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IMPROVING BODY IMAGE IN AN IDEALISED MEDIA CULTURE:
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS AND POSITIVE BODY IMAGE
INTERVENTIONS.

Section A: Promoting positive body image in the context of idealised western
media: Change the media or promote media literacy? Insights from an
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Acknowledgements

Summary Page

Section A: This section provides a systematic review of the emerging research base into promoting positive body image in the context of western idealised media. The findings suggest that strategies such as changing the media presented to rely less on a thin-ideal, media literacy training, and encouraging a focus on body functionality have the potential to promote positive body image and protect it from the impacts of idealised media exposure. Methodological limitations are examined, indicating only tentative conclusions about the differential processes by which the media impact on positive body image can be disrupted by interventions. Several areas for further research are highlighted, including exploring the relationship between social media and positive body image.

Section B: This section explores how women familiar with body positive social media understand their engagement with it and any impacts they have noticed. Eight women were interviewed about their experiences of engaging regularly with body positive social media and the results analysed using interpretive phenomenological analysis. Four core themes emerged, encompassing each woman's unique journey through developing an understanding of the meaning of body positivity, and using social media to connect with people, ideas and activism, whilst slowly internalising new values to develop their relationships to themselves and their bodies. The impacts of these journeys are summarised as enabling them to live in alignment with their values and experience self-acceptance. Implications for the emerging research base into body positive social media and incorporating these benefits into clinical practice are discussed.

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SECTION A

Promoting positive body image in the context of idealised western media: change the media or promote media literacy? Insights from an emerging research base.

Word count: 8294 (7975 + 319)

Abstract

In recent years, exposure to idealised Western media has been found to detrimentally impact positive body image (PBI). An emerging research base is examining how this impact can be reduced or protected against, using both content-focussed and interpretation-focussed approaches. The current paper used a systematic review to assess which approaches are currently indicated as the most effective and how robust this evidence is.

Nine papers were identified as having used interventions or experimental manipulations to promote PBI in relation to western media.

The results indicated three main approaches as potentially beneficial in promoting PBI and protecting it from the impacts of idealised media exposure: changing the content of western media to rely less on a thin-ideal, and media literacy training and encouraging a focus on body functionality as ways to change how people relate to, interpret and appraise idealised media.

Methodological limitations mean that the extent to which these approaches beneficially impact positive body image or protect against exposure to idealised media, is yet to be robustly established, and we can only draw tentative conclusions about the differential processes by which the examined experimental manipulations and interventions caused the impacts noted. This review highlights several avenues for further research, including exploring the relationship between social media and positive body image.

Key words: Promotion, Positive Body Image, Western Media, Thin-ideal, Systematic Review.

Body image is a complex multi-dimensional construct encompassing affective, behavioural, perceptual and cognitive elements of body experience (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2004; Cash & Smolak, 2011). Influenced by multifarious factors, such as age, peers and family, media, and the extent to which people internalise societal appearance ideals (Cash & Smolak, 2011), body image itself can profoundly impact on emotions, behaviours, thoughts and quality of life (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2004; Kearney-Cooke & Tieger, 2015).

Traditionally, body image research has focussed on deficit constructs such as body dissatisfaction (Cook-Cottone & Phelps, 2003). Poor body image has been found to be more common in women, (Tiggemann, 2004) and associated with a wide variety of poor outcomes, such as constraints in leisure activities (Frederick & Shaw, 1995; Liechty, Freeman & Zabriskie, 2006), and quality of life impairments (Griffiths et al., 2017). Meta-analysis has demonstrated body dissatisfaction to be a strong risk and maintenance factor for eating disorders (Stice, 2002). Poor body image has been framed by researchers as a significant public health concern (Mond et al., 2013), and there is a substantial research base devoted to interventions focussed on preventing or reducing negative body image (Smolak & Levine, 2001).

