



Speaking from Experience Asthma in Childhood

Transcript for chapter 9 of 12: Impact on lifestyle

Marilyn (has three sons with asthma): We haven't come across it personally that other children or other teachers or adults have discriminated against our children. The discrimination often comes from themselves.

Susan (has three children with asthma): They can't do scuba diving. They can't get a job in the armed forces or the police force. So there are still certain discriminatory things attached to asthma.

Lavinia and Geoff (have two daughters with asthma): Your quality of life should be the same if you have it or if you don't have it. It's what you make of it. It hasn't stopped me in any way. I do a lot of things probably I shouldn't do, like I'm a volunteer fire fighter and I have been for fifteen years. A lot of people sort of look at me funny when I tell them that I am. So I haven't let it stop me.

Paul, Vicky and Michelle (who has asthma): It also meant that you were up most nights checking her breathing initially. Because she also had eczema, which often goes with the asthma, she had a whole range of oils and creams and lotions and those sorts of things, which had to be applied two or three times a day.

Susan: We'd have to pull a pump out and sit there on a pump at 4:00am, and then she would get so bad sometimes that it would be cough, cough, vomit... cough, cough, vomit - because they're coughing so hard they actually vomit. And that's a scary thing for a parent, but it's also a scary thing for somebody who is caring for them as well.

Vladamier (has a son with asthma): He might've taken a bit more of our time and a bit more of our attention. The kids might've watched out for him.

Paul, Vicky and Michelle: I know that Claire feels responsible for Michelle if there is an asthma problem at school, which isn't right - she shouldn't feel responsible, it's the teacher's area. But I know that she does watch out for her sister.

Susan: It really impacts on your relationships. As I said, going back to work, socialising, going on holidays - my husband was very supportive and very hands-on with caring, but I was the one who was the director of the whole show. And I was also the one, I think, who took it all personally.

Marilyn and Matthew (has asthma): He was getting asthma more and more - about five or six times a year, and often sick for about two or three weeks at a time. It was becoming more difficult to maintain my nursing career as well. And I felt that I needed to be home to look after them. So I consciously made the decision to stop nursing.

Susan: I can remember times when we got a babysitter in and we were still called home in the middle of the evening because the asthma had got out of control. Even a crying session or a laughing session can trigger an asthma attack.



Marilyn: I left them with a very trusted family member who I knew could cope with any situation. Even though they would be nervous with looking after the children, I would have everything ready, you know, in case this may happen or in case that may happen. We didn't really go anywhere too far away, and we didn't often take too many holidays or much time off because we concerned about how our boys would be with other parents. We found that it didn't impact greatly on our social life because that's what we considered normal at the time.