

Case study: Anthony, 59

Context

Momenta Newcastle is delivering the NHS Low Calorie Diet (LCD) Programme across Birmingham and Solihull. The programme is delivered virtually over Zoom to groups of up to 15 people.

Anthony's background

Anthony started his career as a mechanic and then moved into the paper trade, where he stayed for 20 years working his way up to become a manager. When stress became an issue, with the support of his wife, Anthony left the trade and worked as a compound driver for six years. Since starting the NHS Low Calorie Diet (LCD) Programme Anthony landed his 'dream job', working with a learning disability charity teaching cycling skills. He finds his job very rewarding and is looking forward to spending more time outdoors during the spring and summer months.

Life before the programme

Anthony describes himself as being a chubby kid but says he didn't mind it because he was also very sporty and enjoyed being active. He played football for many years but, when he stopped playing, he saw his weight piling on. Because of his weight gain he began feeling breathless when exercising, so he started dieting. But this was the start of a pattern of yo-yo dieting, where he'd lose and gain weight again and again and go through different fitness regimes.

*'I couldn't do the things
that I wanted to do.'*

After being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes in 2015 Anthony tried to manage his condition with diet and medications. He was supported by a dietitian and a psychologist, but he'd still binge and drink a lot. During the holidays, before starting the NHS Low Calorie Diet Programme, Anthony pledged with his wife to be more active. They started walking more. Being more active was a most enjoyable change in his lifestyle and he started to feel motivated again.



Anthony's journey

Anthony felt he was in the right mind space when he started the programme, *'It felt like a switch clicked.'* To begin with he didn't believe he'd cope on 800 calories a day – and even now gets surprised with what he's achieved.

'Honestly, the programme's changed my life.'

Phase 1 – Total Diet Replacement (TDR)

Anthony didn't particularly like the savoury meal replacements but enjoyed the shakes and bars – and still uses them occasionally. He also found the process and prep easy, helping him stay disciplined during TDR. The only issue he faced was constipation, which was eventually resolved. His determination to reach his goal helped him to stick to the 800 calories per day.

Phases 2 and 3

Previously Anthony felt food was like an addiction for him. Now he finds he gets full quicker, and his portions are smaller. When he started introducing 'real food' he noticed some weight gain, but managed to control it by increasing his activity and focusing on eating nutritious meals. He also found it really helpful to learn about healthy eating in the group meetings and made a habit of taking notes in the sessions and reviewing them in his own time.

'My biggest challenge will be leaving the [NHS LCD] programme.'

Anthony believes his biggest challenge is yet to come. He's nearly completed the programme and, although he feels there's still a lot to learn about nutrition, he's gained a great understanding of energy balance and calories in food. In future he plans to stay active, cut down on the foods that might hinder his progress, and use his *Momenta Workbook* to refresh his knowledge.

How did the programme fit into Anthony's life?

'My family and work colleagues were very supportive.'

When he was doing Phase 1 (TDR) Covid-restrictions were still in place, so he didn't feel tempted with food as social gatherings weren't an option. The few times they had family dinners he chose to spend more time in the garden playing with his grandkids and stayed away from the dinner table. His work colleagues supported him by making sure not to have food around him and being positive and caring.



How has the program improved Anthony's health and life?

Anthony has lost a total of 38kg (6 stone) and keeps active by cycling, walking, and running after his grandkids. At his most recent GP check-up, Anthony was told his Hb1Ac (average blood glucose) was normal which, as he likes to say, made his nurse ecstatic. His blood pressure is also in the normal range and he's no longer on diabetes or hypertension medications.

'I wish I'd done this 30 years ago.'

In future Anthony wants to focus on losing some more weight, becoming fitter and spending more time with his grandkids – being active together.

Conclusion

While Anthony acknowledges that life can sometimes get in the way he believes that going to the group sessions is critical to success as it allows participants to create a support network. Anthony also wants future participants to know that, although the process can be challenging, it's worth it and that setting different goals, like running a 5K, can be a great way to motivate yourself and stick with it.

'Give yourself something to work towards.'



NOTE: The Momenta LCD programme has 20 group sessions and one individual phone-call in three phases over 12 months, including an initial 12 weeks of Total Diet Replacement (TDR) products including shakes, soups, bars and pot meals. Referred participants must meet NHSE eligibility criteria and comply with medication adjustment advice given by their GP at referral.