PEACE

Pathway for eating disorders and autism developed from clinical experience

NHS

## EATING DISORDERS:

# ONSET VERSUS MAINTENANCE

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## ONSET:

There are factors and risks that may **increase the likelihood** that a young person will develop an eating disorder.

## MAINTENANCE:

There are also factors that **keep the eating disorder going** once it has developed.

(Kan and Treasure, 2018).

## PRECIPITATING FACTORS

A precipitating factor is a factor that **may trigger an eating disorder** to develop (Kan and Treasure, 2018). These can include dieting, illness, and bullying.

## MAINTAINING FACTORS

A maintaining factor is a factor that **keeps the eating disorder going** (Kan and Treasure, 2018). This could be a lack of healthy coping strategies, low self-esteem, difficulty expressing emotions, trauma, or different personality traits (such as obsessive thinking or perfectionism).

## PREDISPOSING FACTORS

(Kan and Treasure, 2018)

A predisposing factor is a factor that increases the likelihood that an eating disorder will develop.

These may include:

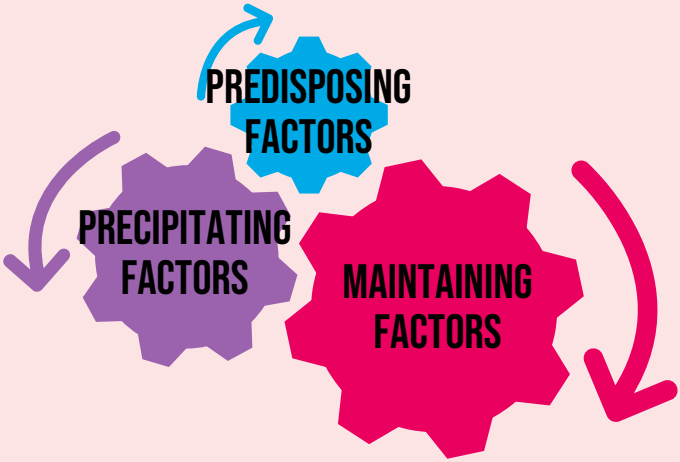
**Factors in the individual:** such as being anxious, a perfectionist, low mood, problems regulating emotions, rigid thinking styles and obsessional behaviour.

**Biological risks:** such as a family history of eating disorders, depression, anxiety or addiction. There could also be food allergies or physical problems that restrict food choices and eating. Type 1 diabetes is also a risk factor.

**Socio-cultural risks**: such as size and weight prejudice and an emphasis on dieting.

**Family risks:** such as major stresses in a family (bereavement, divorce, job loss etc).

# FINDING YOUR CONNECTIONS




Here is a diagram as an example of why a young person may have an eating disorder. It includes things that they were born with, things that may trigger the eating disorder and things that keep it going (Kan and Treasure, 2018). This will be different for every individual as no two eating disorders are the same.

> With the right support and treatment, it is possible to recover from an eating disorder.

Eating disorders are complex, with lots of different risks and factors at play. It is impossible to find one cause or explanation for an eating disorder.

We know that it can be sometimes be really difficult to talk about eating difficulties. Try to find an adult that you trust and remember that they are there to help and not judge.

## References

Kan, C., Treasure, J. (2018). [diagram of the onset and maintenance of anorexia nervosa]. ScienceDirect. *https://www.psych.theclinics.com/article/S0193-953X(18)31168-7/fulltext#articleInformation*

**We would like to thank Dr Caz Nahman, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, for her contributions to this leaflet.**

## INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The QR code will take you to the PEACE website where you can find further information, resources and support.