

Supplementary Table 1. Reasons for beginning work in the field of eating disorders

Theme	Example Extract
Interesting	– Interesting – Desire to understand the disorder, cause, mechanism, way out
Coincidence	– My manager asked me to join a regional work-group – It is part of my work, I did not decide
Desire to help others	– I feel i can make a difference in someone’s life – Possible to make a big difference
Challenging	– Challenging – Difficult to help the patients
Enjoyable	– It’s rewarding – Exciting
Treatment method	– Family therapy focus – You can work with therapy
Personal experience	– Had AN myself – Many friends developed EDs
Patient characteristics	– I think these are patients with a lot of resources – The patients are wise
Professional environment	– Good professional environment – Interdisciplinarity
Unsure	– Unsure

Supplementary Table 2. Challenges in working with eating disorders

Theme (Main)	Subtheme	Example Extract
Patient-related factors	Ambivalence	– Ambivalence towards recovery – Ambivalence towards treatment
	Psychology	– Ego syntonic – The exceptionally poor interoceptive awareness
	Eating disorder diagnosis	– The complexity of eating disorders – Anorexia
	Comorbidity	– Patients suffer from more than one problem, it's hard to know what problem to start with – Somatic complications and psychiatric comorbidity
	Emotions	– Lack of hope – Shame
Clinician-related factors	The relationship	– Building trust – To endure the long time of no advance in treatment, to avoid giving up on the patients' behalf
	Knowledge	– Difficult to understand the cause and maintenance – How to meet them the right way
	Method	– Lack of evidence for treatment – Offer efficient treatment
External factors	Family	– Help the family to handle the anxiety – Get parents on board for good enough routines
	Healthcare system	– No backup from the organization – The lack of collaboration between somatic and psychiatric care
	Resources	– Not enough resources for good teamwork – The time aspect, often not enough to meet needs.
	Teamwork	– The challenge of good teamwork – Consistency within treatment team

Note. This table mirrors the thematic structure presented in Figure 2.

Supplementary Table 3. Rewards in working with eating disorders

Theme (Main)	Subtheme	Example Extract
Patient-related factors	Outcome	– When they get better – When patients start to eat
	Psychological development	– The process of patients starting to become curious of themselves, openly exploring who they are, what they feel, who they want to be – That change can occur on a deep level
	Back to life	– To see recovery and how patients with good resources can begin to live meaningful lives again, even after very serious functional decline related to the disease – Patients resuming their normal lives
	Motivation	– When the patient shows that she/ he really want to make changes – When they can turn and start working to be well
Clinician-related factors	Making a difference	– The possibilities to make a real big difference for the patients and their families – To guide patients to find and experience signals and information from the body again
	The relationship	– When you experience a good relationship with the patient and feel that you are working towards the same goal – The opportunities to earn patients' trust
	Challenge	– To have to think a lot – Challenging
	Knowledge	– Desire to use my knowledge of the subject – Gaining new clinical relevant knowledge through research
	Method	– Good treatment models – Working with family oriented treatment
External factors	Family	– When you succeed in supporting the family to overcome ambivalence and move forward as a whole and strengthened family – Help the parents to handle the anxiety as a family project
	Teamwork	– Working in a team – Collaborative teamwork

Note. This table mirrors the thematic structure presented in Figure 3.

Supplementary Table 4. Important characteristics of professionals working with eating disorders

Theme	Example Extract
Patient	– Patience – Perseverance
Warm	– Empathic – Warm – Supportive
Mature	– Stability – Mature – Mentalizing
Expert	– Experience – Both somatic and psychiatric competence
Curious	– Listen – Curious – Interested
Engaged	– Active – Engaged in their patients
Firm	– Assertive in a kind way – Challenging
Calm	– Calm – Relaxed
Flexible	– Every patient is different – Flexible
Structured	– Follow the plan – Structured
Hopeful	– Keep hope – Have faith – Optimism
Playful	– Playful – Good sense of humor – Creative
Clear	– Clear – Honest
Courageous	– Be brave – Have courage
Humble	– Thank your patients – Humility regarding parents' situation

Supplementary Table 5. Advice to new professionals entering the eating disorder field

Theme (Main)	Subtheme	Example Extract
Therapeutic stance	Patience	– Be patient – Remember that it takes time for the person to change
	Curiosity	– Be open-minded – Listen to what they really are saying, instead of formulating your answer before they have finished
	See the person	– See the person behind the symptom – See your patient's strengths
	Empathy	– Empathy – Kindness
	Cooperate	– Cooperate with the patient; – Make the relationship work, then you can hit the ED
	Self-confidence	– Do not be afraid to set limits or say no if needed – Don't be afraid to make mistakes
Knowledge	Eating disorder	– Learn a lot about ED – Get to know the field. Theory and practice – Take the time to understand why treatment non-negotiables are important
	Technique & method	– Food diary – Keep to the plan
	Learning from the patient	– Learn from your patients – Learning by doing
Supportive system	Team	– Don't work alone – Talk to your colleagues.
	Supervision	– Seek guidance – Seek information and guidance from others who have more experience in the field
	Self-care	– Have a personal life, not just work – Don't take your work home. We can't save the world!

Note. This table mirrors the thematic structure presented in Figure 5.