

RETHINKING PAIN

ANASTASIA'S STORY

HOW MAKING SMALL CHANGES AND SETTING GOALS CAN HELP TO MANAGE PAIN AND HELP YOU TO FEEL HEALTHIER



ANASTASIA'S STORY BEFORE RETHINKING PAIN:

Originally from Ukraine, 43 year old Anastasia now lives near Bingley and works in a local primary school. Her son has a long-term medical condition and special needs but she has the support of nearby family and friends.

Anastasia was referred to the community-based Rethinking Pain Service by her GP in March 2023 after experiencing long-term pain in her hips, back, muscles and joints. She was diagnosed with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue. Anastasia's GP advised her against using medication that irritated her stomach but found the alternative of taking paracetamol gave her headaches.

At the end of her working day, Anastasia needed to take a nap just to be able to get through the evening and complete everyday tasks, like cleaning or making some food. Her pain meant she couldn't walk around for more than 20 minutes, and she missed her family walks. As a consequence of her pain, she was now afraid to do any exercise, including low-impact stretching and yoga in case it made her pain worse.

"BEING DIAGNOSED WITH FIBROMYALGIA WAS NOT EASY. I DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO OR HOW TO CONTROL MY MUSCLE PAIN AND FATIGUE, AND PAINKILLERS WERE CAUSING ME PROBLEMS OR WEREN'T WORKING".

ANASTASIA'S PERSONALISED PLAN:

Anastasia and her coach started work together by using pain self-management tools to enable her to set realistic and achievable goals for herself.

Anastasia attended Rethinking Pain's 'Understanding Pain' workshop after which her health coach directed her to 'Ten Footsteps to Living Well with Pain' which is a free, step-by-step online guide to living well despite persistent pain. She is also attending additional Rethinking Pain workshops on specific topics, like diet and sleep.

"I MADE A WALKING GOAL, OF INCREASING WALKING BY 5-10 MINUTES A DAY AND TO DO 5-10 MINUTES OF YOGA. THE END RESULT IS FEELING I'M FEELING LESS TIRED AS I LEARNT HOW TO PACE MYSELF AND I NO LONGER NEED TO SLEEP AFTER A WORKDAY."



HOW ANASTASIA'S LIFE CHANGED:

"I received so much useful information, links and videos from my pain coach; learning how to accept my pain condition, and importantly, what I could do next. Rethinking Pain's video 'You Are More Than Your Pain', which uses various colours of play dough to explain how pain affects our lives, was a powerful and a moving moment and a point of change for me."

"My coach also talked me through the Rethinking Pain website, where I found the Movement Matters stretching exercises useful, and I realised how I must go back to very basic moves (not easy for me, as I used to be a fitness coach and ran 5kms on the weekends). The mindfulness exercises were great too. After another discussion with my coach, I set new small, achievable goals and started moving more, but more confidently every week. After a few weeks I realised that the pain was up and down and not so constant anymore."

"At last, I am feeling much better and enjoying life again. I understand that I will never be the same person or as active as before but I am happy to be able to walk with my husband, son and dog for 40 minutes! I do not often feel pain in my muscles and joints now and if I do, I remember to slow down and let my body recover and rest more. My mood is better too as I feel happier and a bit healthier."

"I would like to thank my pain health coach and the Rethinking Pain team for supporting me through this last year. I hope telling my story will inspire others in daily pain to try alternative ways to cope and live with it."

MENTIONED SUPPORT AND LINKS

You Are More than your Pain

<https://rethinkingpain.org/understanding-your-pain/>

Understanding Pain Workshop

<https://rethinkingpain.org/understanding-your-pain/>

Live Well With Pain, 10 Footsteps

<https://livewellwithpain.co.uk/ten-footsteps-programme/>

Movement Matters

<https://rethinkingpain.org/movement-matters/>

Pain Toolkit

<https://www.paintoolkit.org/pain-tools>



RETHINKING
PAIN
COMMUNITY-BASED
PAIN SUPPORT