

## CASE STUDY 7

## CASE STUDY: Peter



## Part 1

Peter is 21 years old. He works in an office as a business administrator. He loves his job and is doing well. He has loads of friends at work and a great social life. Life is good, he has a girlfriend and they are saving up to get a flat and live together.

However, two years ago Peter's father, who was in the Armed Services, was badly injured, leaving him physically disabled and with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). After a period of rehabilitation, his dad is now back living at home.

Peter supported his mum through this difficult time and now that his dad is at home he is helping out even more – mostly with physical care needs as the house has not been adapted yet, but also keeping his dad company because he is still struggling mentally with what has happened.

Peter is struggling. He is angry at what has happened to his dad, angry that things to help his dad aren't being sorted out as quickly as they should be, and guilty because he wants his old life back. It is affecting his sleep as he keeps turning things over in his mind all night.

At work, he knows he isn't doing as well because his mind is on other things and he feels so tired. It's beginning to affect his performance, but Peter is finding it hard to talk about his situation, partly because he is scared that he will get upset and cry. He would be so embarrassed if this happened. His colleagues have noticed that he is short-tempered and not his usual friendly and chatty self. Even his girlfriend is getting fed up of him.

- What would you do if you were Peter?
- What support can Peter get for his dad and for himself?

## Part 2

As time went on, Peter felt increasingly uncomfortable speaking to anyone at work about the changes that had been happening in his home life. Last month he was particularly stressed and got into a huge argument with his girlfriend and their relationship ended shortly after. This left Peter feeling extremely low and his performance at work continued to decline – he began coming into work late and extremely tired and would often raise his voice at his colleagues. His manager called Peter in for a meeting to discuss his job and asked if there was anything else going on. Peter was on the verge of telling his manager everything but felt like he would be judged so kept quiet. With no valid explanation for his behaviour, Peter's manager has now given him a formal warning. Peter feels like his life is in a downward spiral and he is becoming very withdrawn. He is beginning to drink at home because he thinks it helps him sleep. He has found that his mood affects the way he acts around his father now too but he doesn't know how to change things.

- What is your advice for Peter at this stage?
- What support is available for Peter?

## CASE STUDY 8

## CASE STUDY: Priya



## Part 1

Priya is 25 years old. She looks after her father who suffers from ME and experiences extreme fatigue and muscle pains. Priya is from a very tight-knit community and many people within it do not recognise she is a carer, instead she is seen as a dutiful daughter. Priya's mother passed away when she was younger and her only brother moved to America a few years ago.

Priya works for a marketing company and is doing well in her role. She has recently been given some information on the possibility of an upcoming promotion. This would be a brilliant step for Priya to advance her career. However, when she spoke with her manager about the new role, he mentioned that it involves working up and down the country and sometimes spending nights away from home. This means the job would take her away from her father and would leave him without support. Her manager does not know that she is carer and she is afraid that by disclosing this now, she may be passed over for opportunities such as this.

Priya had thought about getting extra support for her father from a care agency but is worried that people in her community will judge her and think that she is being a terrible daughter.

Since finding out about the new role, Priya has noticed that she has been having periods of dizziness and shortness of breath. She thinks she may be suffering from anxiety. She is now worried about her health and is considering not applying for the promotion at all.

- If you were in Priya's shoes, what would you do?
- What are Priya's rights around being a carer in the workplace?

## Part 2

Priya decided to talk to some people in her community and seek their advice. On the whole, people were really encouraging and told her to go for the promotion and that her duty is also to make her father proud of her. She also sought help for her anxiety and she has recovered well from it.

Priya got the promotion and, with support in place for her father from a care agency, she began to enjoy the challenge of her new job. However, the care agency that provides support while she is away is not reliable and in the past six months they have failed to turn up on three occasions, leaving her father with no one to help him to bed, wash or to be fed. Priya has had to rush home from business trips which has been very stressful and has affected her ability to do her job. Her father is trying not to put pressure on her, but the situation is taking a toll on his health. His GP says that if this continues her father will need to go into residential care.

