

EQF/MQF LEVEL 7

Post Graduate Certificate in the Psychology of Eating Disorders and Obesity

LW/HSC/009

Contact Hours: 150

Placement Hours: 45

Self Study Hours: 395

Assessment Hours: 160

Total Learning Hours: 750

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This nine-month Post-Graduate Certificate programme will expose the student to a wide range of theoretical models that address the types, causes and symptoms of eating disorders. This programme offers candidates an opportunity for CPD and specialization in this area.

It will discuss eating disorders and disordered eating. The students will learn how to recognize eating disorders and carry out differential diagnosis.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course programme the learner will

- Demonstrate an understanding of the different presentations of eating disorders and their associated symptoms.
- Be able to compare, contrast and evaluate interpretations of eating disorders as mental health conditions within known models of etiology and maintenance.
- Devise a formulation and a treatment plan.
- Carry out a clinical interview.
- Administer eating disorder questionnaires.
- Work with a food record.
- Recognize feeding issues like pica and ARFID.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to engage teens in therapy and apply media literacy.
- Use nutritional models used in the treatment of eating disorders.
- Know how to collaborate with a multidisciplinary team

- Understand the major theories relevant to eating disorders.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to prepare content for a blog/vlog.
- Present a poster for public health purposes.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the attachment theory.
- Work with body image issues and the concept of embodiment.
- Define gender issues, substance abuse and how these overlap with eating issues.
- Identify the medical complications of eating disorders.
- Be able to offer psychoeducation in terms of body, weight, and shape.
- Understand the value of nutrients and how these are essential for recovery from an eating disorder.

TARGET CANDIDATES:

This MQF Level 7 course is suitable for those who are in possession of a warrant such as psychologists, counsellors, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, dieticians, nutritionists or mental health nurses who wish to specialize in or broaden their understanding of eating disorders.

DURATION: 9 Months

CREDIT VALUE: 30 ECTS

MODE OF TRAINING 50% Online, 50% Face-to-Face

ASSESSMENT Hybrid Assessment Method which includes both a continuous and a final assessment.

The following formats may be used:

Presentations (individual or in groups), case studies, weekly journaling, class debates, group work and written assignments.

AWARDING BODY Learning Works

LECTURERS

Ms Colette Farrugia Bennett

Ms Donatella Agius

Dr Dorothy Scicluna

Ms Isabelle Anastasi

Ms Lou Ghirlando

Ms Maria Lisa Gilson

Ms Rachael Marie Scicluna

Ms Rowinda Dimech

Ms Santina Camilleri

Ms Christine Duff

AREAS COVERED:

- The Engagement Process.
- Feeding and childhood eating issues.
- Adolescence and the role of the media in the development of eating disorders.
- Attachment theory, and substance abuse/ misuse and eating disorders.
- Body image and embodiment.
- Gender and the development of eating disorders.
- The course will include lectures in the medical, psychiatric and the dietetic aspects of eating disorders.
- Hunger and Appetite.
- Relapse Prevention.
- Medication utilized for eating disorders and obesity.

THE LEARNER WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO:

- Apply the methods of assessment and diagnosis in order to create a formulation. Those students not in possession of a warrant to practise can only apply this method for training purposes.
- Share the formulation with the patient and update accordingly
- Plan a therapeutic way forward.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the different presentations of the eating disorders and their associated symptoms.
- Develop the skill to use an integrative approach to the therapy of eating disorders.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how and when to utilize which models of treatment.
- Be able to communicate effectively with the family of the patient and with the multidisciplinary team.
- Show an understanding how to adapt different therapeutic skills to eating recovery and to individual presentations of these disorders.
- Design treatment plans which acknowledge appropriate phases of treatment.
- Demonstrate how to respond appropriately to individual client needs within each treatment phase and be able to justify his/her selection of interventions.
- Use appropriate resources such as alternative professional expertise and how to integrate their work with that of the other professionals involved in the recovery process.
- Demonstrate the ability of how to monitor responses to treatment.
- Demonstrate self-awareness and mastery of their own issues with food and weight.
- Demonstrate therapist qualities deemed important and useful for working congruently with clients.

COURSE STRUCTURE

MODULE 1: WHAT ARE EATING DISORDERS (EDs) ? (5 ECTS)

This module will give an in-depth look at each eating disorder and will explain who gets eating disorders.

It will look at;

- Normal and Abnormal Eating.
- Hunger and Appetite.
- Who suffers from Eating Disorders?
- Who gets Eating disorders?
- Assessment and Diagnosis.
- Engagement and Early Issues.
- Nutritional Interventions - outpatient care.
- Working with Food Records.
- What may go wrong?

MODULE 2: CHILDHOOD AND FEEDING DISORDERS (5 ECTS)

Following are the topics covered in Module 2:

- From normal eating to disordered eating and eating disorders.
- Feeding/ Eating Issues in children.
- Body Dissatisfaction and dieting, and how this can lead to Eds:
- Intervention planning.
- Use of drawing/art.
- Use of toys – non-directive approach.
- Family-based intervention
- Presentations of Case Studies: Child Focused and discussions.
- Picky Eaters vs. Problem feeders.
- The Sensory Oral Sequential (SOS) approach to feeding
- From normal eating to disordered eating and eating disorders.
- Food intake guidelines.
- Defining normal eating.
- Childhood ED/ Obesity- differences in developing/ developed countries.
- Childhood obesity: food insecurity, attachment processes, maternal poor nutrition.
- Early Feeding, Child Behaviour and Parenting as Correlates of Problem Eating.

