



NAVIGATING EATING AND BODY IMAGE ISSUES

WANAKA COMMUNITY
PRESENTATION

EDCS



Eating Disorders Carer Support NZ



WHAKATAUKĪ

He kai kei aku ringa

There is food at the end of my hands





HAYLEY GUINNESS



Founder of Stepping Stones Yoga & Therapy
Clinical Nurse Consultant
Therapist
Eat Breathe Thrive Facilitator
Yoga Teacher
Nature Lover
Wife
Mum



ABOUT HAYLEY



Kia Ora, I'm Hayley originally from Australia now in sunny Nelson/Whakātu, New Zealand.

With more than 20 years' experience as a Clinical Nurse Consultant, I've worked across inpatient, day programme, and community settings, supporting people through assessment, therapy, and group-based care.

I support individuals and whānau to rebuild their relationship with food, body, self, and the world around them through a warm, grounded, trauma-informed approach that prioritises safety, compassion, cultural responsiveness, and nervous system regulation across therapy, yoga, embodied movement, workshops, and retreats.



SARAH ROWLAND



EDCS Co-Founder & Chairperson
Parent mentor
Connector of people
MH system advocate
Mum of two young neurodivergent adults
Photographer, writer, avid lifelong learner with a
driving curiosity of all things

ABOUT SARAH

Kia Ora, I'm Sarah - originally from the UK and now proudly calling New Zealand home for almost 30 years.

I'm the founder of Eating Disorders Carer Support NZ (EDCS), providing online support, programmes, resources, and advocacy for families and whānau supporting someone with an eating disorder.

Over the past decade, I've supported many families in New Zealand and internationally to navigate the realities of eating disorders, neurodiversity, and recovery. My work focuses on early intervention, strengthening carer inclusion, and helping connect lived experience with practical support and understanding.

I've also contributed to national awareness initiatives, strategy co-design, and government submissions in Aotearoa, while remaining closely connected with Australian and international carer and peer communities.



TOPICS

01

What is Diet Culture?

02

Why People Develop Eating Disorders

03

Warning signs

04

Myths & Misconceptions

05

Navigating Difficult Conversations

06

Body Image Concerns

07

Eat, Breathe, Thrive

08

Q&A

DIET CULTURE

Diet culture is a societal framework that promotes the belief that thinness and certain types of bodies are superior, often encouraging restrictive eating, extreme weight loss measures, and equating self-worth with physical appearance.

- Magazines
- Media
- Comments from friends, family, teachers, healthcare workers
- TV/Movies
- Fashion

~~“A moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips”~~
~~“Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels”~~

A large three-year study of nearly 2,000 adolescents found that dieting is the strongest predictor of new eating disorders. (Patton GC, et al, 1999)

Young people who diet are five times more likely to develop an eating disorder than those who do not diet.

