

Media statement

13 November 2019

Helping all Australians thrive

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) Eating Disorders Service is proud to be hosting the 2019 Thrive Eating Disorder Symposium (15 November).

Director of Queensland Eating Disorder Service A/Prof Warren Ward said eating disorders in Australia are increasing in prevalence.

“The Butterfly Foundation 2012 report ‘Paying the Price’ estimated almost a million Australians currently experience eating disorders, but only a small proportion of people with eating disorders access specialist treatment.

“The earlier intervention occurs the more likely full recovery can be achieved. People who have had an eating disorder for less than two years when they seek help are more likely to have a positive and quick response, and fewer long-term health complications,” A/Prof Ward said.

Up to nine per cent of the Australian population will experience an eating disorder in their lifetime. Binge Eating Disorder is experienced by an almost equal number of males and females.

“Eating disorders are recognised as severe mental illnesses that are associated with a variety of medical complications and sufferers have a higher risk of mortality, medical complications or suicide,” A/Prof Ward said.

“Initiatives that aim to understand and improve outcomes for people with eating disorders should be considered a top priority.”

SCHHS Mental Health nurse Jocelyn Culpitt said: “The SCHHS Eating Disorder Service has provided in hospital treatment 103 times in the past year, and 94 people have been referred to the outpatient service.”

The Thrive Eating Disorder Symposium provides the opportunity for health professionals across Australia to hear from leading experts on eating disorders, people with a lived experience and their carers.

“Events such as these are key to shining the light on those affected, including families and carers. Their input is critical to informing robust and considered care and treatment options in the future with the consumers at the heart,” Ms Culpitt said.

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service

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Lexi's story

Lexi Crouch will be speaking at the symposium about her 15-year battle with Anorexia Nervosa and her road to recovery.

“When I was going through treatment there wasn't a lot of awareness, so these sorts of symposiums help to normalise eating disorders and reduce the stigma, as well as connect sufferers with professional help available.”

“Access to professional help was crucial to my recovery. Mentoring and therapy sessions were a huge part of helping me get well, and the medical help I received throughout my journey was amazing.”

“I'm now at a point in my life where food, weight and shape is not an issue to me at all, because of the treatment I received,” she said.

On the Sunshine Coast, SCHHS Eating Disorders Service provides assistance and offers treatment to the community, general practitioners (GP), medical and mental health clinicians within the SCHHS area. The care is consumer, family and carer inclusive, recovery-oriented and evidence-based.

Anyone needing support with eating disorders or body image issues is encouraged to contact **Butterfly's National Helpline on 1800 33 4673** or support@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Interview and photo opportunities will be available with A/Prof Warren Ward, Mental Health nurse Jocelyn Culpitt and Tanya Kretschmann and Lexi Crouch.

WHEN: Friday 15 November, 10:50am SHARP.

WHERE: Sunshine Coast Health Institute (SCHI), meet at main reception

ENDS

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