MODULE 3: ADOLESCENTS AND THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EATING DISORDERS (5 ECTS)

This module covers:

- Definition of Adolescence.
- Challenges faced in adolescence which might trigger EDs.
- The difference between ED and Disordered Eating.
- The different types of Eating Disorders.
- The impact of social media on youths and how they may contribute to EDs.
- Websites that promote EDs
- Attachment and EDs.
- The importance of Education where adolescents suffering from EDs are concerned.
- Parent involvement.

- Signs and symptoms of eating disorders and what to look out for when assessing a potential client.
- A potential assessment procedure with an adolescent.
- Interventions used with clients presenting with EDs.
- Introducing the correct jargon when working with clients with EDs.
- Working with other professionals and reasons behind it.

MODULE 4: BODY IMAGE, EMBODIMENT AND EXPRESSIVE ART THERAPY (5 ECTS)

This module will focus on body-image and the way in which it impacts the development and maintenance of an eating disorder, and therefore the relevance in supporting healthy body-image in the prevention and treatment of eating disorders.

It will outline the aspects of body-image and the way that body-image is developed through different stages and experiences of life. It will open awareness to gender and ethnic distinctions in the development of body-image. Critical influences on body-image will also be discussed.

MODULE 5: ATTACHMENT THEORY, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, GENDER AND EATING ISSUES (5 ECTS)

This module will explore attachment theory in relation to the root causes of eating disorders and the subsequent development of substance abuse. It will specifically aim at exploring the following areas:

- Attachment processes and eating disorders.
- Anorexia nervosa and the deficiencies in the self.
- Anorexia nervosa treatment and recovery.
- Introduction to substance abuse.
- Patterns of co-morbidity between eating disorders and substance use.

Further on, this module will eventually shed light on the link between eating disorders and LGBTIQ+. The module will help the student reflect and understand the differences between gender and sexuality. With this understanding, the prevalence and risk factors of this sexual minority with eating disorders (EDs) will be reflected. Therefore, the aim of this part of the module is to gain an awareness of Gender and Sexuality and what happens when there is the development of an eating disorder. This part of the Module will specifically cover the following topics:

- Difference between Gender and Sexuality.
- Definition of 'LGBT+' Acronym.
- Coming out.
- Intersectionality and minority stress; self-harm, adolescents, addiction and eating disorders.
- Case studies with such intersectionality.
- Gender dysphoria and body dysphoria.

MODULE 6: THE MEDICAL, PSYCHIATRIC AND DIETETIC ASPECT OF EATING DISORDERS. (5 ECTS)

This module aims to explore the important relationship of the medical, psychiatric, and dietetic aspect of EDs. This will be referred to as a tri-factor model. Medical care of these clients ideally includes the medical, psychiatric, and nursing aspects.

This Module will look at:

- The figure of the nurse in residential care settings and within the community. A strong and well-trained nurse can pick up subtle changes to the client's medical and underlying psychological status which can serve as a guide to the multidisciplinary team.
- The second aspect of the tri-factor medical model is the role of the psychiatrist. Eating disorders are primary psychiatric conditions that present with a host of psychiatric comorbidities such as mood disorders, personality disorders, and sleep disorders. It is crucial for the psychiatrist to recognize and treat the underlying psychiatric co-morbidities for the client to receive the most benefit from eating disorder treatment.
- Assessing the important role of sleep or sleep deprivation.
- Looking at the medical care guidelines provided by the Academy of Eating Disorders. The medical provider must be trained in the recognition and management of the medical complications of eating disorders — from the complications of extreme restricting to those of extreme bingeing — to support treatment.
- The multidisciplinary team.
- Dietetic intervention in in-patient care including:
 - Medical files.
 - Clinical interventions.
 - Assessment of DH.
 - Intervention plan.

- Communication with the medical team.
- Presentations of Case Studies: Child Focused and discussions.
- Putting it all together.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should:

- Be working within a helping profession where a better understanding of eating disorders and how to support people would be useful. E.g., counsellor, psychotherapist, counselling/ clinical psychologist, mental health nurse, psychiatrist or general practitioner, nutritionist or dietician.
- Be able to demonstrate successful completion of relevant training, or substantial experience, in your stated professional capacity (as above).
- In addition, candidates should satisfy the following entry requirements:
- Be in possession of a MQF Level 7 certification from a recognised local or foreign awarding body, or equivalent
- Have a good command of oral and written communication in English with a level of proficiency in English equivalent to at least IELTS Level 6.

FUNDING

Applicants may get up to 70% of the fee back through the Get Qualified Scheme.

PART-TIME

Lectures are held twice a week in the afternoon on a part-time basis.

This programme is being organised in collaboration with Dott. Dorothy Scicluna