

EveryBODY is Deadly



Body Image and Eating Disorders Fact sheet

Anybody, from any mob, can have eating or body concerns.

Eating or body image concerns can weaken your mind, body and spirit.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience body image issues at similar rates to other people in Australia.

30%
of young people – including Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people – say they're very concerned about their body image.

What is Body Image?

Our body image is made up of the thoughts and feelings we have about our bodies and how we look. Everyone deserves to feel good about their bodies.

Everyone has times when they feel unhappy with their body.

It's OK and totally normal to feel unhappy about our body sometimes. For some of us these feelings can grow to the point that it affects our mind, body and spirit and how we act around eating and exercise. Talking it out with friends, family or other support can really help to get out of that cycle.

Why is body image important?

An unhappy body image can:

- Make us feel we're inferior to other people
- Make us think that our size, shape and weight aren't good enough
- Cause us to feel anxious, sad or disconnected from friends and family
- Lead to unhelpful eating behaviours or an eating disorder.

Getting to a place where you can feel good about your body is different for different people, but it is possible.

What are Eating Disorders?

An eating disorder can include eating too much or too little to the point that it impacts your day-to-day life and wellbeing. An eating disorder can be serious and even life-threatening.

An eating disorder isn't a lifestyle choice, or a diet gone wrong.

About **One in 10** people living in Australia will experience an eating disorder in their lifetime, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

37% of people with an eating disorder identify as male.

You can feel better

The first step to recovery from an eating disorder or body image issue is talk to someone. Yarning to a trusted friend, family or community member, or the Butterfly National Helpline can help. Our counsellors are trained in cultural competence, and can give information, advice or just listen.

What are some of the warning signs?

People who live with an eating disorder may show many signs or only one. In some cases, they may not show any signs or symptoms at all. Some of the warning signs could be:

- Being anxious or irritable around mealtimes
- Feeling 'out of control' around food or having very strict rules with food
- Hiding food or avoiding meals with other people
- Exercising too much

Different eating disorders

There are many different types of eating disorders. Some of them are:

- **Binge eating disorder:** a person eats a large amount of food in a short period of time to the point where they feel very uncomfortable. They feel a loss of control over their eating at these times.
- **Bulimia nervosa:** involves a cycle of out-of-control eating followed by trying to make up for this by purging or over-exercising. Often, the person's weight might be relatively 'normal'.
- **Anorexia nervosa:** the person restricts how much they eat, has very strict rules around food, and might exercise too much. Some might be severely underweight, but others may not be.
- **Other specified eating and feeling disorders (OSFED):** the person might have symptoms of other eating disorders, but not enough for a diagnosis.

Find out more about eating disorders and body image at www.butterfly.org.au

#yarnaboutbodyimage

Phone Chat Email
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www.butterfly.org.au

