

GUIDE

The Regional Centre for the Treatment of Eating Disorders (Adult Division)



The Ottawa | L'Hôpital
Hospital d'Ottawa

Disclaimer

This is general information developed by The Ottawa Hospital. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider who will be able to determine the appropriateness of the information for your specific situation.

Introduction

The Regional Centre for the Treatment of Eating Disorders at The Ottawa Hospital, General Campus, was established by Dr. Hany Bissada in 1997. The Ministry of Health had accepted his proposal and provided the necessary funding to develop an Intensive Day Hospital Program for Eating Disorders at the General Campus of The Ottawa Hospital. In 2001, a second proposal was accepted and the ministry funded a six bed inpatient unit for Symptom Interruption at the General Campus. Finally, in 2006, Dr. Bissada submitted a third proposal to develop an outpatient Eating Disorders Program which the ministry accepted to fund.

The Regional Centre for the Treatment of Eating Disorders at The Ottawa Hospital, General Campus, along with the Toronto Hospital Eating Disorders Program, are the only two centers in the Province of Ontario that provide comprehensive multidisciplinary treatment to adult patients with eating disorders. The Centre in Ottawa serves patients who suffer from serious eating disorders that include Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa and other eating disorders that are not otherwise specified. The Centre serves patients who reside in the Ottawa-Carleton region and Eastern Ontario, as well as the rest of the province of Ontario when there is a demand. The Centre is able to serve patients in both English and French since most members of the treatment team are bilingual.

The multidisciplinary team, led by Program Director and Psychiatrist, Dr. H. Bissada, includes:

- Advanced Practice Nurse/Clinical Manager
- Psychologist/Research Director
- Clinical Psychologists
- Registered Nurses
- Social Worker
- Registered Dietitians
- Occupational Therapist
- Program Evaluator
- Administrative/Clerical Staff

The Centre offers a comprehensive treatment that provides a contained and structured environment with therapy offered almost exclusively in a group format. In addition to the Consultation Service, the Centre offers the following three treatment modalities that are described below:

- I. An Intensive Day Hospital Program
- II. Hospitalization for symptom interruption and medical supervision
- III. An Outpatient Treatment Program

Patients are referred to the Centre's Consultation Service by their family physicians. Once a referral has been made to the Centre, the patient will be contacted for a full psychiatric assessment. The **Consultation Service** provides a comprehensive psychiatric assessment by an eating disorders specialist (psychiatrist/psychologist) to patients referred to the Centre by their family physicians. The severity of the eating disorder will determine which treatment program is most appropriate for each patient.

The Intensive Day Hospital Program is a 12-14 week day hospital program that accommodates a maximum of eight patients at any given time. It is offered to patients with serious forms of eating disorders.

The Inpatient Symptom Interruption Program (six-bed unit) is offered to patients with severe eating disorders who are at a high risk of being medically compromised because of severe weight loss and/or severe purging behavior. This 8-12 week hospitalization aims at interrupting these symptoms to achieve medical stabilization, before addressing the psychological issues that perpetuate the eating disorder.

The Outpatient Treatment Program offers five different treatment modalities: 1) Psychoeducation/CBT Groups, 2) Interpersonal Group Therapy (Relationship Group), 3) Readiness Groups, 4) Transition Groups and 5) Maintenance Support Groups.

1. **Psychoeducation/ CBT Group**

These groups are for patients with mildly to moderately severe eating disorders, who do not require the more intensive services as provided by the Day Hospital or the Inpatient Symptom Interruption Programs. This treatment modality offers nutritional counselling provided by the program dietitian, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) provided by the program psychologist.

2. **Interpersonal Group Therapy (Relationship Group)**

An interpersonal outpatient group for eating disorders is offered to patients who have already completed the CBT Outpatient group, Day Hospital, or Inpatient treatment. The goal of these sessions is to help patients examine and change problematic patterns in their relationships that contribute to the maintenance of their eating disorders. This group is led by the program psychologist.

