2023-2024

BDD FOUNDATION
Impact Report

BODY
DYSMORPHIC
DISORDER
FOUNDATION

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BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER FOUNDATION

01

WHO WE ARE

Since 2013, the BDD Foundation has been dedicated to the relief of suffering from Body Dysmorphic Disorder.
Together, we can change lives.

At the BDD Foundation

we aim to advance education and understanding of BDD. We support research into BDD and its treatments. Whilst we are based in the UK, our reach is international and we are proud to be the only charity exclusively for BDD in the world.

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Together, we aim to:

- Raise awareness about BDD.
- Advance the education of the public and healthcare professionals, supporting them to understand the nature of BDD and how it might best be treated.
- Relieve suffering from BDD through support and high-quality information. Reduce stigma, discrimination and isolation caused by BDD.
- Help develop a sense of community for people affected by BDD. This includes individuals with BDD, their families, friends, partners and carers. Provide information on relevant treatment options.
- Support research into the understanding and treatment of BDD.

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02 WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR

This year has been one of challenge, growth and renewed purpose for the BDD Foundation, as we look back on the last ten years and all we have achieved together. As we marked our 10th anniversary, we took time to reflect on our journey so far - celebrating a decade of progress, connection and hope. Amid growing demand and rising pressures on mental health services, we've remained focused on doing more for the BDD community: listening, learning and responding with compassion and commitment. Thanks to our expanded team, inspiring volunteers, and the voices of those we serve, we've strengthened our services, launched new partnerships, better understand our impact, renewed our guiding principles and have started developing our strategic focus for the future. We've increased awareness, built community, and extended support to more people than ever before, but there is still more work to be done and we won't stop there. As we look ahead, we remain driven by a simple but vital purpose: to ensure that no one faces BDD alone.

The Need

2023–2024 was a year of immense challenge for many. Economic instability, welfare reforms, the continuing cost-of-living crisis, and rising social and technological pressures, including the pervasive use of image-altering apps, global uncertainty and ongoing stigma and discrimination that intensified the strain on people's mental health. For individuals living with or affected by BDD, these realities compounded an already distressing and misunderstood condition. The pressures faced by, and the impact on the BDD community has been significant. Access to treatment remained limited, with long waiting times, stretched mental health services, and more people experiencing difficulty in navigating and accessing the correct care, many were left without the timely and compassionate support they urgently needed. With tragic loss of lives, and many adults and young people experiencing BDD, isolation, distress, and their wellbeing worsening, the increased demand for help underscored the critical importance of our work.

Our Response

In the face of these pressures, the BDD Foundation responded with dedication, compassion, and commitment. We were determined to do even more to serve everyone living with or affected by BDD - to ensure nobody suffers alone. We continued to develop innovative services, deliver compassionate and transformative support, facilitated meaningful connection, and provided vital information to our community. We doubled the size of our staff team, strengthened and built new partnerships, and renewed our strategic focus to serve the BDD community better than ever. We developed our work with young people, provided 1,048 hours of direct support through our core services, expanded our creative and online community, and grew our reach significantly - **258,969 people visited our website, and our social media community increased to over 11,450 followers across all platforms.**

Accomplishements

This year, we proudly relaunched our pioneering Overcoming BDD Programme, providing transformative, evidence-based interventions in a safe and supportive group environment. We marked a major milestone - our 10th Anniversary - with an in-person conference attended by 456 people. This powerful event celebrated a decade of impact, reflected on advancements in research and care, and was driven by inspiring stories of recovery and hope. It also brought new partnerships, awareness, and generous financial support to help us continue our important work.

At the heart of our progress was a moment of reflection and renewal. Through our first ever staff away day, and with valued input from our community and the support of our impact volunteer, we co-created a refreshed Mission, Vision and Values to guide our future work, shaped by our community and clarifying who we are, why we exist, and what we aim to achieve.

Our Promise

The BDD Foundation exists to ensure no one faces BDD alone. We remain committed to building a future where everyone impacted by BDD feels understood, supported, and empowered to recover. With our dedicated team, inspiring volunteers, and the incredible strength of our community, we are more determined than ever. We won’t stop until everyone gets the support they need, when they need it - **because we know recovery is possible, and together, we can make it happen.**

MISSION, VISION & VALUES

MISSION

We are the leading charity for Body Dysmorphic Disorder. We shine a light on a condition that is misunderstood by raising awareness, providing support and fostering community, to shatter stigma and shame.
We alleviate suffering and inspire hope - because we know recovery is possible.

VISION

We envision a world where Body Dysmorphic Disorder is truly understood, and everyone impacted has timely access to support, care and treatment

VALUES

Hope - We inspire hope by showing that recovery is possible and that no one faces BDD alone.

Community - We create a supportive and understanding community where those affected by BDD can connect and share experiences. We actively involve our community in shaping our work, ensuring we remain community-led and responsive to their needs.

Compassionate - We approach our work with compassion, empathy, and a deep understanding of the challenges faced by those affected by BDD.

Pioneering - We champion innovative research and treatment options to create a better future for those with BDD.

Dedicated - We are committed to raising awareness, providing support, and driving meaningful change to improve the lives of those affected by BDD.

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OUR TEAM

The BDD Foundation is a very small charity comprising of an active Trustee Board, Patrons, Associates and 4 members of staff.

Today, we have a Head of Operations, a People & Projects Manager, an E-helpline Manager, and an E-helpline Coordinator, as well as an excellent group of volunteers.

During this year our volunteers grew from a team of 12 to 25 more than doubling in size. This incredible growth has allowed us to expand our reach and offer more consistent, compassionate support to those affected by BDD.

Trustees

Dr Rob Willson is Chair of the BDD Foundation. He is a Cognitive Behaviour Therapist with a special interest in obsessional problems. He co-authored with David Veale and Alex Clarke the self-help book *Overcoming Body Image Problems including BDD*. He first became involved in research on BDD 20 years ago.

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Joe Davidson - Treasurer. Joe is a Managing Partner of Fulcrum Asset Management. Prior to Fulcrum's launch, Joe worked at Goldman Sachs and previously within Schroders Investment Management. He has been a CFA charter holder since 2008. Since becoming Treasurer at the BDD Foundation, he has driven an overhaul of the charity's accounting systems and has supported management with his astute business acumen.

Dr Nicole Schnackenberg - Secretary. Nicole is a child, community & educational psychologist with lived experience of BDD. She is also a certified yoga teacher. Nicole currently divides her time between working as an educational psychologist in Southend, Essex, her position as a Director of the Yoga in Healthcare Alliance and her position as a trustee.

Dr Amita Jassi. Amita is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and lead for the National Specialist BDD service for young people at South London & Maudsley NHS Trust. She has taught and trained nationally & internationally, whilst engaging with media to help increase awareness & understanding of BDD and related disorders. She has authored several books on BDD & published peer-reviewed papers in this field.

Scarlett Bagwell. Scarlett worked for the Italian Trade Centre & American Airlines in Düsseldorf, Germany. Scarlett is now a stay-at-home mother of four, one of whom has suffered with BDD. She has had to fight the NHS system to obtain treatment for her daughter & has an extremely close insight into BDD and the struggles of supporting a BDD sufferer.

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Dr Benedetta Monzani. Benedetta is a Senior Clinical Psychologist at the National & Specialist OCD, BDD & Related Disorders Service for young people at the Maudsley Hospital. Alongside her clinical practice, she continues to be actively involved in research into BDD and OC spectrum disorders.

Patrons

Professor David Veale. David is a Consultant Psychiatrist at the South London & Maudsley NHS Trust, where he directs a national specialist service for people with BDD and at The Nightingale Hospital London in Marylebone, . He is a Visiting Professor at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London. He has been researching BDD for nearly 20 years and has published about 40 scientific and teaching articles in BDD.

Lady Northampton. Tracy is an accredited Psychotherapist with over 25 years of experience in the field of mental health. Tracy has a great interest in the mind, body, somatic connection and is a committed student of yoga. Tracy became interested in BDD when one of her close relations was diagnosed with the illness while being treated by Professor David Veale and Rob Willson.

Katharine A. Phillips, M.D. Katharine is Professor of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College, Cornell University, & Attending Psychiatrist at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. Dr Phillips is a physician & scientist who has spent her career caring for patients & conducting scientific research studies on BDD. She is internationally renowned for her clinical expertise & her pioneering work on BDD.

