

## ***Eating Disorders***

Eating Disorders are far more than a preoccupation with weight and diet. They are often outward symptoms of deep-rooted issues of self-esteem, fear and control. There are many different types of eating disorders but the most common are:

### **Anorexia Nervosa**

This is a condition marked by weight loss [Body Mass Index 15% below expected] and restricted eating – though there can be occasional bingeing too. There is a fear of gaining weight, a distortion of what the person thinks they look like and [in females] disturbance of periods. Over time there are other problems, like poor skin, dizziness, osteoporosis, infertility and it can be so severe as to cause major physical illness and even death. People can become rigid in their behaviour and use laxatives and exercise to control their weight. Fortunately much of this is reversible if weight is regained.

### **Bulimia Nervosa**

This condition is typically marked by normal weight but a cycle of over-eating [binging] and purging [vomiting, laxatives], with a sense of being out of control. Unlike anorexia, this disorder is becoming much more common and is influenced by modern trends in the media. Bulimia can also affect your general health and, if vomiting is severe, can cause heart arrhythmias. Because of the normal weight, it is often unnoticed by friends, family and colleagues. In fact, food can be used to boost confidence temporarily, hiding problems further. Binging and purging follow a cycle where the person feels overweight and bloated after a binge so purges, making them feel low and guilty so they binge again. For some people this can be after every meal. For others it may come and go and they may not see it as a problem.

### **Getting help**

The list below recommends some further reading and two intensive sources of help – a residential counselling facility and course [like the mind and soul course]. There are also articles on the Mind and Soul website.



#### **Anorexia and Bulimia Care**

[www.anorexiabulimiare.co.uk](http://www.anorexiabulimiare.co.uk)

We offer a professional, personal and caring service, from a team of staff with experience in eating disorders, providing encouragement, advice and support for all involved (sufferers and family members) to help



#### **New ID**

[www.newid.info](http://www.newid.info)

A six week course for eating disorders looking at identity, addiction to food, loneliness, nutrition and moving on.



#### **Mercy Ministries UK**

[www.mercyministries.co.uk](http://www.mercyministries.co.uk)

Mercy Ministries is a national non profit organisation dedicated to providing homes and care, free of charge, for young women suffering the effects of eating disorders, self harm, abuse, depression, unplanned pregnancies and other life controlling issues.