



Butterfly Next Steps Outpatient Program

Participant Handbook

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1: Overview of the Butterfly Next Steps Outpatient Program

Butterfly Foundation is committed to providing high quality evidence-based treatment and support to anyone who is affected by eating disorders and body image concerns, and those who care for them. The Butterfly Next Steps Outpatient Program will deliver an online intensive outpatient program, for anyone aged 16 years and over, which will incorporate group therapy, skills training, supportive meal therapy, and lived experience-led recovery support. This 8-week program will be delivered virtually via Zoom and Telehealth, providing intervention for people stepping down into the community from an inpatient or residential admission for treatment of an eating disorder.

Next Steps will be informed by evidence-based treatments for group and individual therapy and will include both psychological and dietetic support. During this 8-week program, you will participate in group therapy and supported meals and will receive individual support from a psychologist, dietitian, and peer support worker. There is no requirement for you to be weighed by program staff. Taking weight as part of a medical assessment will be completed by your physician or the team in charge of your medical monitoring in line with the frequency determined by your medical review team.

The involvement of family, carers, significant others, and support people is important in the treatment of people with eating disorders. Next Steps supports you and your loved ones through education and the introduction of skills to assist in recovery. Your nominated support people will be invited to join one of the program's group sessions and meal support to learn how to best support you through your recovery.

The eligibility criteria for this program are:

- Be over the age of 16 at the time of assessment
- Meet DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Binge Eating Disorder, or Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder (OSFED) as a primary diagnosis
- Be discharging from a residential or inpatient unit in line with medical advice, or have had a planned discharge from residential/inpatient unit in the 90 days prior to your referral to Next Steps
- Be medically stable at intake, assessment, and for the duration of the program
- Be willing to undergo regular medical monitoring for the duration of the program
- Have well managed co-occurring substance-use disorders
- Maintain weight restoration or maintenance in line with your discharge plan and recommendations from your inpatient or residential unit
- Be assessed a low risk for suicidality or deliberate self-harm
- Be able to participate in the program virtually
- Be an Australian citizen or resident
- Have access to a private and confidential space where you can participate in the sessions

Aims of the Next Steps Outpatient Program

This unique and specialised program provides you with support and encouragement while transitioning back into community treatment following a residential or inpatient stay for an eating disorder. The program aims to be a stepping stone between these two treatment service types and provide you with the skills you need to continue your recovery journey.

The Butterfly Next Steps Program aims to provide and develop skills to:

- Address the various symptoms of an eating disorder (e.g., purging, bingeing)
- Normalise food intake and eating behaviours
- Reduce psychological and physical contributors or consequences of the eating disorder
- Provide a step down from residential/inpatient treatment

With the support of a strong clinical team, Butterfly's Next Steps Outpatient Program works to enhance your ability to deal with your eating disorder by:

- Assisting to identify underlying psychological issues that may be interfering with recovery
- Educating and guiding family members and significant others
- Improving social and relationship dynamics
- Establishing relapse prevention skills

The Next Steps Outpatient Program supports you in an open and non-judgmental way, placing significant emphasis on forming respectful and trusting therapeutic relationships.

Program Outline

The program will run for a minimum of three hours a day, three days per week, for 8 weeks with the option to extend your time in the program up to a total of 12 weeks. Group sessions will run from 3:30-7:30pm AEDT/AEST (Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays) on Zoom. Dietitians, psychologists, and peer support workers will facilitate the sessions. All staff will assist with meal support. You will be scheduled a 5-minute slot between 5:30-6:00pm to complete your meal check with one of our program staff so we can ensure you have the food in line with your plan ready for meal support. You must have your meal prepared and plated for meal check.

Additionally, you will receive three weekly individual sessions, one with a dietitian, one with a psychologist and one with a peer worker. These sessions are scheduled between 12-3:30pm (AEDT) Mon-Wed or between 9am-5pm (AEDT) on Thursday. You will see the same psychologist, dietician, peer worker and nurse for the duration of the program. These individual sessions and your 1:1 meal checks before meal support will run on Cliniko using telehealth.

Group sessions will focus on addressing various aspects of eating disorders and disordered eating, including body image concerns, emotion regulation difficulties, relationship difficulties and the normalisation of eating behaviour, allowing you to explore your struggles in a safe, supportive, and

recovery-focused environment. The group sessions will also incorporate meal support where the group will eat dinner together. You are responsible for bringing and preparing your own food.

