



**GÜRZE**  
SALUCORE

# ED PULSE

**A ROUND-UP TO KEEP YOU WELL-INFORMED ON THE  
CURRENT RESEARCH, EFFECTIVE PRACTICES, AND GENERAL  
INFORMATION ON EATING DISORDERS.**

# The Gürze/Salucore ED Pulse

A Round-up to keep you well-informed on the current research, effective practices, and general information on eating disorders.

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## *1. What's Driving the Increase in Adolescent Eating Disorders?*

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This important article takes a closer look at eating disorders, particularly how the coronavirus pandemic has prompted an increase in cases among adolescents.

“Eating disorders affect people of all ages, genders, sexual orientations, ethnic backgrounds, religions, body shapes, and weights,” but adolescence is a particularly vulnerable time. According to the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA), “Over one-half of teenage girls and nearly one-third of teenage boys use unhealthy weight-control behaviors such as skipping meals, fasting, and taking laxatives,” all of which are eating disorder symptoms.

Eating disorders don't have one single cause; they “stem from a combination of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors.” People who have a history of trauma, low self-esteem, difficulty managing stress, or a close relative with an eating disorder are more prone to developing eating disorders. The recent COVID-19

pandemic “has caused many adolescents to experience fear, isolation, boredom, stress, loss of a support system, financial issues, food insecurity, and, sometimes, violence in the home,” all of which are risk factors for eating disorders.

To help determine if your adolescent has an eating disorder, look for the following physical symptoms: fatigue, constipation, nausea after eating, and loss of menstruation in females. Other signs include: extreme weight loss; excessive attention on weight, food, calories, dieting, or body image; refusing to eat with the family or eating in secret; pushing food around on the plate instead of eating it, ritualized eating, or other abnormal eating habits; frequent trips to the bathroom after meals, self-induced vomiting, and laxative abuse; disappearance of large amounts of food or eating abnormally large amounts of food at one sitting; suddenly deciding to go on a strict diet, cut out certain food groups, or restrict the times they will eat; exercising compulsively, even when sick or injured; self-isolating or withdrawing from family and friends; being more anxious, depressed, or irritable; and expressing disgust about their own eating habits.

So why are eating disorders increasing in adolescents? “COVID-19 is escalating an already rising mental and behavioral health crisis. Hospitals worldwide are seeing vast increases in hospital admittance and outpatient referrals for treatment related to eating disorders.” According to NEDA, monthly calls to its crisis helpline have increased 80 percent compared with last year. “Eating disorders often stem from trauma, stress, and feeling a loss of control.” And “COVID-19 is reinforcing these negative emotions” as teens are experiencing disrupted school routines, loss of social and sports activities and time with friends, loss of in-person recovery support, fear related to family finances and job loss, fear of insufficient food in the house, and fear of the unknown. “Triggered by a desire to regain some sense of control in the current climate of fear and uncertainty, many adolescents are turning to the one thing they can control: their food intake.”

Reports also show that social media use by teens has increased since the onset of the pandemic. Multiple studies have found that “adolescents who spend a lot of their time on social media often view their own bodies and physical appearance negatively and are more likely to engage in disordered eating.” In addition, “young women who are

already suffering from an eating disorder are more susceptible to the influence and pressures of social media.”

If your adolescent exhibits the signs and symptoms of an eating disorder, “seek treatment immediately to decrease the chance for severe physical harm and to increase their likelihood for recovery.”

To read this article in its entirety, please click here –

<https://www.tpoftampa.com/the-increase-in-adolescent-eating-disorders/>

*What's Driving the Increase in Adolescent Eating Disorders?*. Turning Point of Tampa. (2021). Retrieved 27 February 2021, from <https://www.tpoftampa.com/the-increase-in-adolescent-eating-disorders/>.

## *2. What Does Body Acceptance Mean as We Age?*

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In this thought-provoking piece, Lindsey Hall explores how our perception of body acceptance changes as we get older.

It all started when her roommate told her he had a secret. Hall describes the interaction, as her roommate explained that, although it might seem vain, he was considering getting a hair transplant to combat the inevitable hair loss that comes with aging. This brought about a bigger-picture conversation. “It’s hard, isn’t it?” she told him. “The aging process: I find it difficult. Things are changing on my body as well. It’s subtle, but I notice it.” And it doesn’t help that society places a high value on looking young, which is hard for anyone to not get caught up in.

