

# MAWSON HOUSE

## SPRING NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2022



**HOW THE TEAM  
SUPPORTED ED  
AWARENESS WEEK**

**HOW TO  
MANAGE EXAM  
PRESSURE**

**RAISING  
AWARENESS  
OF ASD**

**HONORING  
RELIGIOUS  
FESTIVALS SAFELY**

# TEAM UPDATES



## UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT...



**Name:** Dr Laura Chance-Lawton

**Role:** Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Team Lead

**Likes:** Good coffee, walks in the countryside, visiting anywhere new (ideally with some sunshine), occasional runs/yoga, time with friends and family

**Dislikes:** Littering!, being late for things (although I often am), getting up early, birds and heights

**Favourite animal:** Cats (plus my own dog 😊)

**Why did you want to come into this role?** I've had the pleasure of working in CAMHS since qualifying and have worked within LPT for nearly 4 years. It's a privilege to work with young people and their families alongside an incredibly passionate and dedicated group of staff. I've seen the amazing transformation and work the trust has achieved in the past few years and remain really dedicated to continue to be part of this success. I have always been interested in work related to eating disorders from my inpatient CAMHS experiences and could not turn down this opportunity to be part of the leadership team within CAMHS EDT. It's an absolute privilege to be part of young people's recovery journey and I am proud to be part of a team that instils so much hope and compassion in every aspect of what we do.

**What is your favourite part of your job?** Working with an incredibly passionate and dedicated multi-disciplinary team! Despite what has been a difficult 18 months for lots of us in many ways, the team have remained 100% dedicated to improving the outcomes for young people and families. I love being able to hear the positive feedback we receive from our families and see the huge impact they make on the lives of so many.

**How do you unwind and relax outside of work?** Dog walks and being outside (away from a screen!), cooking and the occasional boxset.

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## WHAT'S NEW IN OUR TEAM?

Thanks to the Raising Health and Carlton Hayes Charity funded resources we are now the proud owners of a wide range of books, resources and activities that can be used in sessions!

From this we have also opened the Mawson House Library. Staff, young people and families are more than welcome to borrow from the library.

Please ask a member of staff for more information or the process of borrowing from the library.



# EATING DISORDER AWARENESS WEEK

(28/02/2022 - 04/03/2022)

## WHAT IS IT?

Eating Disorder Awareness Week (EDAW) is an annual event that aims to raise knowledge around eating disorders. For EDAW this year, BEAT, eating disorder charity, aimed to raise awareness of the lack of training around eating disorders for medical students, and aimed to campaign to support General Practitioners (GPs) to recognise eating disorders.

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The GP is usually the first point of contact when seeking support for illnesses, including eating disorders. As a result, it is really important that GPs are able to confidently recognise the early warning signs and support patients with suspected eating disorders.

Our GPs have and handle their many responsibilities incredibly well and we hear many stories from our young people about how great their GP is. However, this isn't always everyone's experience and it has been highlighted that the average amount of training that GPs are given around eating disorders is **less than two hours** during their entire medical degree. Furthermore, a fifth of UK medical schools do not provide training on eating disorders at all.

*For more information we would recommend watching Beat's short YouTube video: Worth More Than 2 hours - Eating Disorder Awareness Week 2022 Campaign Video.*

**53%**

said they'd have sought help sooner if they had more confidence in their GP

**1 in 5**

UK medical schools don't provide any training at all.

**58%**

of patients thought their GP didn't understand eating disorders

On average, GPs get **less than 2 hours** training on eating disorders - in their entire medical degree.





# HOW MAWSON HOUSE PARTICIPATED IN EDAW

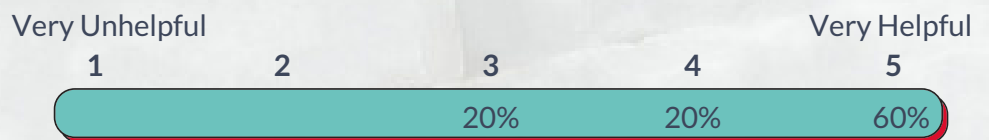
## DROP IN SESSIONS FOR LPT PROFESSIONALS

In response to this, our team hosted drop in sessions for NHS professionals to explore how to support individuals with suspected or diagnosed eating disorders. This included hearing from our Consultant Psychiatrist around addressing common misconceptions, general information ( including prognosis, prevalence and aetiology ), exploring the different types of eating disorders and their presentations and then how to detect, appropriately monitor and then refer on people suspected of having an eating disorder. This was followed by opportunities to ask questions and share views.