Included here is an example schedule for a week of the program. 1:1 session times will differ depending on your availability and the availability of our clinicians.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
12	Possible 1:1s			
12:30				
1				
1:30				
2				
2:30				
3				
3:30	Group	Group	Group	
4				
4:30				
5				
5:30	Meal checks	Meal checks	Meal checks	
6	Meal support	Meal support	Meal support	
6:30	Group	Group	Group	
7				
7:30				
8				

Program Conclusion

It is the aim of the Next Steps Program to develop your ability to maintain your recovery after completing the program. You will be supported to develop a relapse prevention plan to maintain the changes you've made on the program. A treatment summary, prepared by Next Steps staff, will also be provided to any external treatment providers.

Early Exit from the Next Steps Program

If you opt to leave the program, Next Steps staff will first discuss this with you and then communicate with your external treating team to ensure a comprehensive follow-up.

You may need to leave the program if you become medically unstable and are admitted to hospital (medical or eating disorder unit) or become psychologically unstable. You are welcome to reapply in the future, but it will require reassessment of your suitability for the program and updated medical clearance from your treating psychiatrist or GP.

External Treating Teams

While on the Next Steps program, it is up to you whether you continue with your external treating team. This decision may depend on where in your recovery journey you are. Some participants benefit from remaining engaged with their external treating team and having extra support on non-program days. If you are working with your external psychologist or psychiatrist on non-eating disorder treatment, such as for trauma or anxiety, it may be beneficial to continue this while with Next Steps. Other participants can find having two treating teams overwhelming due to the number of appointments, finances, fatigue,

and time this requires. For most participants, we recommend reducing or ceasing appointments with your external treating team and recommencing sessions with them in your final two weeks of the program to ensure a smooth transition of care. When accepted into the program, the Next Steps team send an email to your external treating team (depending on the level of information you have consented to sharing with them) to inform them of the content covered and treatment delivered in the program to avoid overlap.

2: Treatment Non-Negotiables & Flagging System

Treatment non-negotiables are an essential part of the Butterfly Next Steps Outpatient Program for the following reasons:

- To ensure the safety of group members and staff
- To ensure all members clearly understand from the outset what to expect during the program
- To provide consistency and certainty during treatment
- To provide a safe, respectful, and caring environment that promotes change and self-awareness around thoughts, feelings, and behaviours

You are expected to engage in all treatment non-negotiables (below) throughout the program. If you are struggling to meet the non-negotiables, you will receive support from a member of the treatment team to discuss any barriers and your ongoing commitment to the Next Steps Program.

Non-Negotiables

Provide Evidence of Medical Stability

Being a virtual program, Next Steps relies on medical professionals and community-based medical teams to provide assurance around your medical stability. As such, medical clearance forms from your treating GP or psychiatrist are required to be eligible and to remain engaged on the program. Next Steps relies on the expertise of the treating physician to discuss and establish the frequency of medical monitoring. At a minimum, these are required at referral and prior to commencing the program (if there is more than a fortnight between the two time points). **When completing the referral form and medical clearance form, blood tests, ECGs, and vitals must have been completed within 14 days of the form being submitted.**

You are asked to book medical appointments in advance so that there is enough time for Medical Clearance forms to be submitted to the program. Next Steps staff may request you attend your GP for more frequent medical monitoring if there is indication that you are deteriorating or new information raising concerns about eating disorder behaviours are identified during the program. If medical clearance documentation is not provided by the required date, you will not be able to attend groups but will be offered an opportunity to problem solve challenges related to being able to provide the required documentation.

The Next Steps Outpatient Program nurse will review all medical clearance forms and will liaise with the nominated medical professional if any abnormalities in medical stability arise.

□ Absences and Tardiness

Attendance to groups and all individual sessions is compulsory for the duration of the program. If you need to miss a particular group or individual session, arrive late, or leave early for any reason, staff should be advised with as much notice as possible. Any more than 2 absences from sessions is likely to decrease the efficacy of the treatment. Participants who are absent from group sessions without prior approval, who are excessively late to group sessions or who leave the program early without prior discussion and approval will be invited to a meeting to discuss barriers to attendance and problem solve around this. If you are absent from sessions without informing the facilitator, your Risk Contingency Plan may be triggered, and your support person called.

□ Be Monitored by the Same Medical Professional for the Duration of the Program

Continuity of care and ensuring that there is a medical professional in the primary health care setting to monitor and coordinate your care is crucial during the program.

