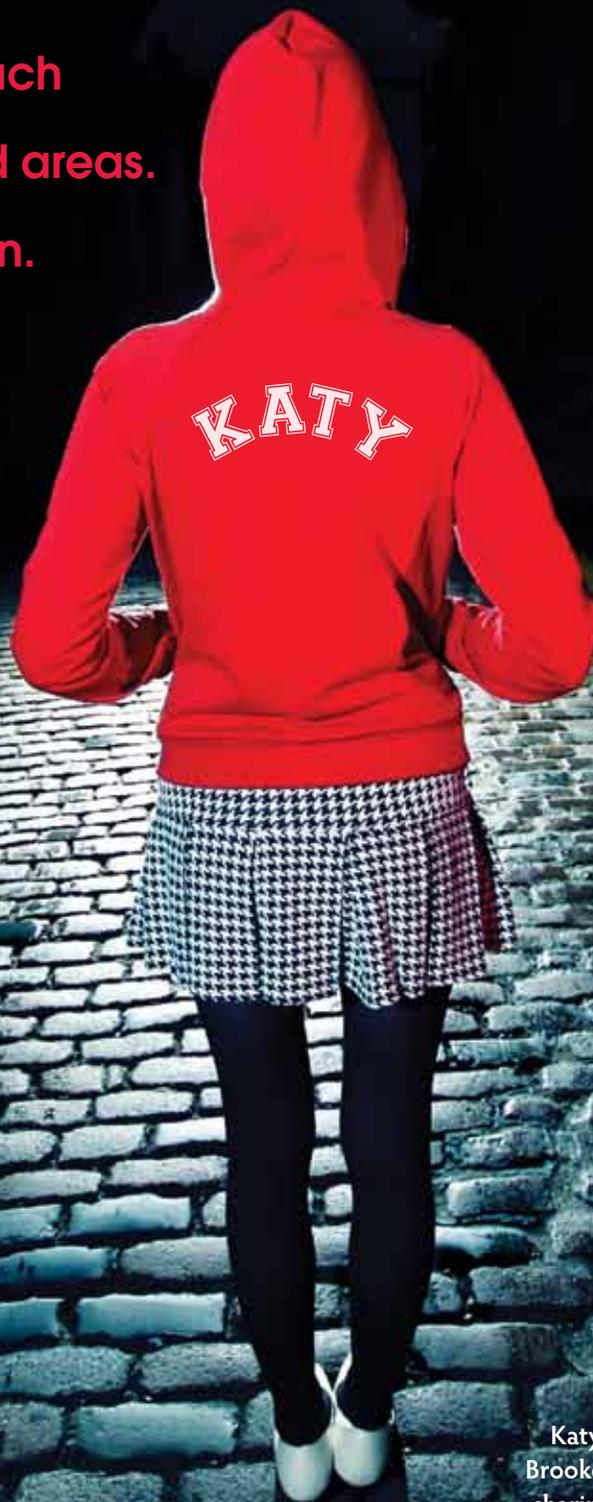


Anything To Be THIN

Eating disorders touch
all ages, races, and areas.
Katy is no exception.

Written By Ashley Withers



Katy Magazine would like to thank Brooke Carico and Becca Kaufmann for sharing their personal stories in order to help others who may be struggling. If you need help, see our list of resources at the end of this story.

Anorexia. Bulimia. Binge eating. Eating disorders hold a heavy negative connotation, bringing with it a shame and a secrecy that keeps its sufferers feeling crazy and alone. Although victims of these diseases tend to feel isolated, they are not alone and the Katy community is here to help. Eating disorders can affect all ages, genders, and races equally and body issues can begin at a very early age. Influences from television, magazines and even your own family can blow the importance of the so-called perfect body way out of proportion.