3. **Readiness Groups**

These are two separate weekly group therapy programs offered to patients on the waiting list, to prepare them for either the Day Hospital or the Inpatient Symptom Interruption Programs. Readiness Groups run weekly for 10 weeks for patients awaiting admission to the Day Hospital Program and continues until admission for patients awaiting hospitalization. Patients are required to commit for the full course of this preparation therapy.

4. **Transition Groups**

These are the aftercare programs offered to patients immediately after their discharge from either the Intensive Day Hospital Program or the Inpatient Symptom Interruption Program. The goal is to consolidate gains made during the intensive treatment.

5. **Maintenance Support Group**

This weekly support group is offered to patients who are struggling with a long standing severe eating disorder, but remain reluctant to accept intensive treatment. The goal of

this support group is to provide medical supervision and to encourage these patients to accept active treatment for their eating disorder.

Referral to the Eating Disorders Treatment Center

Patients are referred to the Centre's Consultation Service by their family physicians. Special referral forms are available online at www.ottawahospital.on.ca, or through the program secretary at 613-737-8042. Once a referral is made to the Centre, the patient will be contacted for a full psychiatric assessment. After the assessment, a recommendation is made regarding which of the Centre's treatment programs is most suitable for the patient. Patients requiring admission to the Intensive Day Hospital Program will be invited to attend a team assessment with family members (parents/spouse). A meeting with team members will allow the patient and her/his family to familiarize themselves with the functioning and goals of the Intensive Day Hospital Program and to demonstrate to team members that the patient is motivated to work on the eating disorder and to adhere to the Program's norms.

Admission to either the Intensive Day Hospital Program or the Inpatient Symptom Interruption Program will depend on the availability of an opening in either program. Patients usually go on a waiting list until an opening is available. Attending the weekly Readiness Group is a recommended preparatory step prior to commencing either program.

Description of the Intensive Day Treatment Program

The Intensive Day Hospital Program combines both nutritional rehabilitation and intensive psychological treatment using multiple group therapy format. The treatment is provided by a multidisciplinary team serving eight patients struggling with eating disorders.

The Day Hospital Program operates four days a week, Monday to Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., (schedule enclosed in Appendix II). This treatment modality requires that meals (lunch, afternoon snack & supper) be completed in group under staff supervision, and that all daily group therapies be attended by the eight patients.

To achieve the goal of nutritional rehabilitation, an individualized meal plan is suggested by the dietitian for each patient on admission, and agreed upon jointly by the patient and the team prior to commencing treatment. The goal of the meal plan is to reach a stabilization weight appropriate for each patient (minimum Body Mass Index [BMI] of 20). Daily caloric intake will start initially at 1500 calories/day and will be readjusted weekly by increments of 300 calories/day. This is done to achieve a weight gain of a minimum one kg/week until the stabilization weight is reached. Then the daily caloric intake will be readjusted to a maintenance level so as to achieve weight stabilization.

Discharge from the day hospital normally takes place one to two weeks after reaching the stabilization weight for patients with Anorexia Nervosa, or after 12 weeks for patients with other eating disorders.

The intensive psychological treatment using the group therapy format aims at helping patients achieve the psychological insight required to substitute the eating disorder behavior with healthy coping skills. The group therapies use a cognitive-behavioral approach to address food related issues such as meal planning and eating attitudes. Also, other psychological themes including body image and its effect on self esteem, autonomy, assertiveness, interpersonal and family relationships, are addressed using a variety of therapeutic approaches.

Pharmacotherapy and family interventions are offered to individual patients when indicated.

Norms of the two Intensive Programs

The staff is always available to assist patients in maintaining the following program norms:

1. **Meals**

Patients are required to complete all meals provided within program hours. Individuals unable to complete meals on the first day of the program will be offered an equivalent amount of calories in the form of liquid supplementation. Beyond this time, meal completion at all times is an absolute requirement to remain in the program. It is not possible to accommodate a vegetarian approach for patients who have adopted a vegetarian diet for the purpose of facilitating weight loss.

