

Your First...experience of working with a long-term condition.

Rose speaks to Hunaida, an occupational therapist, about her first experience of a long term condition.

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Presented by: Rose James
Produced by: Ben Capper

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Rose [01:00:00]

Hello, everyone. Welcome back to another episode of your First of Everything. Today I am joined by Hunaida, who's going to talk to us about her first experience of a long term condition. Hunaida is an occupational therapist. Hunaida, Hello. How are you?

Hunaida

Hello. Hello. I'm fine. How are you?

Rose

I'm very, very good, thank you. So, Hunaida, talk to us then about your situation. What happened?

Hunaida [01:00:25]

So first, honestly, I am an international student who have come from Oman who got a government scholarship to study degree occupational therapy in 2019, where I started my first year as a foundation, and then 2020 where I started my first course of occupational therapy. And then in 2023, where I have finally graduated in July.

Rose [01:00:54]

Oh, fantastic. Congratulations.

Hunaida [01:00:56]

Thank you.

Rose [01:00:57]

So let's go back then to your your first experience that you had. So take me from the beginning. What happened? How did this condition come about? Because it was quite unique to you, wasn't it?

Hunaida [01:01:09]

Yeah. So I first started when I came back to the UK to complete my my last year of my degree in September. So when I started out those two months till November, I was having like a very hard time. I wasn't feeling okay. I was fatigued the whole time. Even just doing a day to day task, like such as cooking, I would take breaks in between just because of how I was not feeling very well of like those time. And I was maybe because it's just like the first month, like it's always been like. Like like the previous years. Like always when I come back to, to the UK the first month, it's very a bit hard for me to adjust and then I would just adjust perfectly. But this time it's like went to like two months. I was like, This is not normal. I need to do a appointment just to check to see if there's something wrong. I might. Maybe there's something that I'm not eating well or anything. So I did an appointment. I went to the doctor and it was like a very not a pleasant experience because like, even me explaining to him my symptoms, I was just crying the whole time because I'm like, This is not me. Like even uni uni work, I wasn't doing well. I wasn't going to classes because of how fatigue I was. Yeah. And then he checked my blood pressure like twice. It was like, Oh, your BP is very high, so I will prescribe you medication, this and that. And I'm a type of person who, like, I don't use I don't like to use medication unless if I have to if I have to, like just let it naturally just go away. The illness and this or like drink some like vitamins or anything this type of way. So when he first told me that I have hypertension, I was like, Oh my God, like, what's this? I remember even going out of the GP. I sat on the chair just like. Like, cried for, like, one minute and then I just went and took my prescription and I was like, okay, if it's like that, like maybe by one month, two month, I would feel okay. And then after December, I went to see him again. He he checked my BP. He's like, it's better than before, but you still need to take because as he as I know that blood pressure tablets, you can't just put them off that easily like you have to go dose by dose something like that. Just quit it. and I was like, okay. And then he told me that, Oh, we need to book you another, appointment just to do a health check-up like they always do every time because you're taking a medication. I was like, okay. So I told him I want to be there until January because in December I was going to visit my sister in Scotland. She lives in Scotland. So I went there to celebrate Christmas with her and her children. So, even me going there, it was very hard. Like, I thought I was getting better, but it was just getting worse. I was feeling nauseous, like extreme headache every day. Like every day. Yeah. until I came back in January, I went to the health check-up. I told them, like, the symptoms that I'm having. They took my blood. they took bloods and everything to check, like, everything. My sugar levels, urine, something like that. And then three days later, the doctor called me like, You need to go to the hospital right now, to the medical care, something like that. You need to go there. And this, this, this because your glucose is very high and we on the way going there, I was like literally the whole ride to the hospital felt like a year and I was just like crying, crying, crying. Like what? What is this? Like, what's going on? Why is it, like, happening to me and this and that? And then when I went there, there I sat there like, for five hours, just like them taking blood from me there where I got traumatised from needles like until now. If anyone tells me that I need to do blood tests, I would like literally get anxious. I had sweaty hands, like it was very a very traumatic experience. And to and even to sit by that like the next day I had an assignment that I need to submit. And today I was like already been admitted to the hospital. So luckily I took my laptop with me. Like even though I was really tired, I was just like, I need to just do it. Like even if you didn't pass, just write it down and get done with the assignment. So then after five hours, they told me that I was diagnosed with first they

