

Who was Ian?

'A man who was intelligent and interesting with a great sense of humour'

Ian grew up in care in Glasgow. At 9 years old, he was introduced to substances. He came to London at the age of 16 to avoid a prison sentence. Ian lived on the streets was heavily addicted to heroin and crack in later years he became chronically addicted to alcohol. He committed crime to finance his addiction, mainly shoplifting. Ian would regularly end up in prison and over dosed so many times he earned the nickname of 'Lazarus'. Ian was like marmite people either loved him or hated him. Those who got on with Ian would see a kind generous man, who fought for the underdog, they would witness a man who was intelligent, interesting with a great sense of humour, people would witness a man that would share his last bit of tobacco and wouldn't leave a person without a drink.

Themes

Ian had numerous hospital admissions throughout his 36 years in the capital of London.

Themes included

- 1) Fluctuating Capacity
- 2) Self-neglect
- 3) Mental Health & wellbeing
- 4) Homelessness

Learning point 1: Korsakoff's

The need to raise awareness of Korsakoff's, confabulation and masking. Just because someone is answering questions with logical sentences it is not evidence of an informed choice, especially for those people who have experienced homelessness who have become so adept/skilled at and hiding their vulnerabilities

Learning point 2: The Care Act

Individuals like Ian need to be carefully evaluated to determine if their medical history, alcohol use and pattern of memory problems may be consistent with Korsakoff syndrome.

The Care Act identifies alcohol (and drug) users as people who fall within its remit (s.92, para 5)

Statutory guidance supporting the Care Act identifies self-neglect as a form of neglect. The guidance states that someone does not need to lack capacity to be regarded as vulnerable



Ian died in September 2021

at the age of 52, whilst being detained under the mental health act. He died of Cardiac Arrest Electrolyte Disturbance/ Hyperkalemia, with secondary causes End Stage Renal Disease, Suspected Carcinoma Oral Cavity and Korsakoff Syndrome. He died in his sleep in a clean, warm bed, with people around him that he knew in an environment that he called 'safe'. Leaving this world calm and worry-free.

Learning Point 4: Professional Curiosity

For many street homeless people with Korsakoff's there is no network, family or friends. No-one fighting their corner. Ian had a supportive friend who worked tirelessly with professionals to ensure that his capacity issues were recognised and reviewed to ensure he was supported and not discharged back onto the streets.

A lack of professional curiosity can lead to missed opportunities to identify less obvious indicators of vulnerability or significant harm and assumptions made in assessments of needs and risk which are incorrect and lead to wrong intervention for the person.

Learning Point 3: The Principles of MCA

- ◆ A person has capacity to make a decision unless proved otherwise
- ◆ A person must be given all practical help to make a decision to include talking to them at a time which suits them
- ◆ People have the right to make an unwise or eccentric decision
- ◆ Any thing done on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done in their best interest
- ◆ A person who is acting on behalf of the person who lacks capacity must consider the least restrictive option