Positive Body Image

More recently, increased focus has been given to the concept of positive body image (PBI: Halliwell, 2015). Originally thought to be the opposite end of the continuum to negative body image (Tylka, 2011), current research has established it as a separate construct (Williams, Cash & Santos, 2004), with distinct effects on quality of life and perceptual, behavioural, and cognitive-affective components, when compared with a lack of body dissatisfaction (Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999; Tiggemann, 2015; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a; Wood-Barcalow, Tylka & Augustus-Horvath, 2010). Many

of PBI's component factors have been found to co-exist alongside indicators of negative body image, such as body dissatisfaction (Tiggeman and McCourt, 2013).

Tylka and Wood-Barcalow, (2015b) define PBI as a holistic, multifaceted construct that is stable but adjustable. Summarised as an over-arching love, appreciation and respect for one's body, Tylka and Wood-Barcalow's conceptualisation also includes gratitude towards the body's uniqueness, features, functions and health, mindfully connecting to the body's needs, and having a broad conceptualisation of beauty. They report nuances in the extent to which PBI can protect well-being and how it is shaped by each person's multiple social identities. Piran's (2016) Developmental Theory of Embodiment is similar, additionally incorporating ideas about experiencing agency to act in the world and feeling comfortable with bodily desires, and defined as "positive body connection and comfort, embodied agency and passion, and attuned self-care" (Piran, 2016, p.47).

To date, a comprehensive multi-dimensional measure of PBI is yet to be developed. Piran's Experience of Embodiment scale (Piran & Teall, 2012) measures multiple domains reflecting several components of PBI[1], however it does not incorporate all the dimensions (such as the broad conceptualisation of beauty). Other attempts to measure PBI components have focussed on measuring satisfaction with body functionality, although validated measures for this have yet to be developed.

The most common operationalisation of PBI is body appreciation (Tylka, 2019), since the development of the Body Appreciation Scale (Avalos, Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2005):

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[1] Body connection and comfort, functionality and agency, experience and expression of desires, attuned self-care, and the body as a subjective vs. objective site.

the concept has been recognised as one of the most salient components of positive body image (Andrew, Tiggemann & Clark, 2016a; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). Broadly, body appreciation can be defined as unconditional approval and respect for the body (Avalos & Tylka, 2006) beyond appearance, to include appreciation for body functionality (Abbott & Barber, 2010), attending to the body's needs, and resisting internalising idealised beauty standards (Andrew et al, 2016a). Body appreciation can co-exist with body dissatisfaction (Tiggemann & McCourt, 2013) and is uniquely associated with self-care behaviours, such as sun protection (Andrew, et al., 2016a; b).

The existing research has shown a clear protective impact of PBI. Studies have shown PBI predicts protective outcomes for general psychological well-being measures including optimism, proactive coping, (Andrew et al, 2016b), positive self-esteem and body-esteem (Cash & Flemming, 2002), and health-related quality of life (Griffiths et al., 2017; Haraldstad, Christopherson, Eide, Natvig & Helseth, 2011), including healthy eating and regular physical activity (Cash & Fleming, 2002; Neumark-Sztainer, Paxton, Hannan, Haines, & Story, 2006; Santos,Tassitano, do Nascimento, Petribú, & Cabral, 2011; Tylka & Homan 2015). PBI as a concept for improving health and quality of life therefore has significant implications for broadening the focus of body image intervention research.

Promoting Positive Body Image

Some researchers have asserted that, relative to body dissatisfaction, body appreciation may be more amenable to change (Andrew, Tiggeman & Clark, 2015). It is viewed as an important quality to foster in women and those recovering from eating disorders (Andrew, Tiggeman and Clark, (2016b), with research starting to emerge about promoting PBI.

