

## **DISCOVERY DAY PROGRAM & VISTA GUIDELINES**

To access the program please call **604-806-8347**

Discovery is an intensive day program for individuals with eating disorders. To participate, you must be medically stable and motivated to make changes in eating behavior and, if necessary, weight. Discovery is a 12-week program, with an optional 3-week extension available. There are eight participants in the program at any one time, with new members joining the group every 3 weeks as other members are leaving. All participants in Discovery reside at the Vista residence, where they receive additional emotional and meal support.

The Discovery/Vista program has been designed to provide support to individuals who are ready to do an intensive piece of work on their eating disorder recovery. It has been structured to assist people to give up self-destructive coping strategies, identify issues underlying the eating disorder, and learn new methods of coping. To facilitate these goals, we ask that you follow the program guidelines. They have been developed so as to create a safe and working therapeutic environment for all group members.

### **Confidentiality**

1. We believe groups should be a safe and supportive place. Personal information disclosed in group is confidential and should not be discussed outside the current group. Please do not post any information about group members or staff on public websites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Information disclosed in group, individual, or family therapy will be discussed by the Discovery/Vista treatment team in Day Program Rounds.
2. Group members should not be asked to keep secrets regarding information that is important to another group member's recovery, such as symptoms someone is struggling with. If you inform staff that another group member is engaging in self-destructive behaviors or breaking guidelines, this cannot be kept anonymous and would need to be addressed.
3. Your individual therapist will not share details of emotional work you have done in individual sessions in group without your permission; however, secrets will not be kept about symptoms around which you may need group support.
4. It is important to deal with conflicts that arise directly and respectfully with the person(s) involved, as avoidance of issues and/or gossiping have detrimental effects on group cohesion. If you have a reaction to something, please address it in an appropriate group or discuss it with staff. Do not discuss it with other group members outside of the group, as this may undermine the safety of the group. We also will not talk about staff or group members in a group in which they are not present. Please note that developing exclusive relationships or cliques with other group members may negatively impact the usefulness of group therapy to yourself and others.

5. Since this is a university teaching hospital, there will be interns or residents assigned to the program as part of their training in the area of eating disorders. These individuals will be instructed on the issue of confidentiality. They will sit in on certain groups but their attendance in the groups will be discussed with group members prior to their arrival.

6. There are some circumstances where your confidentiality may need to be breached by the staff. These are as follows: if your life or someone else's life is in danger due to your actions, if a minor (or vulnerable adult) is at risk of abuse or neglect, if you have a condition which makes it dangerous for you to drive, and if the legal system subpoenas your records.

### **Therapy**

1. To make the best use of therapy offered in the group program, visits with an outside therapist should be limited to once a month. You will see one of the Day Program therapists weekly for 50 minutes while you are in the program. You are strongly encouraged to begin looking for an outside therapist now (if you do not already have one) to work with you when you finish program.

2. Punctuality and full attendance are important for group cohesion. If you are going to be late or absent, please call the clinic office at 806-8347. We request late arrivals (more than 5 minutes late) do not disturb a group in progress and wait to join the next planned group. Groups will also end on time. You are expected to be present for the entire duration of the group (i.e., please do not leave groups part-way through).

3. We ask all group members to participate actively in therapy. This includes sharing and exploring issues in groups, paying attention to other group members, being open to giving and receiving feedback, doing assigned homework (including weekly Coping Tools Records), and being awake and alert. Please do not use jackets, blankets, or hats to hide yourself during groups.

4. To encourage full emotional participation, there is no eating, drinking, or writing during Open Talk groups. Please turn cell phones off for all groups and meals.

### **Nutrition**

1. Before entering the program, a dietitian will meet with you to do a nutrition assessment. To assist with the normalization of eating, a meal plan will be designed with your collaboration at that time, and will include three balanced meals, adequate fluids, and possibly snacks. This plan may need to be adjusted over time.

