**Holiday Feasting**

Thanksgiving is almost here! There are a lot of delicious foods and desserts to be had on this festive holiday, but Mental Health America *of* Porter County would like to remind you of the importance of portion control when it comes to eating. Binge eating or compulsive overeating occurs when people feel out of control when eating and are unable to stop. The following are some signs and symptoms of binge eating:

* **Lack of Control:** When people binge eat, they have a difficult time controlling what they are eating, or feel unable to stop eating, even when they are full.
* **Abnormal Portions:** Binge eaters often eat continuously throughout the day, and have no planned meal times.
* **Secrecy:** Many binge eaters often eat normally around others, but then compulsively overeat when they are alone.
* **Lack of awareness:** Binge eaters are often unaware of how much they are eating while they are bingeing.
* **Feelings after eating:** After a binge eating episode, a person often feels disgusted, guilty, or depressed.

Binge eating can have many negative impacts on a person’s health, as it usually leads to obesity which can often impose other medical complications such as heart disease, diabetes, and joint and muscle pain. However, there are many steps that one can take to overcome binge eating:

* **Stress Management:** People often use binge eating as a way to manage stress. However, things such as exercise, meditation, and breathing exercises are all effective at reducing stress.
* **Stay Active:** Many people eat when they’re bored. If you are bored, go for a walk, visit a friend, or partake in a hobby.
* **Get enough sleep:** People often eat to keep their energy up. If you are feeling tired take a nap, if you have the time to do so.
* **Don’t diet:** If you restrict your food, your cravings will grow strong and you will eventually overeat. Eat nutritious foods in moderation, and try not to ban foods.
* **Regularly scheduled meals:** You should eat 3 meals a day with smaller healthy snacks in between. If you skip a meal, you are more likely to overeat at the next meal.

There is a lot of good food to be had over the holiday season, and it can be very tempting to overeat. However, overeating is very detrimental to a person’s health. That’s why it is good to always control your portions but to not limit or restrict foods that you enjoy, and find other ways to cope with the reasons that a person may be inclined to overeat.