



Eating Disorder Support Services

Client Feedback about Balanced ED MK / General Eating Disorder Services

“Balanced MK has helped me tremendously. It has been comforting to meet and discuss with other the people, the similarities we have.”

“Having an eating disorder is a very lonely place, no one understands why you have it, why you do the things you do and why it doesn’t go away easily.”

“The Rebalance self-support group is great because there is no pressure to attend all sessions. Attendees can learn from simply listening to others or actively participate, depending on how they’re feeling on the day. Attendees are given the freedom of choice, enabling them to feel empowered on their journey to recovery. This makes people more self-reliant.”

“Every day is a challenge to do the right thing and ignore the voices in your head that take over, for me, making it through the day without bingeing, starving or purging is a huge achievement, something someone healthy wouldn’t understand.”

“Balanced MK is a huge support system for someone like me, and the reason being; A: it is run by someone who has been through what we are currently going through B: It gives us hope that we can get better and C: Being surrounded by a group of people that are suffering just as much as you and understand what you are going through is more valuable than any therapy that has been offered to me.”

“I wonder whether there could be more provision for self help workshops, self esteem workshops, stress management (meditation, yoga pilates etc). This would be especially helpful if all attendees were challenged by similar issues.”

“Rebalance has been such an amazing support for me, it has taught me so much about what eating disorders are, what help there is out there, support and guidance when I’ve needed it the most. It’s made me broach topics that I would never even have considered, such as OCD and depression, but most of all its helped me learn to start accepting that I have an eating disorder and that there are other people like me out there. It has been such a comfort and support to know that the things that I think and struggle with other people are suffering with as well, and to realise that I’m not totally crazy, and that these are the voices that I need to start challenging. The group has also made me address issues of denial, how to move forwards and also dealing with relapses.”

“One of the nicest things I’ve experienced recently has been seeing how other people are managing to get better - what they are doing and gaining ideas but also to give me hope that if they can get better then so can I...there is some hope. It has been a light for some of my darkest times.”

“My doctor simply said “Go away and eat more crisps and biscuits!”, sending me away unsupported.”

“Having someone else tell me exactly what to do would not be motivating. I need to be involved in decisions made about what might be helpful.”

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"I find that the mix of the group is a really good thing. All people are accepted and this makes you realise that there are sooooo many people out there with similar problems."

"I feel so lucky to have discovered the group, but I know that there must be so many more people out there suffering away in silence."

"I've had a mixture of counselling and have tried hypnotherapy - but these are all really expensive treatments - I have been lucky enough to be able to afford them, however it has been hard at times to justify spending the money on counselling - I know that my issues with control also extend beyond food and onto money and at times that has meant that I haven't sought the help that I have needed and used excuses that I can't afford the counselling - I can't justify that much money to be spent on counselling...especially when I was quite unwell and didn't believe that it was even helping (even though in hindsight I can see that it was)."

"I think that if there was more access to counsellors who specialised in eating disorders this would help a lot of people to get the help that they needed without having to worry about the financial burden of it (I know that there were times when I was too unwell to work and worried that I then couldn't justify the money even more and I would never have wanted to ask for help from friends or family to help pay)."

"I didn't ever feel that I warranted any help, I wasn't unwell enough, I wasn't skinny enough, but all these subjective measures are insignificant as the issue was still there...the way of thinking, the thought patterns, the rules that ruled my life were still there and needed to be changed before I became even more unwell - and when I was at my skinniest I can now appreciate that I was unable to think clearly even though I was adamant that I could, and to have had the help that I needed then or before that point would have maybe made things easier and less destructive. As the habits are so engrained now it's really hard to break them."

"People have a stereotype image of an extremely thin teenage girl. They don't think of adults as much, or different genders. It's so important that people understand that not everyone with an eating disorder is extremely thin!"

"Having counsellors that are attached to Rebalance would be really good as I know that some of my issues initiating help were in the fact that I didn't trust that the counsellor knew what they were talking about and sometimes I felt like I knew more and that further exacerbated the feeling that I thought I was wasting my money. So having counsellors attached to Rebalance would reassure me that they were specialists able to help."

"I was encouraged to drink a lot of milk, but I don't like milk! My personal likes and dislikes were not considered, making it hard to follow advice."