2. **Binging and purging**

Patients are encouraged to refrain from binging and purging at all times and to discuss urges and symptoms in group therapy.

3. **Attendance**

Patients are expected to attend all program functions, between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Please refer to the program schedule in Appendix I & II.

4. **Substance abuse is grounds for discharge**

Patients are expected to abstain completely from alcohol and nonprescription psychoactive drugs during their stay in the program.

5. **Self-harm**

Patients must accept the goal of refraining from self-harm behaviors, including all forms of purging, during their stay in the program.

6. **Contact with outside therapists**

Our recommendation is that patients suspend contact with outside therapists during the majority of their stay in the program. Reconnecting with outside therapists is encouraged in the latter weeks of patients' stay.

7. **Exercise**

Exercise done by patients with eating disorders is related to the pursuit of thinness. For the first part of the program, patients are asked not to exercise outside program hours. Weekly leisure activities are included in both intensive programs.

8. **Bathrooms**

Bathroom use is expected to take place before meals and snacks to avoid the temptation to purge during or immediately after meals. During the rest of the day, bathroom use should take place between groups to avoid group disruption.

9. **Confidentiality**

Patients are expected to maintain as strictly confidential all information obtained about co-patients during the course of an admission. Clinical staff will transmit information to outside sources only with the explicit consent of the patient.

10. **Social contact among group members**

To facilitate social cohesiveness among group members, a group outing is organized by the patients every Tuesday evening after supper for the Day Hospital patients. This mandatory group outing will cost each group member a minimum of five dollars/week. All other social contacts between individual group members outside program hours should be shared the next day with the whole group in Community Meeting. We discourage the development of intense relationships among patients while they are in the program.

11. **Teaching**

The Ottawa Hospital, General Campus is a teaching hospital affiliated with the University of Ottawa. The Regional Center for the Treatment of Eating Disorders is committed to teaching and research. The teaching component involves training psychology, social work, nursing, occupational therapy, medical students, dietetic interns, psychiatric and family residents in the treatment of eating disorders. Patients will always be notified when staff or students are observing a group.

12. Program evaluation and research

Program evaluation is being conducted to monitor the quality of services rendered and to assess the outcome of the program. In addition, research will help us improve our understanding of the nature of eating disorders in order to improve the quality of care provided.

All patients are asked to complete questionnaires at the beginning, during, and at the completion of their treatment as well as at a six and twelve month's follow-up. We request that patients sign a consent form to allow the use of the information compiled at the Centre for these purposes. Confidentiality will be respected to the utmost.

13. Finances

Treatment costs are covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). Out of province patients should discuss their situation with the Center's Director and the hospital administration.

Patients are expected to cover the cost of their meal outings, meal preparation, and group outings on Tuesday evenings; this amounts to approximately \$20 per week. All meals taken in the hospital will be provided by the Program. Inpatients will obtain their medication from the hospital, day hospital patients will be provided with prescriptions for their medication.

14. Accommodation

The "Rotel" residence is located on the premises of the University of Ottawa Health Complex where the Ottawa Hospital, General Campus is located. Rooms are available for day hospital patients at reasonable rates. This charge does not include daily breakfast or meals on weekends which may be purchased in the hospital cafeteria. To contact the Rotel, please dial: 613-733-1412 (local calls) or 1-800-267-4700 (long distance toll free calls), or go to their website at www.rotel.ca.

15. Length of stay

Patients with Anorexia Nervosa who require weight restoration, are expected to reach their stabilization weight before considering discharge. To consolidate their gains, they are

encouraged to plan their discharge one to two weeks after reaching their stabilization weight.

For patients with other eating disorders, who require normalization of eating without weight restoration, the length of stay will be individually determined but will average 12 weeks.

