

Vlierberghe, L. van, & Braet, C. (2007). Dysfunctional schemas and psychopathology in referred obese adolescents. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy, 14*, 342-351.

Objective: Referred obese adolescents often display psychological problems. The present study aimed at investigating whether Young's schema theory constitutes a comprehensive framework to understand psychopathology in youth in general and in referred obese adolescents in particular.

Methods: 91 youngsters referred for obesity treatment and 91 normal weight controls (all between 12 and 18 years of age) filled out the Young Schema Questionnaire and the Youth Self-Report. Parents were asked to complete the Child Behavior Checklist.

Results: The obese youngsters displayed an overall greater severity of dysfunctional schemas than normal weight controls. The obese group scored significantly higher for the schemas Emotional Deprivation, Social Isolation/Alienation, Defectiveness/Shame, Failure to Achieve, Dependence/Incompetence and Subjugation. Social Isolation/Alienation and Vulnerability to Harm/Illness were highly predictive for internalizing symptoms in youth. The schemas Entitlement and Dependence/Incompetence were predictive for externalizing symptoms in youth.

Conclusion: Referred obese individuals display high levels of maladaptive schemas and these are generally related to internalizing and externalizing symptoms.