

Hi,

I'm Suzanne and I've been a volunteer with Insight Endometriosis for a couple of years. I came to Hamilton from the UK 14 years ago and despite missing my family, life here is pretty good.

My history with undiagnosed endometriosis goes back to when I was a teenager 20 years ago. I just put up with painful periods and went on the contraceptive pill which masked the symptoms for quite a few years. After getting married in 2006 we were keen to start a family. Nearly 2 years passed when we sought medical advice from a gynaecologist.

Initially I was told we had unexplained infertility, until 2009 when I had a laparoscopy which diagnosed severe endometriosis. This first surgery was almost an emergency as I had a burst cyst and an acute abdomen which explained why I was so bloated and so poorly on my return from a trip to the UK. Just goes to show how this discomfort was so normalised! Not good!

After my surgery I was devastated. What did this mean? Had my worst fear come true, not being able to have children? I sought advice and support from Insight Endometriosis which has turned out to be invaluable. My husband and family were caring and supportive, and friends too when I explained what endometriosis was and what it meant.

We had fertility treatment and more laparoscopy surgery. We were fortunate to have our son in 2011. I really enjoyed pregnancy and those months afterwards when I didn't have any periods! I was keen to try for another baby. We used one of our frozen embryos and we were blessed with a daughter in 2014. I feel so lucky and feel that all the treatment, surgery and emotional turmoil was worth it.

I know many women struggle with endometriosis and as a result have fertility issues. I would advise to seek medical opinion early, use the community support network like the one Insight Endometriosis offers and have understanding friends.

Where to from here? Well painful periods have returned and I've been told I may need more surgery and a bowel re-section at some stage. But for now I shall do my best to manage the symptoms and enjoy being a mother.

While delivering posters on our Insight Endometriosis activities, I enjoy talking to women and hope to empower them to lead healthy quality lives. In a small way perhaps I can give hope that despite endometriosis, it is possible to have a family.

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**For more information:**

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