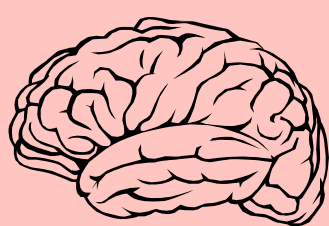


SELF IMAGE FOR PARENTS BY UCLA PROJECT HEALTH



Introduction

A healthy body image is feeling good in your own skin; being happy about the way you look, your strengths, your weaknesses

This is a guide for parents on awareness of how body image can affect individuals in society, and also be a guide to addressing it within your own community and children



Signs of an eating disorder or body dysmorphia

Some common signs of eating disorders/body dysmorphia include the following:

- Food rituals
- Extreme mood swings and concerns about weight and body image
- May be uncomfortable eating around others
- Obsessions with calorie counting, extreme diets or fads, and preoccupation with exercise



Vulnerability Factors

- Developmental transitions- high-stress periods in life (puberty)
- Temperament styles marked by general affectivity, genetic liability to eating disorders, anxiety disorders, and serotonin dysregulation
- Body dissatisfaction, issues with emotional regulation and self-esteem
- Certain medical conditions, namely type 1 diabetes
- Boys are also at risk- 1/4 of those struggling are male



Impact on the Family

Parents often engage in self-blame and enormous guilt
Self-image issues can trickle down to affect every member of the family
Younger siblings may learn target behaviors from other family members
Common behaviors that contribute to a child's unstable self-image include comments on the weight gain of a family member or making negative statements about one's own body



Dealing with a loved one's self image issues

- Educate yourself
- Keep an open dialogue surrounding mental health and body image
- Consider talking to either a school counselor or clinical psychologist about these issues
- Understand that recovery is not a straight path
- It may take a great deal of time for a loved one to get better, but progress is always a good thing and should be treated as an achievement.