



# Guide to Body Image

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This package was created by the Healthy U program at the University of Manitoba. Healthy U is a UM student group made up of a team of friendly volunteers who are trained student health educators.

We provide students with validated health information through our health packages and outreach events, online resources, and one-on-one support. Health topics that we provide resources on include mental health, sexual health, physical health, substance use, social and cultural wellness, and finding a balance.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions at:  
[healthyu@umanitoba.ca](mailto:healthyu@umanitoba.ca)



# Body Image

## What is body image?

Body image is your personal relationship with your body. This includes thoughts, feelings, beliefs, perceptions, and actions regarding your appearance.

## Why is it important?

Many people find that dissatisfaction with their body is a starting point for poor self-esteem, social anxiety, depression, or eating disorders. Body image has a huge impact on the way you understand your value and self-worth.

## Do I need to change my body to achieve positive body image?

No! Achieving positive body image is about gaining peace and acceptance about your body, regardless of what it looks like or what it can do. Body image starts in the mind, not the mirror.

Adapted from [westwind.mb.ca](http://westwind.mb.ca) and [heretohelp.bc.ca](http://heretohelp.bc.ca)

## Encouraging healthier body image

- Treat your body with respect.
- Eat healthy and exercise because it makes you feel good, not as a way to control your body.
- Any time you catch yourself judging your body, find something you like about yourself.
- Wear clothes you feel comfortable in and that fit you now.
- Become aware of how you talk about your body to others - are you looking for validation? Do your comments about yourself revolve around appearance?
- When you have negative thoughts, think about what's going on in your life. Are you taking your stress or sadness out on yourself?

# Is it Your Body or Your Feelings?

## Get to the root of the problem!

Often when we feel like we're "disgusting," "fat," or "ugly," we're actually recognizing that **something feels wrong**. But there isn't something wrong with your body, there's something wrong with how you're feeling. Take time to recognize your feelings instead of blaming them on your body. Otherwise you are betraying both your body and your feelings.

## What can I do about this?

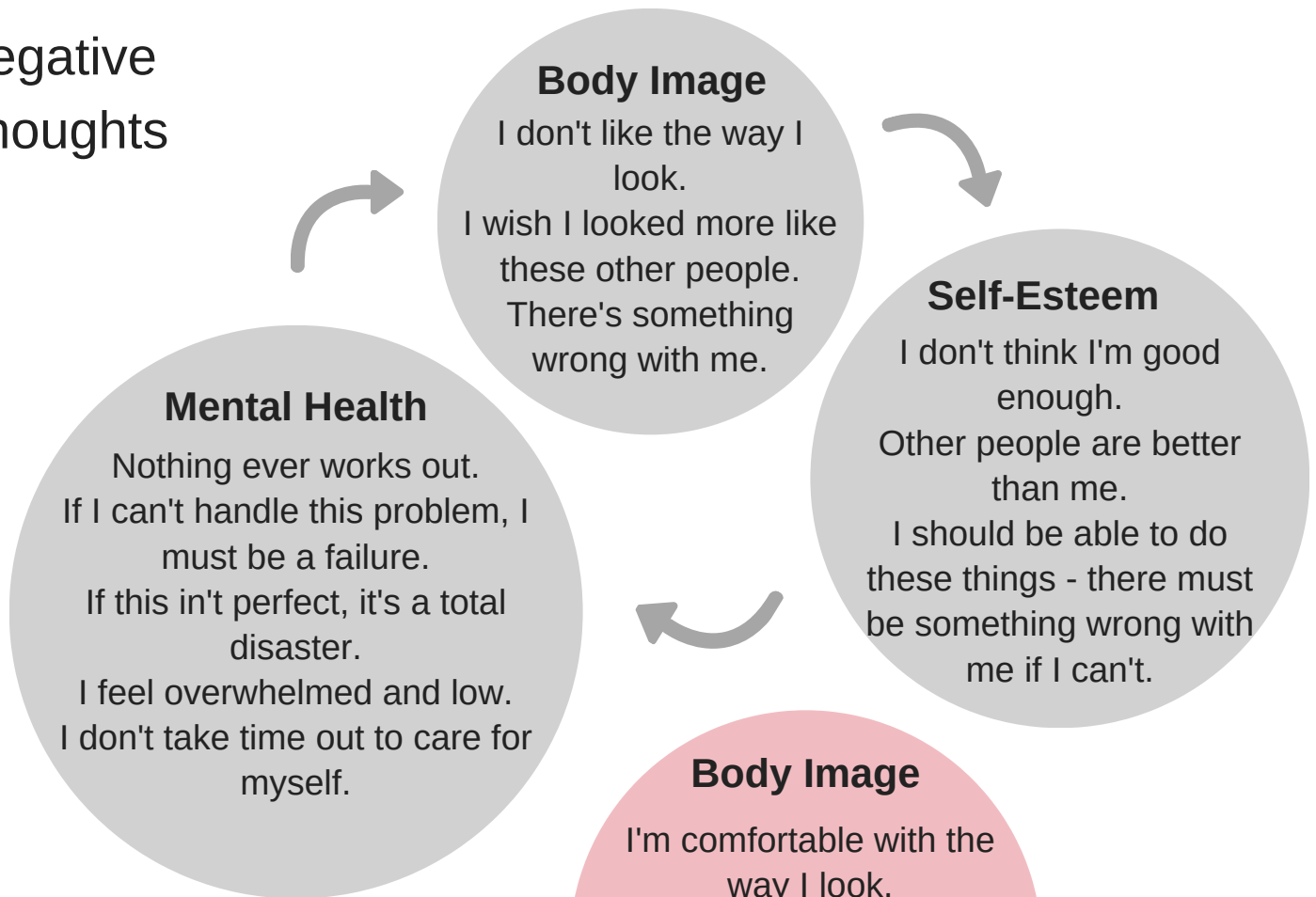
Next time you find yourself criticizing your body, ask yourself what is actually wrong. Do you need sleep? Do you need to eat? Are you sad, stressed, or lonely? **Even if you don't feel like you deserve it, take care of yourself**. Try to keep up with your meals, hygiene, rest, and socializing.

