

# **Preventing Eating Disorders in Rutgers Students Through an Interactive Nutrition Education Program**

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## TO MY AUDIENCE:

- Thank you Noa'a Shimoni MD, MPH, the Associate Vice President for Student Health and Wellness at Rutgers, for being here today and taking the time to consider my ideas. I want to also thank you for all the important work you have done thus far for the health of the Rutgers Community.
- I hope you are excited to learn about my goals & objectives.



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# THE PROBLEM HERE AT RUTGERS

- Although eating disorders are relevant to all age groups, college students tend to develop symptoms during their transition into college due to changes in their environment and schedule, stress, and anxiety.
- This issue persists as eating disorders can lead to adverse physical and mental health issues, increases in mood and suicide-related psychological issues, lowered quality of life, increased anxiety, decreased academic performance, etc.



# ALARMING KEY NUMBERS

**10-20% of women &  
4-10% of men in college  
suffer from an eating disorder**

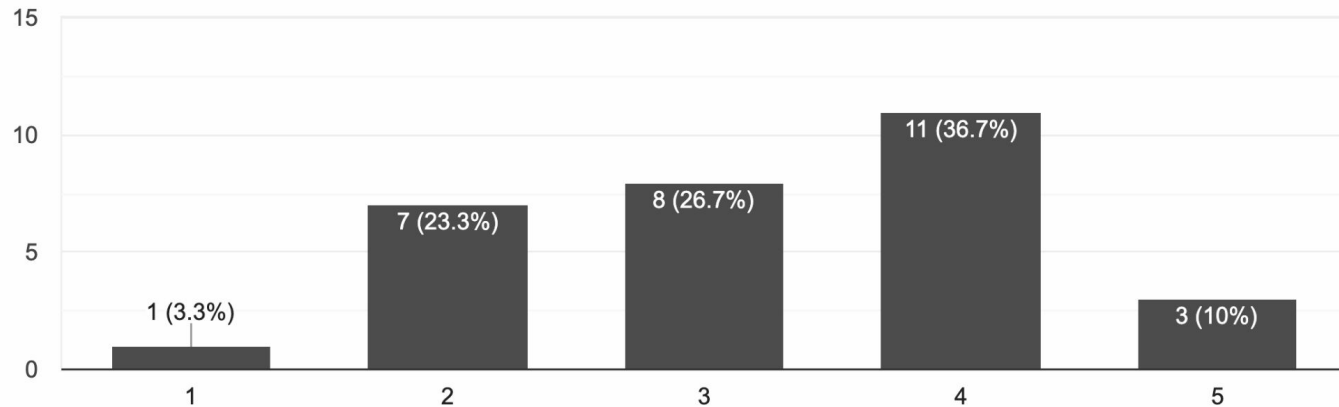
**83.3% of students  
surveyed  
at Rutgers reported they  
themselves or someone  
they know struggles with  
an eating disorder**

# MY RESEARCH

1 being very insecure, 5 being very confident

How comfortable and confident do you feel about your body image?

30 responses

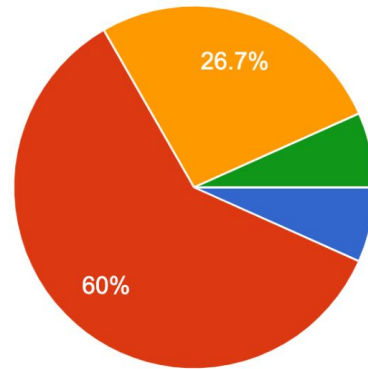


# MY RESEARCH (cont.)

Note: Research was conducted only within Rutgers New Brunswick students.

How accessible do you think that Rutgers student health is if you feel like you are struggling with an eating disorder?

30 responses

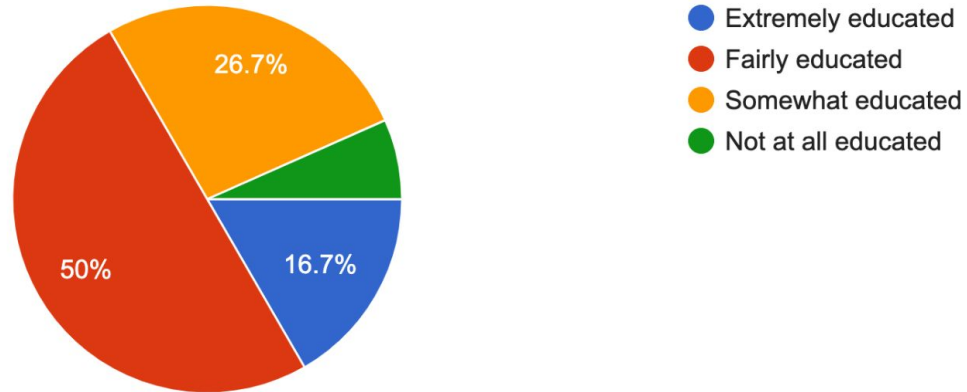


- Very accessible; I feel that I am aware of all the resources Rutgers has to offer
- Somewhat accessible; If I needed help Rutgers would be accessible but I would need to reach out for resources myself
- Rarely accessible; I am not aware of Rutgers resources for student health
- Not accessible; I would not even know where to start if I needed help

# MY RESEARCH (cont.)

How educated do you feel that you are about eating disorders, their symptoms, and their impacts on health?

