

NAVIGATING SUMMER BODY PRESSURE

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With warmer weather around the corner, it is not uncommon for concerns about body, clothing, photos, and comments from others to be on our minds. These fears and attempts to change our bodies are not specific to any one gender or age group(1).

We know from high-quality long-term research that weight loss is not sustainable, and often predicts weight gain instead of weight loss(2).

The National Eating Disorders Association reports that 35% of “normal dieters” progress to pathological dieting and that 20-25% of those individuals develop eating disorders(3).

With the negative risks associated with intentional weight loss, what do we do instead when the pressure to change our bodies is high?

Consider adding an eating disorder-focused, weight inclusive dietitian to your team.

- Get curious about how restriction (both mental and physical) impacts your mental and physical health.
- Remember that restriction and bingeing are two sides of the same coin.
- Follow your meal plan!
- Check the facts: the more underweight a person is, the most dissatisfied with their bodies they are(4).
 - Remember that underweight does not refer to BMI, but rather to each person’s individual set-point weight (where their body naturally lands at).

Practice self-compassion

- Curate your social media. What can we add to our social media feeds? Think body neutrality, body positivity, self-care promoting posts.
- Set boundaries regarding food and body talk.
- Buy clothes that fit your current body. Thrifting can be a great way to do this!

Rely on your support system

- A support system might be family, friends, or a treatment team.
- Communicate your needs and have a game plan for triggers (cope ahead).

Be curious about what you actually want from changing your body. Do I think changing myself will make me more lovable, accepted, happy?

- Remember that diet culture and the eating disorder are insidious. It’s hard to be present in your life when you are trying to live life on an empty stomach. It’s better to be present in your life in your current body, than disconnected or distracted in a smaller/different one.

Works Cited:

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