

A SMILE AND A NEUTRAL ATTITUDE:
AN EXPLORATION OF BODY IMAGE DISCUSSIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF A BODY NEUTRAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

A Smile and A Neutral Attitude:
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Body Neutral Perspective

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This thesis examines the ways in which body image is discussed in online settings. There are three different communities discussed: body positivity, proED (pro-eating disorder), and body neutrality. Both body positivity and proED content are fairly popular online, and both have found significant support and followers on various social medias. In this thesis, I argue that both of these types of content cause significant harm to those who engage with them, primarily because both communities (though different in their approaches to body image) work to uphold the thin ideal. I then bring up the third type of content: body neutrality. Body neutrality has not been given the same academic attention as body positivity and proED content, likely due to its relative infancy. In this thesis, I propose body neutrality as a much healthier way to frame body image online because of its completely neutral stance on fat, thinness, and general body image. Though any work relating to social media is quickly out of date, I hope that this thesis provides an overview of body neutrality and how, in its current form, it provides a more balanced approach to online body image discussions.

Keywords: body positivity, body neutrality, social media, body image, eating disorders

Preface

In the mid 1990s, Dr. Anne Becker travelled to Fiji to experience Fijian culture, and noted how Fijian attitudes towards food were vastly different from dominant Western attitudes, and that Fijians valued bigger bodies, especially for women. In the United States in the 1990s, thin bodies were the ideal – many models had a specific body type called “heroin chic” which got its name due to the incredibly thin appearance the women had (McClendon, 2013, p. 69). Fiji’s body standards valued extra weight. In a study to determine body image, Dr. Becker asked Fijian women how they felt about their own bodies, and many of them, even the women who Western science would consider “medically obese”, said they wished to gain weight (Becker, 1995, p. 41).

In 1998, Dr. Becker travelled once again to Fiji to conduct interviews with teenaged girls who lived there. Notably, three years prior, Western television programs had been introduced to the island nation (Becker, 2004). In those three years, a massive cultural shift had occurred. Dr. Becker now found that many of the young women she interviewed had a preoccupation with their bodies, and actively sought out becoming thinner (Becker, 2004). Some of the girls brought up the American television programs they had been consuming as a form of inspiration or motivation to lose weight. Becker states, “On a subtle but palpable level, study subjects indicated that television characters, appearances, and values portrayed on television provided an anchor for identity as well as competitive social positioning in a rapidly evolving social landscape” (Becker, 2004, p. 540).

During the interviews, several girls volunteered information implying or outright stating that the television programs were a main source of this cultural shift in body image (Becker, 2004). The term for the portrayal of thin bodies as ideal is called the “thin ideal,” and research now shows that being exposed to the thin ideal over time can drastically influence one’s perception of beauty (Chaker, Chang, & Hakim-Larson, 2015; Poloskov & Tracey, 2013).

This example showcases the possible impact that the thin ideal can have. Of course, this was only one ethnographer’s experience and should therefore not be considered the default for experiencing the thin ideal. But it does provide interesting insight into the thin ideal and its possible impact.

And television is a very different medium than social media. Social media follows us everywhere. We carry it around on our cell phones. We check it between classes, during work breaks, and in our free time. Research suggests that being exposed to the thin ideal can create a preoccupation with body image, so, logically, the social media content with which one interacts could have a monstrous impact on body image, self perception, and how one interacts with the different bodies they see every day.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I ask: are there ways of discussing body image in online settings in a productive and beneficial way, specifically in a way that does not cause harm or perpetuate the existing body “ideal”? Could body neutrality shift the narrative of belonging, effectively eliminating the need for subgroups altogether? Body neutrality is still in its infancy (though given the nature of how concepts travel in online spaces it is likely to blow up relatively soon) so there is less information about it in online and academic circles. I will attempt to analyze it in such a way that gives context to the issue, beginning with why I find the existing means of discussing body image harmful, and including context and examples of posts where applicable. I will then analyze why these discussions occur, involving the need for belonging and the ways in which a narrative of belonging are achieved in online posts. Finally, I will explain how and why body neutrality should work to replace the existing means of discussion (body positivity and proED content). Exposing young people to a narrative surrounding body neutrality may be a healthier and more beneficial alternative to the extremes in body image discussion which most young people find themselves faced with on a daily basis.

THE PROBLEM

Being bombarded by the same beauty ideals creates a normalization effect, where the viewers of the ideal images begin to question why they themselves do not fit this ideal. Young people, especially girls, who typically have higher aesthetic standards placed on them by society, can relate to this feeling of inadequacy while scrolling through

Instagram. “How is their waist so tiny?” “When did they learn to do their makeup so well?” “How did they lose so much weight?” For some, these thoughts are more easily ignored. For others, they linger and fester in the mind, shifting perspective entirely. The perpetuation of the body ideal on social media created a schism: those who fit this mould, and those who did not¹. Those who did not fit in created their own subcultures where they could achieve that sense of belonging (Fettach & Benhiba, 2015; Sowles et al., 2018; Tierney, 2006). There were two main lines of thinking leading to two different subcultures: those who wanted to change their bodies to fit in, and those who wanted to change society to fit in.

Those who wanted to change their bodies to better fit the thin ideal would resort to adopting food or exercise regimens to change their body size or shape (typically to become smaller) (He & Luo, 2016; Sowles et al., 2018; Wick & Harriger, 2018). ProED (pro-eating disorder) content praises and uplifts eating disorders, hailing them as a weight loss secret and treating the potentially fatal disorder as a lifestyle choice (Fettach & Benhiba, 2015; Tierney, 2006). The content created and shared by these subcultures can be incredibly harmful, showing the thin body as one meriting applause and veneration, and positioning it within reach of anyone who desires it enough to follow the unwritten rules

¹ This is, of course, a simplified way of examining the issue, as dividing humanity into any binary system has its challenges. Body image is also a very complex phenomenon, because someone’s feelings about their own body may not align with what the rest of the world sees. Beauty standards also change, so fitting into the beauty ideal now does not necessarily mean one will still fit into it in ten years’ time. But the feelings of anxiety and/or inadequacy related to not fitting in are internal, and therefore this binary I have created is also in relation to the internal feelings one has about their own appearance. Hesitancy about fitting into the body ideal indicates the anxiety and/or inadequacy felt by those who do not fit into it, and therefore I argue that anything less than confident is indicative of not fitting in.

of disordered eating (Custers, 2015). The kinds of posts found under pro-eating disorder tags are “diets,” “tips for starving,” “alternatives to eating” and “how to distract oneself from hunger,” and pictures of thin or even emaciated bodies to be used as inspiration (Arseniev-Koehler et al., 2016; He & Luo, 2016; Juarascio et al., 2010; Sowles et al., 2018; Wick & Harriger, 2018).

Those who opted instead to try to change society created spaces where their body types were normalized and praised in the same way that the thin ideal was in general culture, which resulted in the modern body positivity movement. Body positivity involves a person showing their body (for example, in a photograph, a written description, or any number of other means of online sharing) and discussing how even though it does not match the societal ideal of the thin, smooth, cellulite-free body, it is still beautiful and intrinsically has value (Cohen et al., 2019b; Davies, Turner, & Udell, 2020; Lazuka et al., 2020; Leboeuf, 2019). Pictures found under body positivity hashtags primarily feature a range of bodies, from those considered to be of “normal” weight to those considered medically obese (Cohen et al., 2019b). Unfortunately, there are a plethora of problems within this community as well, including infiltration by proED content, commodification and profit-seeking, brand cooptation, and thin people wanting to be involved in the movement (which is not inherently harmful but it has ended up derailing body positivity from the intended purpose by shifting the focus away from fat bodies) (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Lazuka et al., 2019; Luck, 2016).

Both groups create a space where they can belong and interact with their peers by crafting implicit belonging narratives (e.g. “you are not weird for wanting to do whatever it takes to fit in”). These two subcultures exist in the same place that the thin ideal is perpetuated: social media. This has resulted in the same topics being discussed from multiple angles all at once in the same space, which is confusing at best. Scrolling through a social feed, one may see conflicting posts that reflect these various viewpoints/ideas: someone talking about their new favourite protein powder or diet aid, an influencer in workout clothes showing off their abs, a fat person saying they feel beautiful, and a very thin person updating everyone on their weight loss journey. It is even more confusing when several of these messages meld together. For example, I have seen innumerable posts of a beautiful thin woman with long soft hair and a flawless complexion sporting a caption stating the likes of “It doesn’t matter if you’re not everybody’s cup of tea, the most important thing is that you love yourself!” While some people might genuinely find these posts uplifting, my initial reaction is, and has always been, easy for you to say.

Based on my early experience navigating online existence and my own reactions to and opinions on body image discussions, I believed, definitively, that there is no wholly good way to discuss body image online. Even the most well intentioned proED and body positivity content can have significant negative impacts on people who see the content, regardless of whether or not they have prior symptoms of disordered eating (Jett, LaPorte, & Wanchisn, 2010). I was ready to swear off discussions of body image altogether until I came across a term in a Tik Tok video: body neutrality. The main idea of

neutrality is focused on removing judgements from discussions of bodies altogether (Muentzer, 2021). Learning of this new and radical way to conduct discussions of body image prompted me to re-examine my complete dismissal.

WHAT IS BODY IMAGE?

Body image is not easy to define, as certain purposes require different definitions. For example, a clinical definition could be much more scientific and focused on symptomologies than a layman's definition. Kling et al., curious about the clinical measures for body satisfaction, performed a review of several different measures of body image and defined body image as "an individual's cognitive or affective evaluation of their body or appearance with a positive or negative valence" (Kling et al., 2019, 172). This definition will be used throughout this thesis because it encompasses all the major topics of relevance: the cognitive vs affective impact of one's body, a distinction between body and overall appearance, and recognition of both a possible positive or negative reaction.

All of these terms are also important to define. Cognition refers to the way we take in information about the world. Affect in this case refers to the feelings we have about this information. It is too simplistic to call cognition objective and affect subjective; cognition is impacted by existing schemas including past experience, sensory issues, and a plethora of other things, so even if a singular event is experienced by two people, they may experience it in drastically different ways (Statt, 1998). And to write off affect as subjective is to do a disservice to the individuals who are experiencing these feelings. The

way one's world is experienced is just as important as the way those experiences make them feel, as those feelings then influence schemas about a topic and the cycle continues (Statt, 1998). To this end, the terms are clearly related, but not interchangeable.

Similarly (but more obviously), though one's body and overall appearance are related, they cannot be used interchangeably. The term "body" will be used simply to refer to one's physical body, including body shape (ex. fat distribution, muscle tone, etc), body size (e.g. weight, height, and other numerical values), and details (e.g. blemishes, scars, visible disabilities, etc). Overall, appearance can be defined much more generally, including facial features, hair, overall body satisfaction, and even choice elements such as clothes, piercings, or other style or aesthetic choices.

The difference between a positive and negative reaction is whether the assessment of one's body results in a positive or negative feeling. It is important to note that, despite it not being included in the accepted definition of body image, feeling neutral regarding one's body is what this thesis argues would be the best-case outcome. It is also difficult to accept that feelings would be entirely positive or entirely negative. Positivity and negativity exist on a spectrum, whereas true neutrality exists outside that spectrum altogether (Muentzer, 2021). One might be tempted to think that neutrality would exist at the middle point on the spectrum, but this neglects to consider that neutrality taking a centre position would imply feeling equal parts positively and

negatively, and I believe that true body neutrality must exist outside of value judgements altogether.

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

There are several key notes to consider before continuing with this thesis. The most important is that this thesis will be using a body neutral tone while explaining certain key concepts and ideas. Some of the terms used may seem jarring to those who have been socialized by Western beauty standards, but part of accepting the body-neutral point of view is unlearning these assumptions. For example, the word fat will be used to discuss fat people. There exist many euphemisms for the word (e.g. plus sized, curvy, or big-boned). Even subconsciously people may cringe when they hear the word used to reference a real person. But the fact is, “fat” is simply a descriptor word.

The second thing to highlight is that aesthetic preferences are learned. Much in the same way that fatness is vilified, beauty standards are upheld by a society which perpetuates the myths surrounding what is and is not attractive. Individual preferences are fine, and they are not inherently wrong, but it is important to recognize that they are simply informed by the culture in which one was socialized. Cultural differences could subsequently result in an entirely different view of what is attractive. Race, sexuality, and class distinctions may also play a role in aesthetic preferences. For example, there is research which suggests that Black women in the United States have to juggle culturally specific beauty ideals in the Black community with the overwhelmingly white beauty

ideals which are so dominant in Western culture and media. There is evidence that suggests that this can result in feelings of shame or inadequacy, especially when being intimate with their bodies (Avery et al., 2021). Additionally, the associations between fatness and morality, discipline, confidence, laziness, and any other descriptor are tenuous correlations at best, and at worst they are a means of shaming people into conforming to a specific patriarchal body ideal.

Thirdly, there are some controversies regarding gender and queer representation in body image research. These will be discussed further in the next chapter, but it is important to keep in mind that men are frequently understudied when it comes to body image (Delderfield, 2018), and therefore they are also under-referenced in this research. I have hope that more research will be done on the harm that beauty ideals can do to men and that they will be included more in clinical and empirical research in the future.

HELLO, THIS IS YOUR AUTHOR SPEAKING

As the author of this thesis, I feel it prudent to explain my own position in this research, as I believe it has informed both the content presented and the ways in which the topic is discussed. Firstly, this topic was suggested for my thesis by a close friend who has suffered from disordered eating for the majority of their life. They have taken an active role in my project, including suggesting topics I should cover and proofreading all of my work to ensure I am presenting the material in a conscientious way. All of this

occurred through casual conversation, and they have asked to not be mentioned by name anywhere in this thesis.

Secondly, I have a psychology background. The way research is conducted in psychology is very different from cultural studies. I have always been interested in the topic of body image (specifically on Tumblr) and when I had the opportunity to study this topic in a cultural studies degree, I decided to take it despite my lack of familiarity with the discipline of cultural studies. There, my work here is heavily influenced by psychology, including the ways in which information is cited and the heavy use of empirical studies as a means of providing support for my ideas. I have tried to implement cultural studies methodology as well, especially in terms of theory, as will become apparent in later chapters.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. This introduction including the rationale for the project, the definition of body image going forward, and the key notes, form **chapter 1**.

Chapter 2 will highlight the existing means of discussing body image online. There currently exist two primary means of discussing body image online: proED and body positivity. The overview of body positivity includes a brief summary of the movement's history including its migration into online settings, followed by detailed analysis of how

and why the current form of the movement is harmful drawing on existing research into the topic (including cooptation, commodification, and a general lack of diversity). The chapter then provides an argument for why body image matters at all, which takes the shape of a general discussion surrounding fatphobia. Then proED content is discussed, including its online history, popular content types, and, again, lack of diversity. Body neutrality will then be presented as an alternative to the previous two kinds of content. Also included will be a summary of the theoretical approaches used in this thesis, including Tajfel's Social Identity Theory and Bourdieu's *habitus* and capital.

Chapter 3 will serve to explain the methodology used to provide examples and context of the content found in online body image discussion spaces. A detailed summary of the procedure to collect the data from Instagram and Tumblr will be provided, followed by an explanation of how the data was stored and organized. Ethical considerations will also be mentioned due to the potentially private nature of the topics. This chapter will also include a brief section regarding the ethnographic justification for this study.

Chapter 4 will discuss and analyze the screenshots acquired via the methodology described in chapter 3. The theories will be applied here and explanations for how and why people continue to engage with body positivity and proED content will be included.

Chapter 5 will be a more in-depth analysis of body neutrality. The goal of this section will be to present body neutrality and then highlight the ways in which it is similar

to both proED content and body positivity with respect to the theory, but that its impact is a lot more positive. In doing so I hope to present it as a viable alternative and a new and healthier way to discuss bodies online. I hope to be able to create a compelling argument for body neutrality and make a case for revisiting the way that body size and shape are discussed online today.

Finally, **chapter 6** will be a conclusion for the research and contributions, summarizing all findings and outlining the limitations and possible future directions this research could take.

To conclude, body image is frequently discussed in online settings. Unfortunately, the ways in which these discussions are held is likely to be more harmful than helpful. Reasons are proposed for why body image should be discussed differently online; specifically, I propose that body neutrality is a more helpful and productive way to have conversations that young people are already having. Preserving the beneficial nature of discussing body image while removing the negative aspects is the ideal result, and body neutrality may be a path forward to that future.

CHAPTER 2: EXISTING RESEARCH ABOUT BODY IMAGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is one of many ways ideas about body image are circulated in modern day. Those with access to social media are constantly shown images or texts which prop up the ideal body type: thin, toned, etc (Horn, 2021). Most of these images are highly unrealistic and unattainable for the average person. In response to this ideal being perpetuated constantly and in every context (Horn, 2021), there have been several subcultures created which have become very popular in online settings, including body positivity and pro-eating disorder (proED) content, both of which (inadvertently, in some cases) work to uphold the body ideal in different ways.

Body image discussions should change to take a more body neutral stance because the more common forms of body image discussion are causing significant harm. Body positivity began as a movement for fat acceptance but since its migration onto social media and into popular discourse, it has evolved into something completely different (Osborn, 2021). Not only is it no longer a movement for fat people, but it has also been commodified into something unrecognizable from its origins of acceptance (Luck, 2016). ProED content, i.e. content that takes a pro-eating disorder stance as a means to achieve a specific body type, uplifts the thin ideal and positions it as something which anyone can achieve if they try (Robinson et al., 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). Content shared under proED tags, such as “proana” (pro-anorexia) typically features photos of thin white women or diet advice, and people with disordered eating habits will check the content in these tags in order to rationalize their disordered eating behaviours (Wick & Harriger,

2018). This content can be harmful to those who look at it, even if they do not have a history of disordered eating (Jett, LaPorte, & Wanchisn, 2010).

Body neutrality, unlike positivity and proED content, takes a less appearance-focused approach to discussing body image. Body neutrality is not as accepted or known by the general public as body positivity, and there exists little academic research into the movement as of yet. But, with a more inclusive ethos which is more accepting of age, gender, and disability, I believe that it could help overcome some of the challenges body image discussions are facing and creating in the online world.

NO BODY'S PERFECT: BODY POSITIVITY

The supposed “opposite” of proED sentiment is body positivity. Body positivity is ostensibly “the movement to accept our bodies, regardless of their size, shape, skin tone, gender, and physical abilities” (Leboeuf, 2019, 114). The goal of body positive posts is to engage and celebrate people of all body types, especially those who may feel underrepresented in media. Body positivity is not a new concept, though it has recently gained traction in online communities and become a common concept online. Unfortunately, there are many problems with the movement, including commodification, cooptation, and exclusion, all of which will be discussed in depth. Understanding the history of the movement, its conception, and how it has changed is fundamental to my reasoning for why the current form of the movement is harmful despite its auspicious start.

Body positivity began in the 1960s when a clear movement for fat acceptance became popularized. Activists grew weary of the medical community trying to eliminate fat bodies, and The National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA) was formed (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015; Alptraum, 2017; Osborn, 2021). In 1973, a group of feminists released their Fat Manifesto which argued for fat liberation (the NAAFA was arguing for fat acceptance – the differences are semantic at best.²) (Osborn, 2021). These early fat acceptance movements were heavily inspired by other social and human rights movements of the time, including the civil rights movement, gay rights, and feminism (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015; Osborn, 2021). Despite early obstacles in the movement, including prominent racial exclusion which is still felt today (Osborn, 2021), the movement has lasted and recently migrated into online culture.

Modern Day Body Positivity and the Online Shift

The term “body positive” was used for the first time online in 1996 with the creation of thebodypositive.org (Cherry, 2020), a website with the mission of ensuring that “children would grow up in a new world—one where people are free to focus on the things in life that really matter” (thebodypositive.org, 2021). The website was started in 1996 by two women, one an author and one with a clinical practice for eating disorder

² The difference between fat liberation and fat acceptance is nuanced. What the NAAFA called “acceptance” was the disappearance (or at the very least, lessening) of fatphobia and oppression. “Liberation” was used in a similar way, implying liberation from the current societal harms of being fat (Osborn, 2021).

recovery. The two founded TheBodyPositive.org in order to help those who felt left out of the societal beauty narrative (thebodypositive.org, 2021).

Since then, the term “body positivity” has been used in many campaigns and programs, and has been used as the name of the whole fat acceptance/fat liberation movement. Today, the term has become extremely popular on social media, and many social media personalities and activists such as Tess Holliday³ use the term to label their content (Alptraum, 2017; Osborn, 2021). The move to social media makes social justice movements a lot more ubiquitous, because now in-person interaction is not necessary. This opens up these movements a lot more. Body positivity seems to be particularly well adjusted to social media and has since become very popular online. As concepts are spread through social media, they are noticed (and interacted with) by more people. This is how internet phenomenon (like memes) or niche terms (like “mansplaining”) become part of the public consciousness. This is what happened to body positivity and it is now a term recognized by most people.

The wide knowledge and acceptance of the movement has seriously impacted its efficacy in achieving its main goal of fat acceptance, due to different interpretations of the movement as it grows in popularity. In many ways, the movement has evolved into

³ Tess Holliday is a fat model and body activist. In 2015 she was signed to Milk Model Management and has since appeared in numerous campaigns including for Vogue magazine, as well as having over two million followers on Instagram (Elan, 2021). She also coined the #effyourbeautystandards hashtag, which is very popular in the body positivity movement (Cwynar-Horta, 2016).

something completely unrecognizable from its origins (Osborn, 2021). The modern version of the body positivity movement is no longer focused on fat acceptance, and even the term “body positivity” is now taken to mean general acceptance of body diversity in all its forms (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). This has created a confusing mess of content, all of which could theoretically be classified as body positivity, depending on which definition is used. The old definition of fat acceptance no longer functions as a catch-all for the term body positivity because some of the content now labelled as body positive does not mention fat people at all (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). But there is still some fat acceptance content which is also labelled and shared online as body positivity. Essentially, the modern body positivity movement suffers from a lack of clear definition as to what content is actually considered body positive. Even the academic literature on the subject uses varying definitions, with some focusing in on the historical movement and fat acceptance (Stewart & Ogden, 2019) while others take a broader approach and discuss body positivity in terms of general rejection of the societally accepted beauty ideal (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Cohen et al., 2019b).

Despite this minute discrepancy in aspects of the definition, on the surface, the body positive movement remains a celebration of diverse bodies in some form or another, which is achieved through an overall theme of acceptance focused on loving diverse bodies. Whereas proED content has distinct online post types (e.g. photos for inspiration or diet lists) and even distinct subcategories for content, body positivity is more likely an overall theme of a post: a general narrative of celebration of diverse body

types. Sometimes it is found more in captions or hashtags (Davies, Turner, & Udell, 2020) while other times it is captured by the brand of the person posting (for example, it is arguable that anything Tess Holliday posts will be deemed body positive considering her history with the movement mixed with the simple fact that she exists on social media as a fat person (Cwynar-Horta, 2016)).

Where Are All the Men Around Here?

A very underexplored area of body positivity is related to men. Men also have body-positive communities online in which they can share photos and compliment each other. This sort of community is frequently associated with women, leaving male participation largely understudied. One study that focused on male body positivity conducted research on a Tumblr blog called Body Positivity for Guys. The authors conducted content analyses and came to the following conclusions. Firstly, the overall tone of the blog and its content was overwhelmingly queer-friendly. There was a significant number of gay contributors and the comments were very pro-gay (Caruso & Roberts, 2018). There was also a distinct lack of traditional masculinity. The comments for posts frequently used female-typical language, such as referring to the photos' subjects as "cute" or "adorable" (Caruso & Roberts, 2018). This lack of traditional masculine language could be due to having a safe space where the participants felt comfortable not engaging in the masculine roles society deems appropriate (Caruso & Roberts, 2018). This remains an underexplored area and more research on the topic, including researching the apparent shift in perception of masculinity while engaging in body positivity, would be

beneficial to future audiences, because the idea that body positivity can work in tandem with eschewing societal norms is uplifting and promotes the general idea of what body positivity should be.

The Negative Surrounding Body Positivity

On the surface, body positivity seems like a beneficial movement helping to bring awareness to underrepresented body types. A content analysis of posts under the “bodypositive”, “bodypositivity”, and “bopo” hashtags on Instagram found that a significant portion of the pictures featured individuals ranging from “normal weight” to “obese” (94%), and 40% of posts “diverged from societal beauty ideals such as cellulite, stomach rolls, and stretch marks” (Cohen et al., 2020, p. 2). A second analysis of online body positivity content showed that positive captions had a greater positive effect than the photo itself; including a body-positive caption increasing self-esteem after viewing photos regardless of the body depicted in the photo, which suggests that body positive content could have a positive impact on body image (Davies, Turner, & Udell, 2020).

Unfortunately, with growing popularity, body positivity changed its focus, shifting from fat acceptance to general body appreciation (Lazuka et al., 2016). Nowadays, many advocates for different causes have begun using the term and this has caused a decline in truly body positive content (Osborn, 2021). A plethora of research suggests that the way in which body positivity has evolved can be harmful, both because of the direction the movement has gone in and because of the increase of people (and brands) participating in

it as it becomes trendier. For instance, while the 2018 Caruso & Roberts men's body positivity study assumed that all of the body positivity content was fully body positive, there are frequently non-positive posts hidden in the body-positive hashtags (Lazuka et al., 2016). Even when one ignores the fact that there could be content that is inherently not positive but that shares another hashtag with a body-positive post (e.g. Posts tagged with either #bodypositive or #proana that are also tagged with #inspiration), there can be people who accidentally or purposely exploit the body positive hashtag with harmful content. For example, Lazuka et al. examined the messages that the body positivity movement was spreading in online environments. The researchers collected images by searching relevant body positivity hashtags on Instagram and coded the posts according to their prescribed variables regarding the content the post contained, including demographic features, body features, and the overall theme of the post. They found that approximately 12.6% of posts in one body positive content analysis alluded to or outright mentioned eating disorders (and 13% included eating disorder recovery). Eight point five percent praised the "thin ideal", and 2% denigrated fat bodies (Lazuka et al., 2020, p. 89). Some of this content is not inherently anti-body positivity, and there is a place in the movement for discussing eating disorders or recovery (though not for praising the thin ideal). In my experience as someone who spends a great deal of time looking at these posts and online in general, some "body positive" posts are genuinely attempting to promote positivity but miss their goal, for example a post from a thin person saying that they feel body positive when they work out and lose weight, or a post from a fat person uplifting themselves while tearing down others (e.g. "I want a little meat on my bones so

I'm glad I've recovered from my eating disorder"). The goal of the movement is to promote loving the body one inhabits no matter what, but the underlying tone of many body positive posts seems to praise one body at the expense of another.

Commodifiers, Co-opters, and Clout Chasers

The way audiences have begun to interact with and contribute to the movement has also evolved into something harmful. It is being used to make money or gain followers on social media (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Luck 2016). Instagram especially seems guilty of this, as it has shifted to an advertising platform within recent years (most recently by moving their notifications alert to make room for a "shopping" tab). This shift still allows users to post photos, and the #bodypositivity tag is still very popular, but with the shopping tab, it is clear that extractive processes are also combined with such websites. Users of the app now have to question who is profiting off these photos. Because it is possible to make money on Instagram, this content should be viewed through a more critical lens (especially if that content is targeting vulnerable audiences, like those insecure with their bodies). People use hashtags that get them a lot of views, and since #bodypositive is so popular, it follows that it will be exploited by some users of the site looking to increase their profile views (Cwynar-Horta, 2016).

When the body positivity movement became trendy, there was a shift away from its intended purpose, to showcase diverse bodies, to being used to make money⁴, and as a result the hashtag is used in captions of posts that are simply supporting the existence of the movement, rather than taking part in it, because people want to show their tolerance for diverse bodies even though they themselves fit the body ideal. There are many people who do not have marginalized bodies who are using the hashtag to speak generally about body love or their own experiences with learning to love their bodies, and though this is not inherently problematic, it does change the narrative surrounding body positivity in general. This is a big factor in why the hashtag is no longer only for plus size people and showcases how the movement in general has shifted away from its fat acceptance roots (Lazuka et al., 2020).

The movement has also been coopted by brands or corporations who are hoping to cultivate a socially conscious image by using the trendiness of the body positivity movement. The movement is being appropriated by fashion brands to show social awareness in such a way that actively sets back the movement. For example, the American Eagle brand launched a campaign using models without photoshop in their advertising in an attempt to show they valued all bodies. However, the majority of the models used in the campaign were still very thin or still had the “ideal” body shape (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Luck, 2016).

