

INSIDEOUT

Institute for Eating Disorders

MEDIA RELEASE: Embargoed 10am Tuesday March 30, 2021

Ground-breaking program to ease burden on carers and improve treatment outcomes for people living with an eating disorder

KEY POINTS:

- **New, Australian-first online program for people supporting loved ones with an eating disorder launched today.**
- **Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses affecting approximately 1.25 million Australians.¹**
- **The impact of eating disorders on carers and families is among the most severe of any mental illness.²**
- **'SupportedED' aims to improve treatment outcomes by equipping carers with the skills to identify symptoms and provide support throughout recovery.**

MEDIA LAUNCH

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

10am - 12pm

Level 3, TAG Family Foundation Grandstand (B23)

University Oval No.2

The University of Sydney

InsideOut Institute for Eating Disorders has today launched a new online program, 'SupportedED', to ease the burden on carers of people living with an eating disorder and improve treatment outcomes.

Eating disorders not only impact the estimated 1.25 million Australians with the illness. They also significantly impact their loved ones, who often play a vital role in identifying symptoms, encouraging treatment and providing care and support throughout recovery.

However, psychologist and InsideOut Institute Senior Project Manager Rachel Simeone says support people are frequently not included in treatment to the level they should be.

"We know that greater involvement of support people leads to better treatment outcomes but unfortunately, the supports that they need are often not there".

"The role of carers can be all-consuming, demanding and unrelenting. Carers often experience feelings of isolation, lack of education and support, and their own mental health concerns."

¹ Butterfly Foundation. Paying the price: The economic and social impact of eating disorders. Melbourne: Butterfly Foundation, (2012.)

²Graap, H., Bleich, S., Herbst, F. *et al.* The needs of carers: a comparison between eating disorders and schizophrenia. *Soc Psychiat Epidemiol* 43, 800 (2008). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-008-0364-7>



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Health
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“Recovery from an eating disorder is a long-term process, lasting on average for one to six years.³ The financial implications of treatment and needing to give up work to be there for your loved one can be staggering.”

Carers spend 12.4 hours per week looking after people with an eating disorder with the opportunity cost of lost wages estimated to exceed \$10 million a year.⁴

Most carers - many of whom must take time off work or quit their jobs to care for their loved one - experience financial hardship.⁵

Anneliese Zanchetta – Lived experience

Anneliese Zanchetta is a 22-year-old Miss Universe Australia 2020 Finalist, committed to breaking down stigma associated with eating disorders.

Anneliese developed an eating disorder aged 10.

“I was so young. I felt a lot of pressure from seeing unrealistic body images in the media, which led me to develop negative thoughts about myself,” she said.

Two years later, Anneliese was hospitalised at The Children's Hospital at Westmead, where she undertook Maudsley Family Based Therapy – an intensive form of outpatient treatment that involves parents and siblings in the recovery process.

“My family is the reason I survived.”

“Eating disorders impact everyone around you. During the height of the illness, I was a tough person to handle.”

“I think my Dad felt it the most. He had to quit his job to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner with me. He'd even park outside my school so we could share meals together.”

“My parents were very hands-on; we were able to fight the eating disorder together and I am grateful for that.”

“When you're a child, it's hard to recognise negative or harmful thoughts, but I felt that with the support of my whole family – including my siblings – we were all in it together.”

Anneliese recovered by age 15 but stresses the importance of an ongoing support network.

“Even today my Mum checks in on me. You really need a support network because it's those people around you who catch you out and normalise healthy eating.”

³ Butterfly Foundation: Investing in Need: Cost effective interventions for eating disorders. Butterfly Foundation, (2014.)

⁴ Butterfly Foundation: Investing in Need: Cost effective interventions for eating disorders. Butterfly Foundation, (2014.)

⁵ Gatt L, Jan S, Mondraty N, Horsfield S, Hart S, Russell J, et al. (2014) The household economic burden of eating disorders and adherence to treatment in Australia. BMC psychiatry, 14, 1, 338.

“I want people to know that you can recover, and you can have a healthy life.”

