

Beating BDD Episode 14 – Scarlett and Frances, part 1

For this and episode 15, I've handed the mike over to two mums who've lived through their daughters' severe BDD and come out the other side. In part one, Scarlett and Frances talk about how their daughters are doing now and how they coped with the worst times.

"We want to pass on the message that it can get better – it's about getting through day by day."

How are their daughters now?

[00:00.54] Scarlett's daughter Alannah is now doing a Masters with a view to going into clinical psychology.

[00:01.35] Frances's daughter Katie also at university studying psychology and cognitive neuroscience.

[00:14.32] Scarlett and Alannah are now each other's best friend.

How did Alannah and Katie get diagnosed?

[00:04.09] Alannah was misdiagnosed for several years.

[00:04.29] Katie's GP diagnosed her when she was 12 – possibly a sign that awareness has grown.

[00:05.57] Alannah discovered the BDD Foundation four years after she stopped going to school.

What did they find helpful?

[00:02.55] Frances found that when things were really tough, setting really small goals and not thinking too far ahead could help.

[00:09.29] Mindfulness helped her to slow down, as did gardening.

[00:10.10] Scarlett would go for walks with the dogs.

[00:11.03] Frances focused on three good friends. You don't need more if they aren't going to support you.

[00:21.23] Focus on listening to and supporting your child, not judging or offering solutions.

What impact did BDD have on the family?

[00:14.51] When Alannah started functioning it left a hole in Scarlett's life she needed to fill.

[00:15.33] Siblings in the family were very affected in that their parents were so focused on the child with BDD.

[00:18.00] You lose track of what normal is for the family.

What advice do they have for other carers?

[00:07.22] You're not a failure if you're trying your best.

[00:11.56] Call in favours from friends, even if it's just sitting in the house for a while. And don't pay attention to other people's opinions.

[00:13.21] Remember that arrows are compliments – when your child says horrible things it's because they feel safe with you.

[00:18.09] Try not to compare your family with others – it doesn't matter or help. Accept you're on a different path.

[00:28.45] Frances describes using the traffic light system for how long a child can be left alone.

[00.23.21] When your child lashes out remember that it's not them talking but their BDD demons.

Coping with the worst times

[00.25.14] Scarlett discusses coping with Alannah's self-harm and suicide attempts.

Resources

- The BDD Foundation: bddfoundation.org