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Danny Gray. Danny is the founder of JAAQ (just ask a question), an idea he had in response to the hundreds of people who contacted him looking for quality, accessible help on mental health due to his other enterprise, Warpaint for Men. He shares openly about his own experiences of BDD. Danny is a passionate mental health advocate speaking to thousands of people every year.

Associates

Stuart Chandler - Founding Member. Stuart graduated from Manchester Uni in 1999 & worked for several years in the City as a web designer. His BDD meant not being able to work for a prolonged period. He was eventually treated & has returned to health (but still battles with BDD). Stuart currently runs his own business offering PC Support & web design & is webmaster for the BDDF website. Stuart was part of the charity's inception in 2006 and helped to re-launch the charity in 2013.

Dr Georgina Krebs - Clinical Advisor. Georgina is an Associate Professor at University College London (UCL), where she co-leads a research group called the Anxiety, self-Image and Mood (AIM) Lab. Much of her research is focused on BDD. She has published around 90 peer-reviewed papers and book chapters, many of which have focused on BDD. Georgina is also an Honorary Consultant Clinical Psychologist. Previously she worked for over 15 years in a National & Specialist Clinic for Young People with OCD & Related Disorders.

Staff

Kitty Newman (nee Wallace) - Managing Director. Kitty is a University of Exeter graduate, who worked in the fashion industry prior to working for the BDDF. Her personal experience of BDD drove her to help raise awareness of the condition, becoming a trustee of the charity in 2017, and Head of Operations the following year. Kitty's focus is to help raise awareness, reduce the stigma connected with BDD and to give hope of recovery to those suffering from the condition.

Gem Ponting - People & Projects Manager. Gem first connected with the charity as a service user and then became a volunteer facilitator in 2020. Passionate about raising awareness and understanding of BDD as a condition, Gem supports the Foundation's work in providing essential services to those affected. She brings experience from various charity sector roles.

Christian Bower - E-helpline Manager. Christian is a mental health advocate with a focus on supporting individuals affected by BDD, OCD & related conditions. He oversees our dedicated team of helpline volunteers. He holds a qualification in Independent Advocacy & has extensive experience providing support through helplines and mental health services. His work with OCD Action & the Maytree suicide respite service have shaped his commitment to providing empathetic support & ensuring individuals feel heard.

Lana C. - E-helpline Co-ordinator. Lana supports the day-to-day administration & coordination of the E-Helpline service. Her work ensures that those accessing this service receive high-quality empathetic & helpful support around their experience & how they can access the appropriate help. Lana has an academic & professional background & passion in Psychology. She possesses in-depth knowledge of BDD, OCD, & other related conditions, their treatments and how they can be accessed, and of the varied lived experiences of sufferers & their loved ones.

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MY NAN WAS BORN IN 1935 AND STRUGGLED WITH BDD SINCE SHE WAS AROUND 12 YEARS OLD.

FOR YEARS, HER ILLNESS HAS BEEN DISMISSED AS VANITY AND OTHER THINGS BUT FINDING OUT ABOUT THE FOUNDATION HAS CHANGED HER PERCEPTION.

SHE KNOWS NOW THAT SHE HAS AN ILLNESS, THAT THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO STRUGGLE AND THAT SHE IS NOT ALONE.

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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The BDD Foundation has marked a number of significant milestones this year. This has included:

1

10th Anniversary Conference

This year, we celebrated our 10th Anniversary with an in-person conference bringing together service users, families & professionals. The event highlighted a decade of impact and we heard powerful recovery stories and updates on treatment and research in BDD.

2

Re-launch of Overcoming BDD Programme

We relaunched our Overcoming BDD Programme after a brief pause to review and strengthen the content and data collection. We supported 28 people through the programme on their journey towards recovery.

3

Grew Staffing

This year, we doubled our staff team with two new roles: a full-time People & Projects Manager and a part-time E-Helpline Coordinator. This growth strengthened our capacity to support the community and deliver our work more effectively.

4

Clarifying Mission, Vision & Values

With valuable input from our community, we refreshed our mission, vision, and values to better reflect who we are and our direction. We also held our first staff and trustee away day to align on priorities and prepare for updating our strategy.

06 OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

1,576

INDIVIDUALS DIRECTLY SUPPORTED THROUGH OUR SERVICES

1,048

SUPPORT HOURS PROVIDED

258,969

WEBSITE REACH ACROSS

195

COUNTRIES

BDD TEST TAKEN

602,000

TIMES

10,606

VIEWS FROM 21 PUBLISHED CONFERENCE VIDEOS

OUR CONTENT WAS SHARED

858

ON INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK

OUR E-HELPLINE RESPONDED TO

1,196

REQUESTS FOR HELP & SUPPORT

OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT WAS LIKED

8,271

TIMES

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> THE BDD FOUNDATION HELPED ME REALISE I HAD BDD BY SHARING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS, I RECIEVED ADVICE ON HOW TO MOVE FORWARD WITH TREATMENT WHICH I FOLLOWED, AND I GOT FORMALLY DIAGNOSED.
>
> I HAVE PARTICIPATED IN ZOOM SUPPORT GROUPS AND CONTINUE TO ACCESS THE WEBSITE AS I TRY TO PROGRESS IN MY RECOVERY. BDD FOUNDATION WAS AND IS CENTRAL TO MY MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY JOURNEY

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OUR PROJECTS

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The BDD Foundation offers a range of pioneering services, tailored to support anyone affected by or working with people experiencing BDD. Our key projects include:

1 PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Our bi-monthly Zoom support groups provide a safe and inclusive space for individuals over 18, with or without a formal BDD diagnosis, to share experiences and receive empathetic peer support.

2 EMAIL HELPLINE

The only email support service solely dedicated to BDD in the UK, this project provides a non-judgmental space for anyone impacted by BDD to seek advice and support. Our Helpline Manager and dedicated volunteers offer high-quality information, guidance on accessing treatment, and empathetic support tailored to individual needs, with expert input from trustee clinicians.

3 OVERCOMING BDD PROGRAMME

The only programme of its kind globally, this CBT-informed programme combines the expertise of Professor David Veale and Dr. Rob Willson with lived-experience insights. The programme helps individuals reduce isolation, improve self-understanding, and develop effective coping strategies through practical and emotional peer support and effective CBT-based principles.

Together, these core projects aim to reduce isolation, promote awareness, improve access to treatment. Providing practical and emotional guidance for those affected by BDD. Through these core services we have supported **6,773 people** to date.

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PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Our bi-monthly zoom peer support groups are delivered online by volunteers with lived experience. Our peer support groups provide a safe environment where people living with BDD over the age of 18 can talk openly about their condition, providing compassion, encouragement, and guidance to each other. It is inclusive and user-led, available to people with or without a diagnosis.

We are one of only 2 organisations in the UK offering support groups to individuals with BDD.

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Zoom Support groups were launched in

APRIL 2020

in response to the pandemic

From 2020-2024 we delivered

125

support group sessions over

188.5

hours, supporting

2,279

people. This was only possible through the support of our 4 compassionate and dedicated volunteers

During September 2023-2024 we delivered

22

support group sessions over

33

hours, supporting

352

people

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What we do

1. Help people to recover from and manage their BDD
2. Sharing of useful tips, strategies and advice
3. Benefit people during and after their treatment
4. Provide opportunities for people in recovery to give back and share positive and encouraging stories with the community

Benefits

- An increased knowledge & understanding of BDD
- Feeling equipped with effective strategies to manage symptoms
- Reduced isolation
- Greater connection with others
- Motivation to access specialised treatment
- Increased feelings of agency and choice
- Emotional support
- Reduction in shame and stigma
- Greater self-compassion
- An increased sense of community
- Better ability to manage BDD symptoms
- Information about what do to in a crisis

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“I find the group really helpful. I suffered alone for 40 years with BDD and now find a community where I can share with people who ‘get it’. This group is a lifeline to myself”

“As I can’t attend physical support groups for BDD, I am truly truly grateful to be able to attend these online support groups they have saved my life & helped me to realise I am not alone. These groups are life saving so thank you for all the work the BDDF does”

“The group has been a key strand of my recovery. Being with others who ‘get it’, a sense of community, no pressure to go on camera, supportive facilitators who have lived experience. Positive focus for groups, sharing tools whilst also being safe space to share bdd struggles. As someone who lives far from London, it gives me access to a support group I wouldn’t otherwise have”

“This group has helped me so much over the past few months with my BDD. It’s a place to be heard by people who understand. I was housebound with my BDD & am now slowly rebuilding my life”

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EMAIL HELPLINE

The BDD Foundation’s email support service is for anyone affected by BDD, or anyone who is concerned that they, their friends or family may have BDD or a related disorder. We are the only email support project specifically for BDD in the UK.