Remember how much your body does for you. Your body needs you to take care of it so you can live the way you hope to. You are not fat for being hungry, you are not lazy for being tired, and you are not selfish for doing things for yourself.



# Negative vs. Positive Thoughts

## Negative Thoughts



## Positive Thoughts



# positive things about my body

think: things my body lets me do or be

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## appreciating my body

My eyes let me see:

My ears let me hear:

My hands let me feel:

My legs let me do:

# UM Resources

## Body Image

### Student Counselling Centre (SCC)

The SCC provides students with supports for their mental wellness. The offer offers individual counselling, workshops, and groups.

474 UMSU University Centre

204 474-8592

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/student-health-and-wellness/student-counselling-centre-scc>

### Health and Wellness

The Health and Wellness Educator is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse and available to talk about health and wellness topics.

469 UMSU University Centre (within the SCC)

204-295-9032

[healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca](mailto:healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca)

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

### Healthy U

Healthy U provides students with health and wellness resources.

[healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca](mailto:healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca)

<https://www.healthyuofm.com/>

### Spirituality Services

One-on-one emotional and spiritual support.

528 UMSU University Centre

[spiritualcare@umanitoba.ca](mailto:spiritualcare@umanitoba.ca)

204-298-2467

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/spiritual-services>

### Indigenous Student Centre (ISC)

The ISC provides resources for Indigenous students including academic, cultural, personal, and physical wellness.

Migizii Agamik - Bald Eagle Lodge

[isc@umanitoba.ca](mailto:isc@umanitoba.ca)

204-474-8850

<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/student-experience>

# Off Campus Resources

## Body Image

### Winnipeg, MB

#### Women's Health Clinic (WHC)

WHC has workshops that are open to all genders.

(204) 947-1517

<https://womenshealthclinic.org/>

#### Klinik Community Health

167 Sherbrook Street

204-784-4090

<http://klinik.mb.ca/>

#### Psychology Today

Should you be experiencing challenges with body image and eating habits, Psychology today allows you to connect with various therapists who specialize in disordered eating habits. Psychology Today is a fee service and would accept UM Health and Dental Coverage or alternative private insurances (i.e. Blue Cross, Canada Life etc.) To confirm your coverage, you can call your insurance company directly.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/therapists/mb/winnipeg?category=eating-disorders>

### Online

#### Here to Help

Online resource to learn about health topics including body image.

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/>

Body Image PDF:

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/body-image-vol12>