"There's an assumption that something in particular triggers an eating disorder, which can make parents/carers feel scrutinized and judged."

"The media stereotype eating disorders, sensationalizing physical issues, making it harder for people to come forward for help."



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“The BalancED MK counsellor is excellent at helping me articulate emotional issues and explaining why she uses particular approaches. Sessions give me space to reflect and the counsellor reinforces positives. Really very beneficial for many reasons.”

“When I ask for help, I need it offered quickly, because it’s taken so much courage to ask, that rejection or delay causes a negative response.”

“At my first NHS appointment for support, I was given a list of foods that I should eat more often. This list included foods such as cakes, biscuits and crisps. As someone affected by orthorexia, I just felt upset, misunderstood and disheartened. There was no empathy for my concerns. Impossible!”

“I worry about whether other people need more help than me. Am I a priority? I feel pressure to let other people get help instead of me.”

“The first point of contact is really important because you’re most vulnerable. A positive first experience encourages further help. A negative experience frightens you away from accessing support.”

“My counsellor was so patient and yet persistent in encouraging me to work through my fears and issues. I had come to counselling with a degree of resistance - but trying to be open to the process as I was really feeling in need of help after more than 20 years off an on with eating disorder symptoms. She made me feel that she recognised and understood this conflict and often took the time to explain to me the background/theory behind what we were doing so I could better understand how and why it could benefit me. This really helped me to engage, to become less inhibited and take better advantage of the opportunity.”

“For the first time in years I have been able to follow the advice given as I really trusted what I was being told and it is proving to really work for me. I feel much better with more energy. I have a long way to go but the appointment was a definite turning point to help me with my eating habits and I am very grateful for the session in conjunction with the counselling provided by BalancED MK. Thank you!”

“Expecting me to feel better because my weight is more normal is not reasonable. If someone can’t swim, is scared of water and needs armbands, taking away their armbands and throwing them into the deep end would not help either!”

“Very interesting session – challenging but helpful! Thank you for the opportunity to learn and recover.”

“The combination of group and individual support is really helpful. The group instigated thoughts that I could then discuss in more detail with my therapist.”

“Orthorexia seems to be more common than ever, what with modern culture/society obsessing over ‘clean eating’.”

“The self esteem workshop has given me a better understanding of myself and has helped me put where I am in perspective. I found the hand outs a useful way to remember information and have had a lovely Saturday – it has been really helpful. Thank you so much!”



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“Being welcomed by a helpful, friendly receptionist makes a huge difference to my level of anxiety when I attend appointments.”

“The general public only recognise eating disorder extremes – they are not well educated or understanding about the early stages of an eating disorder and definitely don’t understand how long it takes someone to recover.”

“Schools often send home information about what NOT to eat, weight charts and how to get more exercise etc. There need to be more focus on balanced eating and positive activity as a way of life, rather than a focus on avoiding certain foods etc.”

“It seems that eating disorders are not taken seriously unless someone is skeletal. Also, people assume that my body image issues are linked with wanting to look like a celebrity, which is not true at all.”

“My initial phone call with Balanced ED MK gave me an empowered sense of direction and belief in positive change. It helped so much to talk to someone that understood.”

“After each group session, I would chat with my mum/partner about what I had learnt from the session. This helped me to process information and make positive changes.”

“Short term support should always direct clients to long term support for on-going care. Transition from one service level to another is scary – I need reassurance and specialist recommendations to give me confidence.”

“Most people don’t appreciate the fact that I am constantly affected by a negative voice in my head that doesn’t let me rest for a minute. Unlike an alcoholic or drug addict, I can’t give up my vice...I have to battle it day after day.”

“When my weight increases, people assume that I am getting better, but in actual fact, life is much harder for me to manage because I am not relying on my usual coping strategies. The more my weight normalises, the more support and reassurance I need, not less. Rebalance is a good form of support at these times.”

“A lot of people I have met in eating disorder services have been pushed from pillar to post, referred to a number of services. Often people are told that they ‘don’t meet the necessary criteria to receive help’, which makes them feel disheartened and almost encourages them to get worse in order to justify needing support.”

“The NHS seems to want a ‘one size fits all’ service, but eating disorders are a complex issue that requires a multitude of support methods. Recovery is much more likely if personalised to individuals circumstances.”

