



Eating Disorders 101

www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

What Are Eating Disorders?

- Real, life-threatening mental and physical illnesses with potentially fatal consequences.¹
- Involve emotions, attitudes and behaviors surrounding weight, food, and size that severely impair functioning in major areas of life.²
- No single cause, but rather a combination of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors that converge and set off an individual's predisposed genetic vulnerability.³



Who Do Eating Disorders Affect?

- **Everyone.** People of all genders, ages, races, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, body shapes, and weights can be affected.⁴
- It is estimated that **9% of the U.S. population, or 28.8 million Americans,** will have an eating disorder in their lifetime.³

Biopsychosocial Disorders



An eating disorder is a biopsychosocial disorder -- a mental illness caused or influenced by genetic, biological, environmental, and social elements

Biological Factors

- Family history of eating disorders or other mental health conditions.^{3,5}
- History of dieting⁶
- Type one diabetes⁷
- Genetic predisposition³

Psychological Factors

- Perfectionism^{8,9}
- Body image¹⁰ dissatisfaction
- History of mental health conditions¹¹
- Being inflexible or difficulty going back and forth between tasks¹⁴

Social Factors

- Weight stigma¹⁵
- Bullying/teasing¹⁶
- Cultural norms that overvalue appearance¹⁷
- Drive for perceived ideal body type¹⁷
- Historical trauma^{10,18}

9 Truths About Eating Disorders



Many people with eating disorders look healthy, yet may be extremely ill.²

Families are not to blame, and can be the patients' and providers' best allies in treatment.^{19,20,21}

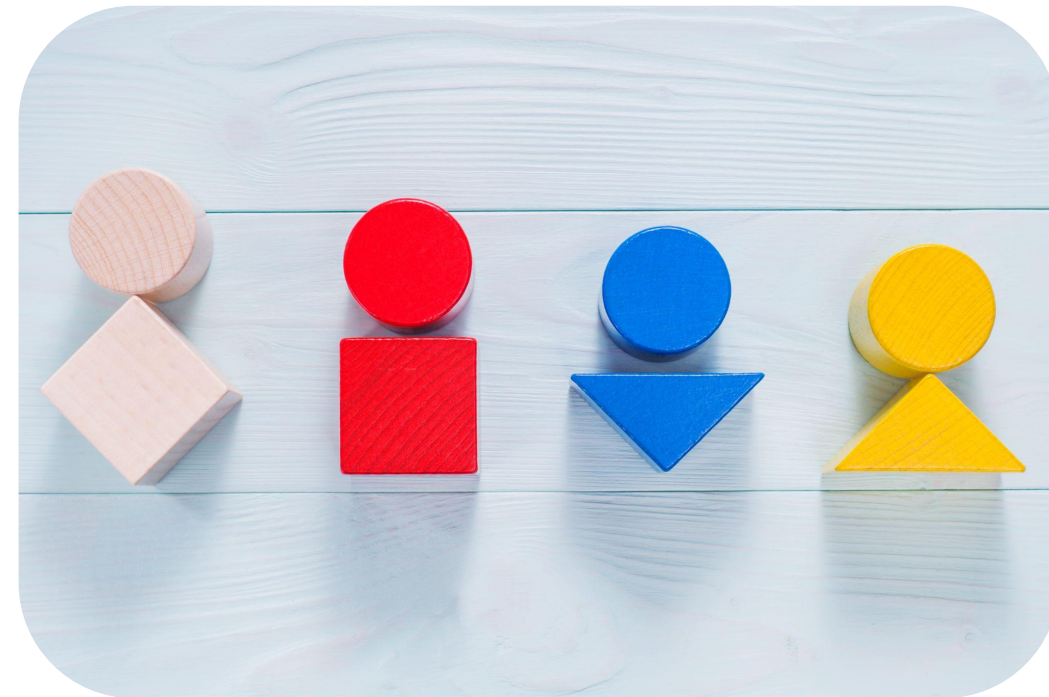


An eating disorder diagnosis is a health crisis that disrupts personal and family functioning.⁴

9 Truths About Eating Disorders



Eating disorders are not choices, but serious biologically influenced illnesses.^{4,22}



Eating disorders affect people of all genders, ages, races, ethnicities, body shapes and weights, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses.^{3,4,23,24,25,26,27,28}



Eating disorders carry an increased risk for both suicide and medical complications.^{29,30,31}

9 Truths About Eating Disorders



Genes and environment play important roles in the development of eating disorders.^{3,4,10,32}



Full recovery from an eating disorder is possible. Early detection and intervention are important.^{4,20,33,34}



