

TEENAGERS

One of the most stressful times for teenagers is when they enter into adolescence. This is a time when their bodies start developing and they begin to discover who they are. They are becoming more independent and are establishing friendships.

For many, this can be a very emotional, stressful, confusing, and frightening time. Some make the change from childhood into adolescence with only a few minor problems. Others, however, may have a harder time handling the pressures. They may develop eating disorders as a way to cope. Eating disorders may include eating too much or too little, dieting or engaging in harmful practices to try to lose weight. Many fear that they will never lose the weight that is gained during this time. They may panic and desperately try to take the weight off. Once they start losing weight, however, people might praise them, which would make them feel better. They may start to believe that losing weight would make them happier. But no matter how much weight is lost, it is never enough; and they are never happy.

Many teenagers are constantly buying teen or fashion magazines. The pictures of slim models in these magazines further convince them that in order to be happy they must be thin. Teenagers need someone to look up to. Unfortunately, too many of them choose fashion models as their role models. They paste pictures of them all over their rooms. Some will turn to dangerous methods of control to try to look like their idols.

Family problems can also cause teenagers to develop an eating disorder. If they are in a family where emotional, physical, or sexual abuse is taking place, they may develop an eating disorder to gain a sense of control or to block out painful feelings. The parents may be going through divorce and being interested in their own problems. There may be alcohol abuse in the home, or a parent or close family member may have died. The children may be neglected, which could cause them to turn to food for comfort. The parents may be too critical, or may pressure the teenagers to do well in school. Feelings of disappointment or failure might lead them to starve themselves as a form of self-punishment. These situations can be very stressful for teenagers.

Schools should play an important part in educating students on the dangers of eating disorders. Students should be taught that success in life does not depend on their weight.

Questions

1. List THREE reasons why adolescence is a stressful time. (3)

2. Name TWO problems adolescents may encounter as they change from childhood to adolescence. (3)

3. Explain how fashion magazines influence teenagers' eating habits. (4)

4. Explain THREE ways schools can help teenagers with eating disorders. (3)

5. Identify the SINGLE WORD from the passage which means the same as EACH of the following. (4 points)

(a) find out (paragraph 1)

(b) make flattering remarks (paragraph 2)

(c) persuade (paragraph 3)

(d) getting better (paragraph 5)

6. Using information from the passage only, list FOUR family problems which may cause eating disorders in teenagers. Besides each problem, state why teenagers turn to eating too much or too little. Write your answer in the space provided below. (8 points)

Family Problem	Why Teenagers Turn to Eating
a)	
b)	
c)	
d)	

7. Your teenage relative is worried about his/her weight. Based on information from the passage, what advice would you give to him/her? (5 points)