⁴ Even the creators of the term “body positivity” now sell products and classes on their website about how to live a body positive life (thebodypositive.org, 2022).

An ad for Swimsuits For All showcases another problem with body positive marketing. Their ad features a curvy plus size woman (still extremely conventionally attractive) seen posing in a swimsuit with a conventionally attractive man admiring her from behind. As Luck points out, “his gaze equally validates and reinforces her beauty and sex appeal to the ad’s audience, making it acceptable for others to also view her as beautiful and sexy. The male gaze makes her desirable” (Luck, 2016, p. 4). The use of the conventionally attractive man in the image is not only used to validate the woman’s body, but it is also noteworthy that this validation occurs through the woman’s sexualization (i.e. becoming a sexual and desirable body by and for a man). In two studies where researchers looked at Instagram posts tagged with body positivity hashtags, Lazuka et al. found that 23.6% of the body positivity posts they viewed contained sexually suggestive posing (Lazuka et al., 2016), while Cohen et al. found that of the posts they had coded for objectification (over 34% of all posts) over 84% featured a sexually suggestive pose (Cohen et al., 2019b).

Diverse Bodies Left Behind

Furthermore, an additional critique of the movement is that it frequently silences or ignores the voices of people who should be included. Based on its purpose, one would expect body positivity to be very inclusive of minority and oppressed groups. In addition to fat people, this includes people of colour, disabled persons, queer persons, and those who do not fit into the gender binary. The original fat acceptance movement began in the 1960s and it quickly cut out people of colour, despite being inspired in large part by the

Civil Rights movement (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015; Osborn, 2021). White people were under the impression that Black people did not need the fat acceptance movement as they would not benefit from it in the same way (as Black people seemed more accepting of fat people) and also because activists were worried about diluting the message of fat acceptance if they brought up other discrimination as well, like racism (Osborn, 2021). Essentially, the movement ignored intersectionality and focused solely on fatness at the expense of Black people.

The online movement has ignored Black bodies in a similar way, with Black content creators being pushed aside in order to make room for thin white women to promote themselves and their bodies (Osborn, 2021). The movement has been force-shifted from its roots and its conception by fat Black women and taken over by thin white women who are profiting financially from the platform the movement has created for itself (Osborn, 2021).

Race is not the only disqualifier either. People with disabilities, more specifically physical disabilities (as that kind of disability would often be featured in photographs), are also seemingly cut out of popular discourse regarding body positivity. Cohen et al. found that in an analysis of 640 posts taken from body positivity pages on Instagram, only 2.24% showed a person who had a physical disability (Cohen et al., 2019b). Leboeuf (2019) goes even further, and takes issue with the ideals of the movement itself. Leboeuf uses the term “body positivity” to mean “the effort to celebrate diversity in bodily aesthetics and

to expand our narrow beauty standards beyond their present-day confines” and also emphasizes the pleasure the body can bring (Leboeuf, 2019, p. 113). They admit that this definition of body positivity could be considered ableist, as an emphasis on physical pleasure excludes those, for instance, with chronic pain (Leboeuf, 2019). This is just one example of a disability which might stop someone from experiencing pleasure or from enjoying their body as Leboeuf suggests we all should.

I also question how Leboeuf’s definition would appeal to someone who actively dislikes their body for non-aesthetic reasons, for example in the case of transgender people. There is some research which shows that transgender people find it very difficult to engage with body positivity because they cannot identify with their bodies (Hartman-Munick et al., 2021). In short, Leboeuf’s definition of body positivity excludes disabled people and others who have non-typical relationships with their bodies, and it remains unclear whether this supposed body positivity should be achievable to all or if Leboeuf is proposing that some people (i.e. those without disabilities or transgender people) should be more or less body positive than others.

Ultimately, the modern body positivity movement has evolved from the specific goal of fat acceptance; it is now a movement which claims to benefit everyone. But much in the same way that other modern liberation movements like Queer Pride have been corporatized, made less political, and more “appropriate” (DeGagne, 2020), body

positivity has also been diluted from its original purpose in an attempt to make it more palatable and relatable to those not directly involved (i.e. fat people).

Conclusion: Body Positivity is Positively Ruined

Body positivity content has the potential to be very helpful with self-esteem, but it has been misused, appropriated, and commodified to the point of losing its intentions. Capitalism is now fully ingrained within body positivity, with marketing teams choosing to showcase a specific kind of body only and frequently sexualising the models according to a male gaze that is heteronormative in their “body positive” ads (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Luck, 2016). It can also be infiltrated by diet content, for example posts which advertise personal trainers or diet pills, and in such a case, its usefulness as a source of self-esteem or positivity is compromised (Lazuka et al., 2020). Osborn states that for some body activists, “the phrase [body positivity] has become so meaningless that [activists] either adopted variations or simply won’t use it at all” (Osborn, 2021). Ultimately, the body positivity movement has garnered widespread acceptance by the general public and cooptation by those looking to profit off the movement, either monetarily or by gaining internet clout. Between its commercialization and exclusion of fat, disabled, queer, and conventionally unattractive people, it seems as though body positivity is not the epitome of love that it is portrayed as.

THE CRUX OF THE ISSUE: FATPHOBIA

The lack of direction and clarity in the body positivity movement, which was born as a movement which stood for fat people and which is currently supposedly still about celebrating all body types, is especially problematic when examining the systemic oppression and biases that fat people face in everyday life (Phelan et al., 2015; Schafer & Ferraro, 2011). Fat people are also frequently socially ostracized (Dondzilo et al., 2019; van Geel et al., 2014). The impacts of fatphobia are far-reaching, and a dedicated movement for combatting fatphobia, such as the NAAFA, could be a great step in combatting the level of fatphobia in society had it not evolved into the body positivity movement, which then began excluding fat people (Osborn, 2021).

And online movements are not the only place fat people are excluded. There exists in Western culture a prevailing idea that fat people are less likeable, approachable, and deserving. A study by Dondzilo et al. decided to test this idea in a lab setting. They administered a test to participants in which they were shown an image of a thin or fat person and asked to move a cursor closer to or farther from the image depending on the body size of the person in the image (similar to the method of Harvard's Implicit Association Test). This test was used to measure implicit bias. For example, if the participant was told to move the cursor closer to the image if it showed a fat person and farther if it was thin person, and they did the opposite, this indicated an approach bias for thin people. And vice versa for if they were supposed to approach a fat person and did not (Dondzilo et al., 2019). Their results found that not only were participants more likely to

quickly approach the photos of thin people, but also that these attitudes increased with higher levels of self-reported “thin-ideal internalization, dietary restraint, and body dissatisfaction, but only whilst controlling for BMI” (Dondzilo et al., 2019, 589). This indicates a subconscious bias towards thin people and away from fat people.

The bias toward thin people influences how overweight and “obese”⁵ children are treated; they suffer from significantly more bullying than their “normal” weight peers (van Geel et al., 2014). This meta study also shows that the negative attitudes towards fat people start a very young age. If people are already being bullied due to their size as young children, it is clear that the adverse view of fat people is socialized into children very early on. There is also evidence that experiencing bullying or discrimination for weight-related reasons can have an impact on weight years later. Sutin and Terracciano found that “obese” adults who felt they experienced weight-related discrimination were more than three times as likely to remain “obese” four years later than “obese” adults who did not report the same perceived discrimination (Sutin & Terracciano, 2013). The authors give several potential reasons for this, most involving the psychological state that discrimination causes and the propensity for some individuals to turn to food as a comfort in stressful or otherwise difficult times (Sutin & Terracciano, 2013).

⁵ The term “obese” is used here because it was used in the study from which this information came. “Obese” is a medical term referencing BMI (itself a questionable measure) and is too stigmatized for discussions about fat liberation or fat acceptance (Bessey & Brady, 2021; Schafer & Ferrero, 2011).

In addition, fat people have a more difficult time accessing appropriate medical care due to their size for several reasons. There is evidence that doctors are more likely to focus on an overweight or “obese” patient’s weight than the actual cause of the problem, and life-saving diagnostic tests may be skipped over in favour of prescribing weightloss instead (Phelan et al., 2015). Additionally, while weight influences quality of care in regards to discrimination, it appears as though discrimination itself can also have a significant impact on health. A study by Schafer and Ferraro showed that people who felt discriminated against for their weight felt fatter than those who did not perceive discrimination, and those who felt discriminated against showed a greater health decline than those who did not feel discriminated against, even if they were a lower weight (Schafer & Ferraro, 2011). In Canada, news reports about the covid-19 pandemic reported on fatness as though it was a choice, and people could take steps to reduce their fatness if they cared about their health amidst the global pandemic (Bessey & Brady, 2021).

Based on all of the above research, it is not only the active attempt to avoid fat oppression that leads to people desiring a thin body, it is also the subconscious effect of a society consistently implying that fat people are lesser than thin or average-size people. There have been steps taken in recent history to limit the negative impact of fatphobia, including, of course, the campaign for body positivity (Osborn, 2021). Unfortunately, due to the commodification and the cooptation of the movement by thin people, both for marketing and because thin people simply want to be involved, body positivity does not accomplish its goal of universal positivity for every body (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Luck 2016).

This is one of the reasons why I posit that body neutrality is better suited for the task than positivity. In a completely size-neutral society, the oppression of fat people would no longer occur because all sizes are neutral.

TO THINNESS AND BEYOND: PROED CONTENT

ProED content found a home on Tumblr in the early 2010s, but it has existed online in some form or another for many years (Csipke & Horne, 2007). There used to exist proED forums, with names like MyProAna which contained all of this proED content, and those who were aware of the websites would be able to seek them out in order to find the content they wanted to see. Posts actively encourage viewers and participants to engage in disordered eating behaviour in attempts to control their weight and become thinner. This is done by many different means which, along with several overviews on the content found on proED channels, will be described below.

But first, it is necessary to note that the participants and posters on these websites are not necessarily intentionally harming others. They create the content they wish to see, and when others find it they gain an audience. This is undeniably harmful, but the act of creating proED content appears to be motivated by individual participants wanting to communicate their experience rather than by any urge to see others suffer, and there is

something to be said for people having to be responsible about their own internet activity.⁶

Evolution of Pushing ProED

Regardless of the questions of who creates it and who consumes it, proED content does exist, and it has for years. In 2007, four distinct types of eating disorder websites were identified: "those run by health professionals/associations; 'recovery sites' run by those with eating disorders; moderate pro-ED sites, and the more uncompromisingly pro-ED sites" (Csipke & Horne, 2007, 197). This last type is the most pertinent to this thesis. At this point in time (early 2000s), it frequently included posts about weight goals, milestones, tips and tricks, and seeking reassurance from other users (Tierney, 2006). Even though the internet has changed significantly over the past 15 years, the types of content outlined by Csipke and Horne (2007) are still present, though they are presented differently. I have noticed that instead of each kind having a dedicated website, any of

⁶ While some social media platforms have taken steps to create barriers for participation for certain demographic groups, typically those under the age of 13, there is no adequate means of enforcing this online. There is no one to check your ID at the door when you go online, and therefore what one sees is largely up to them. There exists, therefore, an expectation that people will not seek out things which they know will actively harm them. But can we expect children to know themselves well enough to discern their own limits? Looking at the demographics of eating disorders, most people living with eating disorders are in their teens (American Psychological Association, 2013), so when it comes to proED content much of the most vulnerable demographic is technically allowed to use the websites on which this content is typically held. Tumblr, for example, bars anyone under the age of thirteen from using their platform, but this in and of itself is unenforceable. The next logical step, therefore, is to ban or lessen the amount of knowingly harmful content altogether. Tumblr tried this in 2018 with their ban on sexual imagery, deciding that if thirteen-year-olds were allowed to use the site then the developers should be doing more to ensure a safe space for the young teenagers. But the website's patrons (including many of the younger ones) did not take kindly to this ban and the site lost a lot of traffic (Liao, 2019). And this also creates the problem of censorship – if there are people who can engage with harmful content (whether sexual, proED, or something else altogether) then should they be banned from doing so just because others cannot engage with it? When do personal responsibility and accountability enter the context of online content and engagement?

these four types of content are more likely to be posted and found on social media websites, for example, there could be a subreddit created by someone with an eating disorder who is encouraging recovery. Also important to note is that because of the nature of social media, these kinds of content are not divided separately anymore; it is likely that all four intermingle and can be found in the same place, and even individual posts can fall into more than one of these typologies (Custers, 2015; Lazuka et al., 2016).

The content itself does not seem to have changed drastically while technology has developed; in 2006 it was noted that users primarily used the websites to find or discuss weight goals, milestones, tips and tricks, and finding support (Tierney, 2006). Contemporary content analyses show that the type of content typically found on pro-eating disorder sites and communities has overwhelmingly stayed the same since the sites first started becoming popular, including diet and exercise plans, peer support and encouragement, and sharing goals and milestones (He & Luo, 2016; Sowles et al., 2018; Wick & Harriger, 2018).

One technology-related difference over the past decade or so is that there appears to be some variation between social media sites regarding frequency, volume, and ease of access to proED content. Both Twitter and Tumblr have proED content, and both “have popular pro-ED hashtags such as ‘thinspiration’, hashtags that suggest interests in weight, beauty and body image such as ‘weightloss’, ‘diet’, ‘skinny’ and ‘beautiful’, and hashtags that describe determination such as ‘motivation’ and ‘goals’” (He & Luo, 2016, p. 3979).

However, Twitter users are more likely to use these hashtags in ways both related and unrelated to proED, while on Tumblr these hashtags are much more closely tied to distinctly proED content (He & Luo, 2016). This implies that the communities themselves may engage differently based on which website they are on, but it is unclear at this point whether this is a result of fundamentally different communities or if it is simply a result of differing user interfaces across different websites.

Pick Your Poison: Content Typology

There is a wide variety of content in these communities. Regardless of the site on which the content is found (and additionally, there are often screenshots of content on other websites, for example an Instagram post screenshot and posted to Twitter), the two main forms of content are text posts (posts that are made of only of words) and pictures (Wick & Harriger, 2018). All of this content can be called “thinspiration”. “Thinspiration (“thin inspiration”, shortened to “thinspo”) is thin-ideal media content (i.e., images and/or prose) that intentionally promotes weight loss, often in a manner that encourages or glorifies dangerous behaviors characteristic of eating disorders,” advocating for thinness and promoting it as the ideal body type (Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015, p. 54).

This often looks like sharing a photo of a very thin body in a positive light, glorifying the thinness. Wick and Harriger collected a sample of 132 images tagged with “thinspiration” and found that 97.7% of them featured a very thin body. The remaining 2.3% were curvy or overweight bodies – but they were featured as the Before in a Before

and After photoset (Wick & Harriger, 2018). Ghaznavi and Taylor found a similar percentage in their study when they collected images tagged “thinspiration” or “thinspo” from Twitter and Pinterest. They found that 91% contained an image of a thin body (referred to as “triggers” because they activate the disordered eating thought process) and 4% featuring an overweight body as anti-aspirational (referred to as “reverse triggers”). Ghaznavi and Taylor’s inclusion of reverse triggers, sometimes called “reverse thinspo” or “fatspo”, is used in the same way that thinspo is used, despite showcasing the opposite body type; thinspo says “you want to look like this, so you have to change your eating patterns” while reverse thinspo says “you do NOT want to look like this, so you have to change your eating patterns”. The Befores in the Before and After pictures mentioned by Wick and Harriger (2018) have a similar purpose. They supposedly showcase what someone looks like before they commit themselves to disordered eating, thereby framing the disordered eating in a more positive light, with the Before image taking on the role of anti-aspirational (AKA reverse thinspo/fatspo/reverse trigger).

Arseniev-Koehler et al. searched for proED Twitter profiles by searching the key term “proana” (pro-anorexia) in the Twitter search bar and these user profiles made up their sample. They analyzed the profiles based on the number of proED references on the page itself, and how many of the profiles’ followers contained proED references, in order to gain understanding of how the community functioned and networked overall (Arseniev-Koehler et al., 2016). In the process, they discovered the use of niche proED terms. One of

these terms was bonespo⁷, or thinspiration that features emaciated bodies with prominent bones, and used hashtags such as “bonespo”, “hipbones”, or “backbone” (Arseniev-Koehler et al., 2016). Bonespo can also be found in a text post by means of describing what the body would look like (Arseniev-Koehler et al., 2016).

Though thinspo photos seemingly make up the majority of proED content, other varieties also exist. Another common one is personal or diary posts. Despite most proED pages being fully anonymous (Arseniev-Koehler et al., 2016; Wick & Harriger, 2018), they are still deeply personal (Juarascio, Shoaib, & Timko, 2010). Users want to discuss themselves and their experiences with their eating disorders, as this is how they connect with others (Arseniev-Koehler et al., 2016; Chancellor, Lin, & De Choudhury, 2016; Fettach & Benhiba, 2019).

One specific kind of diary post is body checking. Body checking is the act of repeatedly analyzing body size or shape by weighing oneself, trying on clothes to see if or how they fit, comparing one’s body to others, seeking reassurance from others, or feeling one’s body for signs of change (e.g. If hipbones feel more prominent) (Shafran et al., 2003; Shafran et al., 2007). Shafran et al. (2003) organized interviews with 64 women with eating disorders and found that 92% of them admitted to engaging in checking behaviours throughout the day. In a similar study, participants were assigned to one of two

⁷ Many of the content types have names ending in -spo; this is likely just because it is used as a shortened and more adaptable version of -spiration.

conditions: one where they were prompted to engage in checking behaviours, and one where they were told to neutrally examine their bodies. Those in the checking condition spent 75% of their time looking in the mirror looking for or examining perceived flaws; whereas those in the neutral condition only spent 20% of their time engaging with perceived flaws (Shafran et al., 2007). These findings imply that body checking might be both a symptom and a cause of eating disorders (Shafran et al., 2007). Body checking can be very subtle and it is not directly related to proED content in the same way that thinspo is. The nature of body checking allows users to post a picture that may not even be recognized as body checking, for example, if the person posts a non-anonymous picture that shows off a weight loss, or even a picture that shows them framed in such a way or at such an angle that makes them look thinner than normal. The post can be framed either as harmless or interesting or as a clear body check for the purpose of monitoring changes.

Monitoring and tracking changes can also be done by “What I Eat in a Day” posts. These posts are exactly what the name suggests: a user lists off everything they ate that day as a food diary (Custers, 2015; Juarascio, Shoaib, & Timko, 2010). This is sometimes posted along with the day’s exercise log in order to show (or at least estimate) the net calories of the day (Juarascio, Shoaib, & Timko, 2010). According to Juarascio, Shoaib, and Timko, “the purpose of this appeared to make one accountable to others in order to increase the likelihood of adhering to a strict diet” (2010, p. 401-402). In addition to personal diets, diet plans are also frequently shared around the internet. Many content

analyses of proED content found diet plans were very common, and were shared on Twitter (Arseniev-Koehler et al., 2016) and Tumblr (Wick & Harriger, 2018).

The last obvious subtype of proED content online is referred to as general encouragement. This is typically found in text form, be it a caption on photo, a comment on someone else's post, or a separate text post (Csipke & Horne, 2007; Custers, 2015; Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015; Juarascio, Shoaib, & Timko, 2010). Someone would, for example, leave a comment on a body checking photo saying, for example, "Looks great, I can totally see a difference since you started!"

Thinspo Lite (Fitspiration)

There exists another kind of content worth a brief discussion: fitspiration. Fitspiration, or fitspo, is content with the ostensible purpose to promote fitness (Cohen et al., 2019b; Davies, Turner, & Udell, 2020; Lazuka et al., 2020). Unfortunately, oftentimes the content is similar to thinspiration, as both promote the thin ideal, and a study by Robinson et al. even groups thinspiration and fitspiration content together in their analysis of the impact of photos of body image, categorizing both as "thin images" (Robinson et al., 2017, p. 68). Due to the similarities outlined in both content and impact, I think it is prudent to include fitspo content under the proED content headline, despite the fact that some researchers view them differently (Cohen et al., 2019b). The similarities are too clear to ignore. Both promote one body type over another and place the ideal body within grasp of those willing to work for it (Robinson et al., 2017). Slater et al. even found

that viewing fitspiration images was significantly correlated with decreased self-compassion (Slater et al., 2017). A 2015 study in which women were given questionnaires, then shown a series of images, then given follow up questionnaires showed that women were very likely to compare themselves to fitspiration images, and that this comparison would in turn lower their self-esteem (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). This is a similar effect as that seen in thinspiration content, where comparison can lead to body dissatisfaction and increased eating disorder pathology (Saffran et al., 2016; Sowles et al., 2018).

A later content analysis of fitspiration showed that fitspiration, like thinspo, upholds a specific body type as ideal and promotes the idea that one must act to achieve this body type. Some of the content found in fitspiration content analysis advocates for unhealthy focus on body image, such as over-exercising or limiting food intake, either by quantity or variety (Tiggeman & Zaccardo, 2018). These are also frequently found in thinspo (Juarascio, Shoaib, & Timko, 2010; Sowles et al., 2018; Wick & Harriger, 2018). Ghaznavi & Taylor (2018) highlight fitspo as an area for future study in their conclusion due to its similarities to thinspiration content, and suggest that it might share characteristics with thinspiration or even more extreme thin-ideal images like bonespo.

After researching fitspiration, I have concluded that it should be looked at not as its own distinct kind of content, but as a subtype of thinspiration. It functions in the same way: by presenting an ideal body type and encouraging audiences to change their lifestyle

in order to achieve the same look. Fitspiration may have been created as a means to promote “healthy” body types and lifestyles, but because of its focus on appearance, it has become something a subtler version of proED content.

Thin White Women and the Exclusion of Diversity

Because proED content is based on uplifting the body ideal, it typically strictly adheres to societal beauty norms. The majority of thinspo is white Caucasian women (Cobb, 2017). While men also have eating disorders, many studies of thinspiration content choose to actively exclude men from their research (Arseniev-Koehler et al., 2016; Wick & Harriger, 2018). There is some existing research which suggests that men react to body image content in a similar way to women (Barron, Krumrei-Mancuso, & Harriger, 2021). In addition, queer youth might be susceptible to proED content for different reasons, as some research suggests that gender diverse youth might engage in disordered eating behaviours in order to increase control over gender presentation (e.g. menstruation may not occur below a certain weight) (Hartman-Munick et al., 2021).

Race is also a significant means of exclusion from proED content. Eating disorders, and anorexia specifically, have historically been seen as a white girls’ illness (Gremillion, 2008). Existing research into the kind of content shared on social media sites under proED hashtags supports the notion that the thin white body is still seen as aspirational in proED contexts, and especially in thinspo photos (Cobb, 2017).

Conclusion: The Lasting Damage

ProED content is, overall, very harmful to the individuals who view it. It can act as a trigger which motivates the individual into more drastic weight loss, or to try different measures to achieve weight loss (Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015; Shafran et al., 2007).

Unfortunately, there exist few empirical studies on the impact of looking at proED content. One such study was done in 2010, and the results were predictable. Jett, LaPorte, and Wanchisn conducted a study in which participants with no prior ED history were selected and filled out a seven-day food diary. They were then assigned to one of three groups where they viewed a website full of proED content, a health and fitness site, or a travel website. Participants then filled out another seven-day food diary. Participants were debriefed and offered counselling services. The results showed that 84% of those who viewed proED websites decreased their caloric intake, and that 60% of this group decreased their weekly caloric intake by at least 2500 calories (Jett, LaPorte, & Wanchisn, 2010). Only 56% of participants in this condition were aware of the caloric decrease (Jett, LaPorte, & Wanchisn, 2010). The authors note that their study involved only looking at proED content for a total of 90 minutes (two 45 minute sessions) whereas those who are suffering from eating disorders and seeking out this content on their own likely spend a lot more time looking at proED content, so the effects are likely even greater for those who are more vulnerable (Jett, LaPorte, & Wanchisn, 2010).

There appears to be a fair bit of comorbidity between eating disorders and other mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression (American Psychological

Association, 2013). Social media addiction has also been correlated with other mental illnesses, and “has shown correlation with stereotypes, self-esteem, method of change, thinner body image and the desired part of the body to change” (Aparicio-Martinez et al., 2019, 11). There are many posts under proED hashtags which showcase other types of mental illness, including anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicidal ideation (Chancellor, Lin, & De Choudhury, 2016). All of these mental illnesses appear comorbidly with eating disorders (American Psychological Association, 2013).

Based on all of the above information, we can deduce that anything that encourages eating disorder behaviours is harmful to individuals who may be suffering from disordered eating, so the harm of proED content on websites, especially social media where viewers may stumble across it without actively seeking it out, should be viewed as a much more serious problem than it currently is (Custers, 2015; Tierney, 2006).

NEUTRALIZING THE PROBLEM: BODY NEUTRALITY

There is currently very little academic literature about body neutrality, likely because it is a fairly new concept and the idea of neutrality has not permeated the collective general consciousness to the degree that body positivity has. This is evidenced by the fact that body positivity has over ten million tags on Instagram, and neutrality has only 263 thousand. The reasons for this are unclear, but it could be because having your body celebrated is more enjoyable and appealing than being told one’s physical appearance is largely unimportant.

And that is the main idea of body neutrality: your body's appearance is significantly less important than what it does for you. Healthline.com's definition of body neutrality is as follows: "Body neutrality promotes acceptance of your body as it is, encouraging you to recognize its abilities and nonphysical characteristics over your appearance. This movement aims to decentralize the body as an object by challenging the myth that the way you look drives your worth. It also creates room to step back from body conversations in general⁸" (Raypole, 2021). Neutrality says that the way your body looks is of little importance to a person and ultimately should have no bearing on the way people are treated by society or by other individuals (Raypole, 2021). As Horn states in their overview and comparison of neutrality to body positivity, "you do not have to love your body to be happy with it" (Horn, 2021, p. 3). In summation, body neutrality separates physical appearance from intangible concepts such as value, health, worth, and morality.

Positivity vs Neutrality

Body neutrality is closely linked and compared to body positivity in part because body neutrality's existence is due to dissatisfaction with body positivity. The emphasis that positivity places on physical appearance and its increasing exclusivity prompted

⁸ The idea of "[stepping] back from body conversations in general" in this case might be more feasible for some than for others. Specifically, racialized, queer, and disabled people, whose identities and physical appearance are tightly wound together due to their treatment by others and society at large, might have a difficult time trying to distance themselves from their bodies. What I think Raypole is suggesting by this comment is that body neutrality gives everyone room to "step back from" from the *value judgements* which are so often part of body conversations. Feeling pride in or connection to a certain attribute one has can coexist with body neutrality if the judgemental and comparison aspects are removed from the conversation. Being Black or queer or disabled can still be celebrated as they have a certain culture associated with them beyond the simple physical aspects of the identity.

desire for a less body-focused means of discussing body image. The messages on social media promoting either complete love or complete hatred for one's body (in the form of body positivity and proED content respectively, for instance) left space for neutrality as an alternative for those who became disillusioned with the dominant narratives (Lissandrello, 2022).

Body neutrality differs from positivity in several ways, but the emphasis on the body's function over appearance is key (Horn, 2021). Horn describes body positivity as very appearance focused, with the main goal of the movement being to expand society's notion of beauty and consider every body beautiful, whereas body neutrality's main tenet is that bodies do not need to be beautiful (Horn, 2021). Horn also outlines some of the main flaws in body positivity, including that it has been overrun by corporations as a sales tactic and that the movement, as it has developed, no longer has room to advocate for "women of colour, trans people, disabled persons, and non-conventionally attractive plus-sized women" (Horn, 2021, p. 6). In comparison, body neutrality includes everyone, including those who do not connect with or may not like their bodies (e.g. trans or disabled people) and ultimately rejects the labels of broader societal categorization (e.g. attractive/unattractive) (Horn, 2021).

Wider Inclusion

The idea that body neutrality offers a worthy alternative for minority and marginalized folks is corroborated via interviews with transgender and gender-diverse

individuals who had experience with eating disorder treatment. An emerging theme was that embracing one's body for all it was (AKA body positivity) has additional difficulties attached for people who cannot connect with their bodies (e.g. some transgender folks). Several of the participants noted that striving for body neutrality felt a lot easier than positivity, with one participant even outright stating that "coming to peace with my body makes more sense right now than diving head first towards love" (Hartman-Munick et al., 2021, p. 4).