30 responses





# THE IMPACT



Due to the lack of easily accessible information and education at Rutgers, students often rely on unhealthy eating patterns and negative mindsets in terms of body image, ultimately leading to severe and sometimes fatal cases of eating disorders.

# SOME IMPORTANT QUOTES

from anonymous Rutgers students

- ❖ “They [eating disorders] have **made me weak** and not be able to perform at my best especially when trying to focus on studying and exams.”
- ❖ “Currently eating disorders have affected me in the way that **I don't necessarily know how to properly fuel my body**, nor do I really know how to listen to the cues my body gives me when I'm hungry or when I'm full. most days I feel like I can get by having 1 meal with snacks scattered throughout the day and barely any water.”
- ❖ “People become **overly obsessed with their body image** and **manipulate their food intake** in some way.”
- ❖ “They [eating disorders] make you **physically weaker, more fatigued, and less motivated**”
- ❖ “They [eating disorders] have made **the way that we talk about food very sensitive**”

# RELEVANCE AT RUTGERS

## LACK OF NUTRITION EDUCATION

- One of the main reasons that eating disorders are present within our society is due to the lack of nutrition education that is provided.
- Fueling one's body is not a one-step formula that every person can follow, and therefore, it is necessary that our students have proper understanding about how food impacts their health, eating patterns, and overall body image.



## RUTGERS' REPUTATION

- When students are not challenged by the influences of an eating disorder they will be able to perform better in school, their athletics, and their extracurriculars
- When students are physically and mentally healthy, the overall reputation of Rutgers University will be favored. When outside sources are aware that Rutgers is devoted to the health of their students, not only will other institutions respect and praise the institution's efforts, it will also be a source of attraction for prospective students.

# EXAMPLE SUCCESS MODELS

## Cornell University – “Body Positive Cornell”

“Peer education initiative that fosters body acceptance, offers peer-ed, weekly discussion groups, provides empirically-based, weight-neutral information about health, challenges discrimination based on size and/or appearance, and is a force for positive social change at Cornell.”

### 5 step plan of core competencies:

1. Reclaim health
2. Practice intuitive self-care
3. Cultivate self-love
4. Declare your own authentic beauty
5. Build community



Registered dietitians and master’s-level therapists facilitate program courses. With educational resources through webinars, handouts, worksheets and assignments, and videos.

- 76% of participants of the Body Positive Program said that “the groups helped them effectively deal with a problem related to body image, and/or eating and exercise”
- 71% of participants said “they would recommend the program to a friend.”

# EXAMPLE SUCCESS MODELS

## University of Pennsylvania – “The Body Empowerment Project”

10-week, 1-hour, weekly after-school educational workshops which centered its focus around self-care in regards to health.

After the implementation of this program, there were findings which showed a statistical significant increase in body-appreciation and awareness and a decrease in eating disorder symptoms present within the participating students.

- 92% of participants said they would like to participate in a program like this again.
- 97% expressed that they would recommend our program to their friends.



# EXAMPLE SUCCESS MODELS

## University of Minnesota – “Comprehensive Eating Disorder Program”



- Educational resources to students including: traveling food demonstrations, a “body appreciation mirror” initiative, and an eating disorder presentation and resource center
- This program specifically works to encourage a curriculum of “nine dimensions of wellness” which works towards coping skills and emotional and physical health.

# PLAN OF ACTION

## PHASE ONE: PREPARATION

2 weeks prior to the start of the program



**Prepare Workshop  
Lesson Plans**



**Hire & Train Staff**



**Prepare Recipes for  
Cooking  
Demonstrations**

# PLAN OF ACTION

## PHASE TWO: PROJECT ACTION PART ONE

Over the course of the first 5 weeks



**Cooking  
Demonstrations**



**Peer  
Counseling  
Sessions**



**Symptom  
Screening**



**Classes on  
Detection  
Skills**



# PLAN OF ACTION

## PHASE THREE: PROJECT ACTION PART TWO

Over the course of the second 5 weeks



**Meetings with  
dietitians &  
Review  
Personalized Meal  
Plan Strategies**



**Peer  
Counseling  
Sessions**



**Body Positivity  
Workshops**



**Mental Health  
Awareness  
Resources**

# BUDGET



- The cost is estimated to be around \$430 per student who participates in the program– therefore, the overall cost for one ten-week program is \$43,000; 100 students will be enrolled
- Most of the costs needed for this program are already available at Rutgers University, however additional funding must be allocated for added dietitian staffing and material costing. For instance, there will be printing fees for the worksheets that are needed for certain phases of the project as well as hired staff for marketing and communication resources throughout the project.

**THANK YOU!**

*Any Questions?*

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