“As we talked more in depth about this perspective, I reflected on how in my teens and early 20s, this body insecurity was all about weight and fitness level,” Hall notes. And how, “I didn’t foresee it morphing from weight into the aging process.” She acknowledges spending “years in recovery coming to terms with the frame or physique of my body as it naturally wants to be. What I didn’t think to explore was about how this body will eventually age, and currently is aging, as that’s the beautiful price of living.”

Body acceptance doesn’t have to be “this narrow perspective” in that “to have body acceptance is to accept yourself, no matter what happens, and prance around in defiance of the insecurity,” Hall says. Instead, she leans toward “the idea that body acceptance is learning how to live with and manage the body insecurity that inevitably arises as we move through Westernized, modern life.” So maybe we shouldn’t spend so

much time trying to figure out how to accept our frame or physique, which is, “frankly, a recipe for shame-inducing thoughts.” Why not “just face the days I don’t feel great about again, and figure out what the deeper meaning is there, and how to speak that truth and then hold it in alignment with my other values and perspectives”?

Even if we don’t like what it does to our bodies, aging is a privilege. “It means I’m living in this short time I exist here, right now,” Hall says. But “it’s hard to age because we’re told by marketing ads that being youthful is some figurative ‘prime.’” The thing is, life doesn’t have any single “prime.” “What I’m finding is that all stages thus far in life are a ‘prime’—it’s just different. Different people, settings, jobs, and moments of joy. So in order to have those, I have to be willing to age.”

Hopefully, what her roommate eventually accepts is that getting a hair transplant “doesn’t have to be some vain act,” she says. “I don’t think it’s negative to want to do things for your body, it’s just learning how to accept the insecurity that triggers that response to want to change ourselves.”

And, Hall continues, “maybe that’s body acceptance: holding two truths together, in tandem. And being OK—and willing—to move along in life anyhow.”

To read this article in its entirety, please click here –

<https://www.eatingrecoverycenter.com/blog/what-does-body-acceptance-mean-we-age>

Hall, L. (2021). *What Does Body Acceptance Mean As We Age?*. Eating Recovery Center. Retrieved 27 February 2021, from <https://www.eatingrecoverycenter.com/blog/what-does-body-acceptance-mean-we-age>.

### *3. Mental Toll of Pandemic Will Leave Long-Term Mark*

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This timely piece examines the lasting impact the COVID-19 pandemic will have on mental health and provides tips on how to proactively preserve your well-being.

The number of people in the U.S. who have died from COVID-19 complications has crossed the half-million mark—a stat that is difficult to fully comprehend. “And even as hope is on the horizon in the form of vaccines, a slowing positivity rate, and a decrease in hospitalizations, the toll of the pandemic will be felt for years to come” as people cope with the loss of loved ones, jobs, and so much more. And as many of us struggle to process the world being turned upside down, “the mental and emotional fallout of the pandemic will take a while to emerge.”

While the risks of severe physical illness from COVID-19 increase with age, the reverse has been true for its effect on mental health. “More than a third of Americans ages 18 to 24 reported having thoughts of death and suicide, and almost half displayed at least moderate symptoms of depression,” according to a recent report. That’s about 10 times the rate observed before the pandemic. The report also found that symptoms like depression, anxiety, and disrupted sleep were higher among women.

As we approach the one-year anniversary of the pandemic, “it’s important to be proactive in response to the many social and emotional hurdles we’ll continue to face in the early part of 2021 and beyond.” Here’s how:

1. Get proper sleep. As noted, “disrupted sleep has been one of the most prevalent effects reported by young women during the pandemic.” People ages 18 to 25 should get seven to nine hours of sleep per night.

2. Exercise. “Many people have been moving less since the pandemic began, as most gyms shuttered for a long stretch and are still considered a health risk” by many. Even if you simply go for a walk or light jog in your neighborhood, exercise is essential to staying mentally and physically healthy.

3. Eat nutritious foods. “Being more sedentary only increases the need to be mindful of what and how we’re eating.” Eat fruits, vegetables, proteins, and whole grains, and limit caffeine, sugar, and alcohol. Keep balance, moderation, and variety in mind.

4. Talk about how you feel. Losing invaluable time with friends and family can be extremely isolating. “Get creative to make sure that these connections aren’t lost—whether that’s playing games on Zoom, going for socially distanced walks, or doing online scavenger hunts with coworkers or classmates.”

