



Constant Food & Weight-Related Concerns Could Signal An Eating Disorder

by Kelly Griffin

Eating disorders affect children, adolescents and adults of all ages. Both males and females suffer from them. In fact, in the United States alone, approximately 8 million people struggle to overcome eating disorders.

Lucene Wisniewski, PhD, FAED, clinical director of the Eating Disorders Program at Laurelwood Hospital explains that eating disorders are biologically based –there may be a genetic tendency for a person to develop one – although that doesn't necessarily mean that an eating disorder will occur. Social and environmental factors also have an effect on whether a person develops an eating disorder.

Dr. Wisniewski also explains that treatment for eating disorders differs, depending on whether an individual is a child or adolescent, or an adult. But before we talk about the latest eating disorders, treatment models and the recovery process, let's cover the main types of eating disorders and some of their symptoms and signs.

Dr. Wisniewski explains that eating disorders fall under three main categories: Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating Disorders.

With anorexia nervosa, there's often an intense fear of gaining weight, refusal or inability to maintain normal weight, restricting food intake, unusual eating habits or rituals, vigorous or compulsive exercise, and, for females who have reached the age of puberty, infrequent or abnormal menstrual periods. Some individuals with anorexia nervosa lose a significant amount of weight as well.

Someone who suffers from bulimia nervosa may experience episodes of out-of-control eating; shame regarding eating and intense fear of gaining weight; purging behavior such as vomiting, laxatives, fasting and intense exercise; hoarding or stealing food; and visiting the bathroom immediately after meals.

A person diagnosed with a Binge Eating Disorder may often eat until uncomfortably full, find him or herself ingesting large amounts of food when not hungry and feel disgusted, depressed or guilty about overeating. That person may often eat alone as well.

If you think that you or a family member might have an eating disorder, the best thing to do is schedule an appointment for a comprehensive assessment by an eating disorders specialist so the eating disorder may be properly diagnosed and treated.

Eating Disorders Treatment for Adults

Eating disorders specialists like Dr. Wisniewski, who is a fellow of the Academy for Eating Disorders, report that recent research shows that both cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) are effective in eating disorders treatment.

CBT and DBT therapeutic techniques used in Laurelwood Hospital's treatment programs help you learn how to recognize situations and behaviors that lead to eating disorder behaviors and to develop the skills to handle stressful situations and better cope with your feelings.

CBT and DBT, as used in Laurelwood's Eating Disorders Program, help you focus on recognizing what circumstances may trigger an inappropriate eating behavior and assist you in managing the situation and using an alternative behavior instead. For adults requiring treatment, here are some examples of how CBT and DBT help.

"If you have a fight with your partner and your immediate response is to binge eat, you can find other ways to manage the emotional feeling besides eating," explains Dr. Wisniewski. "If you look at a magazine full of thin women and it makes you feel bad about yourself, it might trigger you to restrict your intake of food. We find other ways to help you manage your feelings that are not necessarily going to get you into trouble – like, calling a friend, writing down your feelings and

Resources

Local:

Laurelwood Hospital 35900
Euclid Avenue, Willoughby
800-GET-HOPE (800-438-4673)
or 440-953-3000

National:

Academy for Eating Disorders:
www.acadeat.org

National Association of Anorexia and
Associated Disorders,
www.anad.org/site/anadweb

Eating Disorders Resources, Gurze
Books, www.gurze.com

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

The Alliance for Eating Disorders
Awareness,
www.eatingdisorderinfo.org

Girl Power! – Get Body Wise, www.girlpower.gov/girlarea/bodywise/index.htm

National Eating Disorders Association,
www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

Eating With Your Anorexic,
www.eatingwithyouranorexic.com

Book: Eating With Your Anorexic, by
Laura Collins (McGraw-Hill, 2005).

thoughts about the emotions."

Developing the skills to manage your behavior can be challenging, however; and you may need significant professional in-

Article Continues on Page 115 ▶

tervention, therapy and support. Patients in Laurelwood's Eating Disorders Partial Hospitalization Program that meets six hours a day, five days a week, and the Intensive Outpatient Program that meets three to four times a week for three hours, can count on additional support outside their treatment program.

"Laurelwood's Eating Disorders Program therapists offer telephone support so our patients can call us in the moment – patients are encouraged to call us *before* they engage in a behavior so we can help them find a better way to manage a situation. For example, a patient who is having trouble finishing dinner may call us to help her get through it," says Dr. Wisniewski. Each staff member carries a pager for a week at a time so she can be available when patients call and need extra support.

Adolescent Treatment Programming

Eating disorders treatment for adolescents is family-based treatment at Laurelwood Hospital. "It is based on the Maudsley approach and is heavily parent-oriented," explains Dr. Wisniewski. "It views parents as part of the solution for treating the eating disorder.

There are multifamily groups, multifamily meals and one-therapist-to-one family treatment meetings as well. This is a biologically-based illness that needs to be managed and you [parents] are part of the solution, not the problem."

The family-based approach allows patients and their parents to understand and incorporate new behaviors together, assisting in the adolescents' recovery process.

Eating disorders are highly treatable illnesses. The most critical advice shared by Dr. Wisniewski is this: "The minute that you suspect that you might have an eating disorder or that your child does is when you should ask for help." ■



THE FAIRWAYS
ASSISTED & STRUCTURED LIVING COMMUNITIES

- Spacious private suites
- Beautifully landscaped grounds
- Outdoor patios and courtyard
- Weekly housekeeping and linen service
- Recreational and social programs
- Respite care available
- Adult Day Care
- 24-hour access to professional staff
- Secured memory impaired unit
- On-site physical, occupational, and speech therapy
- Full range of medical services available

440-943-2050
30630 Ridge Road
Wickliffe, Ohio 44092
www.thefairwaysofwickliffe.com



Welcomes you to
Join our family operated
Pub & Grill
For great food, friends and drink!



"Largest Irish Whiskey selection in Lake County"
Open 7 days a week!
Happy Hour M - F 3:00-7:00



HOME OF THE IRISH TOAST

Located at:
36200 Euclid Avenue
Willoughby, Ohio 44094 Phone 440-946-2400
(West to Lake West Hospital in the True Value Plaza)
www.mickspub.com



Your Source for Quality
Machine Quilting...



Edge to Edge • Custom • Heirloom
Binding Service also Available!

www.longarmlegacies.com

I use the APQS Millennium  AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL QUILTING SYSTEMS



Diane Wantz
Mentor, Ohio • 440-255-0385