

DIS TORT ED PERCEPTION?



Jan (looking in the mirror. She is wearing her new bathing suit): I'm so fat! If only I could lose 10 more pounds, I'd be happy. Then I know George would notice me!

Sue: But Jan, you're not fat. You look great in a bathing suit.

Jan (protesting): No way! Just look at my thighs, my hips. I look hideous! I'm going on a diet now!

20 - 25% of college women suffer from an eating disorder and the statistics are rising. More and more college women and adolescent girls suffer from a distorted body image. They equate happiness, beauty, success, popularity, and ambition with being thin. Men, also, are falling into this trap. Unfortunately, the media reinforces these perceptions.

If you believe that you or someone you know has an eating disorder, you can do something to help. seek help with a friend, a counselor, or someone else you trust. Here are some guidelines for helping a friend or roommate:

- 1). Gather evidence of the eating disorder and make a written record.
- 2). Arrange to meet with the person in a private, nonthreatening environment.
- 3). When together, tell the person that you care about her/him and that you value her/him for things other than physical attractiveness. Focus on personality, skills, etc.
- 4). Present the evidence in a nonjudgemental way. Remind her/him that you care and that s/he needs help. S/he is in danger physiologically and needs professional help.
- 5). There may be denial. You have to decide whether to pursue the matter or drop it until a later time. Reassure her/him that there is help available and that people do recover.
- 6). Present options of where to go for help. Offer support. The important thing is for her/him to take responsibility for her/himself. Make sure s/he takes the initial action.

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ALCOHOLISM - THE MYTH AND THE REALITY

Myth: Alcohol is an addictive drug, and anyone who drinks long and hard enough will become addicted.

Reality: Alcohol is a selectively addictive drug; it is addictive for only a minority of its users, namely alcoholics. Most people can drink occasionally, daily, or even heavily without becoming addicted to alcohol. Others (alcoholics) will become addicted no matter how much they drink. (Chapter 2*)

Myth: Addiction to alcohol is often psychological.

Reality: Addiction to alcohol is primarily physiological. Alcoholics become addicted because their bodies are physiologically incapable of processing alcohol normally. (Chapters 3 and 4*)

Myth: An alcoholic has to want help to be helped.

Reality: Most drinking alcoholics do not want to be helped. They are ill, unable to think rationally, and incapable of giving up alcohol by themselves. Most recovered alcoholics were forced into treatment against their will. Self-motivation usually occurs during treatment, not before. (Chapter 8*)

*from the book Under the Influence by Milam and Ketcham. We have several copies of Under The Influence as well as other informative books on alcohol and other substance abuse in the Health Education Center inside the Student Health Center. Books may be checked out for up to two weeks. We also have a lot of free pamphlets and free 45 minute appointments with Peer Health Advisors.

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GO FOR IT!

