

Let's Talk About Eating Disorders

The way we talk about eating disorders matters. Here are some facts you can use to help shape the conversation around eating disorders.



“Eating disorders are medical illnesses.”

Genetic and environmental factors can influence eating disorders. An eating disorder is not a trend or a choice.



“Eating disorders are serious and can be fatal.”

Eating disorders often involve serious medical complications that can cause permanent damage or death. People with eating disorders also have an increased risk of dying by suicide.



“Eating disorders can affect anyone.”

Eating disorders do not discriminate. They affect people of all ages, races and ethnicities, and genders.



“You can't tell if someone has an eating disorder by looking at them.”

People with eating disorders can be underweight, normal weight, or overweight.



“Family members can be a patient's best ally in treatment.”

Eating disorders are caused by a combination of genetic, biological, behavioral, psychological, and social factors. Family members do not cause eating disorders and can be great sources of support.



“It is possible to recover from an eating disorder.”

Complete recovery is possible with treatment and time.



National Institute
of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov/eatingdisorders

NIMH Identifier No. OM 20-4317