



Myth Busters about Eating Disorders

(Source: National Institute of Mental Health, unless otherwise noted)

- There are **four** types of Eating Disorders: **Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Binge Eating Disorder, and Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (EDNOS)**
- **25 million** Americans are struggling with an eating disorder. (Source: National Eating Disorders Association, Binge Eating Disorder Association)
- **7 million** of those struggling with eating disorders are **males. Male eating disorders often go undiagnosed.** (Source National Association for Males with Eating Disorders)
- **More people die from eating disorders** than from any other psychiatric illness
- **Suicide** leads to up to **50% of the deaths** of those with Anorexia. (Source: University of Maryland Medical Center)
- **More women struggle with eating disorders than with breast cancer.** (Source: 2010 National Cancer Institute, SEER, National Eating Disorders Association, Binge Eating Disorder Association)
- Eating disorders are **complex illnesses**, and successful treatment often requires the dedicated efforts of a team of professionals (psychologists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, nutritionists). **It's of paramount importance that you act early when your child shows signs of an eating disorder. Early intervention is key to a full recovery.** (Source: HELP YOUR TEENAGER BEAT AN EATING DISORDER by James Lock, MD, Ph.D. and Daniel Le Grange, Ph.D., p.132-33)
- Eating disorders frequently **co-exist with other psychiatric disorders such as depression, substance abuse, OCD, PTSD, ADHD or anxiety disorders.**
- **People with anorexia are up to ten times more likely to die as a result of their illness.** The most common complications that lead to death are **cardiac arrest, electrolyte imbalances and suicide.**
- **Rates of dieting among adolescent girls are estimated at 60 and 70 percent, as reported by a 2006 study by Drs. James D. Lock and Daniel Le Grange.** (Source: HELP YOUR TEENAGER BEAT AN EATING DISORDER by James Lock, MD, Ph.D. and Daniel Le Grange, Ph.D., p.132-33)
- **35% - 40% of dieters will develop an eating disorder.**
- **At least one-fourth of all U.S. teenage girls are suffering from self-mutilation, eating disorders, significant depression or serious consideration of suicide – or are perpetrating acts of physical violence.** (Source: THE TRIPLE BIND, Dr. Stephen Hinshaw, Ph.D.)
- Between 2003 and 2004, the **number of girls ages ten to fourteen who killed themselves rose by 76%.** Among the reasons for the sudden rise, experts from the Centers for Disease Control noted the **huge pressures** endured by girls in young adolescence. (Source: THE TRIPLE BIND, Dr. Stephen Hinshaw, Ph.D.)
- Up to **360,000 students nationwide – more than 70% of whom are female – exhibit self-injurious behavior.** (Source: Richard Lieberman, National Association of School Psychologists)
- **Eating disorders are increasing among diverse ethnic and sociocultural communities**, despite the erroneous beliefs that this only affects Caucasian teens.
- Up to **70% of obese individuals are struggling from Binge Eating Disorder.** (Source: Binge Eating Disorder Association)
- **Dieting and exercise are not the best treatment interventions** for those with binge eating disorder, as these are the gateway behaviors for other types of eating disorders. (Source: Craig Johnson, Ph.D., FAED, CEDS, Clinical Director, Eating Recovery Center)
- **Effective treatment for Binge Eating Disorder is similar to Bulimia.**
- Similar to addictions, eating disorders are coping mechanisms that individuals have created to manage difficult experiences or feelings. This is why it is **important NOT to focus on the eating disorder, but the feelings that are driving the behavior.**
- One of the **main causes of relapse** for people with eating disorders is un-acknowledged, un-treated or **under-treated trauma.** (Source: Kim Dennis, M.D., Medical Director, Timberline Knolls)



GET THE CONVERSATION STARTED -- WHAT TO SAY TO A FRIEND (courtesy of NEDA)

- Set a time to talk. Set aside a time for a private, respectful meeting with your friend to discuss your concerns openly and honestly in a caring, supportive way. Make sure you will be away from other distractions.
- Communicate your concerns. Share your memories of specific times when you felt concerned about your friend's eating or exercise behaviors. Explain that you think these things may indicate that there could be a problem that needs professional attention.
- Ask your friend to explore these concerns with a counselor, doctor, nutritionist, or other health professional who is knowledgeable about eating issues. If you feel comfortable doing so, offer to help your friend make an appointment or accompany your friend on their first visit.
- Avoid conflicts or a battle of the wills with your friend. If your friend refuses to acknowledge that there is a problem, or any reason for you to be concerned, restate your feelings and the reasons for them and leave yourself open and available as a supportive listener.
- Avoid placing shame, blame, or guilt on your friend regarding their actions or attitudes. Do not use accusatory "you" statements like, "You just need to eat." Or, "You are acting irresponsibly." Instead, use "I" statements. For example: "I'm concerned about you because you refuse to eat breakfast or lunch." Or, "It makes me afraid to hear you vomiting."
- Avoid giving simple solutions. For example, "If you'd just stop, then everything would be fine!"
- Express your continued support. Remind your friend that you care and want your friend to be healthy and happy.

RESOURCES: All eating disorders require professional help *and are curable if treatment begins early enough.*

- **Robyn Hussa** (NORMAL nonprofit) – www.normalinschools.org

EATING DISORDER SUPPORT AND INFORMATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- **AED** – Academy for Eating Disorders – www.aedweb.org
- **BEDA** – Binge Eating Disorder Association – www.bedaonline.com
- **IAEDP** – International Association of Eating Disorders Professionals – www.iaedp.com
- **NEDA** – National Eating Disorder Association – www.nationaleatingdisorders.org (1.800.931.2237)
- **NAMED** -- National Association for Males with Eating Disorders – www.namedinc.org
- **WE ARE THE REAL DEAL** – www.wearetherealdeal.com

OTHER SUPPORT AND INFORMATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- **AFSP** -- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention -- www.afsp.org
- **DBSA** -- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance -- www.ndmda.org
- **SAFE** -- Alternatives: Self Abuse Finally Ends -- www.selfinjury.com
- **ASHIC** -- American Self-Harm Information Clearinghouse -- www.selfinjury.org