

NEWSLETTER

CAMHS Eating Disorder Team



Welcome

August 2019 – 4th edition

Welcome to our quarterly Newsletter. This is a publication for young people and families within our service which focuses on the journey of recovery from eating disorders, and it keeps you up to date with current news and research.

Meet the Team! This month, we'd like to introduce:

— Dr. Catherine Coffey, Consultant Psychiatrist

Hi, I'm Dr Coffey, and I am the consultant psychiatrist in this team. I work closely with the team to ensure the health and safety of our young people from a medical perspective, and I have been here since the eating disorder team was first established. I am responsible for monitoring medication that may be given to young people, as well as blood tests. I have extensive experience in helping young people recover from eating disorders, and I am here to support all of our young people on the road to recovery.



Research: 'Living with a Young Person with an Eating Disorder: The Sibling Experience', by Leanne Harvard

We understand that there can be a huge impact on the entire family when a young person has an eating disorder. However, we wanted to know more about what this experience is like for siblings. To help us do this, twelve siblings of young people receiving treatment for an eating disorder shared their stories with a researcher from the University of Leicester.

The findings suggested that siblings can find the eating disorder really confusing and hard to understand. Siblings can also really worry about their brother/sister and their other family members, including parents, during this time. The eating disorder can often mean that there are lots of changes for siblings to get used to and this can be very challenging. These might include changes to family roles and relationships, the atmosphere at home, and structure and routine. Some siblings also described finding it difficult to share these experiences with their family and friends. Some worried about upsetting people and others worried that their point of view would not be understood.

However, despite the challenges that different siblings might face during the eating disorder, their stories highlighted how strong they can often be. They try their best to stay hopeful and positive and to support themselves and their family members. The siblings involved also came up with some great ideas about how services can support them and the team is looking at how this can be achieved.

Again, a **massive thank you** to all of the siblings who took part! This research has helped us to start developing a 'Sibling Support Pack' to be given to siblings of those with eating disorders. If you are a sibling and would like to give us your story to be shared with other siblings, please contact the eating disorders team.



You will find a feedback form attached to the back of this newsletter
We welcome your comments to ensure that the content is right for you
Please return completed forms to reception—Thank you

Page for Young People: *New Transitions*



Change and new starts can be very exciting times. Moving on to the next chapter in life brings new experiences and learning opportunities that can help you grow as a person, but they can also be challenging and bring with them their own anxieties. There are common difficulties people recovering from Eating Disorders share around these transitions and it is helpful to be mindful and prepared for these so that you can be more able to focus on the positives of whatever the next step in your recovery journey may be. Transitions can be moving from a particular state, stage, place, or subject to another. Some transitions young people find challenging could be; moving from GCSE to A-Level, A-Level to University, from one school to another, moving house as well as others. They are changes, often big changes, that everyone experiences, but not everyone is at ease with.

We would like to share with you some tips and advice published by other specialist Eating Disorder organisations so that you may develop your own methods for coping with transitions. Whilst we will give thought to the challenges you may face, we hope that we can share lots of positives with you too!

AM I READY?



This one is particularly important if you are thinking about university or other further education where you are likely to be away from home. Thinking about if you are ready to take responsibility for your eating can help you to reflect on your current support network. Will your eating disorder behaviours increase without this support? It may be hard to look after yourself whilst away at uni, could you find similar support in the new place you will be living? Most universities have mental health support in house and GP's nearby that you can register with, or do you need to think with your lead professional about accessing specialist support in this new area?

It may be helpful to have open discussion with the people/ a person who is close to you about the transition. Think about the pros and cons, write them down. Sometimes seeing them in front of you can help you to make sense of the factors you need to consider and this may help you to make the best decision for you and your recovery.



AM I 'FIT TO STUDY'?

www.heops.org.uk explains fitness to study guidelines. At the same time, if you think your health will suffer, taking time out to pursue recovery could help you to have a more enjoyable university experience when you do begin.



WHAT DO I NEED TO TAKE WITH ME?

Whether it's moving house or going to uni, you may need to ensure you have your basics for the professionals who support you. That might be letters from your current mental health worker, your care plans or a prescription that will last a couple of weeks so that you have time to register with and get an appointment with your new GP or mental health prescriber.



HOW CAN I HELP MYSELF?

Think about the things that are important to you and help you cope. These can be small things like;

- Letters from loved ones with positive well-wishing messages
- A favourite jumper
- Blanket or soft toy for example that you find comforting
- Tangles and fidget toys to help you manage anxiety on the journey but also when you're navigating your new environment



HOW CAN I KEEP MYSELF SAFE?

