

Reaching Out

To Someone Who May Have An Eating Disorder

Notes:

Do

- 1) Speak to the person privately and allow time to talk.
- 2) Tell the person you are very concerned about her or him.
- 3) Calmly tell the person all the specific observations that have aroused your concern.
- 4) Allow the person time to respond. Listen carefully and non-judgementally.
- 5) Keep the focus on problems (for example, withdrawing from others). If the information you receive suggests an eating disorder, share with the person that:
 - You think the person might have a problem with eating (or body image or weight management).
 - You are concerned about his or her health and well-being.
 - You are concerned that the matter needs to be evaluated by somebody who understands eating disorders.
- 6) Know about some of the resources in your school and your community to which students can be referred.
- 7) Tell a nurse, guidance counselor, teacher or coach immediately if the person has problems that scare you, for example, if the person is:
 - Bingeing and throwing up several times per day.
 - Passing out or complaining of chest pains.
 - Complaining of severe stomach ache and/or vomiting blood.
 - Suicidal.

Don't

- 1) Don't speak to someone else without first speaking privately to the person whom you suspect of having an eating disorder (unless the situation is an emergency).
- 2) Don't confront the person with a group of people, all of whom are firing concerns and accusations at the person.
- 3) Don't threaten or challenge the person.
- 4) Don't be judgemental. Don't tell the person what they're doing is "sick" or "crazy" or "stupid".
- 5) Don't give advice about weight loss or exercising or appearance.
- 6) Don't diagnose.
- 7) Don't get into an argument or a battle of wills.
 - Calmly repeat your evidence, your concern, and your strong belief that they need to have the problem evaluated.
 - End the conversation if it is going nowhere or if either of you becomes too upset.
- 8) Don't promise to keep what you have observed a secret.
- 9) Don't try to keep track of what the person is eating or try to force the person to eat or not to eat.
- 10) Don't let the person monopolize your time and energy.



Sindecuse
Health Center

Western Michigan University

for a Healthy Community

(269) 387-3287

www.sindecuse.com

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Eating Disorder Treatment



What
You
Need
to
Know

Treatment options
Helpful resources
Services at WMU

Sindecuse Health Center

Eating Disorders

When your relationship with food and obsession with thinness interferes significantly with your life, you may be suffering from an eating disorder. Eating disorders involve destructive patterns of restrictive dieting, excessive eating, purging, exercising and bingeing that lead to serious physical and psychological consequences. Feelings of shame, worthlessness and isolation are commonly associated with these disorders.

Overcoming an eating disorder can be a long and difficult process. Recovery is possible, especially when an eating disorder is identified early and treated with the help of a team of professionals. Support from close friends and family may be helpful along with treatment.



Treatment At WMU

Professional help and commitment to recovery are keys to success.

WMU has a team of caring and capable professionals waiting to help you. This team coordinates the delivery of prevention, assessment, treatment and referral services for students struggling with anorexia and bulimia or a preoccupation with body image as well as patterns of eating that diminish physical, academic, psychological and personal development.

All program components listed in this brochure are available to students through self-referral depending on space available.

Helpful Resources

The Health Resource Center, an information and lending library, is located in the Office of Health Promotion and Education at Sindecuse Health Center. Self-help brochures, books, pamphlets, CDs and videos are available to borrow or purchase at the Resource Center. To view a list of these resources, visit the Health Promotion department on the web at www.wmich.edu/shc/.

Call 387-3263 for more information.

Personal Services

Medical Evaluation & Treatment 387-3290
Sindecuse Health Center

Eating disorders may create a variety of serious medical conditions, including body mineral imbalances, ulceration of the stomach, dental decay, menstrual irregularities and nutritional deficiencies. An assessment for medical conditions that accompany eating disorders includes a complete physical examination and blood tests. Some eating disorders are treated with medication along with counseling and monitoring physical progress. A clinician may also refer a student for psychiatric consultation or other medical issues as needed. This service is provided for a minimal fee.

Nutrition Assessment/Counseling 387-3263
Sindecuse Health Center

Individual nutrition assessment and counseling with a Registered Dietitian is available for students with eating disorders. Sessions are focused on developing and implementing a realistic food and activity plan that can help attain and/or maintain physical and emotional well being. This service is provided for a minimal fee.

Individual Psychotherapy 387-1850
University Counseling & Testing Center
Located in the Faunce Student Center

Individual therapy sessions are offered for students who are struggling with an eating disorder. Individual therapy focuses on clarifying, assessing and working through psychological difficulties regarding eating concerns and body image. Therapists at the Counseling Center are licensed psychologists, counselors and supervised graduate students and interns. Counseling Center services are provided at no charge on a time-available basis.

Group therapy sessions for bulimics also may be offered periodically. Call the Counseling & Testing Center for more information.