



## Exploring psychology

### *Exploring Psychology: Living with Memory Impairment 1*

**Researcher:** I first got to know a group of people with memory problems several years ago. When they volunteered to take part in research I was doing on memory rehabilitation. In the research, we worked together on aspects of their memory problems, which were particularly significant to them and this proved quite successful. Recently I met up with three of them again. In conversation I asked them how they first noticed their memory problems? What the experience was like? How they think it has affected them and their relationships? And how they've tried to adjust and cope. You will hear some extracts from our conversations, which focus on their experiences of memory problems rather than on the research we did together.

The first two people I spoke to, both have progressive memory problems. Both are in their 70's, and they are each joined by their Carer. Later on you will hear from a younger person with non progressive memory problems.

So what do you put your memory problems down to yourself? What do you think causes your memory problems?

**Male:** It just seems to have disappeared. I just can't.. I don't know. I don't know what it is.

**Researcher:** And has that been a gradual process over time do you think?

**Male:** Well it has recently. I would occasionally, or sort of earlier on. I would sort of think about it, and it would come. And then would probably go for a certain series of time. And I know what it is, and yet I can't name it.

**Researcher:** And what about remembering people. Recognising people, know their names?

**Male:** I can't remember people. I know them by face. But I can't remember their names. And those sort of things.

**Researcher:** So you recognise them, and know that they're people that you know. But you can't put the name to them.

**Male:** Yes. Yes. No, I can't put the names to them.

**Researcher:** And does that mean that you also find it difficult to know things about them?

**Male:** Well I do. Because I know that these things are in my memory. But I just can't go to them. It's a funny thing, this memory lark. It really is.

**Researcher:** In what way?

**Male:** Well as I say. Sometimes I can go out into the garden, and I know exactly what I'm going to do. And another day, I'll just wander about and wonder which to do, and when to do it.

**Researcher:** Do you think it's affected your life in any other way? Has it affected perhaps the way you and Jean live side by side? Or your family or friends in any way, that you've had memory difficulties?

**Male:** Well no trouble with Jean. We get along fine. And well, close people that living close to where I am. Well Jean and I, we're both living in the same house. And I find that just the local people, I can sort of go out of the house in the garden. Or even into the road for a walk. Not actually on the road. But on the paths. And I come as I see them, probably in their garden. And I will have to sort of stop and wait until I can say the name.

**Jean:** Well I see things of course differently. Because I've tried to help him. But he thinks I'm interfering all the time. And he then sort of jeers me, and that sort of thing.

**Researcher:** In what way? What kind of happens?

**Jean:** Well calls me stupid. and why should I tell him, he knows what to do. And he will do it. And I'm not to interfere.

**Researcher:** And how does that make you feel?

**Jean:** It makes me feel sad. Because I know I'm only trying to help him. He won't do anything that I ask him to do. I just know that nothing is going to be right. Like this morning. He wanted a blue shirt. And I ironed it. Then he said I was interfering, because of that shirt. And he wouldn't put it on. Then he said 'Where's that shirt?' I said 'Look. Hanging on the back of the chair. I've left it there for you.' 'Well I don't want that', he said. You know. Everything I do really is not right. And yet you know, he's got a heart of gold in some ways. Because we spent a lot of time going to clubs and things. And he will pick and transport people anywhere.