Teaching Nutrition in an Empowering Way

Body Positivity, Intuitive Eating, and Managing for Inclusivity
How can we as adults and educators encourage a student’s positive relationship with food?

Why does it matter?
Body Positivity
List your top 3+ Qualities you **Like** about yourself
List your top 3+ Qualities you **Judge** about yourself
What is **Body Positivity** and **Body Negativity**?
Body Positivity

Accepting your body as it is.

Comfortable in your own skin.

Living to love, care for, and give thanks for your body throughout life.
Body Negativity

**Distorted** Body Image
**Unrealistic** of how you view your body.

**Unhappiness** with your body and appearance
How Body Image is Altered

Discrimination via **Sizeism**

Dieting culture

Thin = Healthy

Shaming from society & health professionals

One-Size-Fits-All Health Standards

Clinical Health Measurements (ex: BMI)
What this does to Us & Our Kids

- Lower healthcare quality
- Ignore internal eating cues
- Poor self/body-image
- Mental & Physical health complications
  - Anxiety, Depression
- Eating disorder development
Have you encountered any Body Negativity in youth you work with?
Ultimately

Body size and weight is a **dimension of diversity**.

**Sizeism** is a social justice issue.

The **stereotypes** around our identities play into our experiences of our bodies.

Body positivity should be a **regular concept** with youth we encounter.
How to include Positive Language with Youth

Use neutral & non-specific terminology
Maintain a ‘holistic’ focus to health lessons
Incorporate times/breaks for constructive self-reflection.
Be the supportive adult
Take advantage of HAES principles
Health At Every Size (HAES) for Children

Health is multifaceted and holistic

Health is not a moral imperative

“Healthy weight” is not determined by a scale

Weight and size is naturally diversified
Flipping Your Own Negatives

Turn at least one of your Judgements into positives

How do these make you **Uniquely You**?
Intuitive Eating
“A person who makes food choices without experiencing guilt or an ethical dilemma, honors hunger, respects fullness, and respects the pleasure of eating.”

-Evelyn Tribole, 2012
Intuitive Eating

We are **born** intuitive eaters

Tuning into **bodily cues**

**Eliminates guilt** associated with eating

**Rejects** diet mentality
Diet Culture vs. Intuitive Eating

Diet Culture

- Food rules
- Deprivation
- “All or nothing”, the last supper effect
- Labeling foods as “good” or “bad”
- Weight loss
Diet Culture vs. Intuitive Eating

Intuitive Eating

- No food is off limits
- Honoring hunger cues
- People are less likely to binge
- Neutral approach to food
- Body acceptance
95% of all dieters will regain their lost weight within 5 years.

Americans spend over 60 billion dollars on diet products each year.

(NEDA, 2018)
How do the following activities reinforce diet culture?
Healthy choices

Unhealthy food
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult/Parent decides...</th>
<th>Child decides...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>Whether to Eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>How much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What ways can you support intuitive eating practices in schools?
Managing for Inclusivity
Weight Normative Approach

Weight Inclusive Approach
Weight Normative Approach

*Emphasis on weight and weight-loss when defining health.*
The **Weight Normative Approach** suggests:

1. Higher weight individuals are **unhealthy**.

2. Weight can be controlled through **will power** and **lifestyle**.
Healthism

A dominant health paradigm that sees health as the property and responsibility of the individual.

“If you get sick, it’s your fault.”
Who represents the **normative** Idea of Health?
Fatphobia

The stigmatization of individuals with bigger bodies.
Weight Inclusive Approach

Views health and well-being as multi-faceted.
The **Weight Inclusive Approach** suggests:

1. Everybody is capable of achieving health *independent of weight*.

2. Healthy behaviors should be made *more accessible* to more people.
The **Weight Inclusive Approach** appreciates that bodies naturally come in a **variety** of shapes and sizes.
The **Weight Inclusive Approach** encourages **individualized practices** that are sustainable.
The **Weight Inclusive Approach** recognizes that health and well-being are **dynamic**, rather than fixed.
Do you as a health educator or adult promote a **weight normative** or **weight inclusive** approach?
### Age Appropriate, Body Positive Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight Normative Messages</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Weight-inclusive messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fat is Bad</td>
<td>Eating fat makes me a bad person</td>
<td>Fat is a major nutrient that our body needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low calorie is better</td>
<td>High calorie foods are harmful</td>
<td>Our bodies need energy to do the things we love!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat less</td>
<td>Food is bad for me, I should resist hunger</td>
<td>Eat until you have had enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots help you see</td>
<td>If I don’t eat carrots I will go blind</td>
<td>Eating all colors of the rainbow gives us the vitamins and minerals we need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cake is bad</td>
<td>I should never eat cake</td>
<td>All foods fit!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How may an educator send a weight inclusive message?
“Vegetables are low in carbohydrates - a diet low in carbohydrates helps you lose weight.”
“Vegetables are low in carbohydrates - a diet low in carbohydrates helps you lose weight."

“Fruits and vegetables contain carbohydrates, a main source of energy and nutrients that help our bodies do the things that we love.”
Scenario 2

“I was so bad yesterday! I ate a piece of cake. I feel so fat.”
Scenario 2

“i enjoyed a piece of cake - it was delicious!”

“I was so bad yesterday! I ate a piece of cake. I feel so fat.”
“You look so healthy! You’ve lost so much weight!”
Scenario 3

“You look so healthy! You’ve lost so much weight!”

“You are beautiful the way you are.”

Or, simply don’t comment on someone’s physical appearance.
It’s up to us to send messages to youth that encourage *compassion* for *their body* and *all bodies*. 
We need to advocate for all bodies
to be held in *acceptance* and *respect*.
Activity
BREATHE IN... BREATHE OUT...
Personal Reflection

Are there spaces or activities where you feel most connected to your body?
How can you promote mindful eating among youth?
Mindful Eating Activity
Mindful Eating Activity: Touch
Mindful Eating Activity: Smell
Mindful Eating Activity: Listen
Mindful Eating Activity: Taste
Activity Reflection

How was this different than your normal eating practices?
Reflection

What were the most **meaningful** pieces of information to you from this presentation?

How can you take them and use them in your personal and professional life?
Questions.
Resources


