13.1: Introduction

Learning Objectives

- Apply the nursing process to clients with eating disorders
- Describe nursing assessments related to eating disorders
- Identify common nursing problems/diagnoses related to eating disorders
- Establish a safe environment
- Plan individualized goals and expected outcomes in collaboration with the client and their family members
- Apply evidence-based practice when planning and implementing nursing care
- Describe common treatments for eating disorders
- Identify appropriate referrals to community resources
- Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Provide patient education to clients and their family members

Many people become concerned about their weight at some point in their lives. However, individuals with eating disorders have a distorted view of their weight and their body image and develop an unhealthy relationship with food. As a result of this psychological struggle, behaviors such as severe restriction of food intake, obsessive exercising, binging, and purging can occur. Eating disorders can affect anyone, regardless of gender, age, race, or economic status and often can also affect their family members and loved ones. The physiological consequences of eating disorders can be fatal if they are not identified and treated appropriately. This chapter will review different types of eating disorders and discuss common assessment findings, treatments, and related nursing interventions.