

# Solutions: Support for Emotional and Binge Eating

## Session 8: Body Image

# Check-In

- What is a success and a challenge from the past week? What did you learn about yourself, your relationship with food, or your needs from those experiences?
- Did you hear any shame messages this past week? What is a self-compassionate response to those messages?
- How can the group support you with this week?

# Quotes of the Week

Weight loss does not make people happy. Or peaceful.  
Being thin does not address the emptiness that has no  
shape or weight or name. —Geneen Roth

We can't hate ourselves into a version of ourselves we can  
love. —Lori Deschene

# What is Body Image?

Body image is defined as your thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about your body, its appearance, and how you feel in your body. It's comprised of:

- What you believe about your own appearance- including memories, assumptions, and generalizations.
- How you feel about your body (including your height, weight, and shape).
- How you physically experience your body- how you control your body as you move and how you feel in it.

A survey from the Mental Health Foundation in 2017 found that within the last year:

- 21% of adults (23% of men and 19% of women) felt satisfied because of their body image.
- 20% (15% of men and 25% of women) felt shame.
- 34% (25% of men and 43% of women) felt down or low.
- 19% (12% of men and 26% of women) felt disgusted because of their body.

# Discussion Question

What are thoughts,  
feelings, and beliefs you  
have about your body and  
how you feel in it?

We can have a positive or a negative body image that can change as we encounter different factors that impact it throughout our lifetime.

### **Influencers of body image:**

- Comments and actions from family, friends, partners
- Culture and society
- Media, social media, and advertisements
- Life changes (i.e., pregnancy, age, injury)
- Personality and individual characteristics (self-esteem, perfectionism, etc.)

**What has influenced your body image throughout your life?**

# Negative Body Image

- Bases self-esteem and self-worth heavily on appearance
- Focuses on disliked characteristics
- Compares self to examples that are unrealistic or impossible due to physical differences, photo editing, staged lighting, etc.



# Impacts of Negative Body Image

- Feelings of depression and anxiety
- Disordered eating patterns
- Low self worth
- Impact on romantic and social relationships

Society has a lot of thoughts and opinions on how bodies “should” look, which ultimately ends up becoming our own beliefs about our goodness and worth.

**How has negative body image impacted your life (positively or negatively)?**

# Expectations of what a different body will do for me

Sometimes we can have the fantasy that, “if I look a certain way, \_\_\_\_\_ will be better in my life.”

- I will have more confidence/ be happier.
- I can wear the clothes I like.
- I will have more respect.

There are things that may be easier when weight loss happens, but there are also things that require internal work to improve or change.

When those expectations are not met after weight loss, people sometimes find themselves depressed, discouraged, and unconsciously going back to old behaviors.

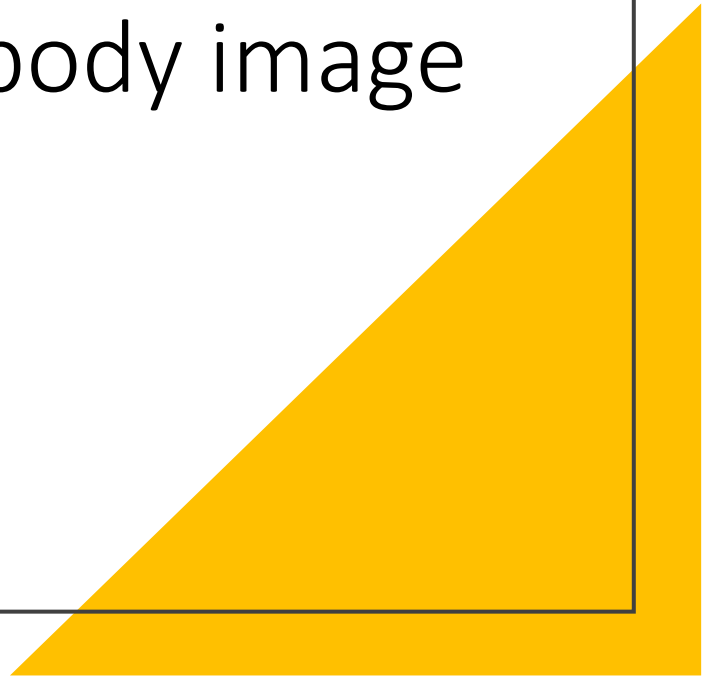
**What are some expectations you have about living in a smaller body?**

# Positive Body Image

- Feeling comfortable with your body as it is, not achieving a specific appearance.
- Basing self-esteem on a combination of appearance and other qualities.
- Creating ideals based upon realistic examples, with appearance and personal characteristics taken into consideration.

# Discussion Question

How would you describe a positive body image for yourself?



# Improving Body Image

- Focusing on your body as a whole, rather than just on your appearance.
- Improving self-esteem.
- Taking care of your body with mindful eating and movement.

# Body as a Whole

Focusing on your body as a whole, rather than just on your appearance, can help you develop a more well-rounded body image.

**What are your unique qualities?** (strengths, gracefulness, or resilience)

**What are specific functions your body serves?** (getting through a long day, helping you accomplish your daily tasks, participating in favorite activities, hugging loved one or playing with pets)

# Self-Esteem

When you base your self-esteem on various qualities, body image becomes less important. Other contributors to self-esteem could be competence, belonging and acceptance, security, identity, and purpose.

**What factors, other than body image, contribute to your self-esteem?**

**How can you build upon these other areas in your life?**

# Mindful Eating & Movement

Body image is also the care we give to our bodies. Taking care of your body through movement and mindful eating can help improve your body image. However, things like crash dieting and obsessive exercise are ways that these behaviors may become harmful.

*Think balance, variety, and moderation!*

**What are signs that your eating and exercise have moved more towards an extreme and away from moderation?**

**What are some ways you can give care to your body that helps you feel good about, and in, it?**



# Let's practice some body appreciation!

1. Choose 5 parts of your body that you tend to be critical or judgmental of.
2. For each body part, name a reason you can appreciate that body part. (Hint: focus on what that body part does for you, not what it looks like).
3. Plug each into the following prompt as a daily affirmation:

I appreciate my \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

Any last thoughts or questions?