At intake, Next Steps staff will ensure that you have a **nominated medical professional who you can work with for the duration of the program**. To ensure that you are able to be seen in a timely manner, you will be asked to book medical appointments in advance so that you can see your preferred GP or psychiatrist. On the Medical Clearance Forms, the treating medical professional will be asked to acknowledge their commitment to support and monitor you for the duration of the program. If a change in professional is required during the program due to unexpected reasons, Next Steps staff will support you to engage with a new medical professional and provide the new professional with a written treatment summary.

□ Engagement and Participation

Next Steps Outpatient Program is an inclusive program that seeks to provide a safe and non-judgemental space for all participants. It is important that you understand that information shared with other group members is strictly confidential and is not to be discussed with anyone outside of the group. **We encourage everyone to contribute, participate, and engage in the group sessions. This includes completing any at-home tasks given to you by the Next Steps team.** To help the groups run smoothly and to ensure the safety of all group members and staff we ask that you please follow the below rules:

- Access the group from a confidential space that is free of interruptions
- Keep the camera on at all times. If this needs to be turned off briefly for any reason, let the staff know by chat function prior to turning the camera off
- Use recovery-oriented language at all times and avoid using triggering language. E.g., avoid appearance-based comments and do not comment on someone else's food, weight, or shape; do not use specific numbers/quantities around weight, food, exercise, substance use etc

- Only share details of recovery-oriented content or behaviours. Avoid all “pro-ED” content including tips related to dieting, purging, specifics around self-harm or exercise, non-recovery websites, social media pages etc
- Be prosocial and engage with others in a respectful and curious manner. Avoid anti-social behaviours such as taking phone calls, walking away from your screen without notifying staff in the chat function, falling asleep during group sessions etc
- Be entirely present and engaged throughout the duration of the group. Avoid taking phone calls or scrolling on your phone/laptop during the program. If you need to take a call during a group due to exceptional circumstances, discuss with the program staff early on during the session check-in
- Dress appropriately for group sessions and avoid wearing cropped tops/swimwear/hoodies covering your head/face
- Be aware and mindful of ED behaviours that can come up during group sessions and avoid engaging in body checking, body measuring, purging, fidgeting, and pacing during the group
- Participate in the group in a sober state. Do not consume alcohol, use other substances, or smoke cigarettes or vapes during group times. If you appear to be intoxicated, you will be asked to leave
- Complete all homework tasks and proactively participate in group discussions

□ Uphold All Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for admission to the program must be upheld for the duration of the program. The team will work with you to help you uphold them, but if you no longer meet one of the criterion, the team will discuss whether the program is still the most suitable option for you at this time. No longer meeting all criteria may result in an early discharge from the program.

The eligibility criteria to uphold are:

- Meet DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Binge Eating Disorder, or Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder (OSFED) as a primary diagnosis
- Be medically stable at intake, assessment, and for the duration of the program
- Be willing to undergo regular medical monitoring for the duration of the program
- Have well managed co-occurring substance-use disorders
- Maintain weight restoration or maintenance in line with your discharge plan and recommendations from your inpatient or residential unit
- Be assessed a low risk for suicidality or deliberate self-harm
- Be able to participate in the program virtually
- Be an Australian citizen or resident
- Have access to a private and confidential space where you can participate in the sessions

□ Engage in Supported Meals

Supported meals are an essential part of the program and help to engage you in utilising skills learned on the program and to ensure nutritional intake and adequacy. **Adhering to the meal plan** discussed with the dietitian, bringing an adequate amount of food and meal completion are all non-negotiables. You are responsible for preparing and bringing your own food in line with your meal plan. You must have your meal prepared and plated for meal check.

During supported mealtimes you will be required to have your meal and upper body within displayed view. Some examples of this are shown below:



Flagging System

To ensure the Next Steps group remains as encouraging and recovery focused as possible, we have program requirement indicators (flags) in place to uphold the non-negotiables and to ensure the group's dynamic and safety. If the team notice you are struggling to meet any of the non-negotiables, we will work collaboratively with you in your 1:1 sessions to explore any barriers to you meeting them and any further necessary support we can provide. A flag, or program requirement indicator, will be issued if you continue to not meet any of the non-negotiables. The team are here to help you and really want you to succeed in this program, so it's important you know these flags are not a punishment or a reflection of failure, but rather to indicate to our team when you may be needing additional support. The flags are issued by the treating team during weekly MDT meetings and you would be made aware prior to the meeting that you are not meeting the non-negotiables and may be issued one. If you receive three program requirement indicators across any of the non-negotiables, you will be unable to remain engaged with the program.

