



Hi, my name is Diana, I am a volunteer with the Self Help UK Cancer Support Service Beyond Diagnosis, and I offer emotional and some practical support to anyone affected by cancer out in the community.

I remember that I was shopping in Tesco and I came across an information stall promoting the service, one of the coordinators discussed the volunteer role with me, I decided it was something I wanted to do and have been a volunteer for the last two years. I was diagnosed with cancer in 2005 and I felt that I wanted to give something back because of the amazing support I had received during and after my treatment. I understand how lucky I was to have so much support but also understand how difficult dealing with a cancer diagnosis is so I wanted to offer support to someone else going through a similar situation.

I feel the support visits can offer people an environment where they are able to talk openly and honestly about how they are feeling. The person I am supporting and I enjoy each other's company and between us we share some common ground. Through my role as a Self Help UK Beyond Diagnosis Volunteer I have been able to support people to get involved with their own community and support them to socialise with others as this is a real benefit to people who may be lonely. We are able to have a chat over a coffee or I could support with their physical health by going for a walk with them. Being a volunteer with a cancer support service does not mean you always have to talk about the cancer diagnosis, I feel that people benefit more from talking about everyday activities and I can see the benefits for people and their recovery.

I feel that I get so much out of volunteering and it has broadened my horizons and I feel that I am giving something back. It has been a privileged to meet so many lovely people and to be a part of their lives and for them to allow me to be a support network for them. I feel that I have been given something, not that I have given something to others, and the volunteering experience has enhanced my life. At first I was a bit apprehensive to be a volunteer, but now I feel it's an amazing opportunity, just be yourself and enjoy what you are doing! I would recommend being a volunteer, it's a life enhancing experience.