

DONALD MIDDLETON (PARTY A) INSTRUCTIONS

Role Play:	Donald Knows Best	
Party A:	Donald Middleton	(57 yo)
Party B:	Beth Carlton	(65 yo)
Process:	Preparation to Closing	

Background

Donald and Beth are siblings. They have been sharing some of the care of their elderly father Gareth since their mother died 5 years ago. They have come to mediation as they are in dispute over whether their father needs to be put into an aged care facility, and if so, who will pay for it. Beth would prefer to build a granny flat at her home for Gareth.

Common Understandings

- Dad is still living in his own home. Beth has been dad's main carer since mum died.
- Both of you are concerned that dad is no longer able to look after himself.
- Mum made you promise not to put dad in a home.

Script for Donald – Opening Statement

Look I don't know if I can take much more of this. The answer is simple; dad needs to be put into a nursing home where he can be cared for. Neither of us can do it anymore – he's too far gone.

Ever since mum died a few years ago Dad's been progressively deteriorating. I guess it was out of loneliness. Mum and dad were as thick as thieves, but when mum died it's like he lost the will to live.

Sometimes he remembers who we are, other days he just stares at us as if we are strangers.

When he could no longer manage by himself at home we alternated going over there every so often to take him meals, take him to the doctors – you know that sort of stuff.

I've just been a bit busy with work over the last few months and haven't had the time to check in on dad as much.

The last time I went there, the house was an absolute mess. Beth says she is over there all the time – I don't understand why she can't help dad clean up while she is there. Also, I find out things that have happened to dad weeks later – I should be told straightaway.

Look to me the answer is cut and dry – he needs to be put into a home and Beth just needs to realise that our old dad isn't the person he used to be.

Donald's Narrative

Exploration

- You have spoken to someone at the Guardianship office and they say that you can be a co-signatory to your dad's accounts. You think finances should be decided jointly.
- Beth was always dad's favourite and that's why he's agreeing to sell the house to live with her.
- You are worried how your sister will cope with being your dad's carer – you do notice he is getting progressively worse, and your sister isn't getting any younger.
- Beth already looks after her grandkids – she just bought a new car to fit the kids in – and now she wants to look after your dad even more!?! And who financed that new car.

Option Generation

- Place dad in an aged care facility that is close by.
- Financial information is more transparent, and decisions are made jointly.

Private Session

- You want to know how much the property can be sold for and what it will be used for.
- You're concerned how welcome you will be to visit your dad at Beth's place considering the conflict that has been going on for about 12 months.
- You want to be more involved in the decisions for your dad and his care and welfare.

Negotiation

- Start by saying you will see about getting dad into an aged care facility.
- Eventually (don't hold out too long!) agree to selling dad's house and using the proceeds to build a flat at Beth's place. You want to be a joint signatory to Dad's accounts – you know there will be left over money and want it spent wisely.
- Acknowledge that Beth had gone to personal and financial expense to care for dad. But you won't agree to give her a financial contribution towards the van or petrol money for taking dad to appointments. Suggest you start taking dad to some appointments yourself.
- Come up with some ideas about talking more with Beth about keeping in touch with what's going on for dad.

Outcome Statement

- Make sure anything you have agreed on goes in the outcome statement – Beth has a selective memory.