Exclusion Criteria

These two Intensive Programs are designed to serve competent and voluntary patients who are seeking treatment for their serious eating disorder. Patients who are actively self destructive and/or suicidal may require hospitalization in a general psychiatry bed. Those patients whose medical status is seriously compromised will require management in a medical setting. Finally, patients with eating disorders and active substance abuse disorder will have to address the substance abuse problem by seeking treatment in a drug rehabilitation program prior to being considered for either Intensive Treatment Programs.

Psychoeducation/ CBT Group

Purpose

This group is for patients with mildly to moderately severe eating disorders, who do not require the more intensive services provided by the Day Hospital or the Inpatient Symptom Interruption Programs.

Format

This group is run twice weekly for four weeks, then once weekly for the remaining eight weeks. Each group session lasts an hour and a half. **This outpatient program requires a commitment by the patient for the full 12 weeks.** Attendance is monitored and allowed absences are limited. Participants are encouraged to interact and challenge one another during this group. Reading material is assigned to stimulate discussion.

Content

This group has two components: a nutrition group offered by the program dietitian, and a psychotherapy group offered by the program psychologist.

The group sessions are semi-structured and are focused on helping patients control symptoms through cognitive behavioural techniques such as maintaining food records (mandatory) and challenging thoughts, beliefs, and values that maintain the eating disorder. Thus, the goal of these first sessions is to help patients reduce/eliminate problematic behaviours such as restriction, bingeing, and purging. Psychotherapy sessions, also encourage patients to explore emotional triggers for symptoms, ambivalence about recovery, personal values and goals, as well as body image issues.

Program Evaluation and Research

Participants will be requested to complete questionnaires and interviews both before and after the group to improve the quality of care delivered and to improve our understanding of the eating disorders. All personal information will be kept strictly confidential.

Interpersonal Group Therapy (Relationship Group)

Purpose

This interpersonal outpatient group is offered to patients with eating disorders who have already completed initial treatment within our program in the form of the CBT Outpatient group, Day Hospital, or Inpatient treatment.

Format

This is an on-going, open group and patients are asked to make a minimum 6 month commitment to this group. Patients will have up to 12 months to attend the

group. All potential group members are assessed for suitability prior to beginning the group. These assessment sessions entail 1 or 2 individual sessions with the psychologist that includes questionnaires, feedback, and the opportunity to patients to set goals for treatment content.

Content

Patients are encouraged to talk about their relationships, both those that they have inside and outside of the group. The goal of the group is to help patients examine and change problematic patterns in their relationships that contribute to the maintenance of their eating disorders and other psychological distress. This is accomplished by encouraging patients to explore their underlying needs, emotions, and coping styles in their most significant relationships with parents, spouses, family members, and close friends.

Given that this group is semi-structured, the onus falls on group members to raise issues for exploration; there will be no set agenda for sessions. As group continues, group members are strongly encouraged to try out new ways of interacting, first with fellow group members, and later with significant people outside of the group. This group is led by the program psychologist.

Readiness Groups

Purpose

The main objective of the readiness groups is to prepare patients for more intensive therapy offered in the Inpatient Symptom Interruption Program and the Intensive Day Hospital Program. Participants will become familiar with group work and recovery processes. Readiness Groups help patients to recognize the issues and behaviours they need to work on to achieve recovery.

Another important goal of Readiness Groups is to increase motivation and instill hope that it is possible to beat the disorder.

Format

The Day Hospital readiness group runs weekly, for ten sessions. Weekly sessions for the Inpatient Symptom Interruption group are ongoing until participants are admitted to the Inpatient Program (pending bed availability). Both readiness groups are one and a half hours in length and require a commitment by the patient to attend regularly.

Content

Each group session focuses on correcting nutrition and eating behaviours as well as developing psychological insight into reasons for why the disorder is present. The sessions are semi-structured and are focused on two mandatory weekly recording sheets: a weekly food diary and a weekly reflection sheet. In each session, patients are encouraged to make changes and move towards healthier choices.