Rejoining the Program After an Early Discharge

If you are discharged early from the program due to needing another inpatient admission or hospital stay, we encourage you to reapply for Next Steps when you discharge. Updated evidence of medical stability (bloods, ECG, vitals) will be required to rejoin the program. You will also touch base with one of our psychologists and dietitians before recommencing.

If you are discharged early from Next Steps due to receiving three program requirement indicators, you will need to provide evidence that you have sought treatment elsewhere before re-applying for the program.

3: Participant Privacy & Confidentiality

The Next Steps Outpatient Program upholds a strict confidentiality policy for the safe keeping and appropriate use of all participant material collected on the program. Butterfly Foundation as an organisation is committed to treating all personal information in accordance with Australian privacy law.

The Privacy Policy on the Butterfly Foundation website explains how and why personal information is collected from service users, how this information is secured, managed and used within the Butterfly Foundation, or disclosed to other parties. Please refer to the Butterfly Foundation website for further information: <https://butterfly.org.au/privacy-policy/>

Clinicians working within the Next Steps team have a professional and legal obligation to keep your information confidential with the following exceptions:

- When you give consent for information to be shared with specific people
- When failure to disclose information could place you at serious risk of physical harm or death and disclosure is justified to avoid this risk
- When failure to disclose information could place other members of the community at serious risk of physical harm or death and disclosure is justified to avoid this risk
- When there is a need to consult a colleague or supervisor
- When the person is under the age of 16 years and the information is disclosed for the purposes of notification under child protection legislation
- When information is subpoenaed by a court or otherwise required by law

Outcomes Monitoring at Next Steps

At Next Steps we ask you to complete a set of outcome measures via an online survey at defined time-points:

- Start: Before you commence the program
- Mid-way: After 4 weeks of participation in the program
- End: When you finish the program
- Follow-up check-in: 2 and 4 months after you complete the program

These measures are vital to complete for two important reasons. **Firstly**, the information you provide by completing these measures helps our team assess whether the program is working as intended for you or if anything needs adjusting. **Secondly**, the Next Steps Outpatient Program team is evaluating the effectiveness of the program on improving outcomes for participants. The information gathered from participants will be put together and analysed to examine participant experiences and the

impact of the program on important mental health and other outcomes. The results of the research will be shared with others (including researchers, clinicians, people living with eating disorders, families, government, and others), and if Next Steps proves to be successful, we hope it will inspire others to develop similar programs to help people in need access much-needed help for their eating disorder.

It is important to note here, that the information collected for the purposes of this research will not include personal details that will identify you, such as by name, address, or date of birth.

Use of Telehealth

The privacy of any form of communication via the internet or a mobile device may be potentially vulnerable and limited by the security of the technology.

You will need to ensure access to a private and comfortable space to complete each session, which will be free from distractions for the duration of the session. Furthermore, you will be required to confirm your location whilst participating in the program at the commencement of the session.

Disruption to Telehealth Sessions

There is the possibility of disruption during a session due to equipment or connection failure. You will be informed of a Risk Contingency Plan (please see below) which will detail the steps that will occur if this happens. This is likely to include your nominated support persons being contacted.

Recording of Therapy Session Materials

Recordings of any Butterfly programs will not be undertaken under any circumstances. We ask you to respect the privacy of the Next Steps Outpatient Program by agreeing not to make recordings of sessions and not to use materials from our sessions for purposes other than therapy.

Communication with External Treating Team

The Next Steps team recognise that effective treatment requires a collaborative and coordinated treatment approach and is thus committed to working in close partnership with any external medical staff/clinicians who are providing you with concurrent treatment. This will include collaboration with your GP, psychologist, psychiatrist, dietitian, or other health professionals. Next Steps staff will generally contact external clinicians when you have been admitted to the program and at the point you are discharged from the program. It may also be necessary for Next Steps staff to request information from previous treating clinicians at the point of admission to determine your appropriateness for the program. The level of information you wish to be shared with your external team will be collected when you complete the Risk Contingency Plan and Consent Form.

Communication with Family Members

The Next Steps program encourages carers, loved ones, family members, and friends to attend [Butterfly's Carer Support Groups](#) and endeavours to provide advice and support to your

significant others. This includes sharing relevant information with them. This serves to enhance the effectiveness of the therapeutic interventions implemented in the program.

