

STUDENT INSIGHT

FPSS

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Eating Disorders

Tigger warning: this article is about eating disorders. Includes explicit details. Please read at your own discretion.

Food. Something we enjoy, indulge in, and for some, use for comfort. But let's not forget that food is a fuel. So if it is a fuel, **is it also fueling the fire of body image?** Where do we draw the line between enjoyment and sacrificing our health, indulging in and being hospitalized, or comfort and shame? This article will touch upon the symptoms of eating disorders. The journey, physical and emotional, of having an eating disorder varies from person to person. The majority of people don't even realize that they have slipped into an eating disorder - which is extremely dangerous. To try and help, there are a few red flags to look out for; in yourself and others.

Emotional symptoms include attitudes that indicate weight loss, dieting and control of food are becoming primary concerns, refusing to eat certain foods (e.g. no carbohydrates), appearing to be uncomfortable eating around others, excessive chewing, not allowing foods to touch, extreme concern with body shape and size, extreme mood swings and frequently checking in a mirror for perceived flaws in appearance. Physical symptoms include noticeable fluctuation in weight, both up and down, stomach cramps, difficulty concentrating, dizziness (especially upon standing up), fainting, feeling cold all the time, sleeping problems, cuts and callouses across the top of finger joints (a result of induced vomiting), dry skin and hair, brittle nails, muscle weakness, and poor wound healing. Disclaimer: If an individual shows one or more symptoms on

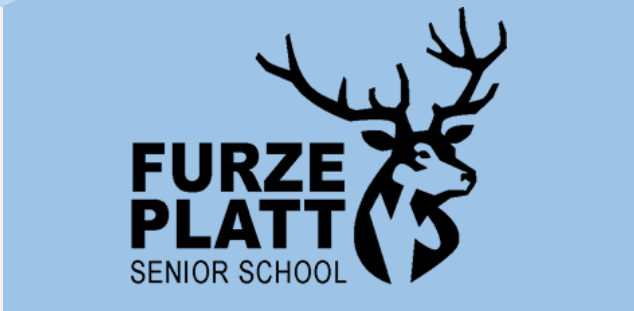
this list, that does not mean that they definitely have an eating disorder. Likewise, if they aren't showing these symptoms that also doesn't rule out the possibility of them having one either. Advice for friends and teachers to help support a friend or student who may have an eating disorder.

Friends:

Keep trying to include them – they may not want to go out or join in with activities, but keep trying to talk to them and ask them along, just like before. Even if they don't join in, they will still like to be asked. It will make them feel valued as a person. Try to build up their self-esteem – perhaps by telling them what a great person they are and how much you appreciate having them in your life. Give your time, listen to them and try not to give advice or criticise – this can be tough when you don't agree with what they say about themselves and what they eat. Remember, **you don't have to know all the answers.** Just making sure they know you're there for them is what's important. This is especially true when it feels like your friend or relative is rejecting your friendship, help and support.

Teachers:

Communicate. If you notice any signs or symptoms (food avoidance, food hoarding, frequent bathroom use, changes in weight/shape, fatigue, changes in attention, paleness, etc.), or notice a student being teased for their weight or shape, talk to them, or to their parents. In order to facilitate a safe environment for all students, talking to the student doing the teasing or bullying about the potential impact can be helpful, as well. Become aware. There is a very stereotypical image of "the eating disordered patient." **Eating disorders come in all shapes, sizes, genders, ethnicities, and abilities.** Be



flexible. Many teenagers with eating disorders are in intensive treatment – sometimes going to appointments and programs more days a week than not.

On top of homework and exams, this can cause stress, which **can trigger an increase in eating disorder behaviours** as a coping technique. While extensions are certainly not always possible, be flexible around giving these teenagers extra time with assignments where appropriate.

There are also many different eating disorders; here are the most relevant.

Anorexia: loss of appetite for food (as a medical condition). An emotional disorder characterised by an obsessive desire to lose weight by not eating.

Bulimia: An emotional disorder characterised by a distorted body image and an obsessive desire to lose weight, in which bursts of extreme overeating, followed by fasting, or self-induced vomiting.

Purging disorder: Characterised by self induced vomiting, misuse of laxatives to control shape/weight.

Binge eating disorder: A serious mental illness where people experience a loss of control and eat large quantities of food on a regular basis, unlike bulimia, people with binge eating disorder don't regularly purge after a binge.

Orthorexia: an obsession with eating foods that one considers healthy. A medical condition in which the sufferer systematically avoids specific foods that they believe to be harmful.

Pica: a psychological disorder characterized by an appetite for substances that are largely non-nutritive, such as ice (pagophagia); hair (trichophagia); paper (xylophagia); drywall or paint;

Aqsa Fatima (year 11)



Construction in school

On January 28th, it was a cold but sunny Monday morning and I had the pleasure of being able to have a look round the construction site and have an interview with the head contractor. The construction at the school has always been quite a cloudy subject, students have had not much information except for some **fancy designs and a vague date to when it will be finished.** I know students will not want a daily update of how many bricks have been laid but maybe a gentle reminder as to why pupils have to hear hours and hours of drilling and hammering while trying to concentrate in their lessons may help.

