



HELPING HANDS



Eating Disorders

(excerpts from Samhsa.gov, "eating disorders")

Eating disorders are disorders that involve extreme preoccupation, disturbing emotions, attitudes, and behaviors involving weight and food. Some common eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and bulimia. A common misconception is that individuals with eating disorders have a particular body type (e.g., individuals with anorexia nervosa are thin). However, eating disorders can affect anyone regardless of body size, race/ethnicity, gender, age, or socioeconomic status. Many factors contribute to the development of an eating disorder, such as genes, hormones, co-occurring mental health disorders (such as depression or anxiety disorders), social attitudes that promote very thin body types, and diet culture.

Anorexia Nervosa

Anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder in which people avoid or severely restrict food. People with this disorder have an intense fear of weight gain. They may diet, exercise excessively, or compulsively use other methods (e.g., laxatives or diuretics) to lose weight.

Signs and Symptoms of Anorexia Nervosa include:

- Having an intense fear of gaining weight
- Denying the seriousness of food restriction
- Feeling a strong desire to be in control
- Having a distorted sense of body image, and being very focused on body weight or shape



Binge-Eating Disorder

Binge eating disorder is when a person eats a much larger amount of food in a shorter period of time than they normally would. During binge eating, the person may feel a loss of control.

Signs & Symptoms of binge eating disorder:

- Eats large quantities of food in one sitting, often secretly
- Feels unable to control their eating behaviors
- Uses food as a coping mechanism in response to traumatic or stressful life events
- Feels shame, embarrassment, or guilt about their eating behaviors

Bulimia Nervosa

Bulimia Nervosa is an eating disorder in which a person binges on food and feels a loss of control over their eating. The person then uses methods to prevent weight gain, such as vomiting, excessive exercise, or using laxatives, diuretics, or diet pills.

Signs & Symptoms of Bulimia Nervosa:

People with bulimia often eat large amounts of food, usually in secret. People can feel a lack of control over their eating during these episodes. Eating and binging episodes may occur as often as several times a day for many months or longer.

Get Help for Eating Disorders

Eating disorders can be fatal due to various medical complications and the high risk of associated suicide. Treatment plans can include psychotherapy, medical care, nutrition counseling, or medications. Full recovery from an eating disorder is possible.

Learn [how to talk about mental health](#) to support a loved one who you think may be experiencing a mental health concern.

Resources



- [National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health: Eating Disorders](#)
- [Office on Women's Health: Eating Disorders](#)
- [Binge Eating Disorder Fact Sheet \(PDF | 89 KB\)](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health: Mental Health Minute \(1 minute, 17 seconds\)](#)
- [National Alliance for Eating Disorders](#)
- [National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders](#)

Your local EAP Representative is a good resource for information about Eating Disorders as well as other mental health and substance use issues. Please refer to the placard below for their contact information

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peers do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations; however, they are trained to get an idea of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peers will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that address the difficulty you were experiencing.

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Help is Available

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available.

Call or text [988](#) or chat [988lifeline.org](#).

To learn how to get support for mental health, drug, and alcohol issues, visit [FindSupport.gov](#).

To locate treatment facilities or providers, visit [FindTreatment.gov](#) or call SAMHSA's National Helpline at [800-662-HELP \(4357\)](#).