2. Filling out daily Food Records is a mandatory part of your participation in program.

### **Meal Support**

1. Some breakfasts and lunches will be eaten at St. Paul's. While on mechanical eating, you are asked to eat 100% of your meal. Those on semi-cue eating (SCE) or full-cue eating (FCE) order meals that include all 5 food groups. On SCE, you are asked to eat at least 100% of the protein, grains, and satiety of your meal, but may leave one fruit/veg or milk for later. If you are on FCE, your food intake will depend on your hunger and fullness cues, but you will be asked to eat at least 50% of your meal.
2. Meal trays will be checked prior to beginning the meal to ensure that adequate portions and correct items are present on the trays. Trays will also be checked after the meal to ensure that 100% of the required food has been eaten.
3. To aid in post-meal tray checks, group members are asked to leave all wrappers, containers, etc. on their trays. Please fold lids back, and do not stack containers, as this makes checking more difficult.
4. To provide an accurate assessment of progress made with eating, group members should not substitute food on their trays. However, substitutions may be made if there is a tray error from the kitchen.
5. To aid with the normalization of eating, we ask that group members not measure their portions at the hospital. Adjustments will be made by the support person when an obvious error in portion size has occurred.
6. To encourage healthy social and emotional aspects of eating, group members are requested to remain seated at the table for the duration of each meal (i.e., 20-30 minutes).
7. In an effort to normalize meal times, group members are asked to refrain from discussing eating disorder or weight-related issues at the table.
8. Please note that some staff, when asked personal questions, will not disclose any personal information as they believe this can interfere with the therapeutic process.
9. Please see the Discovery/Vista Nutrition and Activity Guidelines for more details.

### **Weight and Binge/Purge Goals**

You will see the Day Program dietitian weekly for 30 minutes, and will be weighed at that time.

To find your healthy weight range, we look at many things: your willingness to eat according to your internal cues, your willingness to eat enough food to support healthy levels of physical activity, the frequency of your disordered eating and exercise behaviors, your Body Mass Index (BMI), and, for women, your menstrual cycle. BMI is calculated by taking weight in kilograms and dividing it by height in meters squared. Most healthy adults have a BMI over 20. A minimum BMI of 16.0 is required to begin

the Discovery/Vista program; however, if you have completed the program in the past, the minimum BMI is 19.0. This is to assist you in doing a different piece of work on any repeat admissions.

If you are on weight maintenance, you are expected to maintain your weight within a healthy range. If you are eating and exercising in a healthy manner, and not using any purging behaviors including over-exercise, your weight will gradually settle at where your body needs to be for health. To assist you in staying within your maintenance range, starting in Week 5, you will have 1 week to make gains if your weight falls below this range, but will have a step-down week if gains are not made. If your weight falls below this range on subsequent occasions, there will be an automatic step-down week to make increases. Not making the weight gain on step-down will result in being discharged.

If you are on weight gain, increases of 0.5 to 1.0 kg per week are expected, up to a minimum BMI of 20. This can be achieved by eating 100% of your meal plan and not engaging in exercise outside of the activity protocol. To continue in the program, you will need to increase by a minimum of 3 kg every 4 weeks (Week 1 is your baseline weight). Increases of less than this will result in stepping down for 1 week. If you do not make your weight gain after the step-down, you will be discharged.

If you follow all program recommendations (e.g., eating 100%, no extra exercising, no purging, staying at Vista on the weekend...) during the week prior to a potential step-down week for weight gain, you will not have to step down if you have not made your gains. This is referred to as a “critical or vouching week.” If, however, you do not make your gains the following week, a step-down week will be required. The potential step-down weeks for weight gain are Weeks 5, 9, and 13.

If your symptoms include bingeing and/or purging behaviors that you are unable to reduce in program, you will be expected to set monthly goals to reduce the frequency of these behaviors. If you have not reached your goal by Week 5 (or 9 or 13), you will be asked to remain at Vista in the evenings and on the weekend for one week to support you in meeting your goals. Not reaching your binge/purge reduction goal after this week will result in stepping down for 1 week. If you do not meet your goals on step-down, you will be discharged.

You are encouraged to follow your meal plan and activity protocol during your time in program, as well as to refrain from bingeing, purging, and other eating-disordered behaviors. By doing so, it is hoped that you will be helped to gain trust in your body and to work on learning new ways of coping with difficult situations. That being said, we recognize that perfection is not possible and that recovery is an ongoing process. We hope that you will be honest with us about the behaviors you are engaging in so that we are able to help you address them to our best ability.