told me type one diabetes because it was very high. Like it would go up to like 15 like that. Like that's how high it was. so they gave me insulin injections and they told me the next day that I need to go to see the diabetic nurse to sort out my medication. And at that moment, like, although I had my friend with me, but still, you still feel that you're alone experiencing this or everything. Like it was very, very, very hard for me. Like, especially if when I'm there alone, like my parents are back in Oman and I'm there alone, although I have my sister there. But still, it's. You feel that you're experiencing that thing alone? Yeah. Yeah. But what was good that I had a really good support from my friends. Like they were there with me the whole time. Like even the other day when I went to the, the appointment with the diabetic nurse. It was really, really, really good. so they gave me my medications. I had to take insulin. Jackson Which until now I'm still taking insulin injections. and it was up and down because they were trying to adjust my glucose levels. And sometimes I would get hypos where I would like go down and feel like I can't do anything. So it was really like a roller coaster, like up and down. Like I didn't know how to like adjust it. Even I was having like with this, I had mental issues. Like I was I didn't want to go out. Like even going out was very challenging, like because of the medication that I need to take it on time. I need this, I need this, I need this. So yeah, even uni work, it was, it was very challenging because I had a lot of appointments, especially it was in March. I had like maybe five, six, ten appointments that I had to go just to check. And they need to like adjust my medication, do this, do that. A lot of medical, a lot of blood work they needed to do until they finally told me that I was type two, which still I still needed to take insulin injections. But some of the injections that I needed to stop, like the Novo Rapid, that's what I usually take after I take a meal. But. You know, usually. But now I have to take just tablets with instant injection just once a day. So that's a bit of relief. But still, like it's still a struggle. Like, I need to, like, adjust this. Yeah. But yeah.

Rose [01:08:13]

So I think from that point of view, really, you've been through a life changing experience, not only at the time of being a student of training. Yeah, I've been having the pressure of assignments to then this massive diagnosis that clearly has changed your life, and I think it really shows your resilience and your strength of being able to come through all of that continue. And and now you're qualified, so you should be extremely proud of yourself for that. And I think anybody who listens to this, if you know they've been through a similar experience to help me really be able to resonate with that and to thank you for sharing that, that part of your experience and for basically just giving this that overview. I I'm wondering then, so from from that point of view now, how is that affected your practice going forward? So how how would you help other students in this position who get this kind of diagnosis or any kind of diagnosis?

Hunaida [01:09:09]

So when I first got diagnosed, I immediately sent a long email to my academic advisor, which she is very, very helpful. Like without her, I think that even uni work, I wouldn't be able like to do the work because what she did was once we did everything she like even told me to go to the, learning support or something like they, the students experience support that they help you if like anyone has this type of experience. So they helped me with a lot of support. They gave me a lot of like resources to look onto. If I needed any help, I needed to contact them. And even like

even during classes, I've, I've told my lecturers about it so that like, for instance, like something happened, they would support me and they were really, really, really helpful with it. I was really, I was a bit anxious even during placement because I was like, What if the placement is very heavy for me? I couldn't do it and no one will understand me, this and that. But thankfully, like even the university, they have this sheet where, you fill out with your academic advisor or the practice placement, supervisor, something like that. You both of you like you talk to each other and say what you need. Like for example, I needed time to take my tablets. I needed sometimes I would have hypos and I would like tell them of how they, they needed like to react and what they have to do me do meet when I'm having those type of episodes. So it was really helpful. Like even during placement, the staff there were really, really helpful with everything that I needed. They were in full support. So it was really good. Like when you tell, when you tell and seek for support, they're really helpful. So that's what my advice would be like. It's better for you to go to, to them because they are the ones that will help you even more with these situations.

Rose [01:11:17]

I agree. So I think that ties in really nicely. So that's part of the reason why we wanted to create this podcast. Yeah. Was to have, have people to communicate, you know, to talk about their first experiences and certainly with yourself, you know, you, you've had this first experience. So sharing that with us first of all is absolutely amazing. So thank you. But secondly, your advice in being to communicate, to let people know this is what I need, this is how I need help. I think that's absolutely fantastic and that's definitely something that I would also recommend to anybody that needs that additional support is to ask for it because I'm sure that it is available and it is so when now, now, obviously that you're qualified and you are where you are, which is amazing. Yeah. Is there any is there anything else that you would like to, to say to any student that's in a position of struggling? I know that you've said about obviously asking for that support from there, but in relation to your experience and your practice, is there anything that you'd like to add?

Hunaida [01:12:19]

Just like take it time by time? Yes. Like it will it will get hard. It is hard, but by the time you'll get used to it, like even until now, I'm still trying to get used to it. But I'm better than before because of the support that I had. And as I said, like communication is really key. Like once you say that what you want, what you need, everything will be very easy for you. You won't feel like anything like it's disturbing or anything. Like it's as long as you communicate and see what you need. It is. It's. Everything will be okay.

Rose [01:12:53]

Yeah. Good. Well, that's absolutely fantastic advice. Thank you. And definitely taking your time is is is. Recommended as well.

Hunaida [01:13:01]

Thank you for having me here.

Rose [01:13:03]

No, thank you. Thank you for sharing your experience with us. And thank you for being so open and honest with it as well. I know that it can be quite difficult at times

to talk about diagnosis, but you should be extremely proud of yourself. And thank you very much.

Hunaida [01:13:19]

Thank you very much.

Rose [01:13:21]

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