

Year Care Team Booklet

Year 12 and 13

(Circle Time)

Objective: To understand teenagers' worries on diet and fitness



Topic 1: All about Eating Disorders



Task 1: Discuss with students all types of possible Eating Disorders

The three most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, more commonly known as anorexia, bulimia nervosa, more commonly known as bulimia, and binge eating disorder. Though these eating disorders manifest themselves in different ways, the underlying theme is the same in that sufferers can not separate their emotions from their eating habits and this skews the way, and the amount, that they eat. If you or someone you know suffers from an eating disorder, do not delay in finding help. Eating disorders can have lifelong repercussions, but with treatment these effects can be greatly limited.

Anorexia

Anorexia is an eating disorder in which the sufferer becomes so afraid of gaining weight that (s)he starts to decrease the amount of food (s)he will eat until (s)he literally starves. Even when they are physically wasting away, anorexics will perceive themselves as heavy and continue eating as little as possible. Without enough nourishment to sustain them, the anorexic's internal organs will begin to fail and if this persists, death can and will occur.

Bulimia

In contrast to anorexics who carefully control the amount of food they eat, bulimics often consume far too much food in one sitting and then get rid of it either by making themselves sick or taking laxatives. This bingeing and purging becomes a cycle, and bulimics may never lose, or gain, enough weight to make it obvious that they have an eating disorder. Though they do consume enough calories to keep their bodies healthy, the constant purging can damage their digestive tract, mouth, teeth and salivary glands. The yo-yoing of their diet can also mean that bulimics rarely take in enough vitamins and minerals to remain healthy.

Binge Eating Disorder

Much like bulimics, those suffering from binge eating disorders will consume large amounts of food at one sitting. Unlike bulimics, they do not purge or rid themselves of this food. Instead, those with binge eating disorders often become obese from their excessive food intake, and can suffer from side effects such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart disease.

Task 2: Discuss with students the causes of Eating Disorders and how to treat them.

The Causes of Eating Disorders

In all honesty, no one really knows what causes some people to suffer from eating disorders. Those who do suffer often share similar characteristics, such as perfectionism and over-achievement. Some scientists also believe that there are hereditary or genetic causes of eating disorders. Most who suffer from eating disorders also try to tightly control all aspects of their lives and when this fails, they focus their energy on controlling their eating patterns and the amounts that they eat instead.

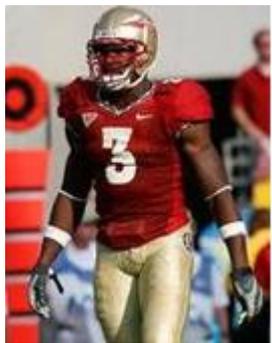
Treating Eating Disorders

The good news is that all eating disorders are treatable, and many former sufferers go on to lead lives that involve more normal relationships with food. However before someone suffering from an eating disorder can get better, they must confront why they eat the way they do. This is most successful when it occurs during part of a counselling or support group session.

Eating Disorder support groups and advocacy organisations are great sources for further information.

If you or someone you know is suffering from an eating disorder, it can be very hard to admit that help is needed. Those suffering from eating disorders are usually highly secretive of their habits and often don't want to change them because their disordered eating is how they cope with the pressures of their lives. Yet even if they do not want help, those suffering from eating disorders need it in order to live truly healthy lives. Remember that even if they do not thank you for it now, helping anorexics, bulimics and

those with binge eating disorders find professional help will
garner you thanks in the future.



Topic 2: Cultivating a Realistic Body Image



The next time you can spare a minute, have a look in the mirror. What do you see staring back at you? How would you describe yourself? How do you perceive your body? This perception is your body image, or what you think you see in the mirror.

Unfortunately a person's body image is often very different from their actual body. It is this distortion, this negative body image, that often pushes people to their limit trying to change what isn't actually there. Rather than fight with this phantom image, cultivate a realistic body image based on what your body can do, and how you feel, rather than how you think your body looks.

Task 1: Discuss with students the followings:

The Basis for Your Body Image

Many young people base their body image on what they see in the media. Young women want to be thin and willowy, and young

men want bulging biceps and washboard abs. Yet what is wandering onto our TV and cinema screens, and popping up in our magazines and websites, are the exceptions rather than the rule. In reality, base your body image on:

- Medically accepted standards, such as a total body fat percentage of under 30% for women and 25% for men, or by calculating your body mass index, a ratio of your weight to your height, to see if it is in the normal weight range of under 25.
- How you feel. When your body feels healthy and strong, then your body image should be as well.
- Respect for yourself. Don't compare yourself to supermodels or celebrities, or even to your friends who have naturally different body shapes. Respect your shape and enjoy yourself.
- Your body! Don't let your emotions get in the way of what you see in the mirror.

