

'I'm walking proof that recovery from eating disorders is possible'

Emma Carpenter's workshops, 'The Stranger That Called', will run over four weeks and help tackle eating disorders. By **Danielle Lett**

Last time I spoke to Emma Carpenter, it was autumn 2021. We chatted all about her personal training business, Muscle Mind Wellness, which she set up after overcoming years of struggling with an eating disorder as an adolescent.

"I suffered with anorexia nervosa between the age of 10 to 19 years old. I got told back then I would never have a healthy relationship with food or exercise again," she says.

However, she defied the odds and successfully recovered.

Emma now has a happy and healthy relationship with both exercise and food, and wants to show others that it's possible.

That's why she's about to run a series of eating disorder workshops in Ipswich, aimed at demonstrating to sufferers that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

"One of the biggest failings in the system back then, and still to this day, is early intervention and educating people about eating disorders," she explains.

"I work with a lot of parents with teenage children who are really suffering, and all of them come to me for the same reason – they're at their wit's end about what to do. They feel like hospitalisation isn't really helping the cause of what's going on in

their head, and their child isn't gaining anything from it as often the professionals that work with them haven't gone through it themselves.

"But then I meet these teens and their parents say how much more they've opened up after one session with me than when they were in hospital – and I believe when I was in hospital, I also would've benefited from talking to someone who had experienced similar."

With that in mind, Emma felt inspired to put on a series of workshops, entitled 'The Stranger That Called', which will take place over four weeks at Honey + Harvey.

The workshops will consist of two-hour sessions, commencing from Wednesday, July 27, with each focussing on a different topic.

"Week one is will be spent getting to know them and talking about their eating disorders and where they think it stems from. I'll also be showing them a slideshow about me, and explaining how mine came from bullying," she explains.

"Week two will be about disordered eating, week three will focus on healthy and obsessive relationships, and during week four we'll look at social media and how it affects body image. We'll



WST Emma Carpenter, who runs her own personal training business, Muscle Mind Wellness
Picture: CHARLOTTE BOND





Emma has successfully recovered from an eating disorder, and is now running a series of workshops over the summer to help others going through similar to assist their recovery

Pictures: SARAH LUCY BROWN



also being doing a mindful yoga session, to show that you can have a healthy relationship with exercise, because I was told that would never be the case for me."

Those who attend will have worksheets to complete, and work to take home with them to bring back the following week. The sessions will be a combination of group and one-to-one activities.

"During the sessions, together as a group, we will also have a small snack like a cookie along with a tea or a coffee – to help show what a normal relationship with food is and what normality looks like," she adds.

Emma will also be calling on a series of guest speakers to attend the sessions. "I think that's one of the best ways to aid recovery – by learning through people who themselves have recovered."

The workshops are open to anyone who is struggling with an eating disorder, regardless of age or gender.

"At the moment, there's just seven spaces as I wanted to keep it personal, but I'm hoping to open up another workshop series in the future. And eventually, I want to run a workshop alongside this one for carers to help support them. When people have eating disorders, it engulfs the whole family and support network, and sometimes they need help too. But with these current workshops, those attending can bring a friend or family member for support."

In addition to her workshops, Emma has also recently met with Ipswich MP Tom Hunt, to discuss eating disorders and calories on menus. "He is keen on the idea of having early intervention

workshops and work in school by businesses like myself to put together workshops and support school. He is also sending a letter to Gillian Keegan MP to put the ideas forward, and will put the question forward in Parliament too," she says.

With the wheels in motion to help combat eating disorders and aid people in their recovery, Emma cannot wait to become a positive influence for those who are where she was once.

"I'm walking proof that recovery is possible, and with these tools I've learned on my own journey, I'm now able to help others," Emma adds.

To find out more about Emma and her workshops, email emmapt@musclemindwellness.co.uk or call 07990 665947.