

Educational Implications

Students with eating disorders may look like model students, often leading the class and being very self-demanding. Others may show poor academic performance. When students with eating disorders are preoccupied with body image and controlling their food intake, they may have short attention spans and poor concentration. These symptoms may also be due to a lack of nutrients from fasting and vomiting. These students often lack the energy and drive necessary to complete assignments or homework.

Resources

Eating Disorders Resources/Gürze Books

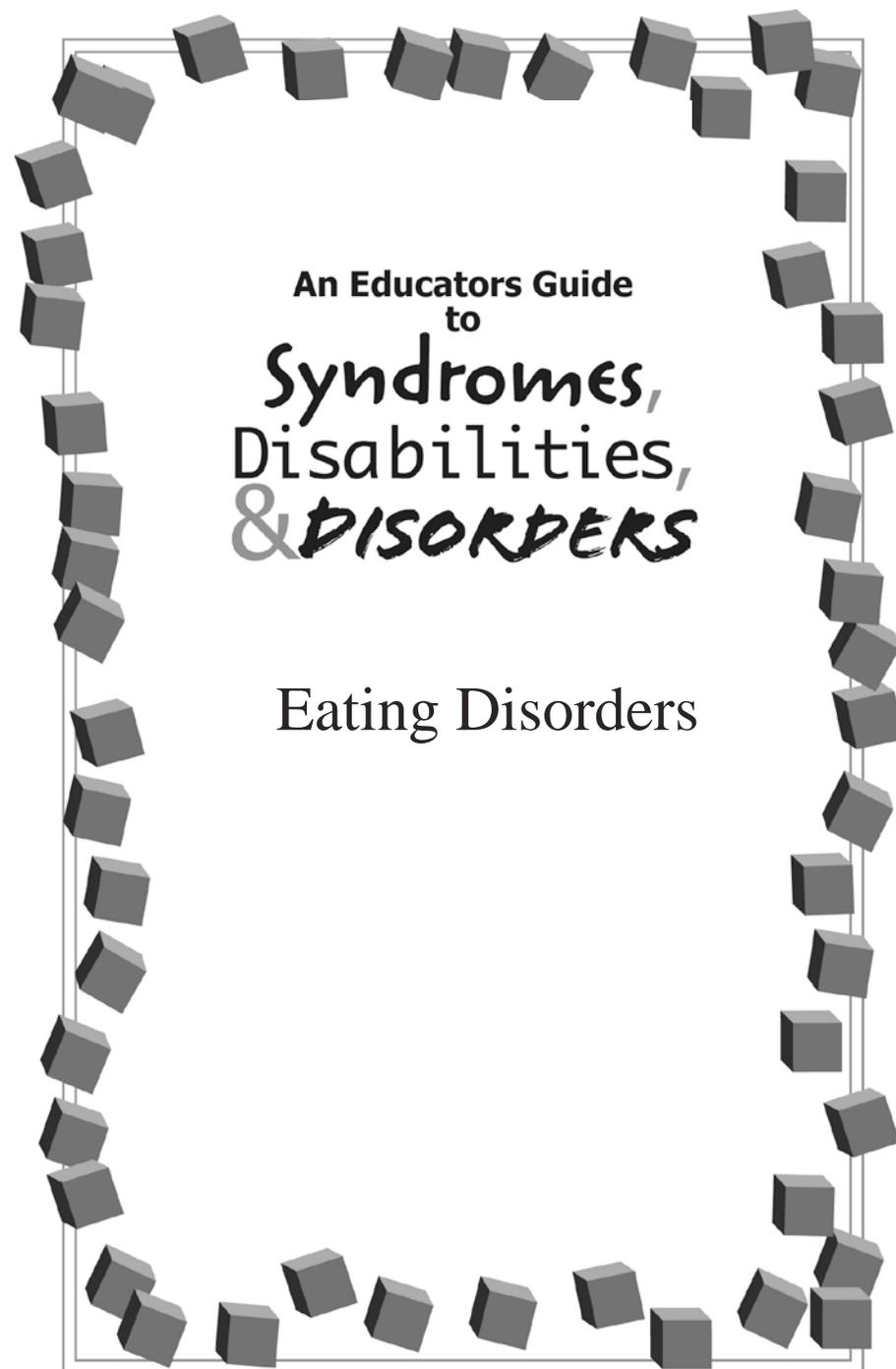
PO Box 2238
Carlsbad, CA 92018
760-434-7553 • 800-756-7533
www.gurze.net

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders

PO Box 7
Highland Park, IL 60035
847-831-3438
www.anad.org
Hotline counseling, referrals, information, and advocacy

National Eating Disorders Association

603 Stewart Street, Suite 803
Seattle, WA 98101
206-382-3587
www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
Educational resources on prevention for schools, health professionals, and individuals



About the Disorder

Nearly all of us worry about our weight at some time in our lives. However, some individuals become so obsessed with their weight and the need to be thin that they develop an eating disorder. The two most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa.

Once seen mostly in teens and young adults, these disorders are increasingly seen in younger children as well. Children as young as 4 and 5 years of age are expressing the need to diet, and it's estimated that 40 percent of 9 year-olds have already dieted. Eating disorders are not limited to girls and young women—between 10 and 20 percent of adolescents with eating disorders are boys.

Individuals with anorexia fail to maintain a minimally normal body weight. They engage in abnormal eating behavior and have excessive concerns about food. They are intensely afraid of even the slightest weight gain, and their perception of their body shape and size is significantly distorted. Many individuals with anorexia are compulsive and excessive about exercise.

Symptoms or Behaviors

- Perfectionistic attitude
- Impaired concentration
- Withdrawn
- All or nothing thinking
- Depressed mood or mood swings
- Self-deprecating statements
- Irritability
- Lethargy

- Anxiety
- Fainting spells and dizziness
- Headaches
- Hiding food
- Avoiding snacks or activities that include food
- Frequent trips to the bathroom

Instructional Strategies and Classroom Accommodations

- Stress acceptance in your classroom; successful people come in all sizes and shapes.
- Watch what you say. Comments like “You look terrible,” “What have you eaten today?” or “I wish I had that problem” are often hurtful and discouraging.
- Stress progress, not perfection.
- Avoid pushing students to excel beyond their capabilities.
- Avoid high levels of competition.
- Reduce stress where possible by reducing assignments or extending deadlines.