

LISA RAFFOUL

PATIENT ADVOCATE

When I got married and decided to have a family, I had no idea about the journey that lay ahead. My husband and I had planned on having two or three children. I would work part time or stay at home with them until they were a magic age of “old enough” and then go back to work. Fairly simple and straightforward, I thought.



A huge change came with the arrival of our second child. Eric was born with multiple disabilities and from the first moment of his life, we were brought into this world of chaos and uncertainty. Without warning, we were headed in a whole new direction, like a roller coaster ride with many upward climbs, unexpected twists, and not enough time at the top to enjoy the view. Life was extremely challenging. We were living proof of John Lennon’s lyrics, “Life is what happens to us when we’re busy making other plans”.

In change, I had found my purpose. When I began to work with families and support professionals, I had no idea how much I would learn, about myself, and about the lives of others. I heard so many stories from many families and human services professionals and the common theme was about seeing the positive side of change, continually learning and testing our values and beliefs.

People continually remarked on my optimism, despite my very challenging situation. Every day, I was learning, from my family and from those around me. I saw my circumstance as an opportunity to pass along those lessons, to people who were going through a similar experience and to those in a supportive role.

I recognized the important role of empathy in human service delivery and that my story gave me a chance to influence quality in support, education and health care. I created my signature workshop, “In a Family’s Shoes, which offers a powerful simulation of what it is like to have a child diagnosed with a disability or any unexpected change.

For over 20 years I have had the opportunity to work with human service organizations, school boards, government, municipalities, hospitals and healthcare organizations, emergency medical response teams, colleges and universities, family leadership groups and business. One of my most rewarding experiences was writing a book with seven moms that offered personal stories and tips for families who have received an extraordinary diagnosis for their child.

I hold a Bachelor of Human Kinetics in Applied Kinesiology, (University of Windsor, 1988) and a Bachelor of Education, (University of Windsor, 1989) as well as additional teaching qualifications in Special Education Part 1, (Queens University, 2007). I have also received additional certification in Alternative Dispute Resolution, (University of Windsor, 2000) and I am a Certified Master Coach Practitioner (Certified Coaches Federation, 2010). I am a trained Community Conversations Facilitator (Harwood Institute, 2013) and a proud graduate of Leadership Windsor Essex, Class of 2015.

My personal experiences have shaped who I am today and it has become my mission to help others to set goals for successful transformation.

As a certified coach and facilitator, I am delighted for the opportunity to work with business, organizations and families to be more compassionate and flexible, discover your strengths, and realize opportunities for growth and development.

Lisa