Observational research about pre-existing factors associated with higher PBI has identified several activities and personal characteristics. Activities linked with higher PBI include exposure to nature (Swami, Barron, Weis, & Furnham, 2016; Mitten & D'Amore, 2017) and physically active leisure activities (Howarth, 2013; Rose, 2008; Liechty, Sveinson, Willfong & Evans, 2015). Embodying activities such as dance (Dimler, McFadden & McHugh 2017; Tiggeman, Coutts & Clark, 2014; Whitehead & Kurz, 2009), were especially associated, particularly when activity leaders encouraged a focus on functional gains and experiencing the activity in-vivo (O'Hara, Cox & Amorose, 2014). In terms of personal characteristics, high self-esteem (O'Dea, 2005) is associated with higher PBI, as are specific ways of approaching information, such as avoidance of social comparison (Liechty, 2012), being critical of portrayals of idealised beauty, and attributing little importance to negative comments from others (Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010; Holmqvist & Frisén, 2012).

Interventions to promote PBI have also been found to be effective, such as self-compassion meditation (Albertson, Neff, & Dill-Shackleford, 2015) and encouraging a focus on body functionality; focussing on what one's body can do and how it feels, over appearance (Abbott & Barber, 2011; Alleva, Martijn, van Breukelen, Janson & Karos, 2015; Avalos & Tykla, 2006; Frisén & Holmqvist, 2010; Mulgrew & Tiggemann, 2018; Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010). Promoting focus on body functionality is emphasised in PBI literature, with it theorised as encouraging a processing style that rejects unrealistic ideals for appearance, therefore maintaining PBI (Andrew et al., 2015; Halliwell, 2013).

Media and Body Image

The powerful influence of western media exposure on women's poor body image has been well-established (Thompson et al., 1999), with the role of idealised images, and how people interact with these, receiving significant attention (Tiggemann, 2011). Western media

is recognised as influential in widely distributing idealised images of women (Tiggemann, 2011); extremely thin, toned, (Kraus & Martins, 2017; Webb et al., 2017), youthful and sexy (Boyd & Murnen, 2017; Grogan, 2010). Frequent exposure to these unattainable ideals is hypothesised as creating unrealistic expectations (Tiggeman, 2004), which in turn are linked to body image concerns in girls and young women (Levine & Murnen, 2009).

Meta-analyses and reviews of the literature (Dittmar, Halliwell, & Stirling, 2009; Grabe, Ward and Hyde, 2008; Groesz, Levine & Murnen, 2002; Levine & Murnen, 2009; Want, 2009) have clearly demonstrated a small to moderate link between thin-ideal media exposure through magazines and television and increased body dissatisfaction in women. Increased exposure is associated with increased body dissatisfaction (Thompson et al., 1999), and the effect is replicated across non-western cultures (Becker, 2004; Lee & Lee, 2000). For men, exposure to both idealised men's bodies and thin-ideal women's bodies are associated poorer body image (Barlett, Vowels, & Saucier, 2008).

As social media becomes more popular than conventional media among young women (Bair, Kelly, Serdar, & Mazzeo, 2012), the effect of idealised image exposure via these websites has also received interest. Initial evidence indicates a similar dose-response effect of increased exposure to the thin-ideal on social media being associated with poorer body image outcomes in both women and adolescent girls (Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian & Halliwell, 2015a; Fardouly & Vartanian, 2015; Tiggemann & Miller, 2010; Tiggemann & Slater 2013; 2014). Furthermore, the additional engagement options offered by social media, beyond mere exposure, increase the complexity of its influence over body image compared to traditional media (Slater, Varsani & Diedrichs, 2017). Specific appearance-related activities, such as photo sharing, have been found to be particularly impactful on body image (McLean,

Paxton, Wertheim & Masters, 2015), especially for women with tendencies towards making appearance comparisons (Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian & Halliwell, 2015b).

