Cambridge Eating Disorder Center

Group Descriptions

The residential, partial hospitalization, and intensive outpatient programs at Cambridge Eating Disorder Center provide group therapy as a part of daily programming. Our groups are based in evidence-based treatment for eating disorders and other co-occurring mental health disorders. Our staff guide groups to share and participate in a variety of ways to encourage individual learning and overall group support and growth. The following groups are only some of the topics that are covered in our programs and rotate on a weekly basis:

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

- Develop psychological flexibility through mindfulness and self-acceptance exercises
- Commit to acceptance of feelings and address problems without avoidance

Body & Self

- Explore ideas on what beliefs are held about the link between body image and self-worth
- Refocus on the function and strengths of the body
- Discuss implicit and explicit messages that are received in familial, social, and cultural domains
- Practice positive reframing and cognitive restructuring

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

- Understand the connections between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- Learn to identify, challenge, and replace distorted thoughts/beliefs
- Develop positive self-beliefs, learn coping strategies, and improve hopefulness for the future

Cooking/Baking for Fun

- Participate in meal preparation with assistance from nutrition and food services providers
- Practice preparing normative recipes that incorporate a variety of nutritional exchanges

Community Meeting

- Meet with a case manager and residential counselor to discuss ongoing community dynamics and provide constructive feedback to promote a recovery oriented community
- Provide feedback on the program offerings and use interpersonal effectiveness skills to advocate for community needs and wants

Coping Skills

- Participate in a variety of activities that could be replicated in the home environment
- Identify ways of practicing the following coping skill types: distraction, mindfulness, self-soothing, opposite action, crisis planning, and emotional awareness

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DBT Distress Tolerance

- Learn skills to effectively tolerate intense emotions and distressing situations
- Practice skills for acceptance of "life in the moment"
- Utilize new ways of coping with behavioral urges

DBT Emotion Regulation/Healthy Anger

- Gain a deeper understanding of the range of emotions that one experiences
- Observe and describe emotions and their functions
- Learn skills to reduce vulnerability to negative emotions
- Learn skills to decrease experience of emotional suffering

DBT Interpersonal Effectiveness/Relationship Dynamics

- Learn effective communication skills and strategies for asking for help, setting boundaries, and coping with interpersonal conflict
- Practice effective strategies for improving or maintaining relationships with self and others

DBT Mindfulness

- Learn to identify the primary states of mind
- Practice meditation and other forms of mindful practice
- Develop skills for achieving increased awareness and attaining "wise mind"

Evening/Weekend Planning

- Problem-solve concerning parts of the evening or weekend might make recovery-oriented choices more challenging
- Group support to develop structured time for the evening/weekend to continue progress towards recovery, set attainable goals, and ways to achieve these goals

Expressive Therapy

- Utilize techniques of self-expression to explore emotions and thoughts
- Provides stress relief, emotional processing, and community connection through art

Food Positivity

- Engaging with positive media on nutrition and food
- Incorporate hands-on nutrition and preparation as is appropriate and supportive

Goal Setting/Check-In

- Daily check-in to identify disordered behaviors requiring attention/change
- Individuals create SMART goals for the day to address progress in recovery
- Enhance motivation for recovery

Identity Exploration

- Examine intersectional identity and how it impacts the individual in their social environment
- Practice differentiation of self from eating disorder

Media & Culture

- Examine the ways that social media and cultural messages influence self-image
- Critically analyze the ways media promotes diet culture and weight bias
- Identify positive media sources to promote eating disorder recovery and wellness

Mood Monitoring

- Individual processing of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors after meal times
- Writing prompts to identify and manage urges during meals
- Reframing of thoughts and feelings intensity around food and meal times

Motivation for Recovery

- Examine potential conflicts between core beliefs, values, and goals, and their eating disorder thoughts
- Introduce a behavioral change model and discuss each person's stage of recovery under this model
- Develop strategies for moving from one stage of recovery to the next

Narrative Therapy

- Engage in free-style writing exercises on various topics
- Invoke creative and authentic expressions of feelings, emotions, and concerns
- Help identify and explore both negative and positive emotions related to different aspects of life, illness, and recovery

Nutrition

- Receive education on the physiological needs of the body
- Receive education on the physiological risks of eating disorders on the body

Psychotherapy

- Explore feelings and thoughts with peers in a safe and structured environment
- Support and challenge peers to explore beliefs that do not align with values

Self-Esteem

- Develop self-worth and explore the negative messages from self, others, and media by considering how these messages undermine recovery goals
- Develop alternative, positive supports for health self-esteem and self-care

Target Behaviors

- Set a goal for behavior change each week
- Formulate realistic, specific, and appropriate goals
- Develop change strategies
- Obtain support from peers and staff for behavioral change

Wrap-Up

- Review the events and goals of the day
- Explore how to use new coping skills to achieve the goals
- Support each other regarding accomplishments of the day

Yoga

- Engage in mindful yoga practice (need to be medically approved)
- Explore ways to engage in joyful movement without compensatory exercise behavior