Support and Empathy for people with Eating Disorders

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

BASIC SELF HELP GUIDE

TO UNDERSTANDING EATING DISORDERS AND SEEKING SUPPORT

NOVEMBER 2014

SEED Eating Disorder Support Services – The Resource Room, 267 Beverley Road, Hull HU5 2S5
Admin (01482) 344084 Helpline (01482) 718130
hello@seedeatingdisorders.org.uk
www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk
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## Web Links:

- [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk)
- [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)
- [www.mengetedstoo.co.uk](http://www.mengetedstoo.co.uk)
  *This site is for men and eating disorders*
- [www.mirror-mirror.org](http://www.mirror-mirror.org)
- [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)
OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to bring together a resource for University Students whereby they are able to have a basic understanding of eating disorders, know what is important about early intervention and the importance of keeping safe. Every effort will be taken to ensure this document is updated annually.

An Eating Disorder
It is about Feelings Not About Food

There are three main types of eating disorder: Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating Disorder.

People with Anorexia
Limit the amount of food they eat by skipping meals and rigidly controlling what they will and will not eat. They evaluate themselves through body weight and shape and this then starts to control them and they can become very ill.

People with Bulimia
Think about food 24/7 and become caught in a cycle of eating large amounts of food (called a binge) and then make themselves sick (called the purge) in order to rid themselves of the food they have eaten.

People with Binge Eating Disorder
Eat large amounts of food in a short period of time and tend to experience weight gain.

People with Different Types of Eating Disorders
There are also other eating disorders that are a mixture of the disorders above.

An Eating Disorder is About Feelings Not Food!
Some eating patterns can be damaging but by developing an eating disorder this becomes a way of coping with feelings that are making someone unhappy or depressed. Food becomes a problem when it is used to help cope with painful situations or feelings or relieving stress. If this is how you deal with food and you are unhappy about it, then you should talk about it with someone you trust. Try not to bottle up your feelings because this is not helpful to you or to other people around you, it won’t make you feel any better and the problem will not go away.

I Don't Have a Problem!
The biggest step forward is when someone accepts that there is a problem but more importantly they must want to make changes.

Often people are not in the right place (in their mind) to want to do this and by changing, often feel they are losing control over the one thing they have control of!

Understanding the long terms consequences of what an eating disorder can do to your body can often help you to take responsibility for your well being and seek the support you need to overcome this illness.

Check out page 5. This may help you to understand
AN INTRODUCTION TO SEED EATING DISORDER SUPPORT SERVICES

Who?
SEED (Support and Empathy for people with Eating Disorders) is a local charity made up of a Patron, Trustees, a Young Ambassador, Volunteers Therapist and an administrator, who give their time to support both sufferers and carers affected by this devastating illness.

What?
“SEED’s mission is to create a facility that provides sufferers and carers alike with confidential independent and non-judgemental advice and support to ensure they are aided by the best possible network of care and support to facilitate recovery”.

How?
SEED provide a number of services including; a monthly support group for both sufferers and carers; a monthly self-help group for sufferers, that concentrates on motivational work and confidence building; a telephone and email buddy scheme that provides support to sufferers who may not want to attend a group or are having difficulties accessing appropriate services; access to a Nutrition and Well-being Advisor; quarterly ‘Walking on Eggshells’ workshops aimed at enhancing support skills for carers; a social club that meets on a monthly basis; and an information and advice service supplied via a telephone helpline and website. In addition, SEED raises awareness within schools, colleges and universities and provides training and awareness for healthcare professionals. They are also working in partnership with Hull University to provide a monthly health and wellbeing drop-in service that covers eating disorders. SEED are currently re-structuring the self-help group and developing workshops to run in addition to present services. SEED are also working on provision for male-only sufferers groups.