As a minimum, Next Steps requires that you nominate a primary support person to be contacted should any risk issues arise. This support person will be offered the option to join one of Butterfly's one-off carer support sessions. If you are unable to nominate a primary support person, you will be directed to the program staff to make alternative arrangements. Having a support person in an online setting is essential to manage any possible unforeseen factors that may arise and to celebrate and champion you during your recovery journey.

Please also advise the Next Steps program staff if there is someone that you would specifically like to exclude from this process.

4: Participant Safety & Emergency Contact Information

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Butterfly maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination and harassment of any kind. All staff and participants are expected to uphold this standard. To ensure a safe and respectful environment for everyone, discriminatory language or behaviour—including but not limited to sexism, racism, homophobia, weight stigma, or any other form of prejudice—will not be tolerated.

Risk Contingency Plan

During the assessment phase of the program, you will create a Risk Contingency Plan (RCP). The RCP will be utilised in the event of increased distress, emotional dysregulation or loss of internet connection throughout the program. By creating the RCP, you give consent to the program staff to communicate with nominated family members/loved ones, external treating team members and emergency services. In the RCP, you can specify the level of detail you would like staff to share with others.

Safety Plan

A safety plan is an individualised plan that details ways of managing distress and risk of harm to self/others. A safety plan may be developed at the assessment phase of the program or you may have a pre-existing safety plan. You will be asked to implement this safety plan in the event of distress or risk issues arising.

Emergencies

In the event of an urgent mental health situation, or if an emergency occurs outside of the Next Steps sessions, your program staff are not available by telephone. Please refer to your safety plan and/or contact:

- Your GP

- Emergency Services (call 000)
- Your local hospital Emergency Department
- Mental Health Line 1800 011 511
- Lifeline 13 11 14

5: Participant Rights & Responsibilities

Rights

While engaged in the Next Steps Outpatient Program, you have the right to:

- Access healthcare services and treatment that meet your needs
- Receive safe and high-quality mental health care that meets Australian national standards
- Be treated as an individual, and with dignity and respect
- Have your culture, identity, beliefs, and choices recognised and respected
- Ask questions and be involved in open and honest communication
- Make decision with the Next Steps team, to the extent that you choose and are able to
- Include the people you want to in planning and decision-making
- Clear information about your eating disorder, and the possible benefits and risks of participating in Next Steps, so that you can give your informed consent
- Receive information about the program and waitlists
- Be given assistance, when you need it, to help you understand and use health information
- Access your health information
- Have your personal privacy respected
- Have information about you and your health kept secure and confidential
- Provide feedback or make a complaint (to feedback@butterfly.org.au) without it affecting the way that you are treated
- Have your concerns addressed in a transparent and timely way
- Share your experience and participate to improve the quality of care of Next Steps

Responsibilities

While engaged in the Next Steps Outpatient Program, you are responsible for:

- Ensuring access to a private and comfortable space to complete each session, which will be free from distractions for the duration of the session
- Adhering to the meal plan agreed upon with the Next Steps Dietitian
- Booking appointments to see your GP as advised by both your GP and the Next Steps Team

- Providing evidence of medical stability and safety by acquiring new bloods, vitals, and ECGs as requested by the Next Steps Team
- Attending all sessions on time and informing the team (via nextsteps@butterfly.org.au) in advance if you are unable to attend a group or individual session
- Implementing the safety plan created with you by one of our psychologists in the event of distress or risk issues arising
- Completing the pre-treatment, treatment, and discharge surveys as you receive them

6: Waitlist Management

If you become eligible for the program while it is at capacity, you will be placed on the waitlist. The waitlist is divided into three priority tiers to provide fair and prioritised access to Next Steps, focusing on those with the greatest need and least access to alternative services.

- Tier 1 – rural and remote residents, individuals with severely limited access to day services, and special consideration cases with urgent needs
- Tier 2 – individuals with moderately limited access to day services, special consideration cases with non-urgent needs, and those who have discharged early from the program previously due to the team's decision
- Tier 3 – all other eligible participants

The waitlist will be reviewed as places become available. Places will be given based on priority tier and waitlist duration. Our program nurse will be in contact with applicants on the waitlist once a week to check in. Once accepted off the waitlist, you must be assessed as medically stable prior to your admission.

You may be removed from the waitlist if you request removal, are unreachable after three contact attempts, or your medical status changes making you ineligible for the program.