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Lecture Abstract: Gerard J. Butcher, Dublin, Ireland

Title: The Role of Compassion-Focused Therapy in Eating Disorders

Emotion regulation is often experienced through self-compassion - a positive and caring attitude of an individual toward the self, even when experiencing some sense of personal failure. As a consequence, those with high levels of self-compassion generally experience high levels of emotional well-being. In contrast, self-criticism, shame and self-disparaging statements are common features of those presenting with eating disorders and a lack of self-compassion is all too obvious. An increased experience of external shame and body image dissatisfaction also predicts a drive for thinness through decreased self-compassion (Ferreira et al, 2013; Braun et al., 2016).

Compassion-focused therapy (CFT) in the treatment of eating disorders shows promise in helping toward recovery (Gale et al, 2014; Hilbert et al, 2015; Kelly et al, 2017). With a focus on the work of Paul Gilbert and Ken Goss, this lecture will explore features of self-criticism common to eating disorders; awareness and management of the critical inner voice; what a compassion-focused approach can look like and, how to incorporate and cultivate CFT into a treatment programme for eating disorders.

References:

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Gale C, Gilbert P, Read N, and Goss K. (2014) An evaluation of the impact of introducing compassion focused therapy to a standard treatment programme for people with eating disorders. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*. 21(1):1-12.

Hilbert A, Braehler E, Schmidt R, Löwe B, Häuser W, and Zenger M. (2015) Self-Compassion as a Resource in the Self-Stigma Process of Overweight and Obese Individuals. *Obesity Facts*. 8(5):293-301.

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