

Media statement

30 May 2019

Eating disorders not just impacting young females

2 June is **World Eating Disorders Action Day (#WeDoAct)**. It's a day of acknowledgment designed for and by people affected by an eating disorder, their families, and the medical and health professionals who support them. The aim is to expand awareness of eating disorders as genetically linked, treatable illnesses that can affect anyone.

Residents now have access to a new community-based eating disorders service through Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS). The Eating Disorders Service will provide help and offer treatment advice to the residents, General Practitioners (GP), medical and mental health clinicians across community settings within the SCHHS area.

Jocelyn Culpitt, Clinical Nurse Consultant for the Eating Disorders Service, said it would provide consumers aged 18 and over the opportunity to attend a specialist consultation clinic for assessment and, where required, individual therapy sessions.

"Unfortunately, there is an increasing need for this type of service because the number of people affected by an eating disorder is trending upward each year," Ms Culpitt said.

"While traditionally people affected by an eating disorder were thought to be young and female, we now know that people of all ages and gender are developing this disorder."

Eating disorders are abnormal patterns of eating and exercising that severely interfere with a person's everyday life. These patterns can include eating extremely small amounts of food or eating in an uncontrolled way. The person may also be very distressed, anxious or worried about food, body weight and appearance.

Ms Culpitt said: "The good news is, there are evidence-based therapies that are effective in treating a person with an eating disorder and we will be offering these as a part of our service. Like many things, though, one of the most important things we can do is identify the disorder as early as possible leading to early intervention and a better outcome.

"Our advice to loved ones/friends would be to support the person to get help as soon as they can.

"Eating disorders are very challenging and for those of us who don't have one, very difficult to understand and relate to. It can be lonely and shameful, it's important that we let the person know that help is out there and they don't have to do this on their own," she said.

Sunshine Coast

Hospital and Health Service

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The Eating Disorders Service will be holding an information stand near the front entry of SCUH, providing an opportunity for members of the community to seek further information about this treatable illness.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Jocelyn Culpitt, Clinical Nurse Consultant for the Eating Disorders Service, Amy Mao, Psychiatrist and Lisa Kelly, Peer Support Worker at Eating Disorders Queensland and past eating disorder sufferer, are available for photos and interviews.

WHEN: Monday 3 June, 11am

WHERE: Sunshine Coast University Hospital, meet at Main Reception

ENDS

Media contact: Alicia Temple | Alexia Kelly | 5202 0083 | 0408 713 747

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