

Healthy Body Image: Bikini Ready Body or Not?

By: Katie Rider, M.A.

It's that time of year again – springtime. For most of us, springtime brings much to look forward to, including warmer weather, blooming flowers, longer days, and baseball season. Spring also brings with it, however, the return of bathing suit season, which means endless advertisements, news segments, and magazine articles about how to achieve a “bikini ready body.”

The evidence suggests the widespread emphasis on the “perfect” bikini body proves troubling for many people. In fact, studies have shown that around 91% of women are unhappy with their bodies. Likewise, body dissatisfaction appears to start young. In one survey of 13-year-old girls, 53% reported they were unhappy with their bodies. For a minority of people, body dissatisfaction ultimately develops into something far more serious, such as extreme dieting or an eating disorder. Still, even for those who don't struggle with an eating disorder, bikini ready information can generate painful feelings of insecurity, inadequacy, and unhappiness.

So, the question is, what can we do to withstand the diet and fitness propaganda that inevitably accompanies the return of warmer weather? Although there is no simple answer to this question, there

are several steps we can all take in an effort to protect ourselves from the bikini ready madness.



Avoid dieting – Diet's don't work. That's right, despite all of the hype, diets rarely result in long-term weight loss. According to most estimates, 95% of diets fail and the vast majority of those who diet regain their lost weight within 1-5 years.

Steer clear of the media trap – Based on what is portrayed in the media, anyone can achieve a thin, lean figure if they work at it hard enough. This just isn't true. In reality, genetics is the number one contributor to body weight and only around 5% of American females naturally possess the body type depicted by the media as ideal.

Practice positive self-talk – Many people fall into the habit of making negative comments about their bodies. “I'm so fat,” “I hate my stomach,” and other negative self-statements are all too common today. Instead of speaking to yourself harshly, attempt to offer yourself words

of acceptance, kindness, and compassion. Not only will you feel better, but you will also serve as a positive example for those around you. Try statements such as, “Today, I honor my body. I love myself, and I treat myself with respect.”

Recognize the bikini ready movement for what it is, a moneymaker – It's no accident information about weight loss programs and exercise plans is widespread this time of year. After all, the weight-loss industry brings in about \$40 billion per year.

Embrace balance – The most sustainable, satisfying lifestyle is one that is characterized by balance. Nourish your body with whole foods, get active, rest well, and laugh often.

So, this year why don't we try something a little different? Instead of dreading bathing suit season and resorting to unhealthy tactics to achieve a bikini ready body, let's accept our bodies as they are – imperfections and all – so that we can enjoy all that the warmer weather has to offer. Cannonball anyone?

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**HEALTHY BODY =
HEALTHY MIND &
HEALTHY IMAGE**

Monthly Guidance

Dear MG,

These last few months have been pretty difficult. My family has recently decided to be healthier overall by eating better and exercising, but I guess it's been harder to get everyone on board than I originally thought. What can I do to help both myself and the others in my life live a healthier lifestyle?

Sincerely,

Worried Parent

Dear WP,

This time of year can have a fair share of stress and tension, and a lot of it can be related to lifestyle changes. It seems that the stress your individual family members may be feeling is also having a big impact on you, which is completely understandable.

Regardless of the changes, it is always good to have some help managing our own stress while also helping out those we love.

Some ways to help family and ourselves make positive lifestyles chances include:

- **Be a good role model.** As a parent, it is helpful to model healthy behaviors for children. They will be less likely to associate stress with unhealthy behaviors if the whole family practices healthy stress management strategies together.
- **Talk about it.** If you notice the ones you love are struggling, have a conversation where you can work together to better understand each others' viewpoints. Promoting open communication and healthy problem solving is just as important to our overall health as eating well and getting enough sleep!

- **Change one habit at a time.** We may wish to change a lot at once like eating healthier, exercising, watching less TV, and so on. Doing everything at once, though, can feel really overwhelming. If you start by changing one behavior at a time, you and your family are more likely to be successful and motivated to continue making positive lifestyle changes! Remember, changing behaviors takes time but you can definitely do it together!

