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Humanities

6 March 2018

Every 62 minutes

“Every 62 minutes at least one person dies as a direct result from an eating disorder”(ANAD).Growing up,adolescents learn about how they feel self conscious, but not knowing why is common until they reach puberty, finally realizing how beauty standards have affected them. “Statistics on anorexia show that between 1 – 5% of all female adolescents and young women suffer from anorexia. The average age of onset is 17” (Morris). Which means that the “every 62 minute” statistics are mostly females around the age of seventeen. But these eating disorders that are developed can start earlier than the age of sixteen or seventeen. In America, young adults have been given unrealistic western beauty standards from social media, family, and friends; putting their health at risk.

Children can start hearing and seeing negativity from family members and friends. Relatives can push these beauty standards onto their kids to make them feel beautiful without noticing how they are affecting their child’s self esteem, while changing how they really look, or want to look. It can make kids or teens feel like they have to look a certain way in front of family in order to fit in or feel accepted. Beauty standards are set early in childhood like when little girls are gifted Barbies as something to play with. “In another experiment, conducted in 2010, researchers found that girls who were made to taste food after playing with Barbies ate

significantly less than when they played with average-sized dolls. The study nauseatingly reflects the extent to which girls are psychologically affected by the media” (Dixon). This goes to show how early children can start noticing the “Perfect body” without realizing it. Dixon’s article presents a chart, comparing what Barbie would look like if she were life size. It presents a table, showing Barbies unrealistic sizing to the average woman in America. “Research has shown that if Barbie were made into a real life teenager, she would be 5’9, have a 39” bust, an 18” waist, 33” hips and a size 3 shoe. She would weigh approximately 110 pounds and would be considered not only anorexic, but so thin that she wouldn’t even be able to walk”(Dixon). Being nurtured less as a child can lead to negative body image later on. Body image can start as early as three years old. Children can adapt this negative body image perspective by what they see and hear from the adults around them, If their mother or father is pointing out something they do not like about their own body, the child is most likely going to develop this bad habit. In the article “Mirror Mirror” by Kate Fox, it quotes “If you were teased about flaws in your appearance (particularly your size or weight) as a child or teenager, your body image may have become permanently disturbed” (Fox). This states that adolescents not only have a weight on their shoulders to look presentable in front of their families, they now have to worry about their appearance around their peers. Small things like family and friend comments on one’s body can be one of the main reasons why children experience these negative thoughts about themselves.

Growing up and seeing everyone around you start puberty, whether it is how they look or a personality change, something that is always changing for teens is social media. Even if they are under the age limit to open up an account for social media (which is thirteen years of age)

they still make one so that they can interact with their friends outside of school. “By the time kids are interested in joining social networks, nearly one in three is stressed out about how he or she looks when posting photos, and even more are worried about how they look in photos they're tagged in.” (Swann). This is worrying because without noticing, social media has become a platform that people post only what they think others want to see. Although it can be a way to express themselves in ways that they can not do in real life, Some have become very dependant on social media and how others perceive them. “Instagram easily makes girls and women feel as if their bodies aren't good enough as people add filters and edit their pictures in order for them to look ‘perfect’” (Macmillan). While trying to keep up this persona, pre-teens can get so caught up with how they look like that they feel more self conscious about their body and appearance, comparing themselves to social media users with the “Instagram Model” title. “The girls’ exposure to the appearance-focused media, outlets were not directly related to the girls’ body dissatisfaction, but rather they were indirectly related through the conversations about appearance that they had with their peers” (Hanna). When pre teens are exposed to something that becomes a negative outlet to them over time (social media), it can lead to them trying to change their bodies in an unhealthy way.

All of these factors like social media, family and friends pushing these beauty standards onto these kids or teens can lead into mental health issues that can affect their physical health. Problems that can be developed are eating disorders like anorexia: the act of an individual who chooses not to eat as a way to stay skinny. Or they can develop Bulimia, which is an individual who binge eats and purges afterwards to maintain their current body shape. These are the two

most common eating disorders that are diagnosed in teens. “95% of those with eating disorders are between the ages of 12 and 25” (*SAMHSA*). Both of these eating disorders can change the brain's structure. “Disordered eating can cause structural damage to your brain such as a reduction in white and grey matter” (Varathan). Both grey and white matter are important, grey matter focusing on, sensory perception, for example: memory, emotions, decision making, muscle control, self-control and much more. While white matter carries nerve impulses between neurons. Something that people who are diagnosed with an eating disorder should know the difference between is negative body image and positive body image. Negative body image is what people with eating disorders are going through, even though, to them, it may seem like they are just “changing their bodies”, they are doing it in a really dangerous way. Whether they know what they're doing is damaging their body or not. Positive body image is what these people should aim towards, whether its just liking one part of themselves, it can lead up to self love in the future.

Society thinks that people should teach them is how to not villainize social media for their own body image issues or even try to tell parents to supervise what their children are exposed to by limiting their phone usage or not allowing them to sign up for social media accounts like instagram or twitter. Social media may be something that can negatively impacts them, but they create social media into something positive. A place they can go back to when they're feeling down. They can choose whether or not they want to see thing that lower their self esteem and they can follow people that they can look up to, people who empower them and help them become better people.

people should be mindful what kids are shown about beauty standards, we can slowly start to lessen the amount of adolescents who are struggling with eating disorders, by teaching them how to love themselves from when they are young and how they can turn negative body image into positive body image whether its with friends and family or with social media. So that when they grow older they don't have self esteem issues or even worse, an eating disorder which can get to the point where their health is at risk.

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