

**Voices of North Yorkshire – Marie Curie volunteers podcast transcript**

**Judith –** I was doing volunteering roles before I retired but then I’d been doing… got trained for bereavement counselling which was really, really interesting. But then, the various things that happened in my life and I thought, I really would like to get involved with Marie Curie. Which I did because I thought it would be a development into what I was experiencing to actually meet people who were given the awful news that their lives would be terminating at some point in the future.

And I’m sure the other two girls would agree that it’s a very strange thing, in that people are very kind but they’re kinder that if they can see what’s wrong with people or if they’re being told that, you know, they’ve got a broken leg or whatever. When it comes to someone who’s going to be facing death, there’s an awful lot of people who can’t cope with it and switch off and I think that adds to the loneliness that a lot of people go through. And I can agree wholeheartedly with what both Carol and Helen have said so far, in that people in this situation will talk more freely to a volunteer, who isn’t connected with the family, who isn’t a friend as such, but is there to listen. And I think the listening part of things does, as Carol said, they tell you things that probably they wouldn’t tell anybody else, especially family. About fears and being scared and different things. But, on the other hand, you also get such positivity! I’ve been so amazed at how positive people are who are living on their own, facing such loneliness trying to get through this.

One of my clients had to go into hospital fourteen times in the past six months. Every time she had to be COVID tested. Every time when she went back home, where she had carers, but has never been able to see her family other than through the window and they’ve been struck there, which in the pouring rain, obviously, when they’ve travelled an hour and a half, isn’t ideal. So, the whole thing for me, is eye-opening. It makes me really appreciate the inner strengths that people have. And, I don’t like to use the word humbling, but it is very humbling when you know what people are going through on a day by day basis. And yet, they still are able to be so positive. It’s just incredible!

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