A Resident Advisor’s Guide
to Helping Students who may be struggling with

Eating Disorders

Approaching a Resident

**DO**
- Keep your eyes out for excessive exercise (2 or more times daily or for 2 hours or more)
- Refer to one of the professionals listed above (in a private setting)
- Express your concerns by “starting the conversation” (see below) and bringing up difficult topics such as this on a one-on-one basis
- Ask the resident questions about their life in order to open up conversation
- Research eating disorders and spend time educating yourself about the risks and consequences
- Suggest books, websites, or other resources in a gentle way
- Ask what they need from you
- Let them know you care
- Focus on their feelings
- Consider calling and consulting with staff in the Counseling Center about your concerns
- Talk with your hall director about best options for responding

**DON’T**
- Make comments about why they are not eating
- Make comments concerning their weight
- Bring the issue up in front of others or in a group setting
- Give any advice about how much they should eat, what they should weigh, etc. - You’re not the professional!
- Assume only women are affected
- Assume that just because people are at a healthy weight means they don’t struggle
- Overwhelm them with questions
- Try to specifically diagnose or label the individual
- Place blame or guilt on them in any way
- Allow yourself to become frustrated if the person denies that he or she have a problem or are not ready to change
- Argue with them about whether or not they have a problem
About Disordered Eating

M: You have to be underweight to have a disorder
F: “Many individuals with severe disorders including Bulimia and Binge Eating Disorder can be underweight, normal weight, overweight or obese and often fluctuate in weight. Even athletes who appear to be incredibly fit might be struggling with an eating disorder. You cannot define someone’s health by how much they weigh and you cannot determine whether they have an eating disorder just by looking at them.” (The Centre for Eating Disorders, Baltimore Maryland)

M: Only females deal with these illnesses
F: 1 out of every 10 people with an eating disorder are male. (The Centre for Eating Disorders, Baltimore Maryland)

M: People with eating disorders are vain or full of themselves and choose to have the disorder.
F: “People do not choose to have eating disorders. They develop over time and require appropriate treatment to address the complex medical/psychiatric symptoms and underlying issues.” (The Alliance for Eating Disorder Awareness)

M: Eating disorders aren’t that dangerous
F: Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate for all mental illnesses- a rate that is almost 12 times higher for those with an eating disorders compared to those without one. These disorders are also the third most common chronic illness among adolescents. Anywhere from 5-20% of people with these disorders die from them (National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders).

M: Only white/middle class people have these diseases
F: The prevalence of eating disorders among Hispanics, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Caucasians is similar in the US. The only exception is an increase in Anorexia Nervosa, specifically, in Caucasians. (National Eating Disorder Association)

M: You can only have one type of eating disorder
F: Many who suffer from these diseases have more than one disorder or a joint disorder such as Anorexia, Binge-Purge Type.
M: You can never work out too much
F: Excessive exercise can be very unhealthy causing problems such as dehydration, fatigue, injuries such as shin splints, cartilage damage and stress fractures, Osteoporosis, Amenorrhea, heart problems and Arthritis.
Resources
BGSU Counseling Center
419-372-2081
River Centre Clinic
419-885-8800
river-centre.org
Behavioral Connections
419-352-5387

Counselors in Bowling Green

Maggie A. Allard
419-777-3058
Mighty Oak Christian Counseling
419-299-4960
Allies in Mental Health
419-354-2464
Psychological Resources
419-475-2535

Helplines
National Eating Disorder Association
1-800-931-2237
National Eating Disorder Information Centre
1-866-633-4220
The Link Crisis Hotline
419-352-1545

Books to Recommend
Don’t Diet, Live It Workbook
Intuitive Eating
Life Without ED
Made to Crave
The Gifts of Imperfection
Goodbye ED, Hello Me
The Beauty Myth
FED UP: College Students and Eating Problems

BGSU’s “START THE CONVERSATION” Initiative

This initiative is all about creating a “community of care” and reaching out to fellow falcons who we see struggling. The four main steps are to:

• Recognize Distress
• Start the Conversation
• Understand concern
• Provide Support

To see these steps explained in more detail, follow the link below.

[CLICK HERE]

Contact the BGSU counseling center for a listing of upcoming training sessions.

Websites
www.proud2bme.org
www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
www.eatingdisordersanonymous.org
www.namiwoodcounty.org
### Bulletin Board Ideas
Resident Advisors can create to raise awareness

- Use inspiring Pinterest pictures, quotes that incorporate healthy living and body acceptance
- Information about proper nutrition or myths and facts surrounding nutrition
- Post a list of books that promote positive body image along with chart and graphs related to eating disorders

### Warning Signs

- Avoiding social situations where food is present
- Withdrawal from usual friends/activities
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Preoccupation with food
- Excessive and rigid exercise routine despite being sick, tired, injured
- Refusal to eat certain foods or food groups (i.e. No carbs allowed)
- Denial of hunger
- Use of laxatives, water pills or diet pills
- Always wearing baggy clothing

*These signs MIGHT be indicative of body image concerns or an eating disorder*

### Assessment tests to determine if someone has a disorder
(All can be done online at no cost)

- Eating Attitudes Test
- Eating Disorder Quality of Life Scale
- Eating Disorders and Emotional Eating Test
- Eating Disorder Quality of Life Scale
- Eating Disorders and Emotional Eating Test

### Click title to watch video

- **Eye Opening Statistics About Body Image**
- **Eating Disorders on Campus: Emma Williams Tells Her Story**
- **From Diet to Disorder - How a Diet can Progress to an Eating Disorder**
- **EDNOS: Most Dangerous, Unheard of Eating**

### Ways to advocate for those who struggle

**Educate yourself**
(neda.org)

- Host a Proud2Bme event
(proud2bme.org)

- Start an EDA (Eating Disorders Anonymous) group on campus
(eatingdisordersanonymous.org)
Sources


