


The CEDAR Review



Associates

Eating disorders, general psychotherapy, nutrition and recovery

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A Conference with Perspective:



The 16th Annual Renfrew Center
Foundation Conference
For Professionals



Feminist Perspectives and Beyond:

Maximizing Change in the
Treatment of Eating Disorders

November 9-12, 2006

Philadelphia Airport Marriott
Philadelphia, PA

22.5 CEUs

For More Information, Call
1-877-367-3383 or
visit <http://www.renfrew.org>

News & Announcements:

[CEDAR Co-Sponsors: ABC's of Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs](#)

[2006 NAMI of NYS Annual Conference](#)

["The Arc of Eating Disorders: Co-morbid Diagnoses Contained Within"](#)

[16th Annual Renfrew Center Foundation Conference For Professionals](#)

Groups at CEDAR:

FREE MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP FOR

family members, friends and partners of eating disorder sufferers

Next Meeting: Nov 18, 2006

[Support Group Info & Meeting Dates](#)

Quote of the Month:

" We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude"
- C. Ozick

Holiday Stress

By Elissa K. Zelman, Psy.D.

For most people, the fall and winter holidays bring happiness, warmth and excitement. Traditionally, they are a time when families get together to reconnect and celebrate. For many individuals with eating disorders this is far from the case.

Holidays bring up a myriad of issues for many people that we work with at CEDAR Associates. The most obvious being Thanksgiving, as it is a holiday that revolves around food. Common food concerns are what to eat, how much is appropriate, and just the act of eating in public, as many of our patients have isolated themselves. Additionally, for many people with eating disorders, there are conflictual and difficult issues within their families such as disconnect, enmeshment, alexithymia, past/present abuse,

substance abuse, or mental illness. Thus, it is at this time of year that we often see the anticipatory anxiety of these holidays greatly increase.

So, as direct or peripheral treatment providers, what can we do? There are several dynamic, cognitive and behavioral interventions that can alleviate a great deal of this stress and empower our patients to move through the season successfully. The following are a few of these interventions, selected to apply to a broader array of practitioners, rather than just for psychotherapists.

1. Have the person find out beforehand the logistical information about the holiday (i.e. where it will be celebrated, who will attend, what's being served etc.). This allows the patient to begin to develop strategies to

cope with various outcomes. If it is appropriate, encourage the person to have some input about these issues.

2. If a dietitian is involved, this is a great time to help the patient structure various meal possibilities so that s/he feels ready to face some of the specific difficulties of the holiday.
3. Enlist any supportive family members or friends to be part of the coping plan, particularly if they will be at the holiday function. If the patient feels there is no one there who will be supportive, help him or her come up with a person or two that they can call, text etc. in the event that they are struggling.

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