

Karen E. Johnson, MA, RN

Karen Johnson has been a practicing registered nurse for over 30 years. She graduated from the University of Michigan School of Nursing and earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree with Magna Cum Laude honors. Karen is currently in the Master of Science Graduate Program at the University of Rhode Island and is looking forward to becoming a Registered Family Nurse Practitioner. She has been a diabetes educator certified by the State of Rhode Island for over six years with experience teaching individuals and groups about diabetes care. Karen is also a patient educator for Eli Lilly diabetes products Byetta, Humalog, and pen devices.

Karen has been caring for people with diabetes since her graduation in 1974. "It was not my first area of interest, but having my two year old twin daughter develop it certainly pushed me to become an expert." Karen became very frustrated when some information could not be provided about her daughter's and unborn child's health. "I was particularly angered when my questions could not be answered. An example is when I asked about the genetics (I was newly pregnant at the time) and there were no helpful answers forthcoming. When 7 cases developed over 10 years in the children of coworkers in the ICU (including my child), I wrote to the CDC and Joslin Diabetes Center hoping they would be interested. I received no responses!" She has been a tireless advocate for children and adults with diabetes as health care providers sequestered information and self-management was not even offered to patients.

She believes people with diabetes deserve the knowledge and support necessary to become active partners and advocates for themselves in the management of their condition. Karen is eager to share her knowledge with people living with diabetes and being that her experience is also personal, her passion is helping people to learn the strategies that best help them achieve their goals.

"I came to FIT4D because I want to help people and I understand the frustration with the lack of answers to questions and the lack of attentiveness to people with diabetes in the health care system. Some preventive care and educational opportunities are given, but as managed care controls who gets what care and what drugs, (this includes Medicare), optimal health can not be achieved without thoughtful and individualized attention to the absolute best plan for each individual. As a Nurse Practitioner and FIT4D Coach, I will be in a position to offer care to the whole person, from the unique perspective of the nurse!"