

Logical & Stuck

Deconstructing Male Eating Disorders

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BRIAN POLLACK, LCSW, CEDS
WWW.HilltopBehavioralHealth.COM
(973) 637-0572

Objectives

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- Recognize how complex the male experience is.
- Receive a basic introduction in 45 minutes.

Opening Activity

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- Think about EDs and men:
 - What common words come to mind?
 - Our body or something else?
 - Is this the same as how women are perceived?

Eating Disorders and Gender

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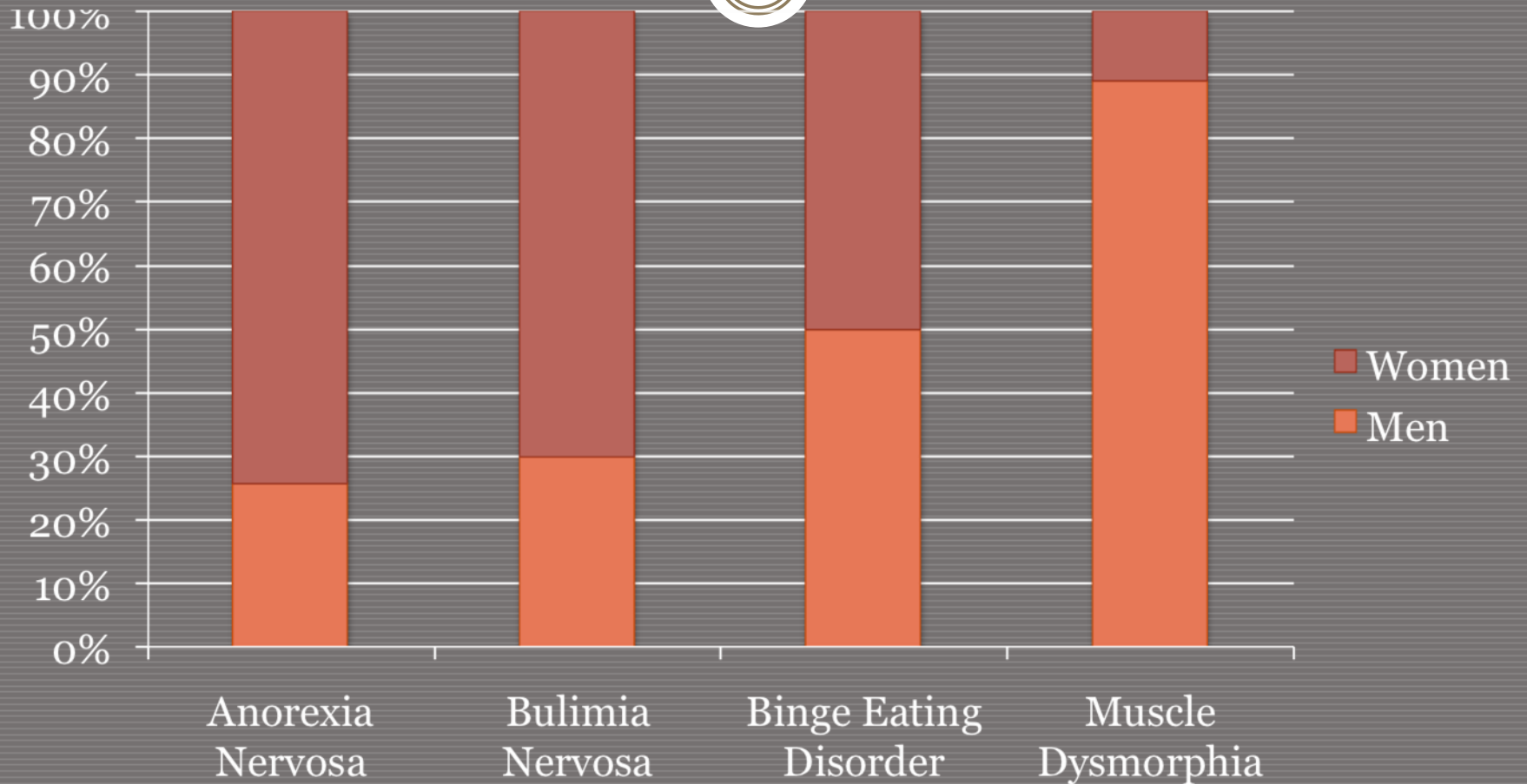
Question



What is Different
(and similar)
in Men?

