

**Beat**  
Eating disorders

**CPD**<sup>®</sup>  
The CPD Certification Service

# **BRIDGING THE GAP**

**Commissioning Guide**

**[beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://beateatingdisorders.org.uk)**

## ABOUT THE COURSE

Bridging the Gap is a **CPD accredited** training programme for university professionals that aims to improve the early intervention rates for people with eating disorders. Delivered by eating disorder clinicians with extensive experience in the field, it is designed to help staff identify when a student is suspected of having an eating disorder, if they are well enough for study, and other important considerations, including inquest conclusions from the [Averil Hart tragedy](#).

## IN PERSON

The training can be delivered in-person within a single day from 9:30-16:30. The seven hour session (including breaks) led by one of our trained clinicians is suited to a maximum of 20 delegates to ensure participants are able to receive specific feedback and support for their own training needs.

## ONLINE

The training can be delivered online within a single day from 9:30-16:30, or split over two mornings, a week apart. The online seven hour session, or 2 x three and a half hour sessions, are suited to a maximum of 15 delegates to ensure participants are able to receive specific feedback and support for their own training needs.

## PRICING

Various factors effect the price of the training, including, the chosen delivery format and setting for the sessions (e.g. venue hire). Our Public Sector Commissioning Team are happy to provide you with a quote if you are interested in commissioning Bridging the Gap. You can contact them via their email: [PublicSectorCommissioning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:PublicSectorCommissioning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

*"A powerful day with great balance between the impacts of eating disorders and how we can work to raise awareness and help."*

## WHY UNDERSTAND EATING DISORDERS?

University is an exciting time – throughout their degree, students may live independently for the first time, shape their professional future, and form lifelong relationships. But with all this comes pressure from every direction, and for people with eating disorders or who are vulnerable to developing one, university is a minefield.

As well as the usual academic and social pressure, they must navigate:

- Being away from their trusted support network.
- Making and/or eating food in a new environment.
- A new GP or eating disorder service.
- Telling new people about the eating disorder – or keeping it hidden.

Eating disorders are secretive illnesses, and the university environment can mask worsening symptoms and make it harder for students to stay connected to treatment services and to their family. Luckily, universities can step in and bridge the gap.

*“I have had lots of superb feedback from many staff who attended and a real sense of ‘we need to get better at what we do’ – and I am confident they will, now that they are armed with a better understanding.”*



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- How the university environment could contribute to an eating disorder’s development.
- How to spot the early signs of an eating disorder.
- The challenges students with eating disorders face.
- Approaching a student you’re worried about and supporting them to get the help they need.
- Assessing whether a student is well enough for study.
- Signposting to treatment services.

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

Bridging the Gap ensures delegates understand and can spot the signs and symptoms of eating disorders. It also focuses on giving the core tools required to provide effective support to aid early intervention. It focuses on the following areas:

Improved understanding of:

- The three main eating disorders – causes, prevalence.
- Physical, psychological, emotional, and behavioural signs and symptoms
- Effects of illness

Increased knowledge of risk management and treatment guidelines:

- Learning from Beat Helpline feedback and Averil Hart tragedy
- NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) Guidelines

Improved understanding of:

- Possible boundaries faced by students
- Sensitivities associated with each condition
- How to access services

Improved confidence in:

- Making an empathic connection
- Approaching someone with identified symptoms
- Managing risks
- Ability to act, to make a referral or to support someone affected



***"A comprehensive, well thought out day of training with facilitators who have extensive knowledge about eating disorders personally, and professionally"***

## ABOUT EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders destroy lives. They steal childhoods, devastate relationships and pull families apart. And they can be fatal. They are serious mental illnesses and include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder. There are **1.25 million people in the UK** with an eating disorder at any one time, with around **130,000 falling ill each year**. While more women are affected than men, and eating disorders commonly emerge during adolescence, they affect people of all ages and genders.

On average, it takes someone over 3 years from falling ill before they seek treatment, followed by more than 6 years of waiting, therapy, semi-recovery and relapse before they get better. PwC estimates that this costs the NHS £4 billion per year. However, it doesn't have to be this way: if someone starts treatment early, they have a good chance of making a rapid and sustained recovery.

Parents, siblings and other family members are also seriously affected. They should be enabled to help their loved one into a quick and sustained recovery but they can only play their role if they have full understanding, are fully supported and engaged by the health services, and if their own wellbeing is protected. However, they commonly report not being given useful information when a loved one is diagnosed, so they can't stop things getting worse while waiting for treatment to start and they don't know how to support their treatment regime. Families and carers also find that supporting the sufferer has a negative impact on their own physical and mental health.

In a study by Beat of students with eating disorders:

- **32%** said they were diagnosed with an eating disorder while at university.
- **39%** had to drop out or take a break from studies.
- **69%** had difficulties accessing treatment and support.

*"My education was disrupted repeatedly.  
I had to leave uni four times before I  
finally graduated this year."*

## CONTACT US

Equip your staff with the knowledge and skills they need to make a real difference in the lives of those affected by eating disorders.

Contact us today to learn more and join us in the fight against eating disorders. Get in touch with our Training team if you have further questions about the content of the programme via email at [training@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:training@beateatingdisorders.org.uk).

Get in touch with our Commissioning team if you would like to know our availability or receive a quote via email at [PublicSectorCommissioning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:PublicSectorCommissioning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk).

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