



I was diagnosed with ME/CFS in April 2016
following kidney cancer. I
returned to work full time in July 2016

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I have attended the CFS clinic in Seacroft, the focus of these sessions are CBT and learning to accept the condition and it is considered to be a mental health issue.

I have recently had an occupational health appointment their recommendation was that I reduce hours at work and I have been advised to inform my employer that they should expect periods of absence in the future.

I do not feel either of these approaches are beneficial to recovering and maintaining a normal existence.

I have found work very challenging and my managers were not supportive at first. I need to sleep everyday as soon as I get home. People at work say they are tired but they do not understand my tiredness and the need to pace myself. Last year I had a period of sick leave and I returned part time for a while.

I don't like having so little energy and the lapses in my concentration. It is very demoralising and frustrating. The support from the CFS clinic and occupational health seems to be focusing, in my opinion, in the wrong area.

In my opinion, the focus should be on giving advice on nutrition and diet, how to eat healthy for maximising energy and what foods to avoid. In addition, advice on what are the best exercises - I have had to stop running and Pilates and now walk and do Dru yoga, which are less physically demanding. I also meditate regularly to help relive day-to-day stress and to sleep.

My condition is, luckily, in the mild category, which has enabled me to continue working. I think this has been important to my wellbeing to remain independent and support myself and my family financially.

For people who are unable to work they must feel like this has a huge impact on their lives. My work pattern is manageable because of my hours- I am a teacher and I finish earlier than traditional office hours therefore I can be flexible and rest before I do my marking and planning in the evening.

However, I have hit many barriers at work many associated with pacing - the nature of a school day is that there is little opportunity for downtime. The Seacroft CFS Clinic have provided me with an advice sheet for employers but I think they struggle to recognise the fluctuating nature of the condition.



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