



Speaking from Experience

Young Adults with Arthritis

Transcript for chapter 9 of 9: Closing thoughts

Judi (developed rheumatoid arthritis at 27 years): It's really important for you to learn to manage the disease yourself. You can live quite a comfortable life, I believe, if you educate yourself about the disease, you learn self-management techniques that work well for you, you take advice from your health professionals and have a really good working relationship and communication with your health professionals and draw from them and relate it back to yourself.

Heidi (diagnosed with fibromyalgia (FMS) at 22 years): I think it's really important to believe in yourself, not to hurt yourself too much about it. Not to let the condition overwhelm you, not to focus on it. It's really important to feel that you're in control of where you're going and what you're doing and you are managing it yourself. You'll have lots of people helping you along the way - doctors, lots of different people.

Andrew (diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis when at 14 years): For someone who has just been diagnosed, just get up and do what you've got to do. Go to school, go to work, try and be normal, because otherwise people won't treat you normally.

Sue (developed rheumatoid arthritis at 12 years): Live your life as you see it. Be prepared to listen to other people and to seek out lots of advice from professional people. Be open to that, but then process that and go with what your thoughts are.

Kim (developed lupus at 23 years): It will get better. Your symptoms will reduce and your life will go back to some sort of normality. As long as you stay positive and don't give up, there will be light at the end of the tunnel.

Peter (diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis at 30 years): You need to be able to keep a sense of humour and laugh about things a bit, because I think if you take it too seriously, it might get a bit overwhelming. It just gets you through the rough spots, and you've always got to look at the positive side of things.

Sharyn (developed juvenile Arthritis at 16 months): To the parents who have a child with arthritis, and if they're in their adolescence, just try and let them go a bit. Try and let them be a normal teenager, as far as they can be and let them do things. Don't wrap them up in cotton wool, because they also need to learn who they are. In normal life, they need to find out who they are in life, and having arthritis is just another thing they need to find out how to manage themselves. Because in the long run, when your parents won't be around, you're still going to have arthritis, so that adolescent still needs to be able to deal with it for themselves. The sooner they can deal with it the better. They can manage life as a whole.