The Road So Far

Despite the evidence to show that body neutrality is a worthy alternative to body positivity, some researchers remain unconvinced. Cohen et al. conclude in their article "The Case for Body Positivity on Social Media" that body neutrality might be a worthy goal but that it would be too difficult to rewrite society into not placing emphasis on physical appearance (Cohen et al., 2020). I question why the authors believe that everybody achieving the self-love required for body positivity and simultaneously undoing all the harms associated with body positivity is more reasonable than altering societal views which place emphasis and disproportionate value on physical appearance. Cohen et al. also put forth the idea that body positivity could benefit older populations with body image issues (2020), but again I believe that body neutrality would be more realistic. Ageism related to physical appearance might be remedied by body positivity (e.g. "wrinkles are beautiful!") but it could almost certainly be cured with body neutrality (e.g. "who cares that you have wrinkles?").

Similarly, Leboeuf, in their essay “What is Body Positivity?: The Path From Shame to Pride” takes issue with body neutrality, positioning body positivity as the superior alternative. Leboeuf denounces body neutrality as ableist, claiming that a focus on what the body can do is limiting for those with disabilities (Leboeuf, 2019). But the definition of body neutrality that Leboeuf uses is not the same as the one that is typically accepted (Horn, 2021; Hartman-Munick, 2021). Leboeuf states that their purpose is to expand the traditional definition of body positivity from appearance-based considerations to the pleasure that the body can bring (Leboeuf, 2019). Unfortunately, the issue that Leboeuf brings up regarding body neutrality (ableism, as a result of viewing your body in terms of its abilities) also applies to their view of sensualist body positivity. As noted above, Leboeuf notes this fact themselves by bringing up the fact that individuals with, for example, chronic pain may not be able to enjoy “sensualism” in the same way as able-bodied folks. Between the use of an outdated definition for body neutrality and the fact that their own alternative to it is ableist (all the same problems as neutrality), I must disagree with Leboeuf’s premise that body neutrality is inferior to positivity.

Conceptual Definition of Body Neutrality

Moving forward in this thesis, an amalgamation of existing definitions of body neutrality will be used. My definition is as follows: the body’s appearance simply *is*. Whether this means their body is respected (Muentner, 2021), begrudgingly accepted (Hartman-Munick, 2021), or even happily celebrated (Horn, 2021), there is more to the person than simply their appearance.

A THEORETICAL INTERLUDE

I would like to clarify the impact that social media has on the topic of body image and fat acceptance versus traditional media, before I go on to discuss these things in greater detail. Specifically, I will provide possible reasons why body image and fatphobia are not viewed as political in online spheres. Why does anti-fatphobia not have the same reach as things like #metoo or #blacklivesmatter?

I suspect it could be because: 1. Fat people are not seen as oppressed; 2. Fatness is viewed as less innate than gender or race; and/or 3. Fatness is viewed as an aesthetic, as opposed to gender or race which are seen as more concrete identifiers and are therefore given more respect as serious means of discrimination. Perhaps in part because it is viewed as an aesthetic, many also seem to view fatness as a choice (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015). To some extent, this is a valid point; body size fluctuates in ways that race or gender do not (putting aside the concept of gender fluidity for the moment). But with the discrimination fat people face everyday it is safe to assume that the aesthetics argument only goes so far.

Enter hashtags. The authors of *Hashtag Activism* (2020) discuss how the practice of hashtagging started on Twitter but was quickly adopted by other social media sites. The practice of hashtagging has been used by many political movements to spread awareness or gain traction for certain causes because hashtags make it easier to connect with others

who share interests. Several political movements have taken advantage of the practice of hashtagging in order to spread awareness, such as the aforementioned #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements (Jackson, Bailey, & Welles, 2020).

This brings us back to the question at hand: why does fatphobia not also have a movement dedicated to it? It cannot simply be the lack of a snappy hashtag, because this problem was already solved. The creation of the #bodypositivity hashtag could have easily been a way for fat activists to share resources and awareness of fatphobia. But instead, the hashtag was overrun with other content and fat acceptance became an afterthought and much harder to find when searching through the hashtag.

I propose that the reason why some online campaigns get more attention than others is because they have clearer goals set out from the beginning and they are also a lot more sympathetic for the general public. When the content being created is created and consumed by the same people, the typical ways of engaging with media change. For example, in Fiji, the people who were consuming the media were not the same ones who created it. Not only was there a divide between common people and TV people, but there was an additional cultural divide that made the receivers less active participants. The media was not being created for young girls in Fiji, it was simply being consumed by them.

Social media, on the other hand, is an open field of participation. Jenkins and Deuze argue that social media allows individuals space to “tell stories and access stories

others are telling, to present arguments and listen to arguments made elsewhere, to share information and learn more about the world from a multitude of other perspectives” (Jenkins & Deuze, 2008, p. 6). When interested in a topic, individuals may look it up, read existing posts, form their own opinions of the topic, and then create their own posts which contributes to the existing dialogue. Therefore, if a topic has a predetermined opinion surrounding it, it may become more easily accepted by everyone, even if on a subconscious level.

But what does this have to do with body positivity, fat acceptance, and activism? Knoll, Matthes, and Heiss (2018) proposed four phases to political participation stemming from online exposure. The first is pre-exposure, indicating that individuals must seek out the media and that their reason for doing so is based on their own subjective experiences in the world. The second is exposure, where the individual is exposed to a post. The third is reception, where the individual processes the media they see. The final stage is behavioural situation, in which the individual decides how they will respond to the media. The fact that fat acceptance does not lead to political activism, I believe, is an issue found in stage three. The authors mention in their article that being exposed to politics in media may go unnoticed by the viewer, and this could have a significant impact on how they respond to it (Knoll, Matthes, & Heiss, 2018). To be more specific, if a post does not register as a fat acceptance post, then viewers may not know how to react to it. They may simply see a selfie, or a note about loving oneself. These kinds of posts are everywhere on

social media so the fat acceptance piece may be easily ignored, forgotten, or not registered at all.

I believe that this more than anything else is the primary reason why social media activism has not done for fat people what it has for Black people or sexual assault victims. Fatphobia and the lingering idea of choice surrounding fatness and body image in general has prompted people to not see fatness as a political issue, and therefore in stage three they are not processing body positivity images as political. Most individuals simply see the hashtag as a means to share their own selfies under the tag, which would never happen with, for example, a white person using #BlackBodiesAreBeautiful or #BlackLivesMatter. Body positivity was created out of a need for diverse representation and fat acceptance, but once it migrated online, it became an open field which allowed everyone to participate. This participation is what ultimately led to the downfall of body positivity as it currently exists online.

THEORETICAL INTERLUDE 2: TAJFEL & BOURDIEU

Several theories were employed to examine how body image discussions currently function, and why body neutrality would work to replace them. The theories used for this project were social identity theory and ingroup/outgroup theories by Henri Tajfel, and Pierre Bourdieu's theories regarding taste, capital, and embodiment (habitus). As far as I can tell, these theories have not been used to look at online body image content. Social identity theory and the idea of ingroups and outgroups have been used primarily in

discussion of human organization and prejudice (Dumont & Louw, 2009), and Bourdieu's work is mostly regarding power dynamics in society (Bourdieu, 1979; Bourdieu, 1986).

Tajfel and Social Identity Theory

In the late 1970s, Henri Tajfel worked with colleagues to create social identity theory, which posits that identity and self-concept are created in part by our interactions with others and the groups to which we belong and, by extension, groups to which we do not belong (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Tajfel and Turner outline three cognitive processes which take place in a set order while determining group status: categorization, identification, and comparison. In the categorization stage, people are divided into certain categories and expectations are created for how they will act. Experience in different social settings creates the expectations – if one does not have any experience with a group, they will have no expectations for how this group will behave. Stage two is social identification, in which individuals adopt the identity of the group to which they belong. They may change their behaviour to fit into the group, and frequently one's self-esteem and identity become entwined with belonging to a given group. The final stage, social comparison, is when people start to take note of and value the differences between their group (the ingroup) and other groups (the outgroup) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Social identity theory can be applied to help understand the creation of bonds through online proED groups. In stage one, the individual with an eating disorder experiences patterns of disordered eating, recognizes it as abnormal, and categorizes

themselves separately from their peers who follow normal eating patterns. For example, in the case of someone with anorexia, they may realize they do not eat when others are eating; for someone with bulimia, they may come to recognize that they purge after meals while others do not. In this way, a divide is created between themselves with an eating disorder, and their peers without one. In the second stage – the stage of identification – someone with an eating disorder may begin to seek out proED content. They have recognized specific connection needs that are not being met by their usual peer group who do not focus so intently on food intake and body shape. As eating disorders take up so much of daily life, these incessant thoughts and feelings require validation, and doctors, peers, and family members are not able to (or simply do not) provide this sense of validation (Custers, 2015; Ferguson et al., 2014). In stage three, the proED communities begin to compare themselves with others. They have the willpower and self-control to not eat; others do not. They will be thin; others will not. The lifestyle view of eating disorders posits that eating disorders are “‘a way of life’ that pervades every aspect of the person’s thought, perception and action” (Csipke & Horne, 2007, p. 202). In one study, nearly 20% of individuals surveyed said that they considered their eating disorder to be a lifestyle at some point during their lives (Csipke & Horne, 2007).

Social identity theory can also be used to analyze a sense of belonging in body positivity online groups. Stage one would have the individual realize that their body is not represented in mainstream media. They are made to feel less attractive and isolated because of that, and they begin to see themselves as someone who does not fit in within

mainstream body discourse. In stage two, they begin to identify themselves with other fat or body non-conforming people, and they may create an identity around their body being different from mainstream representation. These feelings are exacerbated by things as divergent as many clothing stores not carrying size inclusive inventory, to simple rude comments from strangers while out in public. Any indication or implication that society does not view their body as normal pushes them farther into their othered identity. Finally, in stage three, they begin comparing themselves to others. They may begin to feel shame or embarrassment over their body, and this is where I hypothesize many people seek out online connection with those who are experiencing the same thing. Mainstream society has crafted such a narrow view of acceptable bodies that those who do not feel like they belong create their own spaces of belonging in the form of online communities (Zavattaro, 2021).

The creation of these online communities satisfies the desire for connection and belonging (Csipke & Horne, 2007; Jett, LaPorte, & Wanchisn, 2010). Individuals with eating disorders come to identify so strongly with their disorder that they begin to view those who push them to get help as the enemy (Fettach & Benhiba, 2019; Ferguson et al., 2014; Tierney, 2006). This can be seen in the body positivity community as well. Someone who attempts to post with body positive tags is frequently judged as either an ingroup member (someone who could have experienced the requisite amount of discrimination to be considered part of the group) or an outgroup member (someone who likely has not experienced much shame or discrimination for their body size or shape and is therefore

not allowed in the spaces that body positivity movement has created for itself).

Individuals who are considered intruders may have their motives questioned (Jennings, 2021).

The goal of using social identity theory is to gain insight into how a sense of belonging is achieved or created by posts about body image on social media. Both body positivity and proED content have aspects which lend themselves well to crafting a sense of belonging amongst their participants. The online groups that follow these communities are receiving validation in the form of belonging, which is a key reason why these discussions continue to happen online.

Bourdieu, Taste, and Body Image

In a body-conscious society, there is a hierarchy of aesthetics (as outlined in chapter one). The thin ideal is on the top, and the fatter a person is, the less they fit into this thin ideal – and the less status they have in this society. Cultural theorist Pierre Bourdieu gives us language to discuss this. While this thesis does not go into depth or detail about Bourdieu or their theory, some of the language they use is helpful to understand the concepts discussed in this thesis, especially in regards to taste and their notion of cultural capital. Taking specific pieces of Bourdieu’s work and leaving the rest can be justified due to what the Johns Hopkins Literary Guide calls, “a certain generality, which means, for instance, that it is not necessarily clear what a Bourdieusian reading of a specific text would entail” (Beasley-Murray, 2012). Specifically, the language used by

Bourdieu is useful to discuss how change of *habitus* (Bourdieu's term for the way that skills, values, habits, and inclinations exist together within a person; and in the case of this thesis case, where the thin ideal comes from) may be achieved in the quest to dismantle the thin ideal.

Bourdieu's discussion of cultural capital, which they use to explain embodied aspects of class or taste, is focused more so on tangible or material things such as art, and how taste is replicated through generations by passing down appreciation for things like art. But this can also apply to less material things such as the cultural capital one has when they fit into the body ideal. Cultural capital can exist in three significant ways. The first two (objectified, in which the power comes from some possessions, such as books; and institutionalized cultural capital, such as formal education) are less relevant, but the third, embodied cultural capital, would include physical appearance or aesthetics (1986). According to Bourdieu, "cultural capital can be acquired, to a varying extent, depending on the period, the society, and the social class, in the absence of any deliberate inculcation, and therefore quite unconsciously" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 18), and embodied cultural capital is "linked in numerous ways to the person in his biological singularity and is subject to a hereditary transmission which is always heavily disguised, or even invisible" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 18).

Bourdieu theorizes that being forced to accept dominant forms of culture is symbolic violence (1979/1984), making the thin ideal symbolically violent due to how it

forces the aesthetics of the thin ideal onto fat people (and everyone else). This is violent because it creates a social injury. The “lower classes” (in this case, fat people) must define themselves according to the dominant aesthetic (1979/1984). This is where body positivity comes from. The whole movement, the (idealized) purpose of which is (supposedly) to uplift fat people, defines itself in relation to the thin ideal. The movement stands for people who do not feel represented, meaning that the thin ideal must be recognized, internalized, and re-enacted if someone is to engage in body positivity, which in turn helps to perpetuate the thin ideal. This cycle then repeats itself and the dominant aesthetic is reinforced and replicated over and over again, making body positivity lend credence to the thin ideal despite its alleged goal of dismantling the oppressive and symbolically violent norms of the body ideal. Body positivity leaves the hierarchy unbroken.

It is, unfortunately, not an issue so simple that mere awareness can undo the problem. Bourdieu claims that matters of taste are embodied in an individual’s *habitus*, making them very difficult to change. Bourdieu states that we “are objectively attuned to [differences] and therefore tend to perceive them as natural” (Bourdieu, 1979/1984, p. 172). Even understanding the negative and colonial roots of fatphobia does not, therefore, mean it can be undone. The good news is that in this case, it appears that matters of taste are semi-arbitrary and can therefore be shifted over time. For instance, in the case of Fiji there was a major transformation in the dominant aesthetics of the time

after Western media gained influence, suggesting that major transformations in body image and the body ideal are in fact possible.

The goal of this thesis is to examine the thin ideal as perpetuated by proED content and body positivity and to suggest possible ways of undoing the symbolic violence that the thin ideal inflicts upon other bodies. One can personally ignore the symbolic order, but on a cultural level it is more difficult. This is why I propose a societal change on the base level of the thin ideal in the form of body neutrality. Bourdieu's stance is that while matters of taste may appear natural, they are not inevitable. Therefore, by implementing Bourdieu's terminology and parts of the related theory, it is possible to critically examine the thin ideal's hold on society, and subsequently to promote body neutrality (thereby undoing all matters of "taste" relating to body types in the process).

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In conclusion, online discussions about body size and shape can impact those who see this type of content. The explicitly pro-eating disorder content can be incredibly harmful and those affected may not even be aware of the impact the content has on them (Jett, LaPorte, & Wanchisn, 2010). On the other end of the spectrum, body positivity has been infiltrated by weight loss content (Lazuka et al., 2016), commodified by marketing strategists (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Luck, 2016), and actively excludes those who do not fit into traditional western beauty standards, including racialized and disabled people (Cohen et al., 2019b; Lazuka et al., 2016). The general allure of both kinds of

content seems to centre around a key defining feature: the drive for mainstream acceptance. People who seek out proED content want to trigger themselves into embracing their disorder to lose weight, and in doing so they form ties with others and create bonds that help normalize eating disorders and associated behaviours (Tierney, 2006). Body positivity was created in order to give a voice to those who felt underrepresented by society at large (Cohen et al., 2019b). Everyone wants to fit in. Body neutrality would work to decenter the body as something in need of changing, especially in terms of needing to lose weight. Therefore, I propose that it offers something that neither body positivity and proED content do: a means of discussing body image without upholding the thin ideal and the dominant beauty standard.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHY

The primary focus of this project is to examine how body positivity and proED content are harmful, and to present a possible alternative stance for discussions surrounding body image with the rise of body neutrality. This will be explored in three stages:

1. How is the idea of belonging constructed by body positivity content on select social media platforms?
2. How is the idea of belonging constructed by proED content on select social media platforms?
3. How does neutrality present itself online, and how is it superior to body positivity and proED content?

There were three different varieties of research which informed this thesis. The first was my own experiences as a person online. I am a young, white, female person who has ample experience with online culture and different online communities. I also have many relationships with demographically similar people who also have experience with body image and online communities, and both my experiences and theirs have informed aspects of this research. Second was the academic literature I read about this topic, discussed in chapter two. And finally, my own research in the form of exploring this content for myself and applying relevant theoretical perspectives to it. Because online content is always changing, I thought that the best way to examine this content was to use a case study where I chose a particular time period and scrolled through a relevant hashtag, similar to how someone who was seeking out this content would do.

This study was based on several existing ones, making key changes where necessary in order to better suit the specific purposes of this study. Specifically, the case study was modeled after several existing methodologies in articles that explored online body image content (Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015; Lazuka et al., 2020; Wick & Harriger, 2018) and on some papers which used a case study approach to examine why body positivity is harmful (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Luck, 2016). The variety of sources consulted enabled me to craft an approach suitable for my unique purpose. The content analysis articles gave insight into how to create a coding process to manage content, and the case studies provided examples for how the content should be discussed and how theories should be applied.

Ghaznavi and Taylor (2015) set out to examine what kind of thinspo images were being shared on social media. They took images from Twitter and Pinterest using the hashtags #thinspo and #thinspiration and coded the images based on the image type (visual, textual, or both), its purpose, its content (how the figure was posing, if applicable), and sexual suggestiveness based on attire, pose, etc. Their sample size was 300 images, half coming from Twitter and half coming from Pinterest. They then concluded that the content seen online under these hashtags was triggering and would likely promote self-objectification (Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015). The authors also note Instagram and Tumblr as two platforms which merit further study in the future, which happen to be the two platforms being used in this research.

Lazuka et al. (2020) studied the body positivity movement on Instagram. They collected images in a similar way by searching the tag #bodypositivity on Instagram. They took screenshots of the first 50 images under the tag every day for seven days, resulting in 350 images total. Posts were excluded from the analysis if they were not in English, if they were duplicates, or if there were multiple photos in the same post (Instagram allows users to select up to ten images per post), in which case only the first image was used in the analysis. In total, there were 246 images included in this study. Posts were then coded according to theme, content, demographics, objectification, and image type (Lazuka et al., 2020). The authors concluded that in general, Instagram's body positivity movement highlighted body diversity and showcased many different body types, but there were also conflicting messages in some posts, including weight loss, admiration of thinness, and dislike of fatness (Lazuka et al., 2020).

Wick and Harriger (2018) did a content analysis of thinspo posts on Tumblr. They employed a similar means of collecting images, where they searched #thinspiration in the Tumblr search bar and gathered the top 350 images over a total of seven days. They collected "the first 50 images or text posts present over a seven-day period in February, with images and text posts collected at differing two-hour intervals between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM across the week" (Wick & Harriger, 2018, p. 14). They excluded photos if they were duplicates or featured males in the image, and ended with 222 images total. They then coded each image based on what the image showed (e.g. whether it contained stigma against fat people or objectifying messages). Their goal was to gain an

understanding of the kind and variety of content shared under proED hashtags on Tumblr. They concluded that the thinspo content on Tumblr was similar to thinspo content on other platforms, and that it mainly consisted of dieting or food restriction, weight loss, and guilt relating to both food and body size/shape (Wick & Harriger, 2018).

Unlike these three studies, which analyzed posts solely for content to gain understanding of what exactly proED or body positive content included, the present study applied psychological theories of belonging to posts and examined how they positioned body image as a means to belong or fit into society. Due to this methodological difference, case studies were used to inform the present methodology as well.

Cwynar-Horta used a non-random critical case sample of those images which they thought to be more illustrative of the body positivity movement. They chose a total of ten accounts and then took a non-random sample of five images from each account, giving a total of 50 images which they believed would be an appropriate number for their analysis, and also conducted interviews with some women who used Instagram to get their views on the body positivity movement to supplement their arguments about how the body positivity movement has evolved into something harmful. They utilize theories when applicable to provide evidence and to qualify their ideas, including Judith Butler's ideas about legibility and femininity in order to explain why people engage with body positivity, and the impact of capitalism and how the body positivity movement has become commodified through capitalism. Body positivity and other feminist movements being

online has therefore limited the poster's agency as their posts are filtered through the online lens. The idea of including photos was also implemented, to help illustrate the points and provide a visual reference for the discussions.

Luck used a case study approach to examine the role of body positivity. They found three "body positive" advertisements and analysed them: a bathing suit ad, a lingerie ad, and a breakfast cereal ad. They started by describing the ad if it was a video or including a picture of it if it was a print ad. They then determined based on various points such as objectification or femininity whether the ad was truly body positive. They conclude that capitalism and trying to profit off of body positivity in the way that these ads are doing renders any activism or calls for changes in body type representation to be moot and irrelevant because any representation is done solely to make a profit. The author points out that advertisements taking a body positive approach to advertising relies on the post-feminist view of empowering women through their purchasing power. Luck also included images of each image they were discussing when possible, and this practice also made sense for the current study.

As mentioned, the present study was informed by all of these existing studies based on the individual aspects of each that would benefit this methodology. The sample size used was most similar to the Cwynar-Horta study, though the current sample is slightly smaller because the purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which body positivity and proED content could be harmful and to explore another option, whereas

Cwynar-Horta's goal was to explain the specific reasons that commodifying body positivity is harmful. Put simply, the current goal was to explore a general topic rather than to defend a specific idea.

My method of collecting data was very similar to the Ghaznavi and Taylor, Lazuka et al., and Wick and Harriger studies. All data was collected in one night as opposed to over several nights as in the above studies, in order to avoid repetition and having to delete duplicate posts. Having the entire sample available at the time of collection allowed me to choose to not screenshot a particular post if it had already been collected. Collecting the entire sample at once also allowed certain trends or patterns to be noticed that might have been missed if there had been time in between collecting posts due to forgetting certain details related to captions or poses.

DATA COLLECTION

The first step in collecting the data was to create a new account for both Instagram and Tumblr. Most social media platforms employ an algorithm to ensure that the user is seeing content that interests them, and most platforms keep their algorithms secret from competing social media sites (Barnhart, 2021). A new account was used in order to avoid any potential interference from past searches. The new accounts on both Instagram and Tumblr were dedicated solely to this study and were deleted after data acquisition.

To collect the body positivity posts, I began on the designated Instagram account by typing the key term #bodypositivity into the search bar. I then scrolled to the “tags” tab and clicked on #bodypositivity. I opened the first photo and then scrolled down through the posts, taking screenshots as I did. Sometimes, if there were multiple photos in a post (Instagram allows up to ten) or if the caption was particularly long, I needed to take multiple screenshots of a single post. When this was necessary, I edited all the screenshots into a single photo document so it would stay in order. I then transferred all of the screenshots onto a computer. Once there were thirty total posts, they were labeled 1 to 30 and moved into a “body positivity” designated desktop folder.

To collect the proED posts, I began on the designated Tumblr account by typing the term “thinspo” into the search bar. Tumblr has a popup when a triggering term is searched such as “self harm” or “thinspo”, so the first step was to acknowledge this popup and accept seeing the content despite the warning. I made sure the posts were filtered by “top”, “all time”, and “all types”, then scrolled through the posts, screenshotting each one as I went. Just as I did for body positivity, I kept track of how many screenshots were required to fully assemble each post and then edited them together into a single photo document afterwards. These thirty photos were transferred to a computer, labelled from one to 30, and then put into a designated “proED content” folder.

For body neutrality, the hashtag #bodyneutrality was used and images were taken from both Tumblr and Instagram. The top fifteen posts were collected from the hashtag on each site, following the same steps on Instagram and Tumblr as were followed for body positivity and proED content, respectively.

Only photos with captions were included (text relating to the photo, hashtags not included). According to Davies, Turner, and Udell (2020), captions may be more impactful than the photo itself. Additionally, the caption provided had to be in English (the language which I, the author, am most comfortable with for analyzing niche cultural content). The screenshots of each post included the poster's username; the number of interactions, be it likes on Instagram, or the number of notes (likes, replies, and reblogs (shares)) on Tumblr; the caption; and the hashtags used for the post. Tumblr users can post different types of content, but since some kinds of content (i.e. videos or GIFs) cannot be screenshotted easily, it was decided to focus only on photos and text posts.

A few adjustments were made as image collection began. The initial plan was to use both Tumblr and Instagram for all three genres of content, but a quick preliminary search proved this would not work. Tumblr's body positivity hashtags are filled with pornography, which certainly had a purpose outside of belonging. And Instagram simply will not let one search for #thinspo or #thinspiration as a hashtag. So, collecting body positivity posts from Tumblr or proED posts from Instagram was not possible for this study design. #ProED was going to be the catchment hashtag for proED content, similar to how

the content label “body positivity” was used as the catchment hashtag to find body positive content. But this content violates Tumblr’s community guidelines as “promotion of glorification of self-harm” (Tumblr, 2020), so I decided that using a slightly subtler hashtag would yield better and more accurate results and #thinspo was used instead. Using multiple hashtags for each source was also considered, but a quick preliminary search showed that there would be too much overlap between hashtags to make this necessary (i.e. the same content posted under both #bopo and #bodypositivity, and #thinspo and #thinspiration).

Instagram and Tumblr were chosen because each has characteristics which make them well-suited to the purposes of this study. Tumblr has several features which have been identified as appealing to those looking to share proED content (Sowles et al., 2018). Firstly, the website is extremely customizable. As opposed to sites like Instagram, Tumblr shows patrons only the content they choose to see. A “dashboard” (the user’s main page) is filled with posts from blogs which the user has chosen to follow. In contrast, Instagram has many business pages and advertisements. Secondly, Tumblr is much more anonymous than other social media. In my experience, usernames often lack identifying features, and the format in which content is shared (photos, videos, text posts, GIFs, etc) means that if one does not wish to post anything identifying themselves, they can choose not to. Both of these traits make Tumblr conducive to individuals who wish to share content (for example, proED content) that they do not want to be traced back to them. As eating disorders are often kept secret from real life acquaintances (Arseniev-Koehler et al.,

2016), an anonymous and self-curated website experience makes sense for sharing proED content. There are also several features which make Instagram ideal for body positivity content. Opposite to proED content, body positivity is for spreading awareness of other body types and their value (Horn, 2021), so unlike for proED content where it is necessary, secrecy or anonymity would be a detriment to body positivity. Instagram's exclusively photo and video format makes it much more difficult to be anonymous. Instagram allows a photo to be the main focus, which is helpful when discussing aesthetic concerns such as expanding society's perception of beauty. As of April 2022, there are over 10 million posts tagged with #bodypositivity on Instagram. Both platforms provided ample images for this study and I believe that Instagram and Tumblr were both good choices for seeking body image content.

While there is no ethical requirement to protect the privacy or identity of people since content on the internet is free to study, I took measures to ensure that the privacy of the people who have made these posts will be upheld. As such, any faces appearing in photographs were blurred out. Additionally, any identifying information in photos or text posts was blurred or edited out. And finally, the names of the accounts which have posted these images were also be excluded. A notable exception is if the post was from a verified creator. Instagram (but not Tumblr) marks well known content creators with a blue checkmark – any post that comes from one of these pages will be left out of the privacy blurring because the verification means it is no longer solely a personal blog. Verified creators know that they have large audiences, and I believe this implies that they will only

post things they are comfortable sharing with their audience. This ended up not being relevant anyway because no posts came from verified creators.

DATA ORGANIZATION

After photos were gathered, they were sorted into folders according to the content they contained. I then systematically went through each image and coded it based on the general themes it contained. For body positivity, these themes were commodification, uplifting the thin ideal, belonging, fitness and weight loss, sexual suggestiveness, calls for normalization, and other posts that had a strong theme or topic that was unrelated to any of the others. For proED content, the themes were belonging, relationships, diet plans or motivation, community, and venting. For body neutrality, the themes were commodification and monetization, healing and recovery, unrealistic beauty standards, self worth, exercise, anti-weight loss/diet talk, fatphobia, body acceptance, and additional body-related topics including disability or other physical conditions that might be relevant. Also for body neutrality, since images were gathered from two different sources (Instagram and Tumblr), the screenshots were also divided based on where they were sourced. The same tagging procedure for both Instagram and Tumblr was used but the screenshots were kept separate to determine if there were any differences between the content found on the two platforms.

