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Do not let body image weigh on you

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DO you ever look in the mirror and feel unhappy with what you see? You are not alone – body image issues can have a major impact on our mental well-being and quality of life. The media plays a role in how we view ourselves. Celebrities, influencers and advertisers are often used to promote unrealistic beauty standards that society is expected to measure up to. This has caused many people, especially adolescents, to become more concerned with physical appearance than ever before.

It is important to understand what body image is in order to comprehend the physical and mental effects it can have on individuals.

The way we think and feel about our bodies has an immense impact on our overall mental and physical health. Body image issues arise when negative thoughts or feelings surrounding one's body shape, size or appearance become deeply ingrained and have a large effect on an individual's self-esteem.

Low self-esteem because of poor body image can also have a damaging psychological impact on individuals. Those who feel uncomfortable about their bodies may develop depression and/or anxiety, become fixated with dieting, in extreme cases leading to eating disorders like anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa, which can cause dramatic decreases in both weight and strength as well as damage to overall wellness. These activities leave individuals feeling weak, lethargic and unable to focus on everyday tasks, which ultimately diminish quality of life.

Negative thoughts around appearance can cloud our judgement while also sowing seeds for other unhealthy behaviours, such as smoking, in order to manage stress caused by physical embarrassment and feelings of unattractiveness. This, therefore, leads us down a spiral, wherein, our physical and mental health slowly degrades due to perpetuation of negative thoughts and beliefs regarding ourselves.

One effective way to cope with body image issues is to practice cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). CBT focuses on changing negative thought patterns and behaviours related to body image by identifying and making changes in the beliefs that are holding one back. By replacing these thoughts with more balanced views, people can learn to look at themselves through a different lens and develop a healthier view of their own self-image. This type of therapy also encourages one to take steps towards loving and accepting their bodies while building a better relationship with food.

Additionally, learning useful relaxation techniques can help manage feelings of anxiety, which may exacerbate body image issues.

Other methods for coping with body image issues are rooted in self-care practices and habits. To maintain overall mental health during difficult times, it is important for indi-

viduals to focus on physical activities that bring joy instead of feeling obligated or pressured into working out in order to meet certain goals or standards of beauty.

Developing an attitude of gratitude can also help shift attention away from perceived flaws towards reflecting on personal strengths, accomplishments and relationships when feeling down about oneself.

Joining a supportive community that celebrates body love can be a great way to cope with body image issues. In this type of environment, members are encouraged to accept and appreciate their bodies no matter what shape or size they may be.

The support provided by other individuals in the community can help boost confidence and reduce anxiety associated with negative body image issues. Furthermore, these groups often provide resources on emotional health and eating disorders so that members have access to applicable information on proper nutrition habits, mental health treatments and lifestyle modifications for improved well-being.

Find people who appreciate you for who you are, not what you look like. Spend time talking, laughing and engaging in activities together. This will help to reaffirm your self-esteem by forming a strong support system that encourages unconditional acceptance and appreciation for who you are.

In conclusion, it is clear that body image issues can have a significant impact on mental well-being. Not only can they cause negative self-image, low self-esteem and social anxiety, but these issues can also lead to more serious psychological conditions, such as depression and eating disorders. Therefore, it is essential to address body image issues in order to promote better mental health. This can be done through support groups and therapy, engaging in healthy activities such as yoga or meditation, focusing on nutrition and physical activity, and practising positive affirmations.

By taking the necessary proactive steps to tackle body image issues, one can help preserve their mental wellbeing while improving their overall physical and emotional state of mind. "It is essential to address body image issues in order to promote better mental health. This can be done through support groups and therapy, engaging in healthy activities such as yoga or meditation, focusing on nutrition and physical activity, and practising positive affirmations.