

## **Coping With Your Diagnosis: Emotional impact and grief**

The memory of the moment of the diabetes diagnosis is a profound one. Psychologists call it a 'flashbulb' memory, in which you can recall all the exact elements of the moment heard the news, with startling clarity.

Dealing with the diabetes diagnosis has been compared to the experience of grief.

This is the first psychological guide from Dr Jen Nash and is designed to help people to come to terms with their diabetes diagnosis.

### **What's in this guide?**

There are 3 parts to this guide on coping with diabetes diagnosis:

- **Part 1:** Emotional impact of diagnosis and grief
- **Part 2:** Ways of coping
- **Part 3:** Using cognitive behavioural therapy

### **Emotional impact of diagnosis**

The diabetes diagnosis can cause a grieving for your lost health, in the same way as you may grieve for a lost loved one. It is a natural human tendency to live life rarely thinking about our health or mortality.

And why should we, until something life-changing happens, such as being diagnosed with a chronic health problem such as diabetes. Suddenly, you are hyper-aware that no life is without its limits.

Below is an outline of the stages of grief - do you recognise any of these descriptions in your feelings towards diabetes?

### **The 5 stages of grief**

Below is an outline of the stages of grief - do you recognise any of the descriptions in your feelings towards diabetes?

- **Stage 1:** Denial

- **Stage 2:** Anger
- **Stage 3:** Bargaining
- **Stage 4:** Depression
- **Stage 5:** Acceptance

You may not have experienced all of these emotions towards diabetes, or in this particular order.

### **Experiencing the emotions**

However, I'm sure you can see the similarities between these thoughts about diagnosis, and thoughts you may have when faced when you lose someone close to you.

In fact many people fluctuate between these different stages for many years, getting stuck at denial, or between anger, bargaining and depression, perhaps with small acceptances along the way.

The experience and after effects of diagnosis can resonate for a long time, so whether you are recently diagnosed or have had diabetes for many years, you may still be experiencing its impact. You can help yourself manage the potential difficulties better if you can recognise at which stage of the 'grief' process above you are currently in.