

Eating disorders

Stakeholder pack



Introduction

Eating disorders are serious and complex mental illnesses that can be life-threatening and have an ongoing impact on a person's quality of life.

The Department of Health has partnered with Eating Disorders Victoria to develop a series of resources to raise awareness of eating disorders and help people find the support they need.

The materials in this pack have been designed to help you build knowledge in your communities about what eating disorders are, how to spot the signs and where to get help.

What you can do to help

As a key stakeholder, you can help by sharing and promoting information and resources about eating disorders and support services.

- Use the **key messages** available in this document to develop tailored digital and print channels, e.g. newsletters, letter drops and announcements.
- Use the **social media tiles and text** available in this document to post on your platforms. You can also share these assets with trusted community partners, groups and organisations to post on their channels.
- Print **flyers** and share it with people who may be interested or pin up the **posters** on your noticeboards.
- Use this **call-to-action** in all your communications:
 - Visit the Eating Disorders Victoria Hub for support with eating disorders:
<https://eatingdisorders.org.au/find-support/eating-disorder-helpline/>

Key messages: What is an eating disorder?

- An eating disorder is a serious mental illness characterised by disturbances to thoughts, behaviours and attitudes to food and eating. For some, this extends to pre-occupation with body weight/shape.
- They can be life-threatening and impact quality of life.
- Eating disorders affect approximately 1.1 million, or 4.45% of the Australian population.
- And when combined with disordered eating, are estimated to affect 16.3% of the Australian population.
- Eating disorders can affect anyone. People of any age, gender, ethnicity or background can develop an eating disorder.
- They're often linked to a mix of biological, psychological, social and cultural factors and are never the individual's fault.
- Many people face stigma and barriers to care – education about the risks of eating disorders, being aware of the signs and treatment options, and getting early treatment can all make a difference.
- While most people will be familiar with terms like 'anorexia' and 'bulimia', there's a number of different types of eating disorders, with various symptoms that people can experience.
- In Australia, the most common eating disorder is Binge Eating Disorder, with symptoms affecting almost half of all people with an eating disorder.

Key messages: Spotting the signs

- A mental health clinician can form a diagnosis based on the symptoms someone has.
- One diagnosis is not less or more severe than the other – they are just a different group of symptoms.
- Symptoms can be varied, discrete and sometimes appear as regular activities.
- Signs can include changes in eating habits, attitudes toward food, body image concerns, social withdrawal and preoccupation with weight or exercise.
- Some of the common behaviours and attitudes you might notice are low self-esteem, poor body image and/or a preoccupation with the body, changes in eating habits and attitudes towards food, excessive exercising, food anxiety, and rapid weight loss or frequent weight changes.
- There's many symptoms and warning signs that could signal someone is struggling in their relationship with food and their body.

Key messages: Getting help

- Recovering from an eating disorder is possible with the right support.
- It's hard to know when you or someone you care about needs help. Even when you do, it's difficult to know how to talk about eating disorders.
- If something feels off, don't wait - reaching out is the first step toward support and recovery.
- If you're concerned about your eating or the way you feel about your body, talking to your GP can be a helpful first step. To help you prepare for that first conversation, consider writing a list of things you'd like to chat about ahead of time.
- Visiting your GP is the first step, but only a mental health clinician can diagnose an eating disorder.
- If you're not sure what you need, but would like to know what's available, or would just like some guidance, you can reach out for a confidential conversation with the Eating Disorder Victoria Hub on 1300 550 236.
- The EDV Hub provides information and peer support for people experiencing eating disorders or those who are supporting them. They can connect you with services and support, assist you with treatment options, connect you with GPs, psychologist/dietitian, and specialist eating disorder services and support groups.
- It's completely free and confidential. You can call, email or fill out a form on the Eating Disorder Victoria website <<https://eatingdisorders.org.au/find-support/eating-disorder-helpline/>>
- The EDV Hub is open Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 4:30pm. You can get in contact outside of those hours, and they'll get back to you when they're online.

Key messages: Eating Disorder Victoria

- The stepped system of care has been designed so that a person receives the level of support and treatment that matches their needs at each point of their journey. It's about getting the right care at the right time.
- That's why services like the Eating Disorders Victoria Hub are so important.
- Eating Disorders Victoria provides tailored, accessible, peer-led support services to all Victorians impacted by eating disorders.
- Eating Disorders Victoria offers a wide range of free, accessible resources to help you:
 - Understand symptoms and navigate treatment options.
 - Prepare for conversations about eating disorders, whether you're seeking help for yourself or supporting someone else.
 - Access guidance and care at any stage of an eating disorder - there's no wrong door to start your journey.
- Supports include telehealth nurse and counselling services, peer mentor program, online support groups, self-led learning programs, and private mental health and dietetics clinics.
- Eating Disorders Victoria's services are available across Victoria and can support you even while you're on a waitlist for hospital or private practitioner services, ensuring care continues without interruption.

Social media post: Tips on talking to your GP

CW: This post discusses disordered eating and may be distressing for some.

