

Introduction

Few people are completely happy with their bodies or body shape. We are constantly being urged by the media to believe that being slim equals beautiful. We also may believe that if we are slim then we will in turn be happy with ourselves and with our lives, that we may be more confident and popular.

For some people the relationship with food can begin to dominate their day-to-day lives, planning what to eat, how to avoid eating or how to rid themselves of what they have already eaten. Eating disorders are often a sign of unhappiness or as a result of personal trauma and eating or not eating is often used to block out painful feelings.

There are 3 main Eating Disorders

- **Anorexia Nervosa:** People who suffer from this disorder restrict the amount of food they eat or drink. It is important to remember that this is usually an attempt to cope with life and not an attempt to starve to death.
- **Bulimia Nervosa:** People who suffer from bulimia often eat large quantities of food at one time then try and rid themselves of the food or prevent gaining weight from the over-eating. This may involve e.g. vomiting or taking lots of exercise.
- **Binge Eating:** People who “binge” eat, eat large quantities of food and do not attempt to purge themselves.

Signs:

- Over eating/not eating
- Weight gain/loss of weight/fluctuation of weight
- Secrecy around food/eating
- Going to visit the bathroom after eating

How to Help Yourself:

- Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling
- Talk to your GP about getting professional help
- Stick to a healthy eating plan
- Be good to yourself – take time out each day to relax
- Think positively about yourself
- Pay yourself compliments
- Stay away from scales
- Wear clothes that make you feel comfortable and good
- Make sure you get enough sleep
- Keep a diary about how you are feeling and things that make you feel good as well as triggers for feeling bad

How to Help Someone Who Has an Eating Disorder:

- Listen to the person and let them talk about how they are feeling
- Help the person find suitable specialist help if necessary
- Educate yourself about eating disorders
- Help the person make an eating plan and support them with it
- Stay positive about the person and their recovery

Useful Contacts:

b-eat

Advice, information and support

Helpline: 0845 634 1414

Youthline: 0845 634 7650

Email: help@b-eat.co.uk

www.b-eat.co.uk

NHS

Information and service directory

www.nhs.co.uk

Search: Eating Disorders



Penumbra is a leading Scottish voluntary organisation working in the field of mental health. We provide an extensive range of person-centred support services for adults and young people.

We also campaign to raise awareness of mental health issues and reduce the social stigma attached to them.

If you would like more information or have any further questions about any other Penumbra services please contact:

Penumbra, Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY

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