

Eating Disorder Characteristics

Anorexia Nervosa

- Self-starvation
- Weight loss and extremely underweight
- Distorted self-image: look very thin but think they are overweight
- Sometimes hospitalized is necessary to prevent starvation
- Risk of very dangerous physical and emotional effects: heart damage, osteoporosis, amenorrhea (absence of menstrual periods), feeling of dizziness, weakness, lethargy and depression, fear of being fat, low self-esteem

Bulimia Nervosa

- Eat large amounts of food and then rid the body of food by vomiting, laxative abuse or extreme exercise
- Usually “binge and purge” in secret
- Look thin, normal weight or above normal body weight
- Risk of very dangerous physical and emotional effects: stomach aches and gastrointestinal problems, heart palpitations, throat irritation, tooth decay, feeling of self-disgust and depression and lack of control, fear of being fat, low self-esteem

Binge Eating Disorder

- Eat large amounts of food until uncomfortably full
- Have trouble losing weight and maintaining weight loss
- Look normal weight, overweight or obese
- Risk of very dangerous physical and emotional effects: heart disease, diabetes, cancer, feeling of lack of control, depression, low self-esteem

How to Help a Friend: What to Say, Step by Step

- ✓ Set aside a time for a private, respectful meeting with your friend to discuss your concerns openly and honestly in a supportive way. Make sure you are away from other distractions.
- ✓ Communicate your concerns. Point out a few behavioral instances that you believe are affecting your friend’s health, happiness, and safety. Explain that you are concerned about these things and it may indicate that there could be a problem that needs professional attention.
- ✓ Ask your friend to explore these concerns with a counselor, doctor, dietitian, or any health professional they feel comfortable enough to see. If you feel comfortable, offer to accompany them on the first visit.
- ✓ Avoid conflicts or a battle of the wills with your friend. If he/she refuses to acknowledge that there is a problem or any reason for you to be concerned, re-state your feelings and the reasons for them and leave yourself open and available as a supportive listener.

- ✓ Avoid placing shame, blame, or guilt on them for his/her actions or attitudes. Do not use accusatory “you” statements like, “You just need to eat.”
- ✓ Express your continued support for your friend. Let him/her know that you care about them and that you want them to be healthy and happy with themselves.
- ✓ After talking with them, if you are still concerned for his/her safety and health, find a trusted medical professional to talk to. This is probably a challenging and difficult time for both of you. It could be helpful for you, as well.

MU Campus Resources

- Counseling Center in Parker Hall, 882-6601

The Counseling Center offers free individual and group counseling, and a self-help resource center. www.missouri.edu/~councwww/

- Psychological Services Clinic, 211 South 8th Street, 882-4677

The Psychological Services Clinic offers individual, couples, family, and group therapy; the clinic accepts insurance and provides fee assistance if needed.

- Student Health Center, 4th floor University Physicians Medical Building, 882-7481

The Student Health Center offers medical, psychological and health education services. www.muhealth.org/~studenthealth/hp_eatingdiso.shtml

- Wellness Resource Center, 34 Brady Commons, 882-4634

The Wellness Resource Center offers a free resource library for self-help and research including pamphlets, posters, and books. www.missouri.edu/~wrcwww/

- Women’s Center, 229 Brady Commons, 882-4677

The Women’s Center offers free individual and group counseling and a resource lending library. www.missouri.edu/~stulife/women/

Websites for Additional Reading

www.somethingfishy.org

www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

www.muhealth.org/~studenthealth/hp_eatingdiso.shtml

www.mirror-mirror.org/eatdis.htm

www.campusblues.com/healthy_eating.shtml

www.worldcollegehealth.org/031299.htm

www.collegeeatingguide.com