After all of the images were categorized into themes and tagged appropriately based on how they were sourced, the theories were applied. I began by looking at each

general tag (i.e. commodification, motivation, etc) and determined if a sense of belonging could be applied to posts with that theme. For example, a post from an advertiser selling a swimsuit might bring up belonging by saying that they feel so beautiful in their new swimsuit (which, in our society, implies thin (Aparicio-Martinez et al., 2019)) and which is then related to the idea of the ingroup. Once it was determined whether a sense of belonging was applicable to each theme, the posts were analyzed to see which of the three stages of social identity theory they fell into based on how connected the post implied the author was with the community (either body positivity or proED). The focus was primarily on captions, as Davies, Turner, and Udell found that participants shown a fitspiration post without a body positive caption felt more negatively towards their own bodies afterwards than participants who were shown the same fitspiration post including a body positive caption. This indicates that the caption itself could help protect against negative responses to the post (2020), and this could also be the case for other types of body image content. The stage of social identity theory each post fell into gave insight into the ingroup/outgroup phenomenon by showing how closely they identified with their group. According to Tajfel, the later the stage, the more an individual identifies with their group, and the more their self-esteem is linked to their group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

A NOTE ON ETHNOGRAPHY

Pink et al. argue in *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice* (2016) that contemporary ethnography must be adaptive above all else. Pink also outlines five principles which digital ethnography specifically must subscribe to. I will explain each and

describe how I have included it in my study. The first is multiplicity. This term refers to the fact that digital ethnography can be used in many different ways (multiple ways) depending on the specific needs of the researcher(s), and this impacts the kind of information that the project yields. In the case of the current project, the goals outlined at the top of this chapter informed the research methodology. The most important goal, to explore how body neutrality might be the best way to discuss body image online, was the basis of the entire project and led to the inclusion of body positivity, proED content, and the case study approach. The second is non-digital-centric-ness. Adhering to this principle means that the study will take other factors besides the digital realm into consideration. Pink specifies feelings as one area which cannot be separated from the digital realm, and that is very pertinent to the current research. The third principle is openness. Digital ethnography must be open to other influences. The way this principle has been included in the current study is by combining the disciplines of cultural studies and psychology and using elementary theories from both disciplines in order to gain a fuller understanding of the topic at hand. The fourth is reflexivity. A researcher who is cognizant of their own subjectivity and the ways in which they interact with their subject matter is being reflexive. The analysis of the content was reflexive, as the research choices were made by someone with past experience with the subject matter and the analysis was based around existing ideas of possible conclusions. Bias was avoided in every possible way but seeing as the digital world is one with which I am highly acquainted and have spent the majority of my life involved with, it would be naïve to suggest that the research presented here is entirely objective. The fifth and final principle is unorthodoxy. This term refers to the fact

that digital research allows the researchers to seek less traditional means of learning about their subject. In my case, this includes the practice of attempting to understand society by looking at social media pages where objective and clear discussions about society are not taking place. In other words, digital ethnography allows me to use Instagram and Tumblr as a mirror to view how individuals feel about themselves and their world when it comes to body image. In summation, this study was informed by the principles of digital ethnography in order to fully explore the topic appropriately and give a greater understanding overall of both the research methodology and the topic of body image and online settings.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was simply to explain the methodology I used for my study. The next chapter will include screenshots of the body positivity and proED content I collected and I will explain the content and how I interpret it. Chapter 5 will do the same for body neutrality, which is where I will present my argument that it is a more inclusive, generally more accepting stance on body image discussions than anything else that is currently popular.

CHAPTER 4: OBSERVATIONS OF BODY POSITIVITY AND PROED CONTENT

The posts found under both the body positivity hashtag and the proED hashtag were full of messages of belonging. Some of them were explicitly stated, openly discussing how body type and belonging are linked. Others were subtler, relying on intermediary ideas to relate body image and belonging, such as physical attractiveness or sexual desirability. The analysis presented gives insight into how the viewers of these posts might react to seeing them and shows that, overall, both the body positivity posts and the proED posts were relatively harmful and the ways they centered discussions of body image could be detrimental to viewers' confidence, self-image, and self-esteem.

An important thing to note is that two different variations of the term "ingroup" were used. There is the traditional definition, meaning those who are part of a group (ingroup) but this was too simplistic for the needs of this thesis. The idea of a singular ingroup does not allow for the nuance required in discussing both society at large and distinct subcultures within society. Therefore, the term "societal ingroup" will be used to discuss those who do fit into the thin ideal. The term "niche ingroup" will be used to discuss the idea of fitting into a subcultural group, particularly proED. These people want to fit into their own subgroups, and the rules for belonging might be different than they are for fitting into the societal ingroup, for example to fit into the proED ingroup one must engage in disordered eating, while this is not (necessarily) required to fit into the societal ingroup. The drive of proED groups is, of course, to eventually fit into the societal ingroup, but by engaging with the niche ingroup.

While coding the posts, some patterns emerged. I realized the body positivity posts could be divided into three distinct categories based on how they seek belonging based on the thin ideal: those that look for acceptance despite not fitting into the thin ideal, those that openly reject the thin ideal and deny its supposed importance, and those that seek out the thin ideal. This last type especially provides evidence for the fact body positivity content is not always body positive – the core tenet of the movement is supposed to be to love your body no matter what. Changing one's body to fit into the thin ideal obviously is not compatible with body positivity, yet that was a prominent idea under the hashtag. Also indicating the lack of true body positivity was the fact that there were several demographics which ideally should be included in the body positivity movement as they are distinct from the ideal body type for various reasons, but which were absent, including disability and queerness. There were very few posts about disability and body positivity, and queerness was not mentioned at all in the posts studied for this thesis.

The proED posts were essentially what I expected to see, though overall, the content was much more disturbing than the body positivity content. The fact that this content came from Tumblr also created a different experience than the content from Instagram because Tumblr allows users to post content of any kind, including photos, text posts, GIFs, etc, whereas Instagram only allows photos and videos. The content collected from Tumblr included two photos with captions, sixteen textposts, four photosets (photos with a similar look or aesthetic meant to showcase a certain theme or attribute, which in

this case was thinness), and eight memes. These posts were divided into several distinct themes including relationships, motivation, tips and tricks, venting, and posts that appealed to the sense of community. The proED posts differed because of the way they appealed to the niche ingroup community instead of calling for societal change to achieve belonging, the way most of the body positivity posts did (though, as mentioned, there was a large number of posts which did not belong in body positivity as they were about losing weight to fit in to the societal ingroup, which is the core idea behind proED content). Much of what is outlined in this chapter corroborated the literature discussed in chapter 2; many of the same issues highlighted in existing studies were present in this study as well.

A NOT-SO-POSITIVE BODY POSITIVITY

Assuming the aspirational definition of body positivity (“the movement to accept our bodies, regardless of their size, shape, skin tone, gender, and physical abilities” (Leboeuf, 2019, p. 114)), the images collected under the hashtag #bodypositivity fell short of this goal. If the movement stands for people who fall outside the beauty ideal, then, logically, the posts under the hashtag should be more representative of those who do not fit into the beauty idea. The #bodypositivity posts collected featured photos of subjects who were overwhelmingly average size, white, female, and conventionally attractive, with no obvious physical disabilities. Only seven photos out of 30 featured women of colour. Only two featured men (and it is worth noting that both of these posts were advertising personal trainers, further pushing the narrative of the thin/toned ideal). There were also

only seven photos that featured fat women.⁹ It seems like within this group, some women are tagging their selfies as body positive simply because they were fat instead of because they were trying to support the movement itself (e.g. image 12). Some photos contained messages of body positivity, self-love, and general acceptance, but others were simply a selfie or a full body photo of a woman with no body positive messaging.

There were also several posts that had nothing at all to do with body positivity under this tag. There were two photos with captions about pregnancy, only one of which had a body positive tone. There was also a photo of a woman with a caption about astrology and no mention of body positivity (image 25). Additionally, it appears the tag is used occasionally for general feminist posts, as there was a photo of a woman at a protest holding an anti-rape sign (image 27). This indicates that the hashtag is extremely popular, and the fact that the tag is overwhelmed with non-body positive elements in the form of general feminist issues, which provides evidence that body positivity is seen as a feminist issue (though, with the direction the movement has taken, it may be more accurate to label it as “white feminism”¹⁰ as there appears to be a distinct lack of intersectionality) (Osborn, 2021).

⁹ Since this study cannot ascertain BMI or any other “objective” measure of fatness from photos posted in the internet, the classification of “fatness” used in this study is subjective. What may be considered fat to one person may be considered average to another.

¹⁰ “White feminism” is a term relating to a specific kind of feminism which focuses principally on the struggles faced by white, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied women and ignores intersectionality. White feminism especially ignores the unique experiences of women of colour. In an interview with NBC News, author Koa Beck explains white feminism as “an ideology and a very specific approach and strategy toward achieving gender equality that focuses more on individual accumulation, capital and individuality — accruing power without any redistribution or reconsideration of it” (Solis, 2021).

In general, there were three different varieties of belonging posts throughout the hashtag: those that seek belonging by seeking acceptance, those that seek belonging by fitting the beauty ideal, and those that seek belonging by rejecting the beauty ideal. There were also several topics which should have been represented under this hashtag but were not, such as disability and queerness, which will be discussed in more detail. All posts discussed in this section are in Appendix A.

Acceptance Despite Not Fitting into the Thin Ideal

Acceptance and belonging are closely related. There were several posts that made it clear that the poster was seeking belonging through seeking acceptance by people in their lives. The most obvious example was in the case of romantic relationships, and there were two posts in particular that focused on romantic relationships and having or finding a partner who loved them regardless of physical appearance. One caption (image 17) was short and to the point – “I pray that you will find a man who will love you for being the real you.” The other (image 15) was a lengthy post about how her partner made her feel beautiful at her heaviest weight during pregnancy, comforting her over her new stretch marks and complimenting her new bikini selfies. Both of these posts focus on being viewed as desirable in the eyes of men, regardless of physical appearance. Being seen as desirable is heavily associated with belonging, especially for women (Luck, 2016). However, only the second contained themes of body love or insecurity, as the first was a conventionally attractive woman posed in her underwear with only the brief caption and

hashtags relating to body positivity or acceptance. There is not enough to base an analysis on for this photo, so it was excluded from further analysis.

In the second post, the woman discusses her own insecurities, her partner assuages her fears that she is no longer beautiful, and she finishes by mentioning how society's expectations of women are detrimental to wellbeing. She has categorized herself as someone who (no longer, due to her pregnancy) fits into the beauty standard. She identifies with this group and states that she has accepted her new position in it. She is in stage three, the social comparison stage, and is comparing herself with other women she now sees as more desirable or deserving of love. She has turned to her partner with her self-doubt, and he has assured her that she is still beautiful (or still in the societal ingroup). She says that "he really just made me feel good and reminded me that it's okay." This is a noteworthy case because the poster has made peace with their new group identity but it seems to be at least partially reliant on their partner's acceptance. Their partner assuring them that they still belong is a key factor in their acceptance of their new identity.

This type of post discusses belonging not only in relationship but also in society at large. The poster is concerned that she no longer fits into traditional beauty standards and her partner assures her that this is unimportant. However, because the poster is still conventionally attractive and says that her weight gain is due to pregnancy and is not her natural state, this post could make others feel insecure if they have a body type that looks

like hers all the time. When she discusses how insecure she feels and her partner consoles her by saying it is alright because she “is growing a whole human in there,” other people may think to themselves that they do not have the same excuse for not belonging to the societal ingroup as the original poster does because they are not pregnant.

There were also four different posts that appeared sexually suggestive in nature (images 3, 17, 28, and 30). Most of these photos have tags like #curvygirl or #fullerbust, which implies the desire to be seen as a sexual being. All four women who have used these kinds of tags are noticeably conventionally attractive. They fit the traditional beauty standard and seem to be aware of it, using hashtags and captions that imply so, such as #fitnessgirl, and are posting under the body positivity tag, which is supposed to be for those who do not fit the standard. This suggests that perhaps the tag’s popularity has not only increased its popularity for brands to coopt (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Luck, 2016), but it has also been coopted by thin people trying to reach a wider audience for more attention. Regardless of which stage of social comparison theory these posters may find themselves in, they want to be seen as attractive. I interpret this as the posters trying to feel like they are worthy of being desired, and fitting into the societal ingroup (those who are physically attractive) means that they will appeal to the greatest number of people.

Rejecting the Thin Ideal

The idea of rejecting the beauty standard, in this thesis, means that someone would recognize and understand the beauty standard, but dismiss it. They recognize its

cultural value and its prominence but they actively choose to not engage with it. They decide that beauty norms are not important to them and they therefore reject them. Rejection of the beauty standard is clearly represented by some of the body positivity posts. These posts are the ones which encourage individuals to reconsider the beauty standard and to question the narrative of belonging it creates. There were two posts that were clear about pushing back against oppressive body norms. The first photo (image 21) was of a conventionally attractive blonde woman in gym clothes and contained a long caption about how the diet industry profits off of the idea of a “summer body” (a thin and toned physique) and that the “summer body” is not necessary and being comfortable is more important. The overall tone of the post is rejecting body norms and prioritizing personal choice. The second photo (image 22) is a before and after shot of a young woman to show how the same person can look different depending on how their body is posed. The caption states that comparing oneself to photos on the internet is unwise because people can look drastically different based on posing, lighting, or clothing.

These two photos fall into the third phase of Social Comparison Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The target audience for these photos is people who have already been categorized into their group (those who do not fit into the beauty ideal) and they have come to see this as a part of their identity. They have entered the comparison stage and are comparing themselves to others, and the caption of the post is telling them that they are worthy despite the fact that they do not fit into the beauty ideal. The tone is telling its viewers that insecurity is normal but should be combatted. One post outright states that

“just because someone else is doing something, doesn’t mean you have to.” It is calling attention to the comparison stage it assumes its viewers are in and it tells the viewers that they can simply reject the beauty ideal, questioning “who cares if you’re not dieting for summer?”

The belonging in this case is created by those who posted the images creating a space where viewers can take a break from the body ideal. The captions especially create the idea that the beauty ideal is not attainable. By stating that fitting into the beauty ideal is simply a matter of lighting, posing, or dieting, it aims to eliminate the innateness that most groupings purport. This narrative is beneficial to those who may be feeling underappreciated or left out. However, the fact that the posters of these photos are once again conventionally attractive in relatively ideal bodies dilutes the positive message. I suspect that some people who see these two photos will feel similarly to those who see the pregnancy photo analyzed above.

Seeking the Thin Ideal

Finally, there are posts in which the poster says they are seeking belonging in the societal ingroup. This means that the poster might be attempting to change themselves to fit into the beauty standard or the body ideal. These posts position the poster as someone who is on the edge of society but is working towards joining the societal ingroup.

One photo (image 24) features two young women embracing each other. They appear very close. This in itself demonstrates some semblance of belonging because closeness is directly related to belonging and has been found to correlate with not being fat (Dondzilo et al., 2018). The caption discusses how one of the photo's subjects, the one who posted the photo, is going to start going to the gym again so she can "get in a bikini properly for the first time in two years." This phrasing implies that bikinis are not for everyone, and that only those with a certain body type (i.e. that which is achieved through working out) are "properly" able to wear bikinis.

This post is less positive in its approach to body positivity. Whereas the previous two posts attempted to create a sense of belonging, this post acknowledges the beauty hierarchy and states that the poster is taking active steps to move up in the hierarchy. The notion of needing a specific body type to wear a bikini is based in the idea that those who do not have the ideal body type do not belong in bathing suits (and relatedly, that many summer activities such as pool parties, the beach, etc. are out of bounds for them). In the case of this photo, the poster has already accomplished stage 1 of social comparison by admitting that they do not currently fit the body ideal. But they do not identify with their group – in fact, they state they are taking active steps to not join the group, and in fact join the other, more desirable group. By exercising to "fit into a bikini properly," they are attempting to join society's ingroup (those with ideal body types). This is in stark contrast to the narrative employed in image 21, in which the poster is encouraging their viewers to question the ideal and to not be taken in by the notion of a "summer body".

Changing body size or shape in order to belong was a prevalent theme in the body positivity posts, usually framed under the idea of working out. For example, there were eleven posts relating to fitness, working out, or changing body size/shape. In fact, the body positivity hashtag seems to be overrun with fitness posts. While fitness can be something people do for themselves, the fact that the hashtags used were focused on the body (i.e. body positivity) implies that the people posting these pictures want their bodies to be seen and admired. They wanted to project the image of caring about their health and physical appearance to those on the internet. Some of the other hashtags used in tandem with #bodypositivity, such as #girlswithbrownhair, #beachbodyondemand, and #muscular, corroborate this hypothesis, as they are similarly appearance-focused.

The motivation for these posts being under #bodypositivity is likely similar to why the sexually suggestive posts were – desire for increased interaction or spreading a message. The posts advertising a personal trainer, for example, corroborate this theory, as they would want more traffic to be aware of their services. Either way, this content is not body positive, so the impact on a viewer could be different from how the poster intended. For example, the fitness posts might create a sense of shame or discomfort in a viewer. They have chosen to view the hashtag's posts because they want to see diverse bodies, but instead they find a plethora of thin model-like individuals. Given that body positivity is supposed to be a "safe space" for those who want a break from the thin ideal, this has the potential to be upsetting. It is possible for this content to be quite harmful, as it reinforces the idea that the thin ideal is everywhere. Additionally, most would agree

that it is easier to feel positively about one's body when it fits the ideal, so viewers might be reminded of insecurities or perceived faults and flaws in themselves.

Under the broad theme of seeking belonging is the idea of normalization.

"Normalization" is when someone wants to draw attention to a feature or characteristic that is frequently overlooked or deemed odd, and the poster wants it to be seen as normal (Cobb, 2017). Four posts referenced normalizing some aspect of human appearance which is deemed abnormal somehow. Features that are not typically seen in media or real life are abnormal until the general public decides that the feature is normal. Therefore, the idea of society normalizing certain features is due to those with the features wanting to feel belonging or a sense of social normalcy, specifically by finding others who share similar socially stigmatized traits (Sowles et al., 2018). The "abnormal" characteristic featured in these four posts were mostly relating to body size (e.g. "let's not compare our normal to someone else's posed [photo]" in an attempt to "normalize" not being ashamed of showing stomach rolls in photos) but one post also featured a woman with psoriasis (image 13). The photo shows a woman with red marks all over her body and includes hashtags like #normalizepsoriasis and #psoriasisawareness. The purpose of posting these photos is to feel some semblance of belonging and normalcy in a world that constantly uplifts only a specific body type, and the comments (for example, "Girl I feel you right now! Having a flare myself" on the post of the woman with psoriasis) help create the sense of camaraderie and belonging with others who are going through the same things. The comments especially show a sense of belonging, as the commenters

have identified that they are part of the same group as the initial poster. They have identified with that group, and they are happy to find someone else to relate to, showcasing that typically they compare themselves to those who do not belong in the same group.

What's Missing from This Picture?

Two traits were notably missing from the body positivity posts that were collected for this study: disability and queerness. Working under the assumption that body positivity is “for everyone,” there should have been a wide range of people represented. The only brief mention of disability was the post with the woman with psoriasis. Her purpose was to normalize psoriasis and to raise awareness of the condition and its effects on someone’s physical appearance. This is one of the few posts that can be deemed truly body positive – it recognizes that there is a limited amount of acceptance for people with psoriasis and the post actively attempts to create an environment which is uplifting and which embraces someone’s differences. It tries to create a place of belonging for those who do not belong. This is what body positivity should be. It was, in fact, one of the few posts under the hashtag that was tagged appropriately given the aspirational definition of body positivity.

A second group who is largely underrepresented in body positivity is queer folks. In all the posts collected, there were no mentions of queerness. This is not overly surprising because there is research which suggests that queer people, especially trans

people who may have a more difficult relationship with their bodies, typically prefer body neutrality over body positivity because being positive about a body one cannot connect with is too difficult (Hartman-Munick, et al., 2021).

Conclusion: Body Positivity Sorely Lacking

In conclusion, the posts under the body positivity tag on Instagram are lacking in the diversity required to be truly body positive. The majority were conventionally attractive white women. There was a small minority of posts featuring women of colour, and an even smaller minority featuring folks with disabilities. Queer people were left out altogether. Based on my specifications for the term “body positive,” I would classify only eight of these 30 posts as truly body positive¹¹, yet all use the hashtag. There is commodification, monetization, discussions of body size/shape hierarchy, denigrating fat people, and even some random posts that appear to be incorrectly tagged. One thing is clear: despite the outward appearance of inclusivity and belonging for those with diverse bodies, these ideals still uphold and rely on the traditional beauty ideal in order to craft their narrative. The overarching narrative of body positivity is to love your body no matter what – the unspoken “what” translating to “not being conventionally attractive.” Therefore, despite any possible good intentions, these forms of body positivity recognize and uphold the beauty ideal, and in doing so, they help to perpetuate it.

¹¹ Images 5,7,13,14,15,18,21, and 22. See Appendix A for all #bodypositivity posts.

Body positivity and the idea of changing society so one can fit in falls in line with Bourdieu's concept of taste in a conflicting way. Body positivity defines itself according to the thin ideal, which is the dominant aesthetic in Western society. The attempt to seek acceptance, no matter the means one employs to do so, is indicative of people calling out the "natural" order. Bourdieu claims that taste is a matter of necessity and that people have a taste for what is achievable to them (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). Body positivity is trying to actively subjugate Bourdieu's claims regarding taste by calling attention to the thin ideal and how it is unrealistic. Unfortunately, the manner in which the majority of the posts collected here do this is not convincing. Most of them have a hesitant tone, as if they recognize that they are subjugated by the dominant ideal and therefore their own requests (or demands) are not likely to be met. For instance, the "normalize psoriasis" post, which is one of the posts that is truly body positive, has a tone that comes across as either aggressive (as though daring anyone to comment negatively) or self-deprecating (with a joke from a child about how bad their skin is). Either of these interpretations show that the poster is aware that their appearance is not up to the standards of the majority, and that they are actively choosing to take a stance against the dominant beauty standard. Whether or not this will be accepted is not up to the poster – it is up to their audience, who, based on the visible comments, seem to feel similarly.

PROED CONTENT AND THE ASPIRATIONAL THIN IDEAL

The proED content had less identifying information than the body positivity posts. There were only five photo posts (memes or reaction images not included) containing 19

different photos, but some demographic information can still be provided regarding who was most likely targeted in these posts. It is unlikely that the people shown in the posts were the ones who posted these images under the proED hashtags, because proED content is meant to be seen as aspirational and anonymous and it is unlikely that the viewers of this content would see themselves as aspirational. All nineteen images featured white or white passing women. None were of any other race or outwardly presented any other gender identity. All subjects appeared to be very young, likely in their teens or 20s. There were also no mentions of other demographics within the text posts. This corroborates the (mistaken) idea that eating disorders are for thin white women (Gremillion, 2008), which in itself is a problem because when these images are upheld as the body ideal, they become even less attainable for people of colour and other “minorities” (Avery et al., 2021).

The general idea of all proED posts is to embrace disordered eating to achieve the desired body type. The content can be divided into different themes, and though each have the same overall message of weight loss, the way they discuss belonging and how to achieve it differ. In my search, I noticed five main themes based on belonging in the posts analyzed: relationships, motivation, tips and tricks, venting, and general community. Each of these themes can be grouped into posts that relied on either the niche ingroup or the societal ingroup. The societal ingroup posts occasionally acknowledged the niche ingroup, but the purpose of these posts was always to highlight the ways life would be better once the viewers had joined the societal ingroup or things they do in their quest to join the

societal ingroup. These posts included the relationship posts, the motivational posts, and the posts which provided tips and tricks to attain the body ideal. The niche ingroup posts fostered a sense of belonging themselves, appealing to the proED community's shared goals and perspectives on body image and related inside jokes. This collection of posts includes the themes of venting, and community. All posts discussed in this section are in Appendix B.

Societal Ingroup Posts

There were four posts that had a theme of relationships. The first (image 32) was a simple text post, stating "I'm scared that the day i become 'skinny enough' i'll realize that no matter what i do and how much weight i lose i'll always be unlovable [sic]." The second post (image 36) had a more sexual tone, describing how a future "he" would desire the poster once she was thin. The post describes in detail how her thin body would be "so delicate and fragile, like a china cup that he gets to break." The third post (image 58) is by the same person as the second, and has a similar tone, but this one is describing how a man would want her more if she was thinner, "ribs and collarbones and slim thighs, all for him." The fourth and final post about relationships (image 60) was a photoset of a thin girl posing with a man. The caption ends by stating "i know that he would love me more if i were skinner [sic]."

These posts connect the viewer to step three, social comparison in social identity theory. The posts have already identified themselves as proED posts from people who

want to be thinner. The third stage is what these posters are engaging in by saying that they want to be thinner so that this hypothetical man will like them more. They are comparing themselves to thinner people, or, perhaps their future, thinner self. Quotes like “i know he would love me more if i were skinner [sic]” show this sense of comparison as to a hypothetical “ideal” body type. They believe that if they can get this body type, they will be more desirable and that they will be able to find the sense of belonging and connection that comes with being in a relationship.

These kinds of relationship posts that target specific insecurities (ie. my body makes me unlovable and no one wants to be with me) rather than more general ones (ie. my body makes me unattractive) are very harmful, as the posts provide a clear solution to the problem it lays out: lose weight. The narrative of belonging is clearly stating that if one loses weight they will fit in. This perpetuates not only the thin ideal, but also the act of disordered eating as a lifestyle choice and a valid weight loss method (Fettach & Benhiba, 2019).

Motivation was also a prominent theme in the proED posts. The motivation posts were created to promote and to give incentive or drive to people to continue food restriction. The first post of this kind (image 34) is a text post stating that relapses happen, and that one should “ask for help, get back up, and try again.” The tagging on this post makes it unclear if the relapse in question is beginning to eat more again (either for recovery or perhaps part of a binge cycle) or if it is a misplaced pro-recovery post that has

used proED hashtags. Regardless, the post is telling viewers to reach out for help and motivating them to carry on. The second post (image 35) was more explicitly proED: a photoset of thin white girls captioned “do you really want to eat that? or do you want to look fragile and dainty? the choice is yours.” The third (image 46) was a similar photoset with the caption stating “We can do this. We are determined enough to be perfect.” This one was especially interesting because it was talking to its audience by using the pronoun “we” instead of “I” or “you.” It sought to create a community with its language. The fourth post (image 56) was a meme about someone seeking out proED Tumblr when they needed motivation to continue restricting.

These kinds of motivational posts fall within step two, social identification. They are encouraging the viewers to further identify with their eating disorders to give themselves a group to fit into. Not fitting into the societal ingroup is distressing – being told that they do not fit into the niche ingroup either is doubly distressing. The desire to fit in, in some capacity, could therefore provoke individuals into further identifying with, and subsequently engaging more in, disordered eating and its online community. One post even creates a dichotomy between “us” and “them” by stating “We can do this. We are determined enough to be perfect”, implying that “they” cannot do it and do not care enough. These posts go so far as to ask the viewers to change themselves or their habits in order to better fit into the proED community (“do you really want to eat that? or do you want to look fragile and dainty?”).

There were also posts containing tips and tricks for disordered eating. Initially these were grouped with the motivational group, but after collecting the screenshots it was determined they were too dissimilar and required their own analysis. These posts acknowledge their audience and speak directly to it, giving advice to those who read the post. Two posts out of thirty fit into this category. The first (image 59) was a list of tips and tricks to stop oneself from bingeing. The second (image 39) was a lengthy post discussing “ed things nobody talks about [sic]” and listed items such as losing your sex drive. These posts again fall under step two (identification). They are giving advice on how to have a more “successful” eating disorder. The more one can identify with the eating disorder and let it take over one’s life, the more “successful” (and dangerous) it becomes (Fettach & Benhiba, 2019). The identity narrative and the accompanying advice is harmful because it pushes disordered eating, and it is created by positioning belonging and being thin as something attainable to anyone.

