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**UNIT: SENSITIVE ISSUES****TOPIC: Eating Disorders**  
**TIMELINE: 2-3 days**

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**OBJECTIVES:**

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After completing this unit the student will:

1. Define terms associated with eating disorders.
2. Discuss how body type affects a person's self concept.
3. Discuss appropriate options for gaining or losing weight.
4. Identify the short and long-term effects of eating disorders.

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**MOTIVATOR/INTRODUCTION:**

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**PACKAGES:** Display five gift wrapped packages in varying shapes and sizes. Each package should be decorated with a different style of wrapping paper and ribbons. Have each student vote for the package he/she thinks is the prettiest. Present the results to the class. Discuss why the class did not all select the same package. If there was a package that was not chosen, do they think that someone else in another group might choose it? What defines their image of beauty? Is it necessary for every package to look the same? What would life be like if all packages looked identical? Then ask the class if they feel that it is necessary for people to all look identical. Ask them if they feel that they need to meet a particular standard to please themselves and others. If so, then what must they do if they do not meet that standard? What happens to a person who can not meet that standard?

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**INFORMATION:**

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**TEACHER ASSISTED ACTIVITIES:**

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1. **ARTWORK:** Display pictures or artwork of women from past eras for the students to view. Be sure to include women from the Renaissance era, then the 1950's, then today's thinner models. An excellent example is to include Twiggy, who began the thinner look. As a class, contrast the differences in what was considered beautiful in past eras and what is considered beautiful today. Discuss who defines what is beautiful and where we get our ideas of beauty.
2. **BODY TYPES:** Briefly explain and illustrate various body types. Discuss the ability of each body type to fit our standard of beauty today.
3. **WEIGHT CHANGES:** Discuss appropriate methods for losing or gaining weight.

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**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

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1. **NURSE/THERAPIST/DOCTOR:** Invite a nurse, doctor or a therapist who works with adolescent eating disorders to speak to the class. Have him/her discuss the physical problems associated with eating disorders and emphasize the importance of accepting one's body and feeling good about oneself whether or not you fit the mold. Ask them to discuss the professional help that is available for anyone experiencing an eating disorder.

## EATING DISORDERS OVERVIEW CONTINUED

2. **PANEL:** Invite a panel of people who have overcome, or are working on overcoming an eating disorder. Have them share what created the problem, how they recognized the problem, and how they are working on overcoming the problem. It would also be interesting to have their parents come take part on the panel.

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**INDIVIDUALIZED ACTIVITIES:**

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1. **EATING DISORDERS QUIZ** (see page 3-5)

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**GROUP ACTIVITIES:**

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1. **ROLE PLAYS:** Divide the class into small groups and have each group write a scenario about eating disorders. Let them prepare the scenario as a role play and present it to the class. They should identify the problem and offer suggestions for overcoming the problem.
2. **RESEARCH:** Collect articles and pamphlets that deal with eating disorders. Divide the class into small groups and have each group read one of the resources you have gathered. They should then think of a creative way to present this information to the class (posters, skits, rap, etc.).

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**CHALLENGE PROJECTS:**

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1. **EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT:** Have students use magazines and/or catalogs to make collages entitled "Everyone is Different--Different is Good!". They should make their collage from a variety of people with different shapes. (see page 6)
2. **RESEARCH:** Have students visit the local hospital education department or write to the organizations listed on the sheet. They should then write a report on the information they learn. (see page 7)
3. **PERSONAL GOALS:** Have students set personal goals for establishing a healthy lifestyle and body. (see page 8)

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**SUMMARY:**

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Eating disorders can become a part of anyone's life. At the first sign of an eating disorder, one should seek help.

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**RESOURCES:**

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**VIDEO:** View a video about eating disorders. An excellent video is "Real People: Coping with Eating Disorders", Sunburst Communications, Number 2299-AW. Your hospital education department probably has several resources dealing with this topic. Be sure to preview all videos before showing them to the class.

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