

# New training programme will help people with Type 2 diabetes

*DESMOND trainers aim to educate people with Type 2 diabetes about managing their conditions.*

“These trainers will reduce the number of Type 2 diabetics ending up in hospital.”

Matt Watson



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People with diabetes are set to benefit from powerful new tools thanks to training sessions supported by

## **RAPHS.**

Diabetes specialists from across the central North Island – and a couple from the South Island – attended a two-day session in a **RAPHS** training room to learn about the programme.

Called **DESMOND**, the programme provides specialists with tools and materials to help their patients improve their health literacy so that they can take steps to help themselves.

The ball started rolling when a week-long programme for people with Type 1 diabetes, called **DAFNE**, was held in **RAPHS** training rooms.

Through this, **RAPHS** learned about **DESMOND**, a sister programme aimed at helping people with Type 2 diabetes which has been used successfully by WellSouth.

## **DESMOND explained**

**DESMOND** stands for Diabetes Education and Self-Management for Ongoing and Newly Diagnosed.

The programme, based in the UK and Australia, accepts that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to diabetes management.

DESMOND is delivered by trained educators who arm patients with knowledge and skills to help them understand diabetes. It also gives patients a non-judgemental space where they can plan the management of their conditions.

The programme includes discussion of the latest information and guidelines on healthy food choices, physical activity and medication management. This helps patients prepare strategies for making lifestyle changes.

The programme is built around group activities, with participants sharing experiences and talking about what Type 2 diabetes means to them. Patients are not forced to talk, and they contribute to these discussions only if they want to.



Patients are also able to speak to a diabetes educator one-on-one.

At the end of the sessions, participants are given information to take home for reference.

DESMOND aims to help patients:

- Lower their HbA1c
- Develop a better understanding of diabetes
- Improve their physical activity levels
- Take steps to lose weight
- Take steps to quit smoking
- Reduce their risk of depression
- Improve their overall health

More than 200 health professionals have been trained in Australia and New Zealand to facilitate the DESMOND Newly Diagnosed and Foundation module.

Before **RAPHS**’ involvement, DESMOND is

not thought to have had a presence in the North Island. It was being delivered in the South Island and most states in Australia.

## Training days

Two DESMOND staff were brought in from Australia to host education days at **RAPHS** training rooms on October 26 and 27.



The specialists, Sue Stockdale and Kylie Mahony, say they were made to feel “welcome” in Rotorua while providing the Core Training and Newly Diagnosed Foundation Module Training.

Health professionals from **RAPHS** and Lakes DHB attended, as well as several people from other parts of the central North Island. They are expected to start using DESMOND with their patients soon, with delivery to patients in the **RAPHS** area likely to start on December 6.

**RAPHS** clinical services manager Matt Watson says DESMOND has already impressed as being well-developed and structured, and he is confident that the new trainers will make a real difference.

“These are registered health professionals who have been trained to deliver the programme,” Matt says. “The training is quite intensive, and they now have 18 months for accreditation.”

Among other factors, accreditation will involve assessment of patient-focussed sessions run by the new trainers.

Ultimately, Matt says, “these trainers will reduce the number of Type 2 diabetics ending up in hospital”.

## New trainers

One **RAPHS**-area diabetes specialist to attend the training days was Kris Penman of Ngongotaha Medical Centre.

Kris says that DESMOND will be “revolutionary and hopefully fun”, as it will mark the first time the group-education concept for people with type 2 diabetes has been used in the **RAPHS** area.

“It’s an even more patient-focussed approach than what I already practice – getting the participants to try and find the answers to their questions as well as getting ideas and support from each other,” Kris says.

“This is very different from the health professional giving the patient the information.”

Kris is planning to hold her first DESMOND course in mid December. She expects that it will help people with Type 2 diabetes to improve their self management.

Taupo Hospital diabetes clinical nurse specialist Lewese Hicks was already an accredited facilitator for the DAFNE (Dose Adjustment For Normal Eating) sister programme when she attended the training days to learn about DESMOND.

Lewese says the two programmes have a lot in common.

“Both are high-quality, structured education and self-management programmes designed to help participants become experts in living with and managing their diabetes,” she says.

Her approach to patient care will change with the help of DESMOND.

“I believe group education is the best way forward for diabetes self-management education and support, rather than one-to-one clinic appointments,” she says.

“Group courses have many benefits for the participants that do not happen in a clinic visit. The participant feedback from DAFNE has convinced me of this.”

Lewese says programmes such as DESMOND benefit patients by providing a sense of ownership in the management of their diabetes, by improving their knowledge, skills and confidence, by enabling them to take increasing control of their own conditions, and by integrating effective self-management into their daily lives.

For some patients, DESMOND will provide their first opportunity to meet other people with diabetes and to share their stories and knowledge, Lewese says.



## A valuable tool

Several diabetes health professionals from outside the **RAPHS** area attended the DESMOND training days. We caught up with Diabetes Help Tauranga nurse educator/manager Debbie Cunliffe to find out how she benefited.

### **Q: What was your role with the DESMOND training sessions?**

I heard about DESMOND at the NZSSD Conference in Dunedin in May this year and from that was inspired to try and find out how we could bring DESMOND to the North Island. After a few false starts I found that Matt Watson (**RAPHS**) and Lewese Hicks (Lakes) were also interested. We have now all met DESMOND and are excited about what this means for those living with diabetes in the North Island.

### **Q: Have you had a chance to try DESMOND methods with patients?**

Not yet – still catching my breath after the intensive two-day training and trying to lose some of the old habits that I have developed over time as an ‘expert.’ We are still waiting for some resources to arrive that will help us with marketing. Myself and my nutritionist will be ready to deliver one course every second month from January 2018.

### **Q: How do you expect DESMOND to change your approach to patient care?**

Although as a Diabetes Nurse Specialist I am well versed in ‘the patient as expert’, in reality we all talk too much and invariably end up rescuing the patient by giving them answers and solving blood sugar issues. There are times of course when this will be relevant but for what we want to achieve with DESMOND there needs to be a completely ‘new way of not delivering ... just being’.

### **Q: What is the biggest benefit DESMOND offers to patients?**

DESMOND supports patients to be their own experts in a way that is sustainable and do-able. No fancy diets, no great expectations, just learning from themselves and others in the group that yes, diabetes is for life but it does not need to control your life and can be managed. Meeting DESMOND means there is hope.