Changing a Negative Body Image

It's likely that if you sneak a quick peek in the mirror, you'll have at least one criticism of your body. We live in a society fixated on weight, beauty and fashion, and even the most confident of us will feel down at some time or another. If you find yourself fearful of your reflection, you must take measures to change this before you wind up miserable.

- Participate in a favourite activity. When you use your body, you're more likely to respect it.
- Walk to the shops. Remind yourself that you rely on your body and should treat it accordingly.
- Organise a balanced, healthy diet. Your body can only feel as good as what you put into it, so make sure your fuel is fresh and healthy.
- Quit smoking, drinking and/or taking drugs. Unhealthy chemicals will only make you feel slow and bloated.

- Plan, and execute, a new exercise regime with a professional. If you feel unhappy in your own skin, take measures to change the situation but only with the advice of a professional.
- Seek therapy. If you lead a healthy life and your body fat and body mass index are both in the normal ranges, then your negative perception is likely only in your mind. Talk it out with a professional and explore why you feel the way you do.

Body image is a tricky subject. Most of us know in the back of our minds that we need our bodies to be fit and healthy, but if we're honest we'll also admit that we want them to look well and be the perfect peg for designer clothes while we're at it. Rather than letting these unrealistic goals fester, focus on living healthily and enjoying the results!



Topic 3: Organising a Healthy Diet



If we're honest, most of us will admit that when we hear the word "diet" we equate it with trying to lose weight. In reality our diets are simply the foods we choose to eat.

Modern diets tend to stray away from the wide variety of healthy, fresh, natural foods that are in season and rely on old favourites instead. Unfortunately, many of these favourites are pre-packaged, full of preservatives and high in added sugars, salts, and fats. Rather than letting your diet fall to chance and descend into a buffet of convenience foods, organise a healthy diet starting today!

Task 1: Facilitate group discussions on the followings:

What is a Healthy Diet?

Every few months a new fad diet comes along that promises weight loss, a halt to the aging process, and even "optimal

health" if you just follow its rules and purchase its ready made meals. Don't get hooked on these impostors.

According the British Nutrition Foundation, the basis of a healthy diet is:

- A third of your daily food intake to be bread, cereal or potatoes.
- Eating 5 different fruits and vegetables per day.
- Consuming 2 - 3 servings of milk or dairy per day.
- Sensible portions of meat, fish or alternatives, including 2 servings of fish per week.
- A serving or less of fatty or sugary foods per day, including sugary drinks.
- Drinking at least six glasses of water per day, and more when you are active.

Is a Healthy Diet Boring?

One of the most common barriers that prevent people from embarking upon a healthy diet is the idea that it is bland, boring or just plain bad, yet nothing could be further from the truth!

When you sample the robust flavours of fresh foods you'll wonder how you ever survived on anything else. Keep your healthy diet exciting by:

- Aiming for five different fruits and vegetables each day and outlawing repeats until you've sampled a variety.
- Mixing up your breads and cereals. Try whole grains, multi-grains, oatmeal, seeded, and with nuts before you declare a favourite.
- Snacking on a different cheese each day. It will take you a while to get through them all since there are literally hundreds of different varieties.
- Branching out at the butchers and fishmongers. Most of us are guilty of sticking to what we know, but take a risk to re-energise the taste buds.

- Trying your hand at several new cooking techniques. While steaming vegetables may be healthy, it certainly doesn't give the same variety as what you can produce if you also grill, roast and sauté.
- Investing in a cookbook or two. Begin by poaching others' recipes before trying your hand at your own.

But is a Healthy Diet Really Convenient?

A lot of people will talk themselves out of a healthy diet by saying that it just isn't convenient. Don't get sucked into this lie.

Grabbing an apple is just as convenient as grabbing a chocolate bar - it's even got its own wrapper! Munching your way through a bag of nuts is just as convenient as a bag of sweets at the cinema. Heating up some fresh soup is just as convenient as heating up a ready meal. While it may take a little bit of planning, eating a healthy diet is neither inconvenient nor impossible, so don't try to make it that way!

Eating healthfully is one of the most important steps you can take to ensuring that you live a long, healthy life. In the short term, a healthy diet contributes to clear skin, strong hair and nails, an increase of energy, a decrease of the waistline and helps fight off heart disease, diabetes and even some cancers. So what are you waiting for? Organise your healthy diet today!



Topic 4: Questionnaire: Do I Have a Healthy Lifestyle?



There's often so much going on in an average day that it's hard to stop and think, so it's easy for a few bad habits to slip into everyone's daily routines.

But when do bad habits cross the line into unhealthy lifestyles? The answer to this will be different for each teen, but there are some standard areas in which all teens can develop healthy lifestyles.