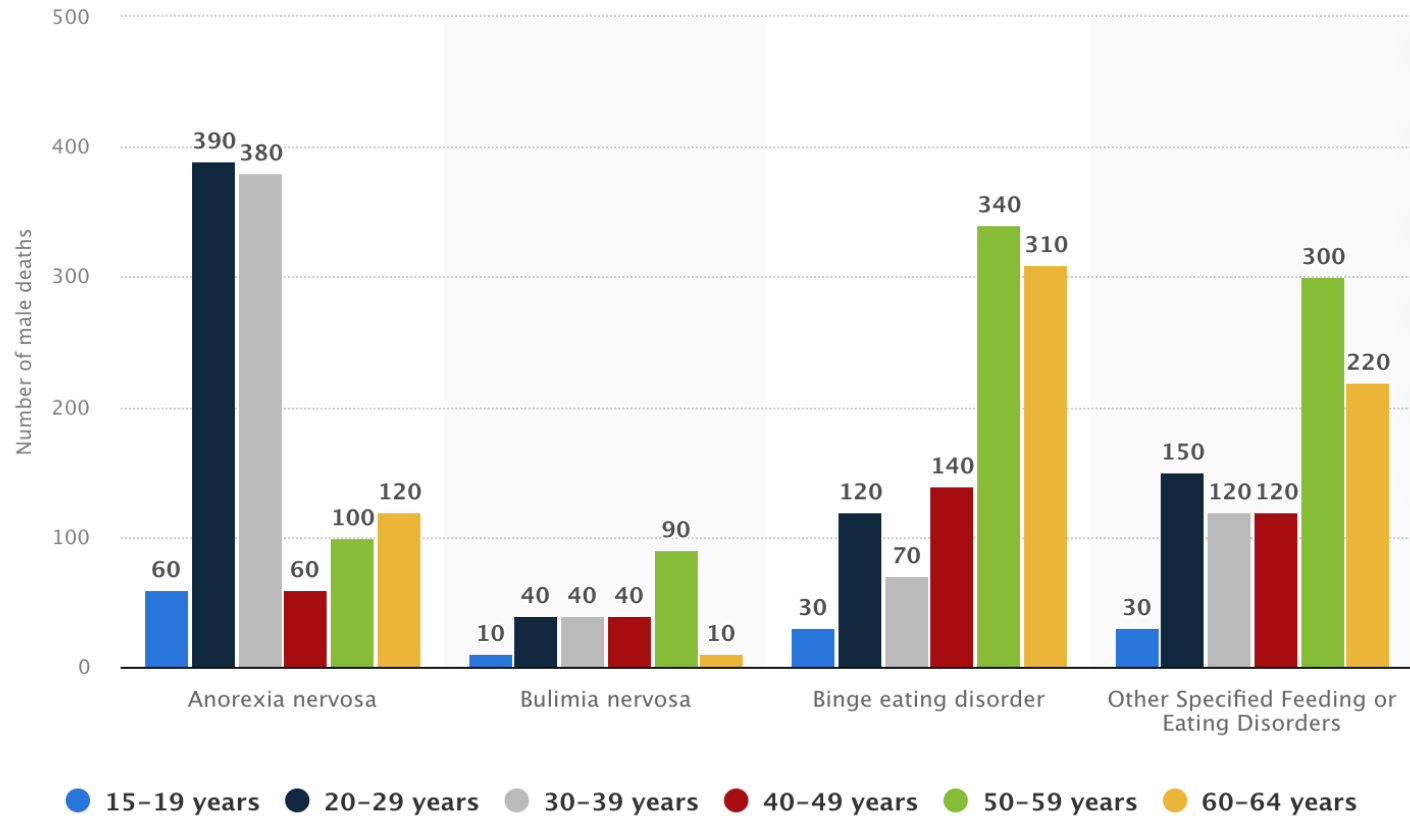
Eating Disorders by Gender

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Deadly Disorder

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Anorexia and Men

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- Not Until DSM 5 allowance for males
- Differences include:
 - body fat loss different - women 15% vs. males 10%
 - Amenorrhea
- Incidence lower in men than in women
- As with women, younger age of onset (teens – young 20s)
- Risk factors: Bullying/teasing about weight, Dieting, Sports like running , Profession that demands thinness, Gay/Bisexual, Cultural ideals of thinness

