Body Image and Eating Disorders

The college years are filled with opportunities for freedom, growth, and self-exploration. However, college also can be a difficult time of transition, with anxiety about leaving home, concern about dating and fitting in, and preoccupation with appearance. The pressure to attain the "ideal" body or look can be significant. This concern with image can spiral out of control and contribute to the development of an eating disorder or, in many cases, to the maintenance of an existing one.

While 90-95% of individuals with eating disorders are female, the proportion of males with eating disorders is rising. There is a long-standing myth that men don't have eating disorders or problems with body image. This contributes to an environment of silence about men's issues with food and the body and can prevent men from seeking help.

While each person is different, all individuals with eating disorders or disordered eating share one thing in common: they are hurting themselves to obtain or maintain a body ideal which is unattainable or dangerous to their health.

Understanding body image, healthy eating, and eating disorders can help you to recognize warning signs and to know when to ask for help.