

ACT NOW

If you believe that one of your friends or fellow students has an eating disorder it's easy if you remember to ACT NOW. Eating disorders are complex psychological conditions that require immediate treatment by a professional. Repeat these steps as often as necessary.

Ask to speak with your friend privately (a place that you will not be interrupted or heard).

Confront with concern and care (help your friend to feel loved and cared for during your conversation).

Tell your friend what you see that makes you feel concerned I see that you have been moody/sad/depressed/obsessed with dieting/fat/losing weight.

Never continue the conversation if either of you become too emotional (if you or your friend become too angry or upset, the conversation will not be helpful for either of you).

Only a professional can diagnose and treat eating disorders, so don't play therapist or caretaker (don't say, "I think you have anorexia " or try and "save" your friend by letting her talk to only you about her eating concerns, tell her how important it is to talk directly to a professional).

When you end the conversation, tell an adult immediately (a school nurse, counselor, parent, coach, teacher are all people you might want to confide in. When you approach the adult, make sure you use concrete examples to convey your concerns, e.g., "I see my friend going to the bathroom after meals, exercising when injured, always talking about food and calories, moody or sad").

Remember, by speaking to an adult about your friend's problem, you are not being a bad friend, you are really being the best friend you can be! By keeping your concerns about your friend a secret you are not only creating a lot of stress in your own life but you are doing more harm than good for your friend. By speaking to an adult about your concerns you are really helping your friend as well as helping yourself. If your friend gets angry let him or her know that you needed to tell someone because you care and want him/her to get better. **The sooner someone gets into treatment, the better chances of full recovery!**