



Warm words and support for those with eating challenges

Myths/Truths

Encouragement and Support

Written by those who have lived experience

Warm Words

Hello, thanks for picking up this leaflet.

Are you currently facing challenges surrounding eating, your relationship with yourself and your body?

This leaflet has been put together by those who have experienced different eating challenges and recovered. We want you to know you are not alone and support is available.

Words of Encouragement

- You matter and your feelings are valid
- You are not the eating disorder, you are still yourself
- You are loved and will always be loved
- You have top-notch qualities, don't forget about them
- Recovery is possible and there is life after an eating disorder
- Stay connected with your support network
- Reach out. You are worthy of help
- Talk to yourself as you would to someone you love
- There are times of joy beyond the eating disorder
- Each day is a new day
- Small steps are still progress
- Be proud of yourself for how far you have come

Physical health ↔ mental health

It is a common misconception that eating disorders are about physical looks. Whilst there are physical aspects such as weight loss or gain, bingeing and vomiting, over or under eating, or over exercising, eating disorders are a mental health illness affecting thoughts and feelings. Physical and mental health are closely linked, and it is important to look after both.

What Might Happen if You Ask for Help?

We know that speaking about this topic with healthcare professionals might seem overwhelming. We want to share some pointers as to what might happen at your appointments.

Trust yourself at the GP surgery. You can have a say in your appointment. If your GP suggests you're fine and you know you are not, don't take no for an answer, you can ask to see another doctor. It is also ok to take someone with you to support you.

Professionals will want to check your health. They need to get a clear understanding about your physical wellbeing to view you in a holistic way (all aspects of your whole self). Some may take blood tests, ECG's, (recording of your heart activity) blood pressure, and weigh you. You can ask for this to not be shared with you if you choose, and you don't have to look while they do these tests.

You may be referred to other services and specialists, and you may go on waiting lists. This may mean you could come across different professionals and specialists in your journey such as counsellors or therapists, specialist eating disorder staff, mental health staff, social workers, health care assistants, nurses or psychologists/psychiatrists.

Try not to be put off by professionals if they do not understand or if your experience isn't as positive as you had hoped. Sometimes the advice you get might not always work for you. Professionals do not always get it right first time. Please don't let any of this put you off asking for other support.

Myths & Truths

Myth: You have to be underweight to have an eating disorder

Truth: Eating disorders are about more than food and weight. You can have an eating disorder at any weight

Myth: Eating disorders are a choice

Truth: Eating disorders are an illness. You can recover

Myth: Eating disorders only affect young girls

Truth: There is no standard eating disorder. It can happen to anybody of any age, gender identity, culture and ability. BEAT say that in the UK there are around 1.25 million people who have an eating disorder

Myth: Something or someone is to blame

Truth: Eating disorders happen for a number of reasons and are nobody's fault

Myth: I will be like this forever.

Truth: It may be in your life for now, however recovery is possible

How to Start a Conversation

Before you talk to someone about your struggles, it can be helpful to write down what you want to say.

Who to talk to

Someone you can trust: maybe a family member or friend. A work colleague, teacher, a school, college or university nurse, healthcare professionals such as your GP, support helplines.

What to say

You don't have to be specific, just let them know you are finding things difficult. This could include some of your thoughts and feelings.

It's okay to not have the answers to questions you may be asked, you may not understand the situation yourself.

You can ask them to come to an appointment with you for support.

Discuss with them how they can support you day to day.

Helpful things to know

It can be hard to open up.

People respond to things in different ways. If you don't get the reaction you were expecting it doesn't mean no one will understand. You are worthy of help whatever the response. If the response isn't what you hoped you would hear, don't give up, they may just not be the right person at the moment. Try and talk to someone else that you trust.

It may feel unsettling having difficult conversations about this but it is a positive step forward. Be kind to yourself. It's a brave thing to do and shows your strength. This could be the first step to your recovery.

Looking After Your Wellbeing

Are things getting too much?

Here are a few things that might help you:

Healthy distractions – puzzles, games, reading a book, listening to some music, meditation, taking a bath, yoga, Pilates, tai-chi

Is there someone you can talk to? Have a catch up with a friend or family member. Contact someone you trust, it doesn't have to be a phone call, and you can talk about anything



Engage in things that make or made you happy

Find what works for you — gratitude, appreciating the little things



Get some fresh air. Take in your surroundings—connect with nature

Get creative — journal, scrapbook, write down your reasons to recover, paint, draw, crochet, or knit



Try to step back and reflect on what is going on for you right now. You might find it helpful to write this down

Support in Your Area

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT) Eating disorder services—

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Foundation Trust run the Eating Disorder Service locally.

Most people will be seen as outpatients, with a small number requiring a hospital inpatient stay. To access support for an eating disorder, please visit your GP.



Personalised Eating Disorder Support—

PEDS—(Self-Refer) - This charity offers a free assessment with signposting and advice to both you and your families / carers if appropriate. Thereafter, they are able to offer individual / family sessions for a fee. PEDS

offer individual sessions which are tailored to meet the unique needs of each person. They also provide family sessions which include practical help, education and support. They can also offer outreach within the family home if appropriate.



CPSL MIND—CPSL Mind is a mental health charity which promotes positive wellbeing across our communities and supports people

on their road to recovery from a wide range of mental health challenges. They offer online support, community initiatives to connect people, counselling, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, peer support groups, Perinatal services and opportunities to get involved with training, volunteering, campaigning and fundraising.



Centre 33— exists to help every young person in Cambridgeshire fulfil their potential and overcome problems through a range of free and confidential services - including housing, sexual health, family problems, and bullying.



*subject to change



Resources

Books: Authors of lived experience and carer books: Hope Virgo, Emma scrivener, Jenny Langley and Tina McGuff. Mainly carer books: Janet Treasure books

[BEAT have suggested books](#)

Apps: [Headspace](#), [Rise up + Recover](#), [Recovery Record](#), [Calm](#), [Reasons2](#), [Dare](#), plus [more](#)

Websites: [Beat](#) - support groups, message board etc

[Keep Your Head](#)

[The Blurt Foundation](#)

[Mind](#)

[How Are You Peterborough](#)

[Male Voice ED](#)

Phone lines: [Lifeline](#) 11am-11pm every day 0808 808 2121.

[Samaritans](#)- 24hours a day, 365 days a year. Free line 116 123

[NHS First Response Service](#). In a mental health crisis? Call NHS 111 option 2

Beat (Adults): Call for eating disorder support - 0808 801 0677

Beat (Student Line): 0808 801 0811

Beat (Under 18's): 0808 801 0711

Your GP surgery

If the person you speak to about this needs support there is a carers and loved ones leaflet available [here](#).

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