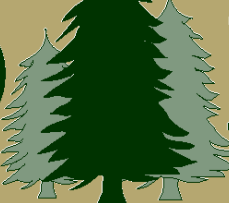


The CEDAR Review

Associates



Eating disorders, general psychotherapy, nutrition and recovery

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The Responsibility to Act!



Family Responsibility

Listen, Learn, Forgive and Heal



Legislative/Government Responsibility

[Provide access to Health Care and the help people need for mental health](#)

[Contact your Nation, State or Local Elected Officials](#)

[Educate and Conquer](#)

News & Announcements:

CEDAR is proud to support the EDC and their efforts to:

[Show YOUR Support for Mental Health Parity](#)

[EDC Lobby Day 2007](#)

Groups at CEDAR:

FREE MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP FOR

family members, friends and partners of eating disorder sufferers

Next Meeting: May 19, 2007

[Support Group Info & Meeting Dates](#)

Quote of the Month:

“Responsibility is the ability to fulfill one’s needs and to do so in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfill their needs.”
- Dr. William Glasser

Research: The Role of the Family in Eating Disorder Treatment - It's a Start!

By Judy Scheel, Ph.D., LCSW

A recent article in the Journal News (March 18, 2007) “Study tests Anorexia therapies,” reported that the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is funding a significant study to compare two treatment methods both involving family therapy. This article was actually sent to me by two people, one that I am currently treating and one that I had treated in the past. Both of these individuals had significant family issues prior to the development of their eating disorder – one individual sought treatment when she was an adult and was seen individually. The focus of her treatment was on improving the quality of her relationship with her mother and on understanding and the resolving the relational issues that led to her eating disorder and how those issues kept her from getting close to people presently in her life. The other individual was a teenager and the family was consulted on a regular basis in an effort to repair and strengthen the family’s relationship and on helping them understand that the eating disorder was the voice of their child’s pain and distress. Ultimately, the goal in family therapy was to help this patient find her voice through words and emotion versus the behavioral voice expressed via her eating disorder and in helping the entire family learn a new language of empathy, communication, tolerance of emotion, trust and mutual respect and helping them determine appropriate family roles and boundaries.

The significance of the family in the development and recovery process in eating disorders is emblematic at CEDAR. Yes, there are biological forces at play, and the research has been and

currently is being funded in this area, but little has been funded to examine what role family members have in the causation of eating disorders. In fact, the major study funded by the NIMH does not address the family’s role in causation, but rather focuses on a theoretical approach that helps parents come up with a plan to help their child eat normally and on what is making it difficult for the child to eat. This is at least a start in the exploration of the family and family relationships. There are some eating disorder treatment models that dance around or ignore the impact of the family as causal. Many of us in the treatment field believe this does the family and sufferer an injustice. There is beauty in acceptance and sharing of responsibility; it is what is necessary for change to occur. When family members are able to acknowledge the mistakes they made and are open to making changes facilitates recovery for the sufferer and healing for the family as well. Most members of the family including the member, who has the eating disorder, bear responsibility for the cause of the eating disorder and the family’s unrest. Blaming is not the point or the intent of family therapy; it is about taking responsibility which includes listening, learning new ways of communicating, learning how to empathize and confronting painful issues. Family therapy is also about forgiveness and healing.

Please click [here](#) to read more on our web site.