

LEARNING

to *Love*

WHAT YOU
SEE IN THE MIRROR

**COUNSELING AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

215-898-7021

(including nights/weekends to reach CAPS counselor on call)

3624 MARKET STREET, FIRST FLOOR WEST
Philadelphia, PA 19104

MON | FRI 9 am - 5 pm
TUES | WED | THURS 9 am - 7 pm
SAT 10 am - 3 pm

www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps



WHAT IS *body image*?

Body image is how we perceive ourselves when we look in the mirror. It can impact how we feel about ourselves and how others perceive us in relationships.

Women often feel pressure to measure up to a certain social and cultural ideal of beauty. This can lead to poor body image, which increases the risk for extreme weight/ body control behaviors.

Poor body image has been linked to diminished academic/mental performance, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and sexual dysfunction. Fixating on weight and dieting can cause you to lose interest in school, friends, or work.

Researchers have found that increased preoccupation with appearance and body dissatisfaction put people at a greater risk for engaging in dangerous practices to control weight and size. Some of these include:

- EXTREME DIETING
- COMPULSIVE EXERCISING
- ABUSE OF LAXATIVES AND/OR DIET PILLS
- SMOKING
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- EATING DISORDERS SUCH AS ANOREXIA OR BULIMIA

If you or someone you know suffers from negative body image, please seek professional help.

CALL OR STOP BY CAPS

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FACTORS THAT AFFECT BODY IMAGE

Some beliefs and attitudes about body image can be traced to a cultural obsession with celebrity. We are inundated with beautiful and perpetually slim young people in movies, magazines, and on the Internet. These images of models and entertainers are often heavily edited, yet this unrealistic representation persists as an idealized beauty standard. Thus, starting when they are children, young women, especially, internalize messages that they need to look "perfect" to be seen as healthy, competent, and desirable.

Body issues also impact men who are bombarded with media promoting lean eating and high-intensity workouts to achieve muscle mass and success. Research shows that today's college men are reporting greater levels of body dissatisfaction.

OTHER FACTORS THAT AFFECT BODY IMAGE

- REMARKS FROM FAMILY/FRIENDS ABOUT APPEARANCE
- OUR OWN IDEAS ABOUT HOW WE AND OTHERS LOOK
- SEXUAL, PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- COMPARISONS TO IDEALIZED BODY SHAPE/SIZE
- A MULTIBILLION-DOLLAR DIET INDUSTRY
- REALITY TELEVISION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Negative BODY IMAGE IS...

- A DISTORTED PERCEPTION OF YOUR BODY SHAPE/SIZE
- BELIEVING YOU ARE LESS ATTRACTIVE THAN OTHERS
- SHAME, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OR ANXIETY ABOUT YOURSELF
- FEELING AWKWARD OR UNCOMFORTABLE IN YOUR BODY
- COMPARING YOUR APPEARANCE TO THOSE AROUND YOU

Positive BODY IMAGE IS...

- HAVING A TRUE PERCEPTION OF YOUR BODY SHAPE/SIZE
- ACCEPTING AND BEING PROUD OF YOUR BODY
- FEELING COMFORTABLE AND CONFIDENT IN SOCIAL SETTINGS
- APPRECIATING YOUR NATURAL SHAPE
- UNDERSTANDING THAT APPEARANCE DOES NOT DEFINE YOU

LOVE *your* BODY

It's natural to find flaws in ourselves, but people with negative body image may take these negative feelings further, hating to look at their own bodies and obsessively pursuing an "ideal body."

Comparing yourself to others can be harmful. We all may have days when we feel awkward or uncomfortable in our bodies, but the key to developing positive body image is to recognize and respect our natural shape and learn to overpower those negative thoughts and feelings with acceptance that is positive and affirming.

IMPROVING BODY IMAGE

YOU ARE WORTH SO MUCH MORE THAN WHAT YOU WEIGH AND HOW YOU LOOK.

- Appreciate your body for all it can do
- Beauty is a state of mind - when you feel good about yourself it shows
- Look at yourself as a whole person
- Become a critical viewer of social media
- Do something kind for yourself and your body

Penn RESOURCES

CAPS

(including nights/weekends to reach CAPS counselor on call)

215-898-7021

OFFICE OF THE CHAPLAIN

215-898-8456

HELP LINE

215-898-HELP (4357)

RAP LINE

(Reach A Peer, 9PM - 1AM)

215-573-2RAP (2727)

SPECIAL SERVICES

215-898-6600

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE

215-746-3535

OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR

UNIVERSITY LIFE/

STUDENT INTERVENTION SERVICES

215-898-6081

WEINGARTEN LEARNING

RESOURCES CENTER

215-573-9235

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