

## Mark & Gayle Forbes

**Founders of the mental health charity, endED Sunshine Coast, whose daughters have both lived with an eating disorder**

Mark and Gayle Forbes are co-founders of the mental health charity, 'endED', which they formed in 2015, to provide peer support, coaching and mentoring to those living with eating disorders.

Mark and Gayle were inspired to create endED – a sanctuary where nature meets nurture – as a result of caring for two of their daughters who have both lived with an eating disorder for an extended length of time, the youngest of whom is continuing her battle with the mental illness.

After spending a substantial amount of time, money and resources trying to find some answers and treatment for their daughters, the couple recognised the lack of adequate facilities for those experiencing an eating disorder.



Taking matters into their own hands, they founded endED to help other families in similar situations.

Initially, the couple held support groups in their home for parents working to navigate their way around their children's eating disorders. As the meetings continued to grow however, so too did Mark and Gayle's vision. They mentioned their plans to build a live-in residential facility to the CEO of the Butterfly Foundation and received a plethora of support.

With the help of their local community, the Sunshine Coast Council, the Federal Government and 40 local businesses, Mark and Gayle have built endED Butterfly House in partnership with the Butterfly Foundation. The house, which is in Mooloolah Valley, Queensland will be Australia's first live-in eating disorder residential facility.

Due to their own family members' first-hand experience with eating disorders, Mark and Gayle are advocates for the Eating Disorders Genetic Initiative (EDGI) – the world's largest genetic investigation of eating disorders ever performed, which aims to identify the hundreds of genes that influence a person's risk of developing anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder, to improve treatment, and ultimately, save lives.

"Having two daughters who have lived with an eating disorder, Gayle and I are passionate about learning more about the genetics of eating disorders. We believe it is important to have a greater understanding of genes that predispose certain individuals to eating disorders, in order to facilitate research and better identify causes, treatment and prevention," said Mark.

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