



EATING DISORDERS COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICE

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BULIMIA NERVOSA

What is bulimia nervosa?

A person suffering from bulimia nervosa will have a seriously disturbed and erratic eating pattern. S/he will try to starve her/himself, then binge on large amounts of food, following an attempt to get rid of the food by either vomiting or consuming large amounts of laxatives or diuretics in order to purge the food out of his/her system. Like anorexia nervosa, bulimia is a psychological disorder. Bulimia nervosa is a very secretive illness, as unlike in the case of anorexia nervosa, the sufferer will usually be of normal to slightly above normal body weight for age and height, the illness thus being much more difficult to detect.

What is a binge?

When a sufferer binges s/he will consume a large amount of bulk high calorie foods in a relatively short space of time. This is usually always done in secret. The sufferer will usually eat large amounts of carbohydrates and sugary foods such as bread, biscuits, cakes, crisps, and chocolates- all of the foods that s/he would class as bad food and would tend to avoid when not bingeing. The average calorie content of a binge is between 1,500 and 3,000 calories, although some sufferers have described binges up to six times that amount. Although a sufferer may feel excited when s/he begins to binge, that is soon over-whelmed by feelings of loss of control and guilt. Many sufferers describe their bingeing behaviour as a way of filling an empty hole, this hole being emotional.

What signs do I need to look out for in someone that I think may have this problem?

Some of the more obvious signs to look out for are:-

1. Disappearing to the bathroom after meals
2. Swelling of the salivary glands below the jaw giving a puffy appearance to the face- this is caused by vomiting
3. Erratic mood swings
4. A lack of energy
5. An obsessional concern with body weight and shape
6. Self-loathing
7. Feelings of guilt

For further information or support, contact the CARALINE help-line on 01582 457474.

"CARALINE" CENTRE FOR EATING DISORDERS THERAPY & EDUCATION

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