

# Let's Talk About Eating Disorders

The way we talk about eating disorders matters. Here are some facts you can use to help shape the conversation around eating disorders.



## **“Eating disorders are medical illnesses.”**

Genetic and environmental factors can influence eating disorders. An eating disorder is not a trend or a choice.



## **“Eating disorders are serious and can be fatal.”**

Eating disorders often involve serious medical complications that can cause permanent damage or death. People with eating disorders also have an increased risk of dying by suicide.



## **“Eating disorders can affect anyone.”**

Eating disorders do not discriminate. They affect people of all ages, races and ethnicities, and genders.



## **“You can't tell if someone has an eating disorder by looking at them.”**

People with eating disorders can be underweight, normal weight, or overweight.



## **“Family members can be a patient's best ally in treatment.”**

Eating disorders are caused by a combination of genetic, biological, behavioral, psychological, and social factors. Family members do not cause eating disorders and can be great sources of support.



## **“It is possible to recover from an eating disorder.”**

Complete recovery is possible with treatment and time.



National Institute  
of Mental Health

[www.nimh.nih.gov/eatingdisorders](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/eatingdisorders)

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