

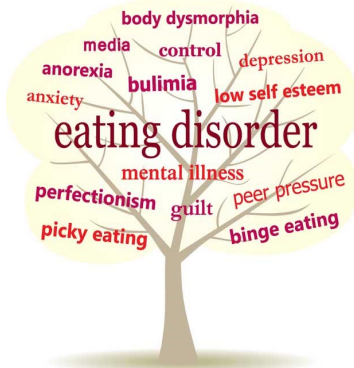


MONTHLY MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

Presented by the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office Mental Health Task Force

In this Issue:

Eating Disorders



WHAT ARE EATING DISORDERS?.

Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Binge Eating Disorder and their variants, all feature serious disturbances in eating behavior and weight regulation.

← *They are associated with a wide range of adverse psychological, physical, and social consequences.*

A person with an eating disorder may start out just eating smaller or larger amounts of food, but at some point, their urge to eat less or more spirals out of control. Eating disorders are real, treatable serious medical illnesses.

Anorexia Nervosa

People with this disorder see themselves as over-weight no matter how underweight they may be. They have a distorted body image and an intense fear of gaining weight.

Sometimes they may binge eat and then follow up with extreme fasting, self induced vomiting and excessive exercise. They will misuse diuretics, laxatives and enemas.

Besides the obvious visual signs other medical complications may develop such as but not limited to the following:

- Thinning of the bones
- Brittle hair and nails
- Dry and yellowish skin
- Anemia and muscle wasting
- Severe constipation
- Heart and Brain Damage
- Multi-Organ Failure
- Infertility

Bulimia Nervosa

People with this disorder will have frequent episodes of eating unusually large amounts of food and feel helpless in doing so. This behavior is followed by forced vomiting, excessive exercising, abuse of diuretics, laxatives, and fasting. These persons will often wear heavy layers of clothing while over exercising placing them at risk of collapsing due to over heating and dehydration.

These behaviors are usually done secretly and create feelings of shame and guilt. It can happen several times a day or week.

Symptoms may include:

- Chronic throat inflammation
- Swollen Salivary Glands in neck and jaw area.
- Decaying teeth
- Acid Reflux
- Intestinal distress
- Severe dehydration
- Electrolyte imbalance leading to heart attack or stroke

Binge Eating Disorder episodes are not followed by purging, fasting or exercise and lead to morbid obesity.

Treatment may include:

- Individual, Group, or Family Psychotherapy
- Medical care and monitoring
- Nutritional counseling
- Medications such as anti-depressants and others
- Some patients require prolonged Hospitalization

REFERENCES

The G.C.S.O. Mental Health Tasks Force encourages you to utilize sources such as the *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)* to learn more about this and other important mental health topics. www.samhsa.gov

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/eating-disorders>

<https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions/Eating-Disorders>