

For Amanda, the worst seems to be over

AMANDA WALKER will celebrate her 18th birthday next month having spent most of her teenage years battling an eating disorder.

She is now in partial remission from anorexia nervosa, an illness that began when she was 12. It culminated in her stopping eating and drinking completely.

The Melbourne teenager says she has started to feel better for the first time, after beginning treatment at the city's Mandometer Clinic in February.

The improvement came after five unsuccessful stays in a regional hospital.

She has finished year 11 and has taken a year off school to focus on healing.

She said disordered eating was a widespread problem among young women.

"Now that I've been through it, I can sit back and watch all my friends [and see] that their eating patterns are completely distorted," she said.

"They say, 'I won't eat this. I'll get fat' or 'I feel really fatty today.'

"If you're in my situation, speak out and get some help. People are always willing to help."

CAROLINE MARCUS

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