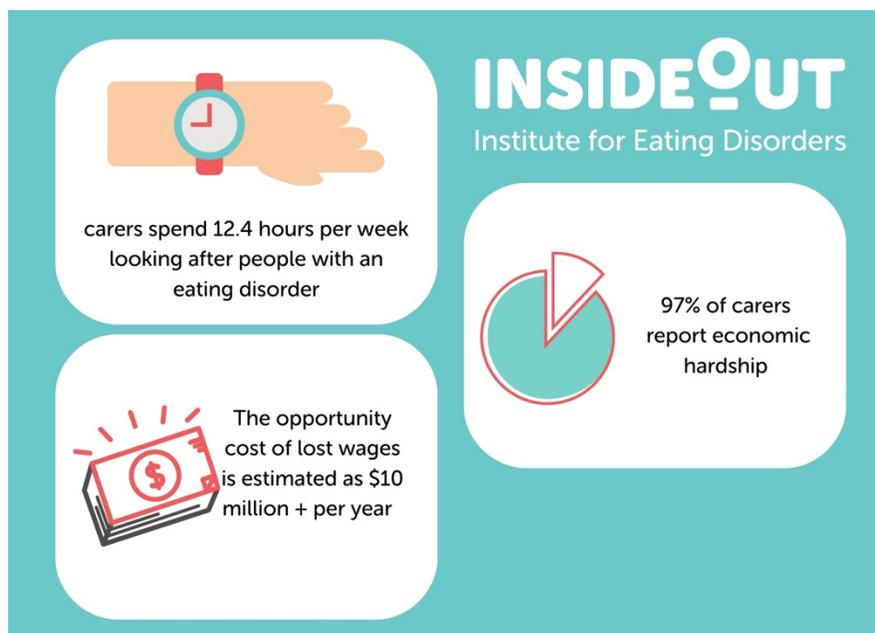
About SupportED

Over five modules, ‘*SupportED*’ provides users with information about available resources and treatment options, plus practical skills - like how to provide support around mealtimes, strategies for avoiding and responding to conflict, and how to care for your own physical and mental health needs.

Ms Simeone says targeted educational and practical skills-based workshops for carers have been noted to reduce carer distress and burden.⁶

“The research tells us specific training programs targeting families and carers have been found to be very effective.”

Free, three-month access is available for those who sign up to an evaluation study of the program. NSW Health has partnered with InsideOut to ensure free places are provided to all carers in NSW once the study is completed.



6 Piat, M., et al. (2015). "International training programs on eating disorders for professionals, caregivers, and the general public: A scoping review." *Journal of Eating Disorders* 3(1): 28.

Declaration: Developed with funding support from the M.A.S.T Foundation

We encourage reporting about lived experience of an eating disorder, but please be mindful in how it is portrayed.

Be careful **not** to:

- Mention specific weights, measurements, weight loss, quantities.
- Detail specific behaviours
- Post images of people with extreme body weights or before/after pictures
- Glamourise eating disorders.
- Use the terms sufferer, patient, anorexic or bulimic to describe someone with an eating disorder, instead use “person with an eating disorder”.

More information about reporting and portrayal of Eating Disorders

here: <https://insideoutinstitute.org.au/assets/nedc-mindframe-reporting-guidelines.pdf>

About the Inside Out Institute

The InsideOut Institute for Eating Disorders – a collaboration between the Sydney Local Health District and the University of Sydney’s Faculty of Medicine and Health, based at the University’s Charles Perkins Centre – aims to ensure every Australian living with an eating disorder has access to the best possible care by rethinking eating disorders from the ‘inside out’. Visit insideoutinstitute.org.au

Support available:

If you are experiencing distress and need support, you can contact:

The Butterfly National Helpline 1800 ED HOPE (1800 33 4673)

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 46 36.

Suicide Callback Service: 1300 659 467

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800

Headspace: 1800 650 890

ReachOut: au.reachout.com

For all media inquiries please contact InsideOut: Claire Aird 0424 850 449

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