

## Childhood sexual abuse major trigger for adulthood obesity, eating disorders

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.**

Christine White was a preteen when she went on her first diet. At school, she was bubbly and sociable, an honors student immersed in social causes. But at home, she would carefully ration her food.

By the time she was 14, she had developed bulimia. It was easier to hide the purging from her family than it was to explain why she wasn't eating.

She didn't fully understand what drove her binges, but she had one idea — an experience she referred to as “my hell” and “my secret” in later journals.

When White was an infant, her mother began dating a man 26 years her senior, and he lived with the family until White was 10. A number of times, after White showered, he'd make her parade in front of him naked so he could “inspect” her. During games of Yahtzee, he would force her to sit on his lap for longer than was comfortable. He'd grab her behind and make flirtatious comments. Occasionally, he'd put a treat in his pocket and cajole her into fishing around for it.

As horrifying as White's story is, it's a common one among people who have been abused as children. Researchers are increasingly finding that, in addition to leaving deep emotional scars, childhood sexual abuse often turns food into an obsession for its victims. Many become prone to binge-eating. Others willfully put on weight to desexualize, in the hope that what happened to them as children will never happen again.

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