

# Clothing Confidential

Dispelling the magic of the fashion industry and how we can use the knowledge to decrease it's impact on body image

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# Overview

- Disclaimer
- Objectives
- Introduction
- Eating disorders and body image
- Research on body image as related to social media and fashion
- How clothing is made
- Disconnecting the self from size
- Future of fashion and body image

This presentation has strong emphasis on the implications of fashion on those who identify as female. This is due to a large body of research being female-centric. However, many of the topics discussed can also be applied to all genders and identities. It is my hope that future research will present more diversified findings.

# Objectives

- 1. Attendees will learn about the role of body image in eating disorders**
- 2. Attendees will learn about the process of creating clothing**
- 3. Through learning about the construction of clothing, attendees can gain an understanding of how to detach size from sense of self/ body image**

# Who am I?

My journey from fashion industry professional to psychologist

- B.A. in Psychology (2008)
- A.A., Magna Cum Laude, professional designation in Apparel Manufacturing Management (2009)
- A.A., Magna Cum Laude, Advanced Study in Fashion Design (2011)
- M.S. in Clinical Psychology (2014)
- Psy.D., Doctorate of Psychology with an emphasis in Clinical Psychology (2019).



# Eating Disorders and Body Image

- Weight or shape concerns are included in the DSM-5 criteria for a number of different diagnoses:
- Anorexia Nervosa
- Bulimia Nervosa
- Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder



# Science says...

- Social media use is positively correlated with body dissatisfaction, distorted body perceptions, and disordered eating (Oakes, 2019; Veldhuis, 2020)
- Both traditional media (magazines and television) and social media play “a prominent role in conveying body ideals and setting aesthetic standards” (Veldhuis, 2020)
- The ideal of thinness is perpetuated by the fashion industry’s response to consumer behavior (Volonté, 2019). We see models/actors glorified for slenderness, we then feel better because we fit into a smaller size (Kinley, 2010), the fashion industry then marks sizes to be smaller to drive up sales (Ketrón & Williams, 2018).

# Liar, liar...

- 99.9 % of celebrity images are photoshopped (Bruner, 2018)
- 90% of women report editing photos before posting (City University London, 2021)
- Most people won't post a photo online without editing it (case24.com, 2020)
- Almost 88% of women compare their bodies to images seen in the media (Blackford, 2020)

## Why is this problematic?

When influencers are sharing their clothing size or celebrity images are retouched to present a specific body type, we are programmed to believe that something is “wrong” with us or we’re “not enough” if we don’t fit that image.



When we learn how clothing is made, we can begin to realize that the number/ letter is just a guideline— not something to be attached to and certainly, not something that should determine our worth.

# The Art of Deception

## Step 1: the sketch

Clothing starts with a sketch. Generally this is drawn on a 'croqui' which is a body form with a ratio of 9 heads tall. *The average human is 7 1/2 heads tall.*



# The Art of Deception

## Step 2: The pattern

- After the sketch, the article of clothing is then draped on a mannequin, or the pattern is blocked based on *one, mostly shapeless* dress form or a basic pattern block.



# The Art of Deception

## Step 3: The fitting

- After the pattern has been made or draped, it is tested on a 'fit model', who is a model that meets the designer's specs for their ideal client. *This is to say that each article of clothing we buy is based off ONE person's body.*



# The Art of Deception

## Step 4: Grading the pattern

- Once the article is fit to the fit model per the designer's standard, the pattern gets 'graded' up and down to create the size range.

