

Patient Case Study: Evelyn

Evelyn is a pseudonym.

Evelyn's Story

Evelyn's pain had progressed over several years and encompassed many aspects of her life. Despite many different tests and investigations, she was advised there was nothing out of the ordinary and traditional courses of treatment would be ineffective. Evelyn was also taking a high dosage of various medications, and even though she felt these did not work for her, a reliance was starting to build. This resulted in feelings of exhaustion, low mood, and a general unhappiness at her situation.

Evelyn was previously an active person who enjoyed trips to the gym and spending time with friends and family, which had been lost due to her struggles. Even small tasks proved difficult, household tasks became increasingly unachievable, her work duties were suffering, and her overall mood and happiness was on the decline. This downward spiral caused further issues with mobility, sleep, diet, and her mental health and it seemed as if there was no way out. Evelyn desperately needed some support in managing her condition, which is where the Primary Care Pain service became involved.

What We Did

Evelyn was seen by a specialist Health & Wellbeing Coach who took the time to understand her story. Immediately Evelyn was given a sense of relief by having the opportunity to discuss her situation with someone who was empathetic and caring towards her struggles. From the first assessment, it was clear that Evelyn wanted to reframe her thinking around her pain and start to incorporate some of the things she had lost over the years. Even by admitting this to herself, Evelyn started to feel more positive and motivated to make a change.

Evelyn started to learn and understand her triggers by trying new things each day. Some days she would push herself too far and need to rest, but on others she would discover she is more capable than she thought. Using specialist resources, Evelyn started to take ownership of her goals, setting herself small daily and weekly targets to work towards. Over time, Evelyn was able to build her confidence to become more mobile, even returning to work having requested adaptations to her responsibilities and working patterns. Each time Evelyn made a step, this further added to her drive to achieve. Despite still feeling pain, Evelyn was finally moving in the right direction.

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Evelyn had learnt about pain and been able to identify triggers in not only her daily life, but how this relates to past events and traumas. By adapting her sleep schedule and setting herself daily reminders, Evelyn was able to gain more quality sleep which gave her the energy and motivation to keep moving forward. Evelyn made changes to her diet which resulted in steady weight loss which further improved her mobility. From the support and guidance of the Health Coach and the resources Evelyn received, she was starting to live more of the life she wanted.

Towards the end of the programme, Evelyn made the decision to get a dog, something she had wanted to do for many years but never had the confidence to do so as she was worried, she would not be able to care for her companion. This elevated her mood and further motivated her to achieve her goals. This was a massive step forward for Evelyn, and one she was incredibly proud of.

Going Forward

Upon reflection of the programme, Evelyn was able to see the progress she had made. Throughout this time, Evelyn had struggled with flare ups in her pain, bouts of illness, and struggles with her mental health. Despite all of this, the guidance and support she received enabled her to remain positive and keep moving towards her goals. Evelyn's mindset had completely shifted. She was now able to accept her situation and focus on the things she can do, rather than what she cannot. Despite still living with pain, Evelyn was now able to get out with her new dog, see more of her friends and family, and manage her work duties more effectively. Evelyn was even able to reduce her pain medication, something she continued to do after the programme had ended. All of this resulted in a much-improved quality of life, where Evelyn was happy and proud of what she had achieved.

Evelyn is a testament to the achievements and progress that can be made by starting with one small change.

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Feedback

“I worked through the modules with Kieran Wibberley and can honestly say that he has changed my mind set about how I deal with my chronic pain and other Fibromyalgia symptoms. My pain hasn't gone, but by understanding how pain is manifested and with loads of new coping techniques I have a much-improved quality of life. I'm able to pace myself much better and have reset unrealistic goals and expectations so that I feel like I'm achieving things rather than failing at life in general! I've also been able to reduce my pain medication over time and hope to come off the opioids completely.”