Of the eighteen professionals who attended. Five agreed to complete a survey following the session. 60% of the respondents rated the event very helpful, in relation to better understanding eating disorders and how to respond if they suspected a patient in their care had one. Please see below and left for responses and ratings from the survey:

'Excellent video presentation and excellent discussion from all involved, informative, supportive and detailed'

[The event] 'Helped to raise the issues, and highlighted what to look out for'



## SPREADING AWARENESS ON YOUTUBE

For EDAW, our team also posted four videos targeted towards our local GPs. These explored debunking common eating disorder myths, the different types of eating disorders, eating disorders from a GP perspective and general information around eating disorders. By the Monday following EDAW (07/03/2022) these videos had a combined total of **293 YouTube views** and they have since continued to rise.

## INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS

Alongside the team's efforts, some of our staff members also did their own fundraising towards the cause, whilst others signed and shared the Beat campaigns around this need for more medical training around eating disorders.

# TIPS FOR COPING DURING THE EXAM PERIOD

We know that exam season can be a stressful time for the young people we support, and we are aware that there may be some extra pressures stemming from the effects of lockdown. Whilst we understand that achieving at school can be a priority, it is important to recognise that studying and revising should never be to the detriment to your own mental well-being, therefore it may be helpful to plan and think about how you can look after yourself during this time.

We have collected some information regarding coping with exam stress, we have tried to keep it short to ensure that it is not just more information for you to process! Please also see the exercises below for a welcome distraction/ enjoyable activity!

## PRIORITISE SELF CARE

Make sure you prioritise time for self-care and enjoyment. Research shows that self-care is not a luxury, but essential for our survival. When we are stressed, our fight/flight system will be activated, and we can quickly feel overwhelmed. Engaging in good self-care can help us to tolerate the more difficult parts of life and help us manage our stress responses.

Practicing self care can help us manage and be more tolerant towards our emotions. Furthermore, during exam periods young people can be more likely to prioritise meeting their academic goals and as result, can neglect their own needs. Everyone's self-care strategies will be different, and it is important to find what works for you, we have offered some ideas (see below).



Play with a pet

Spend time with loved ones

Say three kind things to start of the day

Watch the clouds go by

Read a book

Colouring

put yourself first

Be with nature

take a step back

watch a film you love

# MANAGING EXAM PRESSURE

## REFOCUS YOUR ATTENTION AWAY FROM EXAMS

We understand that exams can take up a lot of our young peoples attention, and we recognise why this may be. However, it is important to take time away from exams / prep and to attend to your other values.

*Optional task:* try to think about all the things you value in life that doesn't depend on your academic ability. Look at our values list and highlight what your top 5 values are! It might be helpful to write these all down and stick them somewhere that you are likely to see them.

Authenticity	Balance	Honesty / Openness	Loyalty	Thoughtful	Adaptable
Justice	Growth	Family orientated	Adventurous	Boldness	Motivated
Kindness	Respect	Wisdom	Compassion	Dependable	Faith / religion
Trustworthy	Curiosity	Creative	Funny	Animal lover	Supportive

Exams are important but remember your grade does not define you as a person! Some people may naturally be more academic, whilst some of us thrive doing practical or creative tasks. You bring so many other qualities and values to the world that are important.

## DISTRACTION

If you are becoming overwhelmed, it will be unhelpful to continue placing pressure on yourself. Once our fight/flight is activated it is difficult to focus our attention on the task at hand, so it may be important to either self-soothe or distract yourself with something you enjoy.

Consider the following exercises/riddles for a welcomed distraction:

What has 13 hearts, but no lungs or a stomach?

Can you list 10 countries/capital cities names beginning with A.

Pretend you are interviewing someone you look up to in the media. What 5 questions you would ask them?

# PLANNING FOR EXAMS

Planning may seem obvious and is probably the tip which is suggested most frequently. However, we recognise that this may be harder than it sounds and sometimes it can be a big task.

Consider the following points to think about how you can make your revision and studying work for you. If you aren't sure, consider asking those around you, including parents and teachers. This goes without saying, but make sure you are being supported to have regular breaks and that you are hydrated and eating well, your brain will need that fuel now more than ever!

**During revision sessions, how do you like your environment to be like (for example, are you someone that prefers sitting in a quiet room or do you like listening to music?)?**

*TOP TIP: research shows that being near natural light is good for our well-being*

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**How do you learn best? What is your learning style? Is it more visual such as through watching videos, auditory by hearing back notes or kinaesthetic by doing such as by making notes or practising?**

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**How will you distract yourself if you become stressed?**

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**How will you / others know when it is time for a break?**

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**What support will you need, from yourself and others?**

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# SUPPORTING YOUR LOVED ONE DURING THE EXAM PERIOD

Exams are always a stressful time and it feels that the run up to GCSE's and AS /A Levels this summer could be trickier than ever given the disruption and uncertainties created by the pandemic over the last two years. This is yet another layer of challenge families must face when coping with the intense pressures and overwhelm that come with eating disorders.

