

Helping Mothers and Daughters Stay Authentic and Resilient

In a Culture Driven by Relentless Pursuit for Perfection

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1

Objectives



- Develop a greater understanding of various influences on the development of body image.
- Explore the dynamics of the mother-daughter relationship and their impact on body image.
- Provide suggestions for ways in which to help mothers and/or daughters develop resiliency and live authentically.

2

The Myth of the Perfect Female



- Daughter:
 - School, athletics, extracurricular, the right look, the right friends, the right clothes, the right personality
- Mom:
 - Work, church/school/team volunteer, well-behaved kids, the right look, the right house, the right personality

....Offline and Online

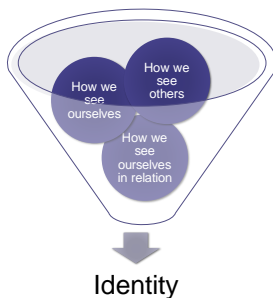
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Being Female



4

Identity Development



5

Temperament



- Dimensions of Temperament
 - Harm Avoidance (High AN, BN)
 - Obsessiveness (High AN, BN)
 - Persistence (High AN, BN)
 - Novelty Seeking (Low AN, High BN)
 - Self Directedness (Low AN, BN)

(C. Robert Cloninger, Temperament & Character Inventory)

6

Student Life



- College visits are occurring during the of students' sophomore year
- ACT/SAT prep is a nearly billion-dollar industry
- Only **50%** report feeling confident about their ability to handle their personal problems, and **46%** say they feel that they are on top of things fairly or very often

(American Psychological Association, 2013 "Stress in America")

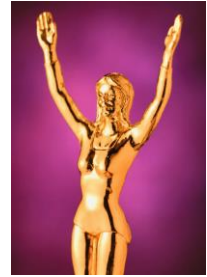
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The Edge



- Competition
 - Pick your sport early!
 - Individually judged sports (figure skating, gymnastics, swimming, equestrianism)
- Body fat measurement
- Scholarships
- Girls between ages 15-20 have more than double the rates of depression as their male counterparts

(Homayoun, 2013)



8

What is Beautiful?



- 68% of women strongly agree that "the media and advertising set an unrealistic standard of beauty that most woman can't ever achieve"
(Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2004)
- 20 years ago, models weighed 8% less than the average woman. Today, they weigh 23% less than the average woman.
(National Eating Disorder Association, 2010)
- After 3 minutes of viewing images of female fashion models, 7 out of 10 women felt more depressed and angrier than prior to viewing the images and 100% of woman of all sizes reported decreased body satisfaction
(Alison E. Field, Lilian Cheung, Anne M. Wolf, David B. Herzog, Steven L. Gortmaker, Graham A. Colditz, 1999)

9

Television



- TV: 76% of female characters are below average weight
(Fouts & Burggraf, 2000)
- Of American elementary school girls who read magazines, 69% say that the pictures influence their concept of the ideal body shape. 47% say the pictures make them want to lose weight
(Martin, 2010)
- Conversely, Black-oriented television shows may serve a protective function; Hispanic and Black girls and women who watch more Black-oriented television have higher body satisfaction

10

Acceptance



- Mean Girls- the use of aggressive bullying between girls has been on the rise since the early 1990s, based on issues such as physical attributes and social status
(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Services and Resource Administration. *A Troubling Trend: Girls and Bullying*, 2012)
- Overweight teens teased by:
 - 70% by their friends
 - 42% by gym teachers
 - 37% by their own parents

(Puhl, Peterson, Luedicke, 2012)

11

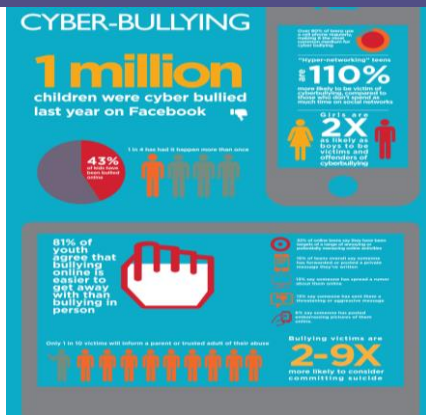
Social Media



- Among college-aged women, Facebook intensity is positively correlated with greater physical comparison and greater disordered eating
(Walker, Thornton, Choudhury et.al, 2015)
- Thinspo sites (ProAna, ProMia)
- Likes, followers, friends, views



12



13

Honorable Mentions

- Instagram Bully Filter
- Yay Tumblr! "Everything ok?"
- Girl Scouts Uniquely Me!
- Dove "Campaign for Real Beauty"
- Secret's "Mean Stinks" Campaign
- Renfrew Instagram Feed



14

Women & Body Image



- 80% of American women are dissatisfied with their appearance (National Eating Disorders Association, 2010)
- Eating disorders among middle aged women have increased 42% from 2001-2010 (National Eating Disorders Association, 2010)
- 36% of women report they have spent at least half their time in the previous five years dieting (Bulik et al., 2012)

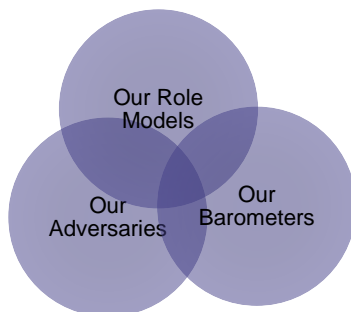
15

Our mothers are our mirrors.
Our mothers are our mirrors.