We provide high quality information about BDD, support available, and accessing recommended treatments for the condition. We offer a non-judgmental space to talk about how BDD symptoms are affecting someone and the options for treatment and support available, as well as effective signposting to resources and other services.

The service is run by our fantastic Helpline Manager, Helpline Coordinator and our dedicated volunteers, who are adaptive to individual needs and empathetic in the support they provide. We also draw on the expertise of our trustee clinicians.

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Our E-helpline was launched in

FEB 2021

by the end of September 2024 We have responded to

4,299

emails

With the support of our compassionate and dedicated volunteers, from

SEPT 23 - SEPT 24

we responded to

1,196

emails

During September 2023-2024 we delivered over

975

hours of support

95%

Found the service very or extremely helpful

97%

Felt that their knowledge about the recommended treatments for BDD, & how to access them, has improved

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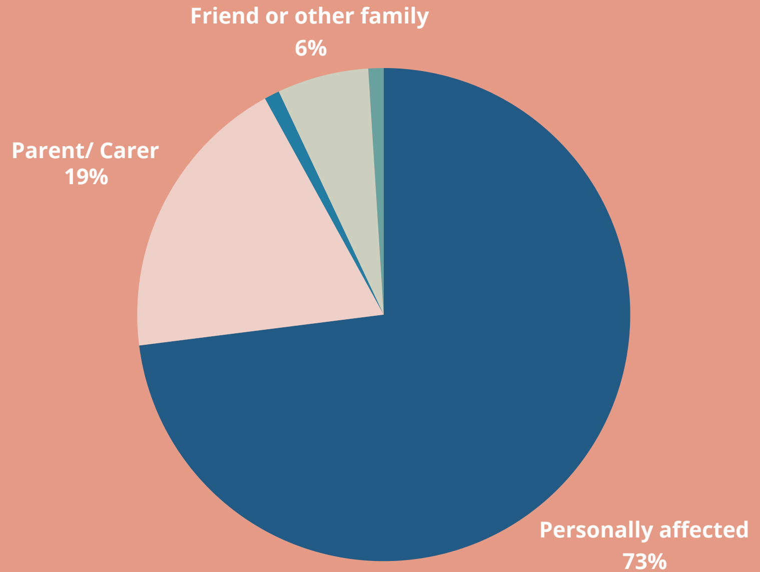
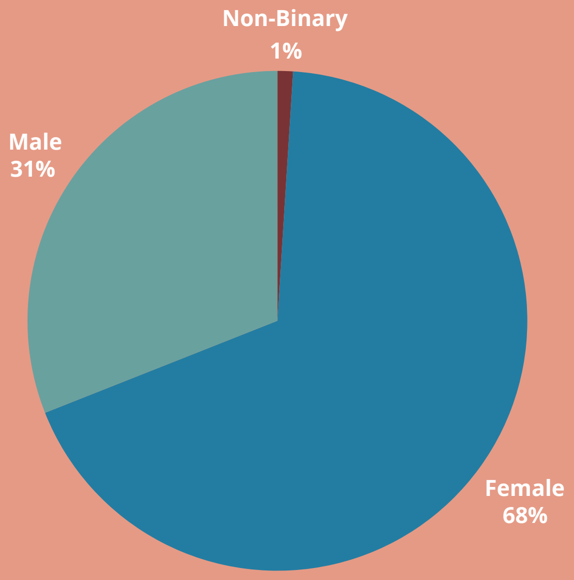
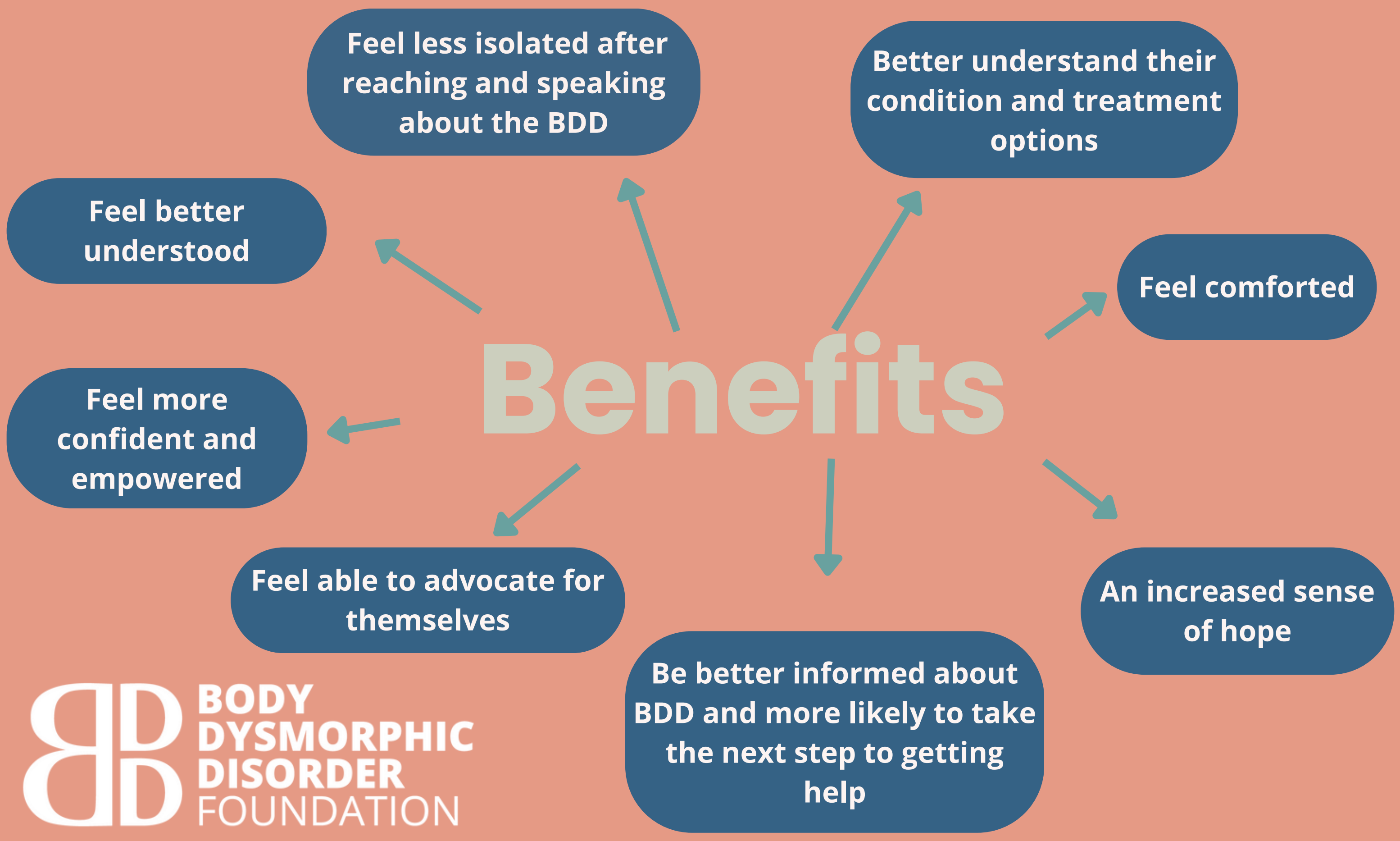
EMAIL HELPLINE

WHO WAS CONTACTING US.