Several models have been proposed to explain the links between media exposure and body image, including a socio-cultural perspective, social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) and objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Socio-cultural Perspective

Socio-cultural perspectives posit that messages about the ideal male and female body image are prevalent from early on in people's lives, largely received from peers and the mass media (Blowers, Loxton, Grady-Flesser, Occhipinti, & Dawe, 2003; Sands & Wardle, 2003). The process of internalisation, accepting these messages and making an effort to emulate them, is posited as causal in these messages influencing body image and increasing body dissatisfaction (Knauss, Paxton, & Alsaker, 2007; Tiggemann, 2011). For women, this is often referred to as "thin-ideal" internalisation; women with more self-reported "thin-ideal" internalisation have been found to be more affected by thin-ideal media exposure (Halliwell & Diedrichs, 2012).

Social Comparison Theory

Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory posits that people maintain their perceptions of their own identity by engaging in both upward and downward social comparisons. Upward comparisons, with people perceived to be superior, lead to evaluating the self as inferior and are thought to be detrimental to a person's sense of identity (Morse and Gergen, 1970).

Appearance-based upwards social comparisons have been implicated as a key process through which the media influences body dissatisfaction (Fardouly, Pinkus & Vartanian,

2017; O'Brien et al., 2009; Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). Famous people and models represent ideals through media and become targets for upwards appearance-based comparisons (Englis, Solomon, & Ashmore, 1994). Frequent exposure to these ideals leads to frequent, and largely automatic (Want, 2009), negative self-evaluations and poor body image (Engeln-Maddox, 2005; Myers, Ridolfi, Crowther & Ciesla, 2012; Schaefer & Thompson, 2014).

Objectification Theory

Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) posit that in western cultures women are objectified: interpersonal interactions and visual media portraying women as mere bodies or body parts cause women to be viewed as objects to be evaluated. Women can internalise this and self-objectify, viewing themselves from a third-person perspective and evaluating their bodies as objects, (Slater and Tiggemann, 2002), which can contribute to appearance anxiety, shame, negative body image, and reduced awareness of internal body cues (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Frederickson and Roberts (1997) posit that the alternative, women focussing on their bodies as active and instrumental, results in better body image,

Interventions Targeting the Impact of Media on Body Negative Image.

Intervention research into reducing the detrimental impact of western media exposure on body image tends towards investigating two approaches: modifying the media itself (content-focussed strategies) or influencing how individuals engage with existing media (interpretation-focussed strategies).

Content-focussed Strategies

Research into content-level strategies has taken several approaches to modifying media, including increasing the prevalence of media which depicts positive physical

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functioning, which, relative to idealised images, increases body satisfaction (Mulgrew, McCulloch, Farren, Prichard, & Lim, 2018). Disclaimer labels on modified thin-ideal media have been trialled but found to be largely ineffective (Tiggeman & Brown, 2018).

Several researchers have called for increased diversity of shape and size in media portrayals of bodies (Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004) and limits on the extent to which unattainable idealised bodies are depicted (Bell, Rodgers, & Paxton, 2017), to reduce upwards social comparisons (Festinger, 1954) and their consequent impacts on body image (Fardouly et al., 2017). This idea is supported by Convertino, Rodgers, Franko, and Jodoin's (2019) finding that an advertising campaign explicitly showing diverse women's bodies was less detrimental to women's body image than thin-ideal images, particularly for women with higher tendencies towards appearance-based social comparisons.

Interpretation-focussed Strategies

Research into interpretation-focussed strategies has targets the way that individuals relate to idealised media, either directly via media literacy training or indirectly via encouraging other focuses.

Encouraging other focusses has largely centred around body functionality. It is theorised focussing on body functionality encourages women to place less importance on comparing themselves to thin-ideal bodies (Halliwell, 2013) and may even discredit thin models as targets for social comparisons (Martijn et al., 2013). Increasing a focus on one's own body functionality has been found to 'buffer' against the detrimental impacts thin-ideal media (Alleva, et al, 2015; Andrew et al., 2015).