jenny
CRAIG



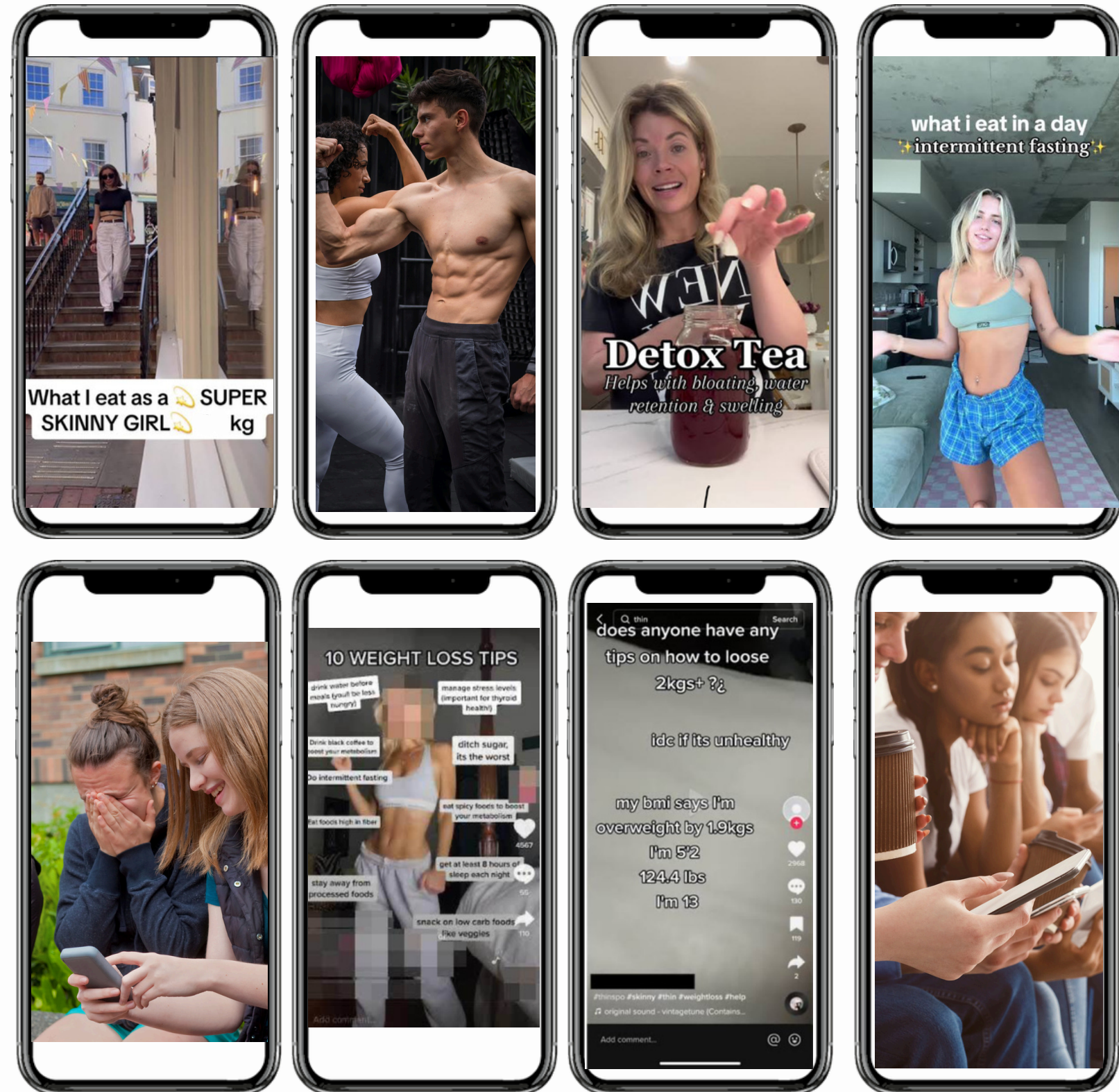
SOCIAL MEDIA

“

“50% of young people say social media makes them feel dissatisfied with their body” The Butterfly Foundation

”

An investigation by The Wall Street Journal where they created a bot mimicking a 13-year-old girl on TikTok found that within just three days, the algorithm started pushing harmful content



EATING DISORDER OR DISORDERED EATING - WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Disordered Eating

Disordered eating describes disrupted patterns of eating - exercise, or body image that may be influenced by factors such as stress, dieting, sport, health conditions, or emotional wellbeing.

Eating Disorder

An eating disorder is a serious mental health condition where these thoughts and behaviours become more persistent, distressing, and impactful on daily life.



WHY DO PEOPLE DEVELOP EATING DISORDERS

PRE-DISPOSING FACTORS

Individual characteristics
Interpersonal factors
Family factors
Biological factors
Socio-cultural factors
Environmental factors

PRECIPITATING FACTORS

Dieting
Developmental stage
Life crisis
Stressors
Teasing/bullying
Weight loss or gain
Excessive exercise and underfuelling
Abuse
Illness



PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Biological protective factor	Psychological protective factor	Sociocultural protective factor
A physical or genetic trait that lowers vulnerability to eating disorders, usually outside a person's control.	A mental or emotional trait or skill that lowers risk of eating disorders by influencing thoughts and feelings about self, body and food.	A social, environmental or cultural influence that lowers eating disorder risk, such as by normalising diversity or celebrating other strengths.
Factors from each of these domains can influence and build on each other. The aim is to develop as many protective factors as possible for a person, to lower their vulnerability to ED risks and triggers.		

