

Patient & Family Guide

2023

# Nova Scotia Eating Disorder Provincial Service



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# **Nova Scotia Eating Disorder Provincial Service**

**The Nova Scotia Eating Disorder Provincial Service is a collaboration between Nova Scotia Health and the IWK. The goal of the service is to make sure that people and their loved ones can access care in their community.**

## **Who is the Nova Scotia Eating Disorder Provincial Service (NSEDPS) for?**

The NSEDPS treats people of all ages who have an eating disorder (like anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge-eating disorder, avoidant restrictive food intake disorder, and other eating disorders) and live in Nova Scotia.

Clinicians are available across the province through community Mental Health and Addictions Programs, virtual care, and specialty clinics.

## What is an eating disorder?

- An eating disorder is an illness that causes changes in your behaviours, thoughts, and emotions related to food, weight, and exercise. It has both mental and physical symptoms.
- Eating disorders affect people of all body sizes. Many people with eating disorders are not underweight.
- When a person has an eating disorder, they have trouble choosing foods that will help them to live a good life. An eating disorder must be treated as soon as possible. Not having a good relationship with food and activity can cause serious medical problems. An eating disorder is serious, but it is a treatable illness.
- If your eating disorder causes you to not get enough nutrition, you may have physical symptoms, like:
  - › Osteoporosis (weak, thin bones)
  - › No longer having a menstrual period
  - › Gastrointestinal symptoms (like constipation [not being able to poop], bloating, feeling full too soon, nausea [feeling sick to your stomach], reflux [heartburn])
  - › Heart trouble (chest pain, shortness of breath, heart racing or slowing)

# Children and adolescents

## Outpatient treatment:

- Treatment for children and adolescents (teens) is available at Nova Scotia Health and IWK, including outpatient options.
  - › **If a client lives in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM)**, service is available through the IWK.
  - › **If a client lives outside of HRM**, service is available through your local mental health clinic (see page 12 for more details).
- Children and adolescents recover best in their community. The NSEDPS recommends outpatient treatment, if possible.
- Inpatient treatment may be needed if a client becomes unsafe medically, or if their symptoms are severe (very bad).
  - › If a client is admitted to the hospital, the main goal is to improve their physical health, or to lower how severe their symptoms are so they can receive treatment at home as an outpatient.

## **Family-based treatment (FBT)**

- FBT focuses on supporting parents in stopping their child or adolescent's disordered eating.
- As a child or adolescent recovers, parents will help them learn how to eat and live without the eating disorder, and gain healthy control of their food and activity choices.
- FBT has 3 phases:
  1. Restoring weight and/or developing normal eating habits and hunger cues
  2. Helping your child or adolescent regain independence with eating
  3. Returning to healthy development
- FBT therapists will monitor your child or adolescent closely. FBT usually takes 6 to 12 months. At first, sessions are done each week. Over time, they are less often.
- During FBT, your child or adolescent is also monitored medically by their primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner). These visits will be less often as your child or adolescent recovers.
- If your family successfully completes FBT, your child or adolescent should make a full recovery. You and your child or adolescent will also learn what you can do to keep them well, and how to watch for signs of possible relapse.

## Cognitive behavioural therapy – 10 (CBT-T)

- If FBT is not successful or is not a good fit for your family, another option is CBT-T. This treatment is for adolescents who:
  - › Are age 13 or older
  - › Have a stable weight and medical status
  - › Want to treat their eating disorder and are ready to make positive changes
- CBT-T involves **10 sessions**, followed by 2 follow-up sessions. Having a loved one who can take part will help the patient succeed.
- Your adolescent will learn to make changes to their eating, behaviours, and responses to emotions. These changes will help them to overcome fears about eating and their body.
- Your adolescent is encouraged to make changes early in treatment and to work on their recovery between sessions. This will help the changes to last long-term. CBT-T teaches how to better manage behaviours and responses to emotions.
- CBT-T has several phases:
  - › Following a regular eating routine and coping with anxiety about food
  - › Changing beliefs about food
  - › Learning to deal with emotions that cause eating problems

- › Normalizing body image (accepting your body)
- › Staying well

## **Other treatments**

- Your treatment team may recommend other treatments, like:
  - › CBT-Enhanced (CBT-E)
  - › Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Avoidant or Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (CBT-AR)
  - › Adolescent-Focused Therapy (AFT)
- Your treatment team will talk with you about these options, if they are available and clinically indicated (needed for your recovery).

## **Inpatient treatment:**

- Inpatient treatment for people under the age of 19 is available at The Garron Centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health at the IWK or in your local hospital.
- The goal of inpatient treatment is to:
  - › Provide clients with food and nutrition
  - › Help clients stop eating disorder behaviours
  - › Help clients regain or stabilize their weight
  - › Help clients manage their eating disorder symptoms

- Once clients have completed the inpatient part of the program, we recommend continuing in an outpatient treatment program in their community until they have fully recovered.