Most important, “don’t be afraid to reach out and explore your options for treatment if you’re feeling depressed or anxious, having suicidal thoughts, or experiencing any type of behavioral health crisis.”

To read this article in its entirety, please click here –

<https://www.timberlineknolls.com/about/blog/mental-toll-of-pandemic-will-leave-long-term-mark/>

*Mental Toll of Pandemic Will Leave Long-Term Mark.* Timberline Knolls Residential Treatment Center. (2021). Retrieved 27 February 2021, from <https://www.timberlineknolls.com/about/blog/mental-toll-of-pandemic-will-leave-long-term-mark/>.

## 4. *Your Relationship with Food Begins with Your Family*

In this helpful piece, Christine M. Peat, PhD, offers insight on how gaining a better understanding of the food culture your family had when you were growing up can help you improve your current relationship with food.

According to Peat, “The way we talk about food in our families has a lasting impact,” sometimes positive and sometimes negative. “On the positive side, food might be used as a way to connect to culture or heritage. On the negative side, food might be talked about in such a way that there are fears associated with certain types of foods or maybe an overemphasis on calories.” Regardless of the messages, we often end up inadvertently internalizing them. That’s why “taking a mindful look at our family’s beliefs and values about eating can help us achieve a healthier relationship with food.”

It all goes back to our childhood and how our parents talked about food to us. “Being told to clean your plate versus learning to stop eating when you are full is a good example of how a small instruction to a child can have a lasting impact on how someone consumes food,” says Peat. Another message is labeling foods as good or bad. “We assign moral values to food that really just end up making us feel miserable about food.”

So what should the messaging be? Families should just be flexible, she notes. Eating salads doesn't make you a good person, and eating fast food doesn't make you a bad person. "Understand what combination of foods makes up a healthy diet for you and your family, and base your choices and suggestions from that knowledge." Yes, "eat lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins to get the most complete nutrition, but a happy family life also makes room for food that simply tastes good."

Now, think about the role of food in your family's everyday routines. How often do you eat together? Do you celebrate with food? Do you ever cook together? These questions can help you understand your family's food culture. Peat advocates identifying positive experiences, like eating as a family. "Communal meals have been shown to have a good long-term effect on food relationships," she explains. "Eating together also helps establish eating patterns for children, which promotes healthy food habits." And preparing a meal together or trying new foods as a family also can have a positive effect.

On the other hand, using food as a reward or punishment can cause issues. "You shouldn't have to accomplish anything to eat," Peat says. "You need a caloric intake to live. If you make food items a prize that you aren't allowed to have unless you do certain things, it just sets you up for wanting it even more, and overindulging when you do have it."

Once you have a better understanding of your family's food culture, you can adjust any problematic patterns that have been established and "decide what role you would like food to play in your household going forward," she notes. A great place to start is to think about why you do things certain ways. Is it what your parents taught you? Did you see it on TV or Instagram? Now's your chance to break from the routine. "Don't eat based on what some blogger or influencer is telling you. Eat based on what your body is telling you and what we know tends to be balanced and healthy."

Finally, take a close look at your personal relationship with food. If you don't think your attitudes or behaviors are serving you, consider working with a doctor, a nutritionist, or a mental health professional.

To read this article in its entirety, please click here –

<https://healthtalk.unhealthcare.org/your-relationship-with-food-begins-with-your-family/>

## *5. The Differences Between Emotional Eating and Binge Eating Disorder*

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This informative article explains what makes emotional eating, a disordered eating behavior, different from binge eating disorder, an eating disorder.

In many cases, the line between disordered eating behaviors and full-blown eating disorders is often blurred—“one can lead to another very easily.” And “it’s common for the underlying causes of these behaviors to be similar.” One key thing to remember about eating disorders and disordered behaviors is that they’re not really about food. They’re about regaining a sense of control over a person’s life—“in essence, stress management techniques, although the result is harmful.”

Engaging in binge eating episodes, in which a person consumes a large amount of food in a short period of time, is an example of a disordered coping behavior. “These episodes are usually conducted in secret and spur feelings of guilt and shame in the person. When these negative feelings cause stress, they can lead to repeated binge eating episodes, becoming a dangerous pattern known as binge eating disorder (BED).”

It should be noted that not everyone who “eats their feelings” or emotionally eats to cope to control negative feelings like loss, stress, or sadness will develop the repeated, compulsive need to binge-eat. “Food cravings often hit when a person is experiencing negative emotions. They may use food to provide comfort against stress and negative emotional states by releasing dopamine and serotonin in the brain.” It’s when they begin to rely on that release to cope with stress that they can develop BED, which “can become akin to an addiction.”

