

Case study: Living donation

In the film *My Kidney and Me*, we meet Tom who has decided to donate his kidney to a stranger. He is motivated by a wish to help someone who needs a kidney. However, his family, girlfriend and some of his friends are uneasy with his decision because of the risks involved with the operation and living with only one kidney.



Tom says:

"I like the idea that it can go to anyone. People have said, "Are they going to be someone who deserves it?", and I think that's just the most horrible question. If it went to someone that had done something terrible in their life or went to someone who just spent their whole life doing amazing things, I wouldn't feel any less or worse off".

Magnus, the transplant coordinator at the hospital says:

"I feel a sense of responsibility to Tom. I've got two children myself and if I saw my son or daughter go into surgery I would be petrified".

Tom's mother says:

"I'm worried that I'm not being a good mother letting him do it...no one in their right mind wants someone they love to take a risk that they don't have to take...what happens if you have a car accident and you've only got the one kidney?". – But, obviously if we had a child or a relative, a partner who needed a kidney then we would be seeing it from a whole different perspective".

Watch the whole film at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-3jvgR5Nxs> (23.47 minutes long)

Discuss:

- Referring to the resource section *Ethical values in donation*, what do you think are the ethical values that motivate Tom, Magnus, and his mother?
- If you were in Tom's position, would you proceed with his donation despite the feelings of his family and friends?
- Should a person's family have a say in whether they donate or not? Should they try to stop the person from donating?