

## One Family's Experience

### with the Intensive Family Therapy Program for Adolescents with Anorexia at UCSD

Finding professional support for Maudsley treatment near your home can be difficult. One exciting new option for treatment is being offered at the University of California at San Diego. The UCSD website describes the program...

*"This is a 5-day intensive treatment program lasts one week, from Monday through Friday and involves approximately 40 hours of treatment. Treatment takes place in our offices which are located in San Diego, CA. The participation of both parents, the individual with anorexia nervosa, and all siblings living in the home is optimal. While attending the program, families stay at the Marriott Residential Inn, located just next door."*

Maudsley Parents asked some of the participants to share their experience...

#### **Steve and Joyce tell their family's story:**

We were the first family to participate in this UCSD program. It's made a critical difference for us as a family in helping our daughter deal with her disease. We completed the program three months ago. Since then, we've also been doing a weekly family therapy session at Columbia/NY Presbyterian and meeting once a month with a local psychiatrist. Our daughter has regained 20 lbs and is of now (late-February 2007) at her goal weight.

As background, our daughter has been battling anorexia for three years, since she was 13 years old. Six months into her disease, she was hospitalized with a low heart rate and blood pressure. Once stabilized, she transferred to a nationally known in-patient eating disorder treatment center for 28 days. The center was not Maudsley based. Her weight improved, but she continued to be very symptomatic after her release. During this time, she was under the care of a psychiatrist, a therapist, and our family doctor.

She relapsed a little more than a year later, and was very close to being hospitalized again with the same heart and blood pressure conditions. She was very depressed and uncooperative. We had been in contact with Dr. Walter Kaye, a leading national researcher in eating disorders, because of a genetic study he

had underway. We asked his advice on treatment, and he offered for us to pilot a new one week program he and his staff at UCSD were developing.

It was definitely the right choice for us. First, Dr. Kaye and the UCSD clinical staff were excellent. Dr. Kaye, Dr. Elise Curry, Dr. Joy Jacobs-Pilipski, Dr. Mary Ellen Trunko, Dr. Terry Schwartz, Megan Holt and Judy Ho were incredibly talented, patient and flexible to our needs.

The program included a comprehensive medical and psychological assessment which helped us address some gnawing concerns we had about possible underlying issues contributing to our daughter's situation. They uncovered and advised us on a previously undiagnosed Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, which affects many anorexics. They also gave us some valuable insights into our daughter's motivations.

The psychoeducation component included topics not covered in the books we had seen and helped us better understand the underlying processes at work.

The staff coached, guided and encouraged our efforts with our daughter in the Maudsley family therapy component at a more personal level than books ever could have. Our daughter was very uncooperative coming in, and it was extremely helpful to have experienced counsel guide us during this critical time. They also gave us very valuable practical guidance on a three step food plan.

Finally, in the discharge component, they were able to provide us with the name of an excellent Maudsley trained psychologist within an hour of our home (as there are still none in our immediate area). We do weekly family therapy with Dr. Chaim Bromberg, who is associated with NY Cornell/Presbyterian Hospital in White Plains. They also provided us with a list of reference books. The one we've found the most helpful so far is James Lock & Daniel le Grange's "Help Your Teenager Beat an Eating Disorder". But the book for us was no substitute for attending the UCSD program.

Finally, Dr. Curry has continued to check in with us periodically on our progress.

**More Information about the UCSD program, staff, and schedule [here](#).**