
Body Image

	MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER	
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What is Body Image?

Body Image is how you see and feel about your body, not just in the mirror, but in your own mind. It includes how comfortable you feel in your body, how you think others perceive it, and how you define its shape. These thoughts often connect to self-esteem, which is how much you like and value yourself overall. Body image and self-esteem affect each other and can shape your motivation and mood. Your body isn't just something you see, it's something you live in. It will be with you your entire life, so take time to appreciate it and treat it with the kindness it deserves.



How Body Image Affects Adolescents

Similar to how adults and parents struggle with body image issues, adolescents and young adults struggle as well. If your adolescents have a poor body image, this will cause negative thoughts, but it can also negatively impact more things.



A recent study found that people who are preoccupied with their weight or body image are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Unhealthy body image is also linked to low self-esteem, especially in adolescents, and can lead to anger, low mood, and harmful comparisons to peers or media. This may result in risky behaviors like disordered eating or considering cosmetic changes. It affects all ages and genders.

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How Parents Can Help Strengthen Their Child's Body Image

Be a Role Model for Positive Body Image

1. Parents are a child's most influential role model and strongly shape how they see the world and themselves. Encourage your child to feel good about their body by setting an example: speak kindly about your own body, embrace its flaws, and show acceptance of all body types. Avoid negative talk about diets or labeling foods as "good" or "bad" - instead focus on their nourishing value.

Encourage Your Child to Engage in Movement

2. Appreciating what the body can do builds a strong foundation for positive body image and self-esteem. Encourage your child to be active and enjoy movement, shifting the focus from appearance to ability. Lead by example through fun activities like walks, bike rides, or swimming. Emphasize the value of physical health over weight loss and help them find activities they enjoy.

Teach and Help Your Child to Feel Confidence

3. Adolescents face many challenges, so it's important to help them feel confident and supported. Encourage healthy coping skills, open conversations about body image, and remind them of their value. Avoid making comments about their appearance that could hurt or discourage them.

Be Involved with Your Community and Schools

4. Children spend most of their time at school and with peers, so stay involved. Talk to teachers about concerns, like bullying or peer pressure, and encourage new friendships through positive extracurriculars if current influences seem unhealthy.

Get Help

5. Lastly, remember that you are one person and can't do everything. If your child is severely struggling with body image, self-esteem, or eating disorders, seek professional help. Visit [ParentGuidance.org](https://www.parentguidance.org) to learn how to support their confidence and well-being.



Loving the Skin You Are In –
Developing Positive Body Image

[Begin Course](#)

Take a no-cost course at [ParentGuidance.org](https://www.parentguidance.org)

Take this course to learn more about body image and to help your child develop a positive body image and self-acceptance.

For helpful parenting resources visit:

[ParentGuidance.org](https://www.parentguidance.org)



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