

HEALTHY CAMPUS CASE STUDY	
Name of Institution	University of Galway
Who led the initiative?	Student Counselling Service- two student counsellors experienced in working with eating disorders.
Date and timeframe of the initiative	The academic year 2022-2023 and ongoing.
What was the reach of the initiative?	The initiative pilot reached 15 female students (4 others participated in the early stages of the programme but dropped off within 1 session)
Initiative Title	The Body Project Treatment Programme / Eating Disorder Recovery Group
Aims/ Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an evidence-based intervention to support female students, registering with the student counselling service, who present with an eating disorder. • To reduce body dissatisfaction and eating disorder behaviours in this population. • To introduce them to the key components of eating disorder recovery and provide them with tools and various pathways to continue their journey of recovery.
The rationale for the action, including any identified health needs	Originally developed at Stanford University, and now in practice internationally, the Body Project Treatment Programme was specifically designed to enable young women presenting with an eating disorder to challenge the thin appearance ideal, a principal factor in the perpetuation of eating disorders (EDs). The 8-week group-based intervention is the outgrowth of a 20-year program of research on the risk factors for eating disorders and incorporates a series of verbal, written, and behavioural exercises to reduce body dissatisfaction and eating disorder behaviours. Clinical trials have demonstrated that this treatment programme produced large and clinically meaningful reductions in eating disorder symptoms relative to usual care received by individuals with any type of DSM-5 eating disorder (Stice, Rohde, Butryn, Menke, & Marti, 2015). Pre-pandemic figures indicate that approximately 200,000 people in Ireland experience an ED at some point in their lives ⁱ , with 1,757 new cases occurring in

	<p>Ireland each year. The fact that 95% of ED cases occur in the 12-25 age-group and that most go untreated, makes the college-age population an important target group for treatment measures. 10% of deaths with people with ED is suicide.</p>
<p>Identify all frameworks, policies, or strategies this initiative aligns to <i>(Internal, local or national)</i></p>	<p>National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework Connecting for life Healthy Campus Charter and Framework Student Success Strategy University of Galway</p>
<p>Summary / Overview</p>	<p>The Body Project Treatment Programme was launched on UoG campus in the autumn of 2022 with the additions of a dietitian assessment for each group member, a dietitian guest talk, and a guest speaker from Overeaters Anonymous (12-step eating disorder recovery support group). The programme was promoted as ‘Eating Disorder Recovery Group’. Group participants were recruited via internal referrals from student counsellors in the service. The majority of the female students had engaged in a number of one-to-one counselling sessions with a student counsellor prior to the group. Some had noted that the eating disorder was one of their main issues, on initial registration with the service, and were referred to the group directly, without previous one-to-one counselling.</p> <p>Two groups took place in the academic year of 2022-2023, one group per semester (in October 2022 and in February 2023). Of the 8 female students who started the programme in group 1, 6 completed and gave positive feedback on their experience in the group. Of the 7 female students who started the programme in group 2, 3 completed and gave positive feedback on their experience in the group. Importantly, over the course of the 8 weeks of the programme, each recounted having made significant changes in reducing disordered eating behaviours, which they planned to continue.</p> <p>Here is a sample of the testimonials from the pilot group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It was great to not feel alone for once and being able to share my thoughts and concerns about food without feeling judged or different” • “Before starting the group... I was really nervous and I had no idea what to expect but the last 8 weeks have been better than I could have ever imagined. I learned so much about myself, and the tools I

	<p>can use to help me on my way to recovery from my eating disorder. I am so glad that I decided to take part.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “From engaging in this group, I have been able to come to terms with what I have been facing for the majority of my life. I have never dealt with this, or even recognized it as a problem that is holding me back. I thought that I was to blame for this, that there was simply something innately wrong with me. I never believed that I could ever feel differently. Since coming to this group, I have finally been able to identify that everything was not my fault and that I don’t have to be confined to the unhappiness that these behaviours have caused me.” • “The therapists were so kind and knowledgeable and the group itself was so supportive and I felt a lot less alone in this fight” • “This group can change your outlook on food and show you you’re not alone” • “I was very hesitant at first, felt I was being dramatic, or I was fine, but it was the best decision I’ve made to join this group. I am so aware of how I can help myself and what I need to do to start living a healthier, happier, life.” • “It feels really good to share with people who understand you”
<p>Did you collaborate with internal and/or external stakeholders to deliver?</p>	<p>Yes. The original idea of implementing the Body Project Treatment Programme arose from the Body Project training rolled out by PCHEI- a body acceptance programme for general population. This training was delivered by Dr. Eric Stice of Stanford University. We collaborated with him to gain access to the Body Project Treatment manual. This equipped us to run the programme.</p> <p>As part of our add-ons to this evidence-based programme, we collaborated with Zoe Davis, Specialist Dietitian within Eating Disorder Mental Health Services in Ireland and UK. Zoe conducted a nutritional assessment with each participant and provided a 1-hour guest talk on nutrition. We also collaborated with Overeaters Anonymous (OA), a 12-step recovery support group for eating disorders. We invited an anonymous guest speaker from OA to share her eating disorder recovery story with the group and to provide information on how OA works.</p> <p>In some cases where there was concern of health risk we collaborated with GPs and/or AMH (psychiatry).</p>
<p>How was the initiative organised?</p>	<p>It was a special pilot project, using The Body Project Treatment programme, coordinated by two student counsellors in agreement with Head of Counselling.</p>
<p>What resources did you need?</p>	<p>Additional funding allocation from HEA provided backfill for core counsellor time spent facilitating the group. 3 hours x 8 group sessions x 2 core</p>

