

FROM PATIENT TO EDUCATOR

NCD ADVOCACY IN URUGUAY

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THIS IS THE STORY about Bruno Carrattini, a young man from Uruguay who has been living with a non-communicable disease (NCD), type 1 diabetes, for 12 years. Today, Bruno has the knowledge and tools needed to have control over the disease, but this was not always the case. Bruno comes from a big family – he and his twin brother are the youngest of seven siblings. His mother is a public school teacher who always made sacrifices to support their family and his father, who was a public servant, died of a brain tumor when Bruno was 16 years old. This tragedy forced Bruno to start working at a young age to contribute to his household's income since the family was practically bankrupt. But he never left school; Bruno continued to work hard to graduate from high school while helping his family, until one year later, when he turned 17, and Bruno was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes.

It was a shock for Bruno and his family, so soon after his father's death. Bruno's life was altered as he tried to learn to live with a disease he didn't know the first thing about. Due to financial challenges, Bruno did not get adequate treatment, had no access to necessary medicines, and struggled to keep a proper diet and find time for physical activity. Besides these challenges, ultimately, Bruno felt in the dark. Bruno knew nothing about diabetes, he did not know others who suffered from the disease, and he had no idea what resources were available. As a young person living with an NCD, it was disappointing to have limited knowledge of his condition. Further, in Uruguay, it is difficult to access quality treatment and education regarding non-transmissible diseases.

Despite all the adversities and shortcomings, Bruno chose to never give up. In time, he understood that he was the only person who could take charge of his diabetes. So, Bruno continued with his studies, graduated from high

school and started college, while still supporting his family. Bruno learned to integrate care into his daily life, so diabetes became a part of him – just not all of him.

Bruno came across the Uruguayan Diabetics Association – a place where people understood and supported him. There he met others living with NCDs, who went through similar situations, and he knew he wanted to get more involved. Bruno began volunteering for the Association, participating in the activities and getting involved in the community.

Finally, Bruno graduated from university as a Nutritionist and completed a diploma in Diabetology and Diabetes Education. Today he works at the Uruguayan Diabetics Association as a Diabetes Educator, carrying out educational activities for the community and defending the rights of people living with diabetes. He believes that the goals and objectives of people living with NCDs can be achieved if they are resilient and committed to learn from both successes and mistakes and never giving up.



Bruno Carrattini, Diabetes Educator



Despite the many difficulties he has been through in life, Bruno never gave up. He says, "Having an NCD requires a lot of effort because it is always with you 24/7, especially diabetes which never rests. Through knowledge, motivation, and political will, someone can accept, learn to live with, and most importantly, manage diabetes. Taking responsibility for an NCD is not an easy task, but it is possible." Bruno's experience has shown him that living with an NCD is a never-ending learning process, from learning how to care for himself to helping others cope to constantly advocating for better access. It never has or will be easy, but Bruno won't give up.

