Working individually with a student on issues of weight loss and healthy diet

At the middle school placement, we had a student who was pressurized from home to lose weight. The family is travelling to their country after a long time for a marriage celebrations and the parents perceive that those people will make fun of all the members in the family due to their extra weight compared to them.

As a result, parents decided to diet and reduce the food intake for all the members for about 6 months. The daughter feels pressured to lose weight by reducing her food intake. She is reporting of being able to have only one meal per day and that keeps her hungry all the day in the school and at night. The parents are trying to explain the anticipating comparisons based on body weight and want to do as much as possible to look good. The student understand this expectations from parents. However, she is a growing adolescent and feels hungry.

She doesn’t want the counselors to contact the family as she feels that would invite negative reactions from the parents and it is also culturally not acceptable to complaint about parents to the outsider.

As a result, we collaborated with the student’s PE/Health teacher. Since, in health and PE students and teachers interact about health and wellbeing, we decided to bring the PE teacher in the picture. She also has more knowledge on diet and weight. PE teacher called up home and prepared a nutrition plan with the student about her diet. This way she will get her daily calorie intake and at the same time her weight is in control.

Also, she communicated with the parents in a positive way rather than a complain from the student.

We also made some healthy snacks available for the student at the school, in case, she feels extremely hungry and difficult to concentrate at the school.