Where?
Resource Room: The Resource Room
267 Beverley Road
Hull
HU5 2ST
(01482) 344084

Meetings: Hull & E.Y. MIND
Wellington House
108 Beverley Road
Hull, HU3 1XA

Helpline: (01482) 718130
Fax: (01482) 718130
Email: hello@seedeatingdisorders.org.uk
Website: www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk
NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT

Visit our website www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk on the Home Page navigate to downloads to access nutritional support for Anorexia, Bulimia and Binge Eating and Restoring Healthy Eating for People With Eating Disorders.

Alternatively if you would like to speak with Emma, Nutritional Advisor for SEED, she is available on a Wednesday evening from 6.30pm to 7.30pm on (01482) 561856.

E MAIL BUDDY/TELEPHONE /HOLIDAY BUDDY SCHEME

SEED recognise that many sufferers feel isolated and most vulnerable when they are not receiving treatment or facing lengthy waiting lists, or feel that there is no continuity in services.

The role of the e mail or telephone buddy is to offer emotional support, dispel any feeling of isolation and offer warmth and empathy in an attempt to support sufferers through this difficult time.

This service is offered to people over the age of 16 years of age. A Buddy will have a basic knowledge of counselling but more importantly an excellent understanding of the needs of a person suffering from an eating disorder.

GROUPS

SEED operate 2 groups, one for both Sufferers and Carers and one for Sufferers only. Check out the website - group services and events - to find out when and where the next group is held. We meet every 1st Wednesday in the month and every 2nd Tuesday in the month. SEED develop a fresh approach to structured sessions that will be on a rolling programme with clear topics including, body image work, confidence building, motivation to change to name a few.

DON’T FORGET THE CARERS

An eating disorder has a profound affect on anyone who is part of the family. They need support too, because without it, how are they ever going to understand or support you in the best way possible. Tell them we offer support for them too. We run workshops for carers, not so that they take control but so they too do not feel vulnerable and isolated!

MEN GET EATING DISORDERS TOO!

Although not included in this booklet we do have stand alone information for males with eating disorders.
IDENTIFICATION CHECKLIST

Emotional signs to look for in Bulimia
- Change in character
- Low mood (depressed)
- Low self esteem
- Tearful
- Uncharacteristic outburst
- Inability to concentrate
- Isolation from others
- Fatigue (due to poor sleep patterns)
- Irrational thoughts patterns
- Poor concentration

Emotional signs to look for in Anorexia
- Change in character
- Low mood (depressed)
- Low self esteem
- Overall Sadness
- Tearful
- Uncharacteristic outburst
- Inability to concentrate
- Isolation/antisocial
- Pre-occupation with food & food issues
- Anxiety around food
- Irrational thoughts patterns
- Poor concentration

Physical signs to look for in Bulimia
- May be low in weight but not always
- Poor hair condition
- Poor skin condition
- Eating large amounts of food
- Drinking large amounts of fluid with a meal
- Visiting the toilet straight after or during a meal
- Sores on knuckles
- Sore throat and mouth
- Arced front teeth (acid erosion)
- Swelling in cheeks (moon face)
- Poor sleep patterns
- Chest pains
- Muscle cramps
- Pins and needles in arms or legs

Physical signs to look for in Anorexia
- Noticeable weight loss
- Fatigue
- Constantly feeling cold
- Growth of fine body hair (lanugo)
- Poor hair condition
- Poor skin condition
- Unable to participate in physical activities
- Skipping meals
- Avoidance of eating with others
- Unable to attend school due to poor physical condition
- Your periods have stopped or you have missed 3 consecutive periods
- Slurred speech

If 3 or more of these symptoms have been identified there may be cause for concern and it would be advisable to share your concerns with your GP. Alternatively call the help line for advice and support.

(01482) 718130
www.seedatingdisorders.org.uk

www.seedatingdisorders.org.uk
HOW ANOREXIA AFFECTS THE BODY

HOW BULIMIA AFFECTS YOUR BODY
HOW COMPULSIVE EATING AFFECTS THE BODY

- Brain (stroke from high blood pressure)
- Heart (enlargement, erratic beat, other types of heart disease)
- Liver
- Kidneys (stones, kidney failure from high blood pressure)
- Ovaries (sterility, cancer)
- Windpipe (snoring)
- Breast (cancer)
- Armpits (sweating)
- Gallbladder (gallstones, cancer, pancreas (diabetes))
- Uterus, cervix (cancer)
- Legs (varicose veins)
- Joints - especially hips, knees, ankles (arthritis)
KEEPING SAFE AND WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW!