Below are some suggestions parents and carers may find helpful to keep worry, anxiety and stress at a manageable level and make the next few months feel calmer and more in control for everyone.

## Offer compassion

- Be interested in your loved one's education without putting them under unnecessary pressure
- Remind them you are proud of them and give credit no matter what happens
- Offer support by asking what would be helpful to them
- Be available and keep your diary as clear as possible so your loved one can share their worries and concerns
- Anticipate an increase in mood swings and outbursts and plan how you will react to these with patience and calmness



## Create a timetable

- Plan a revision timetable together - include breaks and down time so there is a good balance of studying and relaxing. Set short-term and long-term goals with rewards built in
- Break revision down into manageable chunks
- Pin the timetable in a visible place and have a copy to refer to yourself
- Focus on subjects covered rather than hours sat at a desk
- Help with managing their time. This includes study time, mealtimes, snacks and down time





# SUPPORTING YOUR LOVED ONE DURING THE EXAM PERIOD

## Promote self-care and keep routine

- Continue to support meal times and snacks according to dietary needs
- Encourage fresh air and getting out in nature
- Sensible amounts of physical activity can be helpful but that depends what stage of recovery your loved one is at
- Remind your loved one to talk about their worries to you, another family member, a friend or teacher
- Dedicate a quiet space where your loved one can work undisturbed
- Encourage your loved one to stay connected with friends and family to avoid becoming isolated
- Make plans together post exams to ensure there is still routine and structure and to avoid feeling out of control over the long summer holidays. This could be a holiday, work, day trips or taking up a new hobby

Remember to look after yourself! By doing so you will be better able to support your loved one. You can't pour from an empty cup!



## Consider relaxation and anxiety management skills

- Explore helpful relaxation techniques and remind your loved one to use techniques they may already be familiar with. Visualisation, breathing technique and muscle relaxation are all great ways to manage anxiety. There are lots of resources online
- Ensure your loved one builds in some wind down time before going to bed
- Do your best to encourage good sleep routines. Helpful information can be found at <https://www.sleepstation.org.uk/>



Useful tips for young people to cope with exams and practical activities can be found on pages 5 and 6

# LET'S TALK ABOUT AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS...

## WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS WEEK

World Autism Awareness Week is an annual event to raise awareness, funding, and support for people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and all the services who support them. This year, Autism Awareness Week was held between the 28th of March and the 3rd of April.

## WHAT IS ASD?

ASD is a neurodevelopmental disorder affecting between 1% to 2% of all people, more recently, it has been suggested that 1 in 44 children has been diagnosed with ASD (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). Therefore, it is likely that you know someone who has been diagnosed with ASD, or perhaps even yourself. The Peace Pathway (2022) further indicates that around 35% of people who experience an eating disorder meet the criteria for an ASD diagnosis.

ASD is linked to finding social situations and communication with others tricky alongside the presence of restricted and repetitive behaviours such as a desire for routine and dislike of change. However, Autism is a spectrum disorder, meaning that people will be affected in different ways and to varying levels of severity, so each person's experience will be different.

## HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

### 1. EXPLORE ASD RELATED RESOURCES

The key goal of Autism Awareness week is to raise people's understanding of ASD. With the high rates of ASD within Eating Disorder populations, it is perhaps unsurprising that this is a goal our team also promote! We have included some resources (right) that can act as a first step to increasing your own awareness. From these you may become more able to recognise and correct myths around ASD, understand the experiences of someone with ASD and raise awareness in other people.

#### Books

- Odd Girl Out by Laura James

#### YouTube:

- Amazing things Happen from the National Autistic Society
- Tony Attwood website, blog and YouTube videos.

#### Websites:

- The National Autistic Society
- The Peace Pathway
- The Girl with the Curly Hair Project

# OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED...

## 2. LEARN FROM FIRST HAND EXPERIENCES

Learning from other people's lived experiences is key, and you might notice that many of the resources on page 10, are based around first-hand experiences of ASD. Alternatively, you may want to look towards people already in the public eye...

### **Christine McGuiness, Model and TV personality**

"To actually be told that I am autistic just made everything fall into place. I realised that basically what I'd been doing my whole life was acting. It's exhausting trying to juggle everything. I was extremely emotional, but relieved."



### **Chris Packham, Nature photographer, TV presenter and author**

"If there were a cure for Asperger's, I don't know if I'd want it. Humanity has prospered because of people with autistic traits. Without them, we wouldn't have put man on the Moon or be running software programs. If we wiped out all the autistic people on the planet, I don't know how much longer the human race would last".



