WHAT IS BODY IMAGE?

• Psychoeducation for client; body image is in the mind
• People of all shapes and sizes struggle with negative body image
• Explore instances where their body image shifted overnight
PROBLEMS WITH THE “LOVE YOUR BODY” MESSAGE

• Can cause sufferers to feel like they are “failing”

• May promote a focus on the aesthetic of the body, when the true aim is to shift this focus

• Body is not a slab of marble - changes with age
WHAT IS NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE?

• Preoccupied with negative thoughts about one’s body
• Self worth and one’s body / appearance are highly connected
• Body image distortion may be present
WHAT CAUSES NEGATIVE BODY IMAGE?

- Cultural messaging, weight-stigma and systemic oppression
- Psychological factors
- Eating disorder mental illnesses (diathesis-stress model), where symptoms may include; fear of weight gain, undue influence of body weight on self-evaluation, disturbance in the way one’s body is experienced
WHAT DOES POSITIVE BODY IMAGE REALLY MEAN?

• Reframing from “body-love” to “body-acceptance” and eventually “appreciation”

• Positive body image = not spending much time thinking about how your body looks because you are too busy living your amazing life!

• Reconnecting with your true values, which the eating disorder and body-shame have kept you from
BUILDING MOTIVATION FOR BODY IMAGE WORK

• How do you treat something that you appreciate vs. something that you hate?
• If I could wave a magic wand and you no longer struggled with your body image - what might be different in your life?
• How much time / energy do you spend focused on your body image?
DURING THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT

• What was your relationship like to your body as a child?
• Describe your earliest memory of body-shame or feeling like your body was “wrong”
• What else was going on in your life at that time?
• What were your parents relationships’ like with their bodies and weight?
• How much time of your day do you typically spend thinking about your body?
• If you envision yourself standing in front of a mirror what thoughts/feelings typically come up for you?
REAL MESSAGES TOLD TO CLIENTS

• You are not fat.
• Don’t worry, I’m an RD, my goal is not to make you obese, we can tweak your meal plan as needed.
• Don’t worry you won’t get fat.
• People who say they are “fat” when they aren’t, just want attention.
PAST APPROACHES TO TREATING BODY IMAGE ISSUES IN CLIENTS WITH EATING DISORDERS

• Having client draw their perception of their body and then tracing the outline of their body
• Having client estimate the size of their waste with a string and then comparing the actual size
PSYCHOEDUCATION

• Set-point weight theory
• Body diversity
• Body-ideals over time
• Weight-stigma
• Internalized fat-phobia
• Health at Every Size

It's estimated that women typically think about weight and diet for 21 minutes per day. Over 67 years of life, that adds up to 355 days — almost an entire year. That’s a lot of wasted time.

Source: www.dothehotpants.com
COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY


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DIALECTICAL BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (DBT)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy

- **Mindfulness**: Being focused and learning to live in the present moment.
- **Regulating Emotions**: Reduce the intensity of emotional pain until the feelings pass.
- **Distress Tolerance**: Learn to defuse stressful or painful situations resulting in better health.
- **Interpersonal Effectiveness**: Understand how to set boundaries and clearly express your needs.


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ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY

Contact with the present moment

Acceptance/Willingness
Open to whatever comes

Thought Defusion
Observing thoughts as they come and go without attaching meaning or judgment, detaching from thoughts

Psychological Flexibility
Being present, open, doing what matters to you

Chosen Values
Knowing what matters in a person's life, what can guide their behaviors

Committed Action
Effective mental and physical actions guided by values

Self as Context
Observing self, pure awareness of thoughts, behaviors, moods

http://www.janerekaslesw.com/2015/05/acceptance-and-commitment-therapy-and.html

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AWARENESS OF UNHELPFUL BODY THOUGHTS

• Help client to explore their thinking around their body
• We don’t have to believe everything we think
• Externalize the thoughts as stories their minds (ED self) tell them
• Imagine you are standing in front of a mirror, what thoughts come up?
• Mindfulness without judgement

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SHIFTING FOCUS FROM UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

• What is the ED self telling you about your body?
• Is it helpful or unhelpful?
• Shift to “wise mind coping statement” or “healthy self thought”
• Ex: “I am not more valuable if I take up less space”
• Ex: “My weight is the least interesting thing about me”
EXERCISE: GRATITUDE FOR BODY FUNCTION

• List as many things as you can think of that you are thankful for in terms of all that your body enables you to do

• Body as paint brush - not your masterpiece

TRIGGERS FOR UNHELPFUL BODY THOUGHTS

• Giving up scale! (DBT Pro/Con Exercise, urge surfing)
• Getting rid of “scale substitutes”
• Clothing
• Reducing body-checking
• Set boundaries with people
• Social Media
SOCIAL MEDIA CLEANSE

• Taking out triggering messaging, adding in body-diversity
• Counter-conditioning
• Pinterest board of body-diverse images including ancient artwork
• Normalize initial discomfort

IF GODDESS APHRODITE CAN HAVE STOMACH ROLLS SO CAN YOU

https://pics.me.me/an-acachad%4E2%96%B2-lll-if-goddess-aphrodite-can-have-stomach-2993787.png
DBT PRO/CON OF CRISIS URGE

