

Case study: Faraza, 42



Context

Momenta Newcastle are delivering a group-based Diabetes Remission Programme (DRP) virtually over Zoom in Birmingham & Solihull CCG as part of the NHS England Low Calorie Diet Programme.

Faraza's background and life before the programme

Faraza has been working with refugee families over the last 3 years, with a previous background in journalism. Faraza is a single mother to a 11-year-old boy. In her spare time, Faraza enjoys reading and crafts, and has recently been enjoying felting!

Before commencing the programme in June this year (2021), Faraza struggled with chronic back and leg pain following micro-discectomy (spinal surgery) for Cauda Equina Syndrome – a medical emergency, which can result in paralysis and loss of bowel and bladder function.

'It was so debilitating. I felt low and very frustrated'. The surgery was successful, but recovery was difficult, especially as Faraza has no family in the UK and is the sole carer for her son.

She suffered a recurrent disc prolapse and nerve damage that left her with chronic pain.

*'I put on weight because it was **easier** to get a takeaway or a ready-meal as **I was so tired**'.*

During a health check-up in the spring of 2021, Faraza was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

*'I was devastated to be **diagnosed with type 2 diabetes**, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol'.*

Keen to act to improve her health she approached her GP who suggested the NHS Low Calorie Diet Programme to give her a chance at reversing her diabetes.

*'I was initially very sceptical about my **ability to stick** to a soups and shakes diet.'*

Before starting the programme, Faraza weighed **83kg** and her BMI was **30.5kg/m2**.



Faraza's journey

Faraza has now finished 12 weeks of total diet replacement and the second phase of reintroducing real food and is starting Phase 3 of the programme.

Phase 1 – Total Diet Replacement (TDR)

Faraza described being apprehensive with the TDR products at first but found that she became used to it after a week or two –

*'I actually began to **enjoy them** and they are **really convenient especially** during the morning school run.'*

Her particular favourite is the vanilla and almond shake. To start with she wasn't a huge fan of the soups but liked them better by adding herbs and spices.

She passed this wisdom on to her fellow participants and they've continued to sharing ideas and recipes on their group Whatsapp chat.

Faraza very creatively made a traditional 'falooda' from an unflavoured shake, alongside some rose essence, food colouring, basil seeds, and the fibre supplement to act as the jelly, which proved to be a success!

*'I want to **reassure prospective participants** that it **isn't too difficult** to manage social situations'.*

'I still enjoyed seeing my friends despite not going out for meals.' Instead, she's embraced meeting her friends for non-food related activities.

By the end of Phase 1, Faraza weighed **67.3kg**, having lost **13kg** – or **16%** of her starting weight.

Phase 2 - Rebalance

Faraza slowly reintroduced meals every couple of weeks. To keep motivated and to help manage portion size, she bought a beautiful 8-inch plate for serving herself and her son for mealtimes (see below).

*'I have **changed my habits** - I am more **aware** of food labels and want to pick healthier options'.*

She constantly refers back to her Momenta Workbooks and makes sure she keeps her goals at the forefront of her mind.

All these positive changes in behaviour mean that Faraza has continue to lose weight. At the end of Phase 2 (after just 18 weeks) she has lost a truly impressive 19% of her body weight – now weighing **64.8kg** with a healthy BMI of **23.8 kg/m²**.



How did the programme fit into Faraza's life?

Faraza knows that her tastes have changed whilst she has been on the programme and she is experimenting with new recipes and dishes, as well as adapting existing favourites into healthier options.

*'It has **ignited** a former **passion** for cooking.'*

Faraza has experienced a change in her mood, how she perceives herself, and her physical activity levels – all for the better! Before the programme, she was constantly tired and in pain and was unable to walk for longer than 15 minutes –

*'I can now **walk** for up to **40 minutes**.'*

She is also aware of the positive impact it has had on her son, 'he is also aware of food labels, and motivated to make healthy food choices.' He encourages Faraza to keep going and is a tremendous support!



Conclusion

Faraza describes this programme as a positive experience, and advocates for it to be promoted more, and to be better recognised. She highlighted how it's changed her attitude towards food, encouraging her to reflect and change. Faraza found the group meetings and the Momenta Workbooks helpful and how '*it (the programme) provokes you to think of your strengths and weaknesses, and more importantly, being able to accept them to drive you to make a change.*' The programme is a positive influence on her son too.

*'I'm a **role model** for my son and he's **inspired to learn** how to cook!'*

Faraza would like to continue to lose weight, try new recipes and be able to share them with her group as well as her friends/family. She'd certainly like to achieve remission of her diabetes and is looking forward to the second half of the programme.

NOTE: The Momenta DRP 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.