

## Eating Disorders Awareness Week February 26 - March 3, 2024

# Healing in Community

## Eating Disorders in Underrepresented Communities

Community plays a crucial role in shaping our lives and fostering a sense of belonging. It is a place where individuals connect with each other regardless of social, cultural, or economic status. During Eating Disorders Awareness Week, we know eating disorders affect individuals in every age group, race, gender, and socioeconomic class. We work to positively impact the lives of those in every community and help them find the healing they need.



### Medicare Recipients

**15%**  
of eating disorder cases

**Higher rates of comorbidities:**  
arrhythmias, arthritis, thyroid conditions<sup>1</sup>

**Higher cost of treatment**  
(\$29,456 versus \$7,418)

### Socioeconomic Groups

Groups with faster rates of growth in eating disorders:<sup>2</sup>



- Males
- Older individuals (44+)
- People in lower socioeconomic households

Eating disorder behaviors in these groups include:<sup>2</sup>



- Self-induced vomiting
- Laxative and diuretic misuse

**28%**

of multiethnic and low-income adolescents self-reported some form of disordered eating<sup>3</sup>

**Study participants:**

**47%**  
Hispanic

**46%**  
African American

### Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is associated with higher rates of clinically significant eating disorder pathology<sup>4</sup>

High levels of food insecurity are associated with:<sup>5</sup>

- Higher levels of binge eating
- Higher likelihood of having any type of eating disorder
- Dietary restraint for any reason
- Weight self-stigma
- High levels of worry

**Individuals who suffer from food insecurity are almost four times more likely to experience bulimia nervosa<sup>6</sup>**

Adults who seek assistance from food pantries report higher eating disorder symptoms<sup>5</sup>

- Vomiting
- Laxative/diuretic use
- Fasting
- Intense exercise

### Limited Access to Care



Latino, African American, and Asian individuals with eating disorders utilize mental health services at lower rates than non-Latino Whites<sup>7</sup>

Individuals from non-affluent backgrounds had lower odds of receiving treatment for an eating disorder in comparison to affluent peers<sup>8</sup>

### Eating Disorders are Disabling

Eating disorders can cause some of the highest levels of medical and social disabilities of any psychiatric disorder.<sup>9</sup>



This infographic developed in partnership with



**Area Health Education Centers**

Strengthening the Nation's Healthcare Workforce

#### Sources:

1. Presskreischer, R., Steinglass, J., Anderson, K. (2022). Eating disorders in the U.S. Medicare population. *Int J Eat Disord.* <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.23676>.
2. Mitchison, D., Hay, P., Slewa-Younan, S. et al. The changing demographic profile of eating disorder behaviors in the community. *BMC Public Health* 14, 943 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-14-943>.
3. Najjar RH, Jacob E, Evangelista L. Eating Behaviors, Weight Bias, and Psychological Functioning in Multi-ethnic Low-income Adolescents. *J Pediatr Nurs.* 2018 Jan-Feb;38:81-87. doi: 10.1016/j.pedn.2017.11.008. Epub 2017 Nov 16. PMID: 29167087.
4. Becker, C., Middlemass, K., Johnson, C., Taylor, B., Gomez, F., & Sutherland, A. (2018). Traumatic event exposure associated with increased food insecurity and eating disorder pathology. *Public Health Nutrition*, 21(16), 3058-3066. doi:10.1017/S1368980018001738.
5. Becker, C., Middlemass, K., Taylor, B., Johnson, C., Gomez, F. (2017). Food insecurity and eating disorder pathology. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 50(9), 1031-1040. doi: 10.1002/eat.22735.
6. Hazzard VM, Barry MR, Leung CW, Sonnevile KR, Wonderlich SA, Crosby RD. Food insecurity and its associations with bulimic-spectrum eating disorders, mood disorders, and anxiety disorders in a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults [published online ahead of print, 2021 Jun 27]. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol.* 2021;1-8. doi:10.1007/s00127-021-02126-5.
7. Marques, L, Alegria, M, Becker, AE, et al. Comparative prevalence, correlates of impairment, and service utilization for eating disorders across US ethnic groups: implications for reducing ethnic disparities in health care access for eating disorders. *Int J Eat Disord.* 2011;44(5):412-420. doi:10.1002/eat.20787.
8. Sonnevile, K. R., & Lipson, S. K. (2018). Disparities in eating disorder diagnosis and treatment according to weight status, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and sex among college students. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 51(6), 518-526. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.22846>.
9. Klump KL, Bulik CM, Kaye WH, Treasure J, Tyson E. Academy for eating disorders position paper: eating disorders are serious mental illnesses. *Int J Eat Disord.* 2009 Mar;42(2):97-103. doi: 10.1002/eat.20589. PMID: 18951455.