Sleep, diet, exercise, dental hygiene, emotional health, sexual health, alcohol and drugs are just a few of the issues that teens must contend with, and focus on in order to develop their own healthy lifestyles.

We've put together this questionnaire to help teens figure out where their good and bad habits tend to cluster. Simply answer "yes" or "no" to each question and add up your answers to find out if you have a healthy lifestyle.

Questionnaire

1. Do you sleep for about eight hours per night?
2. Do you go to sleep easily and sleep through the night?
3. Do you eat at least five fruits and vegetables each day?
4. Do you limit the amount of sugar and salt in your diet?
5. Do you stay away from cigarettes and other tobacco products?
6. Do you avoid alcohol and drugs?
7. Do you get at least thirty minutes of exercise or activity each day?
8. Do you brush and floss your teeth at least twice a day?
9. Do you see a dentist and GP regularly if you feel something is wrong?
10. Do you usually feel that you can manage all of the tasks required of you in a given day?
11. Do you have family and friends ready to help and support you if needed?
12. Do you feel comfortable and practice safer sex in intimate relationships?

Do You Have a Healthy Lifestyle?

If you answered "yes" to between one and four questions then you have a lot of room for improvement in your lifestyle. Look at the pattern of your answers to find out where you are not concentrating on good health. If you feel unable to make changes yourself, ask an adult or professional to help you.

Visit your local library for more information, or scour the Internet for sites that you trust and implement some of their tips. But make changes soon, before your unhealthy lifestyle has any lasting consequences.

If you answered "yes" to between five and eight questions then you have a fairly healthy lifestyle. However, you can never take your good health too seriously. Try to target a few areas in which you can improve and think up a few easy changes that you can make in your daily life. It may be as easy as going to bed an hour earlier or switching from candy to fruit as your afternoon snack. Whatever it is, dedicate yourself to making changes and celebrate when you do!

If you answered "yes" to nine or more of these questions then you have a healthy lifestyle. For optimal health, work on any topic to which you answered "no". Lucky for you there does not seem to be many areas on which to concentrate. But while you obviously take care of yourself well, for the brightest future you must look after all areas of your physical and emotional health. If you find that you are unable to identify areas of change yourself, consider asking a trusted adult or a health professional for guidance.



Topic 5: Steroids



Recent newspaper articles have talked about a growing problem of steroid abuse in teenagers almost exclusively boys, and young men. Anabolic steroids are illegal to sell in the UK, but they aren't illegal to buy, which means that people can get them over the Internet from other countries, or buy them in another country.

Task 1: Discuss the following questions with the students:

What Are Steroids?

In a nutshell, they are hormones, and there are many different kinds. But when people talk about steroids in the field of sports and bodybuilding, they are usually talking about anabolic

steroids. This is a synthetic product that resembles the natural male hormone testosterone, and taking it can help you develop more muscle tissue.

Why Are More Young People Taking Steroids?

There seems to be two reasons why boys, and it is much more likely to be boys taking them than girls, are turning to steroids. The first is to try and get an advantage in sports, but research has never shown that there's any increase in ability when people take steroids. In fact, they are more likely to damage your response times and agility, and sports officials are very strict on weeding them out. Steroids do give you more muscle bulk though, and that leads to the second reason.

Media Pressure

Just as girls have problems with anorexia and bulimia, as they are pounded every day with images of 'perfect' skinny women models and stars, boys are beginning to feel the pressure too. Sports stars, film stars and even male underwear models feature highly toned bodies, with glistening pecs, that essential 'six-pack' and washboard stomach. Men generally did not have bodies like this thirty or forty years ago, only bodybuilders and professional athletes. It's all being created by the media's obsession with image.

So What's the Problem?

The problem is that muscle bulk is not all that steroids can give you. Man boobs, for a start, bad acne, particularly on the back, premature baldness, mood swings, aggression and paranoia are all downsides of overdosing on testosterone. Although we talk of testosterone being a 'male' hormone, and oestrogen being a 'female' one, the truth is that they occur naturally, at different levels, in both men and women, and upsetting that balance causes problems.

The unexciting truth about improving your physique is that the only safe way to do it is controlled, targeted and regular exercise, a healthy diet and good sleep. Actually, regular exercise and a healthy diet will make you feel better and get you some decent sleep anyway.

Long Term Damage

The more long-term damage from steroid use is on the inside, to your body and your brain. Studies in America have shown that the damage to the brain involves the destruction of brain cells, which is the key factor in such illnesses as Huntington's disease and Alzheimer's.

The damage to your internal organs is mostly to the liver. Some of the compounds in these synthetic drugs can't be processed easily so they cause the organs to overwork.

No Deterrent

The trouble is that the effects of this damage that may not be noticed for some years, even though it starts immediately. So these aren't very effective deterrents, in much the same way that the dangers of smoking don't work well as a deterrent. Lots of young people know the dangers of smoking, but they carry on because the effects aren't immediate, and everyone knows smokers who are still alive and apparently healthy.