Monthly Guidance [MG] is here to answer questions about relationships and personal issues. If you would like to ask MG a question, you may call the Ball State Counseling Practicum Clinic and leave an anonymous message for MG. Or, you may send your question in writing to the address on the back page of this newsletter. If you choose to ask MG a question, the identity of the person submitting the question will remain completely anonymous. Please keep in mind when writing your questions that space is limited. Due to time constraints, MG cannot answer all questions, but will try to choose questions that are representative of a broad range of issues. If your question does not get answered and you would like to discuss it, please call Ball State Counseling Practicum Clinic at (765) 285-8047. Please be advised that MG is neither a crisis/emergency service nor a correspondence therapy service. If you need either immediate attention or ongoing therapy, call Ball State Counseling Practicum Clinic at (765) 285-

Featured Youth Issue: Kids and Self-Esteem—Setting Your Child Up for Success!

By: Corie Hess, M.S.

What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves and is reflected in our interactions with others. Individuals with high self-esteem can more easily handle stress, act independently and take on new challenges, and show pride in their accomplishments. On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem often struggle to manage stress and frustration, are easily influenced by others, lack confidence in their talents and abilities, and are less likely to try new things.

Why is it important?

Self-esteem is important to the overall happiness and success of your child. Youth with low self-esteem are more likely to have academic problems,

struggle with depression and anxiety, experience relationship difficulties, and may be more vulnerable to drug and alcohol use.

What can I do as a parent?

As a parent, you play an important role in your child's self-esteem. The following are some tips to help your child develop healthy self-esteem for long-term success!

Encourage your child—There is no such thing as too much *specific* praise for your child. Instead of telling your child, "Good job," let them know what you are proud of. For example, "I really like how you cleaned up your room. All of your toys were put where they belong." Try to offer your child praise both privately and publically. Your child will feel good when you share with others how well he or she is doing in school or has been getting along with their siblings. It is also important that you focus on praising your child's *effort* rather than the

final outcome. Instead of saying, "You are so smart," try saying "I can tell you have been working really hard at your math, I am so proud of your effort!"

Set limits for your child—Providing structure is extremely important. Firm, consistent boundaries and limits create environments for children that are predictable, therefore helping them feel safe and secure. When children know what is expected of them they are more likely to meet those expectations and feel good as a result.

Tell your child you love them every day—Parents who express their love and acceptance on a daily basis set their children up to feel safe to try new things. It is important that children know they are loved even when they make mistakes. Provide plenty of hugs and tell your children how proud of them you are.

Featured Mental Health Issue:

Food, Body Image, and Eating Disorders

By: *Jessica D. Shrack, M.A.*

Food is necessary for our survival, but what happens when food becomes the enemy? According to the National Eating Disorders Association, 20 million women and 10 million men in the United States will suffer from an eating disorder at some point in their lives. Unfortunately, it is thought the main contributing factor is dissatisfaction with body image.

Anorexia Nervosa

Anorexia nervosa is a condition in which the body is starved of essential nutrients (i.e., food) needed leading to a body weight that is greatly below normal. Additionally, it involves an intense fear of becoming fat and self-esteem that is excessively connected to body image.

Warning signs—Significant weight loss. Obsession with weight, food, calories, fat grams, and dieting. Refusal to eat certain foods or restricting entire categories of food (e.g., no fats, etc.). Frequent comments and anxiety about feeling “fat” or overweight despite weight loss. Denial of hunger or regular excuses to avoid mealtimes. Excessive, strict exercise routine.

Health consequences—Increased risk for heart failure as heart rate slows and blood pressure lowers. Dry, brittle bones. Kidney failure resulting from severe dehydration. Fainting, fatigue, and overall weakness. Death: Five to 20% of individuals struggling with anorexia will die from the disease.

Bulimia Nervosa

Bulimia nervosa involves recurrent binge-and-purge cycles during which large amounts of food are consumed followed by behaviors to prevent weight gain, such as self-induced vomiting, excessive exercising, or fasting. There is often a feeling of being “out-of-control” during binge-eating. People struggling with bulimia nervosa, however, tend to be an average body weight.