Anorexia In Men

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- Increased obsessive thinking
- Distracting comparing mind states
- Irrational body image distortion
- Intense ruminations about body size, shape and weight
- Critical, judging mindset
- Somatic preoccupation: fullness, bowels
- Indecisiveness
- Trouble seeing big picture
- Intolerance, anxiety with change

Bulimia Nervosa in Men

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- Recurrent binge eating pattern similar to that seen in women
- In young men, purging sometimes episodic, connected to sports where men expected to shed pounds quickly so they can compete in a lower weight
- Purging through exercise
- Steroid use

Binge Eating Disorder

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- Men make up approximately **40%** of those with BED
- Often goes undetected
 - More acceptable for a man to overeat and be larger
 - Men are expected to have “big appetites”
- Issues can often be co-morbid with other psychiatric issues or co-occurring addictions, most commonly alcohol
- 45% of male veterans reported one or more current symptoms of BN or BED

Question

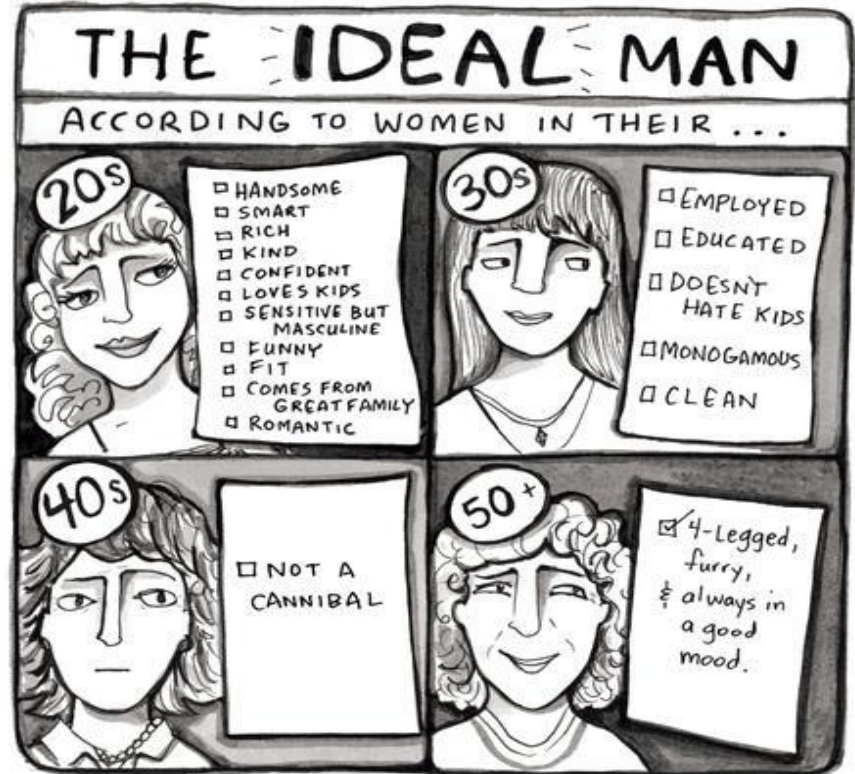


What do you think are some reasons why males present to treatment (for EDs) less often?

Male Cultural Expectations

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- Dominant
- Competitive
- Secure
- Leader
- Powerful
- Logical
- Unemotional
- It's not about the lbs.



Carlynn Filler

Male Gender Norms

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- Creating a sense of “Normativeness”
- Descriptive Masculinity Norms
 - Observational
- Injunctive Norms
 - should vs. should not
- Cohesive Masculine Norms
 - Normativeness

(Mahlik, 2010)

Question



If you were to advise ED facilitates, as well as other ED professionals, on how to treat males more effectively, what would you say?

