

# Analyse me

Harriet Frew speaks for herself

MAPLES IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

**What motivated you to become a therapist?** I was drawn to therapy as a 'wounded healer' - I wanted to help others in a way that I hadn't experienced myself. I suffered from bulimia nervosa in my late teens and early 20s, and it was near impossible to get professional help back then. I was also fascinated by people, personal development and the possibility of growth and change. This all excited me tremendously.

**Do you have a specialist field of practice?** I have specialised in eating disorders throughout my career - my first therapy job was working for the Cambridgeshire Adult Eating Disorder Service, which I have continued on a part-time basis to this day. The role exposed me to the teaching, clients and inspiring colleagues that have cemented this road more fully for me.

**How has being a therapist changed you?** Doing this job brings much greater self-awareness, a toolbox of knowledge and skills, compassion for self and others and a daily recognition to live authentically and to practise what I preach.

**Where do you see yourself in five years' time?** I hope to continue along this adventurous path that involves seeing clients, training counsellors, writing online courses and podcasting. Moving forward, I'd like to reach a greater audience to make eating disorder recovery skills more mainstream and accessible to everyone.

**What do you find challenging about being a therapist?** With eating disorders there is a lot of understandable ambivalence around change, as the focus on food and body image is a coping strategy for underlying pain. Each individual needs to take responsibility for change and walk this path. Sitting with the ambivalence and deep acceptance of this can be difficult work.

**And rewarding?** I find it incredibly rewarding to walk alongside someone when they are experiencing freedom and change. I love to bring my warmth, compassion and encouragement to others. It is hugely satisfying and fulfilling work.

**What is the most recent CPD you've undertaken? Was it worthwhile?** A Myers-Briggs personal development day. It was hugely helpful. I did a similar course 20 years ago and my results hadn't changed since then! However, it was far more meaningful and enlightening to my older, wiser self.

**What book/blog/podcast do you recommend most often?** I do love Steven Bartlett's *The Diary of a CEO* podcast. It's almost become therapy as guests open up and explore their vulnerabilities, challenges and little victories.

**What is your favourite piece of music and why?** I am a huge 70s and 80s fan. My dad has always been a huge Dolly Parton fan so

anything by Dolly is immensely nostalgic and brings back memories of car journeys and singing along with my three sisters.

**What do you do for self-care/to relax?** I have always loved physical adventures, encouraged by growing up on a farm and being outdoors daily and exposed to the elements. I enjoy climbing, beginners' parkour and going for long walks. I also read, listen to podcasts and enjoy being playful and silly with my children (although they are now teenagers, and I am extremely embarrassing to them!).

**What is the meaning of life?** To grow and work towards your potential; to be your most loving and flourishing self; to spread this out into the world.

**What would people be surprised to find out about you?** I mainly don't compare myself to others and am truly not a perfectionist at all. I've realised that many people are held back by these things to their detriment, when they have so much creativity and inspiration to offer. This has enabled me to step out of my comfort zone, and with creative projects, as I can embrace good enough.

**Who is your counselling/psychotherapy hero(ine)?** I have several - the master therapists Susie Orbach, Esther Perel and Julia Samuel, and Deanne Jade, who founded the National Centre for Eating Disorders. ■



About Harriet

**Now:** Online integrative counsellor specialising in eating disorders and body image. I also run training courses for therapists and have a podcast, *The Eating Disorder Therapist Podcast*, available on all major platforms.

**Once was:** Unpaid farmhand, milking cows on the family farm.

**First paid job:** Working on a helpline for prisoners' families.

Who would you like to answer the questionnaire? Email your suggestions to [therapytoday@thinkpublishing.co.uk](mailto:therapytoday@thinkpublishing.co.uk)