

## Designing a Combined Outpatient and Day Treatment Eating Disorder Program for Adolescents and Transitional Aged Youth: A Naturalistic Case Study

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**Abstract :** Background and significance: Patients with eating disorders have traditionally been an underserved population within the publicly-funded Canadian healthcare system. This situation was worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying public health measures, such as “lockdowns” which led to increased isolation, changes in routine, and other disruptions. Illness severity and prevalence rose significantly with corresponding increases in patient suffering and poor outcomes. In Ontario, Canada, the provincial government responded by increasing funding for the treatment of eating disorders, including the launch of a new day program at an intermediate, regional health centre that already housed an outpatient treatment service. The funding was received in March 2022. The care team sought to optimize this opportunity by designing a program that would fit well within the resource-constrained context in Ontario. Methods: This case study will detail how the team consulted the literature and sought patient and family input to design a program that optimizes patient outcomes and supports for patients and families while they await treatment. Early steps include a review of the literature, expert consultation and patient and family focus groups. Interprofessional consensus was sought at each step with the team adopting a shared leadership and patient-centered approach. Methods will include interviews, observations and document reviews to detail a rich description of the process undertaken to design the program, including evaluation measures adopted. Interim findings pertaining to the early stages of the program-building process will be detailed as well as early lessons and ongoing evolution of the program and design process. Program implementation and outcome evaluation will continue throughout 2022 and early 2023 with further publication and presentation of study results expected in the summer of 2023. The aim of this study is to contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to the design and implementation of eating disorder treatment services that combine outpatient and day treatment services in a resource-constrained context.

**Keywords :** eating disorders, day program, interprofessional, outpatient, adolescents, transitional aged youth

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