### **Safety**

**NOTE: The sequence of outcomes of not following these Safety guidelines is: 1) Explore and plan: Share issue in group, receive feedback, and devise coping plan; 2) Step-down week: Live at Vista, stop attending groups at St. Paul's, and attend individual sessions at Vista and St. Paul's with a focus on preventing re-occurrence; and 3) Discharge. Each outcome may only occur once.**

1. Discovery and Vista have been designated eating disorder symptom-free zones in an attempt to create a safe environment for program participants. If you restrict, binge, chew and spit, self-induce vomiting, or exercise, at Vista or at the St. Paul's Hospital Eating Disorders Program, outcomes will be as described above.

2. Your behavior impacts other group members, and may contribute to the development of a safe, supportive, and working therapeutic environment. If you are engaging in behaviors that create a hostile and/or non-recovery-oriented group atmosphere, the outcomes may be as described above or you may be asked to take a therapeutic break by returning home for a week and only attending individual sessions.

3. Physical or verbal abuse of other group members or staff is not appropriate as it creates an unsafe group environment. If a group member physically aggresses against someone, threatens someone with harm, or purposefully damages property, they will be asked to leave program. Depending on severity, verbal abuse may result in any level of outcome above, including a therapeutic break. You are responsible for treating each other with respect. Disrespectful verbal or nonverbal behavior is anti-therapeutic (for e.g., eye-rolling, name-calling, ignoring, mocking, or insulting). Please give feedback or address conflicts directly, and with sensitivity to the other person's needs and feelings.

**NOTE: In order to further promote group comfort and safety, please refrain from making disrespectful comments or jokes regarding gender, age, race, sexual orientation, body size, religion, or mental or physical challenges.**

4. To safely participate in an outpatient group program, there must be a commitment to protecting yourself from harm. You must be able to agree that, if you experience strong suicidal urges, you will call someone (e.g., Vancouver Crisis Line 872-3311), speak with staff, or go to a hospital Emergency Department rather than acting on these urges. Acting on suicidal urges, or engaging in cutting or other self-endangering behaviors, indicate that the program may be too intense for you to participate in safely at this time. As a result, outcomes will occur as described previously.

5. Drugs and alcohol interfere with the therapeutic process, are mind-altering, and may interact negatively with psychiatric medications; therefore, the expectation is that group members will not use any of these substances for the duration of their time in program, whether or not there is a prior history of substance abuse. There is a risk that in giving up eating disorder behaviors, some may be tempted to turn to alcohol and drugs as a means of coping. Alcohol and drug testing may occur during your stay in program. If you use drugs or alcohol at all during your time in program, or misuse prescription or over-the-counter medications, the outcomes will be as described above. Please note that any non-

prescribed use of laxatives or insulin will be considered misuse. Taking any other prescription or over-the-counter medication without the program psychiatrists' knowledge may also be considered misuse. You may also be asked to pursue additional support for these issues; for instance, through Alcohol and Drug Programs or 12-step groups.

6. Self-harm and substance use contracts are employed in order to give you the best chance at recovery, and to keep you safe. Thus, if you are actively abusing substances or planning/engaging in self-endangering or suicidal behaviors prior to starting program, you will be asked to abstain from these behaviors for 6 weeks before admission. We recognize that this will take effort on your part to accomplish; however, coming in to program and simultaneously stopping multiple symptoms could be overwhelming. Our hope is that you will gain some experience in tolerating distress before beginning the intensive work of program. If it is determined that you did not actually abstain, you will be discharged back to Readiness to work on achieving your 6 weeks of abstinence. You may be asked to abstain for longer if staff assess this as important for safety.

**NOTE: These are the minimum outcomes for the safety issues addressed. As group and individual safety are of utmost importance to the program, staff discretion will be used in determining whether it is safe for someone to continue participating under these circumstances.**

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We hope that in having read these guidelines, you have a clear idea of what is required in the Discovery/Vista program. This may sound like a lot of rules, and some of them may be irrelevant to you as an individual, but these are the guidelines we have found to support the creation of a safe and working group environment in which to do the intensive work you have come here to do. We thank the previous group members who have contributed useful input to the development of these guidelines. You will also be given the opportunity to provide feedback around the guidelines; however, at any one point in time, staff and group members must proceed according to the guidelines as they are currently written. Client feedback on Satisfaction Surveys is analyzed every 1-2 years, and revisions to program are made on this basis. Thank you for your patience with this process.