

# Feel Well

## Chapter 1

# Managing Your Feelings and Diabetes Burnout

### You Will Learn About:

1. How to manage your feelings about having diabetes
2. Diabetes burnout
  - a. What is diabetes burnout?
  - b. What are the signs and symptoms of diabetes burnout?
  - c. How can self-compassion prevent diabetes burnout?
  - d. How can you prevent or deal with diabetes burnout?

## 1. How to Manage Your Feelings About Having Diabetes

When you find out you have diabetes it is common to feel shocked. Shock means you cannot believe it is happening. You may also feel helpless, hopeless, afraid or angry. These emotions are normal. You react this way because having diabetes changes your life. Diabetes is not your fault. You did not choose for it to happen.

There are things you can do to manage your feelings. You can:

- Name what you are feeling, for example, 'I am scared'
- Accept you have strong emotions
- Learn about diabetes. Know what you can do to manage diabetes and thrive. Learn how to have a healthy life with diabetes

## 2. Diabetes Burnout

### What is diabetes burnout?

Diabetes burnout happens when you get tired from trying to control your diabetes. Living with diabetes is a lot of work. Diabetes is a job that never ends. At times this job can feel too big, too long, too hard and never-ending. Sometimes, you just wish you had a break from having diabetes. Feeling too tired and empty to manage your diabetes is called diabetes burnout.

Diabetes burnout is common. People grow tired and bored of having to manage their disease. There are many tasks you need to repeat over and over again such as checking your blood sugar, taking your diabetes medicine and timing your food. The many tasks you need to repeat make it more likely to have diabetes burnout.

#### **What are the signs and symptoms of diabetes burnout?**

Below are some signs and symptoms of diabetes burnout:

- You lower your diabetes care
- You feel alone
- You have trouble getting support
- You feel like the only one dealing with diabetes
- You feel guilty or blamed
- You feel like you are being watched by others
- You feel angry or upset that your diabetes control is not perfect
- You feel like giving up
- Your behavior is unsafe for your diabetes
- You avoid trying to control your diabetes
- You stop taking your diabetes medicine
- You stop listening to your doctor

#### **How can self-compassion prevent diabetes burnout?**

Self-compassion means you have concern and sympathy for yourself. Self-compassion helps you:

- Feel better about your diabetes
- Get control of your emotions again
- Feel more hopeful
- Be warm and understanding toward yourself when you don't feel 'good enough'

For example, when your blood sugar level gets too high you might feel shocked or angry. Use self-compassion to notice your feelings and remind yourself you are doing a good job most of the time. Feeling shocked and angry are very common feelings when you are living with diabetes. It will get easier to notice these feelings over time so you can practice self-compassion instead.

Diabetes is not a weakness. Diabetes is also not a sign that you have done something wrong. Practice self-compassion to replace your self-blame. Understand that each person has their own health problems - yours is diabetes. It is a disease that you need to manage.

#### **How do I prevent or deal with diabetes burnout?**

There are many ways to prevent or deal with diabetes burnout. Below are 7 ways for you to try:

1. Accept and name how you feel. For example, 'I am really tired of managing my diabetes', or 'I feel overwhelmed by my diabetes'. It is okay to feel this way. Allow yourself to feel this way. State how you are feeling without trying to change it. Once you accept how you are feeling, you will feel better
2. Take care of yourself. Do something every day that does not involve your diabetes. This will allow you to feel cared for. For example, connect with a friend, have quiet time with a cup of tea or go for a nice walk in nature. Find something just for you and make time for it. Do this activity a few minutes a day to make a difference
3. Practice self-compassion. For example, it helps to tell yourself, 'Today, I am going to believe that doing my best is enough'
4. Be kind to yourself. Do not judge or be critical of yourself

## Feel Well

### Chapter 1: **Managing Your Feelings and Diabetes Burnout**

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5. View your diabetes as part of being human. This way you won't feel as alone
6. Live in the moment. Focus on the present moment. Do not think bad thoughts. Notice when your thoughts are turning into worries and fears. When this happens, think about putting those thoughts away in a box and focus back on the present moment
7. Remind yourself that diabetes is something that many people deal with. You are not alone

### Summary

- A new diabetes diagnosis may cause shock. There are ways to deal with this shock
- Be mindful of diabetes burnout. You can prevent diabetes burn out by being mindful of your feelings and handling them before you burn out