

Mrs A is a member of a community group that received support through DEFT. She is 72 years old, of Pakistani background and has Type 2 diabetes. What attracted her to the 6-week DEFT programme was the Tablet PCs. "I am interested in learning new things" she said. Learning more about diabetes was not a priority for her at first "I have had it a long time so I know a lot about it". It came as a complete surprise therefore, when she learnt something new about diabetes during the very first session. She learnt that there were no restriction on types of food you can eat if you have diabetes, and if consumed in the recommended portion sizes, a person with diabetes can enjoy all food types.

The e-learning on 'Type 2 Diabetes and Me' was an uphill task to begin with, as Mrs A struggled to follow instructions and technical language. However, minutes into the session, she worked her way through the first module with the support of two of her friends, discussing and talking to each other about their personal experiences of diabetes. This soon led to talk of husbands who have diabetes and concern about them and the rest of the family.

With the newly acquired confidence in operating a Tablet, Mrs A tried out various Apps and websites including Punjabi News App and Google Earth, looking up places in India and reading up on what is happening in the world. During one session, she looked up her favourite Punjabi songs on YouTube. She sang and swayed to the music with two of her friends as they watched the clip, and the three of them seemed very happy throughout the session. She stated, "I have learnt at least 5 new things today. I really enjoyed today, very interesting. I am looking forward to next time".

At the start of the following session I was greeted with a hug by Mrs A, she was pleased to see me and was ready to start the session. I felt a bond forming between me and individuals in the group.

Towards the end of the e-learning sessions the group was given a task to learn how to access reliable health information on the internet. Mrs A was happy to look through BBC Health and NHS websites and the different services and information she can access online. It was particularly interesting to see how Mrs A used the session break. She looked up the history of Scotland on Google. "I am interested to know about the history of this country as I know the history of Pakistan but not really about here".

At the request of the group, one of the sessions included an introduction to Skype. Mrs A volunteered to try a test call and Skyped her friend across the room. They were delighted to see each other through Skype and waved at each other on the screen! "I am going to tell my family I can do this myself now. This session was very interesting, I enjoyed it very much". The DEFT sessions also include a few minutes of chair-based physical activity. Mrs A's capabilities exceeded this and supported by myself, she was able to progress beyond chair-based activity. "I enjoyed the exercise, it made me feel more alert afterwards". At her request, Mrs A received advice on exercises she could do at home, and she set this as her personal goal.

A true testament of how much Mrs A had learnt during the sessions came at the end of DEFT support when one of the participants asked a question relating to ethnicity and diabetes. Mrs A stepped up to provide the answer, not waiting for me to respond! This led to further discussion on diabetes within the group, and a confidence boost for Mrs A. She said she will now be telling everybody about what she has learnt about diabetes. "Thank you, I have really enjoyed the learning".

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