The company that has been chosen for the construction is Beard, a family run company formed back in 1892, run by a **man in his eighties who still works five days a week.** The head contractor, Robert Nairn and project manager, Bill McCartney are the ones who make

sure everything runs smoothly on the site and that all problems ran into are dealt with accordingly. Robert **has had experience in the industry for forty plus years** but has only been working for Beard for only nine months and is currently working on three sites, meaning he has to be everywhere at once. Even though Robert is always busy, he was still kind enough to take some time to inform me on how the construction is going.

The construction is split up into three phases, the first being the construction of the **whooping three floored building** that stands tall from most parts of the school. Then phase two is the demolishing of some humanities classrooms, this will take part in the Summer holidays for... safety reasons.

Finally, phase three will be building the new hall where the old classrooms once stood, **this hall will be twice the**

size of the hall we use now,

kitted out with new sound and lighting. This phase will be finishing at around Easter time 2020. But one of the hardest parts about the construction is the safety for everyone walking around the school, not just because they care for our well being, but for legal and insurance reasons. Normally on construction sites the supplies that are needed are delivered anytime during the day, but because they are being delivered to a school there are certain times in which they can be delivered. This stops the possibility of students being run over by giant trucks roaming around.

Every construction brings along problems with it, this is not any different for the school. When asked the question 'Has there been any problems with the construction?' I was told that contractors and people from the school and local council meet up on a weekly basis to record any problems that have occurred, normally this consists of maybe an unknown pipe in the ground or the connecting fire alarm system, if one wire is destroyed then the school will be burnt a crisp without us even knowing. These difficulties are all brought up in the meetings, reducing the chance of unexpected delays. Luckily, no major setbacks have occurred, and let us hope it remains this way.

After a few questions were asked and answered, I had a chance to look around the site. I was given a pair of gloves, boots, a high vis and a hard hat which covered most of my face. Site

Manager, Bill McCartney and all fifteen to twenty site workers looked surprisingly happy on a cold Monday morning as they carried metal and other materials around the site. Unfortunately I was not able to go to the top floor but the first and second would be exact replicas of each other so it made no difference, although at the top, I heard Windsor Castle can be seen off into the distance. Though it was just a skeleton of a building I could visualise students sitting in the eleven classrooms and the four science labs provided by the new building.

My feelings then, **put up with a bit of the hammering and drilling** heard from your lessons, because this new buildings looks to be a great benefit for the school. So cover your ears and just wait.

Felix Earl (Year 9)



Should Young People have the Vote?

Brexit is a huge political shift that is about to begin in our country, and it's a change that will influence our lives more than any other generation's in the UK.

All of our future plans to do with travel, employment or further studies out of the country could very easily be compromised because of it, because the separation from our country and the EU will mean that we might not have the freedom of easy movement into, and out of, European countries like we do right now. We may have to acquire special visas (travel documents) in order to do so, and added difficulties similar to this may end up deterring many of us from pursuing jobs abroad in the future, or **exploring our wider world** in general.

What's happening in politics right now will end up affecting us more than any other age group in the UK, so... why don't we have a vote?

Surveys conducted after the 2016 Brexit referendum showed that the overall results would actually have been to Remain in the EU, had sixteen and seventeen year olds been able to vote.

Just think about that: if a younger age group of just two years had been able to give their say on our position in the EU, our country's future could've been extremely different to what it will be now.

So, why do younger people not have a vote, if our input could make so much of a difference, and if the decisions being made will impact our lives most significantly?

The commonly-heard reason for the government denying us the vote has always been that our generation is seen as 'immature', 'irresponsible', or 'easily influenced'. There is a huge and **unfair bias against young people** which is only becoming worse today – the minority of our group who are reckless or immature have overshadowed the majority of us to the public eye.

Keeping us in the dark will only reinforce the view that young people are ignorant about our current political climate, and who's to say that all adults in our society are educated in this matter and competent in making this

decision for our future?

So if we're perceived as uneducated, **then why not start to educate us so that we can be informed to have a vote?**

Teenagers have the potential to be dedicated and involved members of society; plenty of students in this school already have the knowledge and maturity to have their voices heard in more serious conversations.

So let's **bring our votes into the light.**

By Lara Torok (year 9)



Blindly following the crowd

In December 2018 we saw an internet sensation seemingly come out of nowhere and take over the internet over Christmas.

