

Youth Culture Lesson
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Food for Thought

Eating Disorders are Complex, Serious

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What Happened:

A woman recently filed suit against the Pittsburgh Public School District, saying that her sixth-grade daughter developed anorexia after some boys in her class told her she was fat.

The girl, whose name was not mentioned in the lawsuit, eventually enrolled in a treatment program because her weight was “dangerously low” and now attends another school.

Eating experts say, however, that while bullying may have helped spark the girl’s anorexia, eating disorders are far more complex.

“With eating disorders, we say you’re born with a gun and life pulls the trigger,” says Lynn Grefe, CEO of the National Eating Disorders Association.

According to Grefe, people prone to eating disorders tend to already be:

- Perfectionists;
- Anxious; and/or
- Obsessive-compulsive.

“The person’s often a real high achiever, and if you put those people in a situation and then their world comes crashing down, they get triggered,” Grefe says.

Talk About It:

We all know that it’s not healthy to be too heavy, but being too skinny can be a big problem, too. Do you know anyone who thinks he or she needs to lose weight when, in fact, gaining weight would be beneficial?

Just because someone’s skinny doesn’t mean he or she is anorexic, but some common warning signs can include:

- Dieting constantly, even when they don’t need to;

- Complaining about feeling bloated or nauseated after eating a normal amount of food;
- Weighing themselves a lot; and
- Thinning hair.

Do you know anyone with these warning signs?

Source: The Renfrew Center

Eating disorders such as anorexia are often classified as a disease, but do you think even people who aren't anorexic worry too much about their weight? Why?

What the Bible Says:

“Then God said, ‘I gave you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food’” (Gen. 1:29).

“And put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony” (Prov. 23:2).

“Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food” (Isa. 55:2).

“You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God...” (Joel 2:26).

“‘Please test your servant for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink.’ At the end of ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who are the royal food” (Dan. 1:12, 15).