

Body Image and Mental Health

Overview

- What do we mean by body image?
- What can cause a negative body image?
- The impact a negative body image can have on mental health
- How to promote a positive body image
- Resources to support mental health
- Looking after yourself

What do we mean by body image?

Body image is how you see yourself when you look in the mirror or when you picture yourself in your mind. It encompasses what you believe about your own appearance, how you feel about your body, including your height, shape and weight.

Statistics

- Body image disproportionately affects women
- 1 in 5 primary school aged children say they have been on a diet
- 87% of girls aged 11-21 think that women are judged more on their appearance than on their ability
- Approx a third of boys think that girls who are sporty are not feminine

What can cause a negative body image?

- Puberty
- Menopause
- Mass media
- Low self esteem
- Relationships
- Family/friends
- Criticism

The impact a negative body image can have on mental health

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Low self esteem
- Self harm behaviours (*unsafe sex, steroid use, substance abuse, cosmetic surgery*)
- Low aspirations
- Loneliness/isolation

Promoting a positive body image: developing self esteem

- Be kind to yourself
- Set realistic and achievable goals
- Learn from experience and move on
- Accept that perfection is an unrealistic goal

- Identify your strengths and be confident in yourself
- Introduce a positive way of thinking
- Keep fit and healthy
- Build healthy support networks
- Celebrate the small stuff

Looking after yourself

Things I can do

.....by myself

.....with others

People I can talk to.....