This sensation was called **'the Birdbox challenge'**. The *Birdbox* challenge is a craze that has swept across the internet due to the Netflix original film *BirdBox*. The challenge requires you to do tasks blindfolded, which is an interesting concept, **however some people are doing dangerous tasks** for example driving. In one case a teenager caused a collision, luckily no one was killed but it is ridiculous that some people believe it is a good idea to try and drive with a blindfold on. The challenge sounds fun, but **when does it get to the point where it stops being fun?** When someone is injured or even worse if someone dies? I asked my friends what they thought of the challenge and most of them said it was just **"harmless fun."** This misconception of the challenge being fun ignores the darker side,

the injuries and the deaths, which are covered by the veil of a naive internet challenge. Furthermore, this isn't the first time an internet challenge has gained huge momentum. Just last year the internet was hit with a sensation called the *'Tidepod challenge'*. The *'Tidepod challenge'* requires you to eat a washing up tablet, which contains many chemicals that can kill you, and post it onto YouTube. **The challenge ended up killing eight people** yet Youtuber's still continued to attempt the challenge long after.

The *Birdbox* challenge has **given Netflix a lot of free publicity**, meaning they are benefiting from people being injured. Netflix have told people to refrain from doing the challenge, however it has not helped, as people are continuing to do the challenge. One year eleven student has said that he is upset that Netflix are gaining free advertising as "it is putting people at risk and they are benefiting from that".

There have been rumours that Netflix sets up fake accounts to do the *Birdbox* challenge to then let the general public

take the idea and turn it into a viral phenomenon.

This **new revolutionary form of advertising is free**, and creates a hype around a very average movie. There was a reported **75 million people** that watched the film in its opening week, however its Rotten Tomatoes score was only a 63% which is a very average rating.

Overall it seems obvious that the *Birdbox* challenge is dangerous especially to impressionable audiences like children or teenagers. If a child sees their favourite YouTuber doing the challenge they are more likely to copy it and that leads to people getting hurt as a child or teenager doesn't know what's a good idea and what's a stupid idea that is going to lead to someone getting hurt.

Do you have an opinion on the Challenge or have you done the challenge before? If so email studentinsight@furzeplatt.net

By Finlay Griggs (year 11)

Does gender inequality exist in sport today?

Should dance be for girls and football be for boys? Or like me, do you think that is unfair? When I was in year seven, I didn't get the chance to play football or rugby and the boys missed out on hockey. The PE teachers thought about this and decided to mix it up. Mr Djelani, a teacher involved in the decision to adjust our PE curriculum, explained, "We wanted to offer as wide a scope of sports as we were able to. For some people, **it may be the only opportunity to play a new sport** as they may not feel comfortable trying it outside of school. Specialising too early in sports can result in repetitive strain injuries and the opportunity to try new movements and muscles will benefit all athletes as they get older. It also allows some boys and girls to excel at a new sport that they may not have realised they enjoyed. We've been very happy with how it has worked so far and would love to offer more sports."

Some students shared different opinions on what they thought about the new chance to play these new sports. Izzy P from year 8 said, "I love the changes and

I really enjoy the sports."

However other students are still adjusting to the new sports. Jessica W from year 8 quoted, "It is ok. It was scary at first because we had not done it before."

In sports today, there is a huge difference between what male and female athletes are currently paid: In football, a male premier league player is paid £2.3 million pounds a year, however, a WSL (Women's Super League) player gets paid only £65,000 a year. Although, in tennis and athletics, changes have happened so now men and women are paid equally. Even though this good change is happening, women do not get as much recognition as men. In the 2011 sports personality of the year, there were no women in the shortlist. This caused a lot of outrage and demonstrated the lack of recognition towards women. Tanni Grey-Thompson, Chancellor of Northumbria University and gold medal winner said, "only 2% of media coverage in sport goes to women."

So, what more could we do at Furze Platt to improve gender inequality in PE? If you have any ideas, please email me at bris-towj@furzeplatt.com and your ideas may become reality.

By Jess Bristow (year 8)

How free is free speech?

Article 10 of the Human Rights Act, which is a UK law, states that everyone in Britain has the right to 'freedom of expression', which includes freedom of speech. But what does free speech actually mean? Can we all just say whatever we want, even if it's offending someone else? How free is free speech?

'Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me'. How much truth is really in this statement? Words are one of the most powerful tools that human beings have. They enable us to communicate, work together and create amazing things. However, words are far too frequently used to put people down and prevent any progress towards achieving peace and understanding between everyone from being made.

Section 4 of the Public Order Act states that it is an offence for a person to use 'threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, another person harassment, alarm or distress'. Language that incites hatred on the grounds of a person's real or perceived religion, race, disability, transgender identity or sexual orientation is specifically prohibited. You could receive imprisonment, a fine, or both for breaking this law.

This is very relevant to our school community because many students either hear offensive, insulting, thoughtless comments while at school or are the targets of them. Most of the time, people try to pass these comments off as jokes. Some jokes just aren't funny, especially to the minority groups that they are aimed at. The laws surrounding this kind of behaviour shouldn't even matter. What should matter is that we are all human beings, and we all have the responsibility to do one simple thing – treat each other with respect.

By Scarlett Phillips (year 9)