THE BODY POSITIVE MOVEMENT

WHAT IT IS, WHO IT INVOLVES, AND WHY IT MATTERS
OPENING ACTIVITY

• Take the length of this song and write down every negative thing about your appearance that you can think of, no holding back.
OPENING ACTIVITY

• Find a partner. If you can, choose someone you know pretty well.
• Don’t just share. Say what you wrote to your partner. Not in “I said…”, but as if you were saying it to them.
OPENING ACTIVITY REFLECTION

- How comfortable did you feel writing down your answers?
- When addressing someone else in this way, how did you feel?
- What is the take-away of this activity?
DISCLAIMER

• I attempted to be very equal in my representation of information and bodies throughout this training. However, research is limited on the subject, and the training is extremely condensed. If I do not mention a certain type of body that you would like to know more about, please reach out to me, and I will do my best to provide you with resources.

• Feedback on how the training could improve is welcome.
WHAT IS BODY POSITIVITY?

• Urban Dictionary: “A way to be comfortable in your own [dang] skin and to love yourself/other people no matter what their appearance is.”

• Mallorie Dunn, SmartGlamour: “To me, body positivity means accepting the body you have as well as the changes in shape, size, and ability it may undergo due to nature, age, or your own personal choices throughout your lifetime. It's the understanding that your worth and what's going on with you physically are two separate entities — that no matter what's happening inside, outside, or to your body, you're still just as worthwhile as the person next to you.”
COMMONLY USED WORDS

• Intersectionality: “the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups”
• Reclamation of the word “fat”
• “Flaws” versus “facts”
HISTORY OF BODY POSITIVITY

• Exact date of the beginning of the movement is undefined
• Some people agree that the conversation began in the 1960’s, others believe in the mid-90’s
  – Combination of many social justice issues, such as feminism, racism, transphobia, ableism, etc.
• Negative body image stems from many different outside factors
BEAUTY STANDARDS

• Beauty standards are consistently changing over time
  – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xrp0zjZu0a4
  – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-tJ5erxh4Y

• Beauty standards lead people to look a certain way: thinner, whiter, put together, seemingly perfect

• The beauty industry profits off of people being unhappy with their appearances

• Leads to issues with physical and mental health

• Beauty products are likely to contain different ingredients that can lead to long term damage, such as phthalates in hair spray or nail polish
PHYSICAL HEALTH: WEIGHT LOSS

• Beauty standards lead to diet culture
• Detoxes, fasts, pills, limited amount of nutritional intake
• Most artificial ways of losing weight come with awful side effects
• 95% of diets fail within the first five years of weight loss
• Teenage girls who have severely dieted are 18 times more likely to develop an eating disorder than girls who have not dieted.
• Health at Every Size became an efficient alternative for healthy living
MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS

- 80.7% of surveyed men talk in ways that promote anxiety about their body image. 38% of men would give a year off of their lives to have the ideal body.
- In a *Glamour* magazine survey, 97% of women admitted to thinking they hated their bodies at least once a day (the average being 13 times)
- Negative body image correlated with depression, suicide
- Eating disorders
  - have highest mortality rate of any mental illness
  - Affects at least 30 million people in the U.S.
  - 16% of transgender people affected
- 32%-50% of transgender people attempt suicide
- Bullying victims are 2-9x more likely to attempt suicide
CONCLUSION: NOT YOUR BODY, NOT YOUR PROBLEM
**ACTIVISTS**

- **Harnaam Kaur**
  - Guinness World Record holder for Youngest Woman with Full Beard
  - Motivational speaker, model, body positive activist
  - Admin for #effyourbeautystandards

- **Virgie Tovar**
  - Editor of the anthology *Hot & Heavy: Fierce Fat Girls on Life, Love, and Fashion*
  - The creator of #LoseHateNotWeight
  - A certified sexuality educator
• Megan Jayne Crabb
  • Author of *Body Positive Power*
  • Creator of #DontHatetheShake
  • Recovering eating disorder survivor

• Jessamyn Stanley
  • Author of *Every Body Yoga*
  • Licensed yoga instructor, body positive activist
  • Stars in Kotex commercials