“CBT, CBT, CBT....CBT is not the answer for everything and everyone! Only effective if the person receiving CBT is motivated to change and well enough to consider and comprehend what’s being asked of them.”

Some people experienced helpful support from their GP, where as others found them to be uneducated and actually make them feel worse.

“My eating disorder is only taken seriously when it results in physical complications, even though the emotional turmoil is much worse for me to manage.”



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“A person with an eating disorder needs a positive relationship with their therapist. If you don’t get on, then you can’t share things because there is a lack of trust, which is essential in therapy.”

“Schools can exasperate focus and concern about food and weight.”

“My weight is NOT a good way to judge how well I am, or how much progress I’ve made between appointments!”

“The transition from adolescent to adult eating disorder services is awful. Everyone warned me about it and I was very worried when my daughter was referred to adult services. I am in the process of making a formal complaint and I am not the only one to be doing so.”

“It seems like a lot of NHS money is directed towards obesity, but not Anorexia, Bulimia or Orthorexia.”

“Some people assume that if you have an eating disorder then you also self-harm, which is not necessarily true. People shouldn’t make assumptions because not everyone is the same.”

“An eating disorder should not be diagnosed on BMI!”

“Schools should encourage emotional health and wellbeing. For example, revision advice should include the importance of reducing stress, relaxing your mind and allowing yourself some time to enjoy life. Students should be encouraged to take good care of their mind and body.”

“Services need to be more sensitive and personalised.”

“Early intervention, in the form of activities that build self-esteem and good communication skills would help to prevent an eating disorder from developing. But once an eating disorder becomes a reassuring coping mechanism, intervention is unlikely to be helpful until the person is ready to change.”

“Treat me like an individual, not a statistic!!!”

“It seems like a person with an eating disorder doesn’t currently fit into any of the NHS criteria and so they end up labelled as having a personality disorder or being complex needs. Once someone is labelled as one of these groups, then they are treated as defective and given very little helpful support.”

“Eating disorders are often linked to self harm or post traumatic stress disorder. Professionals need to be more aware of this so that appropriate treatment can be offered.”

“It’s important that the client feels that the therapist really cares. My therapist didn’t even remember my name half the time!”

“Self-support groups can be empowering and very helpful.”

“Eating disorders and healthy relationships with food should be talked about in school.”

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“As my weight has increased, I have felt the need for more support and help to help me cope with the anxiety I feel in relation to my weight gain.”

“In my experience, good professionals often leave because they are so frustrated by service limitations. This can be really disruptive for clients. It might be helpful if therapists arranged a handover, involving a session with the current and new therapist so that the client could address any issues with the transition with both.”

“Group support can be very helpful, but often also frightening. Participants would benefit from receiving preparation therapy and on-going support afterwards.”

“Professionals supporting someone with an eating disorder should be well trained and knowledgeable about eating disorders, but without stereotyping. Everyone is different.”

“Referrals to the Mental Health Team trigger my eating disorder to worsen, because I know that they’ll need me to be really unwell before they’ll offer me any help.”

“Some men get embarrassed about eating disorders being a predominantly female issue. Group support can be helpful for men, but for some, personalised one to one support might be better.”

“Schools should better educate students about healthy living and wellness. Too often pupils are sent home with messages about obesity etc. but not taught to understand the importance of emotional health affected physical health.”

“Sufferers need realistic goals – maintaining wellness rather than aiming for full recovery within a specific period of time.”

“The NHS care pathway should allow for patients being referred up or down services as the severity of their eating disorder changes. But ideally, without having to change therapists all the time!”

“At the point of assessment, staff often ask what triggered my eating disorder, but the initial trigger might not be relevant any more. Because eating disorders can be present for such a long time, the reasons for behaviour evolve over time and can become confusing. When I’m asked what I’m expecting from a group or one to one session, I don’t really know the answer – I need help from the professional to understand what it is I should be searching for. If I don’t know what is normal or good mental health, then I need help to learn this and learn how to feel better. I need the professional to advice me.”

“Short term therapy not very helpful. Clients need therapy to progress at a pace they are comfortable with. The therapist needs time to create a safe place and develop trust, to enable challenge.”

“Recovery has no set timescale.”

“There is not always just one trigger, it could be multiple reasons that led up to the development of an eating disorder.”