

EATING DISORDERS INTERVENTION

Interventions Canada understands that "Eating Disorders" are complex emotional and physical addictions that occur for individuals that have deep emotional disconnection, feel too much, and/or have undergone historic traumatic experiences. They usually start from childhood, escalate and progress into adolescence, and continue into the adult years.

Most studies show that ED begins with low self-esteem, anxiety, mood swings, peer pressure, mental health diagnoses, and social anxiety, history of sexual, mental, or physical abuse, and negative self-perception or body issues.

Eating disorders are not just about body weight and food suppression, they are mostly about the need to stay in control and manage internal emotional conflicts so that all problems seem to go away in the moment. This creates an external solution to end personal emotional turmoil.

The DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria, taken from The Alliance for Eating Disorders, states the following:

1. Restriction of energy intakes relative to requirement leading to a significantly low body weight in the context of age, sex, development trajectory, and physical health.
2. Intense fear of gaining weight or becoming fat, even though underweight.
3. Disturbance in the way in which one's body weight or shape is experienced, undue influence of body weight or shape on self-evaluation, or denial of the seriousness of the current low body weight.

Is Intervention for Disordered Eating Necessary?

Disordered Eating refers to a psychological illness, defined by abnormal eating habits that may involve either insufficient or excessive food intake, to the detriment of an individual's physical and mental health. Bulimia Nervosa and Anorexia Nervosa are the most common specific forms of eating disorders.

Types of Eating Disorders include:

Anorexia Nervosa:

- People with anorexia nervosa tend to be perfectionists who suffer from low self-esteem and are extremely critical of themselves and their bodies. They don't maintain a normal

weight because they refuse to eat enough, often exercise obsessively, and sometimes force themselves to vomit or use laxatives to lose weight.

Bulimia Nervosa:

- Insatiable overeating is a medical condition. In particular, it is an emotional disorder involving distortion of body image and an obsessive desire to lose weight. This typically involves bouts of extreme overeating, followed by depression and self-induced vomiting, purging, or fasting.

Compulsive Eating Disorder:

- Compulsive overeating can affect women or men. Because compulsive overeaters feel that they cannot control their intake of food, they are likely to describe themselves as lacking in willpower usually say that they are eating for comfort rather than for genuine physical need.

Binge Eating Disorder:

- People with binge eating disorder have an inability to stop eating once they start, using food in excess. When overeating feels out of control and becomes a regular occurrence, it crosses the line to binge-eating disorder. This is mostly related to emotional dysregulation.

Disordered Eating Interventions:

- Interventions for disordered eating are necessary due to the severity of the consequences to a person's life. These include physical problems; obsession with food intake, weight and appearance; and negative effects on relationships and daily activities.
- Without treatment, disordered eating can potentially cause death or escalation of physical and medical conditions. Treatment not only improves quality of life, it can save lives.

Intervention Canada has listed a questionnaire that may help you to move forward with reaching out for help:

1. Do you or someone you know have an eating disorder?
2. Do you feel ashamed of your body or feel guilty for eating food?
3. Are you remorseful the moment after you eat, or the next day?
4. Do you feel that your food intake and planning of meals, controls your life?
5. Are you always looking for the next diet or pill that will help you lose weight?
6. Do you avoid eating around other people?
7. Do you pretend that you are not hungry around other people?
8. Do you eat, and then immediately vomit in the bathroom?
9. Do you weigh yourself daily?
10. Do you exercise more than necessary?
11. Do you hide food, count calories, or count fat grams?
12. Do you mostly eat alone?

If you know someone today that is suffering from an Eating Disorder, many treatment programs specialize in providing treatment for the ED person and support for their families by providing them with education and community resources. We at Intervention Canada provide interventions for persons with ED as well as support for their families, to start on the path to recovery, to not be trapped in the shame of eating disorders, and to begin the journey to freedom.