

## ACTIVITY # 6

**WHAT IS...****ANOREXIA NERVOSA and BULIMIA NERVOSA ??**

**Note:** Current research indicates that teaching students about eating disorders may be harmful since some students might learn to glamorize disturbed eating behaviours. This activity should not be used at the elementary/middle school level, and should be used with caution with older students.

**STRUCTURE** Large group and groups of 3 - 4

**MATERIALS** Handout called: "What is...Anorexia Nervosa & Bulimia Nervosa?"  
 Videos: *The Famine Within* (60 minutes)  
 OR *Thin Dreams* (20 minutes)  
 (See Bibliography, p. 85)  
 Flip chart paper

**TIME** 40 minutes

- DIRECTIONS**
1. Show film to the group. After viewing the video, divide the class into groups of 3-4. Have them answer the following questions on a piece of flipchart paper:
    - a) What is Anorexia Nervosa?
    - b) What are the warning signs of Anorexia Nervosa?
      - Physical
      - Behavioural
      - Psychological
    - c) What is Bulimia Nervosa?
    - d) What are the warning signs of Bulimia Nervosa?
      - Physical
      - Behavioural
      - Psychological
  2. Initiate a large group discussion on accurate descriptions of each disorder (See the following definitions, as well as the handout on p. 99).

**ANOREXIA NERVOSA** is a complex emotional disorder characterized by deliberate self-starvation in the pursuit of excessive thinness. Individuals suffering from this disorder usually have an intense fear of weight gain, a distorted body image and a low self-esteem.

**BULIMIA NERVOSA** is a complex emotional disorder characterized by recurrent episodes of uncontrolled binge eating (i.e., eating a large volume of food and feeling a loss of control) followed by purging in the form of self-induced vomiting, fasting, strict dieting, abuse of laxatives and/or diuretics, or vigorous exercise in order to prevent weight gain. These behaviours usually result from a person being in a nutritionally deprived state.

