



Type 1 diabetes - a long-term condition

Diabetes and mental health

When I was first diagnosed, I was classed not as an individual, I was just grouped together with any teenagers who wanted to drink and wanted to eat what they wanted, and it was sort of my fault that I had these issues, and I felt very isolated. I wanted to have a support system, maybe some psychiatric support, you know continuity with my nurses and doctors, and I didn't have any of that, I wasn't offered that. I was seeing a different doctor every time and trying to explain my issues, and being sort of told that it was my fault, and it was just so demoralising and every time I went I felt worse and worse, which eventually meant that I sort of gave up and stopped testing my blood, stopped taking the insulin, and I just thought it was my fault, I can't do anything about it.

I did get very, very down. I was very low for a lot of my teenage years, and it was only really when I moved into London and I went to uni there, and changed my hospital, that I got the support that I felt I needed, which was psychiatric help, a psychiatrist, and just having the support system there where I could talk to people, I could discuss my issues, I didn't feel like it was all my fault, and it was a lot more positive environment, and that positivity was absolutely vital I feel to getting better, people not telling you off or looking disappointed with you when you tell them oh, my sugars aren't very good, just saying to you well, they'll get better, we can do this and this, and having that support system because before I wasn't offered that, and I just felt so isolated and alone, and it was really difficult to cope, and I feel so much better now, having that support system.

My family have really helped me through all the difficult times I've had, it's been really difficult because my friends didn't understand, so I would get very down, I'd get really down, I'd feel lonely quite a lot of the time, and very isolated. People just don't always see what isn't straight in front of them because it's such an invisible illness, it's really difficult for people to understand how it feels and how ill you really are.

It did really, really get me down to the point where when I was first at uni I still hadn't got it under control, I felt almost suicidal and I couldn't cope, and I was so alone. I'm strong so I got through it, and I was determined to keep going, but it has been a struggle and it has been really difficult, and without the support of my family, and the hospital that I'm at now, I wouldn't have been able to get to where I am