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Humanities

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Every 62 minutes

As I was growing up I have always been self conscious about how I looked but I never knew why, until now I have only realized how much negative was around me relating to beauty standards. In America, young adults have been given a negative platform through social media, As well as their family and friends providing unrealistic expectations; while trying to fit into western beauty standards their self esteem can be affected.

children can start hearing and seeing from family members and friends. One example is when relatives push these beauty standards onto their kids to make them feel beautiful, while changing how they really look, or want to look. It can make the kids or teens feel like they have to look a certain way in front of family on order to not get called out on. Some of the earliest beauty standards that children can go through is when they are given barbies as something to play with. “In another experiment, this one 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.” (plastic pressure barbies impractical beauty standards over the years-Julia Dixon) Also, in this article it shows a chart that showcases what barbie would look

like if she were life size, next to an average woman. The chart shows a table comparing barbies unrealistic sizing to the woman besides her. In the article "Mirror Mirror" written by kate fox, it quotes "Teasing factor: 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." It ties into how some friends can be a start to body image issues for an individual. It also states that being held 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 don't like about their body, the child is most likely going to develop this bad habit. Small things like family and friend comments on ones body can be one of the main reasons why children experience these negative thoughts about themselves.

Growing up into a pre teen and seeign everyone around you start to change, whether its how they look or a personality change, something that is always changing for teens in 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." (Kids are super unhappy with their body image and the media isn't helping." (Jennifer 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't do in real life, Some are very dependant on social media and

how others perceive them. 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 while 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.” (“The Effects of the Media on Self-Esteem of Young Girls” Róbert Osad’an – Rania Hanna)

All of these things 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 kids and teens can develop is eating disorders like anorexia; which is the act of an individual who chooses not to eat as a way to stay skinny. Or they can develop Bulimia, which is usually an individual who binge eats and purges afterwards to maintain their current body shape. “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 (connects neurons) and grey (implicated in language, memory, and attention processes) matter.” (how eating disorders change the brain- Deepti Varathan). 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.

How these small things like social media and family and friends can be a little step to the big picture, which is when young girls and boys have their own body images about themselves. One thing that we should teach them is how to create social media something positive that they can go back to when they're feeling down. Instead of demonizing the media they can choose whether or not they want to see thing that lower their self esteem, they can follow people that they can look up to, people who empower them.

“Every 62 minutes at least one person dies as a direct result from an eating disorder”(ANAD) we should be mindful of 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 that they can develop from trying to look “beautiful.” Which can get to the point where their health is at risk.