

Meredith to offer screenings for eating disorders

Submitted by the Counseling Center

Do you or your friends exercise compulsively and count calories in and effort to lose weight and be extremely thin? Does your roommate run to the bathroom to throw up after a big meal? Is your friend always dieting and thinking about the food she eats? These behaviors are all signs that you or your friend may have an eating disorder. Before these illnesses get out of hand, learn how to get help.

Meredith will join hundreds of colleges across the country in the first-ever National Eating Disorders Screening Program (NEDSP) during Eating Disorders Awareness Week, February 5-11. Meredith will hold the free program in Feb. 6, from 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.

at the Dogwood Room A&B below Belk Dining Hall. All Screenings are free and anonymous.

NEDSP is a public outreach effort designed to teach students about eating disorders and direct those in need toward treatment. The program provides students with the opportunity to hear an educational presentation on eating disorders, complete a screen-

ing questionnaire, and meet one-on-one with a health care professional. Those who show symptoms of an eating disorder will be encouraged to make an appointment for a full evaluation.

"Each year we see students with advanced eating disorders brought into the health center only after they have passed out while trying to jog. Even then, lying in a hospital bed with a weak heartbeat and almost no blood pressure, it often takes days for the students to admit they have been eating practically nothing and exercising compulsively," said Kathy Hotelling, Ph.D., president of the Association of University and College Counseling Center Directors.

In order to reach as many students as possible, academic departments and student organizations will be encouraging members to go to the screenings as a team or group activity. Students are also encouraged to bring a friend if they are concerned about his or her eating behavior.

Eating disorders are illnesses that are associated with severe body image

distortion and an obsession with weight. Sufferers are terrified of gaining weight and continue to diet or binge and purge even as their mental and physical health deteriorate. In addition to depression and substance abuse disorders, victims of eating disorders can also develop heart problems, osteoporosis and reproductive difficulties. Left unchecked, eating disorders can kill.

"Four to five percent of all female college students suffer from anorexia, bulimia, or binge eating disorder, and at least five times as many engage in substantially disordered eating behaviors," said David Herzog, M.D. director of the Harvard Eating Disorders Center and Scientific Director of NEDSP. "Although there is a preponderance of women with eating disorders, men are also susceptible and can suffer similar complications. Five to 10 percent of all people with eating disorders are men."

People with Anorexia Nervosa literally starve themselves by dramatically restricting their caloric intake.

Symptoms include significant weight loss, loss of menstruation, dry skin, sallow complexion and an intense fear of gaining weight even when underweight.

Bulimia Nervosa is characterized by binge periods in which the sufferer consumes an unusually large amount of food while feeling out of control of her eating. As the binge period ends, fear of weight gain causes the person to purge, generally by vomiting, using laxatives or compulsively exercising for hours. Bulimics often develop swelling of the feet, hands and cheeks, and serious dental, throat and intestinal problems.

Binge Eating Disorder is similar to bulimia but without the purging behavior. The binge eater sometimes eats enormous amounts of food very quickly, even when not hungry, until she feels uncomfortably full. Binge eaters often feel embarrassed by their inability to stop the binge.

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Dean of Students Office
February 5, 1996

If you have a 2.0 grade point average, do not hold a major office, and are interested in a position for the 1996-1997 academic year as a Student Adviser, you may pick up an application in the Dean of Students office, second floor Cate Center.

Application Deadline March 6



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