

Mirror on the Wall

Studies show that 80 percent of American women are dissatisfied with their appearance. In fact, Americans spend more than \$40 billion on diet-related products each year. Meanwhile, a national obesity epidemic is in full swing with fully 65 percent of American adults overweight.

Eating disorders of all types—from Anorexia and Bulimia to binge eating and obesity—are on the rise among children, teens, women, men, and athletes. Because eating disorders are one of the few psychiatric disorders you can directly die from, it's critical to understand why your eating is disordered and take active steps for recovery.

While symptoms and behaviors may differ between specific disorders, they are all disorders of self-regulation. Even though an Anorexic individual may withhold food intake while an obese person may binge, both actions are unhealthy responses to emotional triggers and stresses.

When individuals don't have the skills to manage feelings like anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, or emotional pain, they can develop disordered eating as a way to cope.

Eating disorders are dangerous. Get help today.

Most health insurance policies cover the service of MFTs so long as the services are "medically necessary." This typically includes coverage for face-to-face sessions for a diagnosable mental health problem. Such coverage may be limited. Please contact your health insurance company for detailed information about the coverage available to you and your family.



California Association of
Marriage and Family Therapists

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WHEN IS EATING DISORDERED?

Recovery from Eating Disorders



Brought to you by the
California Association of
Marriage and Family Therapists



OFFERING EXTRA SUPPORT About Marriage and Family Therapists

Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) are relationship experts. They work with individuals, couples, families, children, adolescents, and the elderly, providing support and perspective as patients struggle with life's challenges.

Licensed by the State of California, MFTs are psychotherapists who are uniquely trained and credentialed to assess, diagnose, and treat a wide range of issues so individuals achieve more adequate, satisfying and productive relationships and social adjustment.

The California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) is an independent statewide non-profit organization made up of over 29,000 mental health professionals. CAMFT is dedicated to advancing marriage and family therapy as a healing art, science, and mental health profession. In fact, CAMFT sponsors TherapistFinder.com™ so Californians can gain access to qualified local experts who can help.



Seeking a Marriage and Family Therapist or other mental health professional to assist with life's difficulties is a sign of courage and a step in the right direction. Always ask about a therapist's special areas of expertise (e.g. grief counseling, children's issues, relationship counseling) before you engage in therapy to ensure it's the right fit for you.

TherapistFinder™ is a California-wide interactive, online directory that is user-friendly and searchable by name, location, and area of expertise. It's your introduction to one or more qualified psychotherapists who hold a California license.



TYPES OF EATING DISORDERS

- Anorexia Nervosa—Anorexics consider themselves fat no matter what their weight is. They are perfectionists and use food to gain control because they feel out of control. This disorder of excessive dieting will kill between 10 percent to 20 percent of sufferers. Symptoms include noticeable weight loss, excessive exercise, obsession with calories, and excuses for not eating meals.
- Bulimia Nervosa—Bulimics binge eat and then purge by vomiting or laxative abuse. They have low self-esteem or may not feel like they fit in. They use food as a source of comfort. Symptoms include: secretive eating, bathroom visits after eating, tooth decay, and substance abuse.
- Binge Eating Disorder—Binge eaters consume large quantities of food until they are uncomfortably full. While similar to Bulimia, binge eaters do not purge. During an episode, they feel out of control and shame or guilt afterwards. They use food as a way to block out feelings. Symptoms include: weight gain, low-self esteem, fluctuations in weight, or going on many diets.
- Compulsive Overeating—Compulsive overeating is characterized by uncontrollable eating and weight gain. This eating pattern usually starts in childhood as a way to block feelings instead of learning coping skills. Some use being overweight as a way to keep others at a distance. Symptoms: depression, binge eating, and withdrawal from activities because of embarrassment about being overweight.

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

- **Understand the feelings.** When your eating is disordered, something is going on inside you that you can't resolve. Learn what the mood or feeling is so you can focus on resolving it instead of resorting to destructive food behaviors.
- **Read up.** If you suspect you or someone you love has an eating disorder, educate yourself. Look for books or websites that offer a quick self-test of signs and symptoms.
- **Role model for children.** Talk about healthy eating and watch for cues in children and teens that their eating might be disordered. Offer children nutritional meals instead of empty calories. Teach them to eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full.
- **Commit to recovery.** Recovery from an eating disorder requires a high degree of commitment. It may involve medical supervision, a nutritionist, and family therapy in some cases.
- **Find the right therapist.** Look for therapists with training and experience in eating disorders as well as someone who is warm, supportive, and goal-oriented. Use short telephone interviews to shop for a good fit with potential therapists. Ask about availability, fees, if they accept your health insurance, and how they approach problems like yours.