### **Wentworth Miller, Actor and screenwriter**

"This isn't something I'd change... immediately being autistic is central to who I am, To everything I've achieved/articulated"



### **Dan Aykroyd, Actor, comedian and writer.**

"I also have Asperger's but I can manage it... One of my symptoms included my obsession with ghosts and law enforcement... That's when the idea of my film Ghostbusters was born."



### **Temple Grandin, Scientist and Autism spokesperson**

"If I could snap my fingers and be non-autistic, I would not. Autism is part of what I am."

There are many more famous people with a diagnosis of ASD and have shared their experiences, both in interviews and documentaries, should you wish to explore further.

**The National Autistic Society website also has some brilliant ideas on how you can fundraise towards the cause, if that is something you would like to do!**



# CELEBRATING RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS SAFELY

## SPRING, WHAT'S OCCURRING?

Alongside National Eating Disorder Week and Autism Awareness Week, spring also contains some major religious events. For example, Ramadan and Lent. Both are extremely significant religious festivals to their respective faiths, however unfortunately these events can also be very difficult to navigate for people with an eating disorder.

### WHAT IS RAMADAN?

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar; whereby Muslim people will observe a month-long fast and abstinence from things considered to be “impure for the mind and body”. Those partaking in Ramadan strive to abstain from food and drink between the hours of sunrise (Fajr) and sunset, so they can instead focus on prayer and connecting more deeply with Allah. Fasting allows the practising individual to greater emphasise with those around the world who have to endure pain, suffering, famine and poverty.



### WHAT IS LENT?

Lent is a traditional Christian practise intended to be a period of deep self-reflection and solemnity where Christians admit their spiritual shortcomings and strive to live a godlier life henceforth. Lent lasts for six weeks leading up to Easter. It lasts this long to emulate the 40 days Christians believe Jesus spent reflecting on his life and future in the desert. Furthermore, Christians typically “give up” something during these six weeks, such as food, social media or drinking alcohol. This is meant to replicate Jesus’s sacrifice, and to test self-discipline.



### HOW CAN EATING DISORDERS COMPLICATE THESE PRACTISES

These holidays require a degree of restriction, typically dietary restriction which of course is detrimental to people with eating disorders, as that would directly contradict their recovery. Even if an individual is no longer in the thick of their eating disorder, these restrictive practises can stir old cognitions and trigger past patterns of harmful behaviour. Additionally, these events can mask disordered eating as spiritual practise, and thus some participants could become significantly more unwell during the course of them.

On the contrary however, if a person decides to not participate in Ramadan or Lent as they find it harmful that can also be difficult for them. They may feel as if they are compromising their spirituality and their commitment to Allah or God. They may also feel adrift from their community, friends and family who are participating. Either way, this is undoubtedly a challenging situation to navigate. While some people will be explicitly medically advised not to fast, some people may find them selves left to make their own decision.

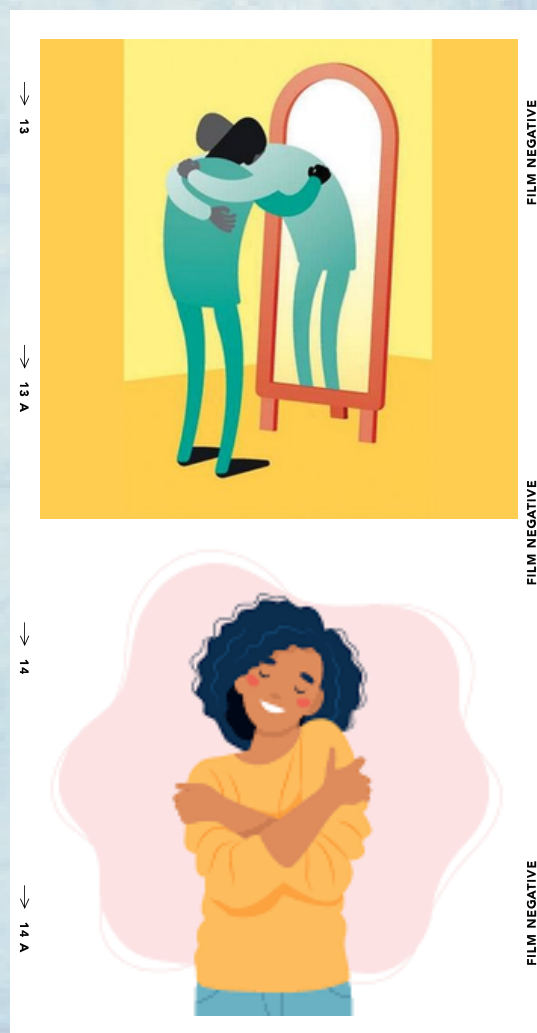
# CELEBRATING RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS SAFELY

## HOW MIGHT WE MANEUVER AROUND POSSIBLE CONFLICTS AND STRUGGLES?

Both Islam's and Christianity's teachings specifically stipulate that if a person unwell, mentally or physically they should not participate in Ramadan or Lent. In both religions a person's good health always takes precedent over any spiritual tradition. If you are too unwell to participate and you thus do not, that is perfect religious practise.