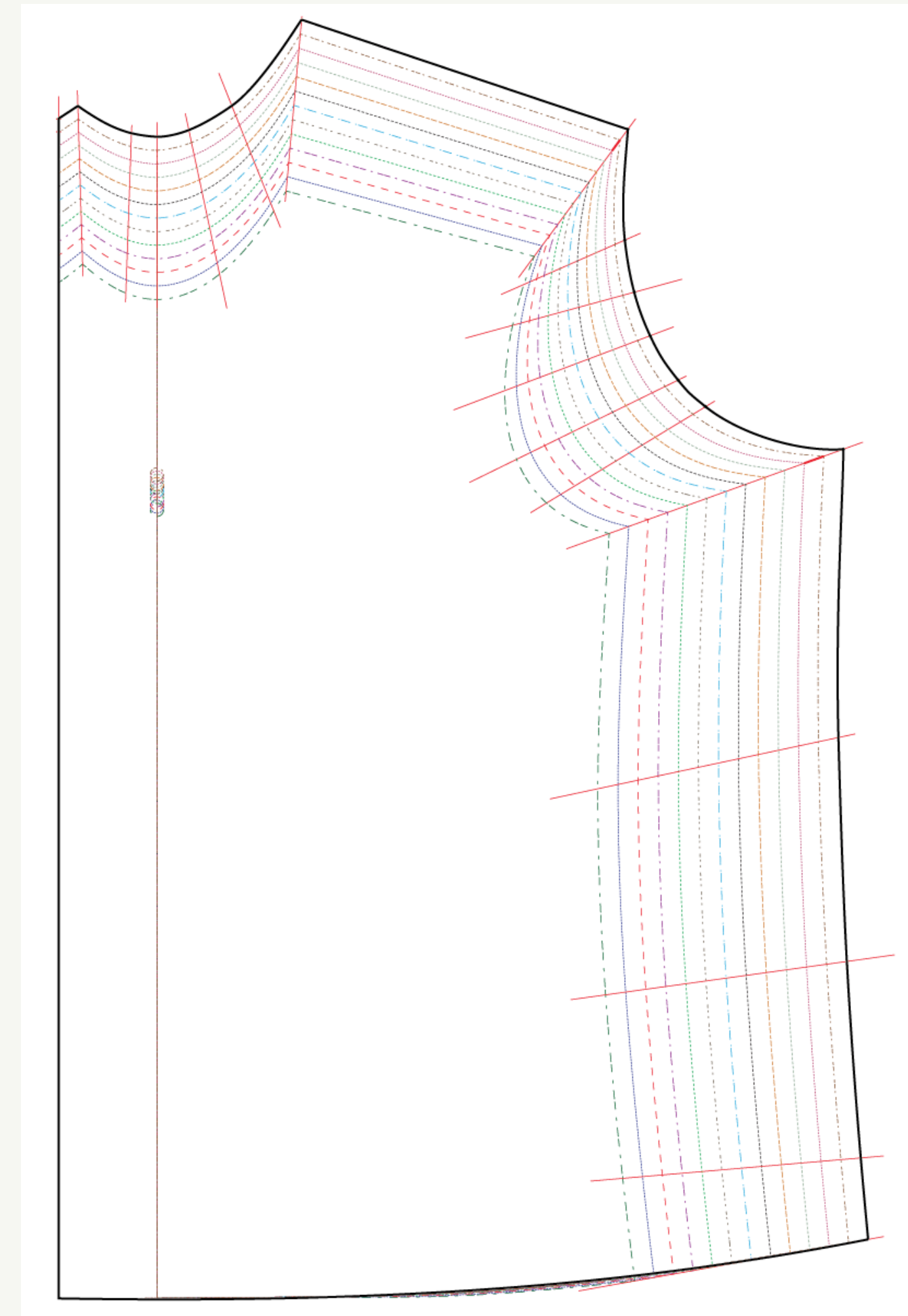


Image from [itch-to-stitch.com](http://itch-to-stitch.com)

# The Art of Deception

## Other considerations

- Because there is no uniformity in the industry with regard to sizing, each brand uses its own standard
- When clothing is mass produced, the top cut of 1,000 pieces (for example) is going to differ than the bottom cut
- Out of 59 jeans brands, 32% ran at least a quarter inch larger around the waist than the average measurement for the label size (a.k.a.- vanity sizing) and 41% ran at least a quarter of an inch smaller (ThreadUP, 2018)
- Some brands run up to 3.5” different from the average measurement for that size label *within themselves* (ThreadUP, 2018).

# Moral of the Story

- Clothing is a means of communicating. It plays a large role in self-expression and impression management. Therefore, it should be fun...not a means of self-worth!
- While shopping and clothing can have a negative impact on body image and self-esteem, understanding the way the process works and how many variables there are at play can help you to practice more self-compassion. When you feel upset with clothing, just go with the old adage, “it’s not me, it’s you”!
- Though you can’t escape that clothing comes in sizes, detaching from the number/ letter and focusing instead on the desired look may help with distress. In fact, learning the art of wearing clothes may even improve overall self-concept (Flanigan, 2019)

# Let's End with a Positive...

## How things are changing in the industry and media

- Truth in Advertising Act of 2014
  - “When consumers see or hear an advertisement, whether it’s on the internet, radio or television, or anywhere else, federal law says that an ad must be truthful, not misleading, and when appropriate, backed by scientific evidence.” (Federal Trade Commission, 2014)
- There are companies working to promote realness and diversity
  - Dove
    - 2004- campaign for real beauty
    - Models of all shapes and sizes
  - Aerie
    - Uses models of different sizes and abilities
    - Curtains for mirrors in dressing rooms
  - Old Navy
    - Uses models of different sizes to show what a particular article of clothing looks like on different body types
    - Gender neutral shop
  - ASOS
    - Promoted natural skin by leaving stretch marks and promoted models of different sizes
  - Getty Images
    - Banned content where models’ shapes have been retouched to change their size
  - Target
    - Adaptive clothing collection
- “Studies find that increasing body diversity in media and limiting thin-ideal images as means of promoting positive body image” (Rodgers, Kruger, Lowy, Long, & Richard, 2019)



# Resources

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**Thank you.**

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