GENDER OF THOSE CONTACTING US





Benefits

- Feel less isolated after reaching and speaking about the BDD
- Better understand their condition and treatment options
- Feel better understood
- Feel comforted
- Feel more confident and empowered
- Feel able to advocate for themselves
- An increased sense of hope
- Be better informed about BDD and more likely to take the next step to getting help

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> This is an incredibly valuable service. I received a response quickly, and the guidance was both sensitive and useful. It didn't feel like a cookie cutter answer that would be sent to everyone, but rather something tailored specifically to my situation which made me feel valued and seen

> Thank you very much for the most informative reply to my email concerning my daughter, her BDD & my concerns of the lack of diagnosis & treatment

> Thank you so much for this email with all the information therein. It means a lot to know there are people out there who understand

> The BDDF has been the only resource I have found that has given me really insightful & informative help, with what is an incredibly overlooked issue within the healthcare system. Young men particularly, who have Muscle Dysmorphia are badly let down & are dying as a result.

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OVERCOMING BDD PROGRAMME

The Overcoming BDD Programme is a pioneering, evidence-based initiative designed to bridge gaps in BDD treatment. Developed by leading experts Professor David Veale and Dr Rob Willson, the programme combines CBT techniques with peer-led facilitation, offering a unique and one of a kind approach to overcoming BDD.

The 20-week programme, delivered online to individuals age 18+, is divided into 3 structured phases: Psychoeducation, Behavioural Experiments with ERP, and Recovery Maintenance. The groups are facilitated by Lead Facilitators and a team of incredible volunteers, all using their lived experience of BDD to give back to the community. This approach ensures a supportive, empathetic and safe environment where participants can form connections with group members, reduce their isolation, and support one another through recovery.

Throughout each phase, participants are guided through practical CBT strategies to help reduce BDD symptoms and isolation, increase self-compassion, and build sustainable recovery practices.

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These Structured Support Groups started in

MARCH 2018

by the end of September 2024 12 groups have been supported over 7 cycles of the programme.

Our first programme in 2018 was delivered in-person over 12 weeks and since cycle 2, we extended this to

20 WEEKS

delivered online.

To date, we have delivered

172

sessions over 7 cycles, supporting

148

people.

With the support of 4 dedicated volunteers, from

SEPT 23 – SEPT 24

we delivered

20

sessions, over

40

hours, supporting

28

people

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RESULTS OF CYCLE 7

Each iteration undergoes an evaluation to monitor it's impact and improve future delivery. To date, seven cycles have demonstrated positive outcomes. On this most recent cycle, we introduced 3 new outcome measures to include; Body Image Questionnaire (BIQ), a Depression Scale (PHQ-9) and a Quality of Life Scale (WSAS), in addition to the existing Appearance Anxiety Inventory (AAI). See graphs on the next page.

RECOVERY RATES

AAI	56% recovered	58% reliably improved
BIQ	39% recovered	45% reliably improved
PHQ-9	30% recovered	33% reliably improved

Benefits

- Motivation for engagement in CBT treatment
- A sense of community and reduced isolation
- Better knowledge of support available
- Better understanding of BDD
- Reduction in time consuming symptoms
- Better understanding of tools they can use to reduce symptoms and anxiety
- Housebound individuals leaving the home
- Improved self-compassion
- People going back into education or employment

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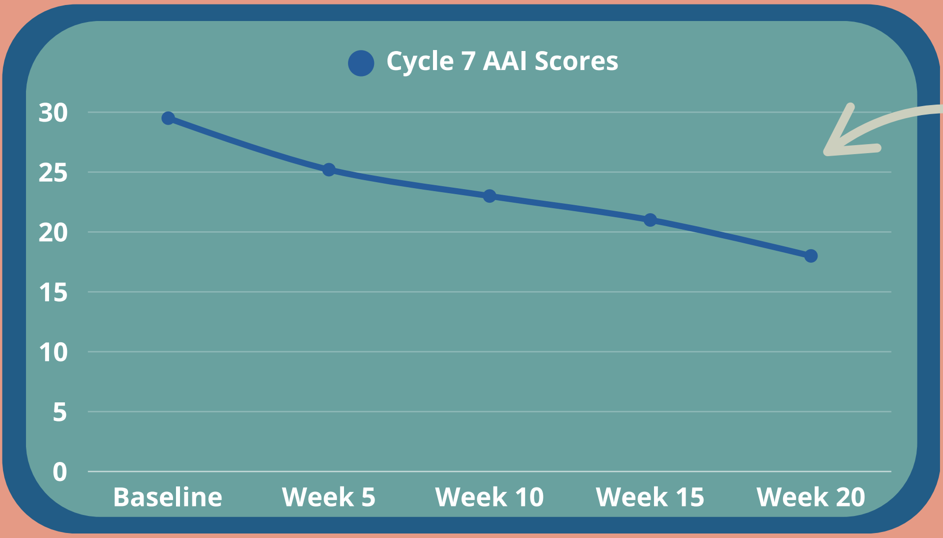
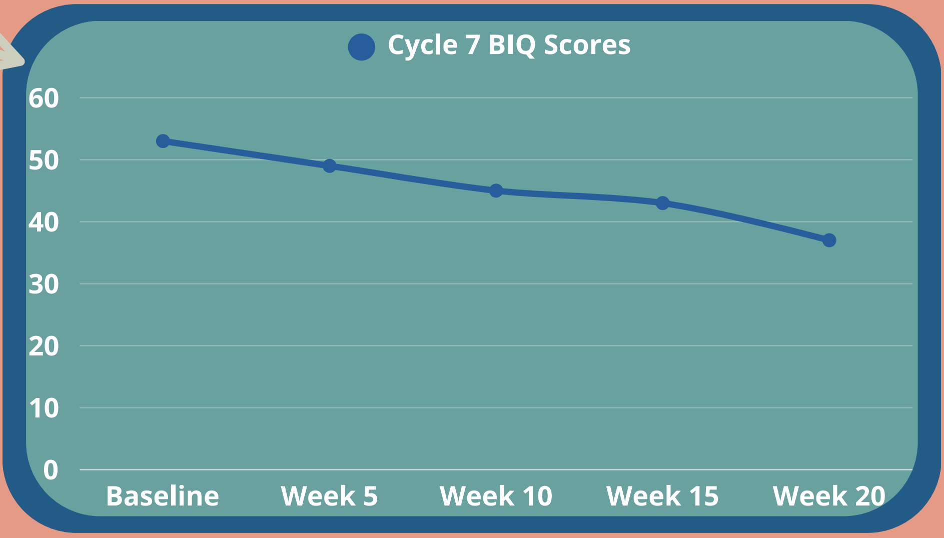
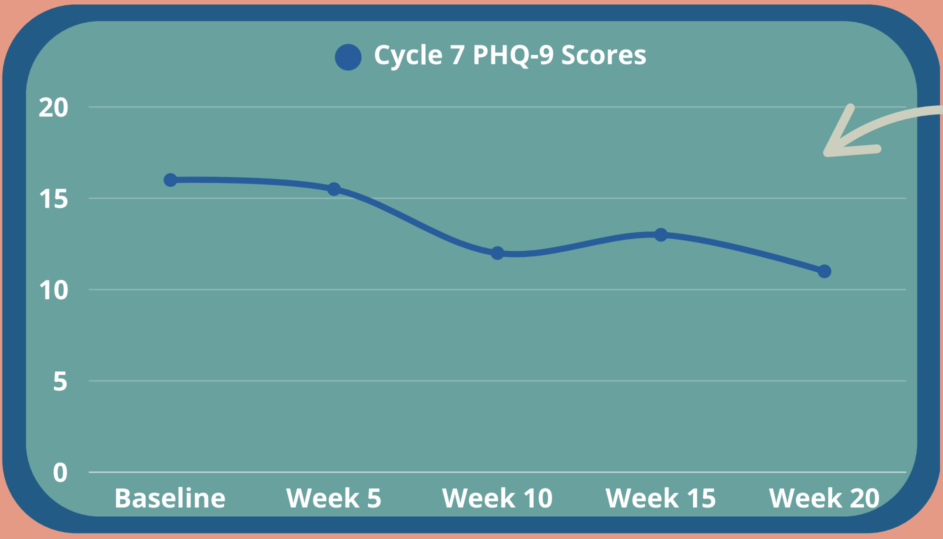


