

Continuum of Care for Eating Disorder Prevention, Identification, and Treatment Florida State University

Treatment Team

The Eating Disorder Treatment team

Due to the complexity of Eating Disorders, treatment requires a comprehensive team approach. To this end, University Health Services and the University Counseling Center collaborate together through the Eating Disorder Treatment Team (ED Team). The role of this multidisciplinary team of health professionals is to meet on a regular basis and discuss the care plans of students with EDs. Each member discusses the student's progress from their individual professional perspectives and receives qualified support and suggestions from other members in order to optimize the students' care. The treatment team professionals include dietitians, medical personnel (primary care physicians, psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurse practitioners) and mental health professionals (counselors, psychologists, art therapists, clinical social workers). Initial assessment and ongoing follow-up with medical, nutritional, and mental health personnel are all essential aspects in the treatment of an ED. The team is responsible for providing counseling and support for students who are open to receive help.

Identification and Intervention with Students with Eating Disorders

If a professional staff member becomes aware of a student who may be experiencing eating disorder behaviors or symptoms, a conversation should be initiated with the student to offer support, resources and obtain additional information. If appropriate, the staff member (or supervisor) will notify a Dean of Students Case Manager. The Case Manager will reach out to the student and assess what services the student may need and/or may call for a welfare check from the FSU Police Department.

Steps for Initiating a Conversation with a Student

The following are suggested steps for initiating a conversation with a student who is suspected of having an eating disorder. It is common to experience discomfort when considering confronting someone about an eating disorder. The goal of the intervention is to assist the student with obtaining access to professional help. You are not expected to act as a counselor with students. It's important to maintain your boundaries as a faculty or staff member. If you are concerned about a student or unable to initiate a conversation, please consult with a Case Manager in the Dean of Students office in University Center A, suite 4100 or call 850.644.2428.

1. The conversation should take place in a private setting.
2. Begin by expressing concern for student's safety, well-being and ability to function.

3. Cite behaviors learned about, witnessed, or reported and tie these behaviors to concerns about the student's medical and psychological well-being.
4. Allow space for the student to respond to your concerns. Listen carefully to the student, demonstrating empathy and a non-judgmental attitude.
5. Avoid the use of the term eating disorder unless the student acknowledges the diagnosis as an issue.
6. Share knowledge of resources on campus, encouraging the student to make appointments as soon as able. Work to negotiate with the student in determining options. The student may express a willingness to be seen for one evaluation at either University Health Services, University Counseling Center or the Nutrition Clinic. View this ~~is~~ as a positive first step.
7. Express willingness to assist the student with making appointments. If the student is unwilling to seek services on campus, the student should be given referral information for off campus resources.
8. Avoid engaging in a power struggle with the student. The student may not admit to the behaviors and may, in some cases, react negatively to the intervention. In order to gain their cooperation, continue to frame the discussion in terms of your concern and desire to support the student, helping to diffuse defensiveness.
9. Consider checking in with the student periodically to offer additional encouragement and support.
10. Seek out your own support. Consult with your individual supervisor.

Friends and Parents

When friends and family become concerned whether a student may have an eating disorder, they should feel empowered to discuss their concerns directly with the student and offer suggestions for a gentle communication (see Steps for Initiating a Conversation). If friends or family are concerned about a student, a conversation may be initiated with a Case Manager in the Dean of Students office. If there is concern about a student's physical or psychological safety, the individual should be encouraged to take immediate action and provided with emergency referral information (see Referral section).

Psychological and Medical Evaluations

A student can be referred or present voluntarily for a psychological or medical evaluation for symptoms, behaviors or medical consequences associated with an eating disorder. The Health Services medical staff member completes an evaluation. A referral will be made to the Counseling Center and the Nutrition Clinic. The Eating Disorder Treatment team will collaborate and coordinate services. The student may be referred directly to off campus resources should the student be in need of more immediate or intensive treatment.

If the student is uncooperative with referrals and treatment recommendations, and is assessed to be at serious medical risk, the UHS Medical Director will be consulted. Options that could be

explored include voluntary referrals to emergency room/inpatient treatment facilities and/or involving family members in the process. Additionally, the provider may consider an involuntary referral to an emergency room.

The Role of the Dean of Students

The Dean of Students is available to consult with faculty and staff regarding students of concern. A student may be referred to the Dean of Students for several reasons. First, a student may be referred as an emergency procedure if a student demonstrates serious psychological or medical risk and/or is a risk to the community. Additionally, a student may be referred if the student is uncooperative in following through with referrals for evaluation or treatment and a serious risk exists. These referrals may come from any faculty or staff member.

Identification and Referral

Any student concerned about his/her own eating patterns, weight or related issues can consult with a professional staff member from the University Counseling Center, University Health Services medical staff, or Nutrition Clinic in University Health Services. The staff member will assess the student and refer appropriately.

Prevention Team

The Eating Disorder Prevention team is part of the larger Healthy Campus Physical Health team. The Healthy Campus Physical Health team consists of students, faculty, and staff with representation from University Health Services, Center for Health Advocacy and Wellness, Housing, University Counseling Center, Campus Recreation, FSU Police Department, Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement, Student Government Association, Athletics, Student Activities, Seminole Dining, Business Services, Department of Nutrition, Food and Exercise Sciences (NFES), Biological Sciences, Modern Language and Linguistics, Campus Sustainability, dietetic interns, nutrition educators, and other students.

Current initiatives include:

- Early identification and treatment of eating disorder behavior through education programs conducted by the University Counseling Center and the Center for Health Advocacy and Wellness at University Health Services.
- Regular facilitation of the *Body Project*, an evidenced-based body image program designed to help college men and women resist the cultural pressures to conform to the “thin” or “muscular” ideal. (<http://healthycampus.fsu.edu/Teams/Physical-Health>)
- Consistent outreach events and screenings including Love Your Body Day (October) and National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (February).

Advisory Team

The Advisory team is responsible for approving the University Eating Disorder protocol and ensuring appropriate ED protocols are maintained and utilized when necessary. The team also ensures that the FSU community is educated on the appropriate procedures.

Advisory Team Members

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