16

Our Mothers Are...



17

Mothers and Daughters



18

Mother Daughter Dynamics



- Separation-Individuation
 - Despite increasing independence, daughters may continue to confide in their mothers most often when troubled
(Erickson's *Commitment & Crisis*)
- How much is too much?
 - Distant vs. Smothering

19

Mother Daughter Dynamics



- Children are often perceived as a reflection of their parents – whether good or bad
- Mothers often feel a responsibility for helping their daughter achieve a “good weight” so the daughter will be “happier with herself”
Vogue April 2012 “Weight Watcher”
- Despite the influences of their culture, mothers continue to serve as a model for self acceptance
 - Parenting in a different world than the one Mom grew up in

20

Mothers and Daughters and Body Image



- Girls who report family teasing are 1.5 times more likely to engage in binge eating and extreme weight control behaviors five years later
(Newmark-Stainer, Wall, Haines, Story, Sherwood, van de Berg 2007)
- A mother's encouragement to be thin has been associated with higher body dissatisfaction and restrained eating
(Anschutz, Kanfers, Van strien, Vermulst & Engels, 2009)
- In mothers with eating disorders, restrictive feeding practices, conflict with infants during mealtime and concern about child weight and shape are more common
(Runfola et al., 2014)

21

Yes, Mother.
I can see you are flawed.
You have not hidden it.
That is your greatest gift to me.

-Alice Walker

22

Open Communication



- Listening
- “I” statements
- Taking the perspective of the other
- Own your part in the dialogue
- Vulnerability
- Time-out



23

Difficult Conversations



24

Helping Clients Understand Mother-Daughter Communication



- Oftentimes, daughters want to talk at the most inconvenient times. This is no accident
- As mothers learn to understand their own issues/reactions, they can respond more genuinely to their daughters
- Communication may change as the daughter moves through stages of development
- Mothers must accept the daughter's perspective while providing an empathic challenge to that perspective
- Safety is critical: daughters may rail against their mothers because that is the safest place to do so

25

Potential Pitfalls of Mother/Daughter Communication



- Privacy does not equal permission
- Larger-sized parents are not hypocrites OR helpless
- Everyone must be committed to authenticity and vulnerability
- Trying to raise a more resilient daughter than we are ourselves

26

Helping Mothers Promote Positive Self Image/Body Image



- Confront thinking distortions
- Practice Self-Compassion
- Understand your relationship with your own true self/body image/self-image legacy
- Refrain from weight/size/attractiveness /comparison statements
- Be a friend to (and talk about) your body with positive affirmations and positive experiences
- Learn to love [and talk about] yourself and what makes you strong/unique
- Spend time with people who like you and make her feel good about yourself
- Eat and live a balanced life (no "good foods/bad foods")

27

For Parents with Anxious Daughters



- **Allow her to Worry**
- **Avoid Automatic Assurances**
 - **Freeze:** pause and take some deep breaths with your child. Deep breathing can help reverse the nervous system response.
 - **Empathize:** anxiety is scary. Your child wants to know that you get it.
 - **Evaluate:** once your child is calm, it's time to figure out possible solutions.
 - **Let Go:** Let go of your guilt; you are a loving parent giving your child the tools to manage their worry.
- **Worrying is good, while it is in the service of discovery**
 - Catch your thoughts
 - Reappraise those thoughts as needed
 - Lean into the function of the emotion if needed
- **Model Present-focused awareness**
- **Avoid Avoiding Anxiety**
- **Help her develop a relaxation checklist**
- **Teach and Model Self-Compassion**
- **Demonstrate an Openness to "Plan B"**

28

Resources for Families



- The Renfrew Center Foundation
 - www.renfrewcenter.com
- Dove Self Esteem Toolkit and Resources
 - (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InOSZX4tpOA>).
- The Myth of the Perfect Girl. Homayoun, Ana, 2012
- Mother-Daughter Movies: 101 Films to See Together (Rosemary Rogers & Nell Rogers Michlin, 2004).
- Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls. Pipher, Mary 1994.
- The Gifts of Imperfection: Letting Go of Who you Want to be and Embracing Who You Are. Brown, Brene, 2012.

29

ABOUT THE RENFREW CENTER

- First residential treatment facility in the nation for eating disorders, opened in 1985.
- Established as a family-run business, currently operating with multi-generational leadership.
- Accepts 430+ insurance plans across the country and is a preferred provider for many insurance companies.
- Incorporates The Renfrew Center Unified Treatment Model for Eating Disorders®, integrating our relational approach with the latest scientific research.
- Offers residential, day treatment, intensive outpatient, and outpatient services.

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30

Questions?



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