



## Speaking from Experience *Cardiomyopathy/Heart Failure*

### Transcript for chapter 7 of 10: Management: Mental health

**Jerome, 60 (13 years since diagnosis):** I was feeling a bit of depression as a result of the myopathy, because I had bad thoughts running through my mind. But I've calmed down now and I do see a way of continuing management and I do see a way of... defeating my 'time will come' day and put it off for another 20 years. So today I'm feeling fine.

**Hylton, 69, & Eileen (10 years since Hylton's diagnosis):** I really think it's important to get on top of that. Very, very important. And you've gotta... be positive about it. It's so easy to give it up, you know?

**Hylton & Eileen:** You can just see how people could just say, "Well, OK."

**Hylton & Eileen:** Go to bed and not get out.

**Alistair & Joan, 66 (13 years since Joan's diagnosis):** Some people can...come to terms with it fairly quickly. Some people need a lot of help. And, you know, I firmly believe that when a person is diagnosed with cardiomyopathy, they need to be seen by a psychologist fairly quickly after the diagnosis.

**Gaylynn, 62 (Had cardiomyopathy for 2 years; 8 years since heart transplant):** I probably don't deal with mental health very well. I tend to worry too much about things.

**Kathy, 55 (2 years since diagnosis):** When I would have a low day, I'd feel down on myself, because I really had so much to live for and so much to be grateful for – the fact that I was given an extra chance in life. So I was probably hard on myself for feeling down. Not necessarily feeling sorry for myself, but um... just there were really difficult days. But as time's gone on, I've managed to overcome most of that.

**Gaylynn:** I'm aware that I have anxiety, or suffer from anxiety. So it's a matter of learning how to deal with it. And it's just to take a step back, slow down and just work things through.

**Kathy:** It's very important to focus on the positives. And what I've also felt that was of great benefit to me whilst I was in the hospital, is that every day they'd say that if something was getting you down, you then file it. And you file it in a box. And then put it on a shelf. And then you put a lid on it. And then you put it in the back of your mind. So for me, that was great, as in, I learnt, psychologically, how to get over some of the really down times and the really hard times. And so I still use that today.

**Alistair & Joan:** Living with cardiomyopathy is something that I think is generally tucked away in the back of your mind somewhere. And, you know, sometimes it'll sneak in and something will happen and it makes you realise that perhaps you're not gonna be here in five years time. But then, you can't dwell on that. Five years time, there could be stem-cell research, there could be anything happening. So... I have fairly good acceptance now.



**Kathy:** Each day is a bonus for me, so... I stay positive as often as I can. And that's most of the time. And if I have a bad day, I don't torture myself about it anymore.

**Jerome:** What I do do is sit down sometimes and just evaluate how beautiful life is and how beautiful it has been. You know, I've been blessed and very, very lucky to have been able to enjoy my life to the extent that I did. There are alternatives to enjoyment than to what I had before, so there's still a lot for me yet to discover. So I don't feel, um... That helps me ward off the depression. I see the future as bright.