



Make waves

COMMUNITY EDUCATION DAY



**BREAK
THE SILENCE.**

Lindner Center
of HOPE

UW Health

Feeding the Demon: One Family's Struggle with Anorexia



Photo by Mike Davis

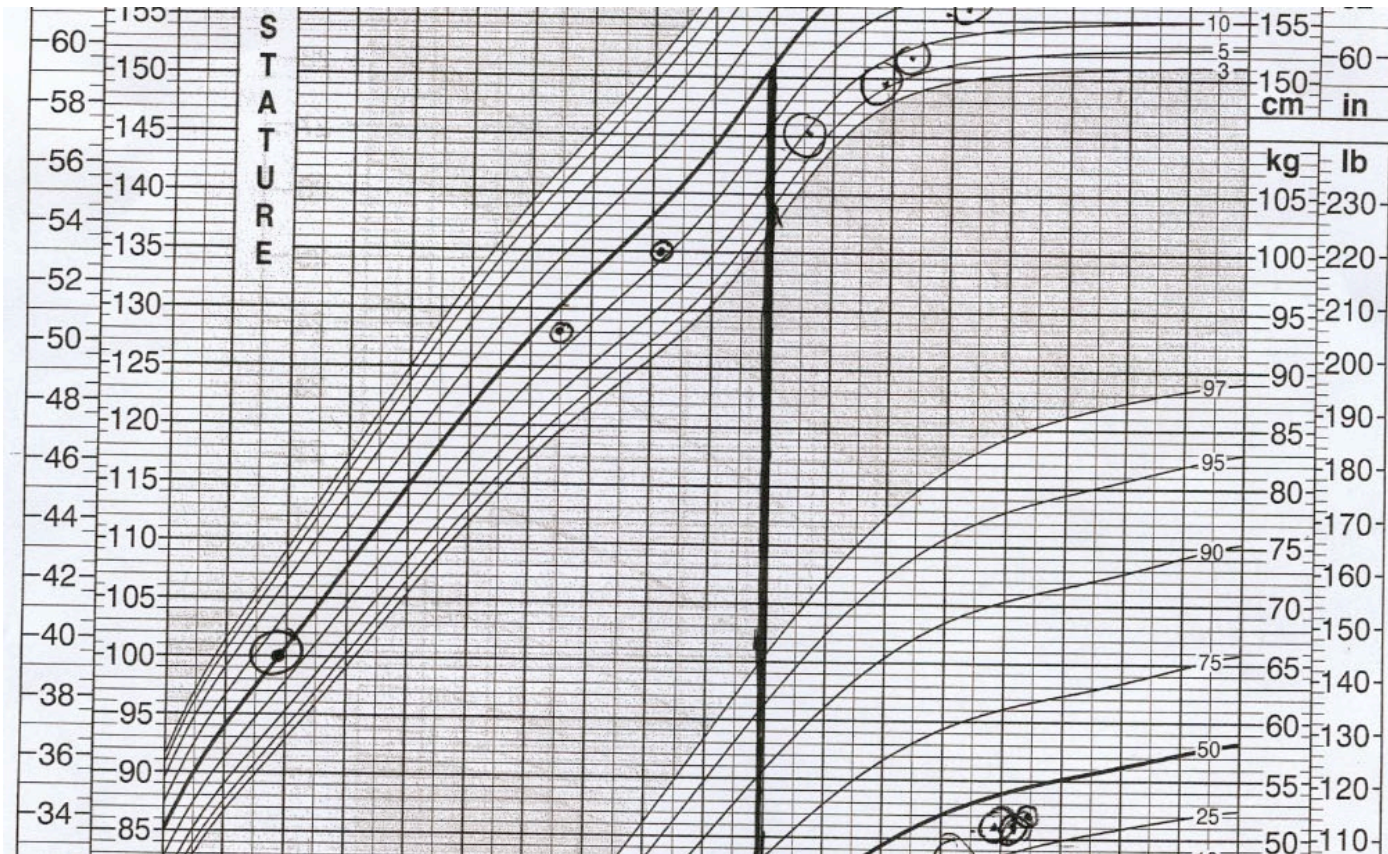
Harriet Brown, MFA May 2019

It started with a bike ride . . .



