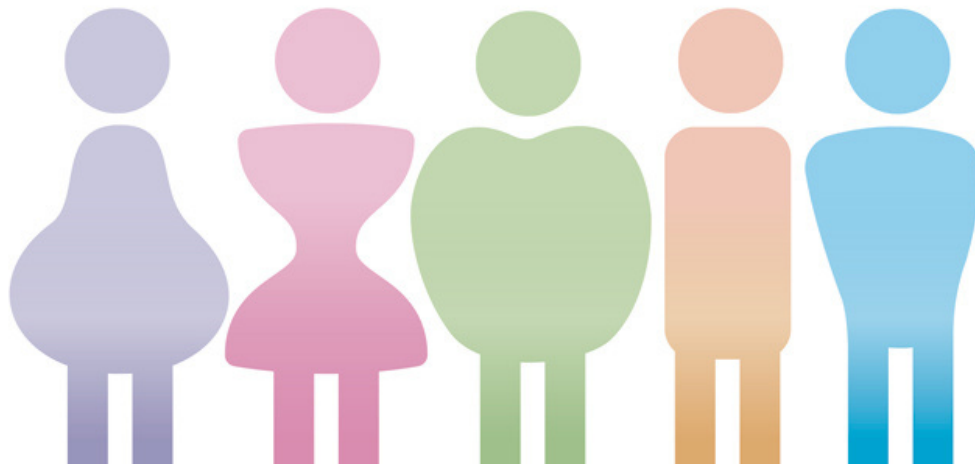


NOVEMBER 2022

Body Image & Well-being

Mental Health Series



Every Body is Different

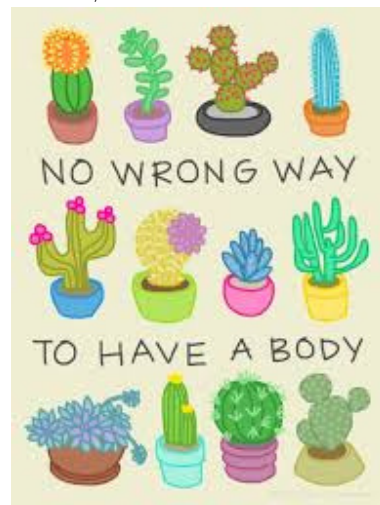
How do you feel about your body? What do you see when you look in the mirror? Think about this, if everyone ate the same thing and exercised the same way... we would still look different. Every body is different based on genetic inheritance, bone structure, shape and weight.

Body image is the way we see ourselves - the way we internally and externally talk about ourselves based on how we look.

So what is an "ideal" body weight? An "ideal" body weight is one that allows you to feel strong, energetic, and lets you live a healthy life. You have the energy to interact with friends and family, participate in sports, and concentrate on school or work. Avoid comparing your body with your friends or people you see in the media. Charts, formulas, and tables may be misleading and should be used under the guidance of a qualified expert. Negative body image can lead to the development of mental health issues such as depression.

Recognize the Signs of Negative Body Image

- Someone who compares themselves with others
- Someone who feels inadequate
- Someone who often feels ashamed or embarrassed
- Someone who lacks confidence
- Someone who fixates on parts of their body, such as their nose, arms, or chin



How Parents Shape Body Image in Their Children

The way parents feel about their bodies has a big influence on the children in their sphere. Think about what you may be saying about your own body. Negative self-talk about your big thighs or your latest diet are negative messages your kids will pick up on. The problem with negative self-talk is that it teaches your child to over analyze their own body. This can lead children to negative self-talk about their own bodies. Ultimately this may have an impact on their behavior and can lead to eating disorders, anxiety or depression.

Positive Body Image

Positive self-esteem has a direct connection with positive body image. Helping a child feel good about themselves often starts with you. When adults celebrate what they love about themselves and use positive self-talk, such as "I am strong, confident, and capable" children are more likely to use the same positive self-talk.



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Featured articles



Modeling Healthy Attitudes for Young People

- Set a positive example of a healthy and balanced relationship with food.
- Help children accept and enjoy their bodies and encourage physical activity.
- Build self-esteem.
- Encourage children to talk openly and honestly and really listen to them.
- Develop a value system based on internal values.
- Be aware of some of the warning signs of eating disorders.

3 Simple Exercises to Help Build a More Positive Body Image

#1: List What You are Thankful for About Your Body

Research tells us that focusing on the things about our bodies we are thankful for improves body image. Compile a list of the things you're grateful for, for example, your ability to walk, your beating heart, your brain, or your strength. You may even want to add why you are thankful for each (for example, I'm grateful for my strength because it gives me the ability to hug my loved ones.) Reflect back on your list often.

#2: Write a Letter to Yourself From Your Body

Writing a letter to your body can be helpful. Reflect on what your body would say to you. Write a letter to yourself from your body.

This gives you a chance to be kind, listen and connect to your body. Check in with each part of your body and reflect on what it might say. (For example, your feet may say thank you for trusting us to keep you moving, think about putting us up now and again and just relax.) You may find your body has a lot to tell you.

#3: Adopt a Personal Mantras

Sometimes we say not-so-nice things to ourselves. It's important to know how to break the cycle of negative thoughts. Personal mantras allow you to redirect your brain when negative thoughts creep in (For example: I love myself. I am enough. I am loved. Just because I think it, doesn't make it true). Find something that resonates with you and allows you to break the cycle of negative thoughts.

10 Steps to Positive Body Image

1. Appreciate all that your body can do
2. Keep a top-ten list of things you like about yourself
3. Remind yourself that "true beauty" is not simply skin-deep
4. Surround yourself with positive people
5. Shut down those voices in your head that tell you your body is not "right" or that you are a "bad" person
6. Wear clothes that are comfortable and that make you feel good about your body
7. Look at yourself as a whole person
8. Be a critical viewer of social media images, which are filtered to represent perfection, not reality
9. Do something nice for yourself
10. Use the time and energy that you might have spent worrying about food, calories, and your weight to do something to help others

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