

Dear Abby: Mom weighs when to tell her son how he came to be

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DEAR ABBY: Lately, I have been feeling down with myself. For the last year or two, I have been really insecure about the way I look or act.

I'm overweight, and compared to my grandmother, I look like I'm pregnant. The way I act is strange. I talk to myself when I'm alone. I prefer to keep to myself and don't really have any friends. At school, I eat lunch alone at my own table (literally).

I suffer from depression and anxiety, yet my dad says I'm just overreacting. My sister talks bad about me every day. I used to cut, not because I'm suicidal, but because I wanted to feel something different for once. Dad forced me to stop.

I'm sorry this is all jumbled up. I'm not great at explaining how I feel. How do I fix me?
— **HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT**

DEAR HIDDEN: If it's any comfort, many people talk to themselves. When I do it and someone catches me, I explain that I'm talking with my "most interesting conversationalist."

I am, however, concerned that you are socially isolated. This is something you should discuss with your school counselor. There is a national organization called **Beyond Differences** that is dedicated to ending social isolation among young people. It started a program called "No One Eats Alone." It's their most popular program, and schools in all 50 states participate. It educates students on how to make tangible change in their own schools. The website is beyonddifferences.org, and if your counselor is not aware of it, he or she may find it of interest.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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