Remind yourself that at their core these practises are about helping others and self-reflection, not nutritional abstinence. There are alternate ways to observe Lent and Ramadan. For example, you could participate in Ramadan by praying more, giving more to charity (if that is possible for you), being more mindful and reflecting on how to interact with others and also practising self-compassion and being more lenient with yourself. If you observe Lent, you look to do this by again praying more, deeply reflecting on yourself and if you are living as the Bible intends and perhaps look to give up something entirely unrelated to food such as social media. Not fasting, and not giving up food do not make you any less of a Muslim or any less of a Christian. These equivalent ways of participating are equally valid.

Finally consider this question: if you were to fast or give up a type of food who would that be for? Would you be doing it for God, for Allah or would you be doing it for the eating disorder? This can be a difficult question to answer, as it can be hard to differentiate between your intentions. Perhaps it isn't even as simple as doing it for A or B, perhaps both are motivating factors and it is difficult to untangle their threads. If the answer is not entirely and absolutely your God, then contemplate not participating, and this could be triggering for you and ED cognitions could well rear their ugly head.





# SOCIAL MEDIA: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE EDITIED



## WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA AND WHO USES IT?

Social media is platform used by essentially every subsection of society. It's a staple in modern culture and is utilised by approximately 3.6 billion of people world-wide. Social media's technical definition is an interactive digital channel that facilitates communication, content sharing and creation, but it's reality far exceeds that.

Put simply social media can be whatever you want it to be.

## IS SOCIAL MEDIA A HELP OR HINDERENCE?

You guys already know the answer...a bit of both.

Social media can be a haven. It can help people build relationships, spread news, help people find communities, foster empathy, and compassion – and even just let people have a bit of fun. Many charities have social media accounts that spread positivity and campaigns, even we have a twitter and Instagram!

But at the same time social media can wreak havoc. It can lead to cyber bullying, cultivate unrealistic expectations, leave its users addicted, promote unhealthy sleep patterns, and negatively affect people's mental health.

But this of course, leave us in a bit of a conundrum. Oh, what to do when something is so incredibly good but also so simultaneously incredibly bad?

The answer we believe, is to use it with vigilance and caution. We have outlined our four top tips to make social media work for you.





# SOCIAL MEDIA: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE EDITIED

## STEP ONE

### **Be scrupulous about what creators and content you follow!**

Policing your own social media isn't the most glamorous of pastimes, but it can be one of the most important. The average Brit spends just shy of two hours a day on social media, so it's vital to ensure that time is spent on content that isn't going to harm you. Those you surround yourself with online can have just as much influence and impact on you as your real-life friends and family. So don't feel guilty or unsure about unfollowing or blocking harmful content that doesn't make you happy. Social media is supposed to add to your life not actively make it worse. Hence if it's doing so, perhaps reevaluate who you are engaging with on there and amend this as needs be.

## STEP TWO

### **Remind yourself-what is the point?**

What is it you hope to achieve by spending time on it?

Do you just want to send your mates TikTok's? Do you want to spend your time meticulously curating a holiday-inspo board on Pinterest?

Are you looking for inspiration and motivation on your journey to recovery? All of these are completely valid motivations – in fact anything that makes you happy is. However, it is easy for good intentions to twist and contort into anything but. We encourage users to take the time to reflect on what their intentions for social media are and if they are being fulfilled.

Are you sending your friends TikTok's or are you spending hours scrolling through accounts of people you wished you looked like, living lives you wished you had? Are you making a Pinterest board dreaming up your gap year-round South America, or are you body-checking against IG models? Are you lapping up support and encouragement towards your recovery or do you feel your self being sucked into a competition of suffering?

Consider what you want from social media, and what social media is actually giving you. If these do not align adjust how you are using these platforms in accordance. Some ways to achieve this could be blocking, or unfollowing accounts that make you feel negative and trying to remind yourself of what you want and actively pursuing that.



# SOCIAL MEDIA: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE EDITIED

## STEP THREE



Social media addiction perhaps seems a dramatic term for spending a bit too much time on Instagram. But it is a common phenomenon. Research indicates the optimum amount of time spent on social media is 30 minutes a day. A significantly shorter period than the estimated 110 minutes spent per day by Britton's. Hence, perhaps to reduce the negative mental health implications from social media use it would be wise to engage less.

Now, we are not recommending going cold turkey. The goal is not total abstinence, but moderated use. It is fine to engage with social media, but it is helpful to have strategies to set limits if you feel your use is spiralling.

