

The Skinny on Eating Disorders: Time to get Obnoxious

Eating Disorders can be one of those topics that people find touchy and unpleasant, so all too often they do not get addressed. Well, it's time to throw your insecurities out the window and get obnoxious. Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa are **not** high society lifestyle choices, but they **are** psychological illnesses. Just in case you are not already aware, Anorexia Nervosa is "an emotional disorder characterized by an obsessive desire to lose weight by refusing to eat" and Bulimia Nervosa is "an emotional disorder characterized by bouts of overeating, typically alternating with fasting or self-induced vomiting or purging" (Oxford English Dictionary). There are other eating disorders with similar symptoms that have not been given specific names; they are usually referred to as "ED-NOS, eating disorders not otherwise specified" (Eating Disorders par. 2). It is often assumed that eating disorders only affect young white women and that's not true. Anyone can develop an eating disorder, no matter what his or her gender or race. The consequences of these diseases are not just that someone is too thin or a little weak, they can cause limitless problems with the way our minds and bodies work. To name a few of these; depression, low blood pressure, hair loss from head, facial hair growth, osteoporosis, swollen face, tooth decay, flaky skin, heart arrhythmias, not to mention death (Eating Disorders pars. 4-6). Being skinny does not automatically equal a healthy individual with strong

strong willpower and being overweight does not automatically mean someone is unhealthy, lazy and weak willed.

In the last few years an underground culture of people who refer to themselves as being pro-ana or pro-mia has been uncovered. They consider their diseases lifestyles and encourage others who have these illnesses to continue living in this unhealthy manner, seeing themselves as an "elite" group who believe they have a uniquely strong willpower that will allow them to control their illnesses enough not to experience any negative consequences (Taylor par. 5). This is a delusional and extremely risky viewpoint from a phenomenon that has mainly taken shape in the form of controversial websites. Many people feel that these websites should be banned altogether, but just like everyone else in North America, the hosts of pro-ana and pro-mia websites do have freedom of speech and with that the right to communicate their ideas and opinions. That is as it should be, however, those of us who recognize these diseases for what they are have that same right. So speak up, get in the face of eating disorders, identify them and get help for anyone you know that is victim to one, even if he/she is a willing victim. It is easier said than done because it's a complex problem and it may very well cause a rift between you and whomever you are trying to help, but look at it this way you'd rather be in a fight with someone you care about than attending their funeral.

Sources:

Eating Disorders: A General Guide for Teens. Retrieved 28 February 2007 from

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Minestrone

Haven't been eating your vegetables? This soup is a great way to feel healthy while eating something tasty.

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 stalks of celery, halved and chopped
- 2 tsp each pepper, paprika and oregano
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 large can of diced tomatoes
- 1 litre of beef or vegetable broth
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup uncooked broad egg noodles
- 1 cup fresh green beans, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1 small can Romano beans, drained and rinsed

In a large soup pot, sauté the onion, garlic, carrot and celery in the olive oil.

Stir in the seasonings just before the veggies become soft.

Add the tomatoes (with their juice), beef broth and water, and bring to a simmer.

Once the soup is bubbling, add the egg noodles. Cook for fifteen minutes, or until the noodles soften.

Five minutes before serving, add the two kinds of beans, so they don't become overcooked.