

# Understanding Eating Disorders

## Prevention, Detection and Support

This training aims to give you a breadth of knowledge of these serious mental illnesses which affect 1.6 million people in the UK.

This course is relevant for those working in Counselling, Psychotherapy, Mental Health and Social care. All eating problems are significant and can only be understood as an expression of underlying issues and difficulties. They contain a message that goes beyond the limits of the behaviour itself. Eating is never a mere physical function: it contains and carries much more than is evident on the surface. As professionals, if we ignore the meaning of the eating pattern, we miss the essential symbolism of the problem.

### **This course covers a range of material including:**

- Defining diagnostic criteria for Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Binge Eating Disorder and the Atypical Eating Disorders
- Physical / Medical/ Psychological / Behavioural Signs and Symptoms
- Risk Factors that contribute to the development of an eating disorder in a sports environment
- The Female Athlete Triad;
  - Screening, risk stratification and diagnosis
  - Health consequences associated with the Triad
  - Treatment of the Female Athlete Triad
  - Clearance and return to play
- “Good athlete” traits and characteristics of Anorexia Nervosa: Are they similar?
- Identification difficulties
- Recommendations for Coaches

# Sport & Eating Disorders

## Understanding & Managing the Risks

There is strong and consistent evidence that eating disorders are prevalent in sport and especially in weight sensitive sports such as endurance, weight category and aesthetic sports as well as jumping events. These illnesses are not only common but lead to significant physical and psychological morbidity and impaired performances.

Sports organisations, and by extension the professionals whose job it is to help and support athletes, have important roles in dealing with these conditions. Preventative practices can be adopted if there is an understanding of how the sports environment contributes to the development of eating disorders. As an ex GB athlete who has achieved recovery from an eating disorder and a Mental Health Practitioner I believe I am well qualified to offer advice to coaches, parents, and other athletes with eating disorders.

Owing to the multifactorial aetiology of the Female Athlete Triad an optimal treatment approach must address the underlying cause, identify how low energy availability developed in the athlete, and involve a specialist professional team including one or more of the following: Sports Dietitian, Exercise Physiologist, Sports Physician, and Mental Health Practitioner.

This course is relevant for coaches, parents, athletes and anyone working in the sporting arena.

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