

Press Release

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Do you know somebody who is suffering from an eating disorder?

It is Eating Disorder Awareness Week, Monday 11th to Sunday 17th February, and the Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is asking people if they know someone who might be suffering from one.

To mark the week, the Sandwell Eating Disorder Team is launching a 12-month campaign to raise awareness and encourage early detection of this serious mental illness following an increase in hospital admissions over the last 12 months (June 2011 to June 2012) by 16 per cent.

The team will be going out to GP practices across the borough with information aiming to support GPs to detect people as early as possible who may be suffering with an eating disorder. They will update on what specialist services are available from the team, so that GPs can encourage people to engage with services early on and recover without the need for a hospital admission.

“An eating disorder is not a ‘slimmer’s disease’. If you know someone who is starving themselves or binge eating they could well be trying to cope with problems that have nothing to do with food,” says Ann Fennell, Specialist Dietitian in Eating Disorders and Service Lead.

“Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa often begin when you want to avoid painful feelings. It becomes a solution for difficult problems and a way of controlling something in your life. Eventually the eating disorder can take control of you. If you can acknowledge that you may have a problem, vital help is available.”

Eating disorders:

- are not primarily about food, but about underlying emotional turmoil
- include Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia, Nervosa and Binge Eating Disorder
- can affect women and men of all ages, from all backgrounds and ethnic groups
- can be helped by talking to someone and understanding the psychological factors

For more information on eating disorders you can contact the Sandwell Eating Disorder Service on 0121 612 8301 or visit www.bcpft.nhs.uk. Referrals to the service are accepted from GPs and mental health professionals.

Eating Disorder Awareness Week is organised by a charity called Beat. They provide; helplines, online support and a network of UK-wide self-help groups to help young people and adults in the UK beat their eating disorders.

*****ENDS*****

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (BCPFT) is the major provider of:

- mental health to people of all ages in Sandwell and Wolverhampton.
- specialist health learning disability services in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.
- community healthcare services for children, young people and families in Dudley.

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