

Take Action for a Friend

Having a friend or family member with eating issues can be worrisome, and you might not know how to take action to help them. Below are some pointers for how to express concern, show support, and encourage your friend or family member to seek professional services.

Talk to the person about your concerns.

- * Use “I” statements (“I’m worried about you.”)
- * Avoid making accusatory “you” statements (“You are ruining your life.”)

Be supportive.

Avoid over simplifying the person’s struggle, (e.g., “if you would just eat.”)

Talk to the person about subjects other than eating.

Encourage the person to seek professional help.

Be patient with the person’s attempts to recover.

- * Know that recovery will take time and there may be backward steps.

Remember to take care of yourself.



Additional Resources

Student Health Center

573-882-7481

Wellness Resource Center

573-882-4634

Check out our website

<http://counseling.missouri.edu>

or our Facebook page

www.facebook.com/MizzouCounselingCenter

for information about the Eating Issues group, individual therapy, and consultation regarding eating disorders or other mental health concerns.



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Columbia, MO 65211-2340
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<http://counseling.missouri.edu>
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Eating Disorders



MU Counseling Center

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EATING DISORDERS



What is an Eating Disorder?

Eating disorders are serious emotional and physical problems that can be life-threatening to men and women. There is typically no single cause of an eating disorder. Most likely, eating disorders arise from a combination of longstanding psychological, biological, and social conditions. The stresses associated with adult life in addition to the pervasive idealization of thinness and beauty in our society can also contribute to the development of an eating disorder. With good treatment and supportive family and friends, recovery is possible.



Types of Eating Disorders

Anorexia Nervosa is characterized by self-starvation and excessive weight loss. Some signs & symptoms include:

- Refusal to maintain healthy body weight for height, body type, age, and activity level
- Intense fear of gaining weight or being “fat”
- Feeling overweight despite dramatic weight loss
- Extreme concern with body weight and shape

Bulimia Nervosa is characterized by a cycle of bingeing large quantities of food followed by purging through vomiting, laxative or diuretic abuse, or over-exercising. Some signs & symptoms include:

- Repeated episodes of bingeing and purging
- Frequent and excessive dieting
- Use of self-induced vomiting, laxatives, diet pills, diuretics, exercise, or fasting to purge
- Extreme concern with body weight and shape

Binge Eating Disorder is characterized by feeling “out of control” while consuming large quantities of food without the regular use of compensatory behavior (i.e., vomiting, laxative use).

Other Eating Disorders can include a combination of the signs and symptoms of anorexia, bulimia, and/or binge eating disorder. While these behaviors may not be clinically diagnosable, they can still be physically dangerous and emotionally draining.



Is Treatment Available?

Eating disorders are typically best treated from a multidisciplinary team approach in order to address all of the complex and challenging aspects of the disorder.

Therapy can help a person explore the origins of the disorder in addition to establishing skills to help reduce the symptoms. Therapy can also help a person address other disorders that are typically associated with eating disorders including depression, anxiety, and relationship issues.

Group therapy can be helpful in not only understanding the disorder and reducing symptoms but connecting to others who are in various stages of recovery. The MU Counseling Center typically offers an Eating Issues therapy group.

Medical attention is encouraged given the complicated range of physical concerns that can arise with eating disorders. Medication can also be helpful in assisting to reduce the symptoms associated with eating disorders. Student Health Center can provide both medical and medication evaluations.

Nutrition counseling can provide dietary education and help create meal and exercise plans that fit each person’s unique concerns and lifestyle. Both Student Health Center and Wellness Resource Center offer nutritional services.