Eating Issues & Body Image Continuum

Where do you fit?

This continuum represents the range of eating behaviors and attitudes towards food and body image. The goal is to function in the "Concerned in a Healthy Way" category, which reflects good physical and emotional health. In college, some students slip into the "Food Preoccupied" and "Disruptive Eating" categories due to the new stresses and pressures of the college environment. Others stop caring about food and their bodies at all, because of time and cost constraints. No matter where you fit, there are resources on (and off) campus to help.

FOOD IS NOT AN ISSUE	** CONCERNED IN A * HEALTHY WAY*	FOOD PREOCCUPIED/ OBSESSED	DISRUPTIVE EATING PATTERNS	EATING DISORDERED
I am not concerned about what or how much I eat. I feel no guilt or shame no matter what I eat or how much I eat. Exercise is not really important to me. I choose foods based on cost, taste, and convenience, with little regard to health. My eating is very sporadic and irregular. I don't worry about meals; I just eat whatever I can, whenever I can. I enjoy stuffing myself with lots of tasty food at restaurants, holiday meals, and social events.	I pay attention to what I eat to maintain a healthy body. Food and exercise are important parts of my life, but they only occupy a small part of my time. I enjoy eating, and I balance my pleasure with eating with my concern for a healthy body. I usually eat 3 balanced meals daily, plus snacks, to fuel my body with adequate energy. I am moderate and flexible in my goals for eating well and being physically active. Sometimes I eat more (or less) than I really need, but most of the time I listen to my body.	I think about food a lot. I'm obsessed with reading books and magazines about dieting, fitness, and weight control. I sometimes miss school, work, and social events because of my diet or exercise schedule. I divide food into two categories: "good" and "bad" foods. I feel guilty when I eat "bad" foods or when I eat more than what I feel I should be eating. I am afraid of getting fat. I wish I could change how much I want to eat and what I am hungry for.	My food and exercise concerns are starting to interfere with my school and social life. I use food to comfort myself. I have tried diet pills, laxatives, vomiting, or extra time exercising in order to lose or maintain my weight. I have fasted or avoided eating for long periods of time in order to lose or maintain my weight. If I cannot exercise to burn off calories, I panic. I feel strong when I can restrict how much I eat. I feel out of control when I eat more than I wanted to.	I worry about what I will eat and/or when I will exercise <u>all</u> the time. I follow a very rigid eating plan and know precisely how many calories, fat grams, and/or carbohydrates I eat every day. I feel incredible guilt, shame, and anxiety when I break my diet. I regularly stuff myself and then exercise, vomit, or use laxatives to get rid of the food. My friends and family tell me I am too thin, but I feel fat. I am out of control when I eat. I am afraid to eat in front of others. I prefer to eat alone.

BODY IS NOT AN ISSUE	** BODY ACCEPTANCE **	BODY PREOCCUPIED/ OBSESSED	DISTORTED BODY IMAGE	BODY HATE DISASSOCIATION
I feel fine about my body. I don't worry about changing my body shape or weight. I never weigh or measure myself. My feelings about my body are not influenced by society's concept of an ideal body shape. I know that the significant others in my life will always love me for who I am, not for how I look.	I pay attention to my body and my appearance because it is important to me, but it only occupies a small part of my day. There are some things about my body that I would like to change, but I spend most of my time highlighting my positive features. My self-esteem is based on my personality traits, achievements, and relationships -- not just my body image.	I weigh and measure myself a lot. I spend a significant amount of time viewing myself in the mirror. I compare my body to others. I have days when I feel fat. I accept society's ideal body shape and size as the best body shape and size. I'd be more attractive if I were thinner, more muscular, etc.	I spend a significant amount of time exercising and dieting to change my body. My body shape and size keeps me from dating or finding someone who will treat me the way I want to be treated. I have considered changing (or have changed) my body shape and size through surgical means. I wish I could change the way I look in the mirror.	I often feel separated and distant from my body – as if it belonged to someone else. I hate my body, and I often isolate myself from others. I don't see anything positive or even neutral about my body shape and size. I don't believe others when they tell me I look okay. I hate the way I look in the mirror.

Adapted from Smiley/King/Avey, 96

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