



Eating Disorders Training for Medical Students Scenario 1

www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Importance of Eating Disorders Training in Medical Education

“In 2012, Averil Hart, a 19 year old student died as a result of anorexia nervosa. Five different NHS services had missed multiple opportunities to save her life over five months.

“In its 2017 investigation, the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman(PHSO) found that Averil’s deterioration and death were avoidable and that she had been failed by each of the NHS organisations involved in her care and treatment.

Importance of Eating Disorders Training in Medical Education

“PHSO noted that the majority of medical professionals had received little or no training on eating disorders during their education and recommended that this be addressed.

This was re-emphasised when the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee reviewed progress on the PHSO recommendations in 2019, calling for eating disorders to be covered effectively in both the undergraduate and postgraduate medical curricula.’

Professor Tim Kendall, National Clinical Director for Mental Health, NHS England, 2021



Interactive session

- Non-judgemental
- Learning experience
- No 'silly' questions
- Be bold



E-learning Module 1



- Spectrum of eating disorders
- Psychopathology
- Link between 'Food and Mood' & the value of nutrition
- Bio-psycho-social underpinnings
- Predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating and protective factors
- Common co-morbidities
- Presentation: signs & symptoms

The Scenario



The scenario is about Maria, a 17-year-old girl who collapsed at her ballet school and has been brought by the Ambulance Service to the Emergency Department of the local hospital for medical attention.

The Scenario



The ambulance staff handed over information about her vitals as follows:

- Pulse: 40 bpm
- Blood Pressure: 90/60 mmHg while lying down
- Respiratory Rate: 22 bpm
- SpO₂: 97%
- Temperature: 35.5 C

Your role in the scenario

You are the Foundation Year 1 trainee doctor, working in the Emergency Department.

You are assessing the patient with the following tasks in your mind:

- Take relevant history to make a differential diagnosis
- Explain the initial investigations required to guide the future management plan
- Do not carry out a physical examination at this time

Key points to consider during role-play

- How will you approach Maria in a caring and sensitive way?
- What are the key considerations in how Maria is presenting that might be challenging?
- Explore the possibility of an eating disorder from the patient's presenting issue?
- How will you discuss the reason why she's presented to A&E?

Key points to consider during role-play

- How will you ask about Maria's symptoms of an eating disorder? How might it feel for her to be asked about her behaviours?
- How will you explore the predisposing, precipitating and perpetuating factors; family history of mental illness and psychosocial factors?
- How will you explore biological and psychosocial factors? - think through the personality traits of a person suffering with an eating disorder.

Key points to consider during role-play

- What positive factors in Maria's support network could you think through with him?
- Which social stressors might be exacerbating the condition?
- Could there be any presenting co-morbidities?
- Think through and explore any physical tests that might need to be conducted.

Key points to consider during role-play

- How might you encourage Maria to engage the family in further discussions about management whilst maintaining confidentiality appropriately?
- How will you assess capacity/risk?
- How would you manage next steps in referral/treatment for Maria?

'This teaching package has been developed to ensure that all medical students and foundation trainees are trained to understand, identify and respond effectively when faced with a patient with a possible eating disorder.'

Dedicated to the memory of Averil Hart, it is the result of a collaboration between the eating disorder charity Beat, Health Education England and the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Faculty of Eating Disorders.

We want to ensure that no other family has to endure what Averil and her family have experienced. It is our hope that this will be a significant step to ensuring that avoidable deaths from eating disorders are consigned to the past.'

Professor Tim Kendall, National Clinical Director for Mental Health,
NHS England, 2021