

Family-Based Treatment (FBT)

Family Based Treatment (FBT) for eating disorders is commonly known as The Maudsley Model and is used to treat adolescents with Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa. FBT aims to assist the family, namely the parents, to bring about recovery in their child with an eating disorder. The core principles of the Maudsley Model are:

1. No one is to blame for the development of the eating disorder
2. The eating disorder is externalised or separated from the sufferer and the eating disorder is targeted to reduce blame and criticism
3. The family are viewed as the best resource to bring about recovery
4. Hospitalisation is a short term solution for the problem
5. Each family member is assigned a specific role

FBT is suitable for people under the age of 19 who have had their eating disorder for three years or less. Treatment typically occurs over a 12-month period and is highly structured consisting of three phases:

Phase One: Refeeding and Weight Restoration. The parents are charged with the responsibility of refeeding their child and containing eating disorder behaviours. The clinician coaches the parents to manage problematic eating disorder behaviours and brainstorm barriers to refeeding.

Phase Two: Returning Control of Eating to the Adolescent. The parents gradually hand back control of eating to their child whilst managing any lapses. Family issues and relationships are simultaneously addressed as the focus slowly moves away from weight and food.

Phase Three: Addressing Adolescent Issues and Treatment Completion. The final stage assumes that the young person is weight restored and in control of their eating behaviours. The focus is on addressing normal adolescent issues and strengthening a sense of identity without the eating disorder.

If you are a clinician working within a specialist public mental health service and would like to be trained in using The Maudsley Model Approach please go to the Training and Events section of the CEED website for training dates.

For further information on Family Based Treatment please refer to the following books and websites:

1. Maudsley Parents: www.maudsleyparents.org

2. Skills Based Learning for caring for a loved one with an eating disorder: The New Maudsley Method. Janet Treasure, Grainne Smith and Anna Crane
3. Help your teenager beat an eating disorder. James Lock and Daniel Le Grange
4. My Kid is Back. June Alexander www.junealexander.com
5. Treating Bulimia in Adolescents: A Family Based Approach. Daniel Le Grange and James Lock