Niche Ingroup Posts

The single largest category of posts containing proED content were venting posts, with over 35% of posts fitting in this category. These posts outlined problems or issues with eating disorders or one’s body, framed in such a way that the posts encouraged others to relate. The venting posts are not *about* belonging, but they *assume* belonging. Similar to the tips and tricks posts, they assume that there is an audience. They are speaking directly to people who they assume will be able to relate to what is being said, and in some cases even asking for advice. Posters already identify with this group, and the

venting posts appear to be a means of seeking out others who also belong to this group. Complaining about a shared experience is a key way that people with eating disorders interact on proED pages (Fettach & Benhiba, 2019). The need to feel connected to others, especially in regards to something as overwhelming as an eating disorder, could push individuals to engage more in the proED community, by creating their own posts, engaging in more disordered eating, or trying to create more intimate connections or friendships with those who they know will understand how they feel (Cspike & Horne, 2007; Jett, LaPorte, & Wanchisn, 2010).

Three posts were about other people not understanding the issues faced by those with eating disorders, but there being a clear sense of community among those who did understand. One such post (image 37) was a meme stating that they could not show their friends jokes about eating disorders because they would not understand. The underlying message is that the poster has created this post knowing that other people in the proED community will be able to relate to the sense of isolation. The second post (image 47) was a screenshot of a news article about a celebrity who was suffering burn out and surviving on cigarettes, coffee, and Diet Coke. The screenshot was edited together with an image captioned “one of us,” meaning that proED community also survives on cigarettes, coffee, and Diet Coke. The “one of us” phrasing shows that the poster is aware of the large proED community, and also implies that this community is welcoming of new members.

The last post (image 57) was the proED version of “normalize” posts as discussed in the body positivity section; for proED these are framed as “does anyone else...” because the goal is not to normalize the illness but to craft a sense of community and ensure that participants do not feel alone or isolated. Normalizing posts are calling for a feature or characteristic to be seen as normal whereas “does anyone else...” posts are calling for kindred spirits, but the general idea of both is that someone feels weird, or as though they are alone, and they are reaching out asking if others are or feel the same way.

These posts create a sense of community and belonging by discussing the actual group itself. “My friends would never understand the proED jokes I enjoy” leaves unspoken that the others who are seeing the post, because they belong to the group, also have these behaviours and can understand the jokes about them. The One of Us post openly discusses there being a group and invokes an Us versus Them mentality, which translates into more emphasis on the ingroup versus the outgroup. Finally, the “does anyone else...” post is openly seeking reassurance and connection with others who share a similar trait. All of these posts focus on the sense of belonging the poster has within the proED group.

In addition to creating a sense of belonging, these posts may also create a sense of fear of losing the connection, even if this occurs subconsciously. Having friends and inside jokes is important for growth and attachment, and for those who identify strongly with their eating disorder, other connections and friendships can lose meaning or importance

(Csipke & Horne, 2007; Juarascio, Shoaib, & Timko, 2010). The proED community has managed to fill that potential void that might be felt by losing connections in real life by replacing them with an online proED equivalent. Therefore, one of the reasons someone might choose to seek recovery (loneliness) is no longer as motivating as it once could have been.

Conclusion: ProED Content is Exclusionary and Dangerous

In conclusion, posts under proED hashtags did not always necessarily appeal to belonging, but they did rely on a sense of belonging and the idea that there was a receptive community. Many of the posts appealed to a community they could turn to when no one in their real life would listen or understand. The posts about relationships, motivation and encouragement, tips and tricks with others, venting, and community all relied on the premise that the people who would see the post would be able to relate to it. The analysis corroborates the idea of identity and connection found through proED content online, which consistently implied or even explicitly stated that the only people who can understand someone with an eating disorder are other people with eating disorders. Therefore, if someone wants to be able to discuss their eating disorder or its effects, they will have to find others with eating disorders. There is also concern that the thought of potentially losing the sense of connection that individuals achieve through engaging in proED communities might dissuade some people from seeking out recovery (Jett, LaPorte, & Wanchisn, 2010). This content should therefore be seen as more

threatening than it currently is (Custers, 2015). A different way of seeking and feeling belonging would be a helpful step forward in the attempt to end proED content.

The proED posts reacted to the thin ideal in a different way than the body positivity posts. The goal of the proED posts was to support the thin ideal and advocate for it by discussing ways that people who did not fit into it could transform their bodies and belong. In other words, these people accept the necessity of taste and as valid by questioning how anyone could be happy living as a fat person. According to Bourdieu, symbolic violence is not inevitable. Fatphobia, including propagating proED content, is not necessary just because taste is inevitable. ProED posters are prioritizing their own sense of belonging and mental wellbeing by perpetuating the thin ideal and supporting the notion of innate taste when it comes to body image, when it has been shown in history that the thin ideal is not innate at all but merely a matter of social environment (Becker, 2004).

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The content analyzed under the body positivity and proED hashtags has the potential to be disturbing and damaging, and the content corroborated the belief that both body positivity and proED content are more harmful than helpful. I cannot interpret positively the way that people who view either type of content may feel about themselves after viewing it. For body positivity, this could mean comparing oneself to all body types including ones that do not fit the thin ideal and learning about new insecurities which one

may then internalize. For proED content, this would mean that the viewer is forming an even stronger proED identity because nothing they are seeing is challenging their preconceived ideas of beauty or the thin ideal. Both kinds of content are damaging.

Despite the body positive movement being well-intentioned, there is ample evidence that body positivity has evolved into something which has abandoned its core values and principles in the name of mainstream acceptance. The existence of weight loss posts under the hashtag shows that the content has deviated far from its fat acceptance roots, and even the more modern version of the movement claiming that every body is beautiful is not compatible with the idea of mandatory weight loss to fit in. After conducting my own research and analysis, I believe that positivity is no longer an appropriate title for the kind of content being linked to the movement. The idealized form of the movement, for example back when it was solely about fat acceptance, no longer exists in practice, and body positivity is worse for this shift.

ProED content has always been known to be harmful (Custers, 2015; Tierney, 2006), and my own experience with the content has only corroborated the existing research into the topic. The kinds of posts found in the proED hashtag were disturbing and could have a severe impact on the people who view it. The sense of community created in this online subculture is nefarious and could prolong eating disorder symptomology (Cspike & Horne, 2007; Jett, LaPorte, & Wanchisn, 2010). This type of

content, unlike body positivity, has no idealized version and after my analysis I am now even more firmly against it.

CHAPTER 5: BODY NEUTRALITY AS CURRENTLY FOUND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In comparison to both body positivity and proED content online, I believe that body neutrality is a far superior means of framing body image discussions. Body neutrality works to decentralize the body from body image conversations altogether, whereas body positivity and proED content both subscribe to the hierarchy that states thin bodies are better, more attractive, and more desirable. Body neutrality is, therefore, more inclusive, as it is not centered around upholding the thin ideal.

The definition this thesis uses for body neutrality is that one's body simply *is*. Because the nature of the movement is to dismantle the hierarchy which places thin people on top and larger people below (having less status as body size increases), means of connection based on body size are dismantled because the concept of different body sizes is devalued if everyone is equal regardless, as is the case in body neutrality.

A sense of belonging cannot be achieved when using a body neutral perspective, but it would not be necessary because it would no longer be seen as a valid way to ascribe value to a person. Body neutrality would essentially undo all grouping based on body-centred criteria if the belonging factors of body size and shape which are used to exclude were deemed irrelevant. For example, thin people would no longer be viewed as the ideal, and body positivity would lose all importance because positivity is irrelevant, so the exclusion criteria would be demolished. I imagine this would be similar to the way that western society views eye colour; there are different eye colours, and which colours one

prefers is personal preference, but one colour is not given significantly more status overall. These are physical differences which are not given much thought or attention. Body size and shape could be the same if society would shift to a more body neutral perspective.

THEORY

Using social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) with a body neutral perspective requires a shift in focus. Instead of looking at how the individuals in a group relate to their group and other groups, I will focus more on how groups are no longer relevant when looking at body neutrality. Ingroups and outgroups cannot exist when the criteria for forming the groups is gone. Therefore, the difference between this chapter, which provides an analysis of body neutrality posts, and the previous one where body positivity and proED content were analyzed, is that in this chapter, ways in which groups are created or perpetuated are irrelevant. Instead, the ways in which groups are deconstructed, dismantled, or made unimportant is the primary focus.

Bourdieu's theory is treated similarly less relevant, as when the capital aspect is removed from the equation, body type will become just another random physical trait with no additional meaning or value placed on it. The exception is at the end of the chapter when I will discuss the path forward, when Bourdieu's concept of habitus will be addressed in terms of how it relates to the steps needed to progress towards a body neutral society.

VENTURING INTO THE NEUTRAL ZONE

The demographic information regarding who appeared in photos differed greatly from the demographics found in body positivity and proED posts. On Tumblr, there were only two photos posted including a person. One was white, one was Black, and both were fat. Photos and selfies were much more common on Instagram, included in eight out of 30 posts, but these were more diverse than body positivity and proED. There were five photos of white people compared to three featuring people of colour, but most of these photos (five out of eight) featured fat people. Even this shallow initial analysis is evidence that body neutrality is more inclusive, because it provides evidence that body neutrality is more in line with the fat acceptance roots of body positivity (before the movement became too popular and lost its purpose).

There were three distinct themes in the body neutrality content based on how the post discussed belonging in a society that is so body-focused. The first major theme was acceptance. Acceptance posts encouraged viewers to accept their bodies as opposed to loving or hating them. Acceptance promoted a truly neutral perspective of bodies. The second prominent theme was self-worth. There were many posts reminding viewers that their self-worth and their physical appearance are distinct and unrelated. The final theme was calling out unrealistic standards, including anti-weight loss posts and posts that reminded viewers that the thin ideal is not attainable for everyone (nor should it be the goal as it does not promote body diversity and diverse representation). All posts discussed in this section are in Appendix C.

Acceptance

Many of the posts under the hashtag #bodyneutrality also used some variation of #bodyacceptance. Sixty percent of the Instagram posts and 33% of the Tumblr posts used #bodyacceptance. Body neutrality is, at its core, body acceptance. The goal is to accept one's body despite any problems or qualms one may have with it (Horn, 2021).

Body neutrality attempts to reduce or eliminate the grasp of the thin ideal on society; therefore, it would follow that there were anti-fatphobia posts in the body neutrality hashtag. Fatphobia is common in a society that upholds the thin ideal (Spahlholz et al., 2016). The idea that some bodies are more deserving of respect than others directly conflicts with the ethos of body neutrality. There were two posts which directly challenged fatphobia or fatphobic patterns of thinking, one on Instagram and one on Tumblr. The Instagram post (image 62) modeled what a parent might do if a child asked if they were fat, advising against replying in the negative. The second slide showed alternative answers, and the third and final slide explained why answering "no" could be harmful. The accompanying caption went over additional alternatives and advised against spreading or perpetuating fatphobia. The post also used the hashtag #parentingwithoutdietculture, to give an overview of the content of the post. The Tumblr post (image 79) was a simple text post in which someone spoke well of themselves and their body. In the hashtags, they state that they love themselves for the "first time in 12 years and [they] are not ashamed of it".

Both of these posts work to dismantle the ingroup and outgroup message surrounding body image. Both posts attempt to eliminate the idea that some bodies are superior to others. The Instagram post gave advice for parents to raise children who do not see a distinction between fat and thin, thereby undoing the power the thin ideal has. It seems as though the author may believe that starting young (i.e. a young child talking to their parent) might have more impact on society's view of fatness than trying to convince adults directly.

The Tumblr post showed the poster's self growth and their burgeoning realization that having a certain body type does not necessarily mean one must be ashamed of it, because it is not inherently inferior. The person who made the Tumblr post felt so much shame surrounding their own body that they have never experienced self-love. The tone of the post is that someone has overcome something significant at a great cost to themselves and they are proud of it and of themselves. Eliminating fatphobia might have significant impacts on people like the Tumblr poster in the future. The acceptance posts have a clear message of dismantling the societal ingroup. They also discuss mental health in subtle ways, referencing the negative impacts that fatphobia can have on individuals and on society at large.

Self-Worth

Self-worth was a prominent theme in the neutrality content found on both platforms. This genre of post was a third of the posts collected from Instagram and just

over a fifth of the posts from Tumblr. These posts took many different forms, from a selfie with a caption exclaiming that weight is not something that strangers can comment on, to eating disorder recovery posts (“Just like plants don’t have to do anything to ‘deserve’ water and sunlight, I don’t have to do anything to ‘deserve’ to eat” or “Your weight may fluctuate but your worth will not”), to posts imploring the reader to practice body neutrality and seek peace.

One Tumblr post commented on how, when loving your body feels too difficult, it is important to think of things your body can do for you even if it does them imperfectly (image 82). This post could almost be considered body functionalism, which emphasizes function over aesthetic concerns (Lissandrello, 2022). But, because of the potential for ableism with this perspective, it has seemingly been redefined and absorbed into body neutrality (Horn, 2021). Body neutrality advocates for admiring the body’s function, even if it does not function perfectly all the time, or if some parts of it do not work as expected (Horn, 2021). In this way, body neutrality also helps counteract negative perceptions of disabled bodies and ableism.

These posts try to eliminate the ingroup and outgroup idea by offering readers another way in which they can equate themselves to the ingroup. These posts question the validity of the ingroup being based solely on physical appearance and they provide other criteria which could be taken into consideration for “worthy” bodies.

Unrealistic Standards

The third broad topic covered by the body neutrality posts was challenging unrealistic beauty standards. Because the purpose of body neutrality is to undo existing beauty standards, it is hardly surprising that there were many posts which challenged the unrealistic beauty standards set by society. These posts were primarily focused on weight and weight loss as a goal, but there were also some posts which protested the idea that people ought to act in certain ways to prioritize their health or wellbeing.

Anti-diet or anti-weightloss talk was the most common kind of post which challenged unrealistic standards. There were three Instagram posts that commented on how “food should not be seen as an enemy”. There were three Instagram posts about how being bloated after eating is normal, and should not be seen as a reason to restrict food intake (images 64, 66, and 73). These posts specifically seem to take aim at the compensatory behaviours performed by people with eating disorders in an attempt to convince viewers that eating disorders are not a good (or valid) weight loss option, nor a way to feel better about oneself when weight insecurity arises.

Exercise was mentioned in several posts as well, and two posts in particular commented on exercise. The first was an Instagram post (image 73) that discussed how “choosing rest over movement” should be normalized, seemingly confronting the pervasive idea that physical activity is necessary to stay in shape which was in both body positive fitness posts and occasionally as a subtheme of proED culture and working out to

maintain a calorie deficit. The second exercise post was a Tumblr textpost (image 81) stating “Imagine a world where women are introduced to exercise as a means to build strength, muscle, and confidence instead of a means to be ‘thin’.” This post, again, is commenting on the omnipresent idea that exercise exists as a means to change body size or shape rather than a way to change the way one feels (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018).

The exercise posts differed from the weight loss posts (though the subtext was similar) because the exercise posts were focused on behaviour rather than on aesthetic concerns. It is implied or even outright stated in body positivity or proED posts that the purpose of exercise is to change one’s body, to lose weight or gain muscle (Lazuka et al., 2020; Tiggeman & Zaccardo, 2018; Wick & Harriger, 2018). The body neutrality posts that mention exercise directly confront this notion, and advocate for exercise as a means to improve mental and physical health or gain confidence.

These posts questioned the existence of the ingroup by remarking that not having to work hard to belong to the ingroup (i.e. fitting into the thin ideal by dieting, obsessively working out, and not getting adequate rest) is a lot more satisfying and enjoyable than the alternative.

Diverse Bodies

Body neutrality was generally much more accepting than either body positivity or proED content. Body positivity and proED content featured many thin white

conventionally attractive people, but body neutrality had several posts that actively defied body norms, especially on Tumblr. On Instagram, there was one post (image 66) where a woman was complaining about being in pain from being bloated, but she did not go into detail about the how and why of the situation; she simply used it as an anecdote to explain that she realized she had to eat more. Two of the posts on Tumblr were about chronic pain and disability (images 79 and 82), and how difficult it can feel to love one's body when it causes one pain. The advice from both posts is to slow down and thank your body for the things it can do rather than focusing on the things it cannot do. The final post that supported neutrality being more accepting was a Tumblr post about body hair (image 78). The text post tried to normalize body hair on women, knowing that hair on women is typically seen as gross or unnatural. This post was also tagged #transwomen, which makes sense because AMAB (assigned male at birth) women are more likely to have hair in places that are not as socially acceptable for women. The overall sense of body neutrality was, therefore, much more inclusive of fat, disabled, queer, and conventionally unattractive people than either body positivity or proED content.

A KIND AND GRACIOUS HOST: INSTAGRAM VS TUMBLR

There were several stark differences between the body neutrality content found on Instagram and on Tumblr. The first is that Instagram had a lot more posts that were trying to sell something. Tumblr had several posts regarding commodification and monetization as well, but the Tumblr posts viewed the subject very negatively and were not actually participating in monetization, whereas the Instagram posts were trying to

profit from the posts. The two Instagram posts coded commodification were trying to sell something (images 67 and 69). In contrast, two Tumblr posts coded as commodification were openly anti-commodification (images 80 and 87) and the third (image 89) was promoting an item the poster liked but they stated in their caption that they were not paid to do so, they just genuinely enjoyed the product.

This was unexpected. Existing research suggested that there would be many posts attempting to commodify the body positivity tags, but it was surprising to see it under the neutrality tags as well, albeit in lesser numbers (there were seven commodification posts under the body positivity tags and two under the body neutrality tags, both of them coming from Instagram). While the content under body positivity hashtags is still more likely to contain commodification, it is possible that Instagram as a platform acts as a confounding variable. Body positivity is more popular on Instagram, commodification is more popular on Instagram, and therefore commodification is more popular under body positivity hashtags (on Instagram).

Another difference between the neutrality content on Tumblr and Instagram is that Instagram had more mentions of eating disorder recovery in their neutrality hashtags. A third of the neutrality posts mentioned recovery in some capacity, and only two out of fifteen body positivity posts mentioned it. Similar to the commodification issue above, this likely has more to do with the specific platform. In this case, it could be the fact that this content is found on Tumblr, which has a huge proED platform. It would make

sense if some proED people begin recovery and start promoting their new ideals on the same platform.

Finally, subjectively speaking, Tumblr posts felt a lot more intimate than the Instagram posts. Neutrality posts on Tumblr were frequently framed as personal reminders or open discussions, whereas on Instagram it seemed as though the poster wanted to lead a conversation. This is likely due to the anonymity that Tumblr affords its users, while Instagram's more public frame means that posters need to stand behind what they say as it is linked to them personally. Both have advantages, but in terms of connection, Tumblr provides a more personal experience and Instagram is much more public.

THE ROAD AHEAD

While humans do frequently group themselves based on random criteria (Sherif et al., 1961), eliminating the criteria eliminates the ability to group. If everyone in the world decided to become body neutral and ignore evaluative discussions of body size and shape, many concerns regarding body image could disappear. For example, before they were aware of the thin ideal, girls in Fiji did not subject themselves to unhealthy means of achieving thin bodies (and in fact many were trying to gain weight!) (Becker, 2004). The hierarchy of body size and shape is the root of body dissatisfaction so eliminating the hierarchy would result in fewer body image issues.

It is also possible that using body neutrality as the principle discussion of body image would have farther reaching societal impact. For instance, the morality attached to thin bodies at the expense of fat bodies being deemed immoral may no longer occur (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015). Also, eating disorders, which are frequently viewed as weight disorders (the DSM has only recently revised their definition (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)), could be redefined as a strictly mental illness (if they still occurred – dismantling the thin ideal may have other positive results as well such as a decrease in some types of eating disorders) and this could result in more people coming forward for help once they recognize their symptoms as a genuine mental illness instead of viewing it as “healthy” or a “lifestyle.” This shift could particularly benefit men, who are underrepresented in eating disorder statistics and the current evidence that eating disorders in men are significantly underreported (Compte, Sepúlveda, & Torrente, 2018; Delderfield, 2018). Ultimately, while the specific connectedness, especially in the form of online communities, might be diminished with body neutrality, the benefits would far outweigh the negative impacts.

Rewriting the social narrative of body image is a daunting but worthy task with body positivity and proED content so plentiful. It is clear now that body neutrality may pose a remedy for many of the deep issues surrounding body image, but in order to achieve the potential benefits the rewrite would have to be complete – simply having a small portion of people advocating for neutrality is not sufficient to dismantle the hierarchy which creates the thin ideal. It is, however, a good first step. It appears that

body neutrality is not as well known as other forms of body image discussion (Muentert, 2021), so increasing awareness would eventually help to include more people in the movement. As with any internet phenomenon, the first step is to simply create it (which has obviously already occurred for body neutrality). Individuals will come across that content, engage with it, recreate and share it, and eventually, with any luck, it will become better known.

Because neutrality is a much healthier view of body image overall (Raypole, 2021; Muentert, 2021), it could be that over time people will begin to instinctively gravitate towards it. The prevalence of fatphobia has limited the impact of body positivity because of health concerns and the perceived immorality attached to fatness (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015). Body neutrality would be able to undo these problems over time if society decides to embrace a body neutral perspective.

This is not to say that all appearance-based discussions would cease entirely. It is not possible to eliminate discussions and visions of beauty from culture; neutrality just disconnects beauty and morality, worthiness, and value. It is possible to be beautiful, but that should not make an individual inherently superior to someone who has less physical allure. Placing too much emphasis on appearance is harmful to everyone. Beauty standards have been linked to racism (Herndon, 2006; Robinson-Moore, 2008; Silvestrini, 2019), classism (Herndon, 2006), and stricter gender roles which negatively impacts sexual and gender minorities (Morrison et al., 2020). By creating such a narrow definition of

beauty and then attaching it to morality, those who do not fit the body standard, for example, Black people living in a dominantly white culture, are significantly disadvantaged. It is a stretch to imply that implementing a more body neutral perspective would solve racism, classism, or homophobia, but there is sufficient evidence that body neutrality could be a positive approach for all people, while the current methods of discussing body image are clearly not.

Body neutrality is also much better when looked at through the lens of capital and symbolic violence. Body neutrality essentially wants to undo the ways in which capital is gained through body type. Beauty standards are not easily changed so some researchers have given up hope in neutrality being a valid option to fight fatphobia (Cohen et al., 2020). But I argue that the standards themselves do not have to change – the capital must be detached. Bourdieu argues that taste is not the fault of any individual and that taste is, on some levels, unavoidable. But Bourdieu also argues that symbolic violence is not inevitable. Taste is presented as natural but as we have seen (for example, in Fiji (Becker, 2004)), taste regarding body image is a matter of environment and socialization. One's *habitus*, essentially the self crafted by an individual as a result of their environment and culture which allows them to succeed in said environment or culture, is hard to change, and Bourdieu notes that many mistake it for an innate part of someone instead of something that has been developed in time through cultural exposure and engagement (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). A change of field (a social arena, such as education or religion (Bourdieu, 1979/1984)) especially can result in a change in the habitus of those engaging

in said field. Essentially, if one enters an environment in which different things are given more capital, their tastes may change accordingly (Melo et al., 2016).

Therefore, I propose that we simply “fake it til we make it” in terms of more accepting body image. Changing the field in which body image operates to have a more body neutral perspective could result in changing habitus. The changed habitus would then affect embodied taste, and the neutral feelings would become genuine. This would result in a massive societal shift over time.

Overall, body neutrality would not only make people more accepting and less judgemental of others, but it may also help undo some of the systemic damages which have been created and maintained over years of upholding one body as inherently superior. Linking body size and beauty with morality helps perpetuate many deep societal issues and destroying the basis of that link could have a significantly positive impact on society as a whole.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In the introduction, I proposed that the reason why body positivity was not treated as a call for fat acceptance was in part due to embodied tastes promoting intergenerational fatphobia. From there, individuals are assigned to either the ingroup or the outgroup, and this affects how they interact with body image content on social media in various ways. Of those who do not belong, they either seek out changing society in order to let themselves in, or they seek out changing themselves in order to fit in.

WHAT I FOUND

This has resulted in two dominant body image-focused communities: body positivity and proED, the first of which had noble goals at the beginning but which turned into the very thing it was created to dispel, and the second of which indoctrinates young people into potentially deadly mental illness with the implicit promise of fitting into society in a more desirable way.

What I found in my research is that both body positivity and proED content were already well represented in the literature. It was agreed that proED content was harmful (Custers, 2015), but body positivity had more mixed reviews (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Cohen et al.,

2019b). The research done by this thesis shows that body positivity has a plethora of problems which outweigh its positive contributions. The commodification of the movement, its overlooking its history of fat acceptance (i.e. increasingly showcasing of conventionally attractive people), and its objectification and sexualisation of women (and others) are only some of the reasons why this movement has evolved into something harmful.

Most concerning was the lasting emphasis on physical appearance. Body positivity states that people are beautiful despite not fitting into the body ideal. Their “flaws”, such as heavier weight, stretch marks, acne, etc., are in fact flaws. The movement says that these flaws should be normalized, but they are still perceived as flaws. They are seen as something that people have to overcome in their quest for belonging.

MY CONTRIBUTIONS

The bottom line is that the ways in which dominant social tastes view fat people are harmful and ought to be changed. But when modern ways of promoting social change are ineffective, such as using social media to change how others view fat people, the problem becomes clear. How can we change our embodied tastes?

In my research, I presented a new method of discussing body image online which has begun to receive more attention in recent years: body neutrality. Body neutrality essentially undoes all the harmful thoughts surrounding body image in a subtle way;

whereas body positivity says that every body is beautiful and deserving of respect, body neutrality simply asks, who cares about your body at all? I believe that this method of discussing body image online would be much more helpful considering the theoretical outlooks of Bourdieu, Tajfel, and media theories.

Body neutrality helps to undo the embodied taste aspect by removing body size and shape as a form of cultural capital. Having taste for a specific body type is less significant if there is no longer any capital attached to it. Similarly, once there is no longer taste attached, the ingroup/outgroup divide would be undone because if one body is not more desirable than another (AKA if one does not bring more capital), then there is no longer any basis for a socially desirable ingroup. Once fatphobia itself is affected by these two significant societal changes, it will no longer have a place in media. Social media will no longer attempt to replicate the thin ideal online because creating content for views or clout is no longer achievable by simply having an ideal body type. As such, the online fat acceptance movement will no longer have to deal with being overrun by individuals who do not advance fat acceptance, and may come to be seen as a valid political movement once viewers are able to process (Knoll, Matthes, & Heiss, 2018) fat acceptance posts as seeking justice for fat people instead of simply aesthetics. This could make room for actual societal change in the same way that other online movements like #MeToo or #BlackLivesMatter have achieved through hashtag activism.

These are lofty goals to be sure, but body neutrality is gaining traction in online circles already. And considering the pace at which social media and online culture evolve, it is possible that a superior alternative to body neutrality will eventually present itself. After all, body positivity has been considered healthy and supportive for a long time (Davies et al., 2020; Zavattaro, 2021). Body neutrality may also shift into something harmful, but its focus on ignoring the physical body may also make it less susceptible to cultural change than body positivity which still uplifts the thin ideal.

GOING FORWARD

The limitations of any project based on social media is that social media changes so drastically over time and even individual platforms can have distinctly different subcultures. Though I explained my reasoning for focusing this research on Instagram and Tumblr, I still believe there is significant value in studying the ways that body neutrality is discussed on other social media platforms as well, including Reddit, Twitter, and especially Tik Tok, whose younger demographic may provide a different experience than looking at social medias which are frequented by older individuals (Barnhart, 2022). A significant limitation of this study is therefore that the results are difficult to generalize or apply to other contexts.

Another significant limitation is that this study is not empirical. Using surveys or questionnaires to gauge feelings regarding different body image movements would be beneficial to future research surrounding the impacts of this content on people's self esteem or their sense of belonging.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the goal of this project was to provide hope for those who feel neglected by society due to their bodies. There have been attempts in the past, but the ever-alluring call of an unnecessary social hierarchy has dampened any real change. This project was intended to start the conversation and to bring awareness to an underutilized perspective on body image and to argue against those who suggest that fatphobia and body image problems are innate to humanity. Body neutrality is a viable option. It will be a long road. But a worthwhile one to start journeying on.

