

## Teen Health & Wellness

real life • real answers

### Submission Guidelines:

Sharing stories is a powerful way to connect with other people. By sharing your own personal story, you can connect with teens who are dealing with the same challenges that you are. By telling your story, you can reach out and help someone better understand their own experience. You are telling someone that they are not alone.

Rosen Publishing is looking for teens to share their personal stories for possible publication in a Web site for teens called **Teen Health & Wellness: Real Life, Real Answers**. This online resource is available in school and public libraries throughout the United States. The Web site covers a range of topics in a teen's world: Dealing with parents or sisters/brothers, being a new American, bullies and bullying, pressure to do well in school, friendship, staying fit, overcoming an eating disorder, dealing with a serious illness, how to help a friend who is taking drugs or drinking, and much more.

**What have you had to deal with or overcome? Write from your personal experiences.**

### Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Identify a situation or challenge that “changed” your life.
- What was it like and how did it make you feel?
- How did you deal with the problem or find a way to live with it?
- What did you learn about yourself and those around you?
- What advice do you have for another teen going through the same thing?

### There are just a few rules...

- Stories should be 250-1,000 words.
- Include your name, year of birth, home address/city/state/zip, telephone number, and the name of your school or library on each submission. If possible, include your email address. You must be 13 to 19 years old to be published. On the Web site, authors will be identified with first name only—unless you request anonymity.
- Choose your words wisely. We can't publish slurs or profanity.
- We can't return submissions, so keep a copy for yourself.
- We need parent/guardian permission if you're under 18. We'll send you a form to include with your submission if it's accepted. Just fill it out and send it back, even if you get published anonymously or under a screen name.
- Include the following originality statement at the end of each submission: “This will certify that the above work is completely original,” followed by your full name to affirm this is your work.
- Request anonymity. If due to the very personal nature of a piece you don't want your name published, we will of course respect your request, but you still must include name and address information.
- Writing may be edited, and we reserve the right to publish our edited version without your prior approval.
- All works submitted become the property of Rosen Publishing and all copyrights are assigned to Rosen Publishing. We retain the non exclusive rights to publish all such works in any format.

## Deadline for Submissions:

Personal Stories will be added to **Teen Health & Wellness** on an ongoing basis. You can send us your Personal Story any time!

## Published Stories:

If an essay is selected for the database, teen writers will receive 1) a letter of commendation from Rosen Publishing notifying them of acceptance and 2) a \$20 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble or Chapters.

## Questions or Requests for a Sample:

Contact Miriam Gilbert, Director of Electronic Sales and Marketing, via email at [miriamg@rosenpub.com](mailto:miriamg@rosenpub.com) or via mail at Rosen Publishing, 29 East 21st Street, New York, NY 10010.

## Sample Story:

Barbara's Story (about Compulsive Eating)

When no one was looking, I would eat until my stomach ached. On some days, I would chow down half a box of cereal at one sitting. Or I would convince myself that bagels were a healthy snack and then eat five at a time. I couldn't help it, and I couldn't eat enough. It was like there was a gaping hole inside me, and eating helped me to fill it up.

I gained twenty-five pounds in four months. My clothes didn't fit and my weight became a major issue at home. My mom told me, "We're not going to buy more clothes for you." She blamed me for being overweight, saying I needed more self-control.

I tried but couldn't control my eating, often bingeing in secret, even though it made me feel guilty and horrible. I felt really lonely.

Then one day, my parents sat me down for a talk. Up until that point, I thought my problem with overeating would go away. But I finally admitted to my mom that I couldn't handle it on my own.

The next day, I went to an eating disorders unit at the hospital for an assessment of my eating problem. The doctors admitted me into their outpatient program. As part of the recovery process, I attended therapy sessions at the eating disorders unit.

At the eating disorders unit, I was forced to eat regular meals. The goal at the unit was for me not to deprive myself of food. They helped me recognize that if I ate normally, it would help me stop bingeing.

The program helped me confront painful experiences from my past as well as learn how to deal with difficult feelings in healthier ways. And I came to understand my relationship with food. Food kept me from certain kinds of emotional stress, but it was also a kind of protective shield. It was safety and comfort.

These days, I'm in control of my eating, but I still struggle with mini-relapses. However, the binges have gradually become less extreme. I'm finally accepting that it's a lifelong process. But at least now, when I struggle with it, I have the tools that I've learned for fighting the urge to eat compulsively. When I feel the urge to eat, I stop and ask myself, Am I hungry or should I write in my journal?

—Barbara

You can view more stories—on topics ranging from scoliosis and the death of a parent to volunteering and religious discrimination—on **Teen Health & Wellness** here:

<http://www.teenhealthandwellness.com/static/personalstoryproject>

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TEEN HEALTH & WELLNESS: REAL LIFE, REAL ANSWERS visit**  
[www.teenhealthandwellness.com](http://www.teenhealthandwellness.com)