



## Exploring the medicine experiences and needs of patients from under-served communities

### Transcript for Mohammed

#### Meet Mohammed and his guide dog 'Vargo'

Hi my name's Mohammed I'm 26 years old and this is my guide dog Vargo.

I've been blind since age fifteen due to numerous retinal detachments and other related eye issues that came from all the operations that I had. I also have asthma, IBS and have suffered from depression. That has also led me to having insomnia which was a factor to do with me losing my sight as well.

#### What medicines do you take?

The medicines I have include salbutamol inhalers, eye drops which help with inflammation, cetirizine hydrochloride and melatonin and in the past I've also been prescribed citalopram to help with depression and diazepam, which helped with cramps after suffering IBS.

#### Issues with medicines

I've had a lot of problems with my medicines in the past for example with my inhalers, I never used to take the brown one because I found it so ineffective, I always found the blue inhaler so much more relieving and used to take it four or five or six times a day until I felt better. Similarly with the citalopram I was already suffering and quite low and I used to take the citalopram and it'd make me feel worse. I used to have bigger lows and bigger highs. I used to sleep more and I just thought gosh I was depressed and now I'm like suicidal, what's going on? I just wished that someone had told me then that you're using the inhaler incorrectly the brown one is preventative the blue one is relief and with the citalopram that actually these SSRI's will make you feel worse before you get any better.

#### Relationship with pharmacy staff

I have a really good relationship with my pharmacy. They know me on a first name basis and also my family. Most of the time my dad picks up my prescriptions for me, so I don't often get to see the pharmacy, but the rare times I do they simply give me the medicine and I walk out or sometimes they deliver. They knock on the door, I'll open the door and they'll say "oh chemist, medicine for" hand me a bag and walk away.

## **Pharmacy medicines management services**

It's something I wish the pharmacy did tell me, especially as they have something like the Medicines Use Review service, but I don't think they'd offer it to me because I think they're scared. And, I would welcome it, any help is welcome especially when you do struggle a bit more in life with a disability.

## **Advice for Pharmacy staff**

My best advice for interacting with people who are blind or visually impaired is; don't be afraid to touch us, to hold us, to be quite physical because we learn through our hands not our eyes and none of us would be offended if you said give me your hand feel my hand. Do you mind if I put this [inhaler] into your mouth of course we wouldn't because how else are we going learn?

## **Engaging individuals with disability**

It's really easy for pharmacy staff to engage with people who have disabilities whether they're visually impaired or deaf or physically disabled. For example with me all you have to do is just talk to me ask me. I'm not gonna bite you. I'd rather you asked questions and learned, I'd rather you asked questions which ultimately help me and actually make me feel like a real human being.

If you're worried about things like how to address me; its fine to say that I'm blind, what's wrong with that? If you're worried about how to guide me; don't pull me by the wrist like I'm a dog, just come over and be like, "Would you like an elbow?" I'll either say yes or no, or I'll say the dog will follow you. Even simple things like when you're giving me medicines; don't just give them to me, ask me simple questions like "there's an information sheet, would you like me to read it to you?" That makes such a big difference. Again I'm just gonna say yes or no, but I'll definitely appreciate it.