

## DDPG Leadership Interviews:

### Education, Career Path, Advice

#### **Constance Brown-Riggs, MSEd, RD, CDE, CDN**

##### **1) Where did you obtain your degree in dietetics and nutrition? Is there anything you'd like to share about your schooling experience and internship program?**

I received my undergraduate (B.A., Home Economics) and graduate (M.S.Ed, Nutrition Education) degrees from Queens College in New York. I also have an A.A.S degree in Food Technology from Farmingdale State University in New York.

##### **2) Can you discuss your career path as a dietitian?**

My formal education and path to becoming an RDN were not traditional. During my last year of high school, I had the opportunity to participate in the work-study program—which placed students on jobs that matched their career goals.

I was placed in a local hospital and worked as a dietary aide. Upon graduation, I attended the New York Institute of Dietetics and, after completion, received a certificate as a dietitian. At that time, a college degree was not required. But, of course, as the field progressed, so did the requirements to work as a dietitian.

While working in the hospital setting, I went back to school, receiving an associate's degree in food technology, a bachelor's degree in home economics, and ultimately a master's degree in nutrition education.

##### **3) How did you become interested in diabetes nutrition?**

I have a family history of type 1 and type 2 diabetes. I've witnessed "the good, bad, and ugly" of diabetes up close and personal.

##### **4) What is your current job position? Can you describe your job duties on a typical day?**

I am the owner of CBR Nutrition Enterprises, a multi-pronged private practice that focuses on providing MNT to people with diabetes. I also provide training and education for laypeople and healthcare professionals and consultation services to industry, physicians, fitness centers, churches, and other corporate and community organizations.

I have no typical days. However, on any given day, I may be preparing for a webinar presentation, writing or pitching an article for publication, creating educational tools/books, participating in an advisory meeting with industry, writing letters of agreement, collaborating with other RDNs, or providing individual virtual consultations.

**5) What do you think the future looks like for RDN's in the diabetes nutrition field?**

The unfortunate reality is there is job security in diabetes. Recent statistics show an increase in the diabetes epidemic, particularly in minority populations. These individuals will need evidence-based nutrition information delivered in a way they can understand and use.

**6) What advice do you have for students and interns interested in pursuing a career in diabetes nutrition?**

- Create and perfect your elevator speech; this may sound rudimentary but remember the cliché—"First impressions are lasting impressions."
- Also, have printed business cards. Now you're ready to network, network, network!
- Volunteer in local dietetic and diabetes associations.
- Attend regional diabetes-related meetings.