

Disordered Eating Behaviors Among Sorority Women

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Abstract : Women in late adolescence and young adulthood are particularly vulnerable to disordered eating, and prior research indicates that those within the college and sorority communities may be especially susceptible. Research has primarily involved comparing eating disorder symptoms between sorority women and non-sorority members using formal eating disorder assessments. This phenomenological study examined sorority members' (N = 10) perceptions of and lived experiences with various disordered eating behaviors within the sorority culture. Data from individual interviews and photographs indicated two structural themes and 11 textural themes related to factors associated with disordered eating behaviors. These findings point to the existence of both positive and negative aspects of sorority culture, normalization of disordered eating behaviors, and pressure to attain or maintain an ideal body image. Implications for university stakeholders, including college counselors, health center staff, and extracurricular program leaders, are discussed. Further research on the identified textural themes as well as a longitudinal study exploring how perceptions change from rush to alumnae status is suggested.

Keywords : eating disorders, disorder eating behaviors, sorority women, sorority culture, college women

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