

## ***Helping a Friend with an Eating Disorder***

An eating disorder occurs when a person's life revolves around weight and food.

- Some people eat too little → restrictive eating
- Some people eat too much at one time → binge eating
- Some people binge and purge → they use laxatives to get rid of the food they eat.
- Some people exercise to excess (also called obsessive or compulsive exercise) → they feel anxious or angry if they miss a day.

### **Helping a friend**

If you think a friend may have a problem, there are things you can do to help.

#### **Focus on the positive:**

- Express concern- talk about friend's health and happiness rather than his or her eating behavior.
- Be patient and be there - Listen and care. Point out strengths and praise talents.
- Encourage your friend to seek professional help - Offer to go along to the first visit.

#### **Avoid the negative:**

- Don't give advice, unless asked (don't nag or criticize).
- Don't be a part of a conversation that focuses just on food, body size or weight.
- Don't expect your friend to change overnight. Change can take time.

#### **To Learn More**

Anorexia Nervosa and Related Eating disorders

(847) 831-3438

[www.anred.com](http://www.anred.com)

The National Eating Disorders Association

(800) 931-2237

[www.edap.org](http://www.edap.org)

