



# Equip

Act Now, Not Later: Challenging  
Appearance Ideals & Shifting Your  
Relationship with Your Body

Oct 2023

# Presenters



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# Body image isn't just a vanity issue.

It's a mental health issue leading to a higher risk of eating disorders, anxiety disorders, low self-esteem & depression, suicidal ideation, and impaired functioning.

**90%**

of women have  
body image  
concerns

**100%**

of body image concerns put  
people at risk for eating and  
anxiety disorders

**70%**

increase in eating disorders  
during the pandemic

**\$700mm**

Spent annually on  
ineffective treatment

# Body Image 101

What is  
'body image'?

We **all** have it

A person's experience in their body

**Perception** of their body

**Thoughts** about their body

**Emotional attitudes** towards their body

**Behaviors** towards their body

# Body image is a spectrum

## Negative Body Image

- Body Judgements
- Body

### Dissatisfaction

Ex: Body checks, drive for thinness, distorted view on one's self, comparing bodies, strong belief in appearance ideals

*"If I looked like x, y, z, my life would be perfect...I wish I was toned like you.."*

## Neutral Body Image

- Body Neutrality
- Body Trust

Ex: Body function or qualities vs appearance (if based solely on function/applied to others→ ableism), neutral statements, self compassion

*"My body is the least interesting this about me"*

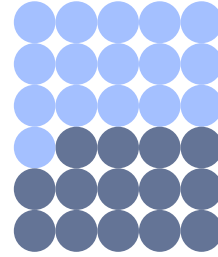
## Positive Body Image

- Radical Self Love
- Body Liberation

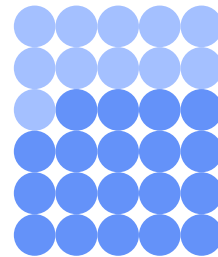
Ex: Self-compassion, body activism, challenging appearance ideals, loving every single cell, body joy, body positivity

*"Making peace with your body is your mighty act of revolution. It is your contribution to a changed planet where we might all live unapologetically in the bodies we have."-Sonya Renee Taylor*

One reason we struggle with body image is due to messages from our culture that we are “supposed” to look a certain way.



**41%**  
of men think they are 'too heavy' & are self-conscious about weight.



**60%**  
of women think they are 'too heavy' & are self-conscious about weight.

# Appearance ideal binary

➔ Society splits appearance ideals into masculine & feminine ideals.

## Feminine Ideal

When you think of the “perfect” girl or woman, how would you describe her?

## Masculine Ideal

When you think of the “perfect” boy or man, how would you describe him?

# What about health?



Is there a single definition of health for everyone?



What is healthier, a hamburger or a salad?



If everyone ate and moved their body the same, would we all look the exact same?



Health is complex and not attainable for everyone. Despite the messaging we receive about it, health looks different for each person and is not a destination point – rather, it's an individualized experience that doesn't change if someone should be treated with respect.



Where do the  
appearance ideals  
come from?



# Appearance ideals have deep, historical roots

- The ideals have changed throughout history based on what will keep institutions, businesses, and privileged individuals profiting and in power.
- Even as they change, they continue to stay narrow, restrictive, and unobtainable for pretty much everyone.
- Currently, the appearance ideals are shifting back to the “thin aesthetic” from the early 2000s, with an emphasis on thin & flat stomachs.

## Y2K FASHION TRENDS ARE COMING BACK — AND SO IS THEIR INHERENT FATPHOBIA

Article by Kelsey Weekman  
Published on Mar 16, 2021



## Y2K Fashion Is Officially Back 'In', But Does That Mean Y2K Bodies, Too?



6 October, 2022  
by LAURA ROSCIOLI

The Y2K Trend Is All A Rage But We Have To Be Wary Of Reviving The Horrific Beauty Standards Of The Time

• *Oops, we're doing it again*

ELLE | BY DEVA SONAKAR | AUGUST 3, 2022



# They show up in our lives constantly...



Fashion, clothing,  
& beauty brands



Harmful curriculum &  
peer interactions



Comments from  
family, friends,  
colleagues, etc.



