

Finding the Balance
Joint Ward Forum Wards 10, 11, 15 & 16
With the National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC)
Thursday March 28th, 2019 6:30-8:30pm
Cosburn Middle School

- Meeting was called to order at 6:38pm
- Trustee Jennifer Story, Ward 15, gave introductions:
 - Trustee Chris Moise, Ward 10
 - Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin, Ward 11
 - Trustee Michelle Aarts, Ward 16
 - Ary Maharaj, Outreach and Education for NEDIC
 - Cosburn Middle School Principal, David Finkelstein
 - Cosburn Middle School Vice Principal, Vincent Spadaro
- Ary, Education and Outreach Coordinator for NEDIC gave a land acknowledgement

- Ary gave an introduction to the National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) and all the services they offer: <http://nedic.ca/about/what-we-do> drawing particular attention to the 24 hour help line and instant chat service:
<http://nedic.ca/give-get-help/contact-nedic> both services offer anonymous help.
- The Panel from NEDIC was introduced:
 - Karin Jasper PHD
 - Sarah Farrel, the parent of a child with anorexia and OCD
 - Candice Richardson, a NEDIC volunteer who works on the help line and has had a personal struggle with anorexia
 - Nancy Main, NEDIC volunteer and parent of a child with an eating disorder
 - Sandy Carrington, the parent of a boy with OCD and anorexia

A discussion of the risk factors and causes of eating disorders.

- **What are the causes of eating disorders:**
 - **Karin**- there is not any known causes for eating disorders but there are risk factors: genetic mental health factors, perfectionism, low self esteem. OCD, Anxiety, Depression, Compulsive tendencies. detail oriented. difficulty processing emotions. dieting is a risk factor, weight prescriptive sports, media
 - **Sarah** - labeling “healthy food/junk food” can cause confusion and assist in restricting behavior. Labeling food “Fuel Food/Fun Food” can help to change perspective.
 - **Candice** - environment can be a risk factor ie. a toxic dance studio environment
 - **Sandy** - peer influence (teasing etc...)
- **Why is it so important to address issues early? What are the first signs?**

- <http://nedic.ca/sites/default/files/files/Do%20you%20know%20the%20warning%20signs%20of%20an%20eating%20disorder.pdf>
- **Karin**- The best chance at recovery is if family is involved in treatment within three years.
- **Sarah** - Trust your gut and get help early
- **Candice** - demand outweighs treatment availability so the earlier you can get treatment referral, the better chance you have of getting into a treatment program
- **Nancy** - you can be too sick for treatment
- **Sandy**- first signs are changes in behavior. The system is slow. You have to push and advocate for your child.
- **Karin** - In focus groups with parents - Dr. did not identify early signs so trust your Gut! if you think there is something to worry about, there is something to worry about. 20% mortality rate, interfere with brain, bone & heart development
- **What helped you face barriers?**
 - **Sarah**- Parent to parent. Was put in contact with other parents and given parent resources
 - **Candice** - Addressing other mental health issues ie. anxiety
 - **Nancy** - other parents and a doctor who was willing to assist and learn (alternative medicine, chiropractic)
 - **Sandy** - Parent advocating - internet access to learn and find resources and others with experience. Family Therapy. Supportive partner.

➤ **Questions from the audience:**

- **Are the risk factors the same for all eating disorders? Not specific to anorexia?**
 - Yes. Some risk factors are stronger with specific disorders and disorders also cross over each other. There is a newer diagnosed eating disorder; Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID)
- **Can you speak more about how to change the language around making healthy choices?**
 - **Sarah** - Talk about emotions with food and exercise. Talk about experiences with certain food.
 - **Candice** - take away good and bad and talk "fun" and "fuel" foods. But, also change language around bodies and body image. Take looks out of the conversation. Focus on what our bodies can do for us, not how they look.
 - **Sandy** -Set example at home. Lead by example.
- **How do you change how you see yourself? Is there any way?**
 - There is no easy answer. The disease is irrational. If there is something underlying get them to talk to someone.
 - There are biological, physiological and societal influences
- **What happens when a child is resistant to help?**

- You have to force them. They will die if they don't get treatment. The disorder takes over, there is no logic. Treat while they are minors, they will not seek treatment on their own.
- **Are early childhood food aversions associated with eating disorders?**
 - There are studies being done now to explore this question. May be a symptom on its own, associated with ARFID
- **If you think your child has risk factors but no symptoms, should you address it? When do you intervene?**
 - Look for behavior changes and personality. Keep communication open and ask about feelings. diets, ask what they want to get out of diet. Reinforce individual beauty.
 - Diets are very harmful to children and adolescents.
 - Food has a social aspect and that needs to be important too.
 - Teenagers and Instagram - images flooding. What advice to counteract the Social Media Message?
 - Debunk social media (photoshop, advertising). "Beyondimages.ca" grades 4-8 curriculum to discuss social media and debunk it. have conversations about it keep communication open.

- Trustee Jennifer Story thanked the panelists. And announced that the Trustees would remain for a bit to answer questions about the recent Ontario Government education funding announcements.
- Gave a brief overview of the changes to class sizes:
 - The numbers are an average. So an average class size of 28 in high school could mean many more than 28 students in a class.
https://twitter.com/malloy_john/status/1110684929669644289
 - There will be a rally at Queens Park on Saturday April 6th from 12-2
<https://www.osstf.on.ca/en-CA/news/mn-mar-28-2019.aspx>
 - Students are walking out on April 4th
<https://www.narcity.com/ca/on/toronto/news/high-school-students-are-protesting-ontario-classroom-sizes-increasing-with-another-walkout>
 - Secord School Council in Ward 16 has put the following event together.
<https://www.facebook.com/events/313680646002174/>
 - Trustees Story and Aarts are working with parents who want to kick off a East End Parents for Public Education Group.
 - If you are in need of some more information, resources, referrals or support for yourself or a loved one experiencing issues with the items discussed here, you can reach the NEDIC Helpline toll free at 1-866-633-4220 (416-340-4156 in Toronto) or at www.nedic.ca from 9:00am - 9:00pm EST Monday to Thursday or 9:00am - 5:00pm EST on Friday.
- Meeting ended at 8:28pm

