



SHEENA'S PLACE
Support for eating disorders

About Us

Sheena's Place (SP) was founded in the memory of Sheena Carpenter, whose battle with anorexia and bulimia ended with her untimely death when she was just 22. Located in Downtown Toronto, SP is the only community-based registered charity in the GTA providing immediate services to those affected by eating disorders. We offer a range of programs for individuals aged 17+ who are living with EDs, and their caregivers and loved ones.



We envision a world where every individual has an accepting relationship with their body.

Our work and decision making prioritizes Compassion, Inclusivity, Community, Integrity, Innovation.

We are driven to provide accessible support when someone seeks it . We're also on a mission to increase awareness and understanding of eating disorders.

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We Strive To

minimize
barriers to
access

- Our services are free;
- No formal diagnosis or referral is required
- Support is available almost immediately.

Our work fills critical gaps in the system by increasing readiness for hospital programs, supplementing medical-based treatment, and, providing ongoing support following formal treatment, when the risk of relapse is high.

educate &
reduce
stigma

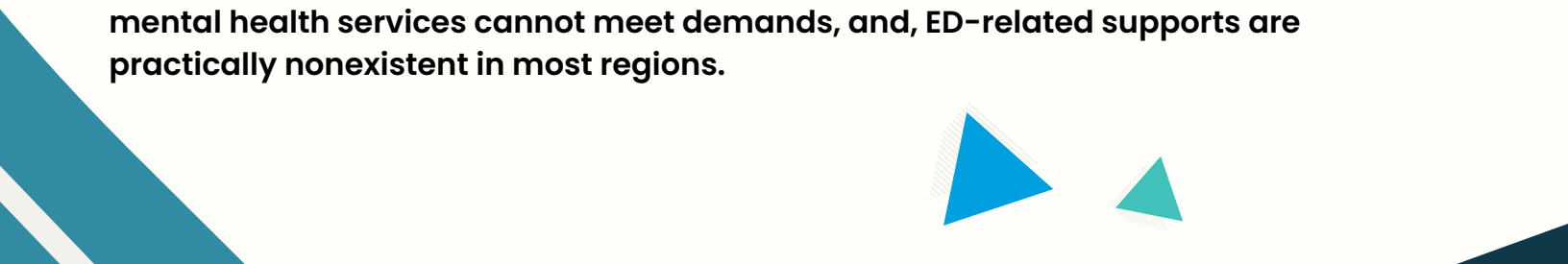
We're also working hard to increase awareness about eating disorders among health professionals and others who are in positions to help individuals with ED. Our reputation has led to organizations from across Canada and abroad reaching out to learn about our work, and to request support in training their staff. We're also striving to reduce weight-based and ED-related stigma.

Why Eating Disorders?

The prevalence of eating disorders (EDs) continues to rise: there's a good chance someone you know is affected in some way. Influenced by both biological and social-environmental factors, EDs account for surprisingly high mortality rates. Those who suffer are at risk of serious physical and mental health illness. EDs affect individuals from *all* demographics and the concern is growing at an alarming rate.

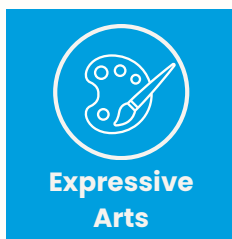
Eating disorders are tremendously debilitating, and contribute to high rates of absence from work and/or school. EDs impact cognitive functioning, often co-occurring with severe anxiety and/or depression. If untreated, EDs can lead to complications in heart health, gastro-intestinal issues, osteoporosis, brain damage, among other issues. And, individuals with EDs routinely experience significant disruptions in their relationships with family and other loved ones.

As there is a scarcity in publicly funded ED support programs in Ontario, those who seek help are left with often unaffordable private counselling options and hospital treatment programs with untenable waitlists. In Ontario, local resources for 'no fee' mental health services cannot meet demands, and, ED-related supports are practically nonexistent in most regions.



Our Programs

We offer group-based services rooted in research demonstrating empirical efficacy facilitated by a roster of talented professionals from a range of related disciplines. The programs fall into the following categories:



Among benefits specific to each group-type, our programming has been proven to be exceptionally effective at relieving intense feelings of isolation, shame and guilt, while fostering an environment of mutual empathy and motivation for change. Participants are able to experience a sense of community and support each other to gain traction on their road to recovery.

Since March 2020, we've been delivering many of our services online. Virtual programming has significantly increased access for individuals living outside the GTA, and those facing other challenges with traveling to our location (issues such as those related to mental health or mobility). We aim to continue to offer sessions both in-person and online.

Our second major area of focus is increasing awareness and education of Eating Disorders. We host webinars, training and presentations for the general public and for a very wide range of organizations (such as corporate teams, government, social service agencies, and post-secondary school staff and students). Our social media presence continues to grow. We have some established relationships where we engage in a regular cadence of information sharing and training. As mentioned above, we're routinely contacted by groups seeking this type of engagement.

Feedback From Participants

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- *"This group really helps me cope with body pain and with[sic] manage stress. I look forward to the group every week."*
- *"You have helped me feel like I am not alone and I truly admire what you give back to participants."*
- *"I have found so much comfort in these groups knowing that I'm not alone. Before joining Sheena's Place I had a lot of shame and anger at myself for struggling with my ED for so long... now I'm more active in working towards recovery."*
- *"As a parent with an adult child with an eating disorder I really appreciated having the opportunity to meet weekly with other caregivers. The support has helped me get through some very challenging times."*
- *"I am so impressed with the outstanding programming I have been a part of."*
- *"Thank you for opening up a safe space for me. I've had this disorder for >10 years and it's the first time I've agreed to address / talk about my problem."*
- *"The feeling of being validated and heard and seen by your peers is unmatched."*

”

Quotes and data collected from Winter 2023

98%

of participants
would recommend
this group/workshop
to others.

98%

of participants
felt welcome at
Sheena's Place and
were greeted warmly,
without judgment.

97%

of participants
found their
group/workshop to be
helpful overall.

92%

of participants
felt they gained new
insights or knowledge.

89%

of participants
felt connected to
and/or supported by
other group members.

89%

of participants
felt their
group/workshop was
supportive of their
recovery journey.



Did You Know...


- At any given time,
an estimated 840,000 to 1,750,000 people in Canada have symptoms sufficient for an eating disorder diagnosis
- International research indicates that
around 2.2 % to 4.6% of the world population are affected by eating disorders in the past two decades

References

Galmiche, M., Déchelotte, P., Lambert, G., & Tavoracci, M. P. (2019). Prevalence of eating disorders over the 2000–2018 period: A systematic literature review. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 109(5), 1402–1413.

Statistics Canada. (2021). Population and demography statistics. Retrieved September 23, 2021, from https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/subjects-start/population_and_demography

Learn More About Eating Disorders

- National Eating Disorder Information Centre
 - Myths and truths about dieting and weight loss
 - Quick facts about eating disorders
 - National Eating Disorders Association (USA)
 - Kelty Eating Disorders Resource Library
 - “Sick Enough” by Jennifer Gaudiani
 - Centre for Clinical Interventions – Disordered Eating Self-Help
 - Harm Reduction Is For Eating Disorders, Too by Kastalia Medrano
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