



Fact or Myth: Get the Real Facts About Eating Disorders

ST. LOUIS, MO (OCTOBER 22, 2015)

The public understanding of eating disorders is riddled with myths. And those misconceptions are dangerous. Eating disorders are an unchecked epidemic, and 20 percent of those affected will die.

It is time to break the silence surrounding this health crisis and get the facts. The Missouri Eating Disorders Council (MOEDC) is committed to ending the stigma and myths surrounding eating disorders.

It's time to Get Real and Get Help.

Who is affected? Everyone.

- There are 30 million Americans suffering from an eating disorder, and more than half a million of those sufferers reside in Missouri.
- Anyone can develop an eating disorder, regardless of race, gender, age or socioeconomic class.
- About 90% of people affected are between the ages of 13 and 23.
- Boys are the fastest growing group affected by eating disorders.
- Women over 40 are developing this illness at an increasing rate.
- Women and girls develop an eating disorder with the intention of becoming thin, while men and boys tend to want to become muscular.
- Less than 10% of people receive treatment, within that group less than 35% will get specialized eating disorder treatment.
- Everyone knows someone with an eating disorder.

Associated Health Risks

- About 85% of those suffering from an eating disorder have a genetic predisposition for the illness.
- The medical conditions that accompany this illness can cause death.

- Purging and starvation will result in deregulation of the body's systems, which can cause heart failure.
- One of the side effects from purging is a lethal level of potassium deficiency.
- Eating disorder behaviors typically begin with seemingly healthy eating habits, such as counting calories, analyzing fat grams and only eating "healthy" foods.

An Illness. Not a Choice.

- Eating disorder behaviors quickly become addictive and reinforcing.
- Purging makes people feel calm and in control.
- Restricting food makes people feel focused and in control.
- Initial positive feedback when someone loses weight reinforces the cycle.
- The sufferer wants to keep it a secret.
- An eating disorder leads to isolation, so the afflicted can maintain its secrecy.
- They think they have it under control, but the eating disorder controls them — completely.

Get Real. Get Help.

- Eating disorders are secretive; the stigma keeps the illness in place.
- Openly talk about it like it's an illness.
- Educate others — parents, children, coaches, nurses, teachers, doctors, etc.
- Drive early intervention and endorse specialized treatment.
- If you are suffering, get evaluated by an Eating Disorder Treatment Specialist
- Take action now! The sooner you intervene, the easier the treatment and the higher likelihood of recovery.

About Missouri Eating Disorders Council

Missouri Eating Disorders Council (MOEDC), under the auspices of the Missouri Department of Mental Health and in collaboration with organizations and stakeholders, such as the Department of Health and Senior Services, Elementary and Secondary Education and Higher Education, provide eating disorders education, awareness and treatment provider training initiatives throughout the state. MOEDC promotes increased access to treatment throughout the state of Missouri and focuses

MEDIA CONTACT

Ann Higby • w. (314) 880-5579 • c. (312) 320-5047 • ahigby@stealthcreative.com

on evidence-based treatment that is supported by clinical practice guidelines (i.e., considering the relevant scientific literature, as well as the potential harms and benefits of treatment for each case).

The MOEDC provides information and support for the entire eating disorders spectrum, including anorexia nervosa (AN), bulimia nervosa (BN), binge eating disorder (BED), and atypical eating disorders called Other Feeding and Eating Disorders (OSFED). The major diagnostic categories included in DSM-5.

The MOEDC's goal is to employ fact based, best-in-class materials and strategic partnerships to bring focus and understanding to the serious, yet highly treatable, nature of this disease. For more information on the MOEDC, please contact Annie Seal at (314) 591-3341, send mail to P.O. Box 50071, St. Louis, MO. 63105 or visit moedc.org.