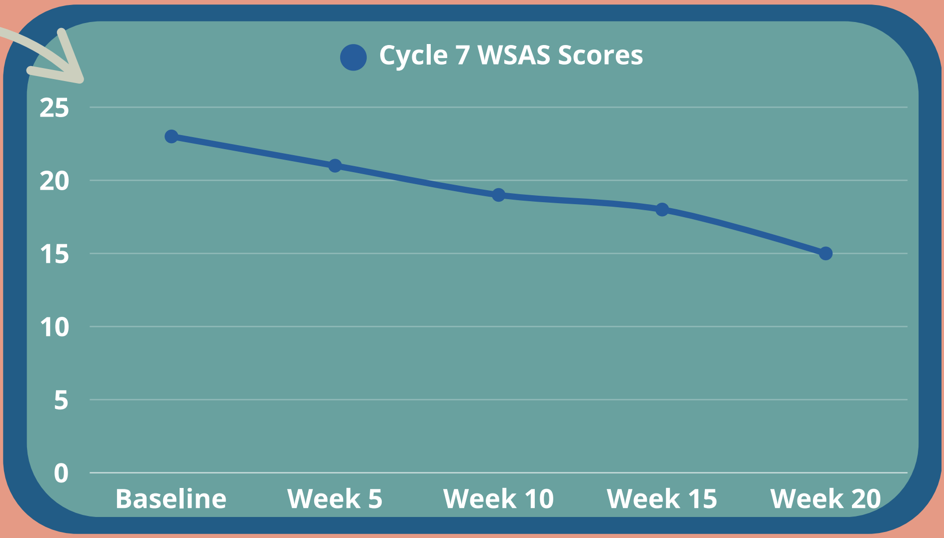
Demonstrates the average reduction in Appearance Anxiety (AAI)



Demonstrates the average reduction in Body Image Dissatisfaction (BIQ).



Demonstrates the average reduction in Depression (PHQ-9).



Demonstrates the average score for quality of life, a lower score indicates an improvement (WSAS)

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Learning more about my BDD has been a tough journey but totally worth it.

The facilitators were wonderful, so supportive & validating of all our experiences. There was always time to speak & share, the other group members were very supportive too.

My general anxiety levels around appearance have decreased. My spirals last for a shorter amount of time. I feel more confident in myself. I started a new part time job whilst on the course (the first job I have had in over 3 years)

The facilitators were excellent. They were great listeners and shared some amazing insights.

I really enjoyed the course outline, including the modules & the resources that were provided. My favourite module in particular was the ‘theory A/B’ as this has stuck with me the most and allows me to now detach from my thoughts.

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Malise's Story

During school I always had comments made about my eyes which made me feel like they were abnormal, which really started affecting me more and more. By the age of 15, the thoughts I had about my face were extremely negative. This caused me to start trying to alter my appearance by wearing extremely heavy makeup. This included foundation, concealer, winged eyeliner and 2 pairs of stacked false lashes.

I would never leave the house without a full face of makeup, nor would I let anyone see me without it. Even to the point that when I went to friend's houses for the night, I wouldn't sleep all night in case my makeup came off - I didn't want anyone to see my face without it.

I was under an immense amount of unnecessary stress in school which caused my skin to breakout and I developed acne. That was the point at which things got a whole lot worse. One morning I just locked the bathroom door and broke down in tears to my Mum saying, "I can't go out or leave the house, my skin is a mess, it looks disgusting." but I thought how I was feeling was normal for all teenage girls.

I went to the doctors, mainly for my skin problems as I didn't want to leave the house or see anyone because of how bad I felt it was. I was given medication for my acne, however I still felt this was not helping and still felt my skin was disgusting. My parents were concerned and got CAMHS involved. I saw them twice and they said that was once my skin was better, I would be fine. Well, that left me even more fixated on fixing my skin.

For the next few years, I only left the house on occasions to go to medical appointments and only saw my family that I live with. I became so obsessed and fixated on my skin and making it perfectly clear. I would constantly check the mirror multiple times a day, seek reassurance from my Mum all the time and spend hours a day googling different ways to clear my skin.

When my skin was looking clear to my family, I could not see it. Every single time I would check the mirror and all I could see was 'bad skin' and no matter what my family said I did not believe them. I didn't know what was going on and neither did my family. That was until I came across BDD while searching on google.

I definitely had all the symptoms, but I was still in belief that it was just because my skin was bad and when it clears and it is perfect I will be fine and back to my normal self. However, that was far from true.

I went back to the doctors as my parents were very concerned, and the doctors referred me to IAPT (now known as Talking Therapies within the NHS). I had low intensity talking therapy, which did not help at all, I just got worse. I was then put on a waiting list to have high intensity CBT which was 8-12 weeks waiting time. During the waiting time, I deteriorated so much and all the symptoms I was having heightened massively.

I couldn't function properly with everyday tasks and life in general - the preoccupation with my skin was taking over! However, I would not take any other medication, only medication given to me by my a dermatologist because I was so worried it would negatively affect my skin and make it even worse.

I was having strong feelings of disgust about my skin/face, and I would constantly make statements like 'my face is a mess', 'my skin is disgusting', 'I can't live with my skin looking like this' and 'no one deserves to see this absolute monstrosity of a face that I have!'

When it came to starting the CBT, I couldn't carry on with the sessions because I would not leave the house.

I developed such a strong feeling that I deserved to be punished for how disgusting my skin/face was, especially every time I saw my reflection through the mirror, and then that is when I started self-harming as a form of self-punishment for how disgusting my skin was and I tried to end my life because I could not see any future at all as long as I had my skin/face. I remember actually feeling like I didn't belong on this planet because of how abnormal and disgusting I was because of my skin.

My parents were extremely worried and concerned and had to do what they could to help me. I ended up getting sectioned under the MHA and taken to hospital as my parents were told I would get the right help this way.

That is when I got the official diagnosis of BDD.

However, during the 3 years I was sectioned for, I was moved around to 6 different hospitals and didn't end up getting the help I needed due to the lack of knowledge and understanding of BDD and also because they were trying to save money. Instead, I was put through a traumatic experience and mistreated in many ways.

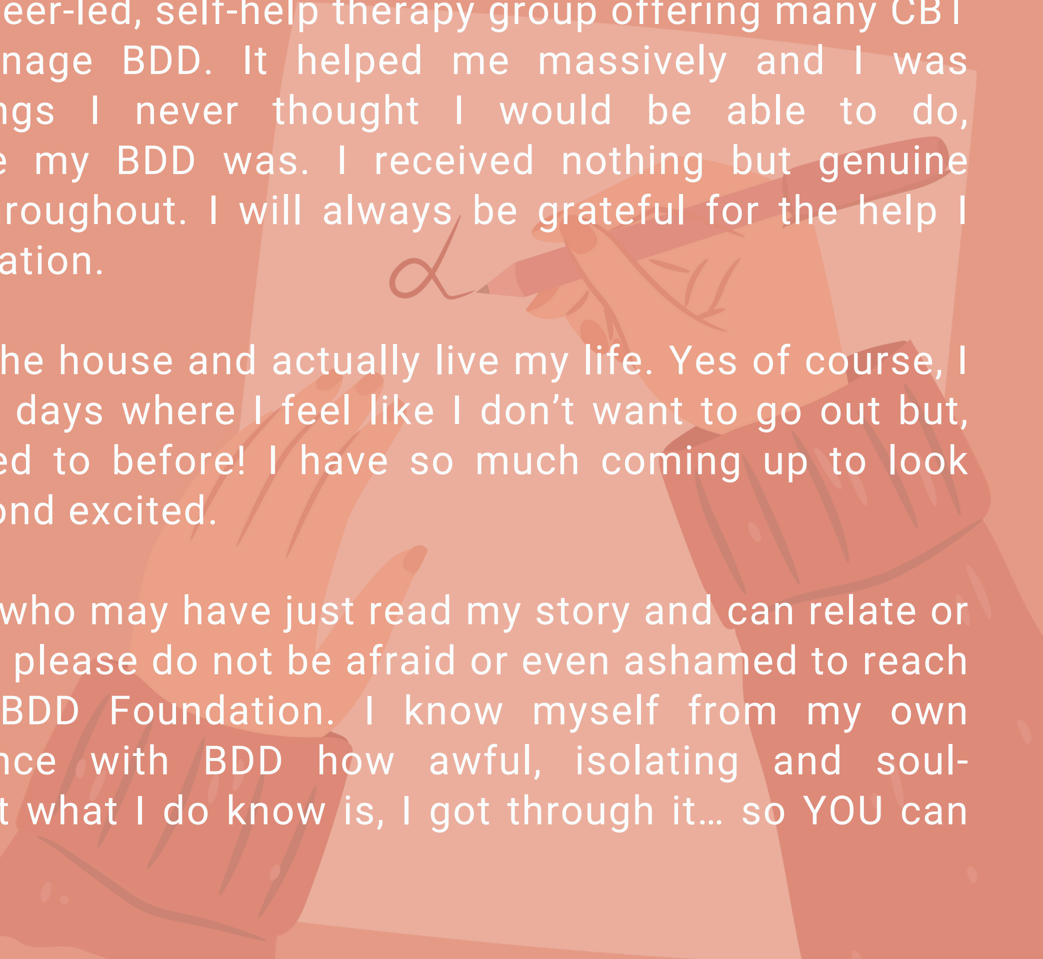
I became even worse than I was before going into hospital. I eventually was given an assessment by Professor David Veale which my parents had to fight for and I was diagnosed with severe BDD.

