

MINDFUL MOMENTS

FEBRUARY: EATING DISORDERS

Introduction

There are many types of eating disorders, the most common being bulimia, anorexia and binge eating but inevitably they are all medical diagnosis based on your eating patterns.

Eating disorders are not only categorised by the number on the scales and physical appearance but also thoughts feeling and behaviours.



How can an eating disorder affect you?

Eating disorders are not just about food, they are in fact driven by attempts to deal with underlying emotional and stress-related issues.

With certain eating disorders the body no longer receives essential nutrients required to function and as a result, it begins to slow down all its processes to conserve energy and can have serious impacts on our physical and mental health.

They often co-exist with other mental health issues, in particular anxiety, depression, OCD, personality disorders or substance misuse.

Eating disorders may make you feel anxious and depressed, tired a lot of the time, ashamed or guilty or you may feel scared that others will find out.

How can I help others?

It is important to not force change, but instead offer support and make them aware that effective treatment is available. Be patient and understand the person is not trying to be difficult but they may not be ready to change or let others know. Reassure them they are deserving of your care and concern and that you want them to be happy. Discuss options for professional help and encourage other support.

Support Available

- Your GP- can help diagnose and offer support.
- [BEAT](#) – the UK's leading eating disorder charity. Provides helplines, online chats, and email services.
- [POD](#) (Peer-support Online Development) - e-learning platform provides people supporting someone with an eating disorder with a space to learn.
- [Mind](#) – provides guidance for individuals, friends, and family.

Self-care tips to help live or recover from an eating disorder:

1. Seek support - talk to your GP, people you trust and look for online or face-to-face peer groups.
2. Learn how to manage relapses – most people have setbacks in their recovery. It is a good idea to be aware of situations and warning signs that may lead to these.
3. Change unhealthy routines – try and distract yourself by doing something fun like a hobby after eating.
4. Be careful online – comparing your body to others especially on social media can trigger some problematic thoughts.