

Eating Disorders - Agree Disagree

KS3

20 mins

An activity to get people thinking about attitudes towards eating disorders

What you need:

- **AGREE/DISAGREE** labels and blutak.
- Space for students to move around the classroom and place themselves along an imaginary line stretching from one end of the class to the other.

Method:

- Place **AGREE** and **DISAGREE** labels on the wall at either end of the classroom.
- Explain that students are going to have a chance to think about where they stand on issues relating to eating disorders. There are no rights or wrongs - it is more important to explore attitudes and beliefs around the statements
- Read out each statement in turn and ask students to place themselves along an imaginary line between Agree and Disagree, showing the degree to which they agree with the statement.
- Ask why people have chosen to stand where they are.
- Refer to information below after each statement has been discussed.
- Finally ask students to write 4 or 5 **FACTS** about Eating Disorders they have learned from this activity.

Statements:

1. Eating disorders are all about food and weight

FALSE

Although eating disorders often appear to be all about food and weight in fact they have much more complex causes. Often they develop as a way of coping with feelings or situations that are making you unhappy, angry, depressed, anxious or worried.

2. People who are normal weight or overweight can still have eating disorders.

TRUE

It is difficult to tell whether or not someone has an eating disorder because not all eating disorders are determined by the size and weight of a person. An eating disorder is not always easy to detect based on weight. People with bulimia tend to be at an average, or even above average, weight. Compulsive overeaters are typically overweight rather than underweight.

3. Only women are affected by eating disorders.

FALSE

Eating disorders are more common among young women than men. However, they also affect males. Among teens and young adults some estimates suggest that 10% of cases of Anorexia Nervosa, 10-15% of cases of Bulimia Nervosa and up to 40% of cases of Binge Eating Disorder occur in males. Some males with eating disorders may be driven by the desire to lose weight while others may be driven by the desire to gain

weight in order to achieve a muscular physique. There is also evidence that it takes longer for males to receive professional help and treatment than females. Typically it is only when symptoms become severe that a diagnosis of an eating disorder is considered in boys and young men. Males may also be even more motivated to hide their symptoms due to the stigma associated with having what they or others perceive to be 'a female disorder'.

4. Eating disorders affect all age groups.

TRUE

The most rapidly growing group of individuals developing eating disorders are women in middle age.

