



BODY IMAGE & BODY LOVE/CELEBRATION

Body image refers to how we view our bodies and how we feel about and *in* our bodies. Body image is complex, unique to each person, and interwoven with our self-esteem, identities, and our experience of being in the world (Chrisler & Ghiz, 1993; Hurd, 2000). Body image ranges on a continuum from body dissatisfaction/hate to body love/celebration. It is important to recognize that our body image exists within a larger social and cultural context with “ideals,” accompanying privileges, and accompanying oppression differing across intersecting identities.

Positive body image is defined broadly as “love and acceptance of one’s body...and appreciation of its uniqueness and the functions it performs” (Tiggemann, 2015, p. 168). Positive body image can have positive effects on mental health including self-esteem, eating and exercise, relationships, and intimacy.

Ways to Foster Body Love/Celebration

- **Learn More about Body Image.** Know that body image refers to every aspect of our bodies from our hair and height to our size, shape, skin tone, and ability status. Know that body “ideals”/ideas about what is “healthy” are socially constructed (tip: check out the Health at Every Size Movement!).
- **Practice Media Filtering.** Follow accounts that encourage positive body image/represent body diversity/make you feel good about your body and unfollow/limit exposure to media that encourages comparison, dieting culture, and “ideals.”
- **Limit Negative Body/Food Talk.** Practice flexible and compassionate thoughts about bodies/food (e.g., moving away from “shoulds” related to food and your body).
- **Practice Self-Compassion.** Speak to yourself and your body how you would speak to the ones you love. Check out our Self-Care/Self-Compassion handout for more!
- **Move Because it Feels Good.** Find ways to move in your body and connect to the experience of being in your body that feel good (e.g., yoga, swimming, meditation, or hiking).
- **Practice Appreciation.** Notice what your body does for you. Every day your body can do amazing things such as move you from place to place, keep you steady in your seat, and breathe.
- **Get Connected.** Contact the Counseling and Testing Center by stopping by calling or visiting our website to learn more about the many services available.