

## Introduction to Module 1

JO BOOTH: Hello, and welcome to our online course on Understanding Continence Promotion brought to you by the Association for Continence Advice. My name is Jo Booth and my role is to guide you on your journey through the course.

As a nurse working with elderly patients I spent years putting pads on people - especially those who had had a stroke. In those days it was accepted that incontinence was part of growing older. The thinking was that if you'd had a stroke, your bladder function would either return or not. There was very little that could be done about it.

As an active continence researcher I now know this negative attitude – what we call 'therapeutic nihilism' - is wrong. There are lots of ways we can support people to regain their bladder and bowel function when it's lost. We can even prevent them from developing incontinence in the first place.

But to do this successfully we have to change how we think about bladder and bowel problems. We need to break the taboos surrounding them, and raise awareness of the challenges they create for people in their everyday lives.

In this course we tackle these contemporary issues, and support your learning about tried and tested methods of continence promotion and care.

Whether you're new to continence issues - or an experienced continence advisor - you'll find a lot of useful material in this course. You'll increase your knowledge and understanding about:

- how bladder and bowel control works,
- what can go wrong, and
- how we can treat it.

And you'll gain the confidence to talk to others about continence care and encourage them to seek help where necessary.

In this first week we look at the underlying concepts of promoting continence and managing incontinence, and the differences between them. You'll begin to explore your attitudes and beliefs about continence - and bladder and bowel health - looking at your own practice and reflecting on the care you currently provide.

We introduce the Continence Paradigm, to help you to think about what you're trying to achieve with any particular patient.

We'll also hear from people living with different types of bladder and bowel dysfunction about the impact it has on their lives.

As well as course materials our experts bring to you, a very important part of this course is the discussion and comment forum. I very much encourage you to introduce yourself on the forum, share your experiences, ask questions, and get involved in the discussions. We know that talking about continence really helps us understand it better.

So please, be brave, be confident and get involved.

I hope you find this course interesting, useful, and fun and I hope it stimulates your thinking about continence promotion.

I look forward to working with you.