Things you could try if you want to reduce your usage are... Firstly, disable or limit notifications. It's easy to spend your time mindlessly scrolling through social media, but by reducing or removing notifications you are less likely to be enticed by them.



Secondly consider a social media cleanse. A 2019 study found that students who abstained from social media for 5 days experienced a "sense of clarity" and returned to it more able to regulate their time. This cleanse could be for days, hours, weeks – whatever you feel is personally helpful. This break can help people reset and return to social media less dependent.

Another idea is to set time aside for other hobbies. The thinking behind this is that if you have time set aside for things you enjoy you will have less time to use social media. If you do not have any hobbies, consider trying something new – even this act of trying to find a pastime is keeping you from social media.



Lastly use the "Usage Tracker Function" on your phone. This function will show you how much time you have spent on your apps per day. From this consider using the same function to set yourself time limits on apps.

# SOCIAL MEDIA: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE EDITIED

## STEP FOUR

Consider the realism of social media (spoiler alert: it's not much!)

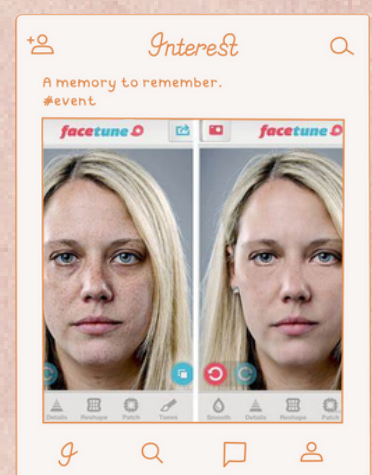
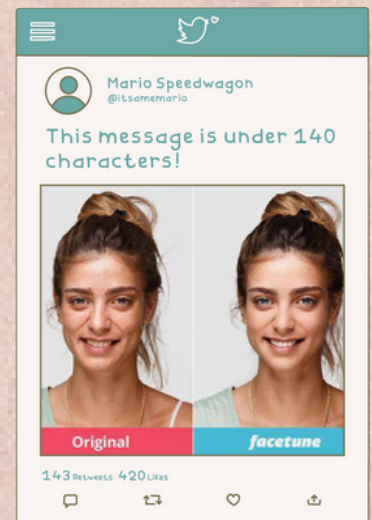
Studies show that 88% of women compare themselves to images they see on social media, with over half reporting this comparison is unfavourable.

Social media rewards conventionally attractive people who conform to white Eurocentric beauty standards, by affording them the most likes and attention. This positive validation can reinforce the cultural illusion of an ideal body and an ideal way of looking. Consequently, those who spend more time on social media can be more vulnerable to suffering body dysmorphia and negative body image, as implied by the statistics above.

To fit social medias "ideal look" many users turn to filters or photo editing. It can be difficult to know when a person has edited their photos. Unlike Norway the UK has instated no legal obligation for influencers to disclose their alterations, nor are the edits always obvious.

People seeing these images, and the attention they generate can push them to consider whether they should change their own appearance. This in turn can create a significant gap to how people perceive their appearance and what they believe they should look like. This discrepancy can trigger obsessive thoughts and behaviour.

To protect yourself from this we recommend the following: unfollow accounts that don't make you feel good - whether they are editing pictures or not - remind yourself social media doesn't represent real life - it's one moment , one pose , one set of lighting and potentially one hell of a subtle photoshop job you are seeing not an organic capture of time ,and look for a community that embraces body neutrality and all body types.





## TRUE COURAGE

TRUE COURAGE COMES FROM  
KNOWING THAT CHANGE IS  
CONSTANT;

INVOLVES ACCEPTING YOUR  
LIMITATIONS;

IS STRENGTHENED BY BELIEVING IN  
YOUR ABILITIES;

COMES FROM ACCEPTING  
IMPERFECTIONS;

IS NEEDED TO EMBRACE ALL LIFE  
STAGES;

INVOLVES HONEST COMMUNICATION;  
IS NECESSARY TO ADMIT WHEN YOU  
NEED SUPPORT;

KNOWS THAT EVERYONE MAKES  
MISTAKES, AND THAT'S OK...THAT'S  
LIFE;

LOOKS AT THE FUTURE WITH OPEN  
EYES AND OPEN ARMS;

EMBRACE THE SUN, THE RAIN AND  
THE RAINBOW.