	counsellors per group, c €7,000 approximately. 68 hours preparation time over the summer months.
<p>Has it been evaluated? How successful has it been?</p>	<p>The Body Project Treatment Programme includes a pre and post quantitative survey measure, which assesses participants’ thoughts, feelings, and behaviours over the past month, specifically in relation to the thin appearance ideal, level of body dissatisfaction, and disordered eating behaviours. Participants completed this survey before and after the 8-week group programme.</p> <p>In addition to this measure, our Assistant Psychologist conducted interviews with 6 of the group participants in group 1 and is currently analysing both the quantitative and qualitative data, with a view to developing a final report on the programme effectiveness.</p>
<p>Any future plans, including the sustainability of the initiative?</p>	<p>Funding for dietitian, Zoe Davis, agreed with the Director of Student Services going forward. Plan is to continue to run the programme twice a year with some revisions, as detailed in key learning points below. As initial planning and preparation is now complete this will be minimal going forward.</p>
<p>Key Learning Points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the most notable benefits that participants consistently named was the peer support. It helped them to break the isolation of the secrecy involved in having an eating disorder. They felt less alone. It also helped them to come out of denial and to be able to acknowledge and accept that they have an eating disorder. Many stated they didn’t believe that it was a problem and/or had been invalidated by other health professionals prior to the group. • The addition of a guest speaker from OA was particularly effective. The guest speaker from OA inspired participants, which fostered greater motivation and hopefulness for their own recovery. Participants expressed a desire for more of these speakers sharing their lived experience. • The addition of the dietitian input was also particularly effective. The individual dietitian assessments helped participants to set realistic targets, to make staged changes, when setting goals within the group programme. Without this input, it would have been difficult for participants to reduce eating disorder behaviours and make positive changes with their eating. • A thorough assessment to ascertain student suitability and readiness to participate in the Eating Disorder Recovery Group is vital. Given that ambivalence is a key factor in eating disorders, this assessment is crucial in addressing the ambivalence, and in enhancing likelihood of commitment to all sessions, from the outset. This assessment would also highlight participants’ level of eating disorder severity and thus indicate where additional supports may need to be in place for

	<p>the student (e.g. GP, psychiatry, one-to-one counselling) in order for them to be deemed suitable for the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme involved several home exercises (written and behavioural). These exercises increased over the course of the programme and expected greater engagement from participants. It also took up more of the group time. This restricted the space available for emotional processing and the opportunity to make greater connection with peers. Future revisions may thus include greater space for this via creative interventions e.g., art therapy exercise. • It is important to consider the dates of the programme in terms of the academic semester. The final weeks of group 2 coincided too closely with the end of the academic year. We believe this may have contributed to participant drop-out when compared to semester one. • Future revision of the programme will also include collaboration with the Student Health Unit in terms of referrals.
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Healthy Campus Framework Categories (please tick all that apply)

Healthy Campus Process	Whole Campus Approach	Topic	Population Group
Commit <input type="checkbox"/>	Leadership, Strategy & Governance <input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol <input type="checkbox"/>	Students <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Coordinate <input type="checkbox"/>	Campus Environment (Facilities & Services) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Substance Misuse <input type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>
Consult <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Campus Culture & Communications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy Eating / Food <input type="checkbox"/>	Wider community <input type="checkbox"/>
Create <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Personal & Professional Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health & Wellbeing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Celebrate & Continue <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Sexual Health & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/>	

		Tobacco Free Campus <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Physical Activity / Active Transport <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Wellbeing on the Curriculum <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Health & Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>	

Contact Details

Contact Name/s	James McCormack
Date	04/04/2023
Email Address	James.mccormack@universityofgalway.ie
Links	
