

Jenny Cross

Education Services Manager Diabetes Australia—Victoria

It has taken me nearly 30 years of my working life to finally find a 'niche' in nursing—diabetes education. If you had asked me when I commenced my nursing training at the Royal Children's Hospital in the late 1970's where I would be in 2006, I don't think it would have entered my mind that I would be the Education Services Manager at Diabetes Australia - Victoria.

My dad was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of eleven—and this is where my interest comes from.

I remember my childhood days with Dad boiling his urine over a Bunsen burner to test for sugar, sterilising glass insulin syringes and sharpening steel needles. Thankfully these things have changed over the years and diabetes equipment has improved dramatically.

Although my Dad took meticulous care of himself, he required kidney dialysis and a below knee amputation. It made me realise the effects diabetes can have on family life. So, in the early 1990's I enrolled in the Diabetes Education course at Mayfield Education Centre.

After completing the course, I was fortunate to gain a position at the International Diabetes Institute, and since then have spent some years at both Monash Medical Centre and The Austin Hospital.

Having worked with people with diabetes over the last twelve years, it seemed appropriate to take the next step and start to work for people with diabetes - and this opportunity came up at Diabetes Australia -Vic late last year.

Diabetes Australia - Vic is the leading charity and peak consumer body representing people with diabetes in Victoria and providing vital support and information to the community about diabetes.

I lead a team of diabetes educators and dieticians who are involved in a variety of activities such as group education for people with type 2 diabetes, individual education for people with newly diagnosed diabetes, training for health professionals and development of educational resources plus many other services.

We have launched an education program for people with type 1 diabetes called DAFNE-Dose Adjustment For Normal Eating.

It's a great team of individuals with a variety of expertise and I feel privileged to lead them.

I have only been in this position for four months, but I love the job and look forward to coming to work each day. There are not many jobs around which can do that for you!

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