

Treatment

Recovery from an eating disorder is possible. Effective treatment addresses an individual's symptoms and destructive eating habits, as well as exploration to the root of the problem. If you or someone you love is struggling with an eating disorder, please contact a professional for help for a long-term successful recovery.

Resources and Recommended Readings

Websites:

National Eating Disorders Association

www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

The Eating Disorder Foundation (Local)

www.eatingdisorderfoundation.org

Something Fishy

www.somethingfishy.org

Books:

Freeman, R.(2002) Body love: Learning to like our looks and ourselves

Hornbacher, Marya (2006) Wasted: A memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia

Johnston, Anita (2000) Eating in light of the moon

Lock, James & Le Grange, Daniel (2005) Helping your teenager beat an eating disorder

Schaefer, Jenni (2009) Good bye ED, hello me!



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Eating Disorders

For millions of women, adolescent girls, and a growing number of men in America, eating disorders are a serious mental illnesses often accompanied with serious medical complications.

In fact, more people die from anorexia than any other mental illness. Eating disorders, unlike other mental health issues, can have severe medical consequences including damaging effects on cardiac, reproductive, kidney, and musculoskeletal organs in the body. Deaths associated with eating disorders are generally due to cardiovascular collapse and suicide.

Eating disorders are commonly used as a means of coping or avoiding emotional issues. They can be devastating to person's life, making work, school, and daily functions often impossible. However, some people with eating disorders appear to be functioning quite well, enjoying success in school and work. This creates difficulty for detecting eating disorder.

Eating disorders often coexists with other mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and substance abuse. Some underlying issues associated with eating disorders include low self-esteem, depression, feelings of loss of control, feelings of worthlessness, identity concerns, family communication problems, and an inability to cope with emotions.

Types of Eating Disorders

Anorexia

Anorexia is serious, potentially life threatening disease, characterized by self-starvation and extreme weight loss.

Many people with anorexia view themselves as overweight, even when they appear malnourished. Eating, food, and weight control become an obsession and a focus of daily life. Anorexics will typically weigh themselves frequently and eat only small mounts of food. There is often excessive guilt surrounding food consumption.

Bulimia

Bulimia is a serious, potentially life threatening disease characterized by behavior patterns of binging and purging. Purging food is done through compensatory behaviors, such as self-induced vomiting, excessive exercise, or laxatives.

Unlike anorexics, people with bulimia typically fall within the normal to high range for their age and weight. However, they are often obsessed with their weight, loosing weight, and are unhappy with their body size and shape.

Purging methods are done secretly and are often associated with excessive feelings of guilt and shame. Cycles of binging and purging may occur many times a day, week, or month.

Binge Eating Disorder

Binge Eating Disorder is characterized by recurrent binge eating episodes of consuming large amounts of food while feeling a lack of control while eating. While similar to bulimia, those with binge eating disorder do not use compensatory methods to get ride of the food.

Warning Signs of Eating Disorders

- Skipping meals
- Making excuses for not eating
- Only eating foods low in fat and calories
- Eating in secret or hiding food
- Adopting ridged meals rituals, such as excessive chewing or cutting of food.
- Withdrawal from social situations
- Persistent worry or fear of becoming fat
- Not wanting to eat in public
- Wearing baggy or layered clothes
- Frequently eating large amounts of sweet or high caloric foods.

Myths about Eating Disorders

"Only females have eating disorders."

FACT: While eating disorders are predominantly found among women, it is estimated that one million American men struggle with eating disorders.

"Eating disorders are only a phase."

FACT: Eating disorders are serious mental illness that can progressively become worse over time. Eating disorders are not just about food and weight, rather they are an attempt to use food intake and weight control to manage emotional conflicts that have nothing to do with weight or food.

"Eating disorders are easy to recognize"

FACT: People with eating disorders are not always extremely thin or overweight.