Understanding Eating Disorders

Brought to you by the Counselling Service
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Psychological Aspects of Eating Disorders

• Who is affected?
  – Women
    – Teens, young adults, college age
  – Men
    – One in every 10 persons diagnosed with an eating disorder is male
  – Children
    – Children as young as 4 and 5 years of age
Is it about the Food?

- Disordered Eating patterns are not about food or vanity. They develop as a way of coping with conflicts, pressures and stresses of life.
- A pattern of disordered eating may be a way to experience some control when the rest of life seems out of control.
Eating Disorders Impact People’s Lives

• Social/Familial
  – Frequently eats alone; eats in secret
  – Avoids friends, family, other support
  – Difficulty being assertive

• Academic
  – From straight HD’s to failing

• Emotional/Psychological
  – Perfectionism, preoccupation with food, high need for structure, rigid eating schedule, difficulty concentrating, fluctuating body image, lack of self-esteem
Emotional Aspects

• Stresses or pressures that may contribute to patterns of disordered eating
  – Worry about new responsibility
  – Communication problems
  – Belief that doing really well is important to be loved and successful
  – Stressful times (break ups, births, deaths)
  – Perfectionistic attitude and Media
Core Beliefs: Become Empowered

- Individuals come with their own power
- Power is NOT something:
  - External
  - Given
  - Earned
  - Awarded
  - Claimed
- Health and Healing is Remembering One’s Own Power
Health and Healing Is:

• Remembering One’s Own Power
• Operating from that source of Power to:
  – Make choices
  – Act
  – Move
  – Produce Change
  – Own responsibility
Aspirations

• You are a role model: Your body
• Identify your own negative body attitudes and challenge them
• Choose healthy foods and find your own natural metabolic setpoint
• Refuse to accept criticism from anyone about your body
• Read something other than popular media and share it
Aspirations: Reverence

- Safety
- Respect
- Honour
Resources

• Books and Journals
  – *Exacting Beauty* - J. Kevin Thompson
  – *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* – S. Bordo
  – [www.gurze.com](http://www.gurze.com)
    – *Eating in the Light of the Moon* – A. Johnson
  – *International Journal of Eating Disorders*

• Online
  – [www.cmha-bc.org](http://www.cmha-bc.org)
  – [www.somethingfishy.com](http://www.somethingfishy.com)
  – Treatment Guidelines from American Psychiatric Association
Resources

• Local
  – Eating Disorders Victoria
    – www.eatingdisorders.com.au
  – Victorian Centre of Excellence in Eating Disorders (CEED)
  – RMIT Counseling Service
    – www.rmit.edu.au/counselling
Resources

• Movies
  – *Real Women Have Curves*
  – *Waiting to Exhale*
  – *Nutty Professor*
  – *On Golden Pond*
  – *The Truth about Cats & Dogs*
  – *Killing Me Softly Series*
  – *Lovely and Amazing*
  – [www.wmm.com](http://www.wmm.com) Women Make Movies