

Eating disorders in today's society



**ASSIGN
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Eating disorders in today's society In a world that is made up of diversity, in which there are people of various shapes, sizes and colors, there is still only one way in most people seem to define beauty: thin and physically flawless. While there are many people that agree that each person is beautiful and attractive, there are still those that believe beauty and attractiveness must follow a certain set of guidelines and standards. The standard that is sought after most in the battle of being attractive is body weight; the thinner the better seems to be the motto of beauty in today's society. It is because of this one standard that eating disorders have become almost fashion statements themselves, as girls resort to them to maintain a thin physique. The biggest focus for both men and women when it comes to being attractive is their weight, though this is quickly followed by the physical, flawless appearance of the face. When it comes to females, a thin, slightly toned body is considered attractive and beautiful. In regard to men, they can either be thin, well-built, or athletic in appearance. Despite how pretty a person may be when it comes to their face, overweight and heavyset people are seldom considered attractive in accordance to society's standards of today.

Standards of attractiveness do not vary so much by gender or age. Men expect women to be thin and busty, while women expect men to either be thin or athletic. Each gender expects the other to at least be able to maintain a decent weight; again, the standard of thin being beautiful is still in play regardless of gender or age. Sexual orientation, however, is slightly different. The majority of homosexual individuals do not put as much stock in beauty or attractiveness as heterosexual people do. Indeed, many homosexual females who look butch or manly are considered to be attractive, while

homosexual males who look dainty and delicate are regarded as being attractive. Even when, in homosexual relationships, a female looks like the typical idea of a female, or a male looks like a typical male, they are still seen as attractive by their fellows.

What our culture tells men about how to attract women is they need to appear as men, regardless of what their real age is. They need to be thin or muscular; many of them tend to look like a cliched Californian surfer.

However, men also need to have an appealing and independent personality, which goes to show that not all beauty is physical. On the other end of the spectrum, however, are the women who believe that they need to attract men by looking as fake as possible. Our culture seems to tell us that women are only considered beautiful and attractive when they are perfect, down to the last detail. These messages differ in the sense that what women want out of men is something natural and achievable, yet what men want from women is difficult to obtain and nearly impossible to hold onto. Men expect more out of women; therefore, women feel more unattractive to men than men do to women, because it becomes so hard for women to uphold to the standards of what is beautiful and attractive.

I believe that the people that are most likely to be influenced by these societal standards as teenagers, and more so the girls. Teenage girls become very concerned about their appearance, especially when they are subjected to gorgeous model-thin women in the media. Teenage girls seem to think that the women they see on television and in the movies are the only way in which females should look, and they strive so hard to look the same way. Unfortunately, oftentimes girls go to great lengths to look just like these media models, whether they end up developing an eating disorder or

begging a parent for plastic surgery as a birthday or graduation present.

While teenage males do not focus so much on their looks as teenage girls do, they still try to follow some of the standards set down for them, such as maintaining an athletic physique or paying close attention to what they wear. Females, no matter how old they are, will always be more concerned with how they look, as approval from males seems harder to come by than approval from females.

Survey of our culture's current standard of beauty

1. Anorexia is becoming less of a health disorder and more of a beauty regimen
2. Obsession with beauty may signal an eating disorder; someone who is thin might be forcing themselves and hurting themselves to become that thin
3. Magazines, such as Star, display beauty as thin, big-breasted and, when applicable, muscled or toned
4. The ideas of beauty can either lead to self-improvement or self-destruction
5. The media does not distinguish between natural beauty and artificial beauty; many people are led to believe that fake, plastic beauty is nature, and therefore most appealing
6. Based on a website solely for men, it appears that the only type of beauty there is is flawless, tanned, and thin.
7. Online teen magazines (as well as their print counterparts) make it seem as though girls are only considered attractive if they can fit into size 2 pants - or smaller. Even as teenagers, these girls are larger-breasted and thin-waisted.
8. The most-used test guys use to decide if girls are attractive is seeing how

they look in two-piece bathing suits. If they look good and fill out the top nicely, they are considered to be attractive.

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