How It Starts

“In my perception, happiness meant being thin no matter what, and outside appearance was more important than the inside,” says Brooke Carico, a recovering anorexic/bulimic and Katy resident. Comments her family would make throughout her childhood equating fat with lazy skewed her vision of healthy weight and appearance. Her family’s nonchalant reaction to her extreme portion control enabled her to continue on the downward spiral to full-blown anorexia. “I’m not sure really how much my parents were aware of the depth of my struggle, but I do remember vividly on my 17th birthday going out to dinner and not ordering anything other than a side salad. I didn’t even eat the side salad and another family member was frustrated. She made the comment that ‘oh well, at least I didn’t waste money by ordering a lot of food and you puking it up.’” Carico says, “Looking back, I don’t know if the comment was made for shock value or out of ignorance to deal with the disorder.”

As a mom herself now, Carico cannot imagine putting that kind of pressure on her children. “I think we as moms need to be very aware of our children and the fact that they are watching everything we do. They see us skip meals. They see us make a scowl in the mirror. They notice when we change outfits because we are discontent with how we looked in the first one,” Carico says.

Reaching Out For Help

There are many different types of treatment available ranging from once a week counselling to inpatient centers. Inpatient treatment can be very costly, so finding one that really fits for you and a full commitment to recovery is essential.

For Carico, the hardest part of inpatient was leaving her husband and four children while she sought healing. “Being away from my family for 10 weeks was the hardest thing I have ever done. I had never been away from them for more than 24 hours. I remember something my doctor said,” Carico recalls, “He told me that one morning I was going to wake up and put my feet down on the hardwood floor, stand up and then my heart was going to give out and I would collapse. And that I would never see my family again in this life. He asked me if that was what I wanted. Every time I was homesick during my time away, I hung on to those words, and that kept me going.”

While there are no inpatient treatment centers in our immediate area, Katy Counseling Services is a local facility that gives victims of an eating disorder a place to come for healing. According to Becca Kaufmann, the peer facilitator of AIR community relations for Katy Counseling Services and a former bulimic, KCS is the only local family oriented group that pulls the whole family into recovery. “It was not just about my problem. It was about my problem and my family’s reaction to it, how the family can grow together and get through it together,” says Kaufmann.



The hardest part for Brooke Carico was spending 10 weeks away from her family in treatment

Photo by Marisa Hugonnet

Signs & Symptoms

- Prolonged dieting despite being thin
- Obsession with calories, fat grams, and nutrition
- Pretending to eat or lying about eating
- Preoccupation with food but eats very little
- Dramatic weight loss
- Feeling fat, despite being underweight
- Fixation on body image
- Harshly critical of appearance
- Denies being too thin

**Excerpted from Healthguide.org*



After struggling with an eating disorder herself, Becca Kaufmann is now a peer facilitator who helps others

Photo by Marisa Hugonnet

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Carico's eating disorder began when she was a teenager

Photo by Marisa Hugonnet



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The Shocking Statistics

- The average American woman is 5'4" tall and weighs 140 pounds. The average American model is 5'11" tall and weighs 117 pounds.
- Over one-half of teenage girls and nearly one-third of teenage boys use unhealthy weight control behaviors such as skipping meals, fasting, smoking cigarettes, vomiting, and taking laxatives.
- Thirty-five percent of "normal dieters" progress to pathological dieting. Of those, 20-25% progress to partial or full-syndrome eating disorders.
- Twenty-five percent of American men and 45% of American women are on a diet on any given day.
- Four out of ten Americans either suffered or have known someone who has suffered from an eating disorder.
- In the U.S., as many as 10 million females and 1 million males are fighting a life and death battle with an eating disorder such as anorexia or bulimia.
- More than 80% of Americans are dissatisfied with their appearance.
- Only one-third of people with anorexia receive mental health care. Only 6% of people with bulimia receive mental health care.

Source: nationaleatingdisorders.org

A woman always desires to look the best she can.

