



## Session 8: What I've learned

# Session 8

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## Introduction

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Figure 8.1

This course has taken you on a reflective journey towards increased understanding of your own qualities, and the skills and abilities gained from your life experience, including your caring role.

Having listened to the experiences of other carers as well as doing the reflective activities, you have thought about how you would like to see yourself in the future: where you want to be and how you might go about planning your first step towards your goal.

This final session reviews the different stages of your reflective journey and invites you to consider what you have learned along the way.

## Learning Outcomes

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After working through this session you will have:

- the ability to use information technology (IT) to carry out reflective activities in writing and communicating
- the ability to explore and use new ways of expressing ideas.

# Thinking about me, where I am now, where I want to be

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Figure 8.2

This final session in the course asks you to take stock and take a little time to review your learning from self-reflection.

At the start of this course you learned about how reflection is a process that can help us recognise and appreciate skills, abilities and qualities that we have and often overlook. You started by taking stock of how you see yourself in your present situation.

During the course you have had the opportunity to consider what you have learned from your roles and responsibilities and past experiences – both the ups and the downs.

You then moved on to thinking more about the future and what your long- and short-term goals might be. You considered how you might use your new understanding of your skills and qualities as a starting point for starting something new, or taking up where you left off.

## What I've learned

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Completing this reflection course helped Katrina into a new stage in her life, but she recognises that the time was right for her. Read her thoughts on completing the course before going on to reflect on what you learned about yourself, your experiences and your hopes for the future.



Figure 8.3 Katrina

I would say for myself, probably in the last five or six years that I tried a couple of things, and the timing wasn't right and so they didn't work. But the timing obviously was right when I tried this because it did work and sometimes I think you have to push the door open and just see where it goes. And if it doesn't work for you and it's not the right time, don't stress about it. You can try again. You don't have to get it all right the first time.

It's two years on from that day and I'm living a different life. It's almost unbelievable. I look back to two years ago and I can't believe I am where I am today. I never thought I'd see this day again.

## Activity 8.1



Figure 8.4

Your final activity is to summarise what you have gained from completing this course. What have you learned about yourself, your experiences and your hopes for the future?

### Activity 8.1 So what have I learned?

We suggest spending around 20 minutes on this activity.

Here are the learning outcomes that we listed in the introduction:

- a clearer understanding of the experiences that carers could reflect on, including their roles, actions and decisions
- an understanding of the various skills that could be developed within a caring role, and how some of these are transferable to other contexts
- an appreciation of personal qualities developed through a caring role
- an idea of the directions carers might like to go in
- an idea of what it is possible for carers to achieve in their immediate future
- an understanding of the learning options open to carers
- an idea, or ideas, about possible learning paths
- as a learner, how to go about finding out what you need to know
- the ability to use information technology (IT) to carry out reflective activities in writing and communicating
- the ability to use the internet to find information useful to you
- the ability to explore and use new ways of expressing ideas.

Make a note of the learning outcomes that you think you have achieved, either fully or partially. Also write down anything else you feel you have achieved that was not in them, such as making some new friends, learning that everybody has difficulties of some kind, etc.

Go to Activity 8.1 of your Reflection Log to complete the activity, making sure you save the document again. Or you can complete the table in the document provided.

## Summary

You may have worked through this course on your own, or with fellow carers in a group context. Or the process might have involved a bit of both. You may have had the opportunity to discuss some of the ideas in the course, and the reflections shared by the carers you've met here.

Regardless of whether you completed the course online or used pen and paper, your Reflection Log is a record of your self-reflection. You could use this as a basis for further discussion with an educational or careers advisor, or a case worker if you have one.

You may already be in touch with your local carers centre but if not why not get in touch with them now to find out about the range of support available to you?

We hope you have enjoyed working through the course and have learned a little bit more about yourself, how much you can do and what you would like to do in the future.

Everyone has transferable skills, abilities and qualities, as well as personal strengths, but

we sometimes need help in recognising and using these. This is true for carers and non-carers alike!

We hope you will go on to achieve great things with your talents!

## Feedback and find out more

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The Open University is committed to supporting students from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances. To help us better support students who have caring responsibilities we would welcome [feedback](#) on your experience of this course: what worked well and what was less effective from your point of view? What are your next steps?

Find out more about how The Open University can offer you [information, advice and guidance](#), as well as other resources and information for [carers in Scotland](#).

If you've completed this course as someone who is supporting or working alongside carers, we'd like your feedback too – **please complete this [survey for front-line staff](#)**.

## Acknowledgements

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