



# Treatment and Outreach Program for Eating Disorders (TOP-ED)

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# What Are Eating Disorders?

Eating disorders are disturbances in attitudes and behaviors related to eating, weight, and body image. They are associated with medical and mental health complications. Individuals with eating disorders often experience other psychiatric disorders including depression, anxiety, or substance use. Eating disorders are serious but treatable mental illnesses which can affect people of all age, race, gender, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.

There are different types of eating disorders all of which warrant early professional help. These include:

- **Anorexia Nervosa:** Individuals experiencing Anorexia Nervosa are preoccupied with weight loss. They typically impose strict dietary and possibly compensatory behaviors (e.g. excessive exercising, self-induced vomiting, misuse of laxatives, diuretics or diet pills) leading to significant weight loss.
- **Bulimia Nervosa:** Individuals experiencing Bulimia Nervosa are also preoccupied with weight loss. They engage in a cycle of bingeing behaviors (overindulgence in eating, typically over a short period of time) accompanied by a feeling of loss of control, guilt, and shame. The bingeing behaviors are followed with any of the compensatory behaviors described above. Their weight often fluctuates, yet it may remain within a normative range.
- **Binge Eating Disorder:** Individuals experiencing Binge Eating Disorder engage in binge eating behavior. Unlike individuals with Bulimia Nervosa, they do not engage in compensatory behaviors.
- **Other Specified Feeding and Eating Disorders (OSFED):** Individuals diagnosed with OSFED are those who display disordered eating behaviors that do not neatly fit all the criteria requirements for meeting any of the above categories. They experience the common psychological and/or medical complications associated with eating disorders.

## Signs of eating disorders include:

- Weight loss
- Brittle hair and nails
- Dry skin
- Anemia and muscle weakness
- Feeling cold most of the time regardless of the weather
- Fatigue
- Swelling around the cheeks or jaw, calluses on knuckles, damage to teeth and gums (signs of vomiting)
- Stomach and abdominal discomfort
- Constipation and/or digestive difficulties
- Infertility and/or menstruation problems
- Sleeping problems
- Emotional problems
- Irritability
- Concentration difficulties
- Injuries caused due to over-exercising

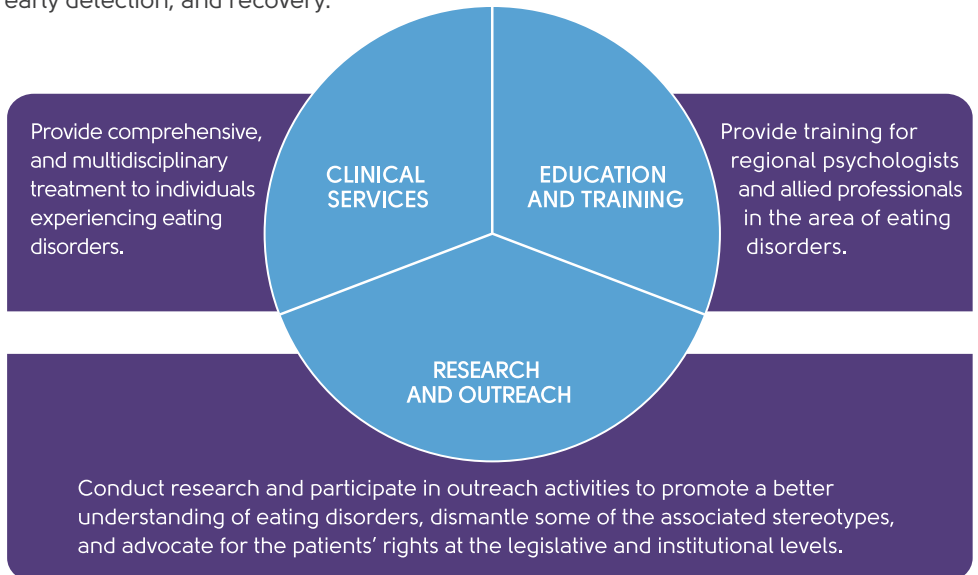
# Treatment and Outreach Program for Eating Disorders (TOP-ED)

In collaboration with the Department of Clinical Nutrition, and the Department of Family Medicine at AUBMC, the Department of Psychiatry has taken the initiative to establish a program dedicated to providing specialized care to patients suffering from an eating disorder. The program will provide services which span across clinical, educational, research, and social/advocacy avenues.

## Philosophy and Mission

In the newly established Treatment and Outreach Program for Eating Disorders (TOP-ED), we recognize the multifaceted nature of eating disorders which involve individual, familial, cultural, and global factors. We embrace the philosophy that eating disorders are not strictly about food, body, and weight. We also adopt the viewpoint that health may be achieved at every size.

Our mission is to support patients on the pathway toward long-term recovery. Through research, educational, and outreach activities, we hope to promote a better understanding of the illness, in order to create an environment conducive to prevention, early detection, and recovery.



# Clinical Services

Treatment and Outreach Program for Eating Disorders (TOP-ED) at AUBMC adopts a multidisciplinary approach and provides individualized patient care based on the latest advances in eating disorders research. Patients are helped to normalize their eating behavior. In order to facilitate long-term recovery, patients’ coping style and comorbid issues are also addressed. Family members and/or significant others are engaged in supporting the individual in the recovery process.

