

Co-Creating Health case study: I've been interested in self-management in diabetes for many years

I used to run self-management groups for people with diabetes as part of a research project back when I used to be a practice nurse. So I already had some awareness of the self-management ethos when I became a diabetes specialist nurse. I was really pleased when Co-creating Health came along as it seemed a real opportunity to mainstream the approach into our work.

I wanted to be a tutor on the Advanced Development Programme (ADP) straight away, but I knew it would be challenging. Clinicians can be very ambivalent towards changing the way that they behave. We're comfortable in the way that we consult, we think we're good at it. If somebody comes along and suggests we might do it differently then it's natural to be a bit sceptical.

I've learnt you can't make people change. What we're doing with ADP is quite challenging, and there are those who will go through the whole process and then not change at all. But on the other hand there are those who are completely behind it, they'll take these techniques away and use them every day.

It's similar to asking patients to change their behaviour. We all need to learn new skills, new techniques, and to be able to test them out and see the results.

It's been great being able to direct patients towards the self-management programme which is also part of Co-creating Health. I know they'll learn similar skills to those we're teaching on the ADP, like how to action plan, and how to decide what their goals are.

It's changed my own practice with patients. Rather than just focusing on the clinical stuff straight away I'll take a bit more time to build up a relationship now, to think with a bit more empathy.

The peer support is a really important part of the self-management programme. Yesterday for example, I saw several people who were very, very overweight and had seen lots of healthcare professionals. Every appointment they'd promise to try and lose some weight, but it never happened. These are people who could really do with the peer support of the self-management programme. So I gave them the leaflet and they were all quite keen to go along.

We need to get everyone signed up to it. I think we should go in and do the ADP course within a GP practice, so that all the doctors and nurses can learn together. That way they can support each other afterwards.

It's been great to be involved. I've found the service improvement tools that Co-creating Health is teaching really interesting and applicable to all other areas – the idea that you can try out small

changes quickly and easily and assess their effectiveness as you go along. It's been a really liberating approach.