Priya feels like resigning from her job. She feels that she was selfish and not a dutiful daughter after all. She is beginning to feel dizzy and breathless again, and unable to think straight.

- What is the most important thing for Priya to get help with?
- Who can Priya turn to for help and support?

## CASE STUDY 9

## CASE STUDY: Josh



## Part 1

Josh is 24 years old and has worked in investment banking for the last 3 years. He is quite successful and really loves his job. Josh cares for his partner who suffers from Crohn's Disease. When Josh first got his job, he did not tell his manager about his caring role as he thought it would reflect badly on him. His industry is quite high pressured and he thought that disclosing his caring role would single him out and make him look weak to his colleagues. In the past when his partner has been particularly ill, Josh has had to use his annual leave to be at home with him.

Six weeks ago, Gabriella started in the company. The two of them instantly hit it off and have become friends. Gabriella started telling Josh about her son who she cares for and explained that she had included her caring responsibilities on her job application. Josh was surprised to hear that this did not hinder her from getting the job in the first place. Gabriella began to tell Josh some of the support options their manager had offered to her, including flexible working hours and carer's leave. This was the first time Josh had heard about these options and he wondered why they were not publicised at work.

Josh has started to think about telling Gabriella and their manager about his caring role but he is very nervous.

- What would you advise Josh to do in this situation?
- Are there better ways in which an employer could let employees know about the support options available to them?

## Part 2

Josh decides to confide in his manager about his caring role. However, instead of being supportive and offering the same flexible working arrangements and carer's leave that was offered to Gabriella, he is dismissive of Josh's situation saying that 'men aren't carers' and that same-sex relationships don't really count. Josh tries to tell his manager that he ought to have the same entitlements as Gabriella, but his manager gets cross and says that she shouldn't have told Josh about a 'private' arrangement between her and her employer.

Josh is hurt and embarrassed by the meeting with his manager. He is now worried that not only will he be seen as weak because he is a carer, but that he will be discriminated against because he is gay. He is also worried that he has put Gabriella at risk.

- What should Josh do now?
- What legal entitlements does Josh have in this situation?
- Who should Josh turn to for advice and support?
- Should Gabriella be worried about her situation as well?



## CASE STUDY 10

## CASE STUDY: Poppy



## Part 1

Poppy is 20 years old. When she was eight years old her mum died and Poppy missed a lot of school because she helped her dad with the housework and in looking after her younger brother and sister. She never did as well at school as she could have done but nevertheless managed to get C grades in her GCSE maths, English and science. When she left school at 16, she did an engineering apprenticeship, which she really enjoyed. Her work placement was very supportive of her caring role and gave her flexible working arrangements. Unfortunately, they couldn't keep her on after her apprenticeship, so Poppy was unemployed.

After six months, Poppy finally got a job for an electronics company which she was really excited about. However, her dad has recently had to retire from his job on ill-health grounds and a recent car accident has left him partially deaf.

Poppy has had to take time off work to support her dad and also to help out at home. Poppy is sometimes late for work because she has to make sure her brother and sister get to school on time. She also knows that she is distracted at work because she is so worried about her dad and feels she has so much to do.

Poppy hasn't told her new employer about her situation because her manager always seems so busy and stressed. She knows that he thinks she is unreliable and not pulling her weight.

She is anxious that she will lose her job and now that her dad is out of work the family can't afford for her not to work.

- If you were Poppy what would you do in this situation?
- What sources of support do you think are available for Poppy?

## Part 2

Poppy decides to confide in her manager. He is very understanding of her caring responsibilities and reveals that he is a carer himself. This makes Poppy feel very relieved and explained why he was seemingly so busy and stressed all the time. Her manager agreed for her to have flexible working hours and has said that she can start at a later time in the morning to allow for doing the school run. He also said that in emergencies she can take carer's leave and this will not affect her staff attendance record. He stressed the importance of Poppy telling him about any further difficulties she has so he can try and offer the best support. Poppy still finds she is worried about her dad a lot when she is at work but she feels a lot more confident and secure about her job now.

- Are you surprised by the way things have turned out for Poppy?
- Is there anything else that Poppy can do to help with her situation?