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Appendix A
Body Positivity Posts
Image 1

Instagram post interface showing a photo of a person with long dark hair and a green top, with their face blurred. The post includes a 'Follow' button, interaction icons (heart, comment, share, bookmark), and a caption: 'Liked by [blurred] and others. You wont get this time back. Recognize what is rather than living for what could've been. Because you are still worthy of this life 🐝'. It also features a list of hashtags such as #selflove, #doveunfiltered, #doveselfesteemproject, #bodyacceptance, #effyourbeautystandards, #plussizefashion, #bodyneutrality, #plussizeblogger, #bodypositivity, #iweigh, #bodyconfidence, and #bodypositivemovement. Two comments are visible: 'Yasssssssss 🍷' and 'You are beautiful babe! Love this post'. The post is dated '1 day ago'.

Image 2

NRW Follow ⋮



♡ 💬 📌

716 likes

NRW: Happiness is the new rich.

#selflove #happiness #lovelife #berserker gang
#kingssupport 🏆 #nrwgirl #fitnessaddict
#girlswithbrownhair #fitfamgermany #photooftheday #selfie
#instafit #instadaily #bodypositivity #fitnessgirl #unna
#support #lovely #makeup #blessed #gymgirl #selfietime
#colorful

View all 15 comments

Image 3



Follow



157 likes

Getting more and more plump


#plump #weightgain #sowhat #mybodymybusiness
#bodypositivity #selfawareness #noshame #selflove
#fullerbust #curvy #brunette #enjoyinglife #feeling #feminine
#lovingmycurves


View all 19 comments

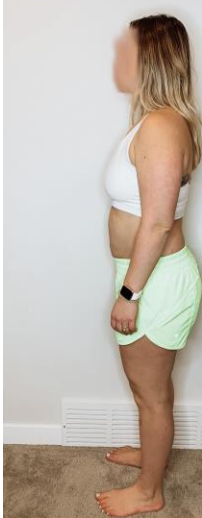

Gorgeous as always 🔥🔥🔥





Image 4

 Regina, Saskatchewan Follow




 Regina, Saskatchewan Follow





1/2

2/2

   491 likes

 FIRE & FLOW ain't no joke.

I committed to this program 100%. Being asked to be a part of the official test group before it was launched to the public was SUCH an honour - I have dreamed about an opportunity like this for 8 years.

So as soon as they asked - I knew then and there that I would take this seriously and get myself some bangin' results!

And that's what it comes down to, no matter what program you decide to do. You need to commit, you need to dig deep and put in the work.

I got results from this program because it's a brilliant program, for sure - but most importantly because I gave it my all! I didn't sleep on this opportunity!

Oh and did I mention... I modified EVERY. SINGLE. WORKOUT. 🤪


Degenerative disc disease & spinal stenosis means I don't do impact. Not even a little. I don't lift heavy.




And I still got incredible results. 🙌


This program launches end of May, but the free sample workout will be available in a couple weeks! If you want me to send it your way as soon as it launches - let me know in the comments below! 🔥🌊

#fireandflow #fireandflowtestgroup #fireandflowbeachbody #athomeworkouts #beachbodyondemand #bodypositivity #postpartumfitness #transformationtuesday #athomeworkouts #lululemon @elijah...
@je...

View all 16 comments

 Yes please

   491 likes

 FIRE & FLOW ain't no joke.

I committed to this program 100%. Being asked to be a part of the official test group before it was launched to the public was SUCH an honour - I have dreamed about an opportunity like this for 8 years.

So as soon as they asked - I knew then and there that I would take this seriously and get myself some bangin' results!

And that's what it comes down to, no matter what program you decide to do. You need to commit, you need to dig deep and put in the work.

I got results from this program because it's a brilliant program, for sure - but most importantly because I gave it my all! I didn't sleep on this opportunity!

Oh and did I mention... I modified EVERY. SINGLE. WORKOUT. 🤪

Degenerative disc disease & spinal stenosis means I don't do impact. Not even a little. I don't lift heavy.

And I still got incredible results. 🙌

This program launches end of May, but the free sample workout will be available in a couple weeks! If you want me to send it your way as soon as it launches - let me know in the comments below! 🔥🌊

#fireandflow #fireandflowtestgroup #fireandflowbeachbody #athomeworkouts #beachbodyondemand #bodypositivity #postpartumfitness #transformationtuesday #athomeworkouts #lululemon @elijah...
@je...

View all 16 comments


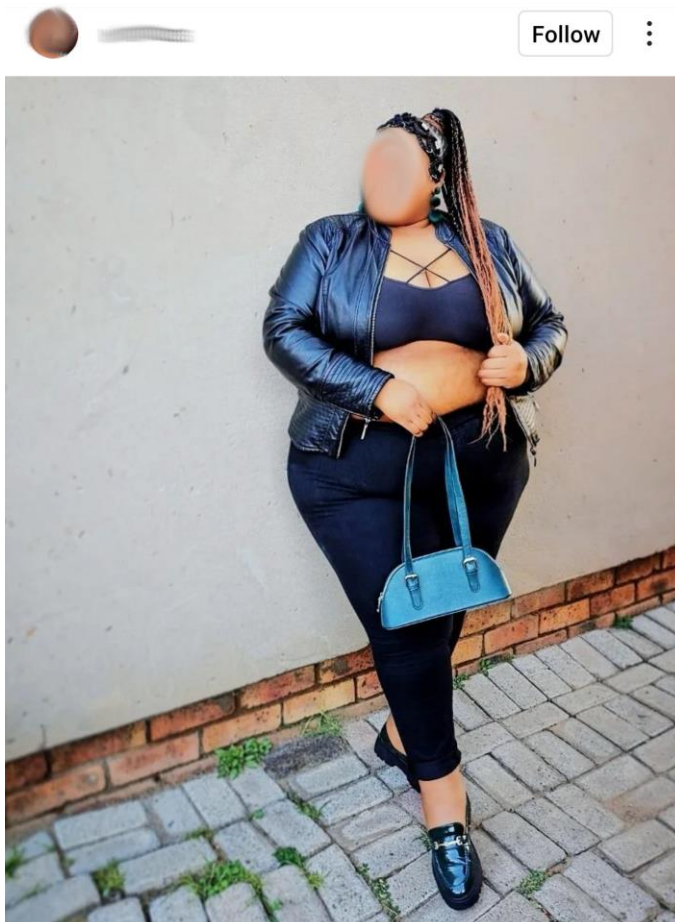
 Yes please

Image 5



177 likes

Body positivity self-love 🥰
and self-acceptance must come from within, before it comes
from others 🙌😊

~
~
~

#bodypositive #bodypositivity #selfacceptance
#comfortableinmyskin #mybodymyrules #fashionstyle
#fashion #fashionblogger #thiccfitssme
#thiccfitss_official#thiccfitss

View all 18 comments

@zambianhoney 🥰🥰🥰
@nicole... 😊



4 hours ago

Image 6



192 likes

Weight loss is hard work, not magic 💪

15 months ago I joined Slimming World, I was almost 20 stone and I honestly never felt more determined. I wanted nothing more than to become happy and healthy (do I think I'm Olivia Rodrigo lol) 😊

All jokes aside I really was so disappointed in myself, I couldn't believe I had let myself go. I was 23 years old and I was so worried 😞

In February I hit my five stone loss, I was absolutely buzzing however since then I haven't made a massive progress (honest) 🍷

I haven't beaten myself up as I have been focusing on other important aspects in my life 🤍

Yesterday however that motivation was back to 100% that determination I felt when I first stepped on the scales back in 2020 was 100% back 🍷

I have never quit, I have been following the Slimming World plan consistently however not to the full effect.

I wasn't as dedicated to my body magic, I was using all my syns each day and going over at the weekends, I wasn't as organised as I had been but boy I am back 🍷

No more maintains and certainly no gains ✅✅✅

Just hard work, commitment and success ❤️

LET'S DO THIS 🍷🍷✅

#slimminaworld #slimminaworld slimminaworld #sw #swuk

Follow

Top posts
#bodypositivity

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Just hard work, commitment and success ❤️

LET'S DO THIS 🍷🍷✅

#slimmingworld #slimmingworld slimmingworld #sw #swuk
#slimmingworldireland #slimmingworlduk
#slimmingworldbelfast #slimminhworldmafia
#slimmingworldjourney #slimmingworldfamily
#slimmingworldjourney #slimmingworldsupport
#slimmingworldblogger #slimmingworldinsta
#slimmingworldtransformation #weightlossjourney
#weightloss #weightlosstransformation
#slimmingworldtransformation #slimmingworldfoodie
#slimmingworldlifestyle #transformationtuesday
#bodypositivity #bodypositive #bodytransformation
#happiness #2021 #2022 #buzzing

🍷🍷🍷❤️

Fabulous achievement 🍷

5 hours ago



Image 7



♡ 💬 📌

170 likes

The human body is wild, amazing, and miraculous when you think about all that it does for us 24/7 without us even thinking about it.

Have you expressed gratitude for your body today? All that it's doing to support your life force 🙌

That's one of the first things I write in my gratitude every day. I am thankful for my health, I am thankful for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

As weird as it's been watching my body change during pregnancy, I am thankful I've documented the process.

I've done my best to celebrate my body for it's changes, instead of shaming it. I've had to continually remind myself that all these changes, even the ones I don't particularly "love" mean a healthy growing baby.

Pregnancy is a wild mix of emotions, experiences, and changes. It is also temporary.

I could go on and on about the list of things that are hard and uncomfortable right now, but this pregnancy will be over in a short 10 weeks or less. I am doing my best to stay positive, speak positive things, soak it up, celebrate myself and my body for all its doing and enjoy the final weeks of this very temporary experience. 🙌👶

Cheers to the final countdown until little babe arrives 🙌 I'm far more curious of WHEN the baby will arrive than WHAT gender the baby is 😊

View all 12 comments

Beautiful! ❤️

You are so beautiful. 🧡🧡🧡

5 hours ago

Image 8



Montreal, Quebec

Follow



183 likes

Bigger is better (thats what she said) 😁😎💪

#bodybuilding #bodypositivity #gymlife #gymaddict
#stayhealthy #men #muscular #arab #athlete #strong
#training #determination #commitment #beard #tanned
#summer

View all 5 comments

🙌👏👏👏



You look great 💪



2 hours ago

Image 9

Montréal, Québec Follow



1/2

Liked by [redacted] and others

[redacted] Ready for more beach days. 💜

Shop the look @iconswim

🔗: Beach Riot Swimsuit

#iconswim #swimwearfashion #lifestyleinfluencer
#beachready #prpackage #vacayvibes #swimwearbrand
#bodypositivity #selflovefirst #mtl #blackinfluencers
#lifestyleblogging #blogginggals #blackfemininity

View all 39 comments

[redacted] This color on you 😍😍

WOWWWWWWW!!! What a fine ass cousin I got

[redacted] Love the purple swim suit on you !! 😍

3 hours ago

Image 10



View shop



Liked by [redacted] and others

[redacted] The World is My "Aesthetic."

Ladies Check Out the "Spring Hours Pant Set" ... and Yes It's Coming Back in More Colors.

Vintagekarmafashion.com

#plussizefashion #plussizeboutique #plussizestylewatch
#mystyliscurves #plussizelook #plussizeoutfitoftheday
#bodypositivity #bodypositive

View all 6 comments

[redacted] Ookaayy 🔥🔥

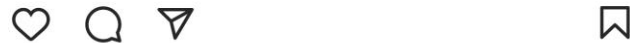


[redacted] 🤔



7 hours ago


Image 11




490 likes

I have got to be honest here right now as this is what i promised i would do all along. Weight loss surgery is not a quick fix. Weight loss surgery was the best decision i made & have zero regrets. My fibro has improved. My self confidence, self worth & health has improved. Right now im having a blip with my mental health & thats ok. I hate myself at the moment. I feel utterly awful. Maybe because ive had my first failed embryo transfer & feel utterly useless as a woman, or maybe its the progesterone making me feel god awful about myself, and again thats ok, ill ride the emotions and get on with it, but for now id like to celebrate trying to keep my head above water!




View all 32 comments


You definitely aren't useless! Please don't listen to that negative voice because it's not from God. Focus on all the good things you have and have accomplished. 





You're amazing hun. This alone is helping so many. Sending you so much love 

11 hours ago


Image 12

  Follow 





113 likes

 A rare moment with my hair up 😊

...

#hair #hairstyles #thick #bun #athleisure #thicc #latina #thickthighssavelives #hoops #leggings #tiedye #spring #happy #vibes #lifestyle #leggingsaddict #mondaymood #bodypositivity #bodypositive #body

View all 3 comments

 Love your page ! 



 ❤️❤️❤️ 

Image 13

  Follow 



5,095 likes

 Mum 'your skin can't get worse... can it?'

One month with no treatment and we are flaring 🔥

[#psoriasis](#) [#psoriasiswarrior](#) [#psoriasisawareness](#)
[#psoriasisgirl](#) [#autoimmunedisease](#) [#guttatepsoriasis](#)
[#getyourskinout](#) [#bodypositivity](#) [#facialpsoriasis](#)
[#scalppsoriasis](#) [#normaliseskinconditions](#)
[#normalisepsoriasis](#) [#normalisepsoriasis](#)

[View all 235 comments](#)

 Ger strong... it's warrior war ! 🙌🙌 

 Girl I feel you right now! Having a flare myself 

Image 14


Chicago, Illinois
Follow
⋮



♡
💬
📌
🔖

245 likes

touch base 😊 I started this page as a way to escape anxieties/uncertainties (we all have them, don't be a Judge Judy 🗿) – note my handle ... A TOAST TO BUTTER 🍞 DAYS aka a toast to better days ahead 🍷 – cooking is an outlet for me 🌈 we carry so much love in our hearts, don't forget to give some to yourself 💕 was I feeling myself after I got my hair done? yup. snapped a pic, sue me lol 📸 stop comparing your behind the scenes to someone else's highlight reel 🌙

#selflove #selfie #smile #confidence #loveyourself
 #spreadlove #positivity #positivelife #spreadjoy
 #nocomparisons #loveyourselfquotes #loveyourselffirst
 #selfietime #selfiequeen #taketheselfie #bodypositivity
 #atoasttobutterdays

View all 41 comments

🗿
Bella
♡
♡

17 hours ago

Image 15



Liked by [New Jersey](#) and others

Yesterday I tried on a bikini to see what my body looked like in one, because my weight check in at my appointment earlier in the day seriously messed with my head. I've never been one to care about the number on the scale, ever, because I know it's what you see that matters, and weight can be distributed differently on everyone. However, I also have never been this heavy in my life, and at 5'1 there's not much room for the weight to go! And my cankles have been at max capacity my entire life, so adding 20 pounds in 4 weeks is a lot for my little self. 😊 I was sitting there trying to accept that I'm realistically probably going to end up hitting 200 pounds this pregnancy, being that I am at about 190 with 50+ days still to go, and it had me questioning myself, and even questioning Miguel, to see if I look different to him now. He reassured me and told me I'm growing a whole human in there and that I am just "lookin thicccc, girllll" in a good way. 🥰💕 & he hyped up the bikini pics I showed him when asking him to be honest with me, and he really just made me feel good and reminded me that it's okay. He downplayed my new stretch marks saying how irrelevant they are and we laughed about how when he went to rub my belly to reassure me he noticed I was lathered to the godssss with oil and lotion. 😊😊😊😊 Like we were crying REAL TEARS, laughing until our bellies hurt, because he said I was sending my stretch marks clear signals that they are not welcome here. LOL. But I say this to say, I woke up today in such a better head space about my body & just super grateful to have people like Miguel in my corner. Women already have SO MUCH PRESSURE on them all the time by society...so having a partner who supports you and lifts you up in those moments is so beneficial. 🥰💕 So to the person who messaged asking what 200 pounds even looks like on someone only 5'1, this is what it looks like...on me. & I decided I'm okay with it. 😊

#33weekspregnant #inspirepregnancy #bodypositivity #momof3 #babynumber3 #bablyno3

Image 16



[Redacted]

Follow



1/2





7,113 likes


[Redacted] A little birdie told me strong women look too masculine 🤔






[View all 154 comments](#)

21 hours ago


Image 17

 Hamburg, Germany Follow 






605 likes

 Any girl reading this? I pray that you find a man who will love you for being the real you. 🥰

[#lovemyself](#) [#bodypositivity](#) [#redlight](#) [#hamburg](#)
[#lithuaniangirl](#) [#bodyshape](#) [#fitfamgermany](#) [#fitnessgirl](#)
[#ootd](#) [#tan](#) [#summervibes](#) [#blogger_de](#) [#contentcreator](#)
[#blackismyhappycolor](#) [#brunette](#) [#photooftheday](#) [#fit](#)

[View all 29 comments](#)



Image 18

  Follow 




163 likes

 a gentle reminder to love the skin I'm in 
[#bodypositivity](#)

View all 4 comments

 DM me with your VENMO if you really need financially help with bills or school fees and some others financially help just say HELLO I NEED HELP and drop your Cashapp name or PayPal you can also DROP your Zelle 😊




 Your beyond beautiful




Image 19

 Phoenix, Arizona Follow 



193 likes



 Made sure I hit the gym today and finishing up with some cardio 😊💪


#sunday #healthylifestyle #exercise #weightlifting #sherrygideons #bodypositivity #bodybuilding #fitness #fitness #fitnessmotivation #fitnessjourney #fitnessmodel #bodybuilder #figurecompetitor #healthy #health #habits ##habitsofhealth #healthyhabits #wellness #consciousness #consciousliving





View all 19 comments

 Magnificent photo . Text me with your amount of feet pictures I'm interested in getting them. 



 @or  Thank you 😊 

 Follow 



340 likes

 Rome wasn't built in a day, 12 months work with @lu

We pushed hard, he got uncomfortable, did the necessary and more.

Over 15kg up with very similar body composition.




How? Lucas learnt how to train properly, with intent and accuracy as well as push past his comfort zone.

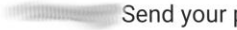


Building muscle isn't easy, you've got to earn the new tissue.

Now we flick the switch and get him inside out for summer 🙌

#coaching #coach #results #bodybuildingmotivation #bodybuilder #fitness #muscle #bodypositivity #abs #pecs

View all 6 comments

 Send your pic 🥰 @f 

 Send your pic 🥰 @f 

2 hours ago

Image 21



United Kingdom

Follow

1/5



Liked by [redacted] and others
[redacted] Summer diet pressure

Okay my people 🙌 it's getting to the time of year where a lot of people are starting their dieting phases which is AMAZING good for them! We love a good challenge & I love to see people share their fitness journeys 🙌

HOWEVER it's also the time of year where there is a lot of

marketing going around reminding you of how long you have to get 'summer shredded' and BELIEVE me when I say I understand it is HARD!

Coming from a restrictive background myself & working with my clients I know that this time of year is super tough 💜

It is so beyond easy to look at someone starting their summer diet and question whether you should be starting one to, I know this, because I feel it myself!

But it's important to remember that just because someone else is doing something, doesn't mean you have to!

STAY IN YOUR LANE 🚗

As the saying goes, you wouldn't jump off a cliff if your friend was going to would you? 🙌

You are on YOUR journey 🙌

& that's pretty damn exciting!

So who cares if you're not dieting for 'summer' or getting 'summer shredded'

It's better to work on YOUR journey build a stronger, happy YOU year round so you don't just have a hot girl summer can have a hot girl spring, autumn, summer & winter 😊

Having a fat loss goal is cool, but you absolutely don't have to lose fat just for summer 🙌

Am I right? Or am I right 🙌

Coaching - @ [redacted] ✨

View all 13 comments

[redacted] Oh man so true! Summer bod has been coined to be such a pressuring thing 🔥

[redacted] 🙌🙌🙌🙌

5 hours ago

Image 22



406 likes

Bicester, Oxfordshire Your weekly reminder to not compare yourself to people on the internet ❤️

Even they don't look like that all the time... everyone can make themselves look different with a different stance, wearing their clothes different, better lighting...

Let's not compare our normal to someone else's posed 🍑

#instagramvsreality #instagramvsreallife #instavsreality
 #posedvsrelaxed #posedvsreality #posedvsunposed
 #selflove #bodypositivity #bodyposi #bodypositive
 #confidenceiskey #confidenceissexy #confidentwomen

Image 23

 Snap Fitness Hinckley Follow ⋮



♡ 💬 📍 🔖

Liked by  and **others**

 Our bodies are always changing... We're not supposed to remain completely the same and that's normal.

-

When we think about our bodies changing, we sometimes associated this with a bad thing. But it's not and we should embrace whatever phase we're at 😊

-

It's your journey and completely different to anyone else's. There's no better feeling than looking back to see how far you've come ❤️

-

Pics, left to right- now, 2021, 2020

[View all 15 comments](#)

 I'm loving this outfit hun 😍😍 ♡

 Absolutely 🙌 always looking 🔥 ♡

4 hours ago

Image 24

 London, United Kingdom Follow ⋮



♡ 💬 📌 🔖

161 likes

 Happy Monday 🥳 realise I forgot to post this, one day I'll smile in pictures 😊 currently at the gym working my bum off to get in a bikini properly for the first time in two years, trying to focus on loving my body again! 30 days til Mexico - I'm too excited to go explore the world again 🥰💜

⋮

#mondaymotivation #monday #mondaymood #nightout #motivation #selfie #tiktok #alternative #alt #uk #london #redhead #ginger #girlswholift #strongwomen #selfcare #selflove #bodypositivity

[View all 18 comments](#)

 Thanks for standing out from the rest ♡

@ Initially I deposited a sum of \$500 as my start up capital and within few days I got return of \$7,042 . Be is very reliable and experienced in this field

 Lindas ♡

24 hours ago

Image 25



Berlin, Germany

Follow



405 likes

Daydreaming of a reality that I can actually create. Mastering the skill of my mind currently.

It's TAURUS SEASON and I AM A TAURUS BABY. I can feel it's my season and I'm taking it in.

Campaign for @s...
Shot by @_...

#bodypositivity #berlin

View all 29 comments

- @... 🙏🥰🤍
- @... selber Mami 🐮🤍

7 hours ago

Image 26

 Gainesville, Florida Follow 



497 likes

 My happy place is in the water 🌞🌊
#plussizeswimwear #plussizeswim #asoscurve
#loveyourself #selfloveclub #loveyourself
#womenempowerment #womenempoweringwomen
#womensupportingwomen #gnvfl #gainesvillefl
#neworleansbride #plussizebride #plussizeblog
#weddingplanning #bodypositivity #bodypositivepower
#effyourbeautystandards #alachuacounty #bloggerlife
#floridasprings #floridabeaches

View all 16 comments

 A mermaid 🧜‍♀️🌟💖 

 So nice 

2 days ago

Image 27

 Follow ⋮



♡ 💬 📍 📌

481 likes

 Stay with us for more! ❤️
DM us for credit/removal
@ unknown
.
.
.
.
#feminist #feminism #feminine #equal #equality
#girlswolift #strongwomen #goddess #bodypositive
#bodypositivity #lgbt #female #femininstmemes
#femalerights #thefutureiswomen #prochoice #feministgram

View all 5 comments

 Wow! So revolutionary and pioneering! ❤️
Let's hold up signs to criminals and say, "hey! Stop being criminals!" And then crime will naturally stop....😄😄😄.
How childish.

 @  men: ❤️

1 day ago

Image 28



Image 29

 Greece Follow 

 1/10

Liked by  and **others**

 *CURVE REDEFINES BEAUTY*

You guys can now shop from [@shopicurvee](#) and enjoy a 15% discount using the code "Fans15"

Photographer & Art Director [@p!\[\]\(e9101f8641b4cf9d570627dddc2e34a2_img.jpg\)](#)






[#icurvee](#) [#icgals](#) [#plussize](#) [#plussizefashion](#) [#plussizemodel](#)
[#curves](#) [#curvygirl](#) [#bodypositive](#) [#bodypositivity](#)


View all 10 comments





 [@!\[\]\(48cab3555f72a3f8cc252ceeed6898bc_img.jpg\)](#) XAXAXAXA 


Image 30

  Follow 



108 likes

 Live, love and laugh lifes to short. ❤️❤️

...



...

...

...

...

#live #love #laugh #liveloveandlaugh #nikepros #nike #gymwear #smilealways #freethenipplemovement #womanconfidence #womanpower #confidenceiskey #teeth #smilemore #freespirit #black #lingerie #bodypositivity

 Gorgeous ❤️🔥❤️ 

7 hours ago


Appendix B


ProED Posts

Image 31



Image 32





[Follow](#)
⋮

I'm scared that the day i become "skinny enough"
i'll realize that no matter what i do and how much
weight i lose i'll always be unlovable.


#anamia #anOrexia #anorexia #ana #eating
#eating disorder #ed #unlovable #thinspO
#thinspo #tw #prOana #proana
#notprojustusingtags #bonespo #bulimia


🗨️
↻
❤️

2,377 notes

↪️
💬
↻
❤️

Image 33





[Follow](#)
⋮

My body if it wasnt covered in fat>>>

#eating disoder things #anOrex1a #calories
#bonesprO #tw ana thoughts #🦋 vent
#ana mia #anamia #c 🦋 #ana #edtblr
#restrictive ed #ed #anorexsick #anorexik
#anorexjk #bonespø #Body #thinspo
#thinspiration

↻
❤️

68 notes

↪️
💬
↻
❤️

Image 34



[Blurred name]

Follow




You aren't weak or lazy for relapsing. Sometimes we slip, and it's a truly frustrating and exhausting thing. Ask for help, get back up, and try again.

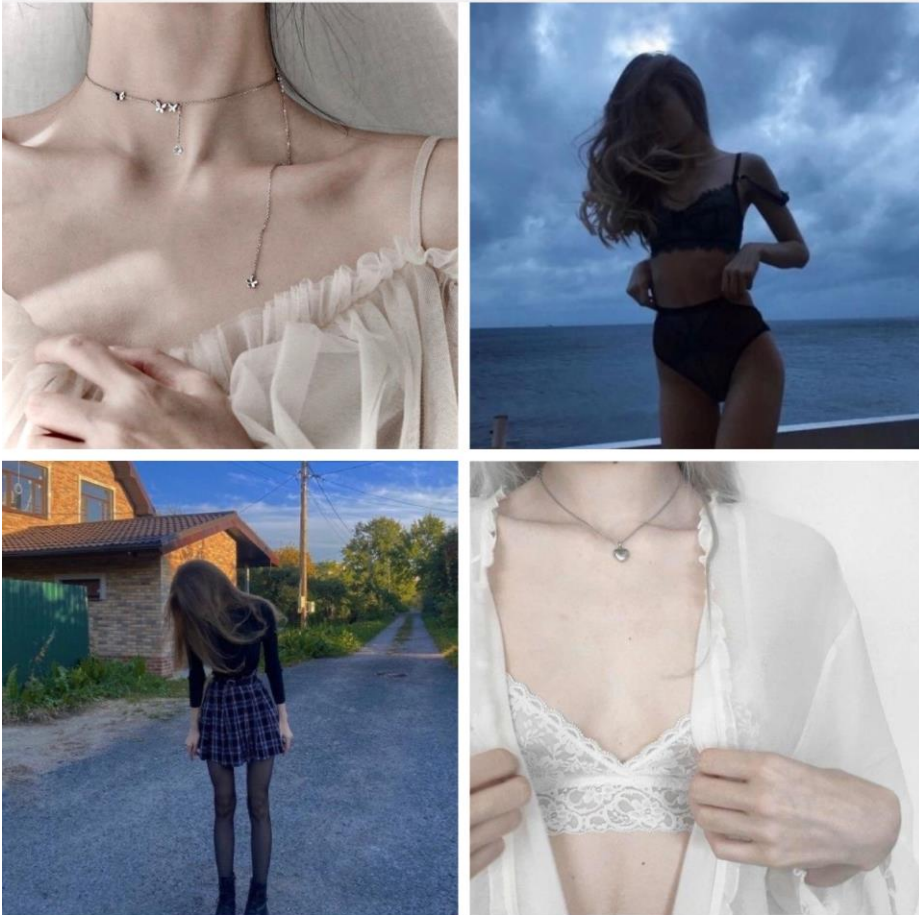
#relapse #relapse positivity #healing
#Ed recovery #eating disorders
#eating disorder recovery
#tw/// tags from here are triggering
#////////////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////////
#thinspo #Ana #proana #pro ana
#body dysmorphia #self harm #bulimia

  677 notes



Image 35

 [@username](#) [Follow](#) 



do you really want to eat that? or do you want to look fragile and dainty? the choice is yours.

