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## The Link Between Childhood Obesity And Trauma

Over the years eating disorders have become more common in people of all ages. As more and more people find themselves facing the harsh reality of eating disorders I have decided that for my research project I'm going to look deeper into the causes of eating disorders and whether or not there is a link between traumatic experience and events that lead people to develop such illnesses.

There are many different factors that contribute to people developing eating disorders both in childhood and adult years. Trauma, abuse, and mainly childhood sexual abuse are some of the major risk factors for the development of eating disorders. There is a range of eating disorders that people all over the world suffer from. An eating disorder is defined as any range of psychological disorders characterized by abnormal or disturbed eating patterns. Eating disturbances also include insufficient or excessive food intake that leads to the destruction of a person's well-being. When looking at the causes of eating disorders one needs to ask themselves if childhood trauma of any kind can lead to a person developing an eating disorder.

The aim of my research project is to determine whether there is a link between childhood trauma and the development of eating disorders. I will be looking at a variety of different eating disorders that either lead one to be seriously underweight or grossly overweight. I will be looking at eating disorders such as Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Obesity as well as comfort eating and what it can lead to.

To find out whether there is a link between the two I will be looking at the research of all different kinds. I will be looking at different studies conducted by people to try to draw the link between the two as well as people's personal experiences and stories of their journeys with eating disorders.

It is crucial to remember that childhood abuse of any kind is extremely problematic as children process information differently compared to adults. As children are young and still developing their own sense of self and what they believe in as their values that they will stand by throughout their lives as well as how they view the world around them. We must remember that when a child is told what they are not good enough or not loved and what they are a problem over and over again eventually one starts to believe it and take it on and their identity leading them to display behavior of emotional instability and can subsequently lead to eating disorders of different kinds.

It is also extremely important to remember that eating disorders are deemed mental illnesses and not lifestyle choices and that it is about more than people not eating or overeating in order to look good but rather a deep physiological disorder that has a tremendous effect on the lives of those who suffer from them. The first eating disorder I will be looking at is Obesity. Obesity is an extremely serious disease that poses huge health risks not only short-term risks but many long-term risks. As obesity has become more common in the society we live in it is important to see if it is caused by more than just overeating or whether it goes deeper than that psychologically. There are many factors that play a role in people becoming obese but we have to ask ourselves whether or not there is a link between traumatic experience and obesity. Many

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people believe that comfort eating leads to obesity. Comfort eating is when a person eats to make oneself happy rather than eating to satisfy hunger. Many people indulged in comfort eating as they view food as a way of temporarily escaping and for many, food becomes their way of relieving stress, guilt, shame, bad memories and so much more. By the age of 14, Christine White had developed Bulimia Nervosa which she had hid from her family as it was easier to hide it than to try and explain the reasons behind it. The purging went on for many years however by the time she had reached college she stopped the purging but continued the binge eating turning to food every time she became stressed or unhappy. Christine never fully understood what led her to binge eating but she had some idea – what she referred to as ‘her hell’. When she was a little girl her mother started dating a man a lot older and he lived with White and her family up until she was the age of ten. When Christine was a little girl her stepfather would make her parade around naked in front of him so that he could ‘insect’ her. He would also make her sit on his lap for longer than what was comfortable and sometimes he would even put treats in his pockets and make Christine fish around for them. This led Christine to view her body as a criminal that needed to be tamed because it led to such terrible things happening to her. Christine became prone to overeating to try to desexualize her body.

All this research has shown that childhood trauma of sexual abuse is often the key to obesity and overweight adults. It also showed that women felt that when they were bigger it helped to ward off sexual abuse from men.

The second eating disorder I will be looking at is Anorexia Nervosa. Many girls all over the world suffer from this disorder due to a variety of different reasons.