Answer



...

You have to think about how men express themselves to find their heart.

Gender Role

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What is a Gender Role?

Behaviors, expectations, and role sets defined by society as masculine or feminine which are embodied in the behavior of the individual man or woman and regarded culturally appropriate

Role Socialization/Strain/Sexism all leading to...

Gender Role Conflict - Fear of Femininity

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- Restrictive Emotionality
 - Emotions Feelings and Vulnerabilities
 - Help through expressiveness seen as immature, weak and dependent
 - Interpersonal Communication emphasizing emotions, and intuitions considered feminine
 - Expression exposes fears and conflicts portraying male as unstable, immature and unmanly
- Socialized Success Control, Power & Competition
 - To regulate, restrain and have situations under one's command
 - Power - obtain authority, influence over others

Gender Role Conflict - Fear of Femininity

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- Success, Control, Power & Competition (cont.)
 - Competition to strive against others to gain something for self worth and superiority
- Conflicts Between Work & Family Relations
 - Persistent and disturbing preoccupation with work
 - Distrust and need for control vs. cooperativeness
 - Career development emerges from masculine gender role socialization process
 - Self Worth lies within intense pressure to succeed

Special Populations

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Gay/Bisexual/Trans identified Trauma Older Men



Gay/Bisexual/Trans-Identified Risk

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Minority Stress

Body Image Ideals

Trans/
Homo
Phobia



Suppress
Gendered
Features

Violence
PTSD

Risk

Monthly
Period

Trauma/PTSD in Men

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bottled up inside.

Older Men



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- Prevalence increasing/First time EDs
- 470 men, aged 40-75 years:
 - 6.8% of men reported current ED sx: BMI < 18.5; binge eating; binge eating and purging; or purging without binge eating
- Purging via excessive exercise
- Functions /risk factors: Loss, control, expressing anger, depression, stress of aging, “silent suicide”

Body Image

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- Men are more concerned with low body fat and a “lean and fit” presentation.
 - 80% want to change their weight
 - 40% want to lose weight
 - 40% want to gain weight
- Drive for ideal - overestimation of shoulders, hips, and thighs, vs. thorax, waist, and hips.
- Fat development difference in puberty

Male Body Image Stats

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- Split evenly between those who want to be bigger and those who want to be smaller
- Men's body image dissatisfaction has tripled in the previous 25 years, from 15% to 45% (Int. health and racquet and sports club association)
- Very different from vast majority of females who want to be smaller

Muscle Dysmorphia

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- Mean Age – 25 years old
- Insight into Preoccupation: 50%
- Steroid Use ~ 36%
- Suicide Attempts – 50%
- Lifetime History of Substance Abuse – 85.7%
- On Average, report spending 4 hours per day thinking about getting bigger
- On Average, check mirrors 13x per day

Protective Actions

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- Expand definition of masculinity and acceptability
- Build strong sense of self and de-emphasize looks
 - Intelligence
 - Kindness
 - Creativity
 - Physical gifts like musicianship, expressiveness, touch, athleticism
 - Empathy
 - Family
- Develop ability to name and react to emotions in healthful and constructive ways
 - Aggression doesn't work for everything.

Treatment for Males with Eating Disorders

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- The verdict is still out about interventions
 - Most measures are based off of single, caucasian females causing internally unreliable testing
 - Data continues to change about rates of men who suffer with an eating disorder
 - Physical hyperactivity can be manifest into restlessness, athleticism, or compulsive exercising
 - Presents different – obesity
 - Men can lose a drastic amount of weight (i.e. 40lbs) and still be seen as fit and healthy without sociocultural fears.
 - Deny fears more readily

Additional Resources

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- National Association for Males with Eating Disorders
 - www.namedinc.org
- National Eating Disorder Association
 - www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
- Bulimia.com
- EDReferral.com
- EatingDisordersHope.com
- Something-fishy.org
- Academy for Eating Disorders

Questions?

