Eating Disorder: Causes, Types And Ways Of Treatment

An estimated 8 million Americans have eating disorder (Graves).. These eating disorders can differ from anorexia to obesity and many in between. Approximately 13% of youth will experience one of these disorders in their life at some point. An eating disorder is classified as a severe psychiatric disorder involving sociocultural, psychological, and biological influences. They lead to many health problems, physically and mentally (Schmitt). Normally, eating disorders begin in the teen years or early 20’s, but they can also occur in childhood and at older ages. Eating disorders are a real problem in our society and no one is really doing anything to help. There are healthier ways to lose weight and maintain that weight.

Most people, mainly girls, think that being thin will make them prettier. The outcome of thinking this are eating disorders. An age 15 girl, Becca said, “I look at the girls in TV and magazine ads. Then I look at myself in the mirror. What I see is a fat girl!' (Graves). There are many things that come with eating disorders. Most of them are health problems. Mental and physical health problems occur from having an eating disorder. These health problems will not only affect you now, but also in the future. The sociocultural idealization of being thin comes from many places. Society and social media are big contributors to these eating disorders. Both put much pressure on people of all ages, but mostly teens from social media. In western culture they spread two messages from society about food and eating. The first one says that a thin woman is successful, attractive, healthy, happy, fit and popular. This gives the idea that being slim makes you happier, more popular, and more attractive. The second message says that eating is a pleasurable activity which meets any needs, also relieving hunger, and that women have a right to meet these needs. In magazines they seem to put out these ‘exciting’ new diets that guarantee weight loss, but then follow those articles up with recipes and pictures of food. So, society and social media is basically saying we should eat everything other people give you, but we can not get fat from this food (Abraham).

There are many different eating disorders, but the most known are anorexia, bulimia, and obesity. Anorexia is the pursuit of thinness without the acknowledgement that they are malnourished. This disorder normally begins with being on a diet. Most diets begin before or after a major change has occurred. Symptoms include excessive weight loss, extreme sensitivity to cold temperatures, unusual eating habits, social isolation and extreme physical activity. Bulimia is another disorder that involves extreme weight loss. Bulimia is when the patient binges and then purges. Purging is mostly performed by self-induced vomiting, but may also abuse laxatives, take diuretics, excessive exercise, fasting, or a combination of these. Bulimia is similar to anorexia in which both are intently focused on weight, dieting, and food. The difference in these disorders are that an anorexic wants to lose more weight and a bulimic’s goal is to get the “ideal” body. Most people that have bulimia have often been abused as a child, and come from families that there has been substance abuse. The symptoms of bulimia are very similar to those of anorexia (Shaw). Obesity has become the number one health problem in America. Obesity is usually inherited. This alone contributes to most overweight problems. If the child has one parent that is overweight then they have a better chance of becoming overweight versus the child that does not have nay parents overweight. Moderate weight problems usually come up with the combination of heredity, overeating, and under exercising. In our society it is normal to overeat a little, but those who have inherited the

tendency to be overweight need to be more careful about overeating. Another factor of being overweight is the family environment. Not only will health risks be a problem, but also will social problems arise when being overweight. These problems include high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, exercise intolerance, lower self-esteem, and depression (Schmitt).

Many health problems come along with eating disorders. These health problems include the breakdown of organs, mental problems, and other complications. The lack of food causes the organs to stop functioning properly. When this happens the kidneys, liver and other internal organs begin to shrink. The other complications include muscle aches, cramps, swelling of joints, and injuries to the nerves and tendons (Shaw). The mental problems that can occur can be depression, poor self-esteem, and personality disorders. Doctors have done studies and the results of those studies showed that women suffering from eating disorders are more 'self-loathing' and lower self-esteem than those that do not (Abrahams).

There are many healthier alternatives to losing and maintaining a healthy weight. Motivation is a big part of achieving your goals. Ways to get motivated to lose weight is by joining weight-loss groups or weight watchers. Healthy eating programs have been big help to people who need to lose weight. These programs teach you how to eat three well-balanced meals a day. It also teaches you not leave the table full, because if you become full at every meal it makes it hard to lose weight. Another way to get motivated is to set weight loss goals. To do this you need to pick a realistic goal based on your bone structure and how overweight you are. You also, should not weigh yourself more than once a week, because weighing yourself daily can cause false hope and disappointment. Exercise is a big part of losing and maintaining a healthy weight. Exercising daily can increase the rate of weight loss as well as make you feel better physically. The most effective way to lose weight healthy is the combination of daily exercise and eating healthy. Some easy exercises to do daily is walking or running, going for bike rides, taking the stairs instead of the elevator and spending more time outdoors. The last thing that can help with maintaining a healthy weight is social activities. The more you participate in social activities and being outdoor the easier it is to lose weight. Having things to do can keep your mind off food which will keep you from snacking. Some things that you can do is getting a part-time job or after school activities (Schmitt).

There are healthy ways to help people that have eating disorders. Social media and society is big contributors. These issues could be resolved if society did not make people feel like they have to be thin to be pretty. Many people do not pay attention and if they did it could help. It is a serious issue that could be helped if we would just pay attention and actually help people that have eating disorders.

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