Genes alone do not predict who will develop eating disorders.³³

An Overview of Eating Disorders

**WARNING SIGNS, SYMPTOMS & HEALTH
CONSEQUENCES**



NEDA

Common Warning Signs



EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL²

- Preoccupied with weight, shape and appearance
- Weight loss, dieting, and control of food are primary concerns
- Food rituals
- Social withdrawal
- Frequent dieting, body checking
- Extreme mood swings



Common Warning Signs Continued



PHYSICAL²

- Noticeable weight fluctuations, both up and down
- Gastrointestinal complaints
- Dizziness upon standing
- Difficulty concentrating, sleeping
- Issues with dental, skin, hair, and nail health

DSM-5 TR Diagnoses

- Anorexia Nervosa (AN)²
- Bulimia Nervosa (BN)²
- Binge Eating Disorder (BED)²
- Avoidant-Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID)²
- Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder (OSFED)²
- Unspecified feeding or eating disorder (UFED)²
- Eating disorders are complex and some eating issues will not meet diagnostic criteria. All must be taken seriously.^{36,37}

Co-Occurring Disorders

- High prevalence rates^{38,39,40}
- Most common comorbidities are:²
 - Mood disorders
 - Anxiety disorders
 - Substance use
- Can intensify eating disorders symptoms and impact treatment (recovery, level of care, drop-out)^{41,42}
- Treatment should address co-existing conditions and eating disorders²⁰

Health Consequences

- Cardiovascular (muscle loss, low or irregular heartbeat)²⁹
- Gastrointestinal (bloating, nausea, constipation)²⁹
- Neurological (difficulty concentrating, sleep apnea)²⁹
- Endocrine (hormonal changes – estrogen, testosterone, thyroid)²⁹
- Premature death^{41,43}

Where to Find Help

SUPPORT & RESOURCES



Resources

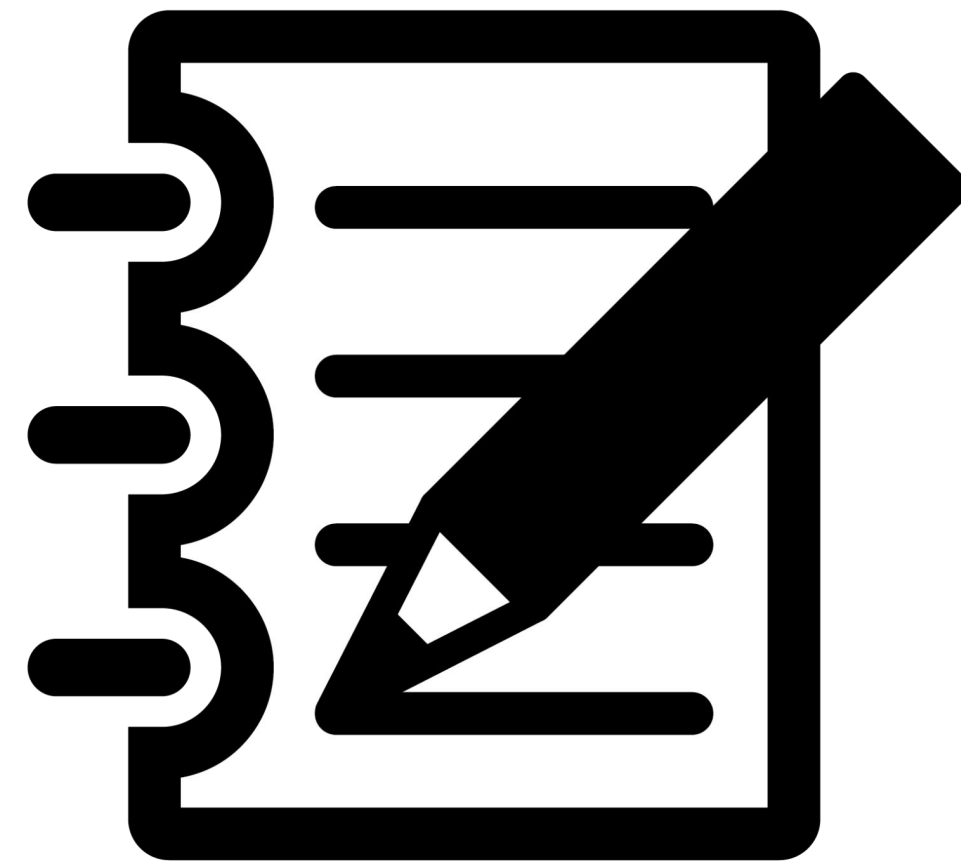


- Find treatment at:
<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/find-treatment/>
- Find free and low cost support options at:
<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/free-low-cost-support>

