

WELLNESS PLAN FOR ELIZABETH MCGOUGAN

DATE: Nov 2016 - 2017

PRIMARY DIAGNOSIS: M.E./CFS - 2005 BY GP DR. S.KARDOS & DR. R.VALLINGS

STATISTICS :

- Average blood pressure 121/82.
- Average resting heart rate 71
- Weight 71Kg
- Height 1.66m
- Age 40 (07.10.1976)

ONGOING RECURRENT SYMPTOMS:

Profound Fatigue. Muscular & Joint pain. Post-exertional malaise –up tp 48hrs delayed. Unrefreshing sleep. Cognitive difficulties. Orthostatic intolerance. Digestive problems – food sensitivity. Severe headaches. Sensitivity to light and sound. Problems with regulating body temperature and blood flow. Mood swings. Anxiety.

TREATMENT PLAN:

1)TREATMENT OF UNDERLYING PHYSICAL ISSUES (VIA ORTHODOX AND/OR ALTERNATIVE & SELF-HELP MEANS)

Pain & Headaches – Amitriptyline (20mg). Weekly to fortnightly Acupuncture,. Daily Meditation practice. Pacing. Recognition avoidance of triggers. If required: Panadol, Ibuprofen, Diclofenac, Magnesium.

Post-external malaise – Yoga. Pacing. If required: Magnesium, L-Carnitine, Co Q 10.

Cognitive difficulties –Mediation. Learning new things. Puzzles. Regular meals for even blood sugar. If required: B12.

Orthostatic intolerance – Florinef (0.1mg to 0.05mg). Regular H2O. Electrolyte (no sugar)

Digestive problems – Flaxseed oil, Low -FODMAP diet – variety of nutritious home cooked food.

Sleep - Amitriptyline (20mg – aiming to reduce to 0), Melatonin (1mg - aiming to reduce to 0) . Mediation.

Future tests: As possible reasons for 'crashes' - mitochondrial production, adrenal function, thyroid function, and a check on the overall system to make sure it is not out of balance due to recent changes in diet and medication.

2) PACING

To help manage Fatigue & Pain I note my activity and plan events well in advance so I can "bank" energy. I also assess my energy levels each day to work out what I can manage and try to stay within these bounds. Practicing saying "no" to requests for my time and energy.

Keeping a log of my activity with the help of a fitbit means I can see when I am over taxing myself and needed to rest (Heart rate below 108 {60%} and no more 5,000 steps per day).

Ensuring that I have a minimum rest / nap of 1 hour each day and keeping that at a similar time. Also making sure I wake and meditate at a similar time each day and if required returning to bed / rest if that is what my body requires.

Also am taking part in a program to learn more about the heart rate and its effect on well being with Physiotherapist Ineke Riley-Stol from Tauranga.

3) STRESS MANAGEMENT

Daily meditation practice is helping me manage my maladaptive stress response.

Additionally taking part in the Tauranga ME/CFS support groups Towards Wellness program has enabled me to accept ME/CFS and implement many positive changes in my life which all together have reduced stressors.

The areas covered by the program include; Understanding ME/CFS – symptoms, systems, stages; pacing; stress management; acceptance; nutrition; movement; sleep; support networks. Continuing with further course starting February 2017.

4) ACCEPTANCE - CREATING A CALM AND HEALING ENVIRONMENT

Over the eleven years of living with ME/CFS, I have traversed process of acceptance but often have become frustrated with my continuing physical symptoms.

Dealing with the loss of future hopes and dreams, stepping away from the cycle of anger and sadness; has been a difficult part of the process towards acceptance. I am very luckily not have become clinically depressed, but have had many low points.

Acceptance for me means starting to make new hopes and dreams for my future, making sure that there is room in those plans for ME/CFS, and not being tied to the outcome or make unrealistic expectations for myself (As I have done in the past).

Also understanding that change is a constant in human life and being resilient to change is part of acceptance.

Mediation, conversation and self appreciation are a very important part of this process for me.

After participating in the Towards Wellness program, I now feel that I am on my way to a better understand of ME/CFS and its permanence in my life. With ongoing support from my family, friends and others living with this syndrome, I think I will continue to find the positive aspects of living with ME/CFS .

5) NUTRITION

In 2014 after many years of IBS - gastric discomfort and digestion problems, with the support of my GP, I under took the Monash University Low FODMAP exclusion diet.

For 6 weeks I excluded all high FODMAP foods then gradually re-introduced them one at a time to test my sensitivity. I found that I had developed intolerance / sensitive's to Lactose, Fructose, Sugar Polyols – Mannitol, Fructans and GOS. Since then I have been using the Low- FODMAP diet as a basis of knowledge but eat a diverse & wide diet.

I have found a massive reduction in symptoms of nausea, gastric pain, bloating, constipation and diarrhea. Gradually over time I have noticed an improvement in aspects of my health that I attribute to the change in diet. (Less fatigue, improved skin, weight loss & stabilization, clearer cognitive skills)

6) SLEEP

Since diagnosis I have been treating my distributed sleep with Amitriptyline. Over the years I have attempted to lower the dose that was as high as 60mg per day.

At present it is 20mg per day and I hope by the end of 2017 to have it down to 10mg.

My aim is to be off this medication and sleeping naturally with the aid of mediation, magnesium and melatonin if required. I think this is possible due to the reduction in chronic pain, which Amitriptyline also helped to control.

I have noticed that since reducing the dose from 40mg I am still sleeping well and waking up more easily, feeling fresher and more cognitively alert.

For any other support with this I will consult with my GP, as sleep is a corner stone to good health.

7) BUILDING A SUPPORT NETWORK

Family; I have an amazing family who have never doubted me or questioned my health. They have and continue to freely give me emotional, practical, financial support. Their unwavering steadfastness has massively contributed to my recovery journey.

Friends; Over the years I have relied on old friends and have made new who regularly show me their kindness, laughter and friendship.

Medical Professionals; I was lucky my childhood GP quickly diagnosed me and then to have ongoing support from him.

Looking for a GP to supporting my recovery journey.

I will continue to see Specialist GP Dr Ros Vallings a minimum of once a year.

Regularly see Acupuncture practitioner Anne Bulley for treatment of pain, fatigue, general wellness and a good chat!

Community; Involvement in the Presbyterian Church Op Shop has brought me into contact with many good hearted and supportive people.

Starting volunteering at the CAB this year has been hugely rewarding and their kindness and support has been beneficial. Both these groups have supported my need to help others.

Being a member of the Whakatane ME/CFS group has had its good moments but becoming engaged with the larger Tauranga ME/CFS group and the Towards Wellness program this year has help me find more like-minded people.

8) RESTORATIVE MOVEMENT

Gardening, Yoga, House work, Home Maintenance, Walking, Playing with my Neices and Nephew, Swimming.

Using my Fitbit to not overdo activities.

WHERE YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE 3 YEARS FROM NOW
(vision without attachment):

OVERALL IMPROVEMENT IN MY HEALTH TO ENABLE ME TO BE ABLE TO BE:

Working in paid employment - I would like to be working part time in a role that is not a physical or overly social. I have found that helping people is important to me but how I do this work needs to be in my control. I find that one on one or small groups (3) are good but too many uncontrolled interruptions and heavy multitasking create a physical strain on me.

Towards Wellness program – I would like to help others to find their paths to wellness through this program.

Studying either university papers or a local course on something to enhance my employment and mental skills.

I would like to be still living in my lovely home and near my family.

I would like to be able to afford to travel to visit friends and family.

I would like to still be part of the CAB.

Still playing the guitar but a bit better.

Fitter and physically stronger so I can continue to be healthy and well.