

PRESS RELEASE

## **More than just calories and weight: What really lies behind eating disorders and how parents can detect patterns and empower their children at an early stage**

- **Alarming development:** children and teenagers are increasingly suffering from eating disorders
- **Complex illness:** the role of food is just the tip of the iceberg
- **Renowned treatment center THE BALANCE RehabClinic reveals how parents of affected children can help them**

**(Mallorca/Zurich, February 2025)** The number of people with eating disorders in Germany has been rising at an alarming rate for years. Experts estimate that around 10 percent of the population suffers from an eating disorder. Young women in particular, and increasingly men too, are affected by illnesses such as bulimia, binge eating and anorexia. THE BALANCE RehabClinic, a luxury treatment center for mental health and addiction disorders, has observed a similar trend: “The number of clients we treated for an eating disorder last year increased fivefold compared to 2023. Of these, 95 per cent were female and 5 per cent were male,” says Dr. Sarah Boss, clinic manager at THE BALANCE. What is even more alarming, however, is that more and more children and teenagers are among those affected. “Although we mainly treat young women aged 17-25 with eating disorders, we are finding that they are becoming increasingly younger,” says Boss. The team of experts at THE BALANCE RehabClinic reveals how to recognize eating disorders early, understand them and treat them effectively.

“We compare eating disorders to an iceberg: the role of eating is just the tip of the iceberg, but under water there is a huge, complex pattern: family, genetic and social influences as well as social media,” says Dr. Sarah Boss. For the diseased, eating disorders pose not only physical, but above all psychological challenges that can have serious health consequences without timely help. This is because eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses at 26

percent. For this reason, they must be taken seriously and treated at the root, not the symptoms. But how do eating disorders manifest themselves?

### **Recognizing the first signs**

It is often not possible to tell at first glance whether someone has an eating disorder, as those affected are not always overweight or underweight. Instead, the first signs of an eating disorder are often subtle and develop gradually. People with an eating disorder become increasingly preoccupied with food and weight, count calories, avoid certain foods or skip meals. Conspicuous eating rituals, social withdrawal and discomfort when eating in company can be further indications. A distorted body image also plays a role: despite having a normal or low weight, those affected perceive themselves as “too fat” - social media is often to blame. “In our clinic, we also observe that young female clients become ill due to difficult family dynamics. They are often daughters of well-known CEOs, royals or celebrities. It is similar with our older clients. Many are the wives of high achievers and big-name investors and often fall ill due to societal pressure to be the 'perfect model wife',” says Boss. It's important to understand that people with eating disorders need their symptoms. “They are like protectors for vulnerable parts; they have a functionality. Their symptoms give them a sense of control, a release from stress or allow them to feel empowered. We have to work with them,” says Dr. Boss.

### **Losing control: a vicious circle**

Eating disorders often begin as an attempt to gain control over one's weight, emotions or life. Restricting food or weight, overeating or purging - all of these behaviors have a numbing effect on emotional or internal states, according to clinic manager Dr. Sarah Boss. “We know that these behaviors have a huge impact on the neural systems in the brain. In our clinic, we see people come to us with severe physical symptoms that affect their cognitive processes, self-perception and emotional regulation, among other things. The last thing they want to be asked is how they feel or what they sense in their body, as this can be very threatening for them. That's what makes the treatment so complex,” says Boss.

### **Back to balance**

In order to successfully treat eating disorders, it is essential for both doctors and relatives of those affected to understand that the problem is not the food, but the relationship to food. However,

far too little is said about the root of the symptoms, namely the mental health problems, which means that many clinics still work with force-feeding. “These futile attempts at therapy are not beneficial for those affected and are also traumatizing. At THE BALANCE, we work with a multidisciplinary team of experts consisting of psychologists, doctors, fitness trainers and nutritionists. We use techniques such as Integrative Medicine, Somatic Experiencing (body-oriented treatment of trauma) and the IFS model (systemic-therapeutic approach) to successfully treat eating disorders. By working with the nervous system, those affected can reconnect with themselves without being traumatized again, says Dr. Boss. Healing is not a straightforward process, but every step counts. With the right help and a strong network, it is possible to return to a self-determined, healthy life.

As a first step, THE BALANCE RehabClinic recommends that those affected or relatives of those affected consult their family doctor. They can get a holistic picture and prescribe further therapeutic measures, ranging from psychotherapy and nutritional advice to inpatient stays, such as those that THE BALANCE RehabClinic offers.

For more information about eating disorders and their treatment options, please visit [www.thebalancerehabclinic.com/eatingdisorders](http://www.thebalancerehabclinic.com/eatingdisorders)

**Über THE BALANCE RehabClinic:**

THE BALANCE RehabClinic is a luxury retreat on Mallorca that specializes in exclusive and discreet rehabilitation measures. The founder and managing director of THE BALANCE RehabClinic is the Swiss entrepreneur Abdullah Boulad (45). With a multidisciplinary team of around 150 doctors, psychotherapists, physiotherapists, personal managers and a whole range of complementary therapists, he has created one of the world's most renowned therapy facilities for addiction problems, mental illness and health issues. Here he offers his clients individually tailored cures in luxurious surroundings. The offer comprises the three pillars of addiction therapy (alcohol, drugs, medication, sex, etc.), mental illness (anxiety disorders, burn-out, depression, trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder) and health treatments (stress, anti-ageing, chronic pain, sleep disorders, etc.). One focus of THE BALANCE RehabClinic's evidence-based medical concept is also the use of the latest scientific and technology-based therapeutic approaches, such as neuro- and biofeedback systems or transcranial direct current stimulation, for which the company is constantly investing large sums in new technologies and medical equipment. The medical director is Dr. Sarah Boss. THE BALANCE is exclusively for private patients. [www.thebalancerehabclinic.com](http://www.thebalancerehabclinic.com)