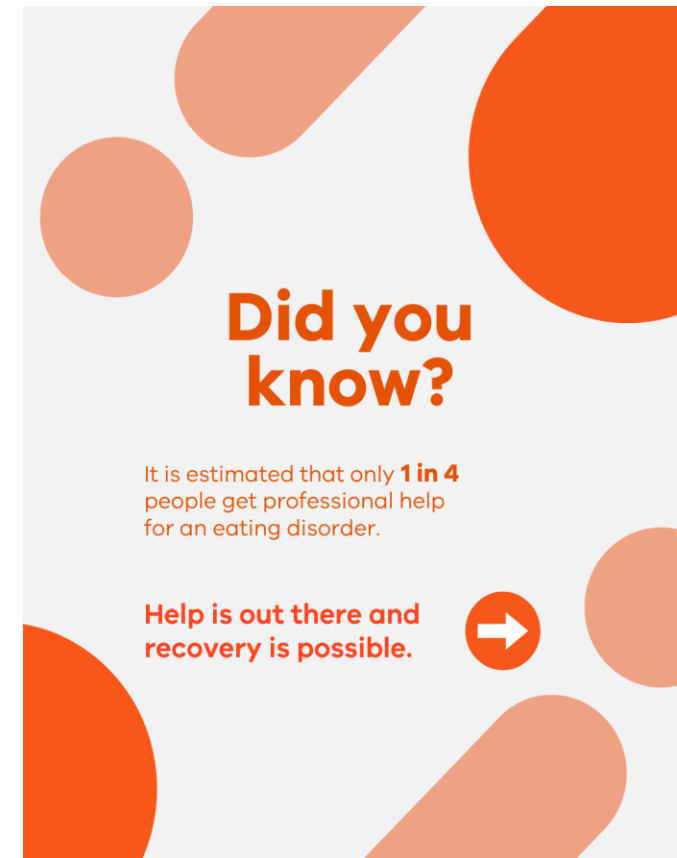
Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses that can affect anyone, and they take many different forms.

Speaking with a health professional can be the first step toward recovery. You don't have to do it alone and there is some amazing support available.

If you're unsure about treatment options or need some guidance to take the first step, you can reach out for a confidential conversation with the Eating Disorder Victoria Hub on 1300 550 236.

For more information and resources, visit the Better Health Channel:
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/eating-disorders>

#EatingDisorders #MentalHealth #YouAreNotAlone



[Download the social media tiles](#)

Social media post: Understanding an eating disorder

CW: This post discusses disordered eating and may be distressing for some.

Eating disorders don't have a single cause or look a certain way. They affect people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. Every experience is different, and deeply personal.

Right now, around 1.1 million Australians are living with an eating disorder. It's more common than many people realise and often misunderstood.

By listening to real stories and learning more, we can break down stigma, spot the signs earlier, and show up for the people around us with empathy and support.

With the right support, anyone can recover from an eating disorder.

Recovery is possible. And help is available.

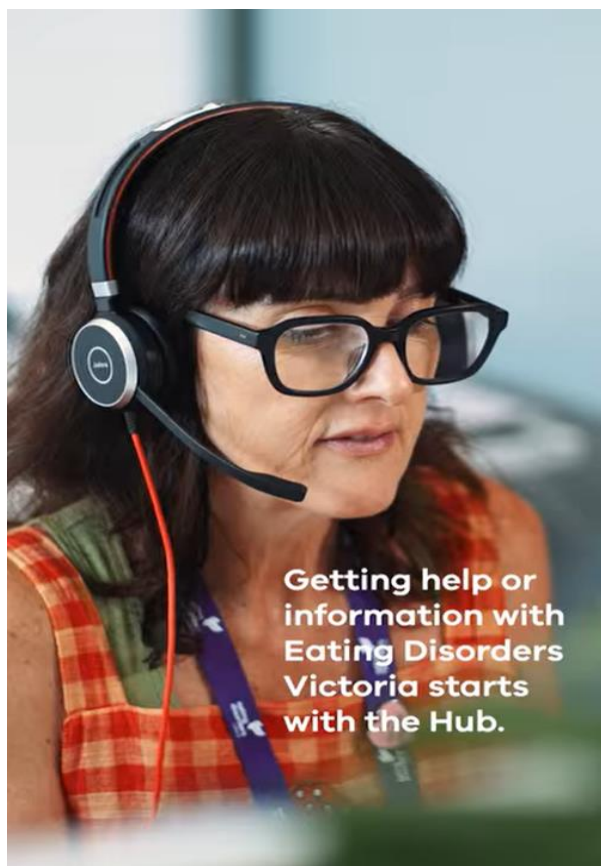
To learn more, visit:

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/eating-disorders>



[Download the social media tiles](#)

Video – Eating Disorders Victoria Hub



[Download the video](#)

Printable flyers

Click [here](#) to download the below flyers:

- Is food eating away at you?
- Professional offerings
- Learn about eating disorders



Printable posters

Click [here](#) to download the below posters:

- Is food eating away at you?
- Navigating Medicare
- Responding to diet talk
- Learn about eating disorders



Thank you