Biological

- The experience of body functionality
- Attunement to bodily needs, or interoception

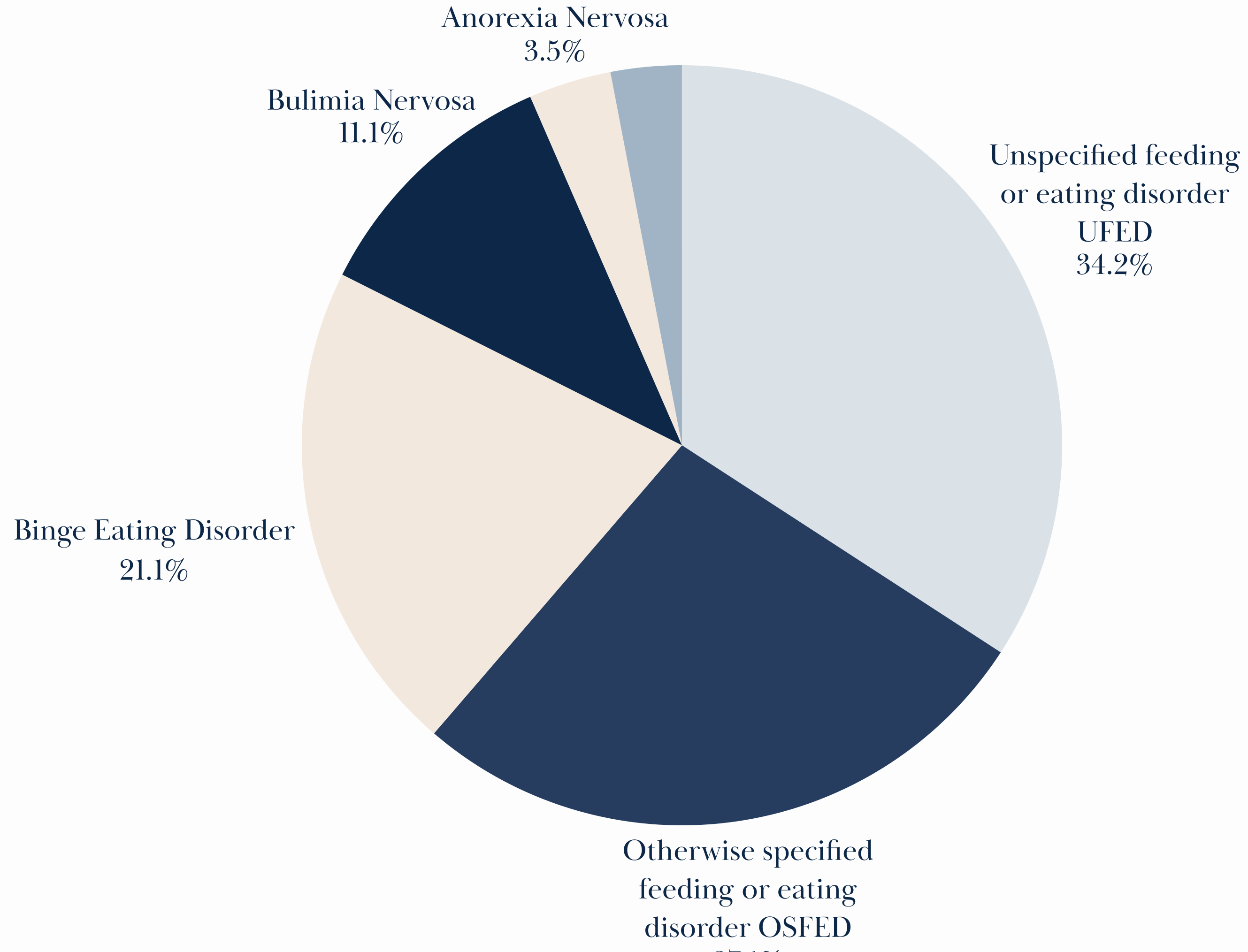
Psychological

- Body neutrality/acceptance/appreciation
- Multi-faceted self-concept
- Self-compassion
- Media literacy



Sociocultural

- Positive family connectedness
- Positive familial attitudes to body diversity
- Regular, positive shared family meals
- Weight-inclusivity (e.g. in healthcare)
- Food security and practical support



WARNING SIGNS

PHYSICAL

People who suffer from an eating disorder may display a combination of symptoms or they can show only one symptom. In some cases, they may not show any signs or symptoms at all

Rapid weight loss or frequent weight changes

Loss or disturbance of menstruation

Decreased libido

Fainting or dizziness

Feeling tired or not sleeping well

Lethargy and low energy

Feeling cold all the time

Signs of damage due to vomiting



WARNING SIGNS

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Psychological warning signs can be difficult to detect in anyone suffering from an eating disorder.

