

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS OF AN EATING DISORDER?

- Preoccupation with weight, food, calories, dieting, and/or body image.
- Development of abnormal, secretive, extreme, or ritualized food or eating habits.
- Withdrawal from usual friends and activities.
- Evidence of binge eating, such as the disappearance of a large amount of food.
- Evidence of purging behaviors, including frequent trips to the bathroom after meals, self-induced vomiting, periods of fasting, or laxative, diet pill or diuretic abuse.
- Compulsive or excessive exercising.
- Discoloration or staining of the teeth.
- Feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety, or irritability.

While the signs listed may indicate an eating disorder, they are not all-inclusive. If you are concerned about someone, but they are not demonstrating these warning signs, speak with them or seek professional guidance.

RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE.

HELP IS AVAILABLE.

For information, resources, and to get involved, visit:
www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

CONTACT HELPLINE

Call or chat for resources and treatment options.

 **800-931-2237**

 nationaleatingdisorders.org/helplinechat

 info@nationaleatingdisorders.org

 text 'NEDA' to **741-741** for 24/7 crisis support

EATING DISORDERS IN THE WORKPLACE

**NATIONAL EATING
DISORDERS ASSOCIATION**
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New York, NY 10036
212-575-6200



WHAT ARE EATING DISORDERS?

Eating disorders are real, complex, bio-psycho-social diseases—**they are not fads, phases, or lifestyle choices.**

Eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and other specified feeding or eating disorder, are **typically marked by an obsession with food, body image, and/or weight.**

These disorders can become life-threatening and **the earlier a person seeks treatment, the greater the likelihood of full recovery.**

HOW CAN EATING DISORDERS AFFECT THE WORKPLACE?

- Eating disorders can affect anyone. High-performing, dedicated employees may struggle with disordered eating and poor body image, impairing otherwise excellent performance and leading to lost productivity.
- Supporting a loved one struggling with an eating disorder can be emotionally and mentally demanding. Flexibility at the workplace can allow employees to maintain balance in their lives while helping their loved one to recover.
- Poor nutrition and coexisting mental disorders can impact all aspects of a person's life, both personally and professionally.

WHAT ABOUT WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMS?

- Workplace wellness programs that promote mental and physical health can be beneficial as long as the focus is not on weight or weight loss.
- Avoid any programs that call for competition and weigh-ins.
- Programs involving exercise and nutrition should be strictly voluntary. Weight loss and weight management programs should not be a part of workplace wellness programs because of the risk they pose for development and maintenance of eating disorders.
- If you are concerned about a workplace wellness program's potentially harmful effects, share your concerns with your HR department.

HOW CAN HR PROFESSIONALS HELP AN EMPLOYEE WITH AN EATING DISORDER?

- Keep resources—such as NEDA brochures and information on company health plan benefits—readily available for all employees.
- Make sure that company-sponsored health benefits provide adequate mental health coverage.
- Consult resources about the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodations, and compliance.
- Contact NEDA or local nonprofit organizations for more information on local resources, and keep a list of local providers available for your employees.

HOW CAN YOU HELP A COWORKER WITH AN EATING DISORDER?

- If you are concerned about someone at work, whether you approach them directly or go through human resources channels will depend on the nature of your relationship to that person.
- Everyone has a right to privacy and confidentiality. Concern for others should only be expressed to a human resources staff member or to the person directly, never to other colleagues.
- If someone at work chooses to disclose their eating disorder to you: listen openly, avoid providing simple solutions (e.g. "just eat"), encourage them to speak with a professional, and suggest that they connect with the HR department to learn more about benefits and assistance.

In any situation, make sure to review your company's human resources policies.