



## EATING DISORDERS

An eating disorder can be described as the physical manifestation of emotional distress. Eating disorders are not solely about food but involve bigger issues. An eating disorder is a coping tool when life feels out of control as food is an area that we can take control of. There are a number of different types of eating disorder:

### **Anorexia Nervosa**

Many people with this illness see themselves as overweight even when they are dangerously underweight. Symptoms of A.N. include extremely restricted eating, extreme thinness, an unwillingness to maintain a healthy weight and a distorted body image.

### **Bulimia Nervosa**

People with this illness have recurrent and frequent episodes of eating unusually large amounts of food and feeling a lack of control over the episodes. The binge eating is followed by behaviours to compensate for the bingeing such as vomiting, use of laxatives or diuretics, fasting, excessive exercise, or a combination of these. Symptoms include an inflamed and sore throat, swollen glands in neck and jaw, acid reflux disorder, severe dehydration and more.

### **Binge Eating Disorder**

Diagnosed when people lose control over their eating. Unlike bulimia, the bingeing isn't counteracted by purging or fasting, and so sufferers often are overweight or obese. Symptoms include: eating when you're not hungry, eating fast during bingeing episodes and feeling distressed, ashamed or guilty about your eating.

For more information on the symptoms of these eating disorders, and more, visit the NHS website: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/eating-disorders](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/eating-disorders)

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Eating disorders have no one single cause. They may be associated with biological, genetic or environmental factors combined with a particular event that triggers the disorder.

Risk factors that increase the likelihood of a person having an eating disorder include:

- having a family history of eating disorders, depression or substance misuse
- being criticised for their eating habits, body shape or weight
- being overly concerned with being slim, combined with pressure to be slim from society or a job
- certain underlying characteristics like an obsessive personality, anxiety disorder or low self-esteem
- particular experiences like abuse or the death of a loved one
- stressful situations

## WHERE CAN YOU GET HELP?

If you think you have an eating disorder, you should contact your GP, or another health professional, so they can recommend treatments, monitor your health and help you begin your road to recovery.

For immediate support and information:

- [www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk)
- **BEAT helpline: 0808 801 0677**
- [www.eatingdisordersni.co.uk](http://www.eatingdisordersni.co.uk)

Or call to the **Student Wellbeing Service Drop-In** (via the SGC Information Desk), Mon-Fri term time, 12.30-1.30pm, or you can email [studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk](mailto:studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk) to book an appointment with a Wellbeing Advisor.

# Take5

steps to wellbeing



Give



Be active



Connect



Keep learning



Take notice

Most of us know when we are mentally and physically well, but sometimes we need a little extra support to keep well.



There are five simple actions to help maintain and improve your emotional wellbeing in everyday life. Try to build these into your daily life – think of them as your ‘five a day’ for emotional wellbeing.



### Connect

Connect with the people around you, with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you everyday.



### Be active

Go for a walk or run, step outside, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



### Take notice

Be curious, catch sight of the beautiful, remark on the unusual, notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are on a bus or taxi, eating lunch or talking to friends, be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.



### Keep learning

Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or interest or sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.



### Give to others

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time, or consider joining a community group. Look out, as well as in, seeing yourself, and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

The 5 ways to wellbeing were developed by the New Economics Foundation

[www.mindingyourhead.info](http://www.mindingyourhead.info)

Would you like to share your story on the back of this leaflet? If so please email [studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk](mailto:studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk)

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