A safety plan that you've worked on with family and professionals is useful so that you know what to do when you're not doing well. This could also be shared with your new education provider. Agreeing on a plan of what to do in case you feel distressed with the education providers can help to alleviate some of the anxiety around going there in the first place!

For more information on how to handle the transition to university, follow this link:

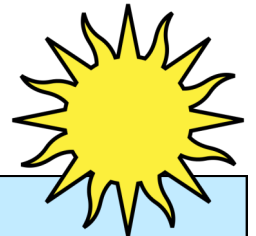
https://freedfromed.co.uk/img/guides/Preparing_For_University-FREED.pdf

BEAT also offers online support groups for those who seek some comfort at tricky times, in addition to providing support for siblings of those with an eating disorder:

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/support-services/online-groups>

Summer Time: *How to Cope*

As summer time rolls around, we know that it can be a difficult time for young people with eating disorders, due to lots of free time, and the hot weather forces us to take our layers of winter clothing off, revealing our bodies more. Here are some tips to engage in body positivity to help you to cope over the summer:



Body positivity talk

It is not uncommon for those suffering from an eating disorder to say negative things about their bodies. Phrases such as 'I'm really fat' and 'I can't wear shorts, my legs are too big' may be heard. Instead of focusing on the things you dislike about yourself, try to think positively about your body, and replace these phrases with more positive ones such as 'I respect and love my body', and 'I will wear my shorts today and be comfortable in this heat'.

Stay social

Keep yourself distracted from anxiety and negative thoughts. Stay in touch with your friends and family and go and do some fun activities! Avoid shutting yourself away for too long, as this can provide opportunities for eating disorder thoughts to rise up and take over, and if they do, don't be afraid to talk to your friends and family about it, or call your eating disorder team, we will be here to continue supporting you over Summer.

Remind yourself that everyone is different

Despite what fashion magazines and 'Love Island' show us, not everyone naturally looks like the people who the media has selectively featured and photo-shopped to look like the 'perfect person'. Viewing this can often lead to body dissatisfaction and low self esteem. Bodies come in many different shapes and sizes which are determined by your genetics, and everybody has the ability to have a healthy body, and your own should be nurtured. Accept your body and appreciate your own features, because they are what makes you unique to yourself!

Poem from a young person

Dear Anorexia

*You crept in slowly, slowly,
and said you were my 'friend',
You made me sick and weaker
until the very end.*

*You made me fear the basic fuel
we need to stay alive,
I don't know how my body even
managed to survive.*

*I was happy and so healthy
until I let you in,
You made up stupid rules,
and said I must be thin.*

*No bread, no milk, no pies
your twisted little lies
No crisps, no sweets, no cake
your words so very fake*

*I've tried so hard to fight you,
the battle still goes on,
But I know for sure that one day,
Anorexia will be gone!*





messages

All young people and parents are given the opportunity to leave a message on our blackboards

We want to share some of these inspirational messages with you...

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"Not to overthink and to think happy"

"A healthy body and healthy mind means you have a better chance of achieving your dreams!"

"If it doesn't matter in 5 years, don't spend more than 5 minutes thinking about it!"

Recovery Resolutions

"Smile more"

"Be happy"

"Accept change and love it"

"If they can't fix it in 10 seconds (acne, weight, hair) don't point it out"

"Stop counting calories (as they don't indicate how much weight food will make you put on!)"

Feedback from you

We really appreciate hearing about your experiences. Here are some positive comments we received, and how we responded to your concerns with improvements...

"We were supported throughout our time and treated with respect and dignity at all times"

"There sometimes feels like too many people at assessments"

"The staff are friendly and professional"

↓ We know that coming to your first assessment can be an anxious time. Your needs are our first priority and we hope to make you as comfortable as possible, whilst also ensuring we can conduct a full and thorough assessment. We will always ask whether you are comfortable to have trainee staff involved and will respect your wishes.

"Everyone at CAMHS have been very supportive of my daughter and are all very friendly"

"It would make me feel more relaxed in sessions if I had a stress toy to play with in my hands"

→ We understand that having therapy can be anxiety provoking. We have now provided fidget toys in each of our therapy rooms that you can hold during therapy to help you to feel calmer.

Useful Resources

Books

Boys get anorexia too—Langley
Hunger for Understanding by Eivors & Nesbitt
Survive FBT—Maria Ganci

YouTube—'Eva Musby' Clips

Websites

www.b-eat.co.uk—National Eating Disorders
<http://youth.anxietybc.com/relaxation>—anxiety management
www.youngminds.org.uk