**The Man with the Worried Eyes**

**The man had been referred by a physician for assessment as to whether he suffered from a dementia. His wife did all the talking, but as she talked he smiled and nodded appropriately. There was no evidence of disorientation in his short replies, but it was his worried eyes that the psychologist noticed most: they were fixed on the interaction between himself and the man’s wife, desperately trying to follow it.**

**Two weeks later, after the psychologist had undertaken some diagnostic tests, it was quite clear what the diagnosis was. At the meeting with the patient and his wife he did not wish to give feedback, feeling that this was the referring doctor’s responsibility. The man’s wife would not accept this and behind her glasses, her eyes flashed their annoyance as she recalled the tortuous path from GP to medical consultant to psychologist.**

**Under this pressure, the psychologist framed the sentence ‘It looks as if your husband might have Alzheimer’s disease,’ but as he started speaking, his voice tailed off and stopped at the word ‘Alzheimer’s’. She thanked him and looked very relieved as if now at last she knew what it was that she was dealing with. As the psychologist left the outpatient clinic he could hear her informing her daughter of the diagnosis quite calmly on the telephone.**

**By her side, the man quietly stood.**

Taken from Cheston, B. and Bender, M. (1999) *Understanding Dementia: The Man with the Worried Eyes*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.