How we view, talk,  
and treat ourselves



Media: tv, movies,  
social media, ads



Illinformed diagnostic  
criteria, biased  
doctors



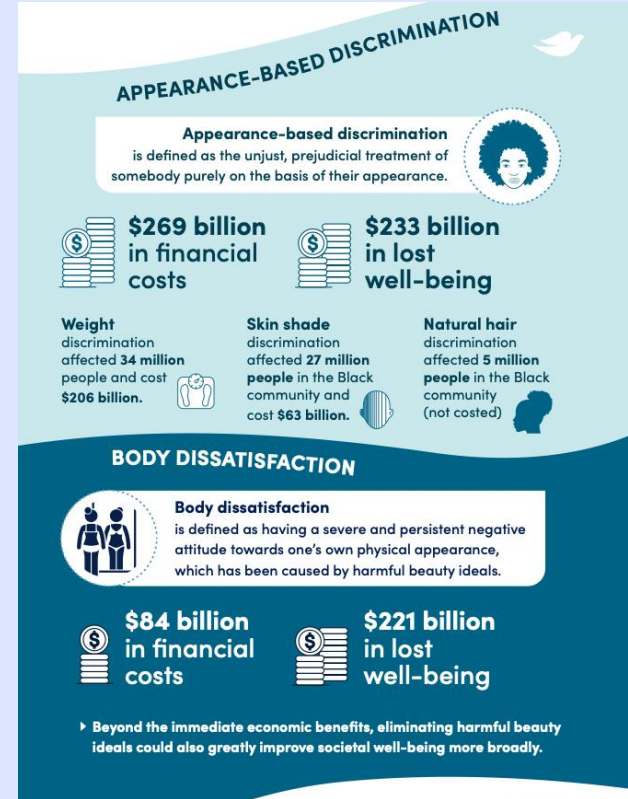
Wellness or “lifestyle  
change” programs



Biased research  
studies & measures

# The impacts are costly

What else do we lose when pursuing the appearance ideals?



# Who benefits from appearance ideals?



Even celebrities, who come closest to the ideals, do they have picture-perfect lives?



Big picture, are we personally part of the group that is benefiting from these ideals?



Given all the costs, is it worth it to work hard to try and look like appearance ideals?

So...what can we  
do about this?



# The power of acting against the ideals

1

We want our values, beliefs, and actions to match and be in alignment with each other.

2

When they do not match, we feel *uncomfortable*: distress, frustrated, conflicted.

3

To soothe that discomfort we can take new actions, towards the new beliefs we want to have that go against the ideals.

# Act now, not later



## Body Talk Challenge

Thinking of the negative comments people have said to you or things you have heard and practice outloud how to respond to them.



## Mirror Exercise

Looking in the mirror with little to no clothing on, list out 15 neutral or positive things about yourself (physical and emotional).



## Opposite Action

What would you be doing, wearing, etc. if you weren't concerned about your body? Then start doing those things!



# Negative Body Talk Examples



Do I look fat in this?



What are you,  
a girl or a boy?



You should lose some  
weight... only for your  
health!



Where are her curves??  
I thought she was  
Mexican.



I'm so out of shape.



Why do they have a  
beard? I thought they  
were non-binary.

# Roleplay Demonstration



# More on Opposite Action



**What would you be doing if you weren't concerned about your body?**

What clothes would you wear?

What activities would you do?

How would you talk to yourself?

How would you interact with others?



**What steps can you take to start doing those things now?**

Practice wearing the crop top.

Practice saying kind things to your body out loud.

Plan time to play your favorite game with friends.

*'Doing the thing'* multiple times can help retrain your brain to enjoy the things you are currently avoiding due to body image concerns.

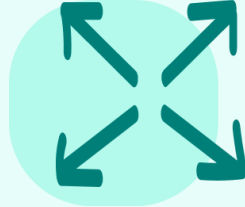
# More ways to take action



## Curate your social media

Unfollow accounts that trigger comparison or make you feel bad about yourself

Follow accounts that show body diversity & joy



## Body Activism

What are some ways you can impact those around you when challenging the appearance ideals? Positive post-it notes, friend pacts, petitions



## Letter to your younger or future self

“You didn’t deserve to be treated like that because of your body size. It’s not your fault—it’s society’s fault.”

Questions?

# About Equip

## Email

[info@equip.health](mailto:info@equip.health) to learn about treatment at Equip

## Visit

[explore.equip.health/resources](https://explore.equip.health/resources) for additional resources

## Explore

More articles related to this topic:

- [Equip's Body Image Info Site](#)
- [Equipped to Recovery Podcast Episode with Ally & Cara](#)
- [Body Positivity vs Neutrality](#)

Equip provides fully virtual, evidence-based eating disorder treatment.

We treat patients of all ages and diagnoses in all 50 states, and accept most insurance plans.



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