*But great skin, hair, eyes and lips
are only a frame for a*

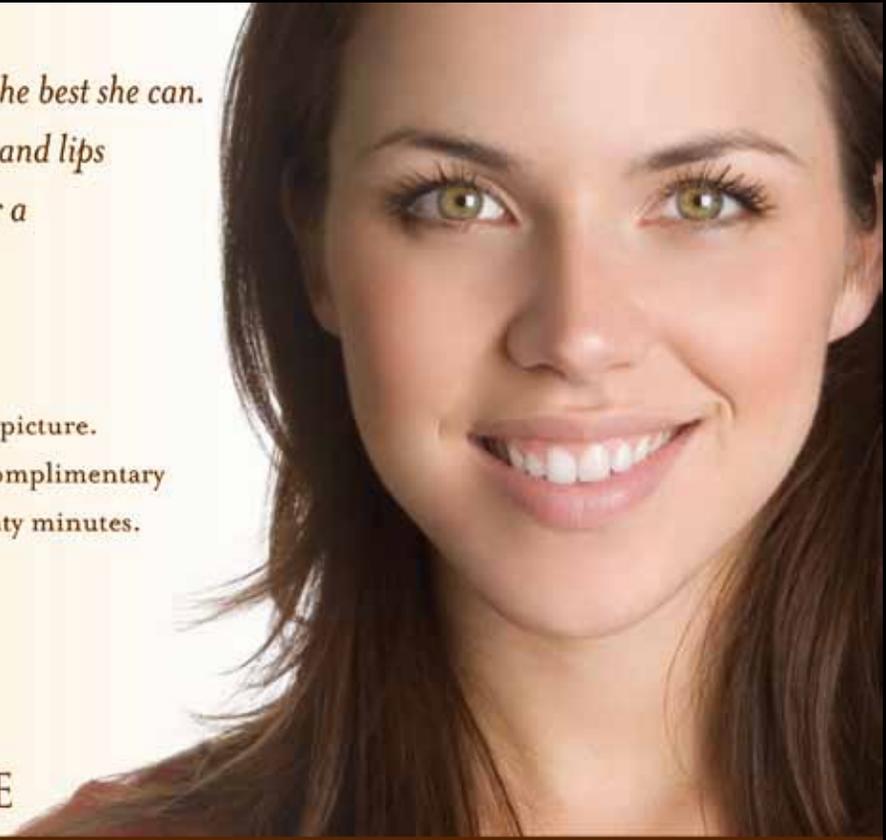
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Celebrating 60 Years

Kaufman now helps others at Adolescents in Recovery in Katy



Photo by Marisa Hugonnet

Counseling Resources

Adolescents in Recovery
20501 Katy Fwy, #132
281-599-9330
adolescentsinrecovery.com

★ Integritas Counseling Services
14526 Old Katy Rd.
832-744-8953

Debra M. Emmite, M.D. Psychiatry
21700 Kingsland Blvd., #106
281-829-5999

★ Roxanne Schreiber, MD
16000 Barkers Point Ln. #228
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Advice from Katy Survivors

Although every eating disorder sufferer is different, finding the method of treatment that works for you is the most important step. In our area, people are working to raise awareness about this issue and soon even more resources will be available to those who seek recovery.

"I didn't think you could ask for those things. I thought I just had to fix it. 'It's all on you Becca, don't ask for any one else's help because they are not going to be able to help you,'" Kaufmann says. "Having this peer support that the program gave me, it's amazing - I'm not alone anymore."

"Come out of the closet!" Carico advises, "That would be the biggest one. Just know you are not alone. There is not a magic pill that can fix it. There is a medical aspect to it... The big thing I would encourage people to realize is that you are not a freak, you aren't crazy. It's not just mental; there are physical things that your body has to detox through. When you are going through it, it is going to be painful to get better. It's going to be hard, but it is ok to be struggling. The last thing is to find someone you can talk to. Find help because it is out there. Don't be scared." **KM**

ASHLEY WITHERS graduated from Cinco Ranch High School in 2008 and recently interned at Katy Magazine. She is a sophomore at Southern Methodist University currently seeking a degree in journalism and human rights.

Support Groups

Katy Eating Disorder Support Group
281-299-8171
Bcarico828@mac.com
1351 S. Mason Rd.
Mondays at 8 p.m.

Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital
23900 Katy Fwy.
Room Tiger A
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foodaddicts.org
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