

May 14, 2020

Champions Circle
Residential Eating Disorders Consortium

Executive Circle
Clementine
Eating Recovery Center
The Emily Program
Monte Nido
Oliver-Pyatt Centers
Veritas Collaborative
WithAll

Policy Circle
Academy for Eating Disorders
National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA)
The Renfrew Center

Leadership Circle
Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness
Bannister Consultancy
Gail R. Schoenbach FREED Foundation
Disorders Professionals Foundation (iaedp)
Focus Treatment Center
Reasons Eating Disorder Center
The Donahue Foundation

Advocacy Circle
Center for Change
Laureate Eating Disorders Program
Walden Behavioral Care

Support Circle
Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics
Alsana: Eating Disorders Treatment and Recovery Centers
Cambridge Eating Disorder Center
Center for Discovery
Eating Disorder Hope
Mirasol Eating Disorder Recovery Centers
Multi-Service Eating Disorders Association
Park Nicollet Melrose Center
Rosewood Centers for Eating Disorders
The Center for Eating Disorders at Sheppard Pratt
Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders (STRIPED)

Hope Circle
Eating Disorder Coalition of Iowa (EDCI)
Eating Disorder Therapy LA
FEAST
International Federation of Eating Disorders Dietitians (IFEDD)
Moonshadow's Spirit
Project HEAL
Stay Strong Virginia
Rogers Behavioral Health
The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Eating Disorders
Wrobel & Smith, PLLP

Senator Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein,

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) would like to express its strong support for Senate Resolution 560, which recognizes and supports the goals and ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness Prevention Month. The EDC is particularly supportive of the recognition that sexual assault is often associated with the development of an eating disorder, along with numerous other adverse consequences for the victim.

The EDC is a national coalition of advocates, providers, parents, industry professionals, researchers, and others who share the common goal of advancing the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States.

Eating disorders affect over 30 million Americans during their lifetime,¹ including over 1.2 million Californians,² and have the second highest mortality rate out of any psychiatric condition, only second to opioid use disorder.³ The relationship between eating disorders and sexual trauma has been well-established in the relevant academic literature. Results from a number of longitudinal studies have demonstrated that women affected by an eating disorder are associated with an increased prevalence of sexual trauma, and that sexual trauma is linked to several different types of eating disorder symptoms.⁴ These studies also report that sexual trauma precedes the onset of an eating disorder for the majority of women who have experienced both sexual assault and an eating disorder.⁵

The link between childhood sexual trauma and the development of an eating disorder has been proven in a number of research studies. One study reports that women affected by an eating disorder show a prevalence of childhood sexual trauma more than twice that of women unaffected by an eating disorder.⁶ These findings have held true in studies focused on particular eating disorders: one study found that young women were 4.9 more likely than the control population to be diagnosed with Bulimia Nervosa (BN) during adolescence after multiple instances of childhood sexual trauma,⁷ and another study showed that women with Anorexia Nervosa, Binge-Purge Subtype (AN-BP) experienced significantly higher rates of childhood sexual trauma than healthy control groups.⁸

Similarly, there is a strong relationship between early adult sexual assault and eating disorders, which should be noted in light of the fact that female college students are especially at-risk for sexual

¹ Judson, J.I., Hiripi, E., Pope, H.G., & Kessler, R.C. (2007). The Prevalence and correlates of eating disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Biological Psychiatry*, 61(3), 348-358.

² Hudson JI, Hiripi E, Pope HG Jr, Kessler RC. The prevalence and correlates of eating disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Biol Psychiatry*. 2007 Feb 1;61(3):348-58.

³ Arcelus, J., Mitchell, A.J., Wales, J., & Nielsen, S. (2011). Mortality rates in patients with anorexia nervosa and other eating disorders. A meta-analysis of 36 studies. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 68(7),724-731.

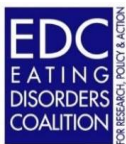
⁴ Madowitz, J., Matheson, B. E., & Liang, J. (2015). The relationship between eating disorders and sexual trauma. *Eating and Weight Disorders*, 20(3), 281-293.

⁵ Cachelin FM, Monreal TK, Juarez LC (2006) Body image and size perceptions of Mexican American women. *Body Image* 3(1):67-75. doi:10.1016/j.bodyim.2005.10.006

⁶ Ng IS, Cheung KC, Chou KL (2013) Correlates of eating disorder in middle-aged and older adults: evidence from 2007 British National Psychiatric Morbidity Survey. *J Aging Health* 25(7):1106-1120. doi:10.1177/0898264313494798

⁷ Sanci L, Coffey C, Olsson C, Reid S, Carlin JB, Patton G (2008) Childhood sexual abuse and eating disorders in females: findings from the Victorian Adolescent Health Cohort Study. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 162(3):261-267. doi:10.1001/archpediatrics.2007.58

⁸ Jaite C, Schneider N, Hilbert A, Pfeiffer E, Lehmkuhl U, Salbach-Andrae H (2012) Etiological role of childhood emotional trauma and neglect in adolescent anorexia nervosa: a cross-sectional questionnaire analysis. *Psychopathology* 45(1):61-66. doi:10.1159/000328580



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assault.⁹ It has been shown that disordered eating is closely associated with sexual assault among female students, and that the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms and depressive symptoms that result from a sexual assault fully mediate the relationship between early adult sexual assault and disordered eating.¹⁰ This relationship remained statistically significant even when childhood sexual victimization was correlated and taken into account.

The EDC appreciates Senator Feinstein's leadership in raising awareness for sexual assault, and highlighting the serious psychological impacts of sexual assault. We look forward to working with your office on this issue in the future and benefitting from one another's expertise.

Sincerely,

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action

⁹ Hines, D. A. (2007). Predictors of sexual coercion against women and men: A multilevel, multinational study of university students. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 36, 403–422. doi:10.1007/s10508-006-9141-4

¹⁰ Dubosc, A., Capitaine, M., Franko, D. L., Bui, E., Brunet, A., Chabrol, H., & Rodgers, R. F. (2012). Early adult sexual assault and disordered eating: the mediating role of posttraumatic stress symptoms. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 25(1), 50-56.