

### Sample conversation and summary of key conversational techniques

- Doctor: I just wanted to talk about your Type 2 diabetes. As you know, you developed diabetes about a year ago now, right?
- Patient: Yeah
- Doctor: And what we've done so far is put you on metformin and done your health checks and your eye tests. But what we have now found out is that instead of treating your diabetes with tablets, it is possible in some people to get your blood sugars back to normal without any medicines. You are eligible for this new programme which could actually put your diabetes into remission - make it go away - and could lead to you needing less or no medication for your diabetes in future. You will still need to continue with your health checks and eye tests. It's paid for by the NHS and is completely free-of-charge. Are you interested in talking about that?
- Patient: Yes, definitely.
- Doctor: Great. This programme works by helping you lose weight and then maintain that weight loss – on average, people tend to lose around 2 stones.
- Patient: Two stone! I can't lose that much. I've already tried.
- Doctor: You'd be surprised. The new programme is challenging but from the feedback, it is much easier than you might think.
- Patient: Well, I know I've probably got 2 stones to lose, but how's that going to help my diabetes? I mean there are plenty more people bigger than me and they don't have diabetes. It runs in my family, diabetes.
- Doctor: You're right but we all store fat in different ways. In some people the fat is stored in their liver and pancreas and these organs then stop working properly, leading to diabetes. Losing weight draws out the fat from these organs, and diabetes can go away as long as you maintain a healthy weight.
- Patient: Right?
- Doctor: Losing weight will reduce the fat in your liver and pancreas and help them to work more efficiently. That will hopefully mean you can reduce or even stop taking medication.
- You will need to maintain the new healthy lifestyle and keep coming to your check-ups to help make sure it doesn't come back.

Patient: Does it really work then?

Doctor: In the clinical trials, they found that nearly half of the people using this approach achieved remission of diabetes after 1 year.

Patient: Will it be permanent?

Doctor: Not necessarily. We know that diabetes can come back, particularly if people regain a lot of weight. That's why it's so important for people who have achieved remission to continue to attend their diabetes checks.

Patient: Right, so what do I actually have to do?

Doctor: There are three stages to the programme and you will be supported throughout each of these. We want to make sure you and your [spouse/family/friends] feel ready to undertake this. You are much more likely to succeed if you have them onside. The rapid weight loss is brought about by eating shakes and soups only, for 12 weeks.

Patient: That sounds difficult...

Doctor: You'll get loads of support while you're doing it. What people love about it is that it really works and helps them to make a lasting change. People who have done this diet say how simple it is. This is successful weight loss by a successful method.

Patient: Well maybe...

Doctor: You'll only need to use the diet replacement products for the first 3 months or so, so it's not forever, just for a short time. The support will continue for 12 months while you re-introduce normal food in a way to avoid regain of weight.

Patient: Do I have to start an exercise regime at the same time?

Doctor: No. We suggest you continue with your usual activities but nothing more in the first 3 months. Later I would encourage you to try and become more active because that can help keep the weight off and control your blood glucose levels. When you have lost weight you will notice that it's easier to be more active.

Patient: But... I thought crash diets didn't work - won't I just put the weight back on?

Doctor: Even if some weight creeps back on, because you've lost so much weight in the first place, many people remain free of diabetes.

Patient: Wouldn't I be hungry all the time on this diet?

Doctor: Actually, people say that they feel full, and full of energy as well. The food products are specially formulated to ensure you are getting all the nutrients you need daily – you'll just need to remember to drink plenty of water – tap water or sparkling water, black tea or coffee. You might get constipated because you're eating less food, but other side effects are rare. You will be given fibre supplements to prevent that so you should try to take them, at least at first while you see how you feel.

Patient: Oh, I would have thought I would certainly feel hungry eating so little. So, it has worked for other people then?

Doctor: Yes, most people have really good experiences with this. And another positive thing is that we'd stop some of your medications and we'd hope you wouldn't need to go back to taking them if you can make lasting changes to your diet with the support of your coach. So, for you, you'd be living without taking medicines every day.

Patient: Sounds good.

Doctor: Yes, this really is best treatment we've got for your diabetes at this stage and I think it will be a really good thing for you. How would you feel about giving it a go?

Patient: Yes, I think I will.

#### Summary of key conversational techniques:

- **Sound positive – the data clearly supports this**
- Emphasise that it is not the individual's fault they have developed Type 2 diabetes
- Instead of using 'you are storing fat...' (implied blame), use 'Your fat is being stored.../your fat is doing XYZ/your body is...' (removes blame)
- Talk about the benefits of feeling better, not having to take tablets and minimising risk to heart, rather than the harms of diabetes
- Ask the person questions throughout, rather than just delivering information they have not asked for
- Mention the diet is 'simple' and that good support is provided
- Make clear that this is being offered free-of-charge
- Talk about other people's good experiences of the diet
- Personally, endorse the diet, saying 'I think'
- Tiredness is not a problem on a low-calorie diet and most people report increased energy levels