My parents ended up getting me out of hospital as I was not getting the help I needed, and I was also diagnosed with FND and needed to use a wheelchair from the trauma I went through in those settings.

I have followed the BDD Foundation for years on social media and got support from them, so when I got out of hospital and I was at home, I was extremely fortunate enough to get a place on the Overcoming BDD Programme, which is a peer-led, self-help therapy group offering many CBT techniques to help manage BDD. It helped me massively and I was supported through things I never thought I would be able to do, considering how severe my BDD was. I received nothing but genuine understanding shown throughout. I will always be grateful for the help I received from the Foundation.

Now I am able to leave the house and actually live my life. Yes of course, I do sometimes have bad days where I feel like I don't want to go out but, that is nothing compared to before! I have so much coming up to look forward to and I am beyond excited.

So, my advice to people who may have just read my story and can relate or know someone who can, please do not be afraid or even ashamed to reach out, especially to the BDD Foundation. I know myself from my own personal lived experience with BDD how awful, isolating and soul-destroying it can be. But what I do know is, I got through it… so YOU can too!



OUR VOLUNTEERS

08

Our work wouldn't be possible without our incredible volunteers. Their empathy, dedication, and support help us provide life-changing services to those affected by BDD. Whether offering emotional support, sharing lived experiences, or guiding recovery, they create a safe, empowering space. We're deeply grateful for the positive impact they make every day.

Volunteer Roles

- E-Helpline Volunteers
- Peer Support Group Volunteers
- Overcoming BDD Programme Volunteers
- Media Volunteers

Feedback

> **The facilitators have been the best thing about the course for me. They have been amazing, insightful, life changing. The group setting has helped me to speak openly about my BDD without feeling judged.**

> **This is an incredibly valuable service. I received a response quickly, and the guidance was both sensitive and useful. It was tailored specifically to my situation which made me feel valued and seen. I want to specifically record my thanks to Lauren for this.**

> **The group has been a key strand of my recovery - being with others who 'get it', a sense of community, no pressure to go on camera, supportive facilitators who have lived experience.**

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09

OUR COMMUNITY

At the core of everything we do is our community. The BDD Foundation exists to support those impacted by BDD, and it's deeply important to us that our decision making is led by the voices and experiences of the very people we serve. Every charity project, initiative, and campaign is created with our community at the forefront and in a response their needs. We are dedicated to consulting with our community where possible and regularly invite members to share their insights and ideas to help shape our work.

Within our community, we are especially fortunate to have an incredible group of creatives who bring insight to the experience of living with BDD. Artists, poets, musicians and writers generously help us to raise awareness of BDD through their art, whilst processing their own experiences and sharing their stories. These creative outlets have become a powerful way to develop connections amongst the community and we are honoured to support and showcase their talents.

Given the sensitive nature of BDD, we have many members of our community who choose to remain anonymous, connect online or engage behind the scenes. Although we don't see all of these individuals, their support and presence is acknowledged and we are continually inspired by the incredible strength and resilience by so many individuals. Thank you to our wonderful community. We are grateful for every contribution, whether visible or not.

I LIKE THAT THERE ARE MANY STORIES I CAN ACCESS OF LIVED EXPERIENCE AND THAT THESE ARE ADDED SO THERE ARE PEOPLES STORIES I CAN RE-READ AGAIN & AGAIN BUT THERE IS ALSO NEW INFORMATION & NEW LIVED EXPERIENCES ADDED REGULARLY.

IT MAKES ME FEEL THAT THERE IS A WHOLE COMMUNITY OUT THERE THAT HAVE THE SAME FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS LIKE ME SO I DON'T FEEL SO ALONE.

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WEBSITE

Our website is where the BDD Foundation began - a resource developed to educate, support and provide better understanding of BDD as a condition. Over time, it has grown into a rich hub of information and resources. For many people visiting the website, it is their first step in recognising and understanding BDD. We often hear from individuals who have discovered the website and subsequently identified their own experiences, feeling validated for the first time. The website offers comprehensive information for those living with BDD, their loved ones, and professionals working in the field - we strive to provide something valuable to everyone. The website is continually evolving, and we work hard to improve and expand it's content, ensuring we remain a trusted and up to date source of information and guidance to all.

Between
SEPT 23 – SEPT 24
we reached
258,969
people

Information pages
were viewed
910,150
times

Our website was
accessed by
195
countries

Our BDD Test
was taken
601,822
times

BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER FOUNDATION

LISTEN HERE

What the Hell is BDD - Song by See Emily Play

"The song chronicles my personal struggles with body dysmorphic disorder. When I wrote it, I was struggling to do pretty mundane, everyday things without feeling extremely distressed about existing in the body I was in.

The song is a completely honest account of my thoughts. I felt ashamed at what I perceived to be a sudden influx of vanity, but actually I think I was just obsessively panicky about the idea that I was not worthy of being loved.

My body and I still have a complicated relationship. Sometimes I feel immensely proud of the things it can achieve, and other times I feel frustrated at what it cannot do, but I am certainly in a much better place than I was. This song is for anyone who has ever struggled with their mental health, self esteem, or body image. It's okay to have demons, and there are happier times ahead." - Emily

Creative Community

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SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITY

INSTAGRAM

+504 Followers

130 Posts

7009 Likes

694 Shares

FACEBOOK

+256 Followers

132 Posts

1262 Likes

164 Shares

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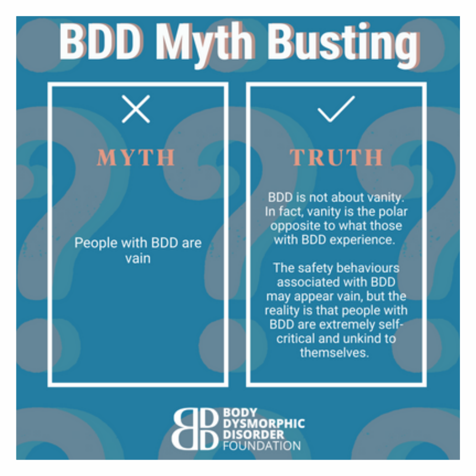
Top Posts



BDD Myth Busting

MYTH

People with BDD are vain

TRUTH

BDD is not about vanity. In fact, vanity is the polar opposite to what those with BDD experience.

The safety behaviours associated with BDD may appear vain, but the reality is that people with BDD are extremely self-critical and unkind to themselves.

BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER FOUNDATION

222
interactions across all platforms

BDD & BIG EVENTS

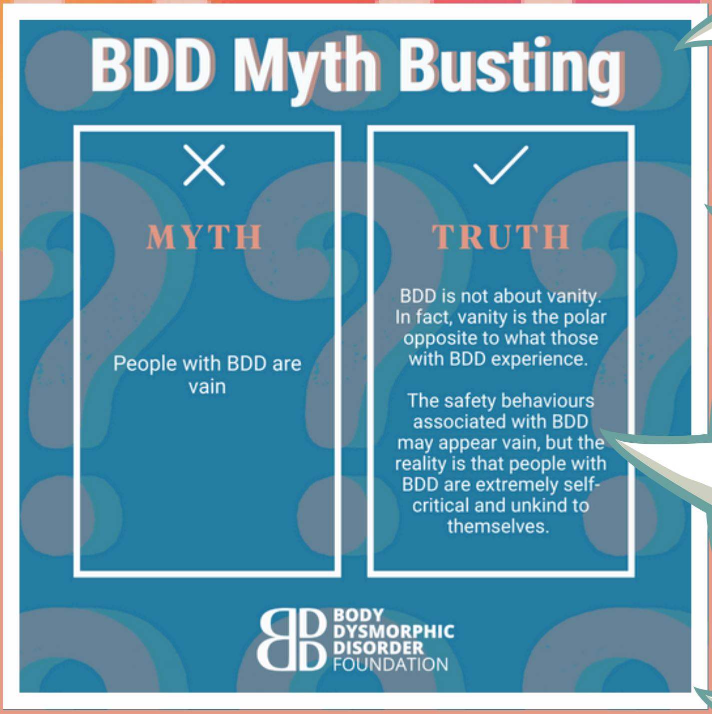
BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER FOUNDATION

203
interactions across all platforms

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF BDD

BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER FOUNDATION

341
interactions across all platforms



BDD Myth Busting

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BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER FOUNDATION

This is amazing and all very true 🙏🏾🙏🏾🙏🏾

This is excellent, thank you!!

