

Diversity in Eating Disorders

Eating Disorders Don't Discriminate!

Culture, Race & Ethnicity

- The rate of eating disorders is similar among Non-Hispanic Whites, Hispanics, African-Americans, and Asians in the United States, with the exception that anorexia nervosa is more common among Non-Hispanic Whites (Hudson et al., 2007; Wade et al., 2011).

LGBTQ Community

- 15 percent of gay & bisexual men reported having a full or sub-threshold eating disorder at some point in their life, versus 4.6 percent of straight males
- Gay males are 7x more likely to binge & 12x more likely to purge than straight males
- Members of the LGBTQ community are at a higher risk of developing bulimia and anorexia nervosa
- In the United States, approximately 3% of men identify as being gay or bisexual; however, studies show that up to 42% of men who present with eating disorders identify as being gay or bisexual
- Lesbian women report higher levels of self-esteem regarding their body & sexual attractiveness. They also have a decreased tendency to adopt cultural standards for physical appearance

Age & Eating Disorders

While it was once believed that eating & body image concerns were limited to adolescent or young adult females, research tells us that in the past decades?

- More women of diverse ages are admitting that they struggle with body image & disordered eating
- While the reasons for this are complex & not yet fully understood, we know that in today's contemporary society, women experience unprecedented stress due to:

- *Rapidly changing roles in a globalized consumer culture*
- *Strict cultural standards regarding women, weight, & appearance*
- *Unattainable media images*
- *Current fear of obesity*
- *Ways body image & disordered eating may look different for older populations:*
 - *Shame & embarrassment for having a teenager's problem?*
 - *More years speaking the language of fat?*
 - *Greater difficulty admitting the need for help*
 - *More motivation for treatment*
 - *Greater awareness of what they have lost due to their eating or body image issues*
 - *More obstacles to treatment due to other responsibilities*
 - *Increased anxiety about appearance/ health due to natural aging process*
 - *Multiple stressors & losses that accompany adult development.*

Adapted from <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/whats-age-got-do-it> [1] Adapted from: *The Body Myth: Adult Women and the Pressure To Be Perfect* by Maine & Kelly (John Wiley, 2005)

Adapted from: <http://www.pridesource.com/guidearticle.html?article=65073> [2] Brown, TA and Keel, PK: *The impact of relationships in the association between sexual orientation and disordered eating in men. International Journal of Eating Disorders* 2012;45:792-799.

Feldman, MB and Meyer, IH: *Eating disorders in diverse lesbian, gay and bisexual populations. International Journal of Eating Disorders* 2007;40:218-226.

Share, TL and Mintz, LB: *Differences between lesbians and heterosexual women in disordered eating and related attitudes. Journal of Homosexuality* 2002;4:89-106.

Source URL: <https://campushealth.unc.edu/health-topics/body-image-eating-disorders/diversity-eating-disorders>

Links

[1] <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/whats-age-got-do-it>

[2] <http://www.pridesource.com/guidearticle.html?article=65073>