The treatment and level of care meets the needs of the patient and depend on the severity of the eating disorder. Services offered include the following:

Assessment	Inpatient hospitalization	Outpatient services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our initial assessment is aimed at gauging eligibility for the TOP-ED.</li><li>• We assess the severity to determine the appropriate level of care.</li><li>• In cases of severe underweight and/or medical complications, a referral is made to the psychiatric inpatient unit (PIU).</li><li>• Follow up assessments are aimed at investigating the overall health needs in order to facilitate holistic care.</li></ul>	<p>During inpatient hospitalization, an eating disorders protocol is administered as per the directives of the PIU attending psychiatrist, in consult with the Eating Disorders team.</p> <p>Primary goals during inpatient hospitalization include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weight restoration</li><li>• Medical stabilization</li><li>• Providing psychoeducation to individuals and families</li></ul>	<p>Patients may benefit from one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individual psychotherapy</li><li>• Group psychoeducation and psychotherapy</li><li>• Family therapy or parent support</li><li>• Nutrition, education, and therapy</li><li>• Medical and/or psychiatric follow up</li></ul>

# Who can benefit from this program?

Our program offers treatment to patients with symptoms of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, or other specified feeding and eating disorders. We see patients from all age groups.

People with an eating disorder or those who suspect they may have a problem with their eating behaviors should consult the TOP-ED as they will be screened to see if they can benefit from the services provided.

## Location and Appointment Scheduling

If you feel you personally may have an eating disorder or care about someone who has, do not hesitate to contact us. We at the Treatment and Outreach Program for Eating Disorders at AUBMC are dedicated to helping you achieve sustainable recovery.

The Treatment and Outreach Program for Eating Disorders at AUBMC, Department of Psychiatry, Building 56. To schedule an appointment, contact us on 01 - 759 620. Please mention your interest to schedule an appointment with a clinician in the Treatment and Outreach Program for Eating Disorders.

For inquiries, please contact us at: [rg34@aub.edu.lb](mailto:rg34@aub.edu.lb).

# Meet our team

The team consists of clinical psychologists, a family medicine specialist, and a dietitian – all of whom are trained in the provision of eating disorder services. Consultations are also available as needed from other medical specialties at AUBMC.

## Core team members include:



**GHINA ISMAIL, PSY.D.**  
**PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

Dr. Ghina Ismail is a Clinical Psychologist, registered with the College of Psychologists of Ontario. She completed her doctoral degree at James Madison University in 2008 and has been a faculty member within the Department of Psychiatry at AUBMC since July of 2014. She also serves as the director for psychosocial services at the psychiatric inpatient unit. Her specialty areas include eating disorders, developmental trauma, and issues of spirituality. Dr. Ismail received training in interpersonal, cognitive-behavioral, dialectical-behavioral and trauma focused interventions including Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Sensorimotor Processing (a bodily based modality). Before joining AUBMC, she worked in a specialized Eating Disorders clinic in Ontario.



**RASSIL GHAZZAOUI, MA**  
**PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

Ms. Rassil Ghazzaoui is a Clinical Psychologist within the Department of Psychiatry and the Bariatric Unit in the Surgery Department at AUBMC. She obtained her M.A. degree in Clinical Psychology from Columbia University. She received further training at the Psychiatric Institute/Columbia University Medical Center in New York. Rassil is currently seeing patients with Eating Disorders under the supervision of Dr. Ismail. She is also the coordinator of the Psychosis Recovery Outreach Program (PROP), a specialized psychosis program at AUBMC.



### **MAY SAKR MAALOUF, MS DIETITIAN**

Ms. May Sakr Maalouf is a licensed dietitian practicing in the Department of Clinical Nutrition at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) since 2001. May is a member of the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN), a member in the Lebanese Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics (LAND), and a former member of the Lebanese Colloquium jury for dietitians. May provides training to dietetic interns and international visiting dietitians. She is a speaker in multiple national conferences on nutrition in pregnancy, breastfeeding, and diabetes among other topics. May has received a certified training in eating disorders. Recently, she completed an observership in two eating disorders' centers in France (Raymond Poincaré and Institut Mutualiste Montsouris).



### **JIHANE NA'OUS, MD FAMILY PHYSICIAN**

Dr. Jihane Naous is a Family Medicine Specialist who graduated from Saint Joseph University in Lebanon. She completed a fellowship in Adolescent Medicine in Nicklaus Children's hospital in Miami-Florida during the period when she was in charge and was training patients with eating disorders in outpatient and inpatient settings. She also participated weekly in eating disorders' multidisciplinary meetings. Dr. Naous holds the Arab Board in Family Medicine, and she is currently a Clinical Associate in the Department of Family Medicine at AUBMC. She is also a Clinical Advisor at Marsa Sexual Health Center. Her main areas of expertise are adolescent medicine, eating disorders, transition of chronic diseases from pediatrics to adult care, adolescent gynecology, sexual health, sexually transmitted diseases, and dealing with risk taking behaviors.





