Body Image & Eating Disorders
Positive Body Image

- A clear, true perception of your shape--you see the various parts of your body as they really are.

Negative Body Image

- A distorted perception of your shape--you perceive parts of your body unlike they really are.
At least 30 million people of all ages and genders suffer from an eating disorder in the U.S.
40% of all 9 and 10-year-old girls have already been on a diet.

70% of 6-12-year-olds want to be thinner.
Media Influence on Body Image

69% of girls in 5th – 12th grades reported that magazine pictures influenced their idea of a perfect body shape.

An average US woman is 5’4” tall weighing 140 pounds; the average US model is 5’11” weighing 117 pounds.
The “Ideal” Body

The body type portrayed in advertising as the ideal is possessed naturally by only 5% of American females.
Body image concerns and eating disorders are inherently linked.
Eating disorders can be genetic or caused by psychological issues like coping skills, control issues, trauma, family trouble, or social issues.

- Sometimes kids involved in certain sports might feel they need to change their body or be thin to compete
3 Main Eating Disorders:

**Anorexia Nervosa:** fear of gaining weight or becoming fat.

**Bulimia Nervosa:** the act of binge eating then purging or vomiting

**Binge Eating Disorder:** eating until uncomfortably full in one sitting.
Signs of Eating Disorders

**Anorexia**
- Losing lots of weight
- Denying feeling hungry
- Exercising too much
- Feeling fat
- Withdrawing from social activities

**Bulimia**
- Making excuses to go to the bathroom immediately after meals
- Eating huge amounts of food without weight gain
- Using laxatives or diuretics
- Withdrawing from social activities

**Binge Eating**
- Lack of control once one begins to eat.
- Depression.
- Grief.
- Anxiety.
- Shame.
- Disgust or self-hatred about eating behaviors.
Factors that Influence whether Someone Develops an Eating Disorder

- global ideals about physical appearance
- continual comparison of one’s own body to the body of others
- exposure to media that dictates what it means to have an “ideal body”
- one’s experiences with physical activity and weight
- one’s social and familial structure including whether sexual, emotional, and physical abuse
- comments made by peers or family members related to their own bodies and the bodies of others
- one’s temperaments such as obsessive thinking, states of perfectionism, sensitivity to reward and punishment, and states of neuroticism
- one’s level of emotional instability, hypersensitivity, and need to avoid harm
- one’s experiences with pleasure, pain, and health; and finally, one’s prejudices against gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, and religion (“Eating Disorders,” Mayo Clinic)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75ICb2KSYk
Is it up to parents to teach their children about positive body image?
Parents and caregivers should:

- eliminate the need to allow their child to affiliate with a particular gender identity by breaking definitions of masculinity and femininity

- become media literate by, say, embracing or enacting social change
Parents and caregivers should:

- enact a secure sense of loving attachment with their child by allowing their child to develop on a healthy emotional level

EX:

- a parent to provide a child with an atmosphere in which the child feels safe and cared for
- giving their child a hug and kiss as often as possible
How to Allow a Child to Develop on a Healthy Emotional Level

- remain patient and nonjudgmental of their child
- avoid discussions related to food, eating, and weight
- demonstrate a healthy affiliation with exercise and dieting practices themselves
- be aware of a child’s feelings
- validate a child’s emotions with loving behaviors
- focus less on appearance and more on encouraging a child’s positive internal personality traits
- set the appropriate amount of boundaries as needed

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSMH3WABkwg
Questions for the class

- Do you agree that our constructions of gender influence whether someone develops body image problems?
- What other suggestions should parents/caregivers consider to combat body image issues?