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# PENNSYLVANIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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## Simple Steps for Celebrating Your Body

*The Pennsylvania Psychological Association Offers  
Tips for a Healthy Lifestyle*

**Harrisburg, PA - January 31, 2014** - With all the focus on romance and love around Valentine's Day, the most important aspect of relationships is often overlooked - the relationship you have with yourself. February is National Eating Disorder Awareness Month and a time when we should remember that there are simple steps we can take to be kind to ourselves in how we eat, treat, and think about our bodies.

The National Eating Disorder Association sites statistics indicating 20 million women and 10 million men in the U.S. will suffer from an eating disorder at some point during their lifetime. Eating disorders vary by symptoms and can include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), only 13 percent of teens with an eating disorder receive the treatment they need. Individuals with eating disorders also are more likely to have depression, anxiety, or engage in substance use. Left untreated, eating disorders can be fatal.

"Eating disorders don't just affect teenage girls and women, but also affect men and children younger than 12," says Dr. Fauve Luckey, a licensed psychologist and Associate Director of the Psychological Services Center at Marywood University in Scranton.

Gemma Boyd, M.A., a graduate student at Marywood University, adds, "With eating disorder rates on the rise, it is especially important to begin talking to your children about healthy eating habits and positive body image early."

**The Pennsylvania Psychological Association offers the following tips for a healthy body image and mindful eating.**

- **Celebrate all your body can do.** Try to find new ways to be active and thankful for all the great things your body does for you every day. Be grateful for your ability to walk, run, dance, laugh, hug, etc.

- **Remember to appreciate yourself as a whole person.** You are not just your pant size. Create a top 10 list of strengths you love about yourself to compare your body with others.
- **Practice mindful eating.** Respect your levels of hunger and fullness. Make sure to keep your body fed and never deprive it of nourishment it needs. Appreciate each and every bite and take time to enjoy and savor what you're eating. Take some deep breaths before meals so you can remember to listen to your body when it tells you that it's full.
- **Forgive yourself.** Throw out unrealistic expectations based on the latest fad diet or what media suggests you should look like. Extreme dieting is not healthy and is not a long term fix. We all have days when we don't feel our best. It is important to be patient and kind to yourself as you work on reasonable goals towards maintaining a well-balanced and healthy lifestyle.
- **Ask for support.** Accepting help and support from those who care about you can help alleviate pressure and reduce your risk of developing an eating disorder. Build a support network of positive and healthy friends and family. If you are concerned about current eating habits or body image, it is important to reach out to your doctor or a psychologist. Use our **Psychologist Locator** at <http://www.papsy.org/index.php/psychologist-locator.html> to find a psychologist near you.

To learn more about eating disorders and mind/body health, visit the Pennsylvania Psychological Association's website, [www.papsy.org](http://www.papsy.org), the American Psychological Association's Consumer Help Center at [www.APAhelpcenter.org](http://www.APAhelpcenter.org), or the National Eating Disorder Association's website at [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org).

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The Pennsylvania Psychological Association promotes the science and practice of psychology by supporting psychologists to meet the evolving needs of the public. Our mission is to effectively communicate to the public, policy makers, and membership the value of evidence-based and ethical practice; support the lifelong learning of competent and ethical psychologists; and promote and connect our membership to foster a community of professional psychologists.

**Web site:** <http://www.papsy.org/>

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