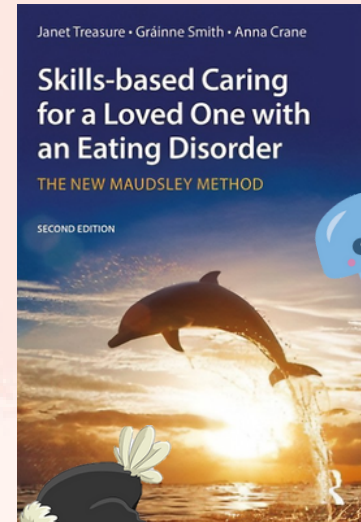
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# CARERS CORNER

## LOOKING BACK - REFLECTIONS FROM A CARER AFTER RECOVERY

My son is fully recovered and has been for over 8 years now. Although it was a long time ago I don't think you ever forget the distress, destruction, chaos and pain anorexia has. Not only on your loved one but the whole family.

In those early days immediately after my son was given his formal diagnosis, I fell into catastrophising mode, focusing on all the negative reports and statistics around eating disorders and finding it very difficult to see a way out. I was in fight or flight mode, frozen with fear, not knowing what to do. The guilt was immense, why hadn't I spotted it earlier, why could I not do this most basic of things – get your kid to eat. It was terrifying and added to that my partner didn't seem to see how serious it all was. He conveniently stayed at work later and later and would busy himself on the golf course at the weekend. We came to understand I was exhibiting jelly fish tendencies and my husband was an ostrich (the animal analogies described by Janet Treasure in her book Skills-base Caring for a Loved One with an Eating Disorder). I could write pages and pages on the turbulent roller coaster journey we went on over the next few years but I am aware I need to be succinct and have been asked to share some words of wisdom I would pass on to other parents and carers embarking on this treacherous journey.



For me remaining hopeful and believing there was light at the end of the tunnel, even in our darkest days was key. Hearing other people's recovery stories definitely helped. Recognising that although we had an amazing team of professionals to support us, a huge amount of work takes place at home. I'm glad to say I became less jelly fish and my husband less ostrich! To begin with neither of us knew what we were doing, and this only strengthen the eating disorder. Listening to the advice and support of our clinician, reading up as much as we could, seeing our mistakes as learning opportunities rather than failures was very important. Slowly, slowly our confidence and skills to support our son grew. We made lots of mistakes, there were lots of tears but through grit and determination, aiming to stay calm, compassionate, and curious we eventually got there. Having a network of support around made a real difference. Friends to help with siblings when your appointment clashes with the school pick up, a friendly ear to talk to, someone to help with the house chores. Small things like that made a real difference. Making time for yourself is essential. In the early hairy scary days it seemed like a pipe dream but even sitting in the garden with a cup of tea for just five minutes can make a difference. Sadly recovery from an Eating Disorder takes time so self-care needs to be a priority. You need to look after yourself to look after others. I'm so proud of my son for his courage, strength, and determination to win the battle against anorexia. I'm also proud of myself and my husband. I wish we'd never had to go through this traumatic experience however I do feel we have all grown as individuals. We've learnt a lot about ourselves, and I believe it has brought us much closer together as a family.

# CARERS CORNER



## CARER'S CAFE - YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Parents and carers of young people who have been accepted for treatment or recently discharged are welcome to join the Carer Café. Carers play a vital role in helping their loved one on the road to recovery however, caring for a young person with an Eating Disorder can be a frightening, exhausting, isolating experience. It is therefore essential for carers to find ways of looking after themselves. The Carer Cafe provides a confidential, non-judgemental source of understanding, listening and support for parents by parents. This virtual group provides a confidential, non-judgemental source of understanding, listening and support for parents by parents.

The next Carer Café is being held virtually on Monday 25th April 9.30 -10.30am. If you would like to attend or to find out more please contact Francesca Shallcross. The Teams link will be sent a few days before the event.

Email: [lpt.carer.cafe@nhs.net](mailto:lpt.carer.cafe@nhs.net)

Tel: 01162950310

## WORDS OF WISDOM

At the end of treatment parents are invited to share their learning on the blackboards at Mawson House. There is not always time to read and absorb these pearls of wisdom on the way into an appointment so we have shared some of them here in the newsletter.

**"DON'T EVER BLAME YOURSELF"**



**"TALKING ABOUT THE PROBLEM WILL ALWAYS HELP - EVEN IF IT'S NOT TO ME (PARENT)"**

**" KEEP FOLLOWING THE PLAN AND IT WILL WORK,GIVEN TIME"**

**"BEING HARD IS SOMETIMES BEING KIND"**



**"THE KEY IS TO BE CONSISTENT AND TO JUST KEEP GOING. DOING RESEARCH IS HELPFUL."**

**CARER CAFE** 25/04/22

**WHAT IS THE CARER CAFE?**

Carers play a vital role in helping their loved one on the road to recovery. However, caring for a young person with an Eating Disorder can be a frightening, exhausting and isolating experience. It is therefore essential for carers to find ways of looking after themselves.

The Carer Café provides a confidential, non-judgemental source of understanding, listening and support for parents by parents.

**WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE?**

The Carer Café is held virtually on Microsoft Teams.