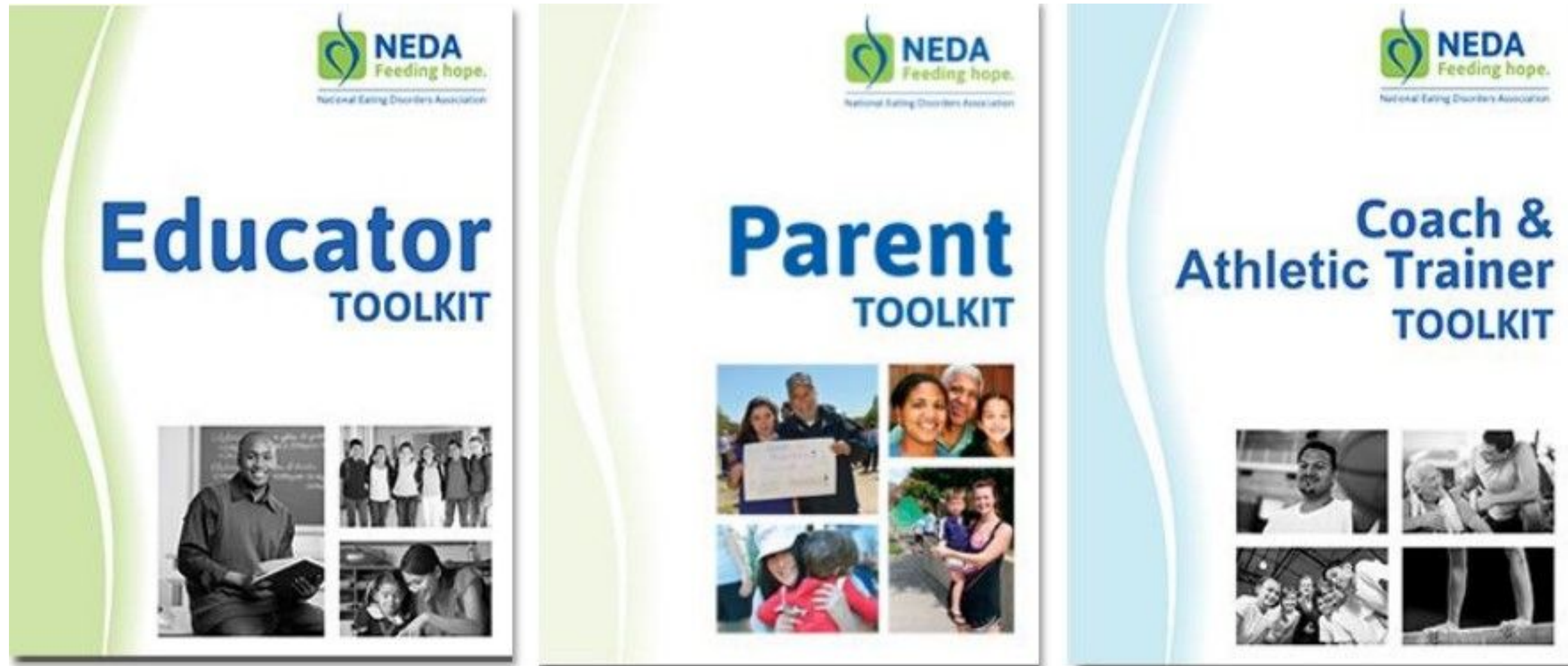
Eating Disorder Screening Tool



- It is a tool that can help determine if it's time to seek professional help.
- Participants who screen as “at risk” will be directed to resources for support.



NEDA Toolkits



<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/toolkits>

How to Help: What to Do



- **Learn** as much as you can about eating disorders.
- **Be honest** and vocal about your concerns.
- **Be caring and firm.**
- **Be a good role model**, practice what you preach
- **Suggest seeking help** from a physician and/or therapist.

How to Help: What Not to Do



- **Place shame, blame, or guilt.**
- **Make rules or promises** that you cannot or will not uphold.
- **Give simple solutions.**
- **Invalidate** their experience or try to **convince.**
- **Give advice** about weight, exercise, or appearance
- **Ignore or avoid** the situation until it is severe or life threatening

Talking about Eating Disorders



KEEP IN MIND

- Be prepared for negative reactions
- Taking the first step towards recovery is scary and challenging
- Make sure they get a medical check-up
- Join with the part of them that wants to get well
- Remind the person of why they want to get well

Get Involved With NEDA!



NEDA Walks, Campus Warriors, Volunteer Opportunities and more!

[Learn More](#)

www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

212-575-6200



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