

Objectives

- Recognize signs that you may be in denial about your weight
- \circ Understand the factors that influence body image and how they change throughout the life cycle
- Understand the hidden benefits of obesity and how they relate to your situation
- \circ Identify and practice steps for developing a new body image
- Recognize feelings that signal you are at risk for weight gain

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Evolution of Body Image

- Body image is built from many different influences over time
- Cultural beauty standards

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- Varies with culture and within a culture over time
 Views of family members and peers
- Teasing by family members/peers can be devastating

distract people from their immediate problems

Coping mechanisms for handling stress
 Eating feels good in the moment and can temporarily

Defining Body Image

- Body image refers to how a
person sess their bodies and
how they feel about it.

- This includes body perception,
which involves the mental
picture a person forms of
how you look.

- A negative body image can
affect mental well-being.

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Evolution of Body Image

- Comfort level with sports and physical activities
- Feeling awkward, clumsy, or "too large" can lead to withdrawing from a physically active life
- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse

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- Feelings of anger, shame, guilt, or fear become associated with negative feelings about the body
- Some abuse victims gain weight to make themselves less attractive or to feel more powerful
- This may be a conscious choice, but it can also be an unconscious way to keep people at a distance.

Avoidance

- $^\circ$ Many overweight people go to great lengths to avoid looking at their bodies, especially their overall image
- Many patients say what prompted them to join a weight management program was the reaction to seeing themselves in a photo or store window and being shocked at their size
- Physical intimacy may be avoided as well
- The idea of someone touching them may make them feel uncomfortable

Lack of Movement

- Overweight people tend to be less physically active
 - Movement may be uncomfortable
- They may be self-conscious about their weight and don't want to draw attention to themselves
- · A less active lifestyle can lead to social withdrawal
- \circ Often results in further upset about themselves and their bodies

Heightened Awareness of Weight Gain

- Overweight people can be more aware of weight gain than weight loss
 - Carry the image and feelings of being heavy even after they lose weight
 - Why? Perhaps fear of failure and disbelief that they can be successfully keep the weight off
- Being more aware of weight gain helps them to mentally prepare for the criticism they anticipate receiving

Hidden Benefits of Obesity

- \circ Sometimes remaining overweight can have benefits (these can be conscious or unconscious)
 - Excuse for unmet goals
 - · I can't find a mate because of my weight
- · Power of protection

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- Overweight men in particular may like the sense of power they have as a larger man
- Some people find a larger body size gives them a sense of protection from physical harm
- Increased professional credibility
- Some people feel being a larger person shows they are devoted to their work (taking little time for personal life)

Hidden Benefits of Obesity

- Decreased threat to friends or peers
- Since people often mistrust "very attractive" people, being overweight can be a way of saying "I'm not a threat to you."
- Test of mate's commitment

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- People may use their weight as a way to test if their mate loves them as they are
- Being heavy may help some stay faithful since they are less likely to cheat
- Staying off the radar screen
- $^{\circ}$ Some overweight people report feeling "invisible" therefore others expect less of them

Developing a Healthy Body Image

- Acknowledging your current body image, understanding it roots, appreciating your appearance, and gradually adjusting to a thinner you are important towards long term weight management
- \circ Until you do this, you may feel uncomfortable at a lower weight
- You may unconsciously sabotage yourself and begin to regain weight to get back to your old comfort zone.



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Signs you May be at Risk for Weight Regain

- Resentment or anger at people who seem to notice you for the first time even though you have met them before
- $_{\circ}$ Anxiety when you receive attention for your new appearance
- Pressure to meet new expectationsyours or those of others
- Inability to see you've lost weight



Be Kind to Yourself

- $\,{}_{^{\circ}}$ Concentrate on your best qualities
- What do you like best about yourself
- Great sense of humor, piano skills, painting
- Appreciating your body
 - People come in all shapes and sizes
- Some parts of your body will change as you lose weight,

but you will be the same person inside.

- It is okay to not look like a celebrity
- $\,{}^{_{\odot}}$ Appreciate and accept your unique body shape/features
- What do you like about your body?
- Eyes, hair, skin, hands



Positive Self Talk

- Everyone talks to themselves "in their heads." Putting yourself down continues to make you feel bad. Changing from negative to positive self-talk can change your mood and behavior.
- \circ Chris came home from a track meet feeling disappointed that he didn't win the race.
- Negative-I should just quit. I'm too overweight to be on the team anyway
 Action: Went to the kitchen to found something to eat-found a bag of chips and polished it off watching TV
- Positive- Although I didn't win, I almost beat my best time. I practiced hard this week. I'm going to get some pointers from my coach to improve my form.
- \circ Grabbed the dog and went for a nice walk in the neighborhood

Examples of Positive Self Talk

- \circ I'm taking one step at a time to reach my goals. I know that's how I am going to get there
- My weight doesn't define who I am as a person. I know I am a good person
- \circ I like to move my body. It feels good and is healthy
- My body is powerful and strong
- Nothing can stop me from being successful
- · Even if I have a setback, I can just get started again
- Eating when I'm not hungry doesn't make sense. I'm going to find something I enjoy doing instead

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Give yourself a pep-talk

- Make a list of positive statements (affirmations) and repeat them to yourself regularly
- ol can take control of my weight
- o I can make active choices in my day
- ol can take 5 minutes for myself
- o I have several friends I can count on
- ol am happy about
- ol am an asset to my company



Develop a sense of success by creating in your mind the ideal person you want to be

After your image is clear in your mind,
tell yourself you have achieved your ideal and feel the
way you would if you were that person

You can also concentrate on a time when you were your best

By recalling these memories, you remind yourself of times
when you liked yourself best

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Stand Tall and Smile

- \circ Nonverbal behaviors communicate a great deal about how confident you are
- People who feel good about themselves
- oHold their bodies erect
- oKeep their heads up
- oSmile! A smile is the most telling sign of approachability and warmth

Reward yourself for your Success

- Pat yourself on the back when you reach your goal.
 You deserve it
- \circ Ways you can reward yourself for your hard work and successes (non-food rewards)
- Buy or download a new book

Athletes have understood and used these techniques of visualizing success and so can you!

- Get a manicure or pedicure
- Get new exercise gear
- · See a movie or a show
- \circ Go for a nice hike on a nice day- enjoy the outdoors/fresh air

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Develop Positive Habits

- Ny Eating Challenges:
 There aren't a lot of vegetables I know I like
- · My eating goal for next week:
 - Try a new vegetable or a different way to cook a vegetable
- My activity challenges:
- $^{\circ}$ My dog needs to go for more walks, but I struggle to take him for very long
- · My activity goal for next week:
 - Take the dog for a walk and go 50 steps further

Positive Motivation for Managing your Weight

- Create and review your diary regularly
- \circ Concentrate on the positive steps you are completing rather than how many steps you did not complete
 - $_{\circ}\,\text{Are}\,\,\text{you}\,\,\text{meeting}\,\text{your}\,\,\text{vegetable}$ and fruit intake goals
 - $_{\circ}\,\text{Are}\,\,\text{you}\,\,\text{meeting}\,\text{you}\,\,\text{water}\,\text{goal}$
- $_{\odot}\,\text{Are}\,\,\text{you}\,\,\text{gradually}\,\text{increasing}\,\,\text{your}\,\,\text{physical}\,\,\text{activity}$
- o Are you setting realistic goals and experiencing success o Are you rewarding yourself for positive changes
- o Are you feeling happy and confident
- o Are you getting the support you need
- Make adjustments to your goals and plans as needed

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