

Interventions for youth with eating disorders and body image issues

Dr. Joanne Gusella

Team Leader, Eating Disorders Clinic

IWK Health Centre,

Halifax, Nova Scotia

What treatment to choose?

- Consider
 - diagnosis
 - age
 - physical state
 - personality

Why Choose Group format?

- Advantages

- universality
- installation of hope
- cohesion
- social learning

- Disadvantages

- competition
- social learning
- moving backwards not forwards

Externalizing the Problem

- Activities that convey interest in the youth beyond his/her eating disorder
- Separating the problem from the healthy self (e.g., the Problem Pendulum activity)
- Exploring the past, present and future self

Encouraging Self-expression

- Doodling can be comforting, and expressive
- Give them Black Folders at the start of group sessions, and gel pens to doodle with, they can color their world however they feel, and write down anything that inspires them in group.....

Rituals provide safety

- Provide predictability by having a structure to your sessions
- **Hi/Lo Feeling Thermometer** can be used to rate intensity of feelings, estimate past and future emotions.

Rituals provide safety

- Goal Setting and checking
 - SMART GOALS (CMHA)
 - Specific-
 - Measurable-
 - Achievable-
 - Rewarded-
 - Time-Limited-

Explore Motivation to Change

- Have them complete the *Motivational Stages of Change for Adolescents Recovering from an Eating Disorder (MSCARED)* as a springboard to discuss their stage of change and decisional balance

Give them a map of recovery

- Give youth a copy of **Recovery Mountain** and have them indicate where they are at on the mountain, given their stage on the **MSCARED**. Discuss with them, making reference to the visual image.

Explore their body image from two different perspectives

- Using the **Body Image Self-Evaluation Lens (BISCL)**, have youth colour silhouettes and compare their view of their body from an ornamental and an instrumental perspective.
- This exercise helps them to consider alternative way of looking at their body, that focuses on function over form.

Other body image techniques

- Have youth draw a life size version of how they think they look, then have them stand in the outline, and you trace around their body their actual size. Can be done against a wall or on the floor. Discuss.
- Have youth complete the Perceived Body Image Scale (Manley....) Discuss

Resources Available

- MSCARED
- Recovery Mountain
- Hi/Lo Feeling Thermometer
- The Problem Pendulum
- Body Image Self Evaluation Lens
- Selected references and articles