

EATING DISORDER DIAGNOSIS SNAPSHOT 2024

Butterfly Foundation's third *BodyKind* Youth Survey was conducted in 2024 to continue to understand the body image experience of young Australians aged 12 to 18 years. In total, 1,648 young people responded.

What do young people who have received an eating disorder diagnosis have to say?

Who are they?

237 (14.4%) of survey respondents reported having been diagnosed with an eating disorder.

The majority (86.5%) of those were aged 15-18 years (M = 16.05 years).

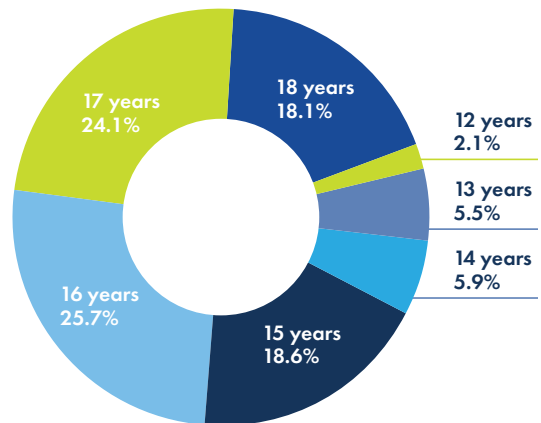
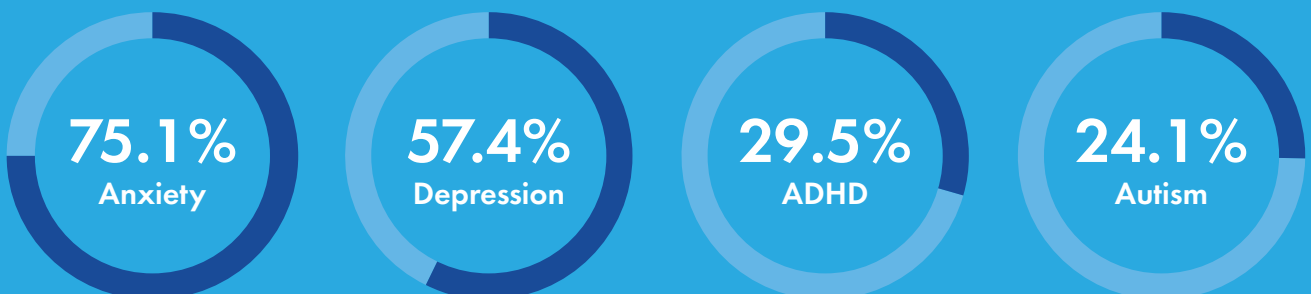


Figure 1. Age distribution of young people diagnosed with an eating disorder

Respondents most frequently identified as:



Respondents also reported rates of:



Their body image

75.5% 

reported some level of body dissatisfaction.

65.9% 

a significant proportion reported a high level of concern about their body image.

59.1% 

reported a high level of body dissatisfaction.

Notably, the proportion of **high body dissatisfaction** for those having been diagnosed with an eating disorder is much greater than the total sample proportion (37.5%).

88.3% 

an overwhelming majority desired to be **thinner/leaner**, **70.7%** desired to be more **muscular** and **52.3%** **taller**.

How much do young people who have received an eating disorder diagnosis appreciate their body?

Young people who received an eating disorder diagnosis infrequently reported high levels of body appreciation.

36.5%

never or rarely respect their body.

62.7%

never or rarely feel good about their body.

65.8%

never or rarely are comfortable in their body.

34.6%

never or rarely feel their body has at least some good qualities.

*Note: based on responses from 214 young people

Are they BodyKind?

72.4% **never or rarely** speak positively about their body.

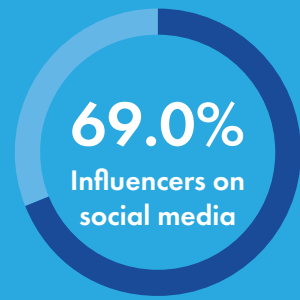
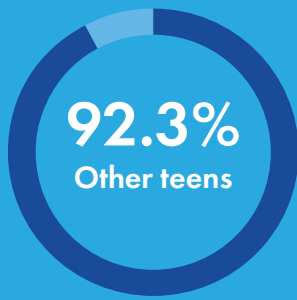
54.7% **never or rarely** feel grateful for what their body allows them to do.

61.2% **never or rarely** talk to someone if they're not feeling good about their body or appearance.

79.4% **often or always** try to value people for their personality and who they are rather than how they look, yet **60.6%** **never or rarely** spend less time focusing on their appearance to have more time for other things they

*Note: based on responses from 170 young people.

Young people who have received an eating disorder diagnosis most frequently compare their bodies to:



A high proportion also compared their bodies to their younger self (61.4%), Celebrities (59.9%), and Models in advertisements (57.5%).

When asked what is most important to them from a list of being healthy, sporty, good looking, smart and kind, young people with an eating disorder diagnosis most frequently reported,

48.6%
being kind

18.3%
reported being good looking as most important

16.8%
reported being healthy as most important.

Has body image ever stopped young people from doing certain activities?

Greater life disengagement was reported by young people who have received an eating disorder diagnosis, compared with total sample proportions.



69.4%

reported a high level of disengagement from going to the beach.



56.7%

reported a high level of disengagement from going to a social event, party or gathering.



58.3%

reported a high level of disengagement from going clothes shopping.



51.7%

reported a high level of disengagement from doing a physical activity/sport.



52.2%

of young people reported a high level of disengagement from giving an opinion or standing up for themselves.



Over half

of young people with an eating disorder diagnosis reported a high level of disengagement from focusing on schoolwork, and more than 2 in 5 from raising their hand in the classroom and going to school.

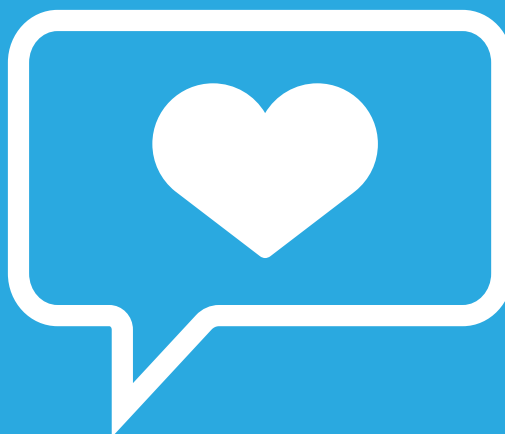
*Note: based on responses from 180 young people

Social media

Of the 201 who reported using social media,

70.1% described using social media more than they would like.

78.1% reported that social media made them feel dissatisfied with their body.



In relation to social media literacy strategies:

61.0%

never or rarely took a break because it was affecting how they felt about their body.

47.3%

never or rarely posted unfiltered images.

38.4%

never or rarely unfollowed pages that made them feel bad about their body.

86.5%

often or always comment kindly and honestly on a friend's post.

What is their experience of appearance-related teasing?

70.9%

reported receiving negative comments or being teased about their appearance.

This happened most frequently at



School

86.3%



Social Media

50.6%



Home

44.6%



via text or group chat

41.7%

*Note: based on responses from 168 young people

No significant differences were found between 2023 and 2024 data for young people who have received an eating disorder diagnosis.