

Co-Creating Health case study: I'm a Self-Management programme tutor

I first heard about the Co-creating Health Programme in a Diabetes UK support group. A speaker said they were looking for people with long term conditions to be part of a joint team with clinicians.

It really sparked my interest. I was still coming out of illness and hadn't worked for some time, so it seemed like something positive. I trained as a tutor for the Self-Management Programme (SMP), while also doing the course myself. I was very nervous and unconfident but both the training and the course were brilliant.

Learning self-management techniques like agenda and goal setting has been great for me. I have a much better relationship with my GP now, although I see all my healthcare professionals a heck of a lot less compared to when I was first diagnosed.

Self-management means I really do look after myself much better. I can make my own decisions, like do I take this tablet, which makes me feel awful but lowers my blood sugar level? Or do I just do the work myself? I know how to do that now. That's made a huge difference to my confidence and has made me much more proactive with things like exercise and healthy eating.

Being a tutor has been an incredibly positive experience for me and I'm now teaching my third SMP course. I love watching people develop. They come along in week one with their stories to tell and as the course goes on the group really gels and people seem to flourish and blossom and start to help each other. It's fantastic.

I'm now also a tutor on the Advanced Development Programme. It's been good to be involved in both aspects of the programme. It means I can go back to the SMP groups and tell them that their doctors are also learning the same tools and techniques.

As part of the advanced training I had to do some presenting which I used to do a lot before I became ill. I was telling my story to all these clinicians and healthcare professionals, and they really listened. I enjoyed answering their questions and it made me think about how being involved in this programme has helped get me back on track.

Becoming a tutor has been a bit like a return to work experience for me. I monitor my energy levels and use it like a barometer. I'm starting to think that if I can manage this commitment I could probably cope with working part time. That's been really valuable for me, to think I'm making gradual steps towards returning to work.

Identify Innovate Demonstrate Encourage