

Evaluating Eating and Exercise Habits

Living in our culture, it's not surprising to feel you have to look a certain way to fit society's expectations in order to be happy or even healthy. However, constant obsession about body weight and shape, fat grams and calories can start a vicious cycle of an eating disorder. An eating disorder is a physical and emotional problem associated with a person's eating and exercising habits that is detrimental to one's health, happiness, and ability to live a "normal" productive life. The three most common eating disorders are Anorexia, Bulimia, and Binge Eating. Disordered eating may begin as a way to lose a few pounds or get in shape, but can quickly get out of control and possibly turn into an eating disorder, or as some prefer to describe as "a diet gone awry". Living with an eating disorder can have very serious health consequences, including loss of life. Eating Disorders are a family, employer, and community concern, and there is assistance available.

Could you or someone you know be dealing with disordered eating? Think about this...

- Do you count the calories or fat grams in everything you eat?
- Do you exercise so much that you are fatigued or have frequent injuries?
- Do you weigh yourself often and find yourself obsessed with the number on the scale?
- Do you ever feel out of control when you are eating?
- Does your eating include ritualized behavior at meal time or secretive bingeing or purging?
- Do you feel ashamed, disgusted or guilty after eating?
- Do you constantly worry about the weight, shape or size of your body?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you could be dealing with disordered eating and the toll it can take on your mental, emotional and physical well-being.

If you are concerned that your eating habits may not be healthy, we encourage you to take a few minutes to take a free, confidential and anonymous online screening for eating disorders by visiting the State of Michigan Employee Service Program website, www.michigan.gov/esp and clicking on "Interactive Screening Program". You will receive immediate feedback if your answers are consistent with the presence of an eating disorder, and informed on how to obtain treatment services.

The ESP website offers a lot of information and resources on the services we provide for state employees, including how to arrange a confidential, individual consultation with an ESP professional counselor. The Employee Services Program can be reached at 1-800-521-1377, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.