**WHEN DOES IT TAKE PLACE?**

The next one will be held on Monday 25th April 9:30AM-10:30AM.

**HOW DO I JOIN?**

If you are interested in attending or would like further information please email [lpt.carer.cafe@nhs.net](mailto:lpt.carer.cafe@nhs.net). A link will be sent out to your email address a few days before the event.





# BEAT CARER RESOURCES

BEAT is the UK's Eating Disorder Charity. Lots of useful resources and support groups can be found on their website. They also run Developing Dolphins, a free online training course for anyone caring for someone with anorexia or bulimia. This is delivered over five weekday evenings and covers more about eating disorders, what are the driving forces behind them, techniques to help your loved one in recovery and how to look after your own wellbeing. To book onto Developing Dolphins you need to sign up to the e-learning platform POD (peer-support and online development)



**Sign-up to POD to access our new e-learning platform!**

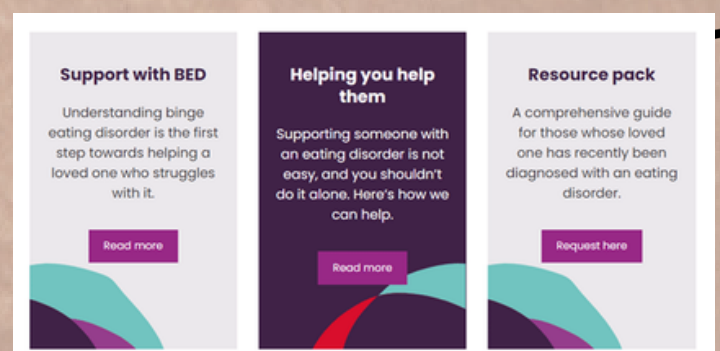
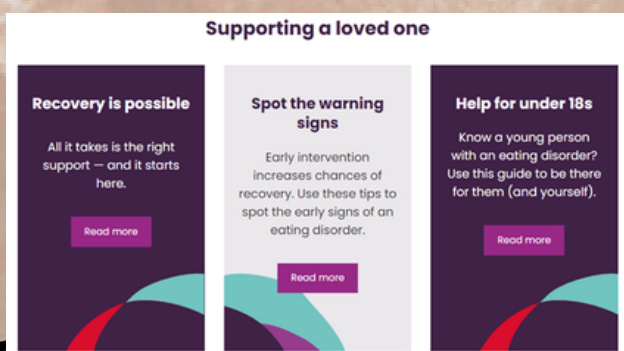
Forums, workspaces, courses and workshops; all available on POD.

Sign Up

(<https://elearn.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>)

## RESOURCE PACKS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

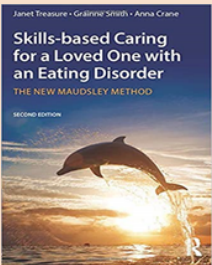
BEAT have a resource pack for parents and carers which is a comprehensive guide for those whose loved one has recently been diagnosed with an eating disorder. It covers topics including common myths around eating disorders, stages of change and parents' and carers' role in helping their loved one's treatment.



(<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/about-eating-disorders/downloads-resources/>)

# USEFUL INFORMATION

## RECOMMENDED READING



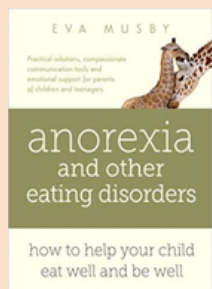
Skills-based Caring for a Loved One with an Eating Disorder – Janet Treasure, Grainne Smith, Anna Crane



Survive FBT – Maria Ganci



Anorexia and other Eating Disorders – Eva Musby



## USEFUL WEBSITES



**B-eat** - [www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

**First Steps** - [www.firststepsed.co.uk/](http://www.firststepsed.co.uk/)

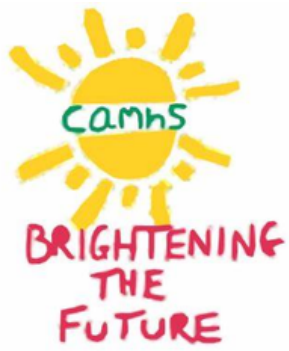
**F.E.A.S.T** - [www.feast-ed.org/](http://www.feast-ed.org/)

**Skills based learning and useful videos** –

[www.newmaudsleycarers-kent.co.uk/new-maudsley-carers/](http://www.newmaudsleycarers-kent.co.uk/new-maudsley-carers/)

**Eva Musby's website & YouTube videos** –

[www.anorexiafamily.com/](http://www.anorexiafamily.com/)



[Lpt.camhs.ed](https://www.instagram.com/lpt.camhs.ed)



[lptCAMHS.EDT](https://twitter.com/lptCAMHS.EDT)

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