Do you Suffer from an Eating Disorder or Care for Someone Who Does?
An eating disorder has the highest mortality rate of any other mental health illness with a staggering 20% of sufferers dying each year as a direct result of the illness or from suicide. Don’t suffer in isolation. We are here to help you!

The Importance of Physical Monitoring
It is important that a person’s physical well being is balanced with their emotional needs. Do not think because a person is receiving emotional support or psychotherapy, that all their needs are being met. It is up to the individual to check in with their GP in order that they are monitored physically. The GP should be part of the sufferer’s care.

Medical Risk in Eating Disorders
For a detailed account of medical risks in eating disorders visit:- www.iop.kcl.ac.uk type in ‘medical risk assessment for eating disorders’ and this will navigate you to a paper written by Prof Janet Treasure.

What is a Body Mass Index (BMI)?
A BMI is a height to weight formula to determine categories for weight.

The formula is:-
weight (KG)/height (m) x height (m)
e.g. 1.78m tall, weighing 86kg =
1.78 x 1.78 = 3.17
86 divided by 3.17 = 27.1
BMI = 27.1

Example

| 25 to 18.5 | Healthy Weight |
| 18.5 to 17.5 | Underweight |
| 17.5 to 15.0 | Anorexia Nervosa |
| 15.0 to 13.5 | Severe Anorexia Nervosa |
| 13.5 to 12 | Critical Anorexia Nervosa |
| Less than <12 | Dangerously Underweight/Life Threatening |

Ref: www.iop.kcl.ac.uk (medical risk in eating disorders)

Be Aware!

- A BMI does not take into account the age or gender of an individual
- For a child a Child Centile Growth Chart should be used to calculate a BMI
- Nor should a BMI be a stand alone assessment of medical risk
**Potassium**

Potassium is a mineral that regulates the heart, helps lower our blood pressure and decreases the risk of a stroke.

If you are experiencing, chest pain, tingling in arms, pins and needles, leg cramps, muscle twitching in arms or legs it may be that your potassium levels are low and it is important that you seek medical advice as soon as possible. In extreme cases of severe chest pain go immediately to the nearest A & E Department. Low potassium levels may occur if someone suffers from bulimia or takes large amounts of laxatives.

It may be necessary for the GP to prescribe potassium supplements.

The following foods are high in potassium:

- Bananas
- Tomatoes
- Oranges
- Grapes
- Lentils
- Peaches
- Coffee

**The Importance of Fluids!**

*Water makes up 50-80% of our total body weight*

Without fluids we would not be able to survive any longer than a week. Our organs, tissues and fluids of our body contain water as an essential component. Most adults aim to drink 6—8 cups/glasses of water a day.

Fluids have many functions within the body:- It aids nutrient digestion and absorption. It regulates our body temperature and carries waste products away from cells through urine, faeces and expiration, to name a few.

If we do not drink enough fluid we become dehydrated and begin to feel generally unwell. Dehydration can cause dizziness, headaches, irritability, dry skin, falling blood pressure, decreased urine output, increased heart rate and extreme thirst. Long term dehydration can cause kidney failure. Dehydration may lead to being hospitalised. It is a known fact that once our fluid levels are increased we feel much better in general terms. We are soon able to ‘function’ better and our concentration levels return to normal and headaches will subside.

It may be difficult for a sufferer to re-establish eating patterns but it is important that they take responsibility for their fluid intake in the first instance.

Don’t worry if you feel bloated; this is the body’s normal reaction as fluids are retained in the first instance. Did you know that the body is made up approximately 80% fluid.

Any feelings of bloatedness will soon pass.

**How Does Anorexia Affect Our Brain?**

An eating disorder affects our ability to think rationally.

