

The background is a solid red color. In the foreground, there are several black silhouettes of people in various theatrical poses: a woman standing on the left, a woman crouching in the lower left, a man leaning forward in the center, and a woman standing on the right. In the background, there are several grey silhouettes of people standing in various poses.

EYES WIDE OPEN

our world is magical!

stars
stages
theatre company

1111 Mainstreet
Hopkins, MN 55343
(952) 979-1111

www.stagestheatre.org

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EYES WIDE OPEN - a play about issues surrounding eating disorders

HOW YOU CAN HELP A FRIEND:

It can be very painful to watch a friend struggling with an eating disorder. Just thinking about discussing your concerns with your friend means that you are a very courageous person and terrific friend. The following tips can act as a guide for a friend reaching out to another:

Speak to your friend privately after choosing a safe place to discuss your concerns. Your friend will appreciate feeling comfortable when he or she talks to you about such a difficult and emotional subject.

Point out to your friend all of the things that you have observed that's causing you to worry.

Let your friend know that you are concerned about his or her health and well-being and that you miss the person that was around before the eating disorder came into your friend's life. Point out changes in his or her personality and how this behavior may affect you.

Do not discuss with your friend your concerns about his or her weight or physical appearance. When you say, "You look so thin," your friend may interpret it as a compliment rather than a statement of concern.

Allow your friend time to respond. Listening may be the best gift you can offer your friend. Remember that you may be the first person whom your friend has told, so he or she may really need to talk.

Try to give your friend resources in your school & community. Offer to go with your friend when he/she talks.

Your friend will probably ask you to keep this a secret. Don't tell other friends, but encourage your friend to confide in an adult. Talking to an adult is important; eating disorders can be very harmful and your friend may need help.

Be sure to listen for the following medical complications that your friend may say he or she is experiencing. If any of these complications are occurring, notify an adult immediately. Do not wait for your friend's permission.

1. bingeing and purging several times a day
2. passing out or having severe chest, stomach or back pains
3. vomiting blood
4. discussion of suicide

Remember, eating disorders are very serious and can be life-threatening. It is extremely important that you talk to an adult about what your friend has told you. It will also be a good idea for you to talk to a school counselor or adult with whom you feel comfortable; you may be overwhelmed with feelings regarding your friend's struggle. Remember that confronting your friend takes a lot of courage. Many people hope to have a friend as caring as you are.

THE MORE YOU KNOW:

Anorexia nervosa & bulimia nervosa are two of the most common types of serious, potentially life-threatening eating disorders.

Anorexia nervosa is characterized by self-starvation and excessive weight loss. The individual has an intense fear of being fat or overweight despite dramatic weight loss.

Bulimia nervosa is characterized by eating large amounts of food, followed by self-induced purging. This may include use of laxatives, vomiting or obsessive exercise to rid the body of calories.

CLUES TO AN EATING DISORDER

Eliminate entire food groups

Skip meals and often say they're not hungry

Use lots of diet food, gum and water to feel full

Become isolated from friends & makes excuses for not eating socially

Eat erratically - by overeating, under eating or eating fast

Constantly talk about food, calories and being fat

LOCAL HELP:

Methodist Hospital - EDI The Anna Westin Foundation

6490 Excelsior Boulevard P.O. Box 268

St. Louis Park, MN 55426 Chaska, MN 55318

www.parknicollet.com/edi www.annawestinfoundation.org

RESOURCES:

Understanding Eating Disorders, A guide for families and friends. www.healthsource.org

"How did this happen?" A practical guide to understanding eating disorders for teachers, parents & coaches. www.parknicollet.com/stores