

James Downs (UK); Associate Lecturer with the Open University; Mental health campaigner, peer researcher and expert by experience in eating disorders.

Overcoming false divisions through collaboration

Rooted in knowledge gained through experience of anorexia and bulimia over two decades, this presentation asks thought-provoking questions about how we listen and respond to those with eating disorders, drawing out some of the false and harmful binaries that exist in care. Through exploring the tensions between hope and nihilism, early intervention and chronic decline, patient and clinical identities, system-wide problems and individual responsibilities, James will lead us towards thinking of the alternatives to these divisive factors. These include the importance of coalescing around shared values, a sense of togetherness, and centring the role of lived - and living - experience.