Emotional eating can be considered a possible precursor or symptom of an eating disorder. “Emotional eating refers to situations when a person eats to deal with the emotions they’re feeling.” Sure, it can mean eating to celebrate, but it far more often occurs in response to negative emotions like stress, depression, or fear. Some people eat less when they are upset, while others eat more. “Although emotional eating can sabotage a person’s health and lifestyle goals, it does not necessarily indicate that the

person has an eating disorder.” To be diagnosed with an eating disorder, signs and symptoms other than emotional eating must also be present.

“Emotional eating can be a slippery slope, and loss of control over urges to eat when negative emotions arise can be a sign of a developing eating disorder.” It’s ironic that a behavior that a person engages in to assert control over their emotions causes the feeling that they are losing control. “One of the major known symptoms of BED is a sense that the person is incapable of stopping their disordered eating behaviors, followed by a sense of guilt that they can’t control their eating behaviors.”

Emotional eating does not necessarily mean that a person has BED, but the additional presence of the following symptoms could indicate BED: frequent and repeated binge eating episodes, during which much larger amounts of food are eaten—usually twice a week for several months; eating past the point of being full or eating when not hungry; eating much more quickly than normal during the episodes; eating past the point of being full or feeling pain; feeling a loss of control during the episodes; eating secretly or hiding food to be eaten in secret; feeling ashamed or embarrassed during or after episodes; and feeling shame or embarrassment surrounding the episodes.

“When a person who might occasionally eat too much when feeling down or stressed begins to feel a compulsion to binge-eat regularly,” it’s a sign that BED may be present. Left untreated, BED can cause heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure. “People with BED are also at higher risk for other mental health illnesses, like self-harm, depression, and substance abuse.”

BED treatment centers offer multifaceted programs that address both the emotional and physical aspects of the eating disorder. Components of treatment may include a full assessment and psychiatric care, treatment for co-occurring disorders, nutritional education and programming, individual psychotherapy sessions, and group therapy sessions.

To read this article in its entirety, please click here –

<https://www.rosewoodranch.com/emotional-eating-and-binge-eating-disorder/>

*The Differences Between Emotional Eating and Binge Eating Disorder.* Rosewood Centers for Eating

## Quick Reads –

### **1. A Communication Lesson**

This insightful piece offers three benchmarks of civility to consider before speaking to ensure that you're communicating effectively.

To read this article in its entirety, please click here –

<https://www.karenkoenig.com/blog/a-communication-lesson>

### **2. 5 Tips to Challenging Diet Culture**

This helpful article presents five strategies for how to combat the dangerous messages promoted by diet culture.

To read this article in its entirety, please click here –

<https://anad.org/5-tips-to-challenging-diet-culture/>

### **3. Why Now Is a Great Time to Start Self-Care**

This important piece stresses the value of practicing the right type of self-care and explains why the winter in the middle of a pandemic is the best time to do so.

To read this article in its entirety, please click here –

<https://rogersbh.org/about-us/newsroom/blog/why-now-great-time-start-self-care>

### **4. Has the Coronavirus Pandemic Made Your More Fearful of Socializing Than You Realized?**

While we've likely all experienced increased anxiety as a result of COVID-19, this timely article provides signs to look for that could indicate a more serious anxiety disorder, as well as tips for managing pandemic-related fears.

To read this article in its entirety, please click here –

<https://www.timberlineknolls.com/about/blog/has-the-coronavirus-pandemic-made-you-more-fearful-of-socializing-than-you-realized/>

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About the Gürze/Salucore ED Pulse

Mission and Focus:

This bi-weekly newsletter is designed to keep treatment providers, parents and loved ones, individuals suffering from eating disorders or people in recovery, and others well-informed on the current research, effective practices, and general information on eating disorders. The Gürze/Salucore team of eating disorders professionals draws on a wealth of knowledge and experience to lighten your load by serving as your designated reader and curating the most pertinent information for you.

To produce the Gürze/Salucore ED Pulse, our team searches and researches over 200 websites, blogs, e-newsletters, journals, and magazines, sifting through hundreds of articles each week, and selects 5-10 to keep you up-to-date and in-the-know. Links to the full article will always be provided unless journals require a paid subscription, in which case we will include a link to the abstract or sign-up page.

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