

Developing Dolphins

Empowering carers to provide the best possible guidance as they help a loved one towards recovery.

A series of five weekday evening sessions, delivered over Zoom by experienced eating disorder clinicians and lived experience tutors. Developing Dolphins uses the 'New Maudsley method' to teach parents and carers to gently 'swim' alongside their loved one, giving them guidance to make their own progress.

Who is it for?

Parents, partners, siblings, and others caring for a loved one of any age who has had an eating disorder for no more than five years.

Intended outcome

Carers will understand the eating disorder and be able to provide support in a manner suited to their situation, improving communications and helping their loved one engage with treatment and achieve recovery.

Duration and intensity

One two-and-a-half-hour session each week for five weeks.

Details

The workshops will equip carers with the skills and knowledge needed to support a loved one suffering from an eating disorder and to help them to break free from the difficulties that prevent recovery.

The course is based on the principles of the New Maudsley method developed by Professor Janet Treasure, which proposes that interpersonal factors can develop within families and maintain the illness. The course engages the analogy of different animals' communication styles and encourages carers to be more like the dolphin, encouraging and supporting progress. It teaches skills including the use of motivational interviewing to provide calm and compassionate meal support, and engaging intrinsic motivation to change.

Carers are also taught the application of behaviour change principles and about the cognitive and emotional styles associated with eating disorder behaviour. Participants at previous Developing Dolphins courses reported a 71% increase in their skills and confidence to support their loved one's recovery from an eating disorder.

Carers receive an information pack and materials that they can refer to and continue to learn from in the long term, including Professor Janet Treasure's *Skills-based Learning for Caring for a Loved One with an Eating Disorder*.

“What we learnt was enormously helpful, and it was very comforting to meet other parents experiencing similar things to ourselves.”

“It was really helpful and has made me feel much more positive and optimistic that things can change.”

More information

For more information about this service or a partnership with Beat, please contact the Public Sector Commissioning team via publicsectorcommissioning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk.

This is one of a series of services which Beat provides in support of clinical eating disorder services. A full list is available at www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/commission-us.

Other services for carers of people with eating disorders:

- Nexus carer support: weekly coaching calls from a trained Beat Programme Officer.
- Solace: weekly video peer support groups facilitated by a clinician and a Lived Experience volunteer.
- Raising Resilience: a follow-up to Developing Dolphins via weekly live workshops over Zoom to help carers tackle specific challenges.

Beat and the public sector working in partnership

Beat works with public sector partners across the United Kingdom to support people and their loved ones in their recovery journeys. We can provide non-clinical support quickly, effectively, and as early as possible, to complement the work of health professionals.

We can provide some of our services free of charge. For other services we have to pass on our costs to you, but we never take a profit from our work with public sector partners.

We provide services in the following areas:

- Direct support to people with an eating disorder
- Training and support for family members and others caring for a loved one with an eating disorder
- Support and training for clinicians
- Strategic support to health care providers

We develop all our services in consultation with clinical and academic partners. We co-produce our services with our beneficiaries, with guidance from our multidisciplinary Clinical Advisory Group of senior clinicians, who provide guidance across all our areas of work.

Our services are delivered by trained Beat personnel – both staff and volunteers. These include experienced eating disorder clinicians, trained Beat staff and volunteers with ongoing access to supervision by an experienced clinician.