



Transcript:

[Music]

Tricia: Vale House was set up almost twenty years ago to look after people who had profound mental health needs due to their dementia. At that time in Oxfordshire for that sort of care was to a general care home, or into hospital. Marjorie Duffield came to live with us last summer. When I went to assess Marjorie in her previous care home, I saw a lady who was sitting quietly in her own room. She didn't engage much with, with me in conversation.

Marjorie: (walking with Tricia) I haven't got any water.

Tricia: Do you need some water? I'll get you a drink in a moment.

Tricia: Her son had told us that she used to play the organ in the local church and had a lot of pleasure and that music had been a very important part of her life.

Marjorie: I can't [unclear 00:01:04]

Tricia: Have a go, (gesturing to organ) have a go. Go on.

Marjorie: Oh. I'm very, very [unclear 00:01:09] at all.

Tricia: (singing) Have a go, Jo. Have a go.

Marjorie: I can't [unclear 00:01:12] (playing organ)

Tricia: We then decided that we would try and sit with her for a very short period each day and see if she could pick up tunes again, so we would sing a hymn to her, and she started again picking up those tunes and playing some of those favourite hymns.

Marjorie: (playing hymn)

Tricia: (clapping) Encore!

Marjorie: (laughing) You would.

Tricia: It's given her back some of her dignity. And this afternoon she's actually going out to a concert with a volunteer and we think that she'll really enjoy that.

Volunteer: Are you looking forward to the concert?

Marjorie: What?

Volunteer: Are you looking forward to the concert, Marjorie?

Marjorie: I might do, if I can get there. Where I am, I don't know.

Tricia: It would be very easy for us to forget that our residents are individual people with their own personal history and their own background and their own things that they've liked to do and that they've been proud of because we're having to care for people. We're having to help bathe them, we're having to help dress them, we're having to help them have their meals. And all of that has to be done in a nurse's or a carer's day's work. The easy way to do it would be just to treat everyone the same, to presume that all people over the age of sixty like to sit in a chair in front of the television for most part of the day, or that they all like the same food. It would be very easy to get in to the wrong way of doing it, but that wouldn't be to give good person centred care.

Volunteer: (at the concert) Are you enjoying it?

Marjorie: I'm listening, yes.

Tricia: If I were ill, or if my mother was ill, I would want people to remember who she was, what her background was, the things that she used to like to do, and that's very important to us here at Vale House. Indeed, the whole process goes much more smoothly if we treat people as individuals.

[applause in concert]

Tricia: When Vale House was developing itself and developing this ethos, we looked at the hospice model of care and found that, for instance, we would like our families to be supported through a family support service.

Lady: We didn't have any visible signs that he was recognising his family.

Support: Right, okay.

Lady: I don't think he did.

Support: No. What he may be able to pick up is the ... a sort of a mood, you know.

Lady: Yes.

Support: And a sort of, and a familiar voice like yours, maybe, the sort of tone of voice; whether you're upset or whether you're laughing or ... and just have a sense of that.

Tricia: Our family support worker, Nicky, would go and meet the family before the person's admitted and then support them in those early days. Sometimes that's a very traumatic, distressing time for families. They feel guilty that their relative has had to come into a home. They feel that they're neglecting them, or that they're deserting them.

Lady: It's such a family environment, always welcomed. And any problems ... well, there's hardly any, you know. The families are taken care of as well as mum, the patient.

Tricia: Indeed we offer the family support service through 'til thirteen months after the death of their loved one. And that's to recognise that we can help them through the first Christmas after a death, and also the first anniversary.

Tricia: Roger came to live with us at Vale House a couple of years ago. He has profound needs. He can't look after his own personal hygiene. He doesn't recognise a table with food on it any longer. At meal times, we have to sit with him and persuade him to eat his food. He likes rowing. He liked trains. He was a social worker. He was an academically inclined person.

Tricia: Do you want to hold that? (passing Roger a model train)

Roger: Yeah. (taking model train)

Tricia: You used to collect these, yeah?

Roger: Yeah.

Tricia: Is that a special one?

Roger: Yeah.

Tricia: What about this one? I'm not able to tell you what that is. (looking at underside of model) Oh, I can tell you what it is. It's the Mallard. The Mallard.

Roger: (takes model train off Tricia)

Tricia: When he recently had a birthday, all of the family, including his new grandson came, and his family tell us that they can see him coming back a bit to the Roger that he was before.

Tricia: (putting hand up) Oh here, we'll do it; high five.

(Roger and Tricia high five)

Tricia: Good man.

Tricia: Every day and every moment in someone's life is as important as the moment before. A moment in one of my residents' lives is no less important than a moment in mine. I don't throw away moments or days in my life, and we shouldn't do that for people who have dementia. So, it really matters that we find out that a man worked on the railways, that he liked, that he liked football, who his favourite football team were?

Man: [unclear 00:06:00]

Tricia: Swimming. Swimming in the river.

Man: Yeah. [unclear 00:06:09] and walk back, number 32 West Street.

Tricia: Number 32 West Street, that's right.

Man: Yeah.

Tricia: Even when people are very mentally disabled, if you say something that resonates with them, that they remember, you will get a smile. You'll get

some feedback. They'll start to feel better. They will be calmer. It's about their wellbeing. That's what we're striving for.

[End of Recording]