#thinspo #ana #ed #notprojustusingthetags #eating problems #tw ed #tw ana thoughts #pro ana #pro 4na #just ed stuff #thinspho #i wanna be thin #thin

  54 notes 

Image 36



small

Follow



small

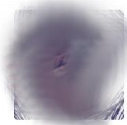
i want to feel so delicate and fragile, like a china cup that he gets to break; loose clothes slipping off of my skinny thighs, they could be so slim and pretty, and my thin fingers digging marks into his back as we move; kisses leaving marks and bruises on sharp jaws and raised collarbones, down exposed ribs and hips; watching him look at me, watching how sick i am, but taking me regardless

#thinspo #thinsp0 #anorexia #ana #anamia
#ana mia #proana #not pro just tags #pro ana
#anorexik #ano... [See all](#)

 1,579 notes



Image 37

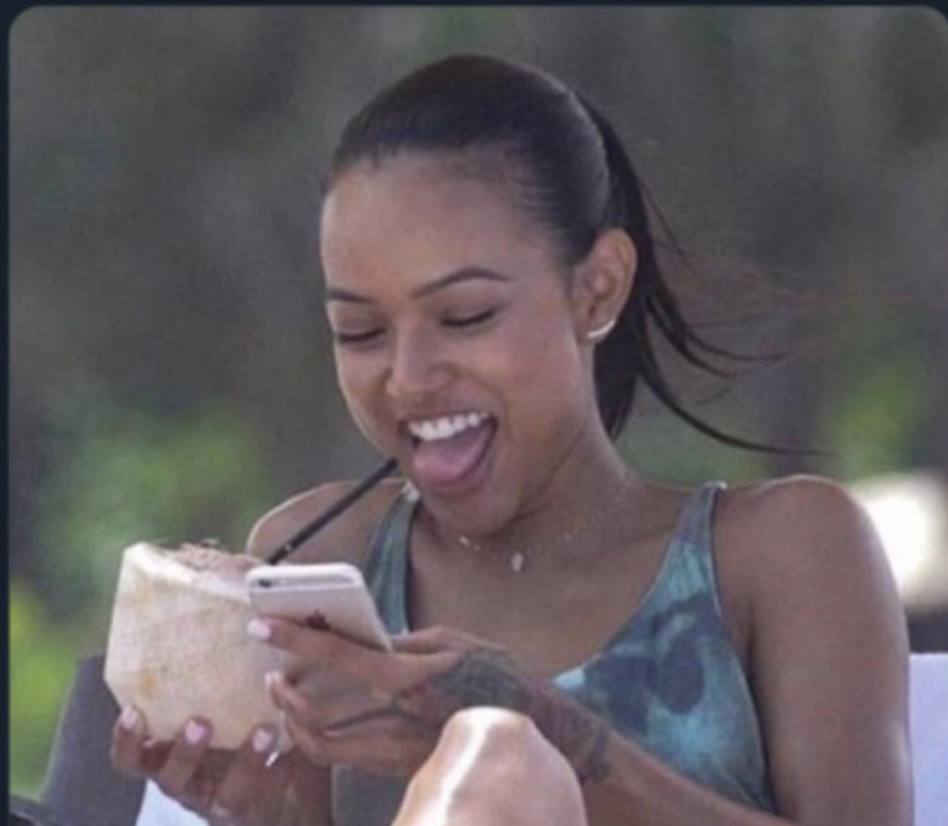


[\[unreadable\]](#)

[Follow](#)



Me, laughing at ED memes, knowing i can't send them to anyone or they'll be concerned



[#thinspo](#) [#eatingdisorder](#) [#ana](#) [#bonespo](#)

   10,012 notes





~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Follow




i'm underweight but i don't look or feel
underweight? i want my money back

#tw 4n4 #ed diet #i want to be a skeleton
#i want to be th1n #4n4r3x1c #tw ed rant
#sk1nnie #an0r3xic #th1n\$po
#eat1ng d1sorder #eating disorder #thinspo
#tw ed relapse #4n4 blog #4n4 thoughts
#4n4 diary #underweight #ana vent
#tw ana thoughts #anor3x1a

 37 notes



Image 39


[blurred]
[Follow](#)
...

ed-things nobody talks about

(some things I experienced when my ed was really bad when I was 16-17. It's not all fun and it's not like the cute thinspo-posts you see here everyday)

- hiding food in your pockets, shoes, socks... while eating with others
- forgetting that you were hiding the food in these places (oh the smell)
- friends, family ... finding the food you were hiding
- throwing away the food someone you loved gave you
- making people cry and constantly worry about you
- being upset when people give you the bigger portion (do they think you eat that much????)
- being upset when people give you the smaller portion (do they think you are fat and that you should eat less????)
- drinking to much water before a doctors weight in so you feel like you are peeing your pants
- the pain after the laxatives kick in
- being afraid to put chapstick on (because you know, it's made out of fat lol)
- not going out with friends, because there is food everywhere (you will regret it later, because everyone went clubbing and now that you are healthy they are not into that anymore, aka missing out your youth)
- freezing when people around you wear a bikini
- not being able to get pregnant, although you recovered
- heartproblems, although recovered
- struggling with hormone-production, although you recovered
- having bad teeth, although you recovered
- having problems with your bones, although you recovered
- having problems with your nails and hair, although recovered
- the need to take medication your whole life because of a few years of having an ed
- loosing your sexdrive
- being afraid to fall asleep and never wake again
- not being able to stop, even if you want to

←
thinspo




Posts
Tags
Blogs

the need to take medication your whole life because of a few years of having an ed

- loosing your sexdrive
- being afraid to fall asleep and never wake up again
- not being able to stop, even if you want to

Edit: I didn't want to make you guys feel bad about using chapsticks. I thought it was obvious that, unless your eat your chapstick, you don't consume calories by using it. Calories need to enter your mouth, not just sit on your lip. Your skin just absorbs the moisture, you can't gain weight by putting calories on your skin. Me thinking that was a thing and so many of you now thinking that's a thing should make you think about how absurd this illness is. You are here to live and experience this earth. You are not on this planet to worry about calories absorbing your body through your skin.

Pinned Post #ed #eating disorder thoughts #eating disorder things #tw eating stuff #tw eating mention #disordered eating tw #tw ed talk #tw ed content #tw ed stuff #tw #trigger #trigger warning #skinny #skinny girl #thinspo #realtak #me #mine #personal #anorexia #ana #pro recovery #bulimia #mia #anorex #anorekic #anorexjc #anorexic #ana tip

   5,425 notes




Image 40

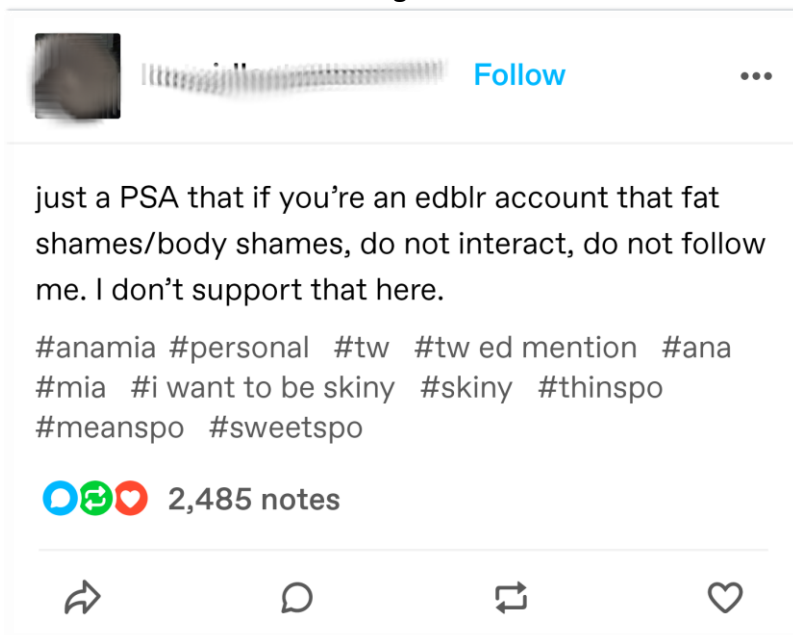


Image 41

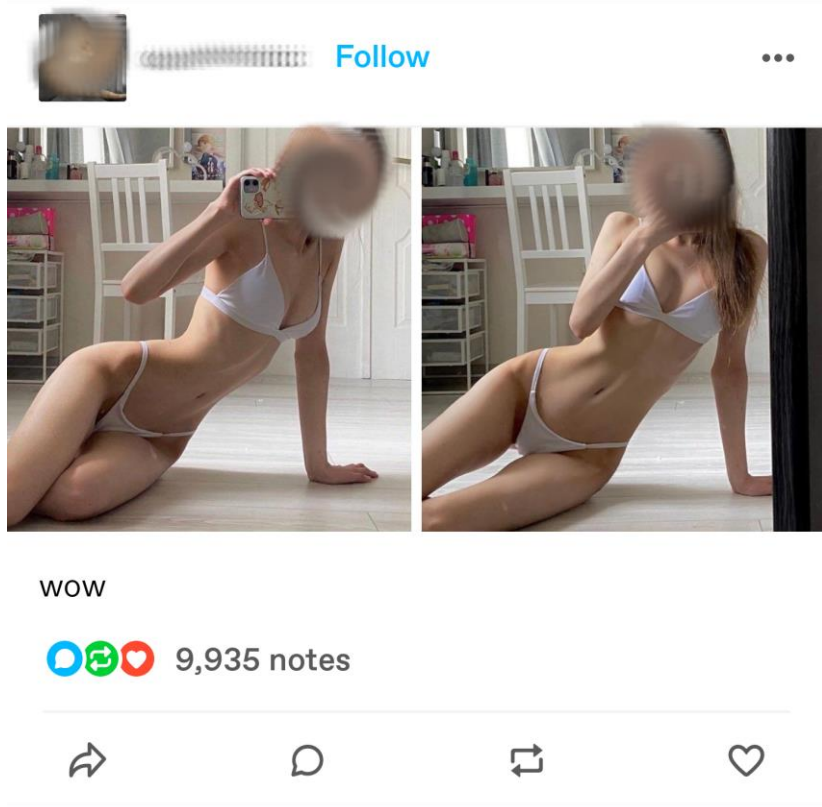


Image 42

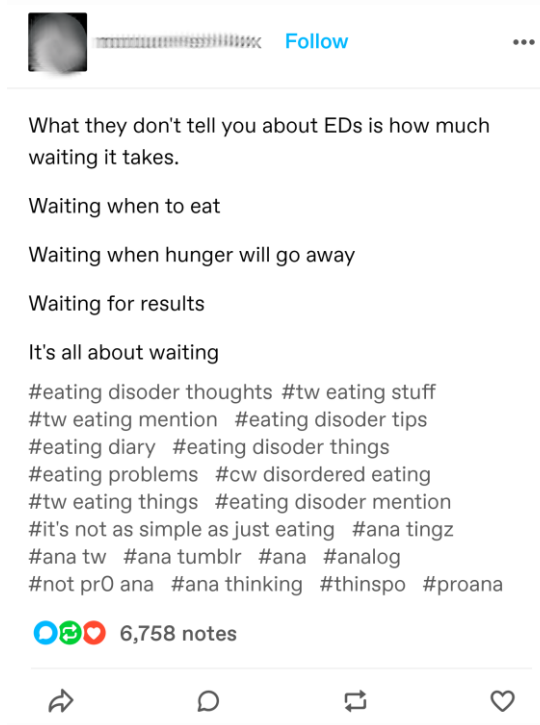


Image 43



ahaha 😂

#edchallenge #thinspo #model thin
#need to lose more weight #meanspo
#not pr0 just using tags #proana #ed memes
#self harrm #sh #tw suicide #anorecya
#self harm

🔗👍👎❤️ 14,015 notes



Image 44



“why are you such a picky eater?”

lol bro i'm not gonna waste calories on food i might not even like get your head out of your ass

#disordered eating tw #low cal ana #tw ed stuff
#pr0 ed #pro ana #anorexia #anamia
#bulimia #anorexic #bulimic #bonespo
#thinspo #fasting #gw

🔗👍👎❤️ 8,336 notes



Image 45



SEBASTIAN

Follow



Me after every meal ever

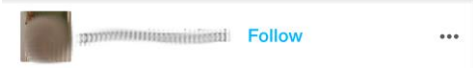


#Ed memes #Thinspo #Ana #Mia #Anamia
#Ed tw #its not as simple as just eating
#weightloss #food restriction #Skinny #Ednos
#Osfed #Not eating #restricting #Edmeme

   9,028 notes



Image 46



Tr1gger W4rn1ng// Th1nsp0



We can do this. We are determined enough to be perfect.

#goals #health & fitness #nicespo #weightloss #pro 4na #motivation #pro4na #restrictive ed #sk1nny legs #4na #thinspo #sweetspo

64 notes

Image 47



Follow



'I survived on Diet Coke, cigarettes and coffee': The Queen's Gambit star Anya Taylor-Joy reveals she burned out filming three back-to-back projects

By Rebecca Lawrence For Mailonline
08:12 EDT 27 Aug 2021 , updated 10:35 EDT 27 Aug 2021



20 shares

311 comments



#tw #tw ed #ed #thinspo #notprojusttags
#proana #promia #ana #mia #anOrexia
#anorexia

10,404 notes

Image 48

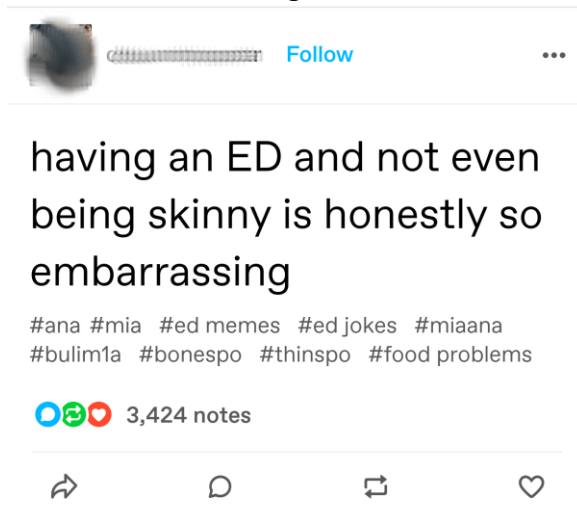
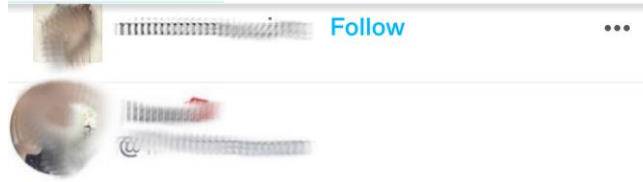


Image 49



Me after skipping breakfast



00:15 · 16.11.21 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

#tw anamia #proana #pro ana #anamia
#tw mia #tw ana #not pro just using tags
#tw ed #tw ed thoughts #anotexic
#eating disorder #thinspo #thinsp0 #thinspii
#skinnysp0 #skinnyspo #meanspo
#sweetspo

4,348 notes

Image 50



im so ashamed how did i let myself get this big

#anamia #its not as simple as just eating
#pretty girls dont eat #anarex1c
#disordered eating tw #not pr0 just using tags
#thinspi #tw ed talk #anorexia #bulimia
#thinspo #thinspii #ed meme
#eating disorders #proana #promia #thin

6,928 notes



Image 51

 [@username](#) [Follow](#) ⋮



They think I'm fat

#ana #mia #ed memes #ed jokes #miaana
#bulim1a #bonespo #thinspo #food problems

 7,259 notes

Image 52



[@username](#)

Follow



being self aware with an ed basically means being fully aware of everything you're doing wrong, the different ways it could backfire and the health issues it can cause, and doing it anyway cause you just cant help it.. all while still feeling invalid and not sick enough

#thinspo #eating disorder thoughts
 #just ed things #ed memes #ed motivation
 #ed tumblr #tw ed #tw eating disorder
 #tw eating mention #anorecsick #bulim1a

   5,783 notes



Image 53



[@username](#)

Follow



“Rapid weightloss” My ASS. This shit is taking too long bestie

#ed #ednos #skinny #thin #thinspo
 #ed writing #ed vent #proana #pro ana
 #pro anorexia #promia #pro mia #probulimia
 #not pro just using tags
 #it's not as simple as just eating #4n4mi4
 #4n0r3x14 #ana meme #pro ana meme

   2,993 notes



Image 54



Stolen from twitter, forgot the @

#anemia #eating disorder things #tw ed behavior
#eating disorder thoughts #not pro ana #ana
#ed memes #thinspo #ed things #thinspiracija
#tw ed content

 6,543 notes



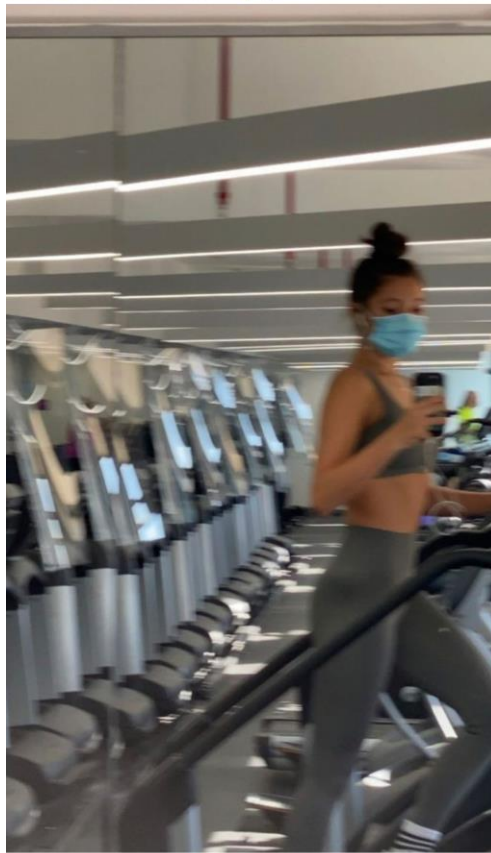
Image 55



Follow



im so excited to lose weight so that I can wear those cute gym outfits and look marvellous in them



yes I want to be *that girl*



2,779 notes



Image 56



Me opening tumblr when I'm trying to find motivation to starve

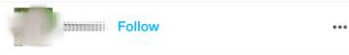


#ana #notpro #mia #ed #thinspo

14,289 notes



Image 57




anyone else got "fridge goals" for when they own one fully?? bc 2 me it's a dream



#thinspo #thin #ana #mia #anmia #tw ed #skinny #ed #eating disorder #notpro #weight loss #calorie counting #calories #eating disorder things #ribs #tw weight #i want to be skinny #tw ed talk

8,005 notes

Image 58



[Follow](#) ...


he says i don't need to starve

but i know he would love it if i were thinner; to be able to lift me up effortlessly, picking me up and spinning me around like a doll; his big hands against a small waist; pretty skirts and dresses he could take off to find something even prettier underneath, ribs and collarbones and slim thighs, all for him

#thinspo #thinspiration #thinspo #tw #tw ed #ed #ana #anorexia #anoresick #anorexic #anorexik #ana mia #anamia #pro ana #proana #not pro just tags #<3

 2,244 notes

Image 59



[Follow](#) ...

If you're trying to eat less or not binge as much, these tips can help! 💕💕💕💕

- coffee (caffeine pills) can help suppress your appetite so you don't binge on that family size bag of chips.
- A LOT of water (just chug it; really good for hydration too; you can add in electrolytes)
- Metamucil (~30cal for 2tbs but helps you feel full; also yay fiber)
- high fiber/high protein foods (feel fuller longer)
- finding ways to take your mind off it (go for a walk, shower, etc)
- knowledge is power. look up ways binge eating is not good for you

Feel free to add things that have helped you not binge eat!

#healthy #binge eating #binging #bingeing #weight loss #lose weight #diet #thin #skinny #kpop #ulzzang #anamia #not pro ana #ednos #eating disorder #thinspo #ana memes #ed things #ana things #thinspo kpop #kpop thinspo #korean thinspo #thinspiration #thinsporation #anoraxia #anorexia #tw #kpop ed #thinspi #mypost


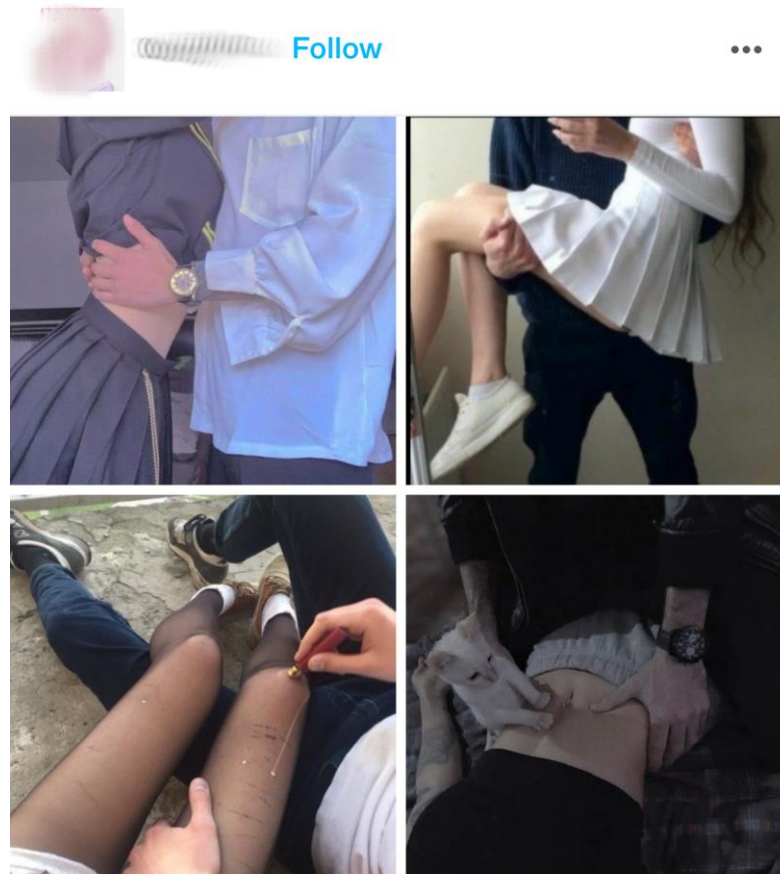
 3,175 notes

Image 60



here's some relationship thinspo !!! this is the kinda stuff that motivates me bc i can feel my boyfriend struggle when he tries to pick me up. he's significantly thinner than i am and it makes me feel more disgusting than i already feel. i know that he would love me more if i were skinnier.

#proana #notprojustags #self harm #tw
 #relationship thinspo #relationship #thinspo
 #thin #skinny #ed #edtumblr #anorexia
 #anorexik #love #love thinspo #tiny
 #thin inspo

 1,274 notes

Appendix C

Body Neutrality Posts

Image 61

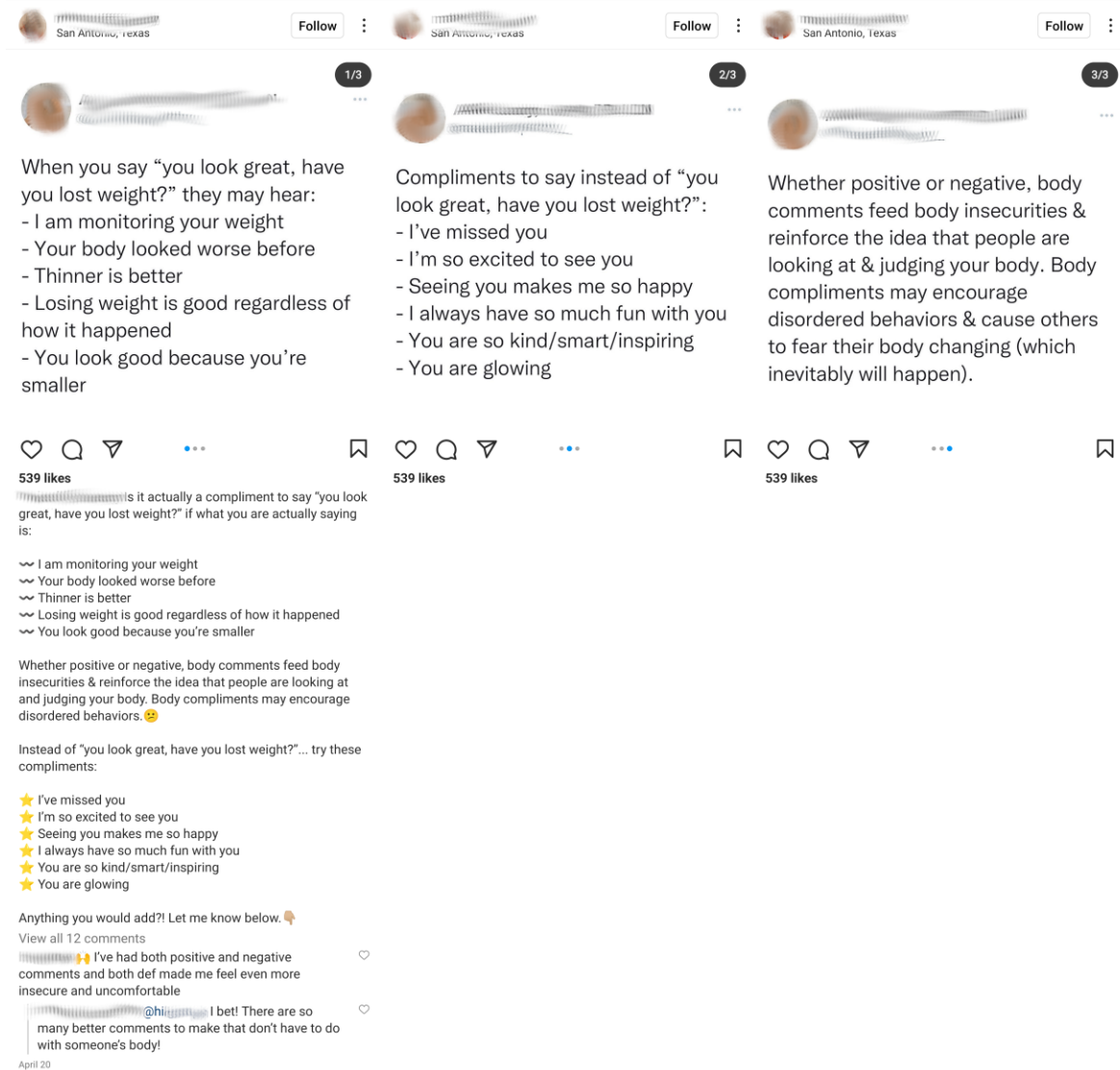


Image 62

Mom, am I fat?

No, honey. You're beautiful!

What you might say instead: →

"I want to understand what you're asking; can you tell me more?"

"It sounds like you're having some tough feelings. I'm here."

"What does that word mean to you?"

"I'm listening."

Some unintended effects of "You're not fat, you're beautiful":

- Implies that fat can't be beautiful.
- Shuts down the conversation.
- Reinforces the importance of outward appearance.
- Suggests fatness is unspeakable and something to be feared.
- Sends the message that we can't tolerate our child's feelings.

Oona Hanson - Parent Coaching

193 likes

Almost every parent who is asked this question has probably rushed in to "reassure" or "correct" their child. It's what we've all been taught to do.

We can learn another way to respond to this kind of question, a way that fosters emotional connection and doesn't accidentally reinforce fat phobia.

It might mean taking a big breath and collecting ourselves for a minute. Or it might mean going to back to our child the next day--or the next week--and saying, "Hey, you asked me something the other day, and I don't think I gave a very helpful answer. I'd love to hear more about how you are feeling about your body."

We might even say, "When I was kid, that word really hurt me, and it was painful at first to hear you say that word about yourself. No one ever talked to me about how I felt in my body or showed me that all bodies are good bodies, and I want to do things differently with you."

#parentingwithoutdietculture #parenting #bodyimage #bodyacceptance #puberty #bodykindness #bodyneutrality #bodypositive #eatingdisorderprevention #eatingdisorderawareness #teenmentalhealth #teensandtweens #parenteducation #knowbetterdobetter #wordsmatter #antifatbias #fatphobia #weightstigma #fatisntabadword

View all 4 comments

These are wonderful!

It also is patronizing bc it doesn't answer the question. It's like someone asking if you like chicken and you say well I like asparagus. I asked about chicken. Did I ask if I was ugly? Then why respond with I'm beautiful.

