

How to Help a Friend with an Eating Disorder

How to Help Someone with an Eating Disorder

- Listen with understanding
- Offer Support
- Don't invalidate their feelings
- Don't make them feel like they're 'crazy'
- Don't blame them
- Don't track their behaviors excessively
- Express your concerns

Questions?

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When we think of college demands, we usually think about classes, assignments, and grades. However, there are also social demands that are placed on students when they begin college. One of these demands relates to how we feel about our bodies. Our society has been flooded with dieting trends and body image ideals. These ideals, along with other college-related stressors, can lead to distorted body image and result in unhealthy eating behaviors.

Such behaviors can include severely restricting food intake, bingeing and purging, excessive exercising, and inappropriate use of diet aids. These behaviors can lead to health problems such as excessive weight loss, fatigue, loss of menstrual cycle, and hair/nail/skin problems. In severe cases, organ failure and even death can occur.

On the other hand, healthy eating habits are easy to develop. These include eating a variety of healthy foods, reducing but not eliminating certain foods, eating moderate portions, not skipping meals, making gradual changes, and not labeling foods as good or bad.

Indicators that you or someone you know may be at risk:

- Feeling guilty about what you eat
- Preferring to eat alone
- Using food for comfort
- Consuming large amounts of food in a brief time
- Using laxatives or diet pills each week
- Counting calories with every bite
- Inducing vomiting after eating
- Exercising excessively
- Weighing yourself several times a day
- Never being happy with the way your body looks

