**The treatment**

There are two main forms of treatment for young people - family-based treatment (FBT) and CBT-E. In both treatments, the goal is to help the young person recover from the eating disorder, both physically and emotionally. You may already have had family-based treatment. This is a model, based on research, where the whole family works together to support the recovery of the young person. Parents are asked to take charge of the eating initially, with the young person taking responsibility at a later stage when they are more confident and motivated. The final stage in FBT is promoting normal adolescent development and discussing any family relationship difficulties that have not already resolved.

In CBT-E, the young person is the central focus of treatment. The family have a key role in supporting them though, not only at meals but helping them towards independence and developing interests outside of the eating disorder.

CBT-E encourages young people to take charge of their own recovery without pressuring them. For CBT-E to be effective, it is important that the young person has some motivation to make changes, although we know that this can go up and down during treatment. In CBT-E, it is essential that the young person agrees with the treatment goals, is willing to consider the treatment as a priority, and to play an active role in therapy. If the young person is not motivated to recover and/or is at serious risk, then this treatment may not be appropriate.

Both FBT and CBT-E have been shown to be effective in eating disorders. FBT is generally recommended as the first line approach. However, some young people may benefit from CBT-E earlier.

**Treatment goals in CBT-E**

The main goals of treatment are:

* to help the young person develop a way of judging themselves that is not so reliant on body weight and shape and eating and their control.
* to displace the eating disorder mind-set and to tackle the things that are keeping the eating disorder going.
* to encourage regular weight regain (if relevant) up to a healthy weight range.

Treatment is meant to be as simple as possible, only addressing the things which impact on the eating disorder. It is a collaborative approach which involves encouraging the young person to try things out and see what works. The young person works on the things that they see as a problem, for example the fact that having an eating disorder takes up a lot of time.

**Duration and stages of the treatment**

The treatment takes place in four stages over 20-40 sessions. Throughout treatment the family will be involved and there are often joint appointments at the end of each stage or in stage 3 at the end of each module.

1. ***Stage one****.* The initial goal is to engage and teach the young person about eating disorders and the treatment. An important aim is to focus on helping the young person to play an active role in treatment. Time is taken to build motivation in the young person so that they make their own choice to have treatment. This is necessary in order to begin the weight regain process which will involve keeping to a standard meal plan, addressing any unhelpful eating/weight loss behaviours, agreeing appropriate help at mealtimes and generally supporting the young person to make behavioural changes. A meeting with family members also happens early on.

When the young person is low in weight, they may have an extended preparation phase of up to 8 sessions (over 4 weeks) prior to beginning weight regain. It can be difficult at the start of treatment for the young person to see the eating disorder as a problem. During these sessions the young person is helped to understand their eating disorder, reduce their concerns about eating and establish a regular pattern of eating. The amount of food is not always increased at this stage. The young person is encouraged to consider the pros and cons of change and to make a commitment to recovery. As parents, you need to be aware that the young person is not expected to gain weight during this period (although the aim would be not to lose weight).

1. ***Stage two***is a chance to take stock, review progress so far, identify any obstacles to change and plan for stage 3.
2. ***Stage three*** is split into different modules looking at body image problems and any unhelpful dietary rules, addressing the eating disorder mindset and learning to manage difficult events and emotions. For some young people, other factors that maintain the eating disorder, such as perfectionism, low self-esteem or interpersonal issues, may also be addressed.
3. ***Stage four*** is to consolidate progress and develop a plan to stay healthy and avoid the eating disorder from coming back.

After the end of treatment there will be up to 3 follow-up sessions (over the next 6 months) in order to keep up progress and look at any setbacks.