This is as a result of starvation on the body. It is considered that someone with a BMI of less than 16 would not respond well to therapy (see information on Body Mass Index).

This is the ‘ball park’ figure determined via the psychology services for people in this area.

This does vary in other parts of the country.

**Mental Health Act**

If a person needs re-feeding to save their life this can be done against their will and there are guidelines in place under the Mental Health Act.

The following website explains the Mental Health Act 1983 in more detail.

[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)
POINTS TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR ASSESSMENT

An assessment is not considered a “one off” session but is an ongoing process throughout your care. It may be useful for you to think about some of the points below to prepare for the questions you may be asked.

Share as much as possible with the practitioner as this will help determine the outcome of your treatment.

Below are things that may be explored with you

Your history of when you’re eating problem started and how as it has affected your family life?

When your problems started what was going on for you at that time?

What understanding do you have of what is happening to you at the moment?

In what way does your problem affect you on a day to day basis?

What impact is your problem having on relationships?

How have your emotions been affected by your eating problems?

How has your physical health been affected?

What understanding do you have of the importance of making sure you are medically safe?

What is happening in your life currently and how are your eating behaviours affecting this?

It may be useful to complete a week’s food diary prior to your assessment appointment, detailing your daily food intake and behaviours. This is available for download on the website www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk or by request via hello@seedeatingdisorders.org.uk

By recording your food intake and behaviours you may be able to identify a pattern emerging connecting the two.

What benefits are there to your current behaviours

Continued......
What consequences are there to your current behaviours?

What changes would **you** like to make to your situation?

What changes do you think **others** would like you to make?

It would be natural for you to feel anxious about attending your first appointment; however the practitioner you see is there to support you through the process. You may take a supportive person along with you if you wish.

Everyone has a right to have someone with them for support but you will be given the opportunity to be seen alone for some of the assessment. If you plan to attend your assessment with a supporter or family member then let the practitioner (**the person carrying out the assessment**) know ahead of the assessment so that a suitable venue can be arranged.

Prior to your assessment it may be useful to make reminder notes, or take notes during the assessment, do remember to take a pen and paper with you.

Make a note of the contact person in case you remember additional information after the assessment that you may like to discuss.

If it is necessary for a Joint Assessment to be carried out before a decision about your treatment is made, it will be with your clinician and a clinician from the Eating Disorder Advice and Consultation Team.

**Things to consider asking:**

- What is the waiting time for treatment to begin?
- What happens next?
- What will be involved in your treatment?
- How will your progress be monitored and reviewed?
- What will happen if I deteriorate whilst receiving treatment?
- What happens if I don’t agree with the decision made about my care?

November 2014
### EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samaritans</td>
<td>08457 90 90 90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crisis Resolution Team</td>
<td>01482 335790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull Royal Infirmary</td>
<td>01482 328541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Crisis</td>
<td>01482 329990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saneline (Self Harm)</td>
<td>0845 767 8000</td>
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### ROUTINE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEED Eating Disorder Support Services</td>
<td>01482 718130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource Room</td>
<td>01482 344084</td>
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<tr>
<td>EVOLVE Hull Eating Disorder Support Services</td>
<td>01482 344083</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-eat (Beating Eating Disorders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults Line</td>
<td>0845 634 1414</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Help Line</td>
<td>0845 634 7650</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single Point of Access (East Riding)</td>
<td>01482 617560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma—Nutrition via 561856 Wed 6.30pm to 7.30pm</td>
<td>01482 561856</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For Adult Mental Health Referrals in Hull, please see Flowchart on website.

### WEBSITES

- www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk
- www.b-eat.co.uk
- www.rapecrisis.org.uk
- www.mindhey.co.uk
- www.sane.org.uk

### E MAILS

- hello@seedeatingdisorders.org.uk
- marg@seedeatingdisorders.co.uk
- Adults: help@b-eat.co.uk
- Youth: FYP@b-eat.co.uk

Footnote: Visit www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk for comprehensive information about eating disorders and for services that we offer.