

# The Hunger Games: Brought to you by Modern Society America

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Cigna Behavioral Health Awareness Series

# we are here to

- Discuss what our adolescents are being exposed to in various forms of media
- Evaluate how it is impacting social, emotional and physical health
- Discuss diet culture and identify red flags for the development of eating disorders
- Learn tools that can help promote positive self-image & worth in a culture of not-enough.

# the adolescent brain

- A time of significant growth and development
  - Prunes away old connections and strengthens others
  - Because their brain is under-developed they are
    - emotional, impulsive, vulnerable, susceptible, struggle in relationships, don't think about consequences
  - Critical thinking is last to develop
- It REALLY matters what your kid's brain is seeing and what it clocks time doing!!

# adolescent tasks

- Learning about relationships
- Accepting and taking care of one's body
- Becoming more self-sufficient
- Making decisions about life
- Attending school, preparing for job and career
- Acquiring a set of values, morals and beliefs
- Becoming socially responsible
- Understanding and developing the SELF

# what is SELF-image?

- How one thinks and feels about self
- Directly impacts one's outlook on life
- Can be different from how the world sees you

# poor SELF-image

- Compare and despair
- Focus is on flaws, limitations, critical and negative self-talk, judgment of decisions and actions
- Thrives on the culture of not enough

# body image?

- Body Image: how a person sees, feels and behaves towards one's body
- Our values and attitudes towards and about our body are shaped by the culture and society in which we live.
- Adolescents are more dissatisfied with their bodies and are an increased risk for depression, eating disorders, and low self-esteem

# body image matters

- More than 1/2 of girls and 1/3 of boys age 6 to 8 believe their ideal bodies are *thinner* than their current body
- 80% of 10 year old girls have tried *dieting*
- 1.3 million adolescent girls in the United States have anorexia
- 20 million women and 10 million men in the United States have eating disorders



# body image development

- 1/3 of children age five to six choose an ideal body size that is *thinner* than their size
  - And... they can *recommend dieting* behaviors for how to lose weight!
- We learn how to think and feel about our bodies based on modeling those around us...
- So what are they seeing?

# the health and wellness market

- In 1968, Vogue magazine invented a disease called cellulite
- Is now dominated mostly by beauty and anti-aging product sales \$679 billion
- Fitness and mind + body exercise \$390 billion
- Health, eating, nutrition and weight loss sales come in third with \$277 billion
- This industry is thriving on our sense of body dissatisfaction, negative self-image and chasing illusion that is promised by media sources

# role of traditional media

- Traditional mainstream media includes television, movies, music (videos/lyrics), magazines, and advertising
- These contain unrealistic, idealized and stereotypical portrayals of body types
- For girls and women focus is on youth, beauty and thinness (lose, trim, tighten)
- For boys and men focus is on strength (adding inches, bulking, building) and masculinity

# role of traditional media


- Kids and teens are comparing themselves to popular images and are coming up short.
- Leading to an epidemic of “not enough” and attempts to *alter* the self to fit in
- They’re chasing illusion and false promises

# let's expose those myths

- Perfection
- Lifestyle
- Objectification
- Objectification

# body shaming

- Body shaming: the cultural acceptance that putting down our own or others' bodies is acceptable. It is the idealization of a particular body type, and the declaration of objectification of women by celebrating thinness (in some cultures), diets, weight loss, and a singular type of “beauty”



“While social media is not the cause of low self-esteem, it has all the right elements to contribute to it. Social media creates an environment where disordered thoughts and behaviors really thrive”

-Claire Mysko

# Teens n Screens

- Digital media is now the most time-consuming teen activity
  - They spend an average of 9 hours using digital media
  - 7.5 hours sleeping
  - 6.8 hours on education and learning
  - 0.7 hours engaged in activity and exercise
- They're spending 300% more time in front of screens as compared to 1995
- 71% of teens use more than one social-networking site (facebook, instagram, snapchat are the top three)



# Teens n Screens... Relationships?

- Teens are losing social skills and they are conducting most of their communication through technology
  - 79% prefer texting/instant messaging
  - 72% use social media
  - 64% use email
  - 59% use video chat
  - 52% use video chat through gaming consoles
  - 42% use messaging apps (Kik or WhatsApp)

# Digital and Social Media

- Popular websites are impacting adolescent development in realms of relationships and self-esteem
- Social Media relationships are becoming a *tool to validate* the self rather than to connect
- What began as a fun way to share experiences has turned into an *obsession about approval*
  - 35% of girls are worried about being tagged in a photo they view as unattractive
  - 27% feel stressed about how they look in a posted photo
  - 22% felt bad about themselves if their photos were ignored

# Social Media Feedback?

- “My life doesn’t look that way”
- The more time you spend viewing, posting, commenting and comparing yourself to others is found to have increased body-dissatisfaction over time
- Research also states that social media impacts self-image and reception of peer-related feedback *equally* in boys and girls

# The Impact: Socially

- Social Consequences
  - Limited or non-attendance at social events and/or
  - Dieting or disordered eating behaviors, fixation on appearance before, during, and after events and/or
  - Possible use of substances to cope
  - Decreased in-person connection & socialization
  - Losing sense of self
  - Staying in unhealthy relationships with hopes of being affirmed
  - Increased comparison & competition
  - Cyberbullying

