This continuum represents the range of eating behaviors and attitudes towards food and body image. The goal is to function in the "Concerned in a Healthy Way" category, which reflects good physical and emotional health. Throughout life, many children, teens and adults slip into the "Food Preoccupied" and "Disruptive Eating" categories due to a variety of personal and/or environmental stresses and pressures (e.g. school, work, family, friends, sports, the media, etc.). Others stop caring about food and their bodies at all because of time and cost constraints. No matter where you fit, there are resources to help.

### Where do you fit?

#### FOOD IS NOT AN ISSUE

- I am not concerned about what or how much I eat.
- I feel no guilt or shame no matter what I eat or how much I eat.
- Exercise is not really important to me.
- I choose foods based on cost, taste, and convenience, with little regard to health.
- My eating is very sporadic and irregular. I don't worry about meals; I just eat whatever I can, whenever I can.
- I enjoy stuffing myself with lots of tasty food at restaurants, holiday meals, and social events.

#### * CONCERNED IN A * 

**HEALTHY WAY**

- I pay attention to what I eat to maintain a healthy body.
- Food and exercise are important parts of my life, but they only occupy a small part of my time.
- I enjoy eating, and I balance my pleasure with eating with my concern for a healthy body.
- I usually eat 3 balanced meals daily, plus snacks, to fuel my body with adequate energy.
- I am moderate and flexible in my goals for eating well and being physically active.
- Sometimes I eat more (or less) than I really need, but most of the time I listen to my body.

#### FOOD PREOCCUPIED/ OBSESSED

- I think about food a lot.
- I'm obsessed with reading books and magazines about dieting, fitness, and weight control.
- I sometimes miss school, work, and social events because of my diet or exercise schedule.
- I divide food into two categories: "good" and "bad" foods.
- I feel guilty when I eat "bad" foods or when I eat more than what I feel I should be eating.
- I am afraid of getting fat.
- I wish I could change how much I want to eat and what I am hungry for.

#### DISRUPTIVE EATING PATTERNS

- My food and exercise concerns are starting to interfere with my school and social life.
- I use food to comfort myself.
- I have tried diet pills, laxatives, vomiting, or extra time exercising in order to lose or maintain my weight.
- I have fasted or avoided eating for long periods of time in order to lose or maintain my weight.
- If I cannot exercise to burn off calories, I panic.
- I feel strong when I can restrict how much I eat.
- I feel out of control when I eat more than I wanted to.

#### EATING DISORDERED

- I worry about what I will eat and/or when I will exercise all the time.
- I follow a very rigid eating plan and know precisely how many calories, fat grams, and/or carbohydrates I eat every day.
- I feel incredible guilt, shame, and anxiety when I break my diet.
- I regularly stuff myself and then exercise, vomit, or use laxatives to get rid of the food.
- My friends and family tell me I am too thin, but I feel fat.
- I am out of control when I eat.
- I am afraid to eat in front of others. I prefer to eat alone.

### BODY IS NOT AN ISSUE

#### * BODY ACCEPTANCE *

- I feel fine about my body.
- I don't worry about changing my body shape or weight.
- I never weigh or measure myself.
- My feelings about my body are not influenced by society’s concept of an ideal body shape.
- I know that the significant others in my life will always love me for who I am, not for how I look.

#### BODY PREOCCUPIED/ OBSESSED

- I weigh and measure myself a lot.
- I spend a significant amount of time exercising and dieting to change my body.
- My body shape and size keeps me from dating or finding someone who will treat me the way I want to be treated.
- I have considered changing (or have changed) my body shape and size through surgical means.
- I wish I could change the way I look in the mirror.

#### DISTORTED BODY IMAGE

- I spend a significant amount of time exercising and dieting to change my body.
- My body shape and size keeps me from dating or finding someone who will treat me the way I want to be treated.
- I have considered changing (or have changed) my body shape and size through surgical means.
- I wish I could change the way I look in the mirror.

#### BODY HATE - DISASSOCIATION

- I often feel separated and distant from my body – as if it belonged to someone else.
- I hate my body, and I often isolate myself from others.
- I don’t see anything positive or even neutral about my body shape and size.
- I don’t believe others when they tell me I look okay.
- I hate the way I look in the mirror.

Adapted from Smiley/King/Avey, 96

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