

Body Image issues can affect everyone, regardless of gender, race, or class.

When the focus is constantly on the way people look, it's common to start judging other students on their appearance. But when you criticize or tease someone else for how they look, or even what he or she is eating, it has more of an effect than you might think.

People who have been teased about their weight or shape by a teacher, coach, or sibling are at higher risk for developing an eating disorder

Eating Criticism

Judging someone else's eating habits is almost *never* helpful.

Examples of eating criticism:

- "Are you really going to eat that?"
- "That's such a girly meal."
- "Aren't you full?"
- "Is that all you're eating?!"
- "I bet I can eat more than you."
- "What are you, a vacuum? You eat so fast!"

Do you want to be one of those people who constantly talks about your own body and judges other people based on their appearance? Or can you be a leader and keep body talk to a minimum, and cut teasing and weight stigma out of your life?

Diet Culture

Our culture's obsession with crash diets, losing weight, and gaining muscle in a short period of time is unrealistic and unhealthy.

Diets, any temporary change in eating habits (like trying to eat less calories, or cutting out food groups) to lose weight, are not lifestyle changes. They would not be healthy to maintain permanently. Even if you've never been on a diet, you've probably witnessed a friend go on a diet to lose weight or bulk up.

Dieting is becoming more common among males – they just don't always call it that, since some people think the term dieting isn't seen as "tough" enough for men to use. So while "bulking up" seems like it doesn't have to involve a diet, it often does.

Why dieting (versus adopting life-long healthy eating patterns) is bad for weight loss

- Only 5% of dieters keep off the weight they lose.
- Dieting often leads to weight *gain*, not weight loss. Diets may lead to a little weight loss at first, but they can also make you overly hungry, which can lead people to eat a lot at once. Cutting out a food group usually makes people crave that food even more. Also, if people don't eat enough, their body goes into starvation mode and actually stores more fat than usual!
- Diets are one of the most powerful triggers of disordered eating.
- Diets can be very dangerous because your body may not get the protein, vitamins, minerals and other substances that it needs to function.

Compliments and Body Image

Giving compliments *is* a great thing. But, people fluctuate weight and body shape all the time. If you compliment someone for losing weight, he/she might feel bad the next time they gain a little weight or don't put on any muscle, since they are no longer receiving those compliments. Instead, try to compliment people for being healthy and active, rather than on their weight. Or even try giving a compliment that's not about their body.

Media and Body Image

Essentially, the media sells an image of an **unattainable "perfect" body**.

Why? Because this creates a "need" for products from the beauty, diet, weight loss, and body-building industries. **The more dissatisfied you are with your current body, the more products they can sell you.**

The media creates unrealistic and inaccurate representations of bodies.

A blog where students made fun of or criticized messages in ads:
http://blog.lib.umn.edu/raim0007/gwss1001/assignment_posts/weekly_assignments/8_adbusting/

"Photoshop of Horrors" – botched Photoshop jobs done on female celebrities and models:

<http://jezebel.com/5426296//gallery/gallery/16>

Content From:

Hannah Weisman

Stanford University

Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

Laboratory for the Study of Behavioral Medicine

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