

How Do You Help an Athlete with Anorexia or Bulimia?

Identify behaviors which suggest an athlete has an eating disorder. Be accessible to teammates who may be concerned and searching for a way to help. Avoid labeling the athlete as anorexic or bulimic.

Do not attempt to diagnose or treat athletes with anorexia or bulimia. An eating disorder is a very complex problem. Help the athlete identify and contact an eating disorders specialist for a professional screening. If the athlete denies the problem, but the evidence appears conclusive, consult a trained clinician and review the situation.

If you think an athlete has an eating disorder, you will have to confront the athlete. Focus on the evidence and what the athlete is able to tell you regarding her or his feelings. Talk about fears the athlete may have about being removed from the team or losing a scholarship.

An eating disorder is both a psychological and physiological problem. Diagnosis should be made by a physician, psychologist, or nutritionist trained in eating disorders.

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