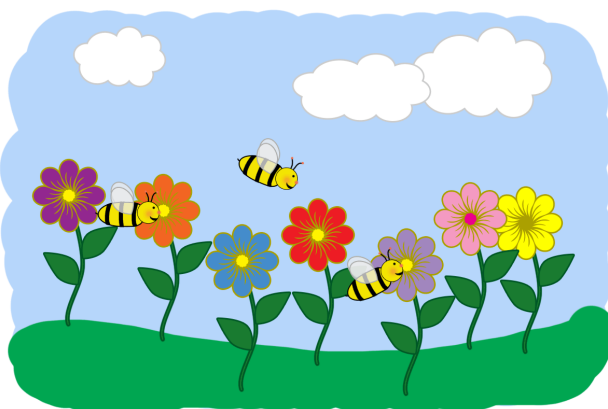
Warning signs—Large amounts of food eaten in short periods of time. Frequent trips to the bathroom after meals and signs and/or smells of vomiting. Excessive, strict exercise routine. Calluses on the back of the hands and knuckles from self-induced vomiting. Staining of the teeth.



Health consequences—Electrolyte imbalances, as a result of purging behaviors, can lead to irregular heartbeats, possibly heart failure, and death. Possible rupture of the esophagus due to frequent vomiting. Tooth decay and staining from stomach acids released during repeated vomiting. Chronic irregular bowel movements and constipation as a result of laxative abuse.

Eating disorders are real and result in significant costs to one’s physical and emotional health. If you struggle with an eating disorder, please see a medical doctor immediately. Additionally, if you are experiencing the signs of an eating disorder or are struggling with body image, consider scheduling a counseling appointment at the Practicum Clinic.

Kids Corner: Spring Has Sprung!





Spring



<p>B U D S D A F F O D I L S F L O W E R S G R A S S R A I N</p>	<p>R A I N B O W S E E D S S P R I N G T U L I P S U M B R E L L A</p>
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Featured Profile

Joshua Staples, M.A.

By: Lauren M Cunningham, M.S.

This column is a way for the community to learn about the diverse talents, both master's and doctoral students, employed at Ball State's New Combined Clinic.

Josh is a second-year masters student in the Department of Counseling Psychology who will be a first-year doctoral student next year. He is currently working in the IU Health Ball Memorial Cancer Center. The following is a discussion with Josh, one of the many talented individuals employed at the Ball State University Combined Clinic.

How did you decide to pursue your PhD in Counseling Psychology?

At the time, I was studying sport and exercise psychology in the kinesiology department at Georgia Southern. Licensure was important to me for a couple of reasons, so I knew I wanted to go back to school for a psychology degree. Early in the process, Ball State emerged as a place where I could build on sport and health psychology interests, as well as employ the strength-based aspects that are characteristic of counseling psychology.

What are your clinical interests?

It's been difficult at times to pin down my interests, mostly because I want to do everything. I'm honing in on health behavior change as a primary interest, though. You could say I'm trying to carve out a niche somewhere near the intersection of primary care, public health, physiology, and sport, if such an intersection exists. While I have been interested in individual motivation and behavior change for some time, I have only recently begun to incorporate systems concepts. A slight difference

distinguishes my approach to health behavior change: whereas some might ask, "How do we get someone to do the things they should be doing?" (e.g. diet, exercise, smoking behavior, etc.), I'm interested in how we get that person to want to do the things they should be doing.

Are you currently doing any research? (could you please describe past research too)

I really became interested in research when I started working on sport-related concussion studies in the biomechanics lab at Georgia Southern. That role, as well as my past experience with neuropsychological testing, inspired a master's thesis in which I studied performance validity (i.e. effort) during baseline athletic concussion tests. I have another project in the works that will explore motivation in recreational long-distance runners. I'm also working with a professor in the School of Nursing on her research addressing health disparities in Native Americans living in Indiana.

What has been your most influential (or exciting, or enjoyable) work experience?

One of the most enjoyable work experiences I ever had was coaching a little league team of five and six year old boys for a pilot study on coaching behaviors. I was reminded of the unadulterated joy young kids experience while playing baseball, and I learned how the right environmental conditions can allow someone to learn and thrive. It was so much fun that it seems silly to even call it a work experience. Perhaps the most profound clinical experience I've had has been interning at the Cancer Center in Muncie. For obvious reasons (and some not so obvious), this experience has really impacted my worldview, particularly my thoughts on health and well-being, meaning, and death and dying.

Are there any populations that you especially enjoy working with in counseling? If so, what are they?

Some of the first clients I ever worked with were collegiate athletes, and I still enjoy working with this population. They are typically so driven that once they see how they can benefit from counseling you can cover a lot of ground. Youth sport participants are a blast to work with too. Because their motivations for participation are so different from older athletes, you can really have fun with them.

