

eating disorder?

Local support for people concerned or caring for someone with an eating disorder



Edinburgh Carers Council



for those supporting people with mental health difficulties

Your loved one may have an eating disorder, which has been diagnosed or remains undiagnosed. They may be receiving specialist help or still waiting for a referral for treatment. As a carer you may be feeling frightened, sad, confused, frustrated. You may feel that you have no-one to turn to or no-one who understands. Perhaps you've had very little information or been kept 'out of the loop' of what is happening to the person with the disorder.

Carers often blame themselves, especially if they are the parent or partner. Stigma and misinformation about eating disorders can make it feel impossible to talk about them or ask questions. You are not alone. Eating disorders are surprisingly common. While often associated with young women, they can in fact affect anyone, male or female, whatever their age or background. They may not always take the form of self-starvation (anorexia). Bulimia (binging, followed by purging), as other types of eating disorders are also common. No two people are the same. They can also present along with additional mental health difficulties, such as anxiety or depression.

Siblings and Friends

You may be concerned for a sibling, friend or acquaintance that you think may have an eating disorder. An eating disorder or disordered eating affects not just the one person, it also affects those who live with and care about them. You may not understand much about eating disorders or how to respond to some of the behaviours associated with them. Be reassured. If you find yourself in this situation, we can offer support, information and advocacy to help you better understand and manage the difficulties associated with an eating disorder.

It can impact on family life

Living with someone with an eating disorder can be distressing, frustrating and frightening. As it impacts on the life of the whole family, relationships can become strained. But you are not alone – help is available.

Contact **0131 270 6087** or
info@edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk

Look after your own mental health

Carers are the people who spend most time with someone with an eating disorder. However, it's important to look after yourself too, so you can care for your loved one. Remember to look after your own mental health and wellbeing. For example:

- Try to catch up on sleep.
- If possible take time out to keep up your own interests.
- If you can, join a carers support group. Talking to others who understand what you are going through from personal experience can be invaluable.
- Access support through your GP. Online support or counselling.
- Advocacy.

Edinburgh Carers Council has an eating disorder group for carers who meet on the first Monday evening of each month from 6 - 8pm. Address and details are on the back.

Useful websites and contacts:

www.b-eat.co.uk, www.mengetedstoo.co.uk

www.anorexiabulimiare.org.uk, www.needs-scotland.org

www.eatingdisordersandcarers.co.uk, www.sedig.co.uk

Edinburgh Carers Council offers independent, free and confidential services. For example, you may need:

- Help to ask your GP the right questions.
- Information about your rights as a carer.
- Access information about financial or social support.
- Support with letters and forms.

“Alice’s son had been diagnosed with an eating disorder. Although he was receiving treatment, she was anxious to know more about eating disorders and how best she and her partner could help him. The whole family was struggling to cope, and no-one else seemed to understand their situation. Edinburgh Carers Council put Alice in touch with their Eating Disorders Carers Group, who meet each month. She has found it a great source of comfort and support being able to talk and share experiences with other carers.”

Help for carers

The level of support you need is individual, but our experience shows you may benefit from being able to talk openly and confidentially to someone who offers understanding, respect and information about services. We offer group support, information and advocacy. Please contact us – we are here to help.

Edinburgh Carers Council
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Royal Edinburgh Hospital
Morningside Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 5HF
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