Eating disorders

This infographic is a summary of eating disorders (2018), part of the Mental Health Needs Assessment.

Person

- Symptoms usually begin aged 16 & under
- Often have other mental health conditions (depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, self-harm, obsessive compulsive disorder, low self-esteem)
- LGBT at greater risk - 16% transgender/non-binary people likely to have an eating disorder
- Incidence increasing in young Asian women

Family & Friends

- May have previously been criticised about size, weight or eating habits
- Reduced quality of life for sufferer AND carers. High emotional & economic costs
- May be family history of eating disorders, depression or substance abuse
- May be linked to stressful event or trauma, e.g. being bullied, changing school or job, work/study pressure, abuse, death of someone close, or divorce
- May be a genetic link
- May be withdrawn, particularly avoiding social situations involving food

Environment

- NOT more likely to live in an urban environment
- Unemployment or not working due to a disability increase likelihood
- Assess impact of home, education, work, social environment (incl. internet & social media)
- May be in a role where there is pressure on physical appearance, e.g. dancer, athlete, jockey

Physical health

- May have a normal Body Mass Index
- May have problems managing a chronic illness that is affected by diet, such as diabetes or coeliac disease: prevalence may be twice as high in female adolescents with diabetes
- Premature death is 2-66 times higher in women with anorexia nervosa
- Delayed physical development in children & young people
- Increased risk of substance misuse
- Excessive exercise may disguise eating disorder

Needs

- Refer immediately
- Be alert to signs of bullying, teasing, abuse
- Offer patient & carers information
- Address misconceptions
- Be sensitive
- Support family / carers
- Assess fluid & electrolyte balance

Statistics

- Incidence: on average there will be 2 new patients with an eating disorder per GP each year
- 25% patients will be treated exclusively in primary care
- Less than 30% women with an eating disorder ever seek medical help

Estimated prevalence in Suffolk:

- 2,256 Anorexia Nervosa
- 16,543 Binge-eating
- 6,015 Bulimia Nervosa

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Current support

- Primary Care - GPs
- Suffolk Eating Disorder Service
- Community Eating Disorders Service (NSFT)
- Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust
- Improving Access to Patient Therapies (IAPT)
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Healthy eating, exercise & mental wellbeing campaigns
- Suffolk MIND
- ChildLine
- Suffolk CRUSE

Useful links

- NICE Eating disorders (NG69)
- BEAT eating disorder charity
- Men get eating disorders too! (MGEDT)
- Follow NICE guidance (NG69, commissioning)
- Smooth transition between child & adult services
- Universal media literacy training
- Dissonance-based intervention
- Improve access to services
- Communicate sensitively, address misconceptions
- Assess impact of wider environment
- Support family / carers
- Refer immediately

Suffolk needs assessments & information

- Eating Disorders
- Eating Disorders in numbers