

# Overcoming Teen Anorexia with Support and Resilience: Alaina's Story

Alaina was a bright and engaging middle school student when she began to face the challenges of disordered eating. As an athlete, she felt a pressure to eat cleanly that developed into a more tumultuous relationship with food.

## An Unhealthy Spiral

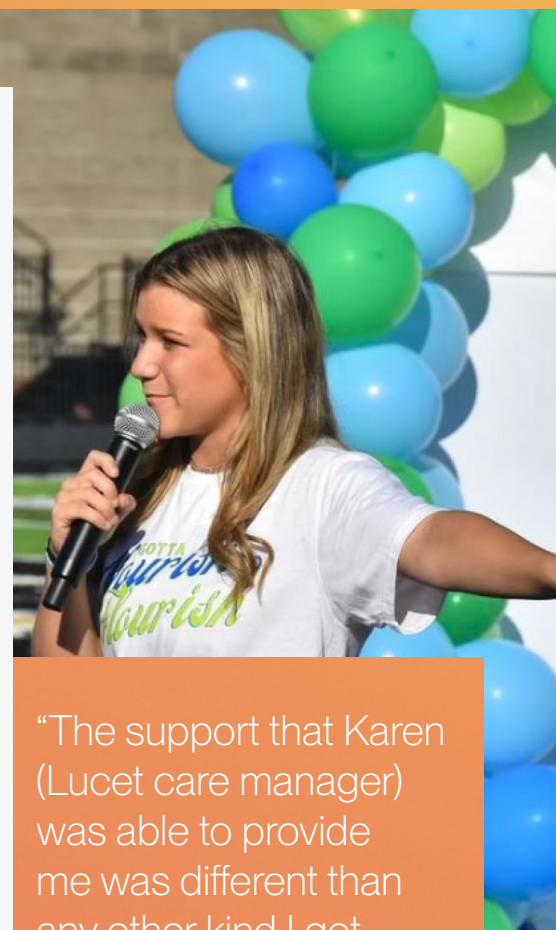
Alaina's journey started with calorie counting, then evolved into a full-blown eating disorder — anorexia. Placing her self-worth on achieving a perceived “perfection,” she restricted her food intake and engaged in excessive exercise, even outside of sports. By her sophomore year, these habits escalated, causing her to pass out and triggering both physical and mental health deterioration.

## The Turning Point

Recognizing the severity of Alaina's situation, her mother sought professional help, connecting her with an eating disorder therapist. The initial assessment determined immediate residential therapy was necessary. Alaina, initially resistant, slowly embraced the support and guidance provided by her therapist, realizing that residential treatment was a lifeline.

After working hard to manage her symptoms at a residential facility, Alaina transitioned to a Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP), and it was there that she was introduced to Karen, a Lucet care manager. As Alaina navigated life outside the treatment facility, Karen maintained consistent communication with her, providing a crucial support system that helped Alaina face her new reality. The personalized approach, meeting Alaina where she was emotionally, became a cornerstone of her recovery.

“The support that Karen was able to provide me was different than any other kind of support I got through treatment,” Alaina explains. “It wasn't like



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— Alaina, in recovery from anorexia



you had this appointment with a therapist and it's super strict and formal. I would be getting in my car, or getting ready for school, and my phone would ring and I would say, 'I bet that's Karen.' Then we would chat for a few minutes, and it would just make my day easier."

## A New Beginning

Now an outpatient, Alaina, with the aid of care management, attends weekly dietary consultant sessions and therapy. The ongoing support has empowered her to manage her disorder and adopt a balanced lifestyle. Alaina's journey has not only transformed her life but has inspired her to give back to the community. Fueled by her recovery, today Alaina is on a mission to raise awareness about eating disorders. She plans to launch a podcast and has organized a walk with the National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA). Her goal is to ensure that others facing similar challenges are armed with the resources and knowledge to navigate their journeys towards recovery.

## #PracticeNourishment #FeedingHope

If you or someone you know is struggling with an eating disorder, you can find additional resources through the **National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA)** or call the **National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders (ANAD)** Helpline at 888-375-7767.