Eating Disorders Prevention and Treatment in Maine

Background

Eating disorders include a variety of illnesses such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating. These illnesses affect people of all ages, but are more common in teens, young adults, and females. They are serious mental and physical health problems that can be life-threatening. Coordination between different professionals is critical to effective prevention and treatment of eating disorders.

- Nationally, it is estimated that:
  - 1% of young women ages 10-20 have anorexia.
  - 4% of young adult women have bulimia.
  - 1% of all women have a binge-eating disorder.
- In 2005, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) (www.mainecshp.com/survey.html) showed that in Maine:
  - Over half of all students were trying to lose weight, while only a quarter were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.
  - 68% of high school girls reported they were then trying to lose weight.
  - 6 times as many girls believed they were overweight than actually were.
  - All of these methods are unhealthy methods of weight loss, and may be early signs of an eating disorder.

The Teen and Young Adult Health Program co-chairs an Eating Disorders work group with Mainely Girls (www.midcoast.com/megirls/). The mission of the Eating Disorders Work Group is:

- To promote healthy eating habits, physical activity, positive self-esteem and body image;
- To provide early identification for effective treatment;
- To identify and increase eating disorders prevention and treatment resources in Maine; and
- To reduce the number of people with eating disorders in Maine.

The State Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan (www.healthymainepartnerships.org//panp/PANP_plan_2005_2010.aspx) also addresses eating disorders by including these two objectives:

- Reduce the number of people with eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa.
- Reduce the proportion of Maine people who use weight loss strategies that endanger their health.

Currently, there is no specific funding for eating disorder prevention, but there are a number of opportunities for programs to work together and pool their resources to better address eating disorders.
Resources:

If you think you may have an eating disorder, or have a friend you think may have an eating disorder, please call the Statewide Crisis Hotline (1-888-568-1112) in emergency or the Statewide Warm Line at 211.

Information on Providers in Maine can be found through one or more of the following web-based referral systems:
- 211 Maine: www.211maine.org
- The Society for Adolescent Medicine: www.adolescenthealth.org
- The Eating Disorder Referral and Information Center: www.EDReferral.com
- National Eating Disorders Association: http://www.edap.org

School nurses and guidance counselors may also know of local resources.

General information for teens and parents can be found at:
- The Center for Young Women’s Health at Boston Children’s Hospital: www.youngwomenshealth.org
- National Eating Disorders Association: http://www.edap.org

Resources for teachers can be found at:
- Health Education Resource Center at the University of Maine, Orono: www.library.umaine.edu/herc/
- Maine Office of Substance Abuse, Information and Resource Center: www.maine.gov/dhhs/osa/irc/
- Curriculum Resource Center of Maine: www.crcom.org

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