Thank you so much for your support and all you do for people with BDD! 🙏 Yes, its exactly as you say.

Thank you for all these 👏 ❤️ I certainly relate to them all

Sending love to everyone struggling 💜 There is so much help and support out there

All my life and I think I need help 😢

The first step of change is awareness, great questions!

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF BDD

BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER FOUNDATION

BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER FOUNDATION

NEW HORIZONS

10TH

ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

In 2023, we proudly hosted our first in-person BDD Conference since the COVID-19 pandemic - an occasion that also marked the 10th Anniversary of the Foundation. Held in London, the conference brought together a diverse community of individuals, professionals, and researchers from across the globe, united in their commitment to understanding and addressing BDD.

This milestone event featured a diverse programme, including a main stage with keynote speakers and panel talks, inspirational stories, interactive breakout rooms, a dedicated research stream showcasing up and coming research in the field, a support and community room, and exhibition space with stalls from partner organisations and support services. The day was designed to offer something for everyone, from people with lived experience and carers to clinicians, academics, and advocates.

It not only celebrated a decade of progress and community but also shared a focus on looking ahead at the continued efforts of the charity and our mission.

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The event brought together **456 attendees** from around the world highlighting the **international reach** of our community.

326
in person attendees

130
online attendees

The response from attendees was overwhelming, with the event described as ‘life-changing’, ‘ground-breaking’, and ‘the best organised conference’ they’d ever attended.

It's hard to quantify such an amazing, informative, and self-esteem enhancing event. I believe the effects will be far reaching

I came away with a greater sense of community, it is so helpful to have finally found a group of people who understand what happens in my head.

To ensure the event's impact extended beyond the room, we published **20 recorded sessions** online, which have been viewed over **10,000 times** and received over **200 likes** on YouTube. This digital reach ensured those unable to attend in person could still access the invaluable insights and support shared throughout the conference.

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I WILL FOREVER BE GRATEFUL TO THE BDD FOUNDATION – WITHOUT WHICH I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW HOW I WOULD HAVE COPED.

IT IS ONLY THANKS TO THE BDD FOUNDATION THAT I DISCOVERED WHAT BDD IS AND HOW BEST TO SUPPORT MY DAUGHTER.

TO BE ABLE TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE IN PERSON WAS A PRIVILEGE – TO BE ABLE TO SEE IN PERSON SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHOSE STORIES HAVE INSPIRED ME AND GIVEN ME HOPE MEANT THE WORLD.

THE COMMITMENT, DEDICATION AND EMPATHY OF THE PEOPLE WHO WORK, VOLUNTEER AND ACT AS TRUSTEES FOR THE FOUNDATION WAS EVIDENT IN ABUNDANCE. IT HONESTLY FELT LIKE THE BEST OF HUMANITY WAS ON DISPLAY.

THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART

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PARTNERS

TILTED EAST®

‘Heart On Your Sleeve’

In partnership with Tilted East, we launched a creative design opportunity ‘Heart On Your Sleeve’ for our community. With so many talented creative individuals affected by BDD, we invited submissions for a limited-edition t-shirt celebrating self expression, story sharing, and connection. The project was a powerful reminder of the creativity within our community and the strength found in shared experiences.

We received over 10 submissions, each showcasing amazing, diverse styles and ideas, a true reflection of the creativity and individuality within our community.

Together with Tilted East, we selected two final designs: one was printed on a t-shirt and the other as a poster. Well done to Hazel San Jose who illustrated the t-shirt image and Kat Hall for the collage featured on the poster.

This project was a meaningful way to recognise and commend the creatives in our community, and a powerful reminder of the healing potential of art.

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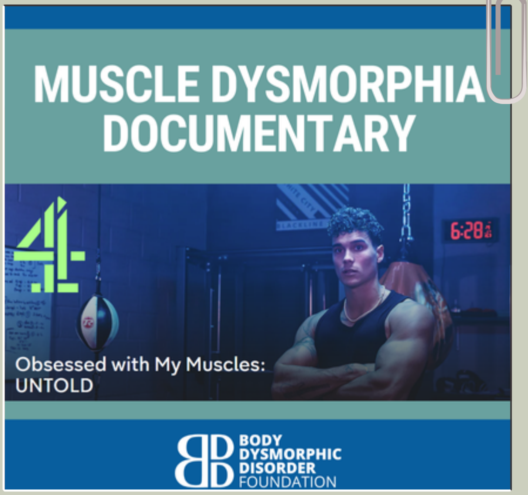
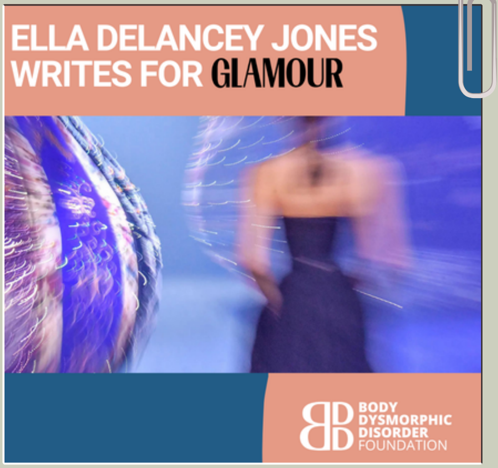
AWARENESS RAISING

Our dedicated staff, trustees, patrons, ambassadors & volunteers helped us to raise awareness of BDD, reach more people, support important policy change, and build hope for anyone impacted by BDD through their involvement in media and news publications, features, podcasts, interviews, panels and providing information and evidence. This included:

Our ambassdor Charlie King, and media volunteers, Mia Hill, George Mycock and Danny Bowman bravely share their experiences.



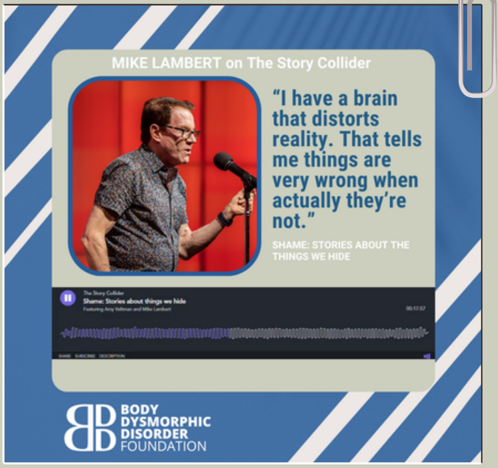
Channel 4 doc featured Dr Rob Willson, our vice chair Dr Amita Jassi, our clinical advisor Dr Georgina Krebs & media volunteer George Mycock



Ella courageously wrote about her battle with BDD for an insightful article in Glamour.

Hannah Millington · Health & Wellness Reporter, Yahoo Life UK
Updated Fri, 19 January 2024 at 9:23 am GMT · 9-min read

Yahoo Life sheds light on BDD featuring insights from our patron Prof David Veale & our MD, Kitty Newman



"I have a brain that distorts reality. That tells me things are very wrong when actually they're not."

The Story Collider
Shame: Stories about things we hide
00:17:57

Mike Lambert, writer & comedian shared his story of BDD on Story Collider's live podcast.

THERE ARE STILL SO MANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT BODY DYSMORPHIA

Meet the artists who are raising awareness of a poorly understood mental health condition.

Emily Ireland writes for the New Feminist Magazine on BDD, the BDD Foundation and her song 'What the Hell is BDD?'

