

## Eating Disorders Support Groups

Supporting people and their families to understand, live with and overcome an eating disorder.

### Who are they for?

The support groups provide a safe place for people and their families to receive additional support. It gives the opportunity to share experiences and concerns with others who understand what living with an eating disorder is like.

### Who will be there?

Clinicians from the Eating Disorders Service are on hand to help and offer advice. They will answer any questions and provide helpful information about topics as they arise.

### What will happen?

Everyone who attends the group will be asked to share their name and why they have come. Time will then be spent in small groups of people with the eating disorder together and relatives in another group, or in mixed groups.

The ground rules including confidentiality are explained and people are encouraged to share their experiences with each other, ensuring that everyone gets the chance to speak if they want to. Sometimes a theme or topic will be discussed.

### Who can attend?

Anyone with an eating disorder or who is concerned about a relative or friend with an eating disorder can attend the support groups.

### When and where do we meet?

We meet at The Brownhill Centre, 121 Swindon Road, Cheltenham, GL51 9EZ

**Adolescents and carers support group** - alternate Thursdays 7.30pm-9.00pm

**Adults and carers support group** - alternate Tuesdays 7.30pm-9.00pm

To join either of the groups and for meeting dates please telephone 01242 634 242.



## Eating Disorders

Information about services available in Gloucestershire

## **Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa and Atypical Eating Disorders affect anyone.**

Men, children, older women and up to 6% of young women can have an eating disorder. If you have an eating disorder you become over concerned with body shape and weight, but have underlying problems of very low self esteem and difficulties relating with people.

You rarely see yourself as ill and try to avoid discovery of your secret behaviour. Weight loss is seen as the only way to feel better and 'in control' of life, so people with an eating disorder generally don't seek help.

Eating disorders cause physical, psychological and social suffering and can also have a damaging effect on the lives of carers, who are often the first to identify the problem. Eating disorders usually last several years and don't tend to go away without help.

This leaflet offers guidance on how to get help for an eating disorder in Gloucestershire.

### **What is an eating disorder?**

An eating disorder means you engage in a variety of behaviours with the aim of controlling your weight, shape or eating.

You will attempt to follow a strict diet, but whether you succeed will determine the amount of weight you lose. You may also exercise excessively, binge eat, vomit or misuse laxatives.

You will judge yourself almost exclusively in terms of your shape, weight and control over eating, becoming obsessed with trying to become slimmer, but constantly feeling fat.

### **What are the effects of an eating disorder?**

- The physical consequences can affect almost every part of the body and are potentially fatal if there is severe weight loss, vomiting or laxative abuse
- The psychological consequences often include depression, anxiety, obsessional behaviour, drug abuse or self harm
- Social effects can include erratic behaviour, social withdrawal, debt, shoplifting and damage to relationships - including feeding and growth problems in the children of mothers with an eating disorder

### **What help is available in Gloucestershire?**

- Information and advice from our telephone helpline 01242 634242
- Initial assessment and help from your GP
- Attendance at a fortnightly support group for people with an eating disorder and their carers. Young people and carers meet on Thursdays and adults and carers meet on Tuesdays both at 7.30pm-9.00pm at the Brownhill Centre, 121 Swindon Rd, Cheltenham, GL51 9EZ
- Help from 2gether NHS Foundation Trust, including assessment and treatment by the Eating Disorders Service
- Intensive treatment at home as an alternative to hospital admission for children and adolescents
- Day treatment support with eating and group therapy, five days per week for people with severe difficulties aged 16+
- Hospital admission in extreme circumstances

### **What else can you do to help yourself?**

Reading self help information could really help you. Research shows that some people recover simply by following written advice.

To learn more about self help information please visit our website [www.2gether.nhs.uk/eating-disorders](http://www.2gether.nhs.uk/eating-disorders)



For further information or advice please telephone our Eating Disorders Service  
**01242 634242**