What do you hope to do after you graduate?

Some of my undergraduate professors will insist this is impossible, but in the past four or five years I've gained a real appreciation and penchant for conducting research. So, when I grow up I hope to find a home in academia in which I can work my teaching and research muscles, as well as keep connected to clinical practice. Again, I want to do all the things!



Josh Staples, future doctoral student in the Department of Counseling Psychology

Featured Wellness Issue

Breathe Easier, Let's Talk Lung Health!

By: Frank Carr, M.A.

In the last two years smoking has decreased by 14 percent in the state of Indiana! That means a substantial number of people have quit smoking. Even with this notable drop, Indiana still ranks 39th out of 50 in the percentage of people who smoke. With such a high rate of smoking, it's important to understand the impact smoking has on our physical health, most notably, the potential for lung cancer.

Research shows that quitting smoking decreases ones chance of developing lung cancer by half! Just this year, scientists found that lung cancer



surpassed breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer-related death among women, and it continues to be the leading cause of cancer-related death among men. In fact, more people die from lung cancer each year than from colon, prostate, ovarian, and breast cancers combined! Unfortunately, when doctors often diagnose someone with lung cancer the disease has significantly progressed because there are few symptoms associated with it in the early stages.

There is hope, though! The most common type of lung cancer, non-small cell lung cancer, can be effectively treated if caught early enough. Getting an annual screen is the best

way to detect lung cancer. If you are currently a smoker or have quit in the past 15 years and are over 55 years of age, you may want to discuss screening for lung cancer with your doctor. The most common screening involves using a low-dose computed tomography (CT scan). The CT scan uses an x-ray machine to take detailed pictures of the lungs. Discuss with your doctor the benefits and risks of undergoing such a procedure.

Unfortunately, the rate of smoking may be higher due to certain myths about smoking. For example, some believe smoking will keep them thin and if they quit, they will gain weight. While there is a relationship between smoking and weight management, smoking is also associated with behaviors that lead to poor health and weight gain, such as poor diet and low physical activity.

If you are a smoker who wants to quit, it can be very difficult to deal with the tobacco cravings. Here are a few tips to get you through those challenging moments:

- Plan how you're going to handle the craving—if you plan ahead you're much more likely to successfully win the battle.
- Avoid triggers—identify those situations where you smoke most often. Is it with your morning coffee? After you eat a meal? While watching TV or surfing the internet? When you're stressed? Once you identify your triggers, you can replace that time with a healthier behavior.
- Delay—try to occupy yourself for 5 to 10 minutes and see if the craving goes away.



- Exercise—engaging in physical activity for 30 minutes will often make the craving go away and has added health benefits!
- Calculate how much money you're saving by not buying a pack—such a big number may give anyone incentive to quit.

Take a few deep breaths and remember, if you still feel like you need some added support in quitting, you can contact the Ball State Practicum Clinic to set up a counseling appointment for smoking cessation!



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Mind Matters

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Ball State University Counseling Practicum Clinic: Serving the Community Since 1969

Mission

- The clinic is a training and research facility for the Department of Counseling Psychology and Guidance Services.
- The clinic provides high-quality, low-cost psychological services to the Delaware County community and beyond.

Service Providers

- Over 50 graduate student counselors under the supervision of faculty.
- Faculty supervisors are licensed psychologists and counselors.

Services Offered

- Individual Counseling
- Couple Counseling
- Family Counseling
- Child/Adolescent Counseling
- Group Counseling with a focus on:
 - Parenting
 - Social skills
 - Anger control
 - Issues of concern to children and adolescents

Hours of Operation

- August-May (Spring & Fall)
9 AM to 9 PM M-Th
9 AM to 12 PM Fri
- May-August (Summer)
9 AM to 8 PM M-Th
Closed on Friday
- The clinic is closed during university vacations and holidays.

All clients have the right to receive timely, competent counseling services consistent with the ethical principles and guidelines established by professional organizations. All counseling services provided at the Counseling Practicum Clinic are guided by the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the American Counseling Association, the American School Counseling Association, the American Rehab Counseling Association, the General Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services, and the Specialty Guidelines for the Delivery of Services by Counseling Psychologists.

We're on the Web!

<http://cms.bsu.edu/Academics/CollegesandDepartments/Teachers/Departments/CounselingPsych/Practicum.aspx>