- Weighing
- Body-checking
- Restricting
- Purging
- Bingeing
- Compulsive exercise

Pros And Cons Chart

Impulse/action: ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acting On Impulse</th>
<th>Not Acting On Impulse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Pros

Cons

Is it worth it? ________________

What can you do instead? ________________

Source: https://www.pinterest.com/tana911/distress-tolerance/
URGE SURFING

• Can be used for urge to weight self, body-check, etc
• When unhelpful body image thoughts lead to ED bx urges

You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn how to surf.
- Jon Kabat-Zinn -
RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

• DBT skill
• Can be applied to body image distress, painful thoughts and feelings surrounding one’s body, and of set-point weight

Radical Acceptance

• Acceptance of reality as is.
• Acceptance is complete and comes from deep within
• Emotional/physical pain + nonacceptance = suffering
• Let go and stop fighting reality
• Letting go transforms unbearable suffering into more ordinary pain, which is part of life
• Turning the Mind implies that acceptance is an active choice and requires an inner commitment

https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/a9/6a/e9/a96ae98c2baa2c8f19ab0485342dc85c.jpg
WHAT ELSE IS BOTHERING ME OR STRESSING ME OUT THAT I’M PUTTING ON TO MY BODY?

• Body-bashing like comfortable clothes
• Negative body image is a signal that you need to pay attention to something else in your life
• Shows that body is not the actual problem
WHAT DO I FEEL THAT HAVING THE “IDEAL BODY” OR “LOSING WEIGHT” WILL BRING ME?

- What will it cause me to feel (or not to feel)?
- What is your fear of what will happen if you gain weight?
- People want to be “thin” because of what they think it will bring them or because what the “ED Self” tells them it will bring them
- Client examples:
  - “A sense of control”
  - “Then I won’t be rejected”
  - “So that I can feel normal....”
  - “To be invisible to feel confident”
- Can you really control whether you are rejected through your body size?
- Playing out the tape
WHAT ARE SOME HEALTHIER WAYS TO GET THOSE NEEDS MET

• Distraction vs processing skills
• Meditation and mindfulness
• Relaxation strategies
• Spending time with friends and family
• Setting healthy boundaries

Self-Soothing
(Comforting yourself through your five senses)
1. Something to touch
   (ex: stuffed animal, stress ball)
2. Something to hear
   (ex: music, meditation guides)
3. Something to see
   (ex: snowglobe, happy pictures)
4. Something to taste
   (ex: mints, tea, sour candy)
5. Something to smell
   (ex: lotion, candles, perfume)
HOW CAN I BE KIND TO MYSELF IN THIS MOMENT?

• Have the thought and take pro-recovery actions anyway
• DBT skills: Opposite Action, Self-Care Box
• Self-Care i.e. putting lotion on, bubble bath, taking a rest day
• Ways to feel a sense of embodiment: gentle yoga, body-scan meditation
SELF COMPASSION

• Not your fault that you struggle
• Cultural climate to fuel a 60 billion dollar diet industry
• Mental illness, that you did not choose to have
• Would you say this to a loved one? To your daughter? To yourself as a child?
BODY IMAGE WORK AS A JOURNEY

• Sharing stories of hope
• Normalize that stress can trigger ED voice to be louder
• Normalize for those with AN recovery that during weight-restoration, body image issues can exacerbate
• Validate weight-stigma experienced by those in larger bodies and help them to grieve loss of “weight loss” dream
AN EXERCISE: BODY IMAGE COPING SKILLS

MENU

• Triggers
• Warning signs
• Support people
• Coping skills
• Coping statements

#EDRDpro MEMBERS

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MORE EXERCISES

• Journal prompts
  • A day in the life when I no longer struggle with body image issues
  • How I feel today when I’m more neutral with my body
  • Thank you letter to my body
  • List of my positive qualities or characteristics that have nothing to do with my body

• Other
  • Sticky notes on mirror or note in phone with “wise mind coping statements”
  • Exploring clients role-models
BEYOND BODY IMAGE

• Values clarification exercises
• Happiness Trap
• Marble Jars
• What do you want to be remembered for?
• Connecting to passions outside, food, body, exercise
• Advocacy work

As a nurse who has worked hospice your post regarding "how would you like to be remembered" was so thought provoking. (I never had a patient’s last words be "I wish I had skipped that jelly donut in ’67!")

Tammi Lee
DOING YOUR OWN BODY IMAGE WORK

• Going to therapy
• Exploring weight-stigma and internalized fat-phobia
• Self-compassion
RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

• Body Respect and Health at Every Size by Dr. Linda Bacon
• Body Kindness by Rebecca Scritchfield
• The Happiness Trap by Russ Harris (to learn about ACT)
• The DBT Skills Workbook (to learn about DBT and for use with clients)
• Self Compassion by Kristen Neff
• Body of Truth by Harriette Brown
• Fat! So? By Marilyn Wann
• Food Psych Podcast by Christy Harrison
LETS CONNECT

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