

What is an Eating Disorder?

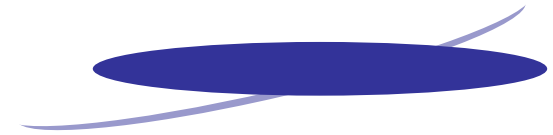
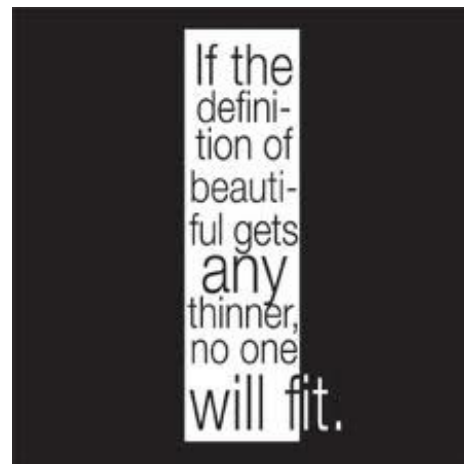
When most people hear of someone with an eating disorder they assume that the person has a problem with food. That is not the case, eating disorders are rather a symptom of an underlying problem in that persons life.

Here are the types of eating disorders:

- Anorexia Nervosa: Characterized as a significant weight loss resulting from excessive dieting.
- Compulsive Eating: Characterized by uncontrollable eating and consequent weight gain
- Bulimia Nervosa: Characterized by a cycle of binge eating followed by purging to try and rid the body of unwanted calories
- Binge Eating Disorder: Characterized by consuming large quantities of food in a very short period of time until the individual is uncomfortably full.

Find a Therapist That:

- You feel comfortable with
- Does not act too 'professional'
- Treats you as an equal.
- Is willing to listen to your ideas.
- Is willing to include important people in your life.
- Believes what you tell them.
- Will not force you to talk about things you are not comfortable with.
- Can be available during a crisis or emergency situation.
- Will teach you new and healthier ways to cope
- Most importantly, will encourage and support you during your recovery.



Eating



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24 Hour Crisis Line
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1-800-611-6349

Getting Help

One of the hardest things to do is admitting and accepting that you have an eating disorder. The next hardest thing to do is reaching out and asking for help. Many of us feel that since this is our problem, that we should deal with it on our own. People with eating disorders are very independent and are not used to sharing their feelings with anyone, especially not a therapist. They may feel too ashamed or embarrassed to reveal to someone what they are doing. Please know that there is no shame in having an eating disorder. I tried for many years to keep this a secret and I tried to stop on my own. It did not work. This problem is too big to correct on your own and you need the help of qualified individuals.

Having a good support system will make your fight towards freedom a little easier and you will know that you are not alone. Your treatment should probably include **individual**, **family** and **group** therapy, **support groups**, and **nutritional**, in some cases **medications** and sometimes there is a need for **hospitalization**.



Myths and Realities of Eating Disorders

MYTH

Only teenage girls suffer from eating disorders.

REALITY

Many eating disorders do begin in the teenage years, but children, men, older women and just about anyone can fall victim to this terrible disorder.

MYTH

You can never fully recover from an eating disorder.

REALITY

Recovery takes a long time, but with hard work and the proper treatment, you can fully recover from your eating disorder.

MYTH

Eating disorders are solely a problem with food.

REALITY

With all eating disorders, weight is the focus of life. By focusing on food, weight and calories, a person is able to block out or numb painful feelings and emotions. Some use of food as a way to comfort themselves. Eating disorders are NOT a problem with food. They are in fact only a symptom of underlying problems.

MYTH

You can always tell someone is anorexic by their appearance.

REALITY

Not all anorexics look like the extreme cases shown on talk shows, etc. Some anorexics may be anywhere from 5 to 15 lbs. underweight. They look thin, but they do not have what society considers to be the "anorexic" look. Just because someone does not look emaciated, does not mean they are not anorexic or that their health is not in danger..

MYTH

People with eating disorders do this to hurt their family and friends.

REALITY

People with eating disorders are doing this to themselves. They are usually very upset when they know the people around them are worried or hurt by their eating disorder.

MYTH

People cannot have more than one eating disorder.

REALITY

Many people have more than one eating disorder. It is very common for someone to suffer with more than one eating disorder. That just proves that the eating behaviors are only the symptom, not the problem.

MYTH

Compulsive eating is not an eating disorder.

REALITY

It is very much an eating disorder and is just as serious as anorexia and bulimia