

Kelly's Story

Worthless, useless, hopelessness and the worst of all fat. Some of the words that have haunted me for nearly four years now.

I am 16 years old and in the midst of recovering from Anorexia Nervosa. I have been struggling with this life altering disorder for a while now, and as of right now for the first time in years it is under control.

Now some may ask how it is possible at 12 years old to hate yourself. To count every calorie that enters your mouth? To want nothing more than to be the skinniest girl in grade seven... pathetic now that I hear myself say it...I had everything. I was a straight A student, captain of all the sports teams, social, boyfriends, loving family... except I didn't realize it. Well, subconsciously I knew.

Everyone thought that I was perfect, and to this day I still believe that Anorexia was my way of showing people that I wasn't perfect, that yes I had a lot more than I should have, but just because I had all these wonderful blessings didn't mean that I wasn't an ordinary girl who criticized every aspect of her body and personality.

Over the summer of going into grade eight I became obsessed with exercise and would not eat.

My mom, being a nurse of course noticed but felt that a firm talking to would change my mind. And like most anorexics, I was very good at being deceitful and making everyone believe that everything was ok. The drastic weight loss continued until my mom wouldn't let it go on anymore.

I got taken to an outpatient clinic program in Brampton where I saw a dietitian and a social worker weekly. As the weight loss continued, and the deterioration of all aspects of my life, I eventually had to be taken to the emergency room.

At this time, I had lost all contact with my friends. Everything had become about me...about losing weight... about burning every calorie...I didn't care how this disorder affected anyone.

The relationship that this disorder took the biggest effect on was that with my mom. She could not handle watching her little girl, 13 years old, wasting away to nothing and the doctors not doing anything about it because I convinced them I would “try harder this week”.

After being taken to the Emergency room, the doctors told me there was no way that I could leave this hospital. With my heart barely beating, they were scared that I would have a heart attack overnight and never wake up.

The scariest thing about this? I took pride in this... But did this change the fact that I wanted to lose more weight, that I still saw myself as fat, or that I even had a problem? No not one bit. I was taken to The Hospital for Sick Children where they had a bed waiting for me. I did everything I was asked to do, ate what I had to but still continued on with my exercise routine in secret. Being put into this environment with other anorexics only made the competition greater, which resulted in my thoughts becoming worse and worse. I stayed there for four months and went back to grade eight to finish the year off with the same kids I have been going to school with since Kindergarten.

I thought it was going to be wonderful, everyone would be so happy that I would be back... instead I came back to everyone having formed a life without me... My best friend had found a new best friend and basically I was left to fend for myself while everyone gossiped about the latest couple, or fight, that I had no idea about.

I realized that I couldn't do it... I became extremely depressed and began cutting myself. I kept to myself at school and completely changed from the once outgoing, smart, fun girl to the lonely, depressed girl who hated everything about herself. I went back into the hospital after losing all the weight that I had worked so hard to put on. I was severely depressed and was seriously considering taking my own life. As soon as I went in the hospital, I was put on anti depressants.

I spent the summer in the hospital and it was once again just another way to further my eating disorder thoughts, actions and routines.

I knew the doctors didn't have faith in me, I knew that they thought I would end up back there again... If they didn't have faith in me, then why should I even try? My parents had no faith in me well, that's the way it seemed.

And as much as I told them I don't care what they say and I never wanted to get better (the rare time I did talk to them) they never left my side. They showed up to every family meeting, doctor's appointment, and finally it was time to go back and face reality and enter high school. As soon as I got it, the downward spiral started again. The exercise, the calorie counting, restricting, perfectionism... Same thing, just a different time.

It didn't help that I live in an extremely small town so everyone knew where I was and what was wrong with me.

At my weekly doctor's appointment at Sick Kids, they caught me earlier this time and I was placed in a treatment program. It was a different approach to being in the hospital. You attended 5 days a week from 8 am until 6 pm where it was an intense therapy setting, 6 meals a day fully supervised. I stayed here for a year and a half.

For the first year it was the same dance just different music. I went home and exercised, and on weekends I lost all the weight that I had put on during the week. Again, I was put into the hospital, and still nothing would change my mind and my goal to be the skinniest still stood.

Then something happened to me.... I can't explain what happened. I wanted my life.

I looked at everyone around me, everyone I had grown up in high school enjoying themselves, living life, getting in trouble, being social... I wanted this. At program, I was surrounded by incredible people who I finally saw were just trying to help me. The girls that I was in treatment with were indescribably special young women who supported me every step of my recovery.

It was the hardest thing I ever had to do.

To give up my daily routine of exercise, purging, fighting everyone around me, and facing the biggest fear of my life... getting my life back.

For the last 6 months in program, I have never worked so hard and I definitely could not have done it without the structure and support of the staff at the program.

There were a few exceptional ones, the dietitian, a child and youth worker, a physiatrist completely changed my life.

It has been almost a year since I have left, in fact a year next week and, well, I haven't been hospitalized and my weekly appointments are now spread to once every two months.

I have never gotten along with my family better, I am an honor roll student at school, I run every day and I am actually satisfied with my appearance.

If I had to give advice to anyone who is trying to recover... open your eyes, look around, look at all the people who are trying to help you. Stop fighting it, all they want is to help you, they are not attacking you and they sure as heck are not going to give up. Use them as support... and don't give up.

As cliché as it sounds, you will get better if you use these supports.

For parents and those supporting loved ones just keep doing what you're doing. It's okay to get frustrated and want to give up but remember you are a role model to your child. If they see you giving up, they will want to too. Just stick by them, let them know they you love them.

For all those who are involved in a career with eating disorders. Thank you. Because of people like you there are success stories like mine. I am no better or have suffered more than any other anorexic but because of you guys it is possible... and I know that now.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Thank you NEDIC for supporting and making people aware of eating disorders. You are helping people in more ways then you know. I would love for you to post this for others to see.

Thank you

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