

Psychology



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Cultures Impact on Health In the United s, there is a constant struggle behind efficiency in the workplace as well as living a healthy lifestyle. Many people struggle with working long hours, family commitments, school commitments, etc. The accessibility of fast food and other processed foods has resulted in a high rise in obesity across the American population. Not only does being unhealthy and obese have its set of physiological concerns, but it also plays a role in some psychological functioning as well. The first topic to address is eating habits in the United States. There has been a high rise in the number of fast food companies. They used many processed foods, which are high in calories and high in fat content (Mela, 2005). In addition, the accessibility and cheap prices of being able to buy these kinds of foods especially targets the middle and lower socioeconomic classes. This in turn can be related to the psychological component of stress and coping. Stress is when a person's perceived demands outweigh their perceived coping resources. The way in which a person deals with the stress is referred to as coping, which can be split into maladaptive and adaptive coping strategies. Overeating and eating unhealthily are maladaptive ways of coping with stress. This can be induced by a wide variety of social and environmental factors. This overeating can lead to a variety of self-esteem issues and clinical disorders (Brannon, & Feist, 2010). Self-esteem is the appraisal of one's self-worth. This is extremely important in the way in which an individual functions in society. In a society where perfection is a must, those that fall outside the norm, such as in weight, are often looked down upon in society. Increased advertising in weight loss programs and exercise programs adds to the stress of being overweight. This can lead to circular reasoning in which the ideal self of the person, being skinny, and the real

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self, overweight, begins to clash with one another causing stress in the person. Poor self-esteem can lead to a lack in efficiency and can lead to depression, as well as social problems. There are also a number of clinical disorders, which can develop as a result of not having the “ perfect” body. There are three main disorders in which the DSM-IV-TR provides a description for. The first is anorexia nervosa, which involves a person taking in a very low calorie diet, which often includes rituals such as fasting. The second is bulimia nervosa, which is where a person engages in binge eating and then purges in order to get rid of the excess calories. Lastly, body dysmorphic disorder is a somatoform disorder that is usually comorbid with either anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa. This is where the person has a distorted body image caused by an abnormality in sensory input and reception in the brain, which causes certain features to be exaggerated (Ogden, 2010). Being overweight has its consequences not only psychologically, but also physiologically. Those that are overweight often have problems with muscle toning and bone density. It also increases the likelihood of cardiovascular disease and certain types of cancer. The change in body chemistry also makes the person susceptible to developing certain types of diabetes (Sherwood, 2006). Once the weight has been put on, it is often hard to get off which sometimes necessitates surgery in order to help a person loose weight to get healthier. There are many effects that weight has placed on our society. Some of these reasons are psychological and some are physiological. Due to environmental and social factors, there have been many studies in the field of health psychology in order to understand the sociological and psychological concepts surrounding the constructs around weight and health. References Brannon, L, & Feist, J. (2010). Health

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