

**For Immediate Release
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**ARE YOUR EATING HABITS HEALTHY?
FIND OUT AT THE NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS SCREENING PROGRAM**

Are you dissatisfied with your body or have an intense fear of gaining weight? Do you over-exercise, restrict calories or think about food all the time? Do you avoid eating around other people, or feel that food has a power over you so that you can't stop eating even when you are full?

Don't continue these unhealthy routines. If you are concerned about your eating habits, or those of a friend, you may find it helpful to talk to counselors at your college's counseling or health center, who will be offering anonymous screenings for eating disorders and information on how to stop letting food, weight and calories control your life. The screenings will be held at Complex III on April 6, 2005 from 9:00 am-12:00. In addition, the screening will be available online at <http://www.gsw.edu/~health/announcements.html>

"Adjusting to college life can be difficult for many and the desire to fit in can make students susceptible to eating disorders like anorexia, bulimia and compulsive overeating. 95% of people with eating disorders are between the ages of 12 and 25 and the majority of those who have an eating disorder don't seek treatment, often as a result of shame or social stigma. The goal of the screening event is to reduce the stigma attached to eating disorders and let students know that help is available," says Katherine Cruise, Communications Manager for Screening for Mental Health, the nonprofit that sponsors the National Eating Disorders Screening Program.

Counselors emphasize that even those who do not have a diagnosable eating disorder can benefit from this program. Food concerns, body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem can keep a student from achieving at school or sports and hinders social activities like dating or being with friends. This program offers education and screening to help students stop unhealthy eating habits before they evolve into full-blown eating disorders.

As part of the program, students will hear an educational presentation, complete a written self-assessment and have the opportunity to talk privately with a health professional about their screening results. If appropriate, students may be referred to the counseling center for a complete evaluation.

The Georgia Southwestern State University Herschel A. Smith Health Center and the School of Nursing are offering this education and screening program as part of the National Eating Disorders Screening Program (NEDSP), sponsored by the national nonprofit Screening For Mental Health. NEDSP is being held at colleges nationwide in conjunction with Eating Disorders Awareness Week, February 27- March 5, 2005. For more information, visit www.gsw.edu/~health or www.mentalhealthscreening.org.