

Cause and effect essay on eating disorders



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The distinctions between eating disorders can be complex. While anorexia and bulimia may have some issues in common, other factors make them distinct. For parents, trying to understand the differences can be crucial. Early detection and proper treatment significantly improve the chances for a child to recover. Bulimia and anorexia are both very dangerous, and can be life threatening. Both are very common among teens and young adults. Eating disorders are becoming more familiar for this generation to feel accepted and in this society. Anorexia Nervosa is a prolonged disorder of eating due to loss of appetite.

This disorder affects many women and a few men, some of whom go undiagnosed for years. Early diagnosis and treatment can improve the odds of recovery by a large percentage. Sometimes knowing the facts about anorexia will help family, friends and providers to recognize the signs and symptoms. Anorexia nervosa appears more in the Caucasian and Hispanic female as opposed to the African American or Asian female. It is more prevalent in the age group of the 15 year-old to 23 year- old female, although throughout the last couple of years, a younger age group is appearing at an alarming rate.

It is estimated that 1 percent of females in their teens and early twenties develop this eating disorder. Studies have shown that 10% to 15% will die of complications arising from anorexia nervosa. A sufferer will sometimes have a soft downy hair growth on their arms and other body parts, which develops from lack of essential vitamins and minerals lacking in their diet. An anorexic patient will weigh 15% or more under the norm for their height and weight.

Women with anorexia nervosa will have lack of or an abnormal menstrual flow.

After a very small meal an anorexic will feel bloated due to extreme shrinkage of their stomach. Studies have shown that 50% of all anorexics will suffer from bone thinning or otherwise known as osteoporosis. It is estimated that only four out of every ten person affiliated with anorexia nervosa will make a full recovery. Bulimia is a serious psychological eating disorder also known as bulimia nervosa. It is characterized by frequent episodes of bingeing-eating and is then followed by inappropriate methods of weight control or purging.

A person suffering from this disorder may use inappropriate methods like vomiting, fasting, excessive use of laxatives and diuretics, or even compulsive exercising to lose weight. People who suffer from bulimia are generally very conscious about their personal appearance related to the shape and size of their bodies. They may be of normal weight or even slightly over weight at times but suffer from self-esteem issues that may lead to depression and stress. They feel the need to lose weight constantly and as a result indulge in inappropriate methods to lose the weight as mentioned above.

Bulimia was diagnosed independently as an eating disorder in the early 1980's and is most commonly seen in adolescent and young adult women. Men are also equally affected by this disorder. According to statistical reports, bulimia is estimated to affect between 3% of all women in the U. S. at some point in their lifetime. About 6% of teen girls and 5% of college-aged

females are believed to suffer from bulimia. Approximately 10% of identified bulimic patients are men. Bulimics are also susceptible to other compulsions, affective disorders, or addictions. 0-40% of women with bulimia also have a history of problems related to drug or alcohol use, suggesting that many affected women may have difficulties with control of behavioral impulses. The ultimate goal for the person suffering from bulimia is to accept himself/herself and to be able to lead a healthy emotional and physical life. This may take some time, and so a positive outlook along with much effort on the part of the person affected is essential for a successful recovery. Emily, 19, is on a gap year before going to a university in the autumn to study English.

She talks about her experience of dealing with an eating disorder. This is her story. When I was younger I thought women were supposed to be thin. It was probably because I was obsessed with princesses, Barbie dolls and my Mom; all of whom were slim. I was always quite skinny, so I didn't really worry about my body in a big way until I was a teenager. That's when I got a lot curvier, and I thought it was the most terrible thing. I think my problem with body image was part of a bigger issue to do with low self-esteem. It doesn't help that our society is so preoccupied with weight loss and dieting.

The real problems started when I decided to go on a diet in a bid to feel better about myself. Like a lot of people who develop eating disorders, I'm a perfectionist, so the diet soon turned into a total obsession. I became completely obsessed with numbers and would spend all of my time calculating calories and grams of fat. Even when I was in lessons at school or having conversations with people I'd be frantically working out how much I

could eat, how much weight I could lose, and over what period of time. I'd do the same sums repeatedly just in case I was getting them wrong.

I'd re-read nutrition labels that I knew off by heart, just in case food companies had introduced more calories. It completely took over my life and I'd weigh myself several times a day. What I weighed completely dictated how I felt about my whole life. I used the scales not just to establish my weight, but also for measuring my self-worth. Quite early on my Mom pleaded with me to go and see someone, but for a long time I was in denial and didn't really think I had a massive problem. It was probably about 18 months after it first started that I actually decided I wanted to get better.

Recovery is a massive challenge and you have to be really committed to it. It was only going to work when I was interested in doing it for myself. Eating disorders are incredibly isolating. It's partly because you're so weak; you're tired and hungry all the time, so you lose all interest in spending time with other people. Also, since nearly every form of socializing involves eating or drinking, I was reluctant to go out. I wasn't able to concentrate on any conversations I did have because my mind would wander off to think about food.

I was irritable and cranky and generally became a fairly horrible human being. It was really hard for my friends and family to see my personality slowly draining away. I was aware that I looked unwell but, although it had all started with me wanting to look good, after a certain point my eating disorder stopped being about vanity. I was managing my food intake as a way of feeling in control of my life in general. If I wasn't eating very much

and I was spending all of my time worrying about my weight, then I didn't have the energy to worry about other insecurities.

Although there was a rational part of me that was saying, 'You're too thin,' and everyone was telling me that, I didn't really care that much because I was clinging onto my anorexia as a way to cope. The turning point came when my sister and best friend sat me down and told me that they were really worried about me. Seeing how much I'd upset them helped me realize how serious things had got. They were a connection back to my former normal life, so speaking to them about my eating disorder helped me look at the situation more rationally and objectively.

It was scary when I started eating normally again. I suppose it's the equivalent of someone telling a normal person to quadruple what they eat each day and it felt very unnatural at first. The cliché that anorexics have voices in their heads telling them not to eat was very true in my case. A therapist once told me to try and think of my body as an instrument rather than an ornament, which I think is quite a positive message. I now feel very positive about my body - more than I did before the eating disorder. I thought I'd be happier if I was thinner and felt guilty about eating properly.

Now I know I'm far happier living in this body than I ever was in the thinner one and I'm a lot more relaxed about food. So in conclusion, anorexia and bulimia are extremely dangerous, and can lead to death or cause life-long problems. Eating disorders are nothing to tamper with. Although anorexia and bulimia are the two most common eating disorders, there are a lot more that sometimes go unnoticed. If you notice a loved one struggling with an

eating disorder, talk to them; get them help as soon as possible. You may be their only hope to getting better. Remember, eating disorders are psychological and can be reversed.