

# CONNECTION

*EATING DISORDER RECOVERY HAPPENS THROUGH CONNECTION*



## ESPERANZA STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### PAM CURTIS, MEd, LPC, CEDS



Healing mind, body and spirit is the holistic approach that guides treatment at Esperanza EDC. Integrative therapies of yoga and Nia Movement to Heal provide opportunities for patients to connect with their bodies and learn to appreciate what they can do. Somatic Experiencing techniques for trauma provide an effective way for patients to work through both the mental and physical impact of trauma. Talk therapy is combined with a variety of techniques that help identify and heal the body's physical reaction to the traumatic experience and its after effects. The goal is to allow release of both feelings and physical manifestations of the trauma, leading to a healthier learned response to triggers in the future.

Pam Curtis, MEd, LPC is a Certified Eating Disorder Specialist who leads Mind/Body Healing for Trauma groups for adults at Esperanza. Pam has worked with eating disorder patients since 2006, both in private practice and in partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient programs. Eating disorders are often used as coping mechanisms for trauma, which led Pam to intensive study of trauma treatment.

"Everyone has experienced some level of trauma in their life," Pam said. She has found that approaching trauma from this perspective makes patients feel less ostracized. "Trauma CAN be healed if skills and tools are used diligently and if one learns the importance of dedicated and compassionate self-care. The healing process must be 'bottom up', encompassing work with both the body and the mind," she continued.

Pam incorporates DBT and ACT into her groups to help patients evaluate their values and purpose. These therapies also provide skills that lead to healthier ways of coping with both trauma and the eating disorder. Pam also utilizes CPT, a therapy that helps patients learn how to modify and challenge unhelpful beliefs related to the trauma.

She incorporates elements of sensory experiences with use of essential oils and creation of "safety anchors" like rubbing a smooth rock or using visual imagery. Gentle, small elements of movement such as chair yoga and working with body positioning help patients to increase their ability to feel safe in their own bodies. Patients learn to recognize their unique physical responses to trauma and how to decrease those responses through awareness and with the use of skills and tools.

Personalization of a skill or tool helps a patient incorporate it into their behaviors. Pam goes to great lengths to help each patient personalize every skill and tool. A concept is introduced, then each group member walks through an example in their life and through application of principles to personalize it.

"I want to be with every patient to see how they are in their pain. I want them to know that I am here to walk through that pain with them in their journey toward healing and a better life."

**Connect with Dessimber Daniels at (210) 253-9763 for a telephone screening, insurance benefits review and to schedule a comprehensive, in-person assessment.**  
**[www.EsperanzaEDC.com](http://www.EsperanzaEDC.com)**

Sarah Snively, MS, RD, LD has been promoted to Director of Dietary Services for Esperanza. She will continue to provide dietary services for adolescents and their families as well as supervising the dietary staff. Sarah is a resource and guide for both patient and loved ones, understanding that an eating disorder effects the whole family.

Her approach is scientific, non-judgmental, and focused on the unique situation of each patient. Her goal is to provide individualized and compassionate care for patients and their families. She values the expertise of her colleagues at Esperanza and sees teamwork, both among staff and with patients and their loved ones, as a cornerstone to recovery. Connection with patients, co-workers and professionals in the community to serve the needs of the whole patient is what she loves most about her position.



Sarah Snively, MS, RD, LD  
Director of Dietary Services