

Who stole my hat?

Tuesday 30 May, 2017

When Landa George's mother Essie first started accusing her family members of stealing household items like her cushions, bedding, hats and food items like sugar, the family initially thought Essie was just being silly. As the situation progressed, the family started to believe Essie was being vindictive and then when the accusation continued they realised something was seriously wrong. Over a period of 20 years, the false belief that Essie held about people coming into her Hackney home and taking things, focussed on her oldest daughter Rosanna, with whom she already had a difficult relationship. Over a couple of decades, the accusations towards her first-born child Rosanna caused turmoil and fragmentation in their close-knit family.

It was only in 2010 that Essie, now in her 80's finally got a diagnosis of Vascular Dementia, after the family had been struggling to cope with the frustration and conflict this condition caused in their family over a period of years. In this time, Landa wrongly believed that her family were the only ones dealing with the issue of false accusations. It became a family problem not shared with anyone, which led to isolation and stigma. "I didn't talk about it with friends or colleagues at work. Mum's behaviour was a bit embarrassing, I guess. I didn't understand she was unwell"

What do you do when someone with Dementia wrongly accuses you of theft? This is the question the book *Delusion of Theft in Dementia*, tackles with sensitivity and compassion from multiple perspectives by its author Landa George. Her book describes the impact delusions of theft has had on her family and takes readers on a journey to understand the upset, anger, frustration and isolation caused through the stories of family, carers and neighbours of Essie.

Dealing with her mother's condition over so many years inspired Landa to go back to university to become a mental health nurse and Social worker in 2010 and she graduated with a first-class degree in 2013 from London South Bank University. Using her experience as a carer dealing with over 20 years of accusations, Landa has recently published a book highlighting the strategies she used to deal with her mother's delusions. She hopes that her book "Delusion of Theft in Dementia" will help carers to cope better and to let them know they are not alone.

This book is free on download for National Carers Week 12-18 June 2017, World Alzheimer's Month Sept 2017, World Mental Health Day 10 October 2017 and Carers Rights Day 24 November 2017 on Amazon and theftdelusion.com.

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