

Beating BDD Episode 15 – Scarlett and Frances, part 2

This is episode 15, the second part of a conversation between two mums whose daughters are in recovery from BDD. In it, Scarlett and Frances discuss how schools can help or hinder, how to support someone through treatment and the importance of setting small goals.

“Be kind to yourself and look back on how far you’ve come to recognise that you’ve done really well as a parent.”

How schools can help (or not)

[00:01.19] A lot of schools are getting more aware of mental illness and having more open discussions.

[00:02.06] Alannah’s school offered no pastoral care at all. She ended up moving to a college that was much more supportive.

[00:03.40] BDD sufferers can feel they’re being looked at all the time at school.

Getting a diagnosis and treatment: Katie

[00:04.46] Katie was diagnosed at 12 but didn’t want therapy. CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) later got involved and did an amazing job.

[00:06.05] The key moment for Katie was getting out of the school environment.

[00:12.18] Katie didn’t want to take medication or even acknowledge she had BDD.

Getting a diagnosis and treatment: Alannah

[00:06.41] Alannah didn’t get the right therapy for a long time. She was eventually diagnosed with severe BDD at the Maudsley at 17 and had four months at the Priory.

[00:10.17] Scarlett had to fight for the GP to prescribe the right medication.

[00:13.13] Alannah wasn’t convinced she had BDD, so getting her to therapy was tricky. They have to accept the help, which is really difficult for parents.

Advice for other carers

[00:15.19] There’s no such thing as a quick fix. So acceptance is important, and trying to find the brighter side. Frances tried to find something positive in each day.

[00:16.47] Humour is important too – Alannah can now laugh about things she did.

[00:17.17] You forget how far you’ve come because it’s a long journey. Try to notice the improvements and be kind to yourself.

Looking to the future

[00:18.40] Frances really enjoys her relationship with Katie now – it’s like a little miracle that she’s doing so well. She’s looking forward to time with the family.

[00:19.58] Scarlett is feeling very positive too – Alannah’s doing very well with her studies. She’s trying to do things for herself now, and to give her husband and Alannah’s brothers a bit more time.

[00:21.30] Frances remembers seeing Alannah and Scarlett at the conference and not being able to imagine getting to that stage. Now she’s part of the “BDD family” of people who have got through it.

Resources

- The BDD Foundation: bddfoundation.org