• Rebekah G. Taussig
  • PhD candidate in creative nonfiction and disability studies at the University of Kansas
  • Creator of @sitting_pretty
ACTIVISTS

• Kelvin Davis
  • Author of Notoriously Dapper: How to be a Modern Gentleman with Manners, Style, and Body Confidence
  • Writes updated style blog and runs social media focused on body positivity for men (@notoriouslydapper)

• Bruce Sturgell
  • Founder of Chubstr, “the site that helps big men find, create, and share their big and tall style with the world”
  • Contains resources like clothing, accessories, entertainment, and body positive events/news
**ACTIVISTS**

- Michael-Anthony Spearman
  - @thebigfashionguy; social media influencer and blogger
  - Upcoming menswear designer and stylist

- Andrew Wallen
  - Found of The Body Image Center, a wellness center for individuals with eating disorders
  - Board member of the National Association for Males with Eating Disorders

- Matt Joseph Diaz
  - YouTube video this image was taken from went viral
  - Received over $20,000 from strangers on GoFundMe for skin removal surgery
  - Body positive activist
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
“WHO IS BODY POSITIVITY FOR?”

• All genders
• All body types, abilities, skin tones, EVERYONE
• Body positivity was created to advocate especially for marginalized voices, but that does not mean that nonmarginalized voices are not important and welcome within the movement.
“WHAT ABOUT HEALTH?”

• Many people claim body positivity is “promoting obesity”, yet people who claim this misunderstand the movement.

• Determining whether someone is healthy or not is healthy based on their weight is seen as a very narrow view of health.

• The resources concerning body positivity and health are endless. Many articles, books, and interviews are available.

• Ultimately, another person’s health is none of our business.

• Is it right for us to tell some people they cannot love themselves if they aren’t healthy?
“THIS IS ALL COOL, BUT WHERE DO I EVEN START?”

• Adapted from Megan Jayne Crabbe’s book Body Positive Power, here are some steps that can help you move towards acceptance and love of yourself.

  1. Get mad.
  2. Have a diet-culture detox.
  3. Create a body positive social media feed.
  4. Call yourself out for negative self-talk.
  5. Stop the comparison.

• None of these are easy steps. You may slip back into your old ways, but do not be discouraged. You can always try again. It gets easier.
“WHAT IF I CAN’T LOVE MYSELF ALL THE TIME?”

• Healing is not linear, which means that not everything is always up all the time.
• No one is 100% all the time, even if they appear to be.
• Give yourself grace on bad days.
• Be okay with just being sometimes.
“DOES THIS MEAN I HAVE TO LOVE/BE ATTRACTED TO HOW EVERYONE ELSE LOOKS?”

• Short answer, of course not.
• Body positivity is not about loving everyone else, although it is encouraged. Body positivity’s ultimate goal, aside from promoting self-love, is encouraging one another to allow all types of bodies to take up space and have a place in the world.
• Being body positive does not mean you have to change your attraction preferences, but it does challenge why society views some people as attractive and others as not.
“WHAT IF I DON’T STRUGGLE WITH BODY IMAGE ISSUES?”

If you do not struggle with body image issues, congratulate yourself. However, there is probably someone around you who struggles with the problems we’ve discussed today. Practice empathy and learn how to be an ally or encourager to people around you.
“HOW CAN I BE A GOOD ALLY?”

- Here’s a list of things you can do to be a better ally in general, no matter what the issue. Adapted from an article in Psychology Today entitled “5 Tips for Being a Good Ally”:
  1. Listen with an open mind.
  2. Believe their narrative.
  3. Use preferred pronouns/names/terms appropriately.
  4. Be an advocate.
  5. Connect them with resources.
Body positivity is extremely intersectional with many other social justice issues. Stay tuned for Part 2 of this training to find out how self love influences social action.
CLOSING ACTIVITY

• Everyone should have a piece of construction paper. Write your name on the paper. Make sure this is taped to your back.
• In the time we have left, go around the room with a pen and write a kind thing about the person on their paper. (No name needs to be included.)
• After time is up, fill out the card saying one kind thing about yourself.