



East Bay Center

...leading lives to hope and recovery

Each and every day, East Bay Center (EBC) Inc., is involved in assessing and providing critical services that treat, heal, and reunite families. We'd like to introduce you to "Maddie", who is an artistically talented fourteen (14) year old girl. When "Maddie" and her parents arrived at EBC for an intake, they sat at opposite sides of the waiting room – completely disconnected. During the initial meeting, "Maddie" became agitated, and both parents broke down crying. The parents were scared because their daughter had resorted to cutting herself as a way to deal with her feelings.

Two years ago, the cutting started slowly and secretively, and "Maddie" learned to use this technique to feel "relief" from the every day things that stressed her, while her parents felt as though their lives were taken over by the sole purpose of keeping her safe from harm. "Maddie" had already missed three (3) months of school, because she had spent time in a psychiatric hospital, as well as an outpatient partial hospitalization program. At EBC, "Maddie" was enrolled in the Intensive Outpatient Program, which utilizes a form of treatment called Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), which is highly successful for individuals who experience considerable difficulty effectively managing their emotions that often result in the use of life threatening behaviors. It is important to note that while self injurious behavior may not always be indicative of suicidal thoughts or intent, clients should always be evaluated by a mental health professional for recommended treatment.

From the first day, "Maddie's" parents were given a folder of skills to practice at home, while "Maddie" was given daily homework and safety planning to practice skills that she learned every day in the program. Her days became structured both at home and in the program, and DBT skills became part of her daily routine.

Through case management services, a collaboration was established with her school, and through tutoring she was quickly brought up to the level of her classmates. Her parents also engaged in family counseling to address how their efforts to protect their child were in fact reinforcing her self-harming behaviors. Her parents were counseled to do the unthinkable – ignore the cutting behaviors – but under the guidance of professionals. Through intensive therapy, "Maddie" learned mindfulness skills, emotional regulation, how to live in the moment, and how to sooth herself when she was bothered or stressed. Her parents continued to respond by utilizing and reinforcing the DBT skills, as they were taught – be gentle, be interested, validate her concerns, and approach with an easy manner. Her parents continued to tell "Maddie" that they loved her, but that they hoped she would choose to use her newly taught skills instead of cutting. As "Maddie" continued to apply learned skills, the family began to realize positive changes on all levels.

In less than four (4) weeks, "Maddie" was stable, she had stopped cutting, and had no plans to cut in the future. Urges to cut that plagued her five times a day, became only daily urges, until even those faded away. "Maddie" was discharged from the program, but periodically sees an outpatient therapist to ensure that she continues to use these life-saving skills. She and her family feel that there is nothing that they can't face together (or individually) and look forward to their new life together.

If you or anyone you know is experiencing issues like "Maddie" and her family, please don't hesitate to contact EBC at 401-246-1195 and ask for "Intake". We encourage you to visit our website at www.eastbay.org for information regarding services, employment, locations, etc.