

## ACTIVITY 1.15

# EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders are rare in children under the age of eight. Over that age they become more common. In general, eating disorders are more likely to affect females than males.

The three main types of eating disorders include:

- **Anorexia nervosa:** Restricted eating, loss of weight (to an unhealthy or even dangerous level) and a fear of putting on weight.
- **Bulimia nervosa:** Periods of bingeing on high-energy foods (often in secret), followed by attempts to balance the overeating by overexercising, vomiting or periods of strict dieting. The bingeing is accompanied by feelings of shame and being 'out of control'.
- **Binge eating disorder:** Similar to bulimia but without an attempt to balance the overeating by vomiting or overexercising.

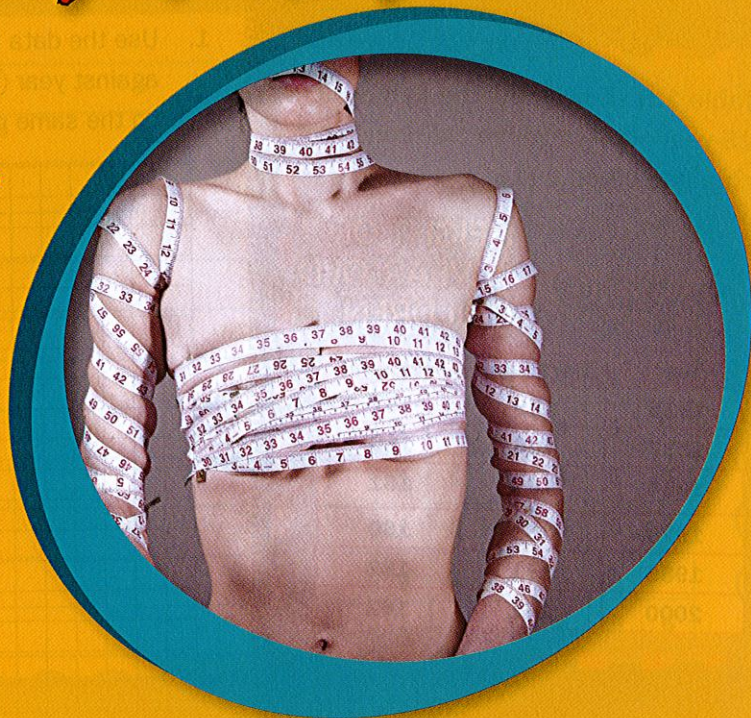


Figure 1.18 Eating disorders.

## STORY 1

'You keep pushing and pushing yourself until you reach breaking point.'

I was about 13 or 14 when I got this illness and I was ill for probably three to five years. The first two years were the most difficult, but recovery took another three years. And although I probably looked well to other people during those last three, I was still struggling inside. I think that stage is where a lot of people tend to lapse or relapse. At that particular time there wasn't a lot of literature available to either parents or sufferers themselves about the condition. So it was very difficult for both myself and my family to really understand what was going on. I wanted to turn my negative experience into something positive; to help other sufferers find their own road to recovery. So that's why I wrote the book.

*Hungry for a life*, by Melinda Hutchings