

## Ways to Improve Your Child's Self-Esteem

1. Teach your child that there is more to a person than the physique. It is what's on the inside that truly counts.
2. Avoid negative statements and teasing about weight, body shape and size.
3. Teach your child that there are no "good" or "bad" foods. All foods are great in moderation.
4. Encourage physical activities for fun and join them. (i.e. bike ride, nature walk, etc.)
5. Model and encourage healthy eating in front of your child (i.e. not dieting).
6. Do not use food as a reward or a positive reinforcement.
7. Educate yourself about recognizing the warning signs of an eating disorder.
8. Compliment your child on their talents, accomplishments, intelligence, and values.
9. As a parent, it is up to you to be a healthy role model. Children are easily influenced. If they constantly hear you complain about your weight or need to diet, they will learn similar behaviors.
10. Do not force your child to eat or not eat. Do not engage in power struggles.
11. Never hold your child back from activities because of the type of clothes needed (i.e. bathing suit).
12. Make your meal times pleasant experiences.
13. Teach your child to listen to their own hunger. Encourage eating when they are hungry and stopping when they are full.
14. Always make sure that there is open line of communication between you and your child.
15. Teach your child to love themselves for who they are, as they are.

## Suggested Websites

**www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com**  
The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness

**www.nationaleatingdisorders.org**  
National Eating Disorders Association

**www.eatingdisorderscoalition.org**  
The Eating Disorders Coalition

**www.aedweb.org**  
Academy for Eating Disorders

**www.anad.org**  
National Association of Anorexia & Associated Disorders

**www.bedaonline.com**  
BEDA: Binge Eating Disorders Awareness

**www.eatingdisorderhope.com**  
Eating Disorder Hope

**www.edreferral.com**  
Eating Disorder Referral and Information Center

**www.something-fishy.com**  
The Something Fishy Website

\*\*The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness does not recommend or endorse any of the organizations/websites listed above.\*\*

## For More Information

### The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness

P.O. Box 2562  
West Palm Beach, FL 33402  
Phone: (866) 662-1235  
Fax: (561) 653-0043  
[www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com](http://www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com)  
[info@eatingdisorderinfo.org](mailto:info@eatingdisorderinfo.org)

## The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness

*help. support. recovery.*

# For Families and Loved Ones

Information for families and  
loved ones of those struggling  
with eating disorders

[www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com](http://www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com)  
(866) 662-1235

## Anorexia

**Anorexia Nervosa** is characterized by self induced starvation and excessive weight loss. Individuals that are battling Anorexia have an intense fear of weight gain or being “fat,” even though underweight, and encounter disturbance in the experience of body weight or shape.

## Bulimia

**Bulimia Nervosa** is a serious eating disorder that is characterized by bingeing and purging. Symptoms include: repeated episodes of bingeing and purging; eating beyond the point of fullness and feeling out of control during a binge; purging after a binge; frequent dieting; and extreme concern with body weight and shape.

## Binge Eating Disorder

**Binge Eating Disorder** is characterized by frequent episodes of bingeing (eating large quantities of food in a short amount of time) without the purging behavior of Bulimia. According to the Binge Eating Disorders Association, BED is a complex disorder with many symptoms, associated complications, causes and risk factors.

## EDNOS

**EDNOS**, or “Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified,” is a serious eating disorder that does not necessarily fall into the specific category of anorexia, binge eating, or bulimia. For more information about each of these disorders, please visit us online.

*www.allianceforeatingdisorders.com*  
(866) 662-1235

## Most Common Warning Signs

- Distorted Body Image
- Bingeing and purging
- Secretive eating; missing food
- Intense, dramatic mood swings
- Feelings of guilt after eating
- Visits to the bathroom after meals
- Tooth decay
- Disgust and shame after overeating
- Complaints of being cold
- A high need for control
- Absence of three consecutive menstrual cycles in post-menarcheal females
- Avoids eating in public or in front of others
- Swollen glands in neck & puffiness in cheeks
- Excessive and/or compulsive exercise regimes
- Hides food in anticipation of a binge
- Constant sore throat
- Feels like he/she has no control over food
- Hair loss, paleness, and dizziness
- Wearing loose or multiple layers of clothing
- Broken blood vessels in eyes
- Abuse of laxatives, diet pills and/or diuretics
- Poor self-esteem

## How to Help a Loved One

### Do

- Learn about eating disorders
- Find an appropriate time and place to talk to the individual in private
- Communicate your concerns
- Stress the importance of professional, specialized help
- Express your continued support

### Don't

- Don't be scared
- Don't engage in a power struggle and/or try to force the individual to eat
- Don't attempt to solve his/her problems
- Don't give any advice about calorie/food intake, weight, appearance, etc.
- Be available and don't expect to be perfect
- Don't promise to keep it a secret

## Tips for Loved Ones

Eating disorders not only affect the individual suffering, but those around them as well. Parents want so much to help their child, but oftentimes anything they say will be met with anger, frustration, denial, or just plain avoidance. **Do not deny a problem exists!**

So often, it's difficult to believe that a loved one is capable of hurting himself/herself by means of an eating disorder. If your loved one displays any/all of the common signs and symptoms, seek help immediately. Early intervention is important.

It is also important that you, the family and friends of someone going through an eating disorder, get help and support for yourselves. Please consider attending family therapy, and/or a family and friends support group. It is crucial that you maintain your physical and emotional health so you can be of help to your loved one when he/she needs you.

## Suggested Reading

**Bulimia: A Guide for Family and Friends**  
Roberta Trattner Sherman, PhD & Ron Thompson, PhD

**Life Beyond Your Eating Disorder**  
Johanna S. Kandel

**Life Without ED**  
Jenni Schaefer

**Parent's Guide to Eating Disorders**  
Marcia Herrin, EdD, RD & Nancy Matsumoto

**Surviving an Eating Disorder**  
Michelle Siegel, PhD, Judith Brisman, PhD  
& Margot Weinshel, PhD

**Talking to Eating Disorders**  
Jeanne Albronda Heaton PhD & Claudia J. Strauss

**Why She Feels Fat**  
Johanna McShane, PhD & Tony Paulson, PhD

\*\*The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness does not recommend or endorse any of the books or authors listed above.\*\*