Our patron, Danny Gray speaks with Yahoo Life on his experiences of BDD.

Kitty Newman & Mia Hill were featured on The Voices Radio feature on 'Summer Body Shame'

BDD Foundation Away Day

We held our first staff and trustee away day, where we had the valuable opportunity to connect in person. A huge thank you to our wonderful Patron Tracy Northampton who kindly provided a beautiful venue at The Falcon, Castle Ashby – we were so lucky. We were also joined by one of our wonderful volunteers, Holly, who supported the organisation and facilitation of the day and guided the development of our strategic framework.

This gathering allowed us to reconnect with the needs of our service users, and formally establish the charity's mission, vision, and values. Additionally, we laid the groundwork for the next stage of our strategic plan.

We extend our gratitude to the community members who participated in the survey & responded to our social media impact questions, which significantly informed our discussions.

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FUNDRAISING


Mark’s Ironman Fundraiser
£3,974

Amita Jassi ran a half-marathon
£1,250

Harriet spearheaded the Jaguar Land Rover team challenge raising **£3,883**

Sam did the Edinburgh Kiltwalk for us raising **£228**

Erwood Craft Station held a Portrait Artist of the year competition


Joe Budgy’s ‘Budgy Smuggler’ challenge **£200**

Raising a total of

£16,425

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10k in May

In May 2024, our community came together for ‘10K in May - Your Way’, a flexible and community focused fundraising challenge in support of the BDD Foundation. Participants were invited to run, walk, cycle, or step their way to 10 kilometres, whether daily, weekly, or across the month, in any way that suited them best.

The heart of the campaign was inclusivity, adaptability, and a shared goal: to raise vital funds to support those affected by BDD.

Still running...

20 days ✅
200K ✅
110K to go ➡️

Thank you so much to all the lovely souls that have run/ cycled with me, sent kind messages and encouragement, given me Strava kudos and supported the cause with a donation. I still carry some shame about having BDD so this has all felt a bit vulnerable, but your messages of support have been just lovely.

I can't lie, I've hit quite a big wall the past couple days. Whilst my fitness has really built, my energy levels are struggling and I'm really having to push through...

BUT, I'm very much focussed on running to help those yet to access the support and treatment they need. I hold them in mind on the tough days, when it all feels a bit relentless. BDD is relentless... and those in the throes of it, feeling hopeless and isolated, have to be so so resilient. The access to effective therapeutic treatment for those suffering is not good enough, but I'm determined to help shift that.

Last push now, on the home straight! 🙌⚡
@bddfoundation

JUSTGIVING.COM

Please consider supporting if you can 💙

300K ✅
30 days ✅
10K to go ➡️

So close to finishing now! Any last donations would be so welcomed and appreciated 💙

Tomorrow's run is going to be a real push with a hobbly left foot but we press on 🙌

JUSTGIVING.COM

@bddfoundation

We’re so pleased to share that our incredible 10K in May fundraising team - Liane, Rachel, Jem, Zosia, and Gem - collectively raised just over £2,000 for the charity! This is a wonderful achievement and a testament to their dedication and determination. From clocking up kilometres to championing awareness, each fundraiser brought their own unique energy to the campaign.

Whilst this was a small-scale campaign, it marked our first time trialling this model of fundraising. It has been a valuable learning opportunity, giving us insight into how we can grow and adapt similar initiatives in the future. We're excited to build on this work and aim to gain even more traction and engagement in this area of fundraising in the years to come.

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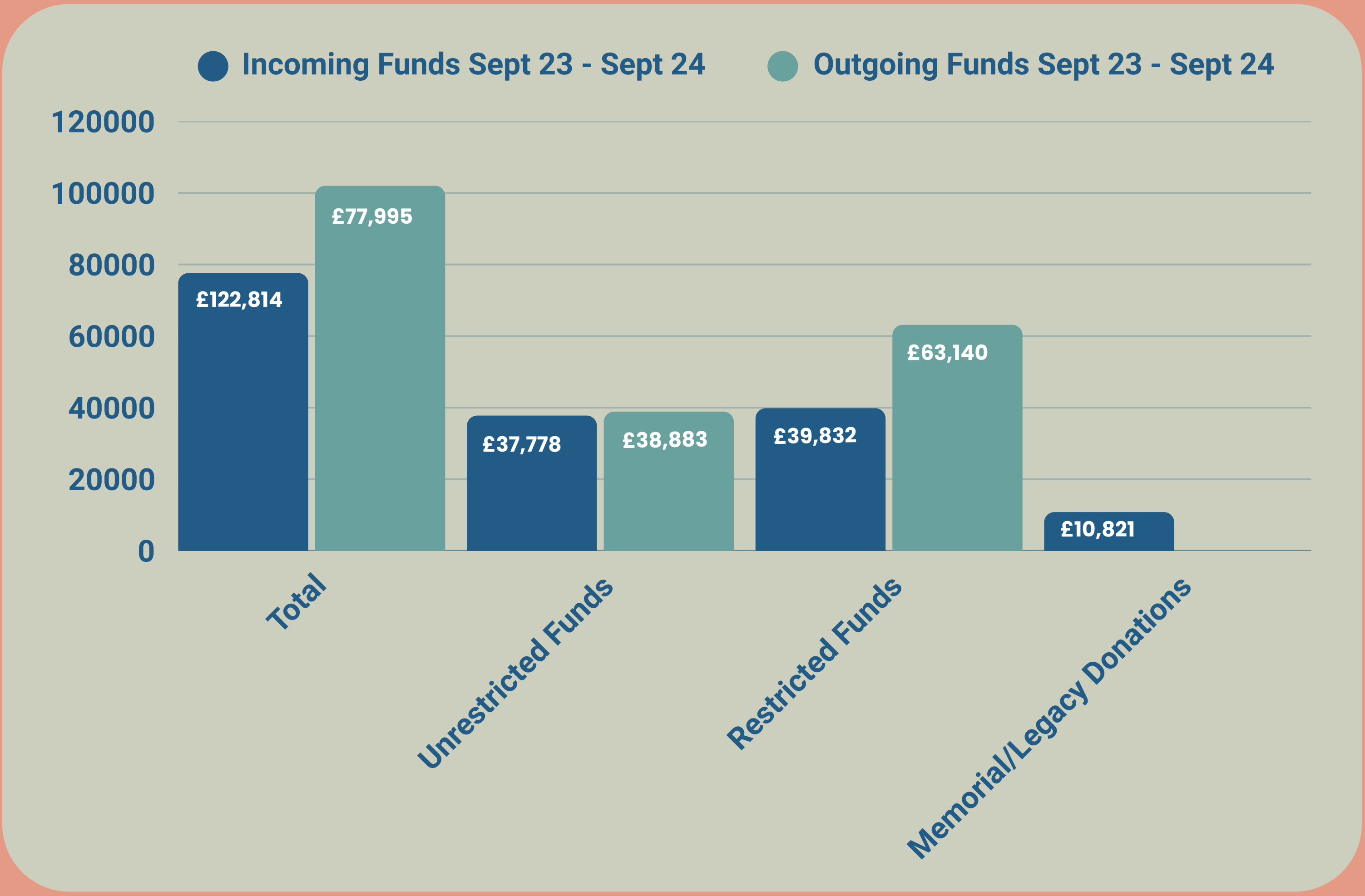
13 FINANCES

Our Finances section provides an overview of how our funding was sourced during this period. Thank you to all who make our work possible, supporting us to drive our mission forwards and make a meaningful impact for those affected by BDD. This helped us to expand existing projects, including our Overcoming BDD Programme, our E-helpline, our social media and outreach activities, and increase our Volunteer Team. We also funded our conference through reserves. We were also able to expand our amazing staff team through recruiting our first full time employee in the role of People & Projects manager, and bringing onboard an E-helpline Co-ordinator. These new roles have allowed us to expand our services, reach and support even more people.



BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER FOUNDATION

THANK YOU

We are deeply grateful to our donors, fundraisers, and volunteers. Your support enables us to continue making a difference for those affected by Body Dysmorphic Disorder.

Together, we are changing lives.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the creation of this impact report. Your expertise, insights, and support were instrumental in shaping this work.

Creators

Holly Staunton, Kitty Newman & Gem Ponting

Contributors

Malise, Emily Ireland.

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