

# Eating Disorders: Ways To Help Yourself

This page includes suggestions to help yourself if you are not quite ready to see a counselor. Many of these suggestions are a lot harder to do than they sound, but that's the challenge. Challenge yourself to feel better about *you*!

**As this is meant to help those with eating disorders, it is NOT a substitute for therapy! Left untreated, eating disorders can become life-threatening. If you are concerned about your own or another's eating patterns, it is strongly recommended that you seek professional help.**

## **Talk to someone!**

Dealing with things alone is not a good way to get through tough times. Talk to a trusted friend or someone who will listen to how you feel. You don't necessarily have to talk about eating issues; talking about how you feel in general will reduce stress and tension in yourself, which may exacerbate your eating problem.

## **Write in a journal**

If you find it hard to talk to a friend, try keeping a journal of your day and how you are feeling. It is good to get things out, even on paper, and it can be very therapeutic. Many people with eating disorders have trouble expressing their feelings and writing in a journal is a good way to start to express yourself. In this way, you won't have to worry about what other people think and you won't have to divulge any secrets that you aren't ready to. Just make sure that you keep this in a safe place.

## **Keep a food journal**

Try keeping a food journal. Write down what you eat, when, and how you were feeling at the time. This might help you identify what emotions or situations cause you to over eat or restrict. Stressors and a feeling of a lack of control are often triggers to this kind of behavior. Once you are able to recognize what triggers more intense feelings about food and weight, you will be better equipped to deal with those feelings. For example, say you fail a test and your immediate reaction is to binge to make yourself feel better. Recognize that it is the "F" that is making you feel bad and try to find another way to make yourself feel better, such as talking to a friend about it or just crying to get it out.

## **Don't criticize yourself so much**

Don't beat yourself up about everything that you do. Realize that no one is perfect, including you, and accept that. Try to give yourself a little slack once in a while. If you don't do well on a test, study more or in a different way next time. Think about things in the bigger picture: Is it really going to matter that you got *one* "F" on *one* test in *one* class 4 years from now? I doubt it.

## **Be positive**

Try to recognize when you're having negative thoughts and try to stop them! Don't constantly degrade yourself, instead give yourself positive comments. For every negative thought, counter it with two positives. Remember that you *do* have worth and you *do* matter.

