

Eating Disorder Script

April Gates, Program Co-ordinator:

Welcome to Homewood's Eating Disorders Program. For more than two decades, we have specialized in the treatment of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. We are proud to welcome you to our new unit designed specifically to accommodate the needs of Eating Disorder patients.

Narrator: Program Strengths

Homewood's Eating Disorders Program specializes in treating both men and women aged 16 years and older. The program is voluntary and client-centred, focusing on the physical, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the patient.

April Gates, Program Co-ordinator, believes Homewood's Eating Disorders program has many distinctive features that set it apart from other programs in Canada.

April:

Interdisciplinary Team Approach

One of the advantages of our program is its size. As one of the largest in-patient Eating Disorders program in Canada, our comprehensive interdisciplinary treatment team is able to offer patients a variety of treatment options. Team members are involved in all aspects of patient care, from assessment to treatment and discharge planning.

Interdisciplinary treatment team:

- Nurses
- Psychiatrist
- Physician
- Psychologist
- Social workers
- Family Therapist

- Dietician
- Diet Technician
- Recreation Therapist
- Chaplain
- Occupational Therapist
- Horticultural Therapist
- Students, and
- Volunteers

We often hear that patients really appreciate the fact that they are with like-minded co-patients – people who have also experienced eating disorders. Often times, in out-patient treatment prior to coming in they may have met individually with a therapist or dietician and they haven't had the opportunity to learn from one another and feel that they are not unique or different - that they have a common illness that they share and that they can heal together. And we always say you heal in community not in isolation.

Co-existing Conditions

We are also able to address co-existing conditions in our patients – providing support and therapy to those who have been diagnosed with additional psychiatric or addiction issues.

Treatment Approaches

The Eating Disorders Program at Homewood uses best practice treatment approaches, including Enhanced Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Dialectical Behaviour Therapy. Together, these methods teach patients adaptive coping strategies, to meet their needs and enhance their quality of life. Patients develop important skills in:

- Identifying and managing emotions
- Tolerating emotional distress and reducing vulnerability, which previously led to eating disorder behaviours

- Learning effective interpersonal skills that help them manage conflict and set healthy boundaries.
- Mindfulness training that involves managing one's attention
- Motivation enhancement strategies to assist and encourage them to fully participate in their own recovery process.

Most treatment is group-based although some individual counselling is offered.

Patients are very excited about the newness of the unit for one thing. It's a very zen-like, peaceful, calm environment. The patients are enjoying the outdoor garden space with a fountain that changes colours by remote and just the visual aspect of being able to look out the look-out lounge and see the trees and that nature is right at their back door.

Narrator: During the time they are in the Eating Disorders program, patients are expected to:

- stop their eating disorder behaviours in conjunction with learning new skills to manage urges and emotions
- take responsibility for their recovery
- develop personal goals for their treatment, and
- be open and honest, putting an end to secrets which often drive the eating disorder

Being a Patient at Homewood

The length of the program is tailored to each patient, based on their individual clinical needs. Patients with bulimia generally remain in the program for an average of 12 weeks. Patients with anorexia often stay longer if additional time is needed for weight restoration.

Patients begin most days at 7 a.m. Once or twice a week they attend a weigh-in prior to breakfast. For the first few weeks, all meals and snacks are served on

the unit and supervised for up to an hour afterward. Patients are expected to fully complete each meal. Further into the program, patients eat meals unsupervised in the Patient Dining Room.

During the day, patients participate in groups.

Weekends and Evenings

Evenings and weekends are free, a time to socialize with other patients and visitors, complete homework assignments and to practise healthy behaviours.

April: Role of the Family

Families and other support people appreciate the opportunity to be involved with the patient as they progress through the program. We offer family therapy with our two family therapists on the team and that can be done by phone, in person or over Skype. We also offer family day which is a wonderful opportunity for families to get together and share experiences living with an eating disorder and how it affects the family and to gain some skills in how to manage and how to support their loved one in their recovery.

The Program's Offerings are Deep

Many patients come into the program expecting the program to just deal with eating or just deal with curbing compulsive exercising patterns but there is so much more to the program than eating and exercising.

We help patients learn to identify and express their emotions and how to be assertive with one another and develop healthier interpersonal coping skills and how to set boundaries and I think that goes beyond what a patient expects coming in the doors.

April:

Program Effectiveness

- Many patients who complete the Eating Disorders Program consider their time at Homewood to be a life-changing experience. The majority of patients experience improvement, particularly in the behaviours and characteristics that are closely associated with eating disorders. Close to 95 per cent of patients surveyed say they were helped by the program and would recommend it to others needing treatment.

For more information about referrals, the admission process, and program outcomes, please visit our website at www.homewood.org.