

INSURANCE

Background

Helen migrated from the Philippines when she was in her early twenties to train as a nurse in the UK. She has advanced breast cancer. She is married with three children, the youngest of whom is eight. She has always worried about money.

Activity

Identify Helen's different worries and anxieties in the extract using the idea of social pain

What help and support could be given to Helen?

What constraints and problems might lie ahead for Helen and her family?

When I was admitted to the hospital I really thought that I wasn't going to get out alive, because I went there in pain and for them to sort out my pain, but my pain got worse. I had this pain in my stomach that I felt was strangling me and making me feel breathless (she takes a drink of water). Sorry my mouth gets very, very dry, and um, I just felt that I was very unwell, so I called my three best friends, that I feel are like my sisters. One of them is my cousin and the other two others are my best friends. Both of them are Godmother to my son and other daughter. So I did ask them for some help. I said "Look, we haven't got any savings all my savings are in my insurance and the savings I do have, they won't really be enough to pay the expenses (she laughs), for my body and for my family to go home."

So I said to them "Please don't wait for my husband to ask you. He will be too embarrassed to do it, you know." And I said "Just don't wait for him to ask. Just help him to sort out things financially and after he comes back, then when he's got some insurance money, he will be able to give you back the money." So my friends said "Don't worry about it and we will do everything we can" and all that. So I've arranged that and I've told my husband, I said "So don't worry about expenses and everything" and at the time I know already roughly how much it would cost, for the whole family and the body to go to the Philippines, so it was just difficult to tell my friends and they were all crying and upset but I wanted to make sure that everything would be OK afterwards so then I called my friend who deals with my insurance as well and I asked her what other benefits I had.