

National Eating Disorder Week

Press Release

Imagine a world in which all of our various body sizes, shapes, colours and abilities were celebrated as being equally beautiful and acceptable! Success and happiness for women would no longer mean changing their bodies. Women would be encouraged to achieve success and power by "taking up space," not only physically, but with their voices, minds and spirits.

This is the vision to be spread across Canada during the third annual Eating Disorder Awareness Week, October 28 to November 3, 1991.

"It is not surprising that most women in our society are dissatisfied with their bodies, given that less than five percent of us "fit" this ideal," says Carla Rice, Coordinator of the National Eating Disorder Information Centre. "The relentless pressure to meet unattainable standards of beauty causes women to develop harmful feelings towards themselves and their bodies."

Many women act on these feelings and go to dangerous and damaging lengths to change the bodies they have. This is why the slogan "Taking Up Space in a Slender Society" was chosen for Eating Disorder Awareness Week.

"We need to move away from one narrow ideal of beauty, to a celebration of our diversity," says Rice. "This would allow women to accept their bodies and get beyond appearance. Women could concentrate on putting their energies into more empowering activities."

Ninety percent of women in our society dislike some aspect of their appearance. Seventy-five percent of women are weight-preoccupied and up to 50% are dieting. Women who diet commonly struggle with depression, bingeing, low self-esteem and increased weight over the long term. In most cases, dieting leads only to weight gain and more dieting.

One to three percent of women in North America have anorexia, 3-5% have bulimia, and another 10-20% engage in some of the symptoms on an occasional basis.

Anorexia and Bulimia can be seen as coping strategies for dealing with traumatic or stressful life situations. Anorexia is characterized by a fear of weight gain, and the relentless pursuit of thinness through restrictive dieting. Bulimia involves a cycle of binge eating, followed by purging to get rid of unwanted calories. Vomiting, laxative abuse, fasting, and excessive exercise are common purging methods. Both anorexia and bulimia can be severe physical

and emotional effects. In 10-20% of cases, they can be fatal.

The week is a co-operative effort by groups across Canada and the US to educate the public on the relationship between dieting, body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. The goal is to increase awareness of the social factors causing individuals, particularly women, to become anorexic, bulimic, or weight-preoccupied.

In the Fredericton area, events are being organized by the University of New Brunswick, Faculty of Nursing and Counselling Services.

Information booths will be set up at noon hour at both the University of New Brunswick and Saint Thomas University on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday during the week. Presentations will take place at Lady Dunn residence (main lounge) on Monday, October 28 at 7 pm and at Saint Thomas University in Vanier Hall residence (basement student lounge) on Tuesday, October 29 at 7 pm. All interested people are invited.

As part of Eating Disorder week, Friday November 1 has been declared "Fearless Friday" in Canada, a day when dieters are encouraged to eat what they want without feeling guilty and without fearing weight gain.

Workshop to deal with cult-related abuse

Press Release

In recent months there has been an upsurge in media reporting on ritualistic and cult-related abuse as an issue of significant proportions, both "nationally" and in the New Brunswick region. At the same time, service providers have been approached by victims of this kind of abuse who are desperately seeking help and support. The reality is that many agencies which are otherwise well-equipped to deal with the effects of multiple forms of abuse have been caught short. To respond effectively to the range of symptoms which signify ritualistic and cult-related abuse, more education and alternative therapeutic strategies are needed.

In a continuing effort to provide training opportunities for service providers, as well as support and education for survivors of all forms of abuse, the Women's Healing Centre is sponsoring a workshop entitled "Working with Survivors of Ritualistic and Cult-Related Abuse."

This workshop designed to raise awareness of the issues and to provide solid information on coping with effects, is open to service providers and to survivors. During the course of the two-day event, care will be taken to accommodate and address the

special needs of survivors. The workshop will be held November 7 and 8 at the Hugh John Flemming Forestry Centre.

Presenter Gayle Woodsum is co-founder of Looking Up, a Maine-based organization that offers non-traditional programs, education, training and support to incest and child sexual abuse survivors (including ritual abuse survivors), as well as to an international community of service providers.

Serving as Executive Director for Looking Up from its inception in 1983 to 1991, Gayle Woodsum has presented hundreds of training sessions on the issue of working with victims and survivors of incest/child sexual abuse to service-providing audiences throughout the U.S. She has frequently addressed children and adult victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, as well as the general public. In addition she has published many educational writings on the subject and provided thousands of consultation/supervision hours to service providers and support hours to victims and survivors.

For information on the workshop, please contact the Fredericton Rape Crisis Centre, at (506) 454-0460.

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