

Understanding Disordered Eating

Eating Disorder vs. Disordered Eating

While all people with eating disorders experience disordered eating, not everyone who experiences disordered eating will experience an eating disorder. The difference between a diagnosed eating disorder and the term disordered eating is the extent to which the compulsive behaviour manifests itself within an individual. Those experiencing disordered eating may be more at risk for developing an eating disorder if they have a history of anxiety and/or depression.

Where can I get help?

- Kids Help Phone
- heretohelp.bc.ca
- jack.org
- cmha.ca
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/eating-disorders-teens-information-parents-caregivers.html>

Practitioners have noticed more recent increases in the number of patients attempting to access services for disordered eating, including in the number of younger children presenting with symptoms as well increases in illness severity. Recognizing signs and symptoms of disordered eating, encouraging conversations about body image, and encouraging eating meals together if possible may support healthier eating habits.

Provide reminders that “fat” is something that all people have on their bodies, not an emotion that someone can feel. Encourage self-analysis of what emotions and thoughts are being experienced when the word “fat” is used.

Provide information about eating disorders and disordered eating. Symptoms of disordered eating are common among young people, they do not discriminate, and they are not easily controlled. Understanding this may mitigate feelings of shame and stigma

Adults should be cautious of how they speak about their bodies in front of children and youth. Obsessing over body image issues may make children feel that they need to do the same.

Listen, validate, and engage with youth's concerns by encouraging them to talk about their struggles with body image or food.

Encourage habits of positive thinking and reducing stimuli that sustain the harmful practices, such as having continuous access to a scale.