Preoccupation with eating, food, body shape and weight

Feeling anxious and or irritable around meal times

Feeling 'out of control' around food

'Black and white' thinking

A distorted body image

Using food as a source of comfort

Using food as self-punishment



WARNING SIGNS

BEHAVIOURAL

While you may recognise some of these symptoms in someone you care about, these signs can still be concealed and may be difficult to detect

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Dieting behaviour | Compulsive or excessive exercising |
| Eating in private | Changes in food preferences |
| Evidence of binge eating | Obsessive rituals around food preparation & eating |
| Frequent trips to bathroom | Extreme sensitivity |
| Vomiting or using laxatives | Secretive behaviour |
| Changes in clothing style | |





MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

Myth: Once you have an eating disorder you will never get better.

Myth: Eating disorders are a lifestyle choice. Eating disorders are caused by vanity and body ideals.

Myth: Eating disorders only affect women and girls, usually teenage girls.

Myth: Eating disorders are a cry for attention or a person going through a phase.



MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

Myth: Dieting is a normal part of life.

Myth: Families, particularly parents, are to blame for eating disorders.

Myth: Only thin people have eating disorders.

GENERAL TIPS

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Listen without judgement

Avoid starting difficult conversations when you are tired or emotionally drained

Avoid starting difficult conversations at mealtimes or around food

Try not to take on the role of a therapist

Talk your feelings over with a health professional, counsellor or friend

Think about your body language

If you do not know how to respond to something, be honest and say so

Be kind to yourself



NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

WHAT TO AVOID

Avoid focusing on food, exercise or body shape and weight

Avoid discussions about dieting, calories, and body shape

Do not use language that implies blame or implies that the person is doing something wrong

Avoid unhelpful, blaming comments like “just eat more food” or “why is it so hard for you to stop bingeing?”

Avoid statements that could be interpreted as manipulative

Avoid threatening statements





HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL THINGS TO SAY AND DO

Unhelpful: “Just eat!”

Helpful: “try to take a just a few more bites? I can see that this is a struggle for you, but we’re trying to get you to a safe place.”

Unhelpful: “Where is the loaf of bread I bought? Did you binge again?”

Helpful: “I’ve noticed food disappearing and wondered how I can help. Are you struggling? Would you like to talk about it?”

Unhelpful: “You better eat your meal otherwise I’ll be really upset with you.” “If you don’t finish your meal we’ll need to go to the hospital.”

Helpful: “I know how hard this is for you..Finishing your meal will be a great step towards getting better though, and showing the eating disorder that you are in charge.”

Unhelpful: “I can see vomit in the toilet. Have you been vomiting again?”

Helpful: “I’ve noticed that you are struggling with purging again. Is there something I can do to help?”



HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL THINGS TO SAY AND DO

Unhelpful: “You don’t look that sick.” “You look healthy/good/well.”
“You look so much better.”

Helpful: Try not to make comments about physical appearance

Unhelpful: “I need an eating disorder to get rid of these extra kilos.” “I wish I could lose weight like you.”

Helpful: Refrain from making comments about the person’s weight or appearance

Unhelpful: “I’m doing this new detox to lose weight for my friend’s wedding.”

Helpful: Try not to make comments about your own weight, diet or exercise

Unhelpful: “The doctor said you’ve gained some weight! That’s fantastic!”

Helpful: Refrain from making comments about the person’s weight.



HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL THINGS TO SAY AND DO

Unhelpful: “I don’t understand why your team won’t let you exercise.” “I can’t believe your Dietitian makes you eat that. It can’t be healthy!”

Helpful: “Your treating team know what is right for you - they are the experts!” “Your doctors have the expertise and know how to help you recover.”

Unhelpful: “We don’t know what to do with you anymore.” “All this treatment isn’t working.”

Helpful: It is important to always hold hope for recovery

Unhelpful: Ignoring small progress - or over doing praise

Helpful: Acknowledge small achievements

Unhelpful: Doing or saying nothing after meals.

Helpful: “I can see how hard this has been for you. Would you like to watch a movie?”

