



The Benedictine Counselor

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A Ministry of the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

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 Bristow VA



Message from the Director:
 Easter Blessings! We rejoice in Jesus' resurrection and it seems that the trees, flowers and the earth rejoice in this spring time. This is a month full of blessings for all of us.
 February 24th to March 1st was National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (NEDAW). We had hoped to have this month's article to you to coincide with this recognition. However, since it is still an important topic we are including it in this volume. Mary F. Sandiford is the school counselor at St. Joseph School in Herndon, VA, and spent three years as part of a treatment team for eating disorders. We hope her article will enlighten schools and parents about this condition.



Mary F. Sandiford, MSW, ACSW, LCSW
 School Counselor
 St Joseph School, Herndon, VA

EATING DISORDERS IN YOUNG PERSONS

Historical Perspective:

Close to fifty million girls and women in the USA are currently identified as having an Eating Disorder. The onset of an Eating Disorder (ED) is most likely to occur in females between age 11 – 14 years. Eating disorders, however, occur in both genders. Males account for 25% of newly diagnosed cases of Anorexia Nervosa and approximately 50% of cases of Binge Eating Disorder.

What is an Eating Disorder?

Eating disorders are characterized by “extreme eating behaviors”.

- In Anorexia Nervosa, food intake is restricted, sometimes to the point of life threatening starvation and can be accompanied by excessive exercising.
- In Bulimia Nervosa, food is consumed in large amounts and is followed by purging behaviors (diuretics, laxatives, vomiting,

Continued from previous page

- In Binge Eating Disorder, food is consumed in large amounts but purging does not occur.

What causes an Eating Disorder?

- Genetic studies at UNC show that 56% of the “liability for Anorexia Nervosa” is determined by genetics. These findings are confirmed by the Swedish Twin Studies. If a family member has an ED, the likelihood of another close relative developing an ED is increased sixteen fold.
- While genetics clearly predisposes a person to an ED, a myriad of other factors (cultural, environmental, psychological,) increase the risk.
- Together, genetics and environmental factors can conspire and create the “perfect storm of events” that results in an Eating Disorder.

What is the treatment for an Eating Disorder?

A medical doctor with expertise in the treatment of Eating Disorders will determine what treatment approach is needed for each individual patient. It is not uncommon to find patients with ED also suffering from anxiety and depression. Therefore, a team of expert medi-

cal professionals may work together to help the patient recover.

What action can schools take to increase awareness of Eating Disorders?

February 24th – March 1st, 2008 was National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (NEDAW) and the theme this year was “Embrace Your Genes”!

- Schools are encouraged to participate annually in NEDAW and include education on Eating Disorders in their wellness curriculum.
- The NEDAW web site is a rich source of educational information for coaches, educators, nurses, counselors, students, parents and concerned others.

Sources and Resources:

www.nimh.nih.gov/science-news/2007

www.news-medical.net

www.emaxhealth.com

www.edap.org – click on link to NEDAW National Eating Disorders Association Email: info@NationalEatingDisordersAssociation
Toll free Information and Referral Helpline: 1-800-931-2237.

From 1990-1993 Mary Sandiford was a psychotherapist on the multi-disciplinary treatment team of an Eating Disorders Program.

One of the great themes of literature is that of overcoming overwhelming obstacles. We all long for the happy ending of triumph over adversity. The desire for resurrection is deep within our hearts, so that when Jesus appears to the women at the tomb after the horror of Good Friday our hopes are met. He is risen.

It was so unexpected that the disciples on the road to Emmaus could not recognize Jesus

for a long time. God does meet the deepest longings of our hearts which finally, hopefully, will be heaven.

Pope John Paul II liked to remind us of the words of Scripture that tell us “do not be afraid.” Why not fear? Jesus says, “I have overcome the world;” and “I am with you always.” (Matthew 28,20)

The **Anita Moreland Foundation** was begun to help BCS provide counseling and psychological assistance for people who would otherwise be unable to pay for services. For more information contact: *Benedictine Counseling Services* below.

To contact *Benedictine Counseling Services*,
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