

## **Example**

- Consider a 70-year-old man, Mr P, living with his daughter.
- When his daughter is cooking, Mr P frequently joins her in the kitchen and gets in the way of the cooking.
- Mr P's daughter is tempted to lock the kitchen door whilst she is cooking to prevent Mr P from entering, but she is not certain whether this is the right thing to do.

### **Identify the relevant facts**

1. The degree of danger and distress to Mr P when the kitchen door is locked.
2. The length of time he remains distressed after the cooking is finished.
3. The danger if Mr P is in the kitchen.
4. The effect on his daughter of his being in the kitchen during cooking and the extent to which this interferes with the cooking.
5. What Mr P might have thought about this situation had he considered it before the onset of dementia.
6. What he is currently able to do.

### **Apply ethical values to the facts**

- At first it might seem that Mr P's right to choose would favour allowing him into the kitchen, since locking the door restricts his freedom and his behaviour suggests that he wants to be in the same room as his daughter.
- However, Mr P's previous wishes, at a time when he would have understood all the relevant issues, might have favoured enabling his daughter to get on with the cooking unimpeded.
- Factors affecting Mr P's well-being, such as avoiding harm (for example burning himself on the hot stove), also need careful consideration.
- Finally, the interests of Mr P's daughter must also be considered.

### **Compare with similar situations**

- For example, Mr P's daughter might already have had to make a decision about whether or not to leave her father in the house alone whilst she goes shopping.
- Her deliberation and the decision she made in that situation may be highly relevant to the issue of whether to lock the kitchen door.
- A health professional such as a community nurse might be able to help the daughter by comparing her situation with that of other families, advising on what has worked elsewhere, and perhaps also by identifying a solution which may remove the problem altogether.