10 TIPS TO SUPPORT BODY CONFIDENCE

1. Discourage appearance based talk and be mindful of language
2. Provide evidence based education for all members of your community
3. Be the change! Role model positive body image
4. Challenge appearance ideals with media and social media literacy
5. Say no to appearance based teasing and/or bullying
6. Empower young people to be more than their appearance
7. Challenge diet culture and unhelpful messaging
8. Encourage healthy relationships with food and exercise
9. Address the risk and protective factors that underpin body dissatisfaction
10. Be aware of warning signs and intervene early if a young person is struggling





GETTING HELP EARLY

If you have concerns about you or your Childs relationship with food or body, it is vital to get advice, support and treatment straight away. Skilled health professionals can give you tailored tools and strategies to prevent an eating disorder becoming entrenched and taking over your life.

Eating disorders are serious, potentially life-threatening, mental illnesses. Research shows that early intervention and treatment can increase the speed of your recovery.

If you think you have an eating disorder, or have developed unhealthy behaviours or attitudes about body, weight or food, get help now.

If an eating disorder is already established, it can be hard to take the first step and seek treatment. A sense of ambivalence about getting treatment often occurs because an eating disorder can provide a sense of safety or control. Take one step at a time. There is no harm in talking to someone about your concerns.

EAT BREATHE THRIVE ©

EVIDENCE BASED APPROACH

Participants learn practical tools from neuroscience, psychology, and movement science to help build skills for mindful eating, emotional resilience and body confidence

YOGA FOR EVERYBODY

Each session of the course includes a short yoga and meditation practice, designed specifically to support recovery, body awareness, emotional wellbeing and physical vitality

COMMUNITY AND PEER SUPPORT

The live format of this course allows participants to connect with a small group to support them along their journey to mental, physical and emotional wellness



EAT BREATHE THRIVE ©

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Mindful eating

Distress tolerance

Interoceptive awareness

Functional appreciation

Coping

Body Appreciation

Mindful self-care

Self-compassion

Social connection

In the moment wellbeing



Eating Disorders Carer Support NZ



EDCS is a national lived-experience-informed organisation supporting carers and whānau of people affected by eating difficulties & disorders.

We provide:

Support - peer-led carer connection and guidance

Resources - practical, evidence-informed tools and information

Education - monthly Carer CONNECT webinars with lived-experience and clinical experts

Advocacy - amplifying carer voices and improving system awareness





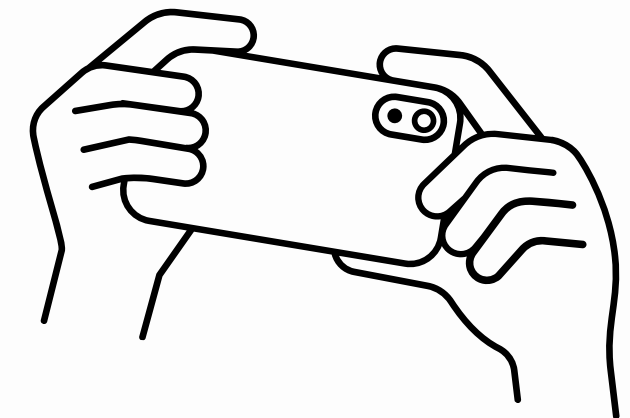
Eating Disorders Carer Support NZ

connection, resources & advocacy

**EDCS works to reduce isolation,
strengthen carer confidence,
and improve recognition of the
vital role carers play in recovery.**

We are currently expanding access to tailored online carer support, resources, and education across New Zealand - including development of a new national 8-week programme, website, and Carer Hub funded by Te Whatu Ora. Learn more at edcs.co.nz

Donate



Like to support our work?
You can donate via our Give a Little page -

<https://givealittle.co.nz/org/edcsnz>

THANK YOU FOR
JOINING US!

Hayley Guinness & Sarah Rowland



CONTACT US



Eating Disorders Carer Support NZ (EDCS)



info@edcs.co.nz



<https://www.edcs.co.nz/>



facebook.com/EDCSNZ



Stepping Stones Yoga & Therapy



steppingstonesyoga.therapy@gmail.com



www.steppingstonesyogatherapy.com



[@steppingstonesyogatherapy](https://www.instagram.com/steppingstonesyogatherapy)



REFERENCE LIST

Ministry of Social Development

The Butterfly Foundation

Inside Out Institute for Eating Disorders

Embrace Hub

National Eating Disorder Collaboration

Eating Disorders Victoria

NSW Health

Embrace Kids Documentary currently streaming on TVNZ

Embrace Documentary

Contact Hayley Guinness or EDCS for a more comprehensive list.

