

Family Based Treatment (FBT) for Children & Adolescents

What is FBT?

Family Based Treatment (FBT) is an intensive treatment for children and adolescents with Anorexia Nervosa (AN).

FBT has been described in the Treatment Manual for Anorexia Nervosa: A Family-based Approach (Lock & Le Grange, 2013). This approach was first developed at the Maudsley Hospital by Christopher Dare, Ivan Eisler and colleagues and is also referred to as Maudsley Family Based Therapy.

FBT is an outpatient treatment that uses the family as the primary resource to renourish the young person back to health. In this treatment, the therapist supports and guides the parents to take the responsibility for re-feeding their child and ceasing all other disordered behaviours until the young person is in a position to take control of their own eating.

Who is Treatment For?

FBT is for children and adolescents (< 19 years of age) who are medically stable and have a short course of illness (< 3 years). Five-year follow-up studies demonstrate that success rates for adolescents in early stages of illness are between 50% and 90% (Eisler, 1997).

About FBT

FBT is a three-phase treatment that involves approximately 9-12 months of therapy delivered over 20 sessions, although additional sessions should be given if indicated. Sessions are held weekly, fortnightly, or monthly depending on what stage of treatment the young person is in.

Phase 1: The primary focus of phase 1 is to restore the young person's weight. Parents are empowered to take full control of managing food and other eating disorder behaviours to ensure that weight is restored.

Phase 2: The primary focus of phase 2 is to hand responsibility and control around eating back to the young person.

Phase 3: The primary focus of phase 3 is to assist in the transition of the young person into adolescent life and activities. Relapse prevention and ending treatment are discussed.

Who Delivers FBT?

FBT should be delivered by health professionals who have undergone specific training in FBT, are familiar with the treatment manual, have experience in delivering FBT, or are under close clinical supervision.

FBT Training

InsideOut offers online training in FBT. Check out the eLearning page on the website for health professionals training packages.

Recommended Reading

Lock, J. (2011). Evaluation of Family Treatment Models for Eating Disorders. **Current Opinion in Psychiatry**, 24(4), 274-279.

Lock, J. (2015). An Update on Evidence-Based Psychosocial Treatments for Eating Disorders in Children and Adolescents. **Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychiatry**, 44(5), 707-721.

Mehler, P. & Brown, C. (2015). Anorexia Nervosa – Medical Complications. **Journal of Eating Disorders**, 3(11), 1-8.

Whitney, J. & Eisler, I. (2005). Theoretical and Empirical Models Around Caring for Someone With an Eating Disorder: The Reorganisation of Family Life and Inter-Personal Maintenance Factors. **Journal of Mental Health**, 14(6), 575-585.

Parent, B. & Parent, T. (2008). Anorexia, Maudsley and an Impressive Recovery: One Family's Story. **Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health**, 44(1-2), 70-73.

Lock, J., & Le Grange, D. (2013). Treatment Manual for Anorexia Nervosa, Second Edition: A Family-Based Approach. Guildford Press: New York, NY

Eisler, I., Dare, C., Russell, G., Szmulker, G., Le Grange, D. (1997). Family and individual therapy in anorexia nervosa. A 5-year follow-up. Archives of General Psychiatry, 54, 1025-1030. doi: 10.1001/archpsyc.1997.01830230063008