

CHAPTER 12

EATING DISORDERS: ANOREXIA NERVOSA, BULIMIA NERVOSA, AND OTHER CONDITIONS

REAL LIFE SCENARIO

At age 16, Sarah suddenly became self-conscious about her weight when the neighborhood children teased her about being overweight. She began exercising to an aerobics video for an hour each day and found that she had success in losing weight; this was just the beginning of her obsession to be thin. Next, Sarah turned to eating less food to lose even more weight and began eliminating certain foods from her diet, such as candy and meat. She increased her water and vegetable intake and chewed sugarless gum to curb her appetite. Once she began dieting, it was impossible for her to stop. She really enjoyed having a high degree of self-control over her body. She was literally obsessed with food and stared at others while they were eating a meal. She cooked large meals and then refused to eat all but a few bites. By the time Sarah was 19 years old and 5'6" tall, her weight had dropped from 150 pounds to 85 pounds in 20 months. Her family was concerned about her weight status, demanding that she go to a physician for an evaluation. Sarah was not happy about this idea but believed that her family would stop pestering her if she just went to the doctor's visit. Sarah did not think she had a problem; she truly thought she still was grotesquely overweight. She did notice, however, that she was intolerant of cold temperatures and had not menstruated in a year.

Does Sarah have an eating disorder? What types of therapy do you think the physician will suggest for Sarah? Where could she go for such therapy? What is the likelihood that she will fully recover from her condition?