

Australian Counselling Association – Towards the Future

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Date:

July 2015

Presentation:

Understanding the root cause of eating disorders

Abstract:

In today's society, people who have labels frequently become identified by or are identified by their labels. In reality, a label will never change a person. In fact, a label can be seen as a judgment, and judgment and understanding can never exist together. Judgment means we lose sight of the person behind the label as we simply judge their behaviour to be wrong and thus something that must simply be changed.

Tanya Curtis works from a model of Functional Behaviour Assessment, a scientific process that is aimed at identifying the reason for any unwanted behaviour. It is this reason that is significantly more important in comparison to the actual behaviour itself. It is this reason that provides an understanding as to 'why' the behaviour is occurring.

Today, we encourage a model of simply changing behaviour. With this approach, the treatment offered can be hit and miss. That is, treatment appears to work for some, yet not for others. The pursuant 'hit and miss' outcome is because, as a whole, we are not treating every person as an individual and thus we are not investigating the unique reason behind each individual's unwanted eating patterns.

Tanya will be presenting a 3-step model to behaviour change that is based on supporting people to understand behaviour before they effectively change behaviour. This model is based on firstly always meeting the person for who they are, secondly taking the approach of investigating the reason for the behaviour and lastly, using this reason to develop effective behaviour change strategies. This model is used successfully in Tanya's behaviour specialist clinic to change people's own unwanted behaviours or to learn to understand and support the unwanted behaviours used by other people.

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