Many users of steroids take 'cycles' of steroids, alternating them with other drugs in the belief that the body will have a chance to recover from the damage, but this doesn't seem to work. In fact, many people who are admitted to emergency wards with unexplained fits of trembling, dizziness, vomiting, and even comatose in extreme cases, turn out to be abusing a mix of steroids and other drugs in a rotation system.

What Can I Do?

Boring as it may be, if you are being pressured into taking steroids, the best thing to do is say 'no'. If you find that hard, remember it's your body, and no-one tells you how to treat it. Just keep saying no, and just that – you don't have to justify yourself. If you find this difficult (and it can be) then try calling one of the numbers below for help in doing this.

Confidential Help

If you feel that steroids are the answer for you, find out more for yourself first. Here are some places you can go for further information or talk to someone, in confidence, who isn't your parent or teacher, either on the phone or over the web:

- Drugscope
- Talk to Frank
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Release
- Samaritans
- Childline

And What Else is in That Tablet?

Finally, all steroids pills or creams (steroids can also be injected) are sold on the black market, which means that no-one can be exactly sure what's in them. And don't believe the person selling them to you either, he won't know, and if they swear that they do, they're still lying.

Real Life Deaths

A recent example of this, although not about steroids, caused the deaths of hundreds of people in Panama who took cold medicine. The problem was that counterfeiters had substituted a dangerous poison, diethylene glycol, instead of the more expensive (and safe) glycerine used in cough syrups, just to make money.

Now if that can happen in legally available cold remedies, what do you think is going in to black market steroids?



Topic 6: The Best Way to Keep Fit



It's easy to become lazy about fitness. A pile up of schoolwork, a few sports or club engagements and a busy social calendar will all conspire to keep you locked in lethargy, moving at a snail's pace and grazing on whatever food you can find.

The only way to shake yourself free of these chains is to commit to a newer, fitter you, and the only way to achieve this goal is with consistent exercise and a healthy diet. These may sound like just a few more chores to add to your already packed schedule, but as you discover your favourite activities and recipes, you'll feel nothing but faster, sleeker and smarter!

Task 1: Discuss th best way to keep fit.

Work Up a Sweat

There are no shortcuts to getting fit, and in fact it will take working up a sweat at least three times per week for you to feel healthier and notice an increase in your energy levels and enthusiasm, and possibly a decrease in your weight and waistline. Accepted advice is that everyone should be exercising for at least 30 minutes three times per week, but if you could make this for 45 minutes four times per week you'll be flying towards a new you.

Remember:

- Stop smoking, drinking or using drugs immediately. All of these actions wreak havoc on your body and stand in the way of your fitness goals.
- Exercise should involve an aerobic or cardiovascular workout, weight training and stretching to avoid injuries and increase flexibility.
- Keeping an exercise journal will give you motivation and help you track your progress.
- Joining a health club, leisure centre or gym will allow you to become a part of a supportive community and explore options and classes.
- An exercise or fitness video is a great way to try new activities in the privacy of your own home.
- Building up a home gym with free weights and a skipping rope will help you exercise even when it is too cold or rainy to go outside.
- You'll be more likely to continue exercising if you like the activity. Take into account your personality and the reason why you are exercising when selecting your activities. For example:

- If you are outgoing and looking for new friends, consider a team sport.
- If you are serious about relaxing, check out yoga classes.
- If you are goal orientated and competitive, think about running or swimming.
- Aim for at least eight hours of sleep per night to help your body recover from all of this new activity.

Whip Up Something Delicious and Nutritious

Healthy eating isn't an option when trying to get fit, it's a requirement. A balanced diet will deliver all of the nutrients you need to stay healthy, and will naturally cut out the excess fats, sugars and salts that can sabotage your fitness goals. According to the British Nutrition Foundation, you should strive for:

- A third of your daily food intake to be bread, cereal or potatoes.
- Eating 5 different fruits and vegetables per day.
- Consuming 2 - 3 servings of milk or dairy per day.
- Sensible portions of meat, fish or alternatives, including 2 servings of fish per week.
- A serving or less of fatty or sugary foods per day, including sugary drinks.
- Drinking at least six glasses of water per day, and more when you are active.

Another way to help you enjoy a balanced diet is to try to "eat the rainbow." Choose fresh rather than pre-packaged foods, and make sure that you are eating a variety of colours. This will help you naturally consume the variety of vitamins and minerals your diet needs.

Getting, and staying, fit is a lifetime commitment. Though your new exercise and eating habits will soon become second nature, it is important to pay attention to your lifestyle to make sure that you don't slide back into old habits. Get fit, have fun and be well!

