Eating disorders – support for parents

There are times in many children's lives where they may develop fussiness or seem to lose their appetite following an illness. Eating disorders however are more than this. Eating disorders have a huge effect on someone's mental and physical health. It is common for the child to feel anxious or depressed – controlling eating in some way can make the child feel that they can cope with the difficult feelings they are experiencing. Additionally, some neurotypes are statistically more likely to experience eating disorders than others.

If your child has an eating disorder, they may not be over or under weight. Some may overeat, some may undereat. Some may make themselves sick after eating. Some may control the types of foods they eat because the sensory experience is so difficult for them to tolerate, or because a previous experience whilst eating certain foods is linked to a negative experience.

Thankfully, Facebook and Instagram has blocked under 18s to see harmful content around eating disorders, but it is important to ensure that age restrictions are added to all electronic devices that your child uses to prevent perpetuation of an eating disorder via 'support' from unethical areas.

Importantly, the earlier your child receives professional and family support, the easier the recovery will be. The first step is to ask for an appointment with a GP. Even if your child does not want to attend, you can still go for advice as their parent/carer. The following websites contain some useful information and tips to help you navigate this difficult period.

NHS advice https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/eating-disorders/advice-for-parents/

Young Minds Eating Disorders and Problems | Parent Guide | YoungMinds

Autism and Eating disorders

ARFID https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/about-eating-disorders/types/arfid/

Helplines Helplines - Beat

Mind Youth Support https://www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/our-services/young-people/youth-peer-support-groups/