

The extract overleaf is taken from “A Teenager’s Diary of Moving on from Anorexia” written by Contance Barter. This text explores the true diary tales of 14 year old School Girl experiences of Anorexia.

The author was admitted to a hospital to treat her anorexia on July 17th, 2007 and stayed there for seven months. She started her diary in August 9th, 2007 (please also note the footnotes as this will help your understanding of the context). All of the extract is taken from her August 9th dated diary entry.

Please conduct a Phenomenologically-Informed Thematic analysis of the extract and write up your report accordingly....

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August 9th, 2007.

In the past I have usually had about two good weeks followed by three or four bad days. This pattern has almost become a habit, but where have the bad days gone? Shouldn't they have come by now? I suppose I might be getting better! But how come? I'm not ready to get better. I still need to get thin. I can't accept this, I can't. The voice told me, and planned that I wasn't going to eat.....It told me not to worry if I had put on weight this time, because I will soon be able to lose it again. It told me – so I have to believe it.

I went down, undressed, got on the scales and waited for the three numbers to come up. Yes, I had only put on a tiny amount, but it felt enough to blame myself for.

Breakfast was put in front of me.

'No, don't give in, you mustn't. Do NOT put it in your mouth.'

I kept telling myself this over and over again. Then I figured there was no point in not eating but still drinking, it didn't have enough impact for me, I had to not drink either. I was so tempted the whole time, but I just kept saying to myself that it was for the best.

Snacks. ¹ Resisting my snack felt so good, because they looked really nice. I pulled them closer to myself to make it look like I was trying, but I wasn't going to have any....

'DON'T GIVE IN!' it should at me.

I had a core team ² meeting today. My key worker ³ brought up my eating today, and asked what was going on. God, I really wish she hadn't. I just want to forget about it and get out of here..... I'd planned to gain some self-confidence today through not eating, but now anorexia had taken over, and I wasn't in control any more. It isn't up to me, I just have to obey my illness.

I only managed a few sips of water at afternoon snacks. I was feeling so trapped. Anorexia had taken control.....

It took a lot of encouragement from staff just to make me take those few sips. Afterwards I felt terrible. Everything had just become out of proportion.

28 Afterwards, I had a meeting with two senior members of staff. They explained very
29 bluntly that they would have to pass a tube⁴ if I carried on not eating or drinking. This put me
30 in such a big mess, I was so confused about what to do, I had so many thoughts and feelings:

31 *‘You want the tube because it gets the message across, it means you are ill.’*

32 ‘What?... No you don’t, it’s painful and unnecessary, you don’t need to go down that
33 road.’

34 ‘Just eat, Constance, you can do this, you are hungry and thirsty.’

35 All these thoughts were running through my head and I just didn’t know which one to
36 choose. I had already taken the decision to let anorexia take control, and that clearly was the
37 wrong decision, but then again, it was making me thin so that is the best thing that has ever
38 happened to me.

39 In my core team they decided to let me have a phone call with a friend, but I couldn’t
40 get though so I had to leave a message. I just said that it would be great to talk to her and
41 catch up is she wanted to give me a call back. I was quite nervous, because part of me was
42 really ashamed of being in hospital and I didn’t want my friends to feel burdened with my
43 feelings.

44 ...I was feeling really weak when I stood up and I really wanted to give in, but I know
45 that I couldn’t. I felt guilty too, because the staff were giving me so much support, and were
46 really encouraging me, and I could see how it was affecting the rest of the young people.

47 My friend rang me back after tea. It was really good to speak to her and just hear a
48 friend’s voice. For thirteen minutes I felt healthy, and that I could recover. It gave me real
49 motivation – but just as quickly as the motivation came, it went when she hung up the phone.

50 I had a session with my key worker this evening, and I shared some things which
51 were really close to me. I just don’t see the point of living any more. I feel worthless. I’m not
52 any good at anything. I find it so hard to want to put anything inside me like food and water
53 because I am not good. I don’t deserve it. I’m nothing, so it is easier and better to have
54 nothing inside me. My key worker asked me to think of three good things about me, but I
55 can’t think of any....

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57 Footnotes

- 58 1) There was a set sequence of eating times in the unit. Breakfast, Morning snacks,
59 lunch, afternoon snacks, tea and late snacks.
- 60 2) Core Team = Staff directly associated with Constance's treatment plan.
- 61 3) Key Worker = One of two members who work directly with you alone.
- 62 4) The Tube = Naso-Gastric Tube that is passed through the nose into the stomach to
63 help people who are not eating enough by mouth.

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