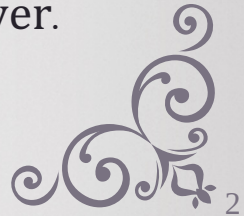


The Power of Shared Experiences



Greetings...

This storybook is about the courageous health journey an individual takes when they're newly diagnosed. When it comes to understanding one's own diagnosis, it requires life-long learning. But you don't have to do it alone. Health care providers can support their patients by providing multiple avenues of knowledge, some that you'll see in this book. After all, knowledge is power.



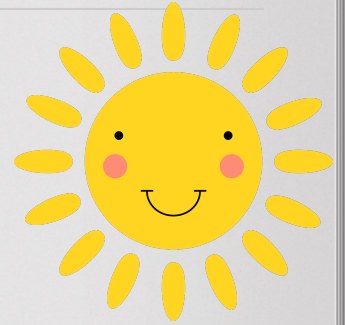


Once upon a time there was a girl...



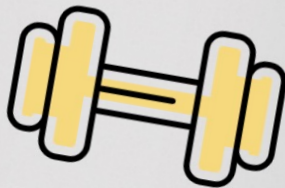
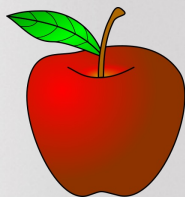


She was happy, healthy, and full of youth.





She ate 3 meals a day, slept 8 hours a night and exercised regularly.

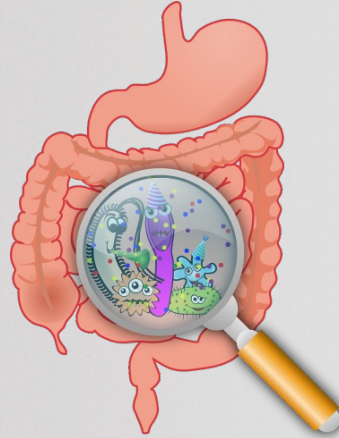


She did everything that she was told to do.





One day, she began experiencing 🩸 in her 💩 ...



But she ignored it.





Although she was scared, she was also embarrassed...

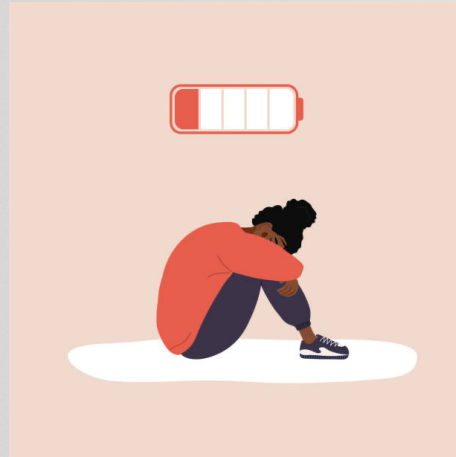


So she didn't tell a soul.





She continued on with her life...

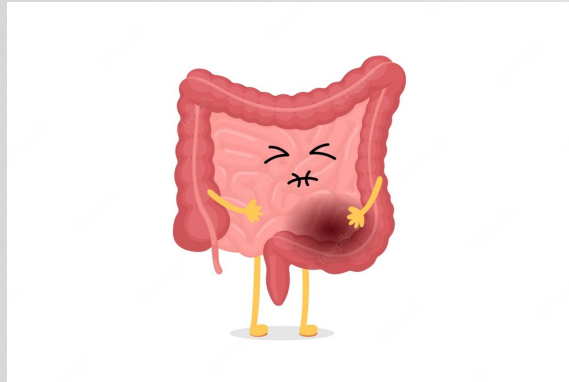


But struggled to keep up.





Weeks went by, and she kept getting worse...

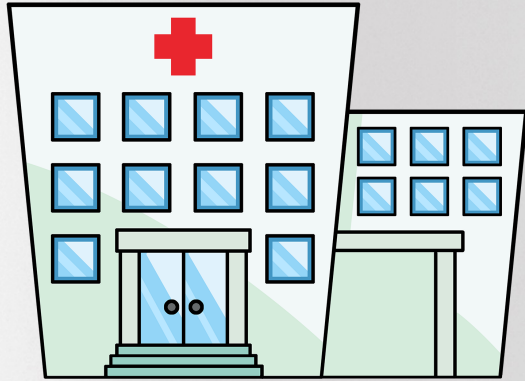


She was in so much pain that she couldn't ignore it anymore.





She went to the doctor and several tests later...



She was diagnosed with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).





She had never heard of IBD before and had no idea what the future held...



It was overwhelming and scary.



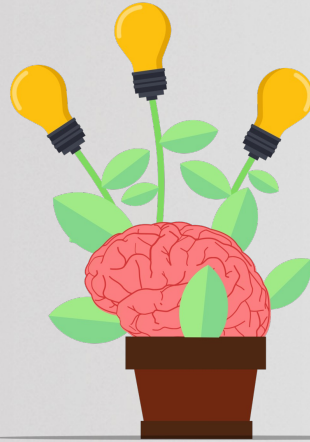


*But then she was introduced to an IBD mentor
and support group!*





Her knowledge base grew exponentially.



It was incredible.





She was learning how to manage IBD from those who had it for years...



From those with a patient's perspective.





The sharing of experiences was priceless.

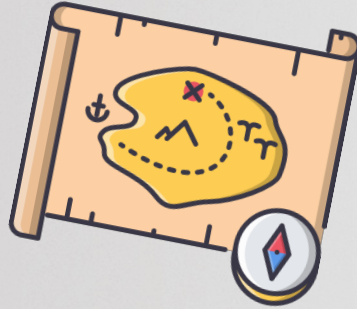


The wealth of knowledge was unmatched.





She now had the power to confidently navigate the health care system and advocate for herself.





Years went by and she never forgot the value of shared experiences.





Instead, she paid it forward by also becoming an IBD mentor.





Now who was this girl...





It was me !

When I was first diagnosed with IBD, it was overwhelming. I had never heard of IBD and had no idea what I was in for. However, what helped me was my connection to the IBD community and being paired with an IBD mentor. The wealth of knowledge I gained from them was incomparable to solely reading about the condition. Now, I pass on my knowledge to others who are just starting their own journeys.

I propose that everyone who is newly diagnosed with a chronic condition be paired with a mentor or group of individuals who can provide support and share their experiences.

There is power in shared experiences.
And that power is knowledge.
And to pass it on is a privilege.





THE END



