



Open Minded Chats

October 2022



**Recent Trends of Children
Presenting with
Symptoms of Eating
Disorders/Disordered
Eating and Self-Harm**

DYNAMIC DISCUSSION

Self Harm and Eating Disorder/Disorder Eating

Agenda

- Trends
- What is self-harm and Disordered Eating/Eating Disorder
- Signs & Symptoms
- What can parents/caregivers do
- How can Lionheart Foundation support
- Resources

Sensitive Material

- Distress Centre – 403-266-HELP (4357)

What are the latest trends

Currently:

- High representation within 10-16- & 20–24-year-old age groups
- Highest presentation mostly among girls/females but there is an increasing amount of males/boys
- 30% identify as Queer
- 40% identify as either newcomer & Racialized
- 20 % identify as Indigenous
- 60 % are low/lower income

What is self harm

Definition

- harming your own body on purpose
- usually not intended to be fatal
- ~5% of individuals engage in self harm behaviors
- can be short term (situational) or long-term (repetitive)

Examples:

- Cutting or carving
- Self hitting, punching objects, or head banging
- Burning or branding
- Hair pulling
- Poking, scratching, picking, or rubbing
- Breaking bones or bruising
- Biting

What is Eating Disorders vs. Disordered Eating

Eating Disorder

- Meeting criteria for specific disorders (DSM-5)
- Only one disorder is recognized at a time
- Timelines on disordered eating behaviours
- Significant focus on body image or body avoidance
- Adverse health complications (vitals)



Disordered Eating

- Restriction of calories
- Compulsive eating
- Binge eating – loss of control
- Irregular, chaotic eating patterns
- Ignoring signs of hunger
- Secrecy food consumption
- Use of laxatives or weight loss medication
- Emotional eating

Signs & Symptoms of Self Harm

- Scarring – often in a pattern
- Unexplained open sores or accidents
- Covering up or hiding injuries – long sleeves or long pants – unseasonable dress
- Possession of or fixation on sharp objects for unexplained reasons
- Difficulties in interpersonal relationships
- Impulsivity
- Emotional dysregulation
- Behavioral outbursts
- Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, helplessness
- Feelings of Shame & guilt associated with the injuries
- Low self-esteem & Self-confidence

Signs & Symptoms of Eating Disorder/Disordered Eating

- Changes in past eating behaviors – strict eating patterns (rules), picky, dieting, increased appetite
- Noticeable weight loss or weight gain – change in menstruation, clothing size
- Fatigue, lethargy, mood fluctuations – dizziness, increased sleep, outbursts, extreme moods
- Unusual or secretive behavior around food consumption – avoiding group meals, hiding or hoarding food
- Long periods of time without food intake – eating once a day or reduce caloric intake
- Frequent use of the bathroom or extended period of time in the bathroom
- Excessive or fixation on exercise routines and/or preoccupation with weight – rigid mindset, compensation behaviors
- Changes in beliefs about eating and food intake – vegan, rituals, “clean”, healthy vs. unhealthy
- Poor body image – criticisms, body envy, poor hygiene, dress in over sized clothes, avoid or frequent checking in the mirror
- Bad breath, sleep problems, feeling cold, fainting, stomach aches

What can Parents & Caregivers do

- ***Regulate your self – you can not support someone who is struggling when you are struggling yourself***
- Have the difficult conversation
 - When you are ready
 - Use empathy, supportive, and understanding instead of blame or threats
- Reach out and get supports yourself
- Educate yourself
 - Get reliable information
 - Consult a professional
- If you young person acknowledges a problem, have some supports available on hand to discuss
- Be present, attuned, attentive, and responsive (PAAR)
- Be reliable and reasonable with expectations
- Provide a safe place – guide instead of demand
- BE BRAVE



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Can we Help?

