

Tips for Students

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With the return to school right around the corner, transitioning back into academic life can lead to added pressures and stressors for students. Transitions can be especially challenging for those who are experiencing an eating disorder/ disordered eating. Eating disorders are complex illnesses that are impacted by genetics, social, environmental, and psychological factors. Eating disorders/ Disordered eating can affect anyone independent of age, race, ethnicity, body type or background. Student's returning to school are facing new academic challenges, social pressures, adjusting to new routines and schedules, and for some completely new environments. All of these demands and pressures can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and a variety of emotions and mental health stressors that can aggravate or exacerbate eating disorders/disordered eating. It is important to recognize stressors, changes in mood or affect, and eating disorder signs and behaviors, in order to intervene as soon as possible. Eating disorders/disordered eating often go unnoticed and look different for each individual affected by this illness, therefore, it is important to let go of any preconceived notions of what eating disorders might "look like" and check in with your child/student about their feelings about food and/or eating patterns. Students in high school can reach out to their school counselor to help facilitate conversations with parents or to help connect with resources for providers that are trained and informed in eating disorder/disordered eating care. Students in college can reach out to their university or local counseling center to connect with professionals who can provide support or treatment for eating disorders/disordered eating or any other mental health issues coming up.

Tips

The following tips are tips for students.

- Notice changes in eating patterns or feelings related to eating and/or food and seek help if you notice a change.
- Be open with your support system about your feelings, stressors, and struggles and ask for support.
- Notice if you find that you are having negative feelings about yourself, body, or body image.
- If you are feeling increased anxiety, depression, or urges to engage in eating disorder or disordered eating behaviors, reach out for help.
- If you find that you have relapsed in your eating disorder, seek help, take one day at a time.
- If you find that focusing on school/ school work or concentrating in class has become more difficult due to mental health issues including eating disorder behaviors or disordered eating, seek professional help.
- If you notice that you are falling behind in class/ school work (i.e. not getting assignments turned in on time) reach out to your support system or counseling center for evaluation and possible treatment.

For more information and resources on eating disorders, visit nationaleatingdisorders.org.

