

## SETTING

Private Clinic

## CARER

You have come with your spouse to receive his/her speech pathology assessment. He/she is 51 and has had Parkinson's disease for ten years. Recently her symptoms have got worse. His/her voice has become softer and his/her speech now often sounds slurred and unclear. He/she feels frustrated and embarrassed that family (two teenage children) and friends sometimes have trouble understanding him/her. Your spouse's doctor has referred him/her for a speech pathology assessment. You want to know what changes have been found.

## TASK

- When asked, find out what the assessment showed, and what the findings mean for your spouse.
- Ask what, if anything, can be done to deal with these new symptoms. Will the changes be permanent?
- Explain that your spouse feels embarrassed about not being understood, and is losing confidence about socialising.

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## PATHOLOGIST

Your 51-year-old patient was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease ten years ago, and his/her spouse has come with him/her to discuss results of a recent speech pathology assessment you conducted. The disease initially progressed slowly, and symptoms were well controlled; however, a recent escalation of symptoms has included reduced volume and clarity of speech, which is becoming increasingly incomprehensible. The patient lives with her spouse and referred to you by her GP. Dysarthria was evident. The patient is anxious.

## TASK

- Greet the patient's spouse and find out how much information they want today.
- Outline the assessment results and explain that dysarthria (difficulty speaking clearly) was found and is quite a common symptom of Parkinson's disease.
- Discuss likely causes of dysarthria (Parkinson's-related weakening of articulatory muscles).
- Reassure the patient's spouse that many treatment strategies, techniques and assistive devices are available to manage these changes and enhance communicative effectiveness. Give examples and find out the carer's perspective on your examples.