Background/Context

Pre-Pandemic Context

- 14% of Canadian youth met the criteria for a mental health disorder
- 15-24 age group had the highest incidence than any group in Canada
- Less than 25% received appropriate treatment

Impact of the Pandemic:

- Doubling of the presentation of anxiety and depression → Local surge in demand
- Older female youth are @ highest risk
- Long wait lists across the system
- Longer-term impact is relatively unknown

Our History

Established in 2009 with the goal of providing access to specialized, longer-term & individualized treatment to young people and their families affected by anxiety & anxiety-driven mental health issues/disorders.

Why Lionheart?

Clinical Focus

Only community-based mental health Program with a specialized focus on (internalizing) anxiety-related issues and treatment for adolescents ~ special focus on females/girls

Treatment

Only program focused on longer-term treatment – no limitation on length or frequency of sessions

Practice Model

Individualized based on the expertise within our partner network.
Multiple service locations, times and modalities based on each client's unique needs

Connect to the Lionheart Foundation

- Complete an Intake Application online @ www.lionheartfoundation.ca
- Request a referral to a therapist within our network
- System Navigation and additional referrals to community resources is available
- Subsidy program available to eligible families/young people to remove/reduce financial barriers
- Supports offered through community engagement and education throughout the year with subsidy support available for eligible families/young people
 - Parent/caregiver seminars, youth groups, community education

The logo for the Lionheart Foundation features a dark blue circular emblem containing a white silhouette of a dog's head in profile, facing right. A small, solid orange heart is positioned on the dog's chest. The text "LIONHEART" is written in a dark blue, bold, sans-serif font above the emblem, and "FOUNDATION" is written in the same font below it.

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QUESTIONS?

Additional resources

Eating Disorder/Disordered Eating

Silver Linings Foundation <https://www.silverliningsfoundation.ca/>

National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) <https://www.nedic.ca>

Bellwood Health Services <https://www.eatingdisorderstreatment.ca/>

Eating Disorders Support Network of Alberta <https://edsna.ca/>

National Initiative for Eating Disorders <https://nied.ca/>

Lionheart Foundation Resource Page

<https://lionheartfoundation.ca/helpful-resources/>

Additional resources

Crisis Counselling

Woods Homes - Eastside Community Mental Health Services <https://www.woodshomes.ca/our-services/crisis-counselling-services/>

Distress Centre <https://www.distresscentre.com/>

Kids Help Phone <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

ConnecTeen <https://calgaryconnecteen.com/>

Black Youth Helpline <https://blackyouth.ca/>

Hope for Wellness <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>

Testimonials

I just completed an application for subsidy and you reached out to me within an hour. I have yet to have heard back from any of the other mental health organizations I reached out to last week. I am encouraged by your response that we may be able to find help for my daughter. Thank you

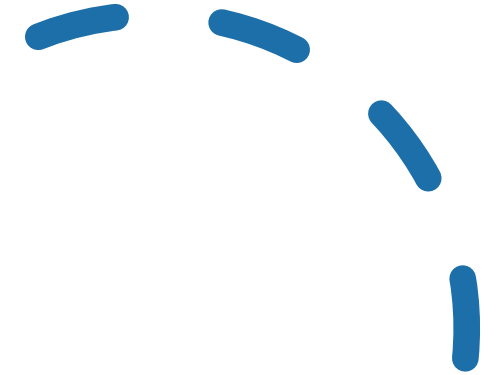
I do not know what to do or where to go to find help my daughter. She is experiencing anxiety and we keep running into long wait times or don't fit the mold. Thank you for responding to my application and finding my daughter a therapist who can help her. Lionheart Foundation has provided our family with the supports we need to get our child well.

I can not even begin to tell you what you have done for our family. Without the support of Lionheart we would not be able to afford the help our daughter so desperately needs.

With tears in my eyes, I wanted to thank you for all the support you have provided and your generous subsidy for our daughter. There are no words.



2022 Key Sponsors/Donors



References

MentalHealth.gov

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/what-to-look-for/self-harm>

National eating Disorders

<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/warning-signs-and-symptoms>

Fairburn, C., & Cooper, Z. (2011). Eating disorders, DSM–5 and clinical reality. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 198(1), 8-10.
doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.110.083881

Mayo Clinic

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/self-injury/symptoms-causes/syc-20350950>

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.).
<https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>