Program Evaluation and Research

Participants will be requested to complete questionnaires and interviews before, during, and after the group to improve the quality of care delivered and to improve our understanding of the eating disorders. All personal information will be kept strictly confidential.

Transition Groups

Purpose

This group is offered separately to patients who have successfully completed the Inpatient Symptom Interruption Program and to those who have successfully completed the Intensive Day Hospital Program. The purpose of this aftercare program is to sustain and consolidate the gains made during the intensive treatment.

Format

This six months treatment modality is offered twice weekly to patients discharged from the Inpatient Symptom Interruption Program, and once weekly to patients discharged from the Day Hospital Program. Patients start the Transition Group the week immediately following their discharge from their respective intensive program.

Content

Transition Group Therapy is an aftercare support group led by members of the multidisciplinary team. Participants are encouraged to discuss issues that may be interfering with full recovery from their eating disorder. Common issues include body image concerns, strategies to avoid eating disorder symptoms, maintenance of a non dieting orientation and adherence to the meal plan. Difficulties in relationships and vocational maladjustment are discussed in this group since these issues may trigger a relapse of the eating disorder, if not properly addressed.

During Transition Therapy, patients with unresolved major problems such as sexual abuse or chronic depression will be strongly encouraged to arrange for long term individual therapy in the community.

Appendix I

The Inpatient Symptom Interruption Program: Weekly Group Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 a.m.– 9:00 a.m.	Supervised Breakfast				
9:00 a.m.– 9:30 a.m.	Self Expression Through Art/ Meal Preparation	Medical Review		Menu Marking and Weekend Planning	
9:30 a.m.– 10:00 a.m.					
10:00 a.m.– 10:30 a.m.			Community Meeting	Body Image	
10:30 a.m.– 11:30 a.m.	Community Meeting			Community Meeting	
11:30 a.m.– 12:00 noon	Free Time				
12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	Supervised Lunch				
1:00 p.m.– 2:30 p.m.	Assertive Training	Relationship Group	Coping Skills		
2:45 p.m.– 3:00 p.m.	Supervised Snack/Snack Outing				
3:00 p.m.– 4:00 p.m.		O.T. Workshop/ Nutrition	Nutrition	Emotions Group/Grocery Shopping	
4:00 p.m.– 4:45 p.m.		(alternate weeks)		(alternate weeks)	
4:45 p.m.– 5:00 p.m.	Free Time for Relaxation				
5:00 p.m.– 6:00 p.m.	Supervised Supper				
7:30 p.m.– 9:00 p.m.	Social Event				
8:45 p.m.– 9:00 p.m.	Supervised Snack				

Appendix II

The Intensive Day Hospital Program: Weekly Group Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00 a.m.– 10:00 a.m.	Community meeting	Community Meeting	Medical Review	Community Meeting	N O D A Y H O S P I T A L
10:00 a.m.– 11:30 a.m.	Shopping and Meal Preparation/ Supervised Lunch Outings (alternate weeks)	Body Image	Community Meeting	Assertive Training	
11:30 a.m.– 12:00 noon		Free Time	Menu Marking	Free Time	
12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.	Supervised Lunch				
1:00 p.m.– 2:30 p.m.	Family Relations Group	Relationship Group	Healthy Attitudes	Menu Marking and Weekend Planning	
2:45 p.m.– 3:00 p.m.	Supervised Snack/Snack Outing				
3:00 p.m.– 4:00 p.m.	Self Expression Through Art	Education	Staff Meeting (free time for patients)	Grocery Shopping (alternate weeks)	
4:00 p.m.– 4:45 p.m.			Feedback Group	Leisure Activities Group	
4:45 p.m.– 5:00 p.m.	Free Time for Relaxation				
5:00 p.m.– 6:00 p.m.	Supervised Supper				
6:00 p.m.– 8:00 p.m.		Social Event			

