

counselling

How do I recognize the signs of an eating disorder?

Do you know how to recognize symptoms of an eating disorder? While some symptoms are obvious, some are simply exaggerations of healthy behaviors taken too far.

One obvious symptom of an eating disorder is weight loss or weight fluctuation; however, this does not apply to everyone. Someone struggling with Bulimia or Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (EDNOS) may not experience much weight loss, may be over weight due to bingeing and purging, or they do not lose weight rapidly or drastically. The stereotype that someone must be severely underweight or losing rapidly to have an eating disorder is misleading. More than half of the clients I work with in therapy do not fit this criterion. Other clues to an eating disorder include obsessive or excessive exercise regimes, bingeing and/or purging, caloric restriction, picky eating, misuse of laxatives or diet pills.

Some healthy behaviors can become unhealthy if taken to an extreme. For example, if individuals know the calories and nutrition information of every meal they may be experiencing success on a diet program. However, sometimes an obsession with caloric counts and nutritional information can be a signal that someone is struggling with an eating disorder. The focus on food is often replacing looking at deeper underlying psychological and emotional issues.



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