Photo by [Christian Stahl](#)

... and then a diagnosis.



Anorexia Nervosa

- A disease of adolescence
- Two typical peaks of onset: 13-14 and 17-18
- Serious endocrine, cardiovascular, and gastrointestinal complications
- Anorexia nervosa has the **highest mortality rate** of any psychiatric illness—between 5 and 20 percent

Evidence-based Research

- Few randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have been done on anorexia
- One treatment that has been studied: **Family-Based Treatment (FBT)**, or the Maudsley approach
- Results from those studies → FBT should be the first-line treatment for teens and young adults with AN
- FBT is also effective for bulimia nervosa

FBT: First-line Treatment for Teens with AN

- A number of studies now show good to excellent long-term outcomes with FBT
- Between 50 and 90 percent of teens recover are **still recovered 5 years later**
- Used more widely in the U.S. now; has been standard of care in the U.K. for 20+ years

3 Phases of FBT

- Phase 1: Restore weight
- Phase 2: Gradually return control over eating to the teen
- Phase 3: Support teen in establishing healthy identity



**KEEP
CALM
AND
DO IT
YOURSELF**

Phase 1: Weight Restoration



Photo by [Jeffrey Deng](#)

What FBT does . . .

- Supports child/teen to health with loving persistence and consistency
- Considers parents an essential resource in a child's recovery
- Works to mobilize family through initial stage of denial into action
- Empowers parents to help their child/teen recover

. . . and what it doesn't do

- Force-feed
- Punish or use punitive/negative methods
- Tell parents exactly how to “get their child to eat”
- Get hung up on what anorexia is “about”



DATE	WT	BP	HR	RR	SpO2
9/13/2005		84	80	92/60	No urine
9/20/2005	2500	84 /12	74	88/46	
9/27/2005	2500	84	80	100/50	>1.030
10/12/2005	3000	85 1/4	70's	94/66	>1.030
10/18/2005		86 1/8	78	106/72	>1.030
11/1/2005		88 3/4	78	100/70	
11/8/2005		87 3/4	83	89/52	>1.030
11/22/2005		91 1/8	80	100/60	>1.030
12/6/2005		90	76	94/54	1.030
1/3/2006		90 1/8	100	102/60	
1/17/2006		94	78	110/60	
2/14/2006		94	79	106/61	
2/28/2006	3500	98 1/8	80	100/60	
3/21/2006		96 1/2		104/56	Ht: 61"
4/3/2006		100 1/8		98/60	

The Re-feeding Experience

- Anorexia “voice”
- Irrationality around food
- Extreme anxiety
- Rages
- Regression
- Deceptive behaviors/personality shifts

Ancel Keys' Experiment



The Minnesota

STARVATION experiment

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5 Things I Want You to Know About Anorexia



1. It's not a choice

“While the symptoms are behavioral, this illness has a **biological core**, with genetic components, changes in brain activity, and neural pathways currently under study.”

–**Thomas Insel**, M.D., former director,
National Institute of Mental Health

- People with anorexia, especially teens, are **anosognosic**
- When duration < 3 years, **weight restoration** often → recovery
- Insight-oriented therapy is **ineffective** with malnourished patients

2. Early, aggressive intervention is crucial

- Many eating disorders begin in middle school as “healthy eating”
- Failure to gain weight is as much a symptom as weight loss
- You wouldn't “watch and wait” with cancer; why would you with an eating disorder?

3. Families are essential to recovery

- Families know their child best and have the biggest investment in a child's recovery
- Families can be there 24/7, and that's what it takes for recovery
- There's no evidence that families cause anorexia; even if they do contribute . . .
- . . . blaming them is counterproductive
- Families of choice can facilitate recovery too

4. Full recovery is possible!

- Hope is crucial to recovery
- Traditional course of disease—multiple hospitalizations/relapses, 5 to 7 years duration—does not apply to young adolescents
- Your words are more powerful than you think!

5. It affects all genders, races, ethnicities, and body sizes



Resources

- Maudsley Parents: www.maudsleyparents.org
- National Eating Disorders Association: www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
- National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders: www.anad.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: www.nami.org