

## Patient Case Study: Donna

Donna has been living with certain health conditions all her life and has now found confidence in all aspects of self-management and is living a more balanced lifestyle.

### Donna's Story

For the past 6 months, Donna reports that her confidence has lowered due to experiencing overwhelming pain flare-ups. Donna notices she experiences a 'tweak'; it leads to increased pain. Donna will push through her daily activities, resulting in restricted movements, being bedbound, walking difficulties, and an experience of hopelessness.

Donna has experienced 3 flare-ups and is concerned these flare-ups will result in becoming wheelchair-bound. She feels debilitated and adds a level of fear and anxiety to potential flare-ups.

The Health & Wellbeing sessions can work towards increasing Donna's confidence and give her the support and guidance to work towards her goals.

"I have several health conditions, including a limb-length discrepancy, scoliosis, degenerative disc disease, and arthritis within my neck and knees. I have been living with these conditions since childhood. There are two halves to my confidence - I am confident in managing my health conditions, but I am not confident in managing the flare-ups."

### What We Did

Donna's first session focussed on exploring her thoughts and feelings in relation to the situation that she found herself in. The sessions focused on listening, giving support and guidance to develop the strategies that Donna needed to become confident in managing all her health conditions.

Donna enjoyed expanding her mind, taking on education, and thrived on implementing elements that make a difference to her pain. While Donna knew there was a need for medical assistance due to the complexities of her health conditions, Donna knew she could make a difference through her own lifestyle changes.

Donna is an active person, regularly hikes, takes yoga classes, walks, and completes rehabilitation exercises daily. Donna felt the need to make sure she is ticking off daily exercises to prevent her conditions from declining. During the sessions, it was evident that the compulsive behaviour to overexercise was a potential trigger for flare-ups.

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Taking the opportunity to step back and discuss the impact of the social, physical, and emotional impact of the level of exercise that she was undertaking daily, Donna stated that she experiences increased anxiety and irritability when she hasn't done certain movements.

We spoke about normalising these feelings and the thought of change is normally worse than change itself. We focused on 'Movement is movement, no matter what context it is.' This helped to lower Donna's feelings of fear and anxiety in relation to movements. Backed with signposting to resources to give education on the positive impact it would have for her.

We used resources to educate Donna on pain flare-ups and developed a 'flare-up management plan' – focused on preparing Donna for when they did happen. Developing strategies for coping with flare-up pain allowed Donna to gain more control over her pain, increasing her confidence, lowering her fear, and giving her the knowledge that she could effectively deal with the pain.

"During flare-ups, it's difficult to function. I become bedridden and unable to do things for myself and my family. This really impacts my mental and emotional well-being. I want to expand my confidence to manage these flare-ups, so that when they happen, I know what to do to overcome them."

### Donna's Story: Moving Forward!

Donna spent 8 weeks on the pathway until she was confident to be discharged. Donna reported that since implementing the small changes, she feels contented, doesn't feel the added pressure that she once placed upon herself, and reports that her life feels more balanced.

She shared all her progress and flare-up plan with her family. Donna included her loved ones, focused on increasing her positive emotions. Donna explained that she is excited for a pain flare-up to implement the preparations that she has made. This is the confidence that Donna wanted to focus on at the start of her sessions, and on reflection, she states that she is now fully confident.

"Excellent service! Felt fully supported and listened to! Can't thank Claire enough for her kind approach! Thank you, Claire!"