

Rhoda, Evora Hospice

I came to work for Evora Hospice in 2010.

I lost my husband through cancer and that's what I then wanted to do after working in a nursing home for a very long time. So then I came to work here and I haven't looked back.

Rhoda is one of our wee patients who comes here every other week and she has got so much out of here. She's a different lady than from what she came a few years ago. Well, it was the Parkinson team that introduced me to this hospice. I've been diagnosed with Parkinson's for the last 15 years. Gradually, it just gets worse, but I'm very lucky that I'm still able to be at home with the help of my husband. We manage very well indeed, and I'm very thankful that it's not getting worse. I'm trying to control it, not to control me. So there. The Living Well Cafe was set up, and it was, as its name says, the Living Well.

How do you live well? At Cafe we thought people come, they meet different people, different diagnoses, but they all come together over a cup of tea and have a wee scone and a biscuit. It's not a place of weary and worry and sadness.

It's a place of making the most of what we have and the joy and people like Jenny and Anna here who make it so much worthwhile. All that makes life so different. It's not doom and gloom, it's happiness and a friendship. I have learned there's so so much more on how to live well with a palliative diagnosis and just because you're palliative it doesn't mean to say that you're going to die. You can live for years with good care and the right groups for support.

Well, we've painted, we've made lovely pictures, we've made birthday cards. Now, I made that, believe it or not.

It's just wonderful to know you come here and you're going to be doing something that's interesting.

What I love about working for Evora Hospice is the patience of making them smile and laugh.

It's positive because I'm not thinking back or thinking, oh, if only. I think, what can I do? What can I do to make life easier for my husband and for my boys and my grandchildren and for my friends? Well, it's definitely not what you think.

I know beforehand if someone had said to me, will you go to the hospice? I'd say, no, I don't want to go there. But now that I am here every other Monday, I want to get back.

It's a different attitude, looking at life differently and appreciating all we have.

Don't be afraid of it. Come test it out and you'll realize the happiness and the helpfulness and people are there to help you through your sadness or your worries or whatever your problems are.

There's someone to listen to you and help you. And that's all we want.