

Co-Creating Health case study: I found out two years ago I was type 2 diabetes

I found out two years ago that I was type 2 diabetes. I did a test at the hospital and they told me I was a border line case, so I was put on Metformin, one tablet a day. I don't need to take that anymore though.

When they first asked me to go along to the self-management course I didn't think there was much point. But the lady said I'd be an example to everyone else. Proof that if you work at it and do things right by changing your lifestyle and your eating habits you can get rid of diabetes, or at least make it easier to manage.

Seven weeks is a big commitment. It wasn't too bad for me as I'm retired now, but if you're working and you've got to take annual leave for seven half days, that's a big ask.

I thought I was going to be bored. I didn't really think I needed to do it. But I ended up totally and utterly committed to the programme, so much so that I went along even when I was ill with a gall bladder infection. After the session I got rushed to hospital in an ambulance. But I didn't want to miss the session. That should tell you how committed I was.

I liked the instructors, they were local from Bermondsey and you could really relate to them. They didn't talk at us, they actually talked *with* us, and they were really part of the group. And we had fun, there was lots of humour in the group.

The course taught me a lot.

Everybody is frightened of asking their consultant questions. Most people just sit there saying 'yes doctor, no doctor' and then come out thinking 'I wish I'd asked this, I wish I'd asked that'. The course taught us to make a list, think about all the questions you want to ask and take it with you to your appointment. Now whenever I go for tests I ask 'What are you doing? Why are you doing that?' And everybody I ask is always more than happy to tell me.

My eldest daughter also has diabetes. Six weeks ago she had to have a triple bypass, caused by not looking after herself properly when she was younger.

I realised that in all the years she's had diabetes, she'd never ever spoken to me about it. Whenever I asked, "How are you love?" she'd say, "I'm fine Dad". If I said, "How's your diabetes?" she would throw a wobbly. She never wanted to discuss it and she would never tell me why. It bothered me. Doing this course made me understand why. The group all said the same thing, "I don't tell people I have diabetes because I'm ashamed of it". That's what it was.

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