# The Impact: Emotionally

- Increase in *anxiety & depression* due to enhanced visual fixation and rumination social media provides
  - i.e. critiquing photos, obsessing over amount of ‘likes’ or comments
  - FOMO: A recent study of Australian teenagers showed that the heaviest social media users experience the greatest amount of anxiety related to FOMO (fear of missing out).
  - University of Michigan Study found that more college students used Facebook, the worse they felt, reflecting a similar study among high school students in the U.S.
  - Story about Nina Langdon (TIME article) and use of IG and body image as a major catalyst in depression, eating disorder, and eventual suicide attempt

# The Impact: Physically

- “IF I could only change my body then...”
- A rise in diet culture and poor body image
- Diets are precursors to eating disorders
- 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

# The Impact?

- Along with the quest for the perfect life, we are seeing the quest for the “perfect body”
- Trending social media hashtags for this?
  - “Fitspiration”, “Fitspo” and “Thinspiration”, “Thinspo”, etc.
- Objectifying images of thin/muscular women and messages encouraging diet and exercise for appearance rather than health related reasons
- Most sites include thematic content about women’s body weight, thinness, food shaming, restriction, stigmatization and objectification

# Our kids are starving and HUNGRY

- For approval
- For acceptance
- For the perfect life
- For relationships
- For connection
- For meaning
- For love (from self and others)



# diet culture as a NORM?

- Children age 9-11 are dieting at alarming rates
  - 46% are sometimes or ‘very often’ on diets
  - 82% of their families are on diets

# diet's don't work!

- We are brainwashed into singular beauty ideal
- Dieting failure helps to explain the rapid growth of the diet industry
- 95% of dieters regain the weight, plus more
- Increased rates of shame, blame, depression, poor self-esteem and self-worth
- Diets set us up for failure, to feel 'not enough'
- They're FEEDING off of our insecurities

# diETING behavior

- Exercising control over food
- Counting calories and fat grams
- Limiting types and amounts of foods
- Excessive exercise and activity
- Other compensatory behaviors
- Watching the numbers drop on the scale
  
- Focusing on dieting is the 'perfect' way to escape emotions and true issues
- Is the 'perfect' precursor to eating disorders

# red flags for disordered eating

- Lack of weight gain/growth in a growing child
- Manipulation of food or body
- Avoiding family meals
- Adopting diet behaviors
- Missing food
- Eating less or refusal to eat with no or vague explanation
- Hyperactivity or restlessness
- Increased interest in cooking and/or watching cooking shows
- Changes in demeanor/mood

# Perfect Body, Perfect Life?

- NO!
- Dieting is not the solution
- It is a bigger problem
- Society tells us to change our outsides and we will be happy inside
- What we really need to do is build from the inside

# What parents can do

- MODEL
- PROMOTE
- MONITOR
- MOVEMENT

# what is normal eating?

- Normalized Eating: One is able to mindfully consume a variety of food when hungry and is able to stop when full most of the time.

# MODEL and PROMOTE balanced eating

- ANTI-diet!
- Avoid labeling foods as 'good' or 'bad, 'healthy or unhealthy'
- Avoid using food for punishment and/or reward
- ALL foods fit
- Make room for kale and cake!
- It's all about BALANCE, everything can be eaten in moderation
- Learn to listen to your own internal cues



# defining positive body image

- People with healthy body image understand that
  - Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes
  - You are MORE than your body – people are more than numbers on a scale; every person is a unique individual with talents, skills and abilities
  - No matter your shape or size you are worthy of love and acceptance
  - The amount you weigh and/or having an “ideal” body does not equal happiness, success or wealth
  - Images in media are unrealistic and created to sell products
  - Do not manipulate food/exercise to create the perfect body
  - Focus on function appreciation and function, not appearance
  - Our bodies are precious temples for our souls

# MODEL positive body image

- Parental body image has a *powerful* influence
- Check out your OWN body image issues
- Understand your own attitudes towards food, exercise and your body

# PROMOTE positive body image

- Place less emphasis on your child's appearance and more on their abilities and skills
- Myth-busters
- Focus on holistic health and wellness
- Help your child to understand body changes
- Find physical activities that fit and they enjoy
- Teach your kids that it is OK to show feelings

# PROMOTE positive body image

- Help your children to move away from competition and comparison with others
- To focus on inner qualities over appearance
- To engage in wholehearted relationships
- To know and believe in their inherent worth and value as a person
- To embrace inner beauty and self-love

# feeding the emotional hunger

- Fill their HEARTS
- Help them to develop an internal compass
- Self-love is not selfish
- Focus on what is WITHIN not what one is without

# MONITOR

- Talk to them!!!
- Open up the lines of communication
  - How does it feel when your post is “liked”?
  - How many times a day do you compare yourself?
  - Have you ever felt worse about yourself after scrolling through a social media site?
  - Is there anyone you follow for inspiration?

# Join the MOVEMENT!

- Corporate campaigns aimed at body image
  - Dove Campaign for Real Beauty
  - Nike Real Women
- [EmbodyLoveMovement.org](http://EmbodyLoveMovement.org)
  - Embody Love Workshops
- [BeautyRedefined.org](http://BeautyRedefined.org)
- Positive body image movement is growing so let's keep growing it!

# what I hope you take away...

- We live in a culture of 'not enough'
- Diet Culture and The Hunger Games are pervasive issues that will not be changed overnight
- Know your red flags for disordered eating/eating disorders! When in doubt, reach out!
- You CAN make a difference by modeling, monitoring and joining the movement
- Adolescents are HUNGRY so let's feed their souls with the good stuff!



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# How to Contact Me!

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