



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Body Image Groups

Body image groups work to reduce body dissatisfaction and the distress, avoidance, and disordered eating it can drive. Body dissatisfaction is one of the most consistent risk factors for eating disorders, depression, and social withdrawal, and it is extraordinarily common. These groups address the processes that maintain it: internalizing unrealistic appearance ideals, social comparison, body checking and avoidance, and judging self-worth by appearance. They range from prevention programs for people at risk to adjuncts within eating disorder recovery.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A good fit for anyone wanting skills and community to change their relationship with their body.
- Works standalone or as an adjunct to eating disorder treatment.
- Not a sole treatment for an active eating disorder needing clinical care. Call or text 988.

What it's for

Significant body dissatisfaction, with or without an eating disorder diagnosis.

People at elevated risk, and those in eating disorder treatment where body image is central.

Formats include dissonance-based (the Body Project), CBT, and ACT.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 Dissonance programs: 2 to 4 sessions, arguing against the appearance ideal together.

2 CBT groups: 8 to 12 sessions of monitoring, restructuring, and body exposure.

3 ACT groups add mindfulness and values work. All ask for active participation.

Dissonance-based body image programs have the strongest group evidence.

- A meta-analysis of 51 trials found effects of **0.57 for thin-ideal internalization** and **0.42 for body dissatisfaction**, maintained at follow-up.¹
- The Body Project specifically has been shown to **reduce the onset of eating disorders** in longitudinal trials.¹

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Speak up. Arguing against the ideal aloud is what drives the change.

Notice comparison. Catching it is the first step to loosening it.

Do the exposures. Facing avoided situations is where it sticks.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1** Which approach is it: dissonance-based, CBT, or ACT?
- 2** Is it prevention, standalone treatment, or an adjunct to other care?
- 3** How many sessions, and what does it cost?

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If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

Body Image Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Stice, E., Marti, C. N., Shaw, H., & Rohde, P. Meta-analytic review of dissonance-based eating disorder prevention programs: intervention, participant, and facilitator features that predict larger effects. *Clinical Psychology Review* (2019), 70, 91–107.

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