



EATING DISORDER INFO FOR COACHES

Live RecoverED Nonprofit | Megan Lavin, DPT, M.Ed.

Eating Disorder Signs & Symptoms You May Notice

- Difficulty with days off/tapering
- Does additional workouts outside of practice
- Refuses to eat with teammates, packs own food
- Frequently uses the bathroom after eating
- Decreased speed/endurance
- Appears fatigued/exhausted
- Has become withdrawn
- Perfectionist behaviors
- Large changes in weight in either direction
- More frequent injuries (stress fractures, strains, sprains)
- Decreased heart rate and blood pressure, fainting

Supporting Your Athlete

1. Reach out in person, one on one using "I" statements and in private
 - a. I'm worried about your eating habits
 - b. I'm concerned about how you're doing extra workouts outside of practice
2. Be flexible with practice times if they need to go to therapy/dietitian appointments
3. Let them know you value their mental and physical wellbeing over their athletic career
4. Let them know you care about them and are there if they need to talk
5. Take time to learn more about eating disorders (NEDA Coach & Trainer Toolkit)
6. Ask them for permission to be in contact with their treatment team, helpful to know if they have exercise limits

Key Points

- Recognize that a severe and life threatening eating disorder can occur at any weight/body size, and can occur even without drastic weight changes
- Only 6% of individuals with eating disorders are underweight
- Don't assume that a decrease in body fat/weight will improve performance, increases in performance shouldn't be at the expense of the athlete's health
- Be mindful of your own thoughts/behaviors- model healthy relationships with food and body image (consider exploring intuitive eating & body neutrality)
- A low heart rate (under 60bpm) with the presence of any eating disorder behaviors needs to be evaluated by a physician

Creating a Healthy Team Atmosphere

- De-emphasize weight, don't comment on athletes' weights and don't weigh them
- Talk about how a variety of factors impact performance that have nothing to do with weight
- Highlight the need for sleep and rest
- Avoid referring to food as good or bad/ healthy or unhealthy

Contact

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