

Worksheet 2.4: Building empathy for the challenges of weight restoration – the metabolism effect

Carers often report that they are very frustrated that Edi is gaining weight very slowly, or not at all, despite the fact that they are sticking with their meal plan. This can lead to mistrust and increased anxiety for the whole family just at the time when Edi has a range of emotions flooding back and is trying to adjust to the idea that they need to gain weight. It is helpful for carers to understand that metabolic needs increase with weight restoration for a variety of reasons.

What do you know about metabolism changes when someone is losing or gaining weight?

You may have heard of the Minnesota Semi Starvation Study. One of the key findings of this study is around hyper-metabolism, whereby an individual's metabolism increases during the re-feeding process by as much as 30%. The effect of hyper-metabolism can last for up to 6 months after Edi has reached their target range. Meal plans need to take this in to account to ensure the goal weight gain can be achieved.

Kalm, L.M. and Semba, R.D. The history of nutrition – they starved so that others be better fed: remembering Ancel Keys and the Minnesota Experiment. *Journal of Nutrition March* (2005): <http://jn.nutrition.org/content/135/6/1347.full>

Tetyana. Hypermetabolism in anorexia. *Science of Eating Disorders* (May 2014). www.scienceofeds.org/2014/05/07/hypermetabolism-in-anorexia-nervosa/