

Students with an Eating Disorder

Facts about eating disorders

Eating disorders are not necessarily about food, but food is the substance that people with eating disorders abuse. Eating disorders have both physical and psychological problematic attitudes and feelings about food, weight, and body shape, a disruption from eating behaviors and weight management, and intense anxiety about body weight and size.

Eating disorders usually refers to anorexia nervosa, and/or binge eating behavior.

- **Anorexia nervosa** is characterized by restricted eating, self-starvation, and excessive weight loss.
- **Bulimia nervosa** is characterized by recurrent episodes or overeating large amounts of food in a short period of time (the binge) followed by some form of purging.
- **Binge Eating Behavior** is characterized by recurrent episodes of binge eating that are not followed by inappropriate compensatory behaviors (purging) to prevent weight gain.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Select a time to talk to the student when you are not rushed and will not be interrupted.

In a direct and non punitive manner, indicate to the student all the specific observations that have aroused your concern.

Your responsibilities are not to diagnose or provide therapy but to develop a compassionate and forthright conversation that ultimately helps a student in trouble find understanding, support, and the proper therapeutic resources.

If the information that you receive is compelling, communicate to the student your tentative sense that he or she might have an eating disorder as well as your conviction that the matter clearly needs to be evaluated.

If you have any questions contact the Health Center (521-6219) or the Counseling and Testing Center at (521-6202).

AVOID

Conflicts or a battle of the wills with the student.

Placing shame, blame, or guilt on the student regarding his/her actions and attitudes.

Giving simple solutions. For example, "If you'd just stop, then everything would be fine!"

Do not intentionally or unintentionally become a student's therapist, savior, or victim.