## Adults

### Outpatient treatment:

Options:

- › CBT-T
- › Day Program
- › CBT-Enhanced (CBT-E)
- › Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Avoidant or Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (CBT-AR)

Clinicians are available in your local area for in-person treatment. Some individual treatment is available online.

### CBT-T

- Most people enter outpatient treatment through CBT-T. This is a series of **10 sessions**, followed by 2 follow-up sessions. Sessions can be done on an **individual** or **group** basis.



- CBT-T will help you learn to make changes to your eating, behaviours, and responses to emotions. These changes help you to overcome your fears about eating and your body.
- You are encouraged to make changes early in your treatment and to work at your recovery between sessions. This will help the changes to last long-term.
- CBT-T has several phases:
  - › Following a regular, healthy eating routine and coping with your anxiety about food
  - › Changing your beliefs about food
  - › Learning to deal with emotions that cause eating problems
  - › Normalizing your body image
  - › Making sure you stay well
- If you need a different type of care, you may be referred to the Day Program. This program is located in Central Zone. Your treatment team will talk with you about this, if needed. If you live outside of Central Zone, accommodations will be provided at no cost to you.

## Day Program

- The Day Program is for:
  - › People who need a different type of support than what is provided through CBT-T
  - › People who have completed the inpatient program
- The program is 10 weeks long. It takes place at the Abbie J. Lane Memorial Building at the QE II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax. Sessions are run by multidisciplinary staff members.
- New people can enter the program at any time. You do not have to wait for a new session to start.
- Sessions are:
  - › Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday.
- You will eat your meals and snacks at the clinic during sessions. You will be responsible for your own meals and snacks on the weekends.
- The main goal of the Day Program is to normalize eating, activity, and weight by:
  - › Taking part in meals, snacks, and group education sessions
  - › Taking part in a weekly case management meeting, where you will be weighed, and set your goals for the week
  - › Keeping a food journal to record what you eat

## CBT-Enhanced (CBT-E)

- If someone has had an eating disorder for a long time, they may need more support. CBT-E is a series of **20 to 40 sessions**, depending on your needs.
- Like CBT-T, CBT-E will help you learn to make changes to your eating, behaviours, and how you respond to your emotions. These changes can help you overcome your fears about eating and your body.
- You are encouraged to make changes early in your treatment and to work at your recovery between sessions. This will help the changes to last long-term.
- CBT-E has 4 phases:
  1. Following a regular, healthy eating routine and coping with your anxiety about food
  2. Reviewing your progress, identifying barriers, and planning your treatment
  3. Normalizing your body image, changing your beliefs about food, and learning to deal with emotions that cause eating problems. You may also learn about managing perfectionism, low self-esteem, and interpersonal problems.
  4. Making sure you stay well

## Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Avoidant or Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (CBT-AR)

- Some people have trouble eating enough food or enough variety of food. This can affect their:
  - › Physical health
  - › Socializing and eating with others
  - › Ability to work
- Instead of being concerned about their shape or weight, they may:
  - › be concerned about the texture or taste of foods.
  - › be concerned about choking, vomiting, or other unwanted consequences of eating certain foods.
  - › not be interested in food and have trouble eating enough.
- CBT-AR is available in some areas of Nova Scotia. CBT-AR will help you learn to eat more, and eat more variety of foods to help you be healthy and well. It is a series of **20 to 30 sessions**, depending on your needs.

- CBT-AR has 4 phases:
  1. Learning about eating patterns, and eating more and/or more variety of foods
  2. Planning your treatment
  3. Addressing the factors that make it hard for you to eat enough or enough variety of foods
  4. Making sure you stay well

## **Inpatient treatment:**

- You may need inpatient treatment if:
  - › Your weight is too low for outpatient treatment.
  - › Your symptoms are so severe you need more support.
  - › The clinical team thinks you need a different type of treatment.
  - › You require medical stabilization (you have medical symptoms because you are not getting enough nutrition).
- Your treatment team will work with you to decide if inpatient treatment is right for you.
- Inpatient treatment for people over the age of 17 is available at the Abbie J. Lane Memorial Building at the QE II.

- The goal of inpatient treatment is to help you manage your eating disorder symptoms, help get your health back to normal, and get you to a healthy weight (if needed). Once you have completed the inpatient part of the program, we recommend continuing in an outpatient treatment program in your community until you have fully recovered.

## **How do I access the NSEDPS?**

The referral process is the same for children and adolescents. There are 3 ways to access the NSEDPS:

1. Self-refer:
  - › Phone (toll-free): 1-855-922-1122
2. Ask your primary health care provider for a referral.
3. Referral by a Nova Scotia Health or IWK mental health clinician.
  - › Once you have been referred, a staff member from Intake Services or from your local clinic will call you.

**What are your questions?**

**Please ask. We are here to help you.**