8 hours ago

Image 63



574 likes

..... @b..... is that you?!? Your bridesmaids dresses look stunning on a plus size body if I do say so myself!! It's giving all the witchy 90's vibes and I love everything about it!

- 👩 @ni.....
- 💇 Hair @j.....
- 💄 Makeup @s.....

I can't believe how much my shoots have improved already. I remember the first time I really had to break out of my comfort zone as a model, and it was during my first studio test shoot before I got signed. I'd done other shoots before, but by doing this particular shoot, I had to acknowledge that it wasn't JUST for fun anymore. I really had to face the fact that I was getting serious about building my book and it scared me. I was about to try to attempt this new career path and I was worried what others might think. Who does this fat girl think she is calling herself a model? The imposter syndrome and doubt really showed in my face and body language during the first outfit I was wearing. When I went to change into my second look, I fixed my face in the mirror and gave myself a pep talk as I would to one of my friends. I deserve to be here being photographed by one of the most brilliant fashion photographers in Brooklyn. I deserve to take up space in this industry, and I don't care what anyone thinks about it. The photos I took after that are currently in my book today.

#NowEnteringWSChat #WSFrequency #plussizemodel #plussizestyle #plussizebridesmaid

View all 29 comments

- ❤️❤️❤️
- I'm so lucky to be included

Image 64

Berlin, Germany Follow



2/2

987 likes

Earlier years i have always had anxiety when i have been travelling because i have known that i Will go to restaurants , eat later on the evening, eat more snack, but you know what?? EAT what you want , WHO cares if you eat more then you usally do. Enjoy your travelling, dont let the food get all the attention, enjoy the food you are eating, you dont have to choose the "healthiest" meal on the menu, eat whatever you want ❤️FOOD IS NOT OUR ENEMY ❤️

987 likes

#bodyneutrality #bloating #bloatedbelly #bodyneutral #antidiet #confident #food #bodyacceptance #selflove #selflovejourney #positivevibes #positivevibes #antidietculture #foodisnottheenemy #edrecovery #eatingdisorderrecovery #anorexia

View all 29 comments

Genius 🍌

Image 65

France Follow



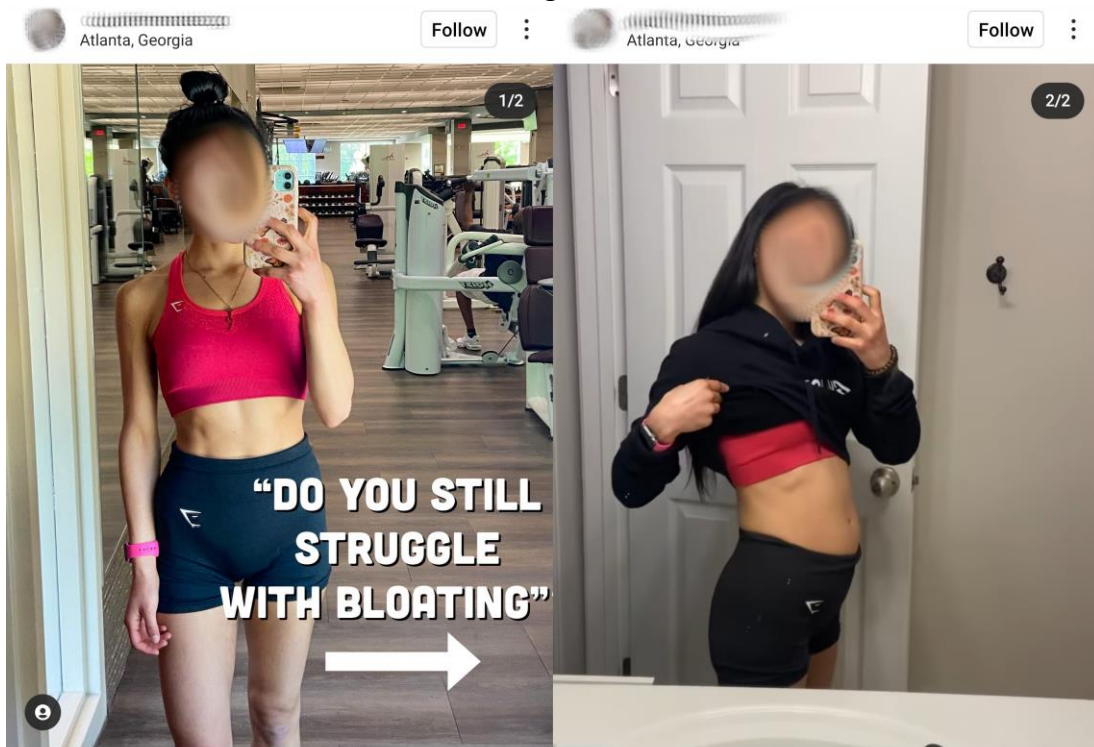
6,578 likes

« Le corps idéal c'est le tien » ✨

#beyourself #allbodiesaregoodbodies #acceptationdesoi #selflove #bodyneutrality

View all 156 comments

Image 66



1,012 likes

The video is me after having most of my meals & a green juice (you know being healthy and sh*t). The thing is that bloating from eating your meals is completely normal, where do you think all your food is going? 😊

Some day you might feel more full than others depending on your food choices, stress levels, time of the month, etc. Nothing to be ashamed of in my opinion!

Of course there are other cases (like me before) where I would WAKE UP bloated AND IN EXTREME PAIN! But that was my fault haha I was undereating by a lot, underweight, my cortisol levels were extremely high, overexercising, oh and saving all my food for the night so of course my body wasn't able to digest properly the food I was consuming 😞

Let me know if you want me to make a post about all the things you could improve in your day to day if you're experiencing that! ❤️

Anyways enough of my ramble! Just letting you know that bodies are supposed to feel satisfied and sometimes even full after meals. Your body is supposed to change throughout the day. Your body is working so so hard to digest the food, keep you alive, keep you moving and doing your regular stuff, & much more!

Why are we treating it so badly just to have a "flat belly" 24/7??? 😞😞😞😞

Anyways, I love you. I hope this helped in any way ❤️



View all 20 comments

Have an








1,012 likes

Image 67


 [Follow](#) 

Stop apologizing for your body.

@binge.nutritionist

1,204 likes

 You do NOT have to keep apologizing for your body. ❤️

- 👉 I know you face discrimination every day. You're filled with anxiety whenever you go to the doctors 🏥 because you worry your concerns will be chalked up to "you need to lose weight."
- 👉 You have a difficult time finding clothes that fit 👤 and you're terrified to travel ✈️ because the planes were not designed for you and your body.

With a diet obsessed world, it can be very difficult to feel like you belong. ❤️

But you do. ❤️

✅ You belong. Your body belongs. YOU are worthy, important, and deserve exceptional healthcare and treatment. Just the way you are, right now.

You are deserving of having a positive relationship with your body and to food. You deserve to live the life you envision for yourself... right now, in this moment. ❤️

✅ In my membership program, The Behind the Binge Society, you get access to all previous live trainings that can help you start to stop feeling ashamed of your body and heal from binge eating.

Some of the trainings inside the Behind the Binge Society right now are:



- 👉 The 4 most common reasons you're stuck binge eating 😞 (& what to do instead!)
- 👉 Impulsive eating vs intuitive eating: pairing logic with instinct
- 👉 How to stop binge eating by overcoming body shame & so much more!



If you want to learn more and enroll, click the link in my bio! 🙌🙌

[!! I want to note my thin privilege here. I will never understand the stigma, discrimination, and unequal access that those in bigger bodies experience. I'm actively trying to use my privilege to evoke change in our weight stigmatizing society. I will hold space for you while recognizing that my experience is privileged and so hearing this message from me may not be for everyone and that's okay. I get supervision for clients who I am for.]

[#healthateverysize](#) [#bodyneutrality](#) [#bodytrustisabirthright](#) [#dietsdontwork](#) [#haes](#) [#bodyacceptance](#) [#buildbodytrust](#) [#bodytrust](#) [#nondietapproach](#) [#dietculturesucks](#) [#intuitiveeating](#) [#intuitiveeatingofficial](#) [#dietculturedropout](#) [#healthateverysize](#) [#haes](#) [#foodisnotmedicine](#) [#foodisnottheenemy](#)

View all 8 comments


 This! 🙌🙌🙌 

 This is such a powerful message! 🙌 

April 2

Image 68

Costa Rica Follow : Costa Rica Follow :



2/2

3,045 likes rebeccachelbea Just another beach body 🍷🇨🇷

#selflove #bodyacceptance #bodyneutrality
#bodyconfidencemovement #normalizenormalbodies

View all 46 comments

Li iiiiiiiebs!!! Du bist so schön! ❤️

Li iiiiiiiebs!!! Du bist so schön! ❤️

3,045 likes rebeccachelbea Just another beach body 🍷🇨🇷

#selflove #bodyacceptance #bodyneutrality
#bodyconfidencemovement #normalizenormalbodies

View all 46 comments

Li iiiiiiiebs!!! Du bist so schön! ❤️

Li iiiiiiiebs!!! Du bist so schön! ❤️

Image 69



793 likes

theantidietplan Sometimes my kids drive me absolutely bonkers but I still love and take care of them.

What would it be like to extend that same unconditional love and care to your body?

📖 For more on mindful eating and body acceptance, check out my book *The Diet Free Revolution: 10 Steps to Free Yourself from the Diet Cycle with Mindful Eating and Radical Self Acceptance*, available in paperback, ebook, and audio wherever books are sold

#bodyimage #selfacceptance #bodyneutrality
 #allbodiesaregoodbodies #antidiet #thedietfreerevolution
 #mindfuleating #radicalacceptance

View all 9 comments






-  find the paradox very challenging. 
- theantidietplan** @malina It's a tough one! 

Image 70


Long Beach, California
Follow
⋮

Long Beach, California
Follow
⋮




Liked by  and **others**
 I'm 99% athleisure and 1% dresses that may result in a nip slip

Happy Friday, angels. Don't forget to wear what you want because...that's enough of a reason 🥰👉

#fckflatteringfriday #ootd #vbo #bodyneutrality

View all 64 comments

 ok where do we begin to stan? is the beautiful lip color? the sun kissed skin? the amazing floral print? the fact that you're back in sunny Cali? who knows, but we love to stan!!!

April 15



Liked by  and **others**
 I'm 99% athleisure and 1% dresses that may result in a nip slip

Happy Friday, angels. Don't forget to wear what you want because...that's enough of a reason 🥰👉



Image 71



Follow



I don't understand why you can't just eat?

You know I'm suffering from an illness with the highest mortality rate of its kind, right? Don't let the enormity of that escape you.

Telling someone with an eating disorder to "just eat" is like telling someone with asthma to "just breath, you have lungs and there's plenty of air!"

It's not that simple.



2,641 likes

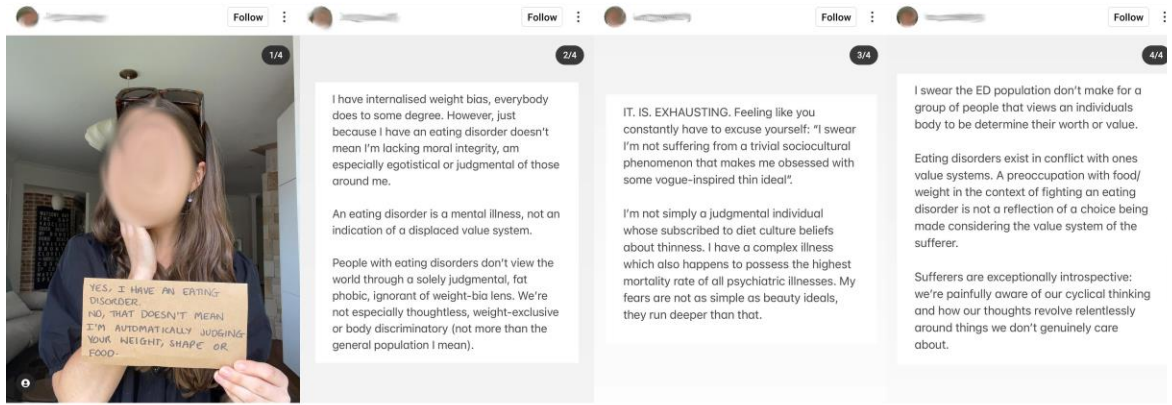
██████████ Eating Disorders are not a choice. They do not stem from a lack of understanding of the importance of nutrition. They're neurobiological illnesses, their relationship with logic is non-existent. . #edrecovery #haes #edrecovering #edrecover #edwarrior #mentalhealth #antidiet #mha #mh #raisingawareness #feelittohealit #realrecovery #bodyacceptance #bodyneutrality #foodfreedom #therapy #healthateverysize #edrecoveryinspiration #workinprogress #podcasting #advocacy

View all 34 comments

██████████ It's also not really about the food. It's about self worth and self advocacy and boundaries and trust and often trauma and attachment and core



Image 72



2,343 likes

I have internalised weight bias, everybody does to some degree. However, just because I have an eating disorder doesn't mean I'm lacking moral integrity, am especially egotistical or judgmental of those around me.

An eating disorder is a mental illness, not an indication of a displaced value system.

People with eating disorders don't view the world through a solely judgmental, fat phobic, ignorant of weight-bias lens. We're not especially thoughtless, weight-exclusive or body discriminatory (not more than the general population I mean).

I swear we don't make for a group of people that views individuals body's to be determinatives of their worth or value.

Eating disorder exist in conflict with ones value systems. A preoccupation with food/weight in the context of fighting an eating disorder is not a reflection of a choice being made considering the value system of the sufferer.

Sufferers are exceptionally introspective: we're painfully aware of our cyclical thinking and how our thoughts revolve relentlessly around things we don't genuinely care about.

IT. IS. EXHAUSTING. Feeling like you constantly have to excuse yourself: "I swear I'm not suffering from a trivial sociocultural phenomenon that makes me obsessed with some vogue-inspired thin ideal".

I'm not simply a judgmental individual whose subscribed to diet culture beliefs about thinness. I have a complex illness which also happens to possess the highest mortality rate of all psychiatric illnesses. My fears are not as simple as beauty ideals, they run deeper than that. #edrecovery #aes #edrecovering #edrecover #edwarrior #mentalhealth #antidiet #mb #mb #raisingawareness #eattohealth #realrecovery #bodyacceptance #bodyneutrality #foodfreedom #therapy #hateeverysize #edrecoveryinspiration #workinprogress #podcasting #advocacy

2,343 likes

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2,343 likes

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2,343 likes

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I swear we don't make for a group of people that views individuals body's to be determinatives of their worth or value.

Eating disorder exist in conflict with ones value systems. A preoccupation with food/weight in the context of fighting an eating disorder is not a reflection of a choice being made considering the value system of the sufferer.

Sufferers are exceptionally introspective: we're painfully aware of our cyclical thinking and how our thoughts revolve relentlessly around things we don't genuinely care about.

IT. IS. EXHAUSTING. Feeling like you constantly have to excuse yourself: "I swear I'm not suffering from a trivial sociocultural phenomenon that makes me obsessed with some vogue-inspired thin ideal".

I'm not simply a judgmental individual whose subscribed to diet culture beliefs about thinness. I have a complex illness which also happens to possess the highest mortality rate of all psychiatric illnesses. My fears are not as simple as beauty ideals, they run deeper than that. #edrecovery #aes #edrecovering #edrecover #edwarrior #mentalhealth #antidiet #mb #mb #raisingawareness #eattohealth #realrecovery #bodyacceptance #bodyneutrality #foodfreedom #therapy #hateeverysize #edrecoveryinspiration #workinprogress #podcasting #advocacy

Image 73



San Diego, California

Follow

⋮

LET'S NORMALIZE...
(to help heal your relationship with food, movement, and your body)

- weight fluctuations & weight gain
- using food to comfort yourself
- cellulite, rolls, fat, stretch marks
- eating & resting more during menstruation
- needing to size up in clothes
- enjoying indulgent foods more than once a week
- having no motivation
- eating more than one cookie
- choosing rest over movement

@devondaymoretti

♡ 💬 📍 📌

101 likes

 A list of things you don't need to disown, demonize, and disparagingly relate to because it's actually very normal 🧠

These are the big ones I've noticed come up in the work I do with my clients. Tell me in the comments which one stuck out to you the most 🙌

View all 10 comments

 @s... ALL THE COOKIES PLZ ♡

 i @s... seems like a sin to me 😊

3 hours ago

Image 74



195 likes
Cw:body talk

I am struggling. Honestly specifically with my chin. I don't say this for compliments or reassurance or to ignore the size privilege I have. I say this to highlight how insidious the standards of beauty are in our society. Just when I think I have let go of old thoughts something new pops up. I have been googling all sorts of procedures and I feel ridiculous for doing this.

Because this is about so much more than how I am feeling. I know the body positivity movement is often co-opted by folks like me with immense societal privilege. I don't want to do this. I want to advocate for and leave the door open for folks who do not have the privilege I have. It feels selfish to be fixating on myself.

This society that we live in that puts so much moral value in thinness, and working out, and in the food we eat. It affects every single one of us, and I wish it didn't. I feel like I can't escape.

We have so much more work to do.

I have really been into the podcast Maintenance Phase and am re-listening to every episode. I want to continue to learn and grow, and get out of my own head, so I want to know what are your favourite resources!

I know I have my own healing to continue to do; but I also know there is so much more than that to do. I'm sorry if this is rambling, this is what's rattling around my brain.




#OttawaStyle #TeacherStyle #Honesty #Struggle #WorkToDo #WorkingOnly #NotPerfect #StyleOver30 #BodyNeutrality #Journey #AlwaysLearning #OttawaFashion #Hintonburg #DiscoverUnder5k #CanadianStyle #Layers #LovePodcasts #DietCultureSucks #DietCulture #Denim


View all 19 comments





We need more of this 🍌
@ thank you so much I appreciate it ❤️

April 13

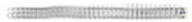
Image 75

  Follow 



112 likes

 ✨Your weight may fluctuate but your worth will not ✨

Normalize gaining weight and still being healthy. Normalize losing weight and still being healthy.

Normalize gaining weight and still being loveable. Normalize losing weight and still being loveable.



Normalize not asking people if they gained weight. Normalize not asking people if they lost weight.



Normalize different bodies and different weights.

Your weight doesn't define your worth ❤️

#normalizenormalbodies #selflove #selbstliebe
 #bodyneutrality #bodyacceptance #bodyappreciation
 #körperbewusstsein #loveyourself #digitalart
 #womenwhodrawwomen #femaleillustrator #femaleartist
 #bodyimagemovement #fempowerment
 #illustrationoftheday #femaleartwork #yogaillustrators

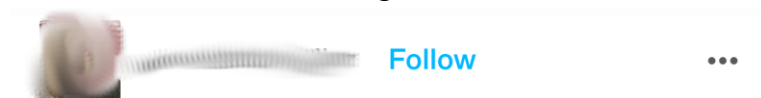
View all 25 comments

 Love this, thank you once again for the beautiful message ✨❤️ 

 Well done, great message ❤️ 

April 11

Image 76



Whatever method you use to stop hating your body is as valid as another. Body neutrality, appreciating your body because it takes you where you need to go and houses your soul, looking at your body through an aesthetic/artistic lense and loving/ appreciating it as a piece of art, finding sexual power/feeling hot in your body, loving it because it helps you connect to your loved ones... It's all valid. As long as it helps you find peace, it's valid.

#fat positivity #dan talks #body positivity
#body neutrality

   3,700 notes

Image 77



Don't wait until you lose weight so you can buy yourself some pretty clothes. You should wear beautiful clothes *that fit you, instead of struggling with your own body to fit into them*. **Don't deprive yourself of something that will make you feel good because you aren't "thin enough" to "deserve it". You deserve good things as you are now.**

#tw: weight loss #self-worth #self-love
#body neutrality #original writing #reminder
#suggestion #self kindness
#positivity suggestion

   1,111 notes

Image 78

[Follow](#)

Hair on the back of the neck is normal and beautiful on women, sideburns are normal and beautiful on women, hair on the lip and jawline is normal and beautiful on women, hair on the stomach is normal and beautiful on women, hair on the chest is normal and beautiful on women, hair on the legs and arms is normal and beautiful on women,

Body hair is normal and beautiful on women

It's your body, don't feel pressured to change it if you don't want to

#body #body hair #hair #body hair on women
 #women #trans women #cis women
 #all women #body positive #body neutrality
 #body positivity #natural beauty
 #body hair is sexy #beauty standards

  878 notes

Image 79

[Follow](#)

Announcement: I am very plump and soft and adorable. My body is nice and even though it hurts at times, I'm doing an amazing job. That's all.

Thanks for reading! ♡

#spoonie #disability #chronic pain
 #chronically ill #body positivity #body neutrality
 #body acceptance
 #for the first time in 12 years i started loving myself and i'm not ashamed of it
 #do i have a muffin top? yes
 #do i look cute as fuck? hell yes.
 #my lesbian wife thinks so too btw

  740 notes

Image 80


[Follow](#)


Current beauty routines are so fucked up and you know how I realized it? Apply them to men. Imagine a man carefully plucking every inch of hair from his body, having 68889 skincare products or spending 3 hours daily to get his hair done. Doesn't it seem excessive, exaggerated, cartoonish? It's because it is. Society makes us believe it's normal to have an elaborate skincare routine for your fucking armpits. Why? Because we're profitable pawns.

Stop it!!!!

#radfem safe #op is a radfem
 #radfem please interact #radical feminst
 #radical feminism #rad fem #radfem
 #beauty standards #beauty culture
 #anti beauty industry #anti beauty culture
 #body neutrality #body image
 #body acceptance




 1,150 notes

Image 81



Image 82

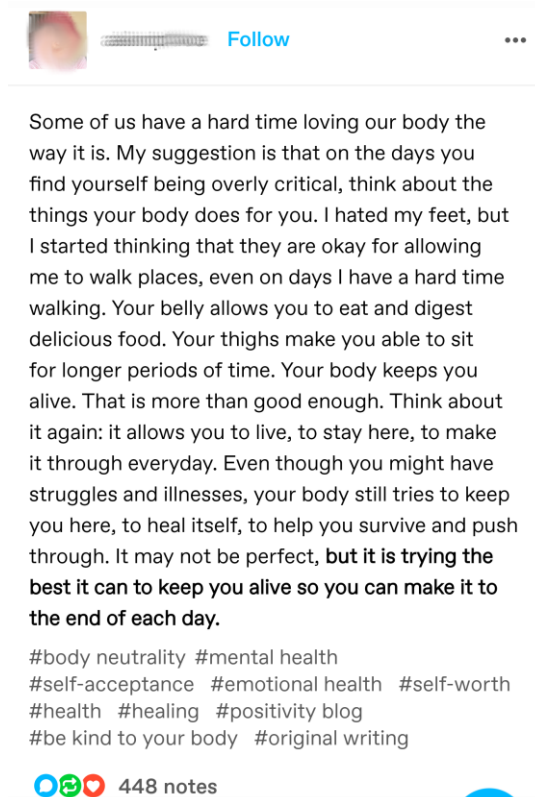


Image 83



Image 84

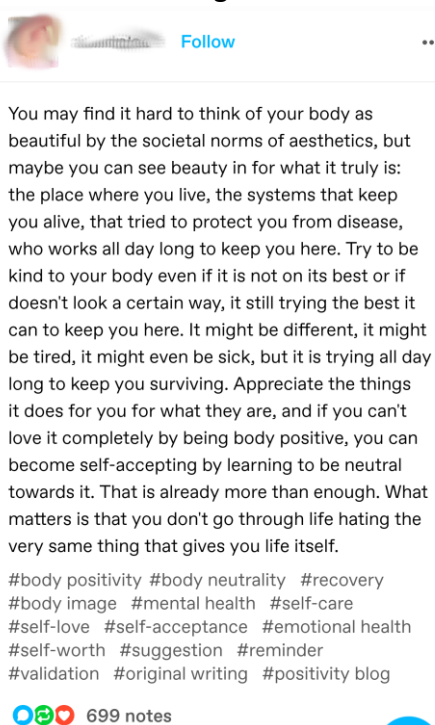


Image 85

I much prefer body neutrality to body positivity.

It fits perfectly with the way I've been raised. You don't have to LOVE your body. You just have it. And you just have to accept that other people have bodies too. Just bodies. No reason to insist that they're beautiful.

I read all those posts by Finns who are used to sauna naked with family members and it very much reminded me of my own Danish upbringing where sunbathing and bathing was often done with naked or topless adults. I know that sounds weird to Americans, maybe even suspicious, but it wasn't. It's was just a healthy, neutral approach to the body. The body wasn't automatically a sexual thing that had to be attractive or desired. I'm happy I was raised like that.

#humontalks #body neutrality

 2,102 notes

Image 86



 [Follow](#)



Just like plants don't have to do anything to "deserve" water and sunlight, I don't have to do anything to "deserve" to eat

#affirmation #ed recovery #disordered eating
#healing #human being not human doing
#self love #self care #body neutrality
#lessons from Mother Earth
#lessons from Mother Nature

 1,994 notes

Image 87


[Follow](#)


become unmonetizable

#body neutrality #anticapitalism
 #refuse to follow targeted ads on instagram
 #like literally if youre interested in the product just
 go look it up in a private browser window
 #go to the library



 1,725 notes

Image 88

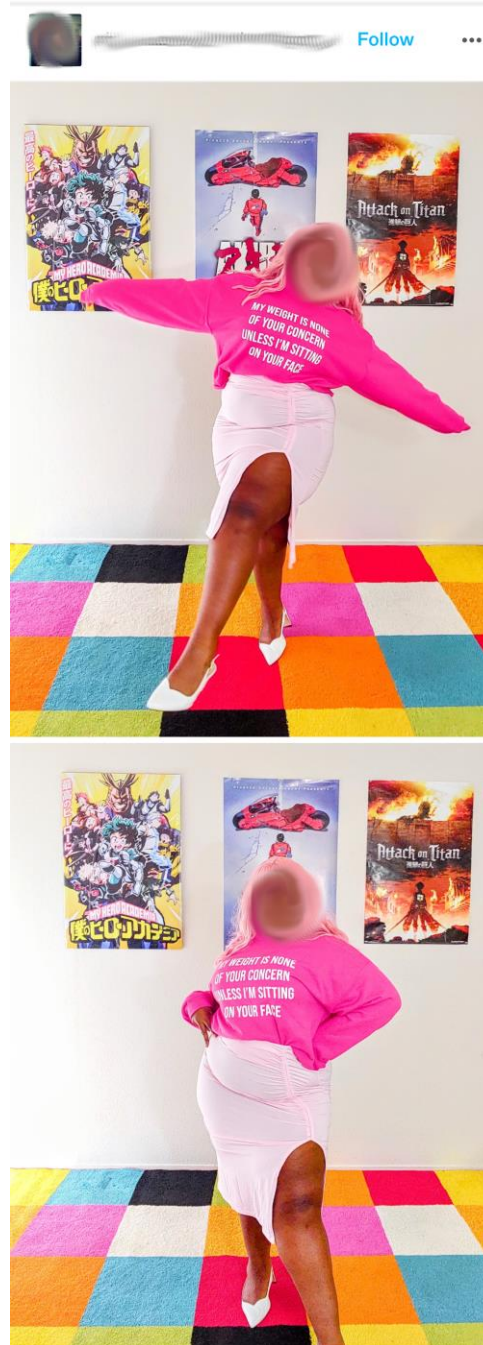

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the galaxy brain revelation I had when I realized that the reason my body looks different in my 20s than it did in high school was because in high school I was LITERALLY a child with a CHILDS BODY and my body had finally become an ADULT BODY and that, despite what society might want me to think, there was not a natural or healthy way to retain my child form

#feminism #beauty culture #body neutrality
 #radical feminism #radfem


 655 notes

Image 89



I said what I said

(You can get this shirt from The Identity of She) - not sponsored, just love the message.

#bgs #big girl swag #plus size
#plus size fashion #fashion #fashiongram
#smiles #psootd #ootd #effyo... See all

509 notes

Image 90



reminder. loving everything about yourself is hard. while self love might seem like a impossible, overwhelming goal sometimes, body neutrality might be easier to do for now. every step in a better direction counts and i am incredibly proud of you for choosing recovery. 🧡

#art #digital art #illustrators on tumblr
#illustration #personal #raccoon #ed recovery
#recovery #mental heath support
#mental heath awareness #mental health
#support #reminder #positive #wholesome
#body neutrality #body postivity #self love

  1,103 notes

