

# Characteristics of Positive Body Image Noted in Qualitative & Quantitative Research

Adapted from Cash, T. F., & Smolak, L. (2012). *Body image: a handbook of science, practice, and prevention*. Pages 59-60. New York; London: The Guilford Press.

## Body Appreciation

- Appreciate functionality, health, and features of your body
- Praise your body for what it can do rather than what it looks like

## Body Acceptance & Love

- Express comfort and love for your body even if you aren't totally happy with all of it
- Choose to focus on assets rather than perceived flaws
- Avoid potentially harmful means to alter your appearance (like cosmetic surgery)

## Inner Positivity Influencing Outer Demeanor

- Feeling that inner positive qualities “shine through” to outer appearance and behavior
- Experiencing inner positivity manifesting as helping others, asserting oneself, holding head up high, outer radiance

## Broadly Conceptualizing Beauty

- Perceive a diversity of weights, shapes, and appearances as beautiful
- What makes people beautiful is what/how they emanate their inner beauty rather than a particular appearance
- Appearances shouldn't be compared; people can be beautiful in a variety of ways

## Media Literacy

- Awareness of unrealistic and fabricated nature of media images
- Rejecting/challenging images and messages that could endanger body image on a regular basis

## Unconditional Acceptance from Others

- Perceived acceptance from others who are important
- Feeling loved, special, valued for authentic qualities – not contingent on appearance

## Finding Others With a Positive Body Image

- Choosing to surround the self with others who also hold a positive body image (or are striving to hold a positive body image)

## Spirituality/Religion

- Belief that a higher power designed them to be special and wants for them to accept their whole body – quirks and all
- Showing respect by maintaining their health and body as it was designed
- Feeling love and acceptance by a higher power buffers against body dissatisfaction

## Listening To & Taking Care of the Body

- Regularly engaging in pleasurable exercise and adaptive stress relief
- Seeking medical care for preventative and remedial purposes
- Pampering the body (i.e. massage) on occasion
- Taking a flexible, trusting approach to eating
- Maintaining a stable weight range that is right for their body

## Characteristics That Promote Positive Body Image

Unconditional acceptance from others who matter most

Media literacy (protective filtering)

Environments/cultures that conceptualize beauty broadly

Belief in a higher power that designs each person to be unique



# Body Positivity



## Characteristics That Emerge From a Positive Body Image

Inner positivity

Engaging in adaptive self-care behaviors

Mentoring others to love their body

Reframing body-related information as positive or neutral

# Cultivating Body Positivity

- Which principles point to areas of strength for me? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which principles point to areas of potential growth for me? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The top two principles that I'd like to focus on most are:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
- The action steps I can take to foster growth and change in the two principles I chose include:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_

*“From very early on in life we are taught to dislike our bodies. Unlearning this takes daily, consistent, effortful practice.”*