

Eating disorders, general psychotherapy, nutrition and recovery

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“A Body to Die For” Seminar

Advanced training in the treatment of eating disorders and body-image disturbance in women.

Speaker: Adrienne Ressler, MA, LMSW, National Training Director for the Renfrew Center Foundation

6 CEUs offered

Contact: Debbie Lucker
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www.renfrew.org

Dates & Locations:

Cincinnati, OH - March 23, 2007
Chicago, IL - March 30, 2007
Bethesda, MA - April 18, 2007
Norfolk, VA - April 20, 2007
Princeton, NJ - April 27, 2007
Birmingham, AL - May 9, 2007
Atlanta, GA - May 11, 2007
Boston, MA - May 18, 2007

News & Announcements:**National Eating Disorder Awareness Week (NEDAW)**

February 25—March 3, 2007

For Local Events that promote awareness, please visit our web site:

<http://www.cedarassociates.com>

Groups at CEDAR:**FREE MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP FOR**

family members, friends and partners of eating disorder sufferers

Next Meeting: Mar 17, 2007

[Support Group Info & Meeting Dates](#)

Quote of the Month:

“Dare to be Yourself”

- Andre Gide

Adolescence, Brain Development and Eating Disorders

By Jacqueline A. Reilly, MS LMSW

For many, the teenage years are characterized by impulsivity, lack of future planning, and unpredictable emotional swings. Most eating disorders emerge during the adolescent years when a young woman is reaching developmental milestones, some of which encompasses significant brain changes. These changes in the brain can make a person more vulnerable to developing eating problems such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia and binge eating disorder.

One of the more pronounced aspects of adolescent brain functioning is the activity focused in the prefrontal cortex (Keating, 2004). This activity consists of myelination and pruning which means that the nerves in that area of the brain where decision making, future planning, and control of risky behavior is exercised, is becoming more and more efficient. The intensity of activity and growth in that area, since the teenager is not yet done with this process for a number of years, correlates to unpredictable emotionality and stages of identity formation that are markedly different from that of, for example, a normal twenty five year old person. In short, teenagers have a difficult time seeing their connection to the future and are more likely to accept reasoning and behaviors that they might not have by the time they reach twenty years of age.

It is an old adage that teenagers are impressionable and now we have hard science supporting this. Current science indicates that adolescence is also the last significant time of synaptic pruning thus, how the brain is used during adolescence may predict how the brain will function into adulthood. Eating disorders that develop during adolescence and that remain untreated may become chronic psychological fixtures in adulthood. This is why it is imperative that an adolescent who ventures down the path of an eating disorder receive early intervention and treatment in order to have the best long term outcome.

How does this help us understand eating disorders as they appear during adolescence? Girls in our culture are bombarded day in and day out with images of success associated with being thin. This image of success promises parental approval, peer acceptance and admiration for being a stellar student and a good athlete among others. If we do not embrace the developmental playing field that teens are embedded in, we cannot understand their vulnerability to the false cultural promise of happiness gained via weight loss.

To read more of this article, please click on this [link](#) to our web site.