Strengthening media literacy is associated with reduced body dissatisfaction, with these interventions promoting increased analytical skills and critical awareness (Thompson et al., 1999; Piran & Teall, 2012), especially regarding socio-culturally presented idealised

norms (Berel & Irving, 1998; Cook-Cottone & Phelps, 2003; Coughlin & Kalodner, 2006; Ghaderi, 2001), and education about the prevalence unrealistic body stereotypes (O'Dea, 2005) and altered images portraying physically unattainable bodies (Irving, DuPen, & Berel, 1998). Social media literacy has found similar effects in protecting young adult women against the impact of idealised images on these platforms (Tamplin, McLean & Paxton, 2018). Media literacy is theorised to encourage individuals to be less accepting and prone to internalising of ideals (Irving et al., 1998; Thompson et al., 1999; Piran & Teall, 2012), therefore less affected by the messages conveyed, and more resilient against body dissatisfaction (Richardson, Paxton, & Thomson, 2009)

Media and Positive Body Image

Currently, PBI is recognised as protective against the negative impacts of idealised media on body dissatisfaction. For example, body appreciation increases resilience to the thin-ideal (Halliwell, 2013). PBI is associated with a protective processing style towards unrealistic appearance ideals (Andrew et al., 2015).

Correlational research indicates that higher consumption of western idealised media is negatively associated with body appreciation for western populations (Swami, Hadji-Michael & Furnham, 2008) and non-western populations alike (Swami, Kannan & Furnham, 2012). However, compared with poor body image, the relationship between idealised media exposure and PBI is yet to be robustly established. Furthermore, whilst research has established interventions to promote positive body image (Halliwell, 2015), there is currently no consensus about how interventions could specifically target the impact of western media exposure on positive body image and body appreciation (Slater et al., 2017).

Current Review

This review will examine the existing evidence about interventions targeting the impact of the media on PBI. Given the content-focussed and interpretation-focussed interventions found in negative body image research, it is expected that interventions targeting the media's impact on positive body image will also fall into these categories.

This review will therefore examine research which aimed to influence PBI, either by modifying the media content itself or influencing how individuals engage with and interpret media.

Aims

- Draw together the emerging evidence about how media can be used or engaged with differently to promote positive body image.

This will involve:

- Critically examining papers which report interventions or experimental manipulations which make changes to media with the aim of impacting positive body image

- Critically examining papers which report interventions or experimental manipulations which equip individuals with strategies to influence how they engage with the media, to change positive body image

- Concluding about the effectiveness of these interventions

- Reporting directions for future research and interventions.

Review Question

How have interventions to promote positive body image targeted the impact of idealised western media, and is this effective?

Methodology

The above research question was addressed using a systematic review, Following the guidelines from the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (Tacconelli, 2010), a review protocol was established, setting out the procedure for identifying all current research investigating interventions or experimental manipulations intended to promote positive body image, which relate to engagement with the media.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Table 1 details the inclusion and exclusion criteria, using the PICOS acronym (Tacconelli, 2010).

Table 1
*Inclusion and Exclusion criteria for current review using the PICOS acronym (*Tacconelli, 2010)

PICOS Element	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Participants	Any	None
Interventions	Any intervention or experimental manipulation which employs changes to media[2] to enhance, or reduce detriments to, positive body image or a component construct.[1]	Any intervention or experimental manipulation given to promote or enhance, or reduce a detrimental impact on, positive body image or a component construct[1] which does not reference western media[2]
	Any intervention or experimental manipulation which influences how people engage with western media[2] to enhance, or reduce detriments to, positive body image or a component construct.[1]	Any intervention or experimental manipulation given to improve body image[3] without including a component construct of positive body image[1].
		Any intervention or experimental manipulation given to reduce negative body image/body dissatisfaction.
Comparators	-	-
Outcomes	Measures of positive body image or its component constructs[1] Including but not limited to: - Body Appreciation Scale - Functionality Appreciation scale - Experience of embodiment scale	Any measure of body image which does not include any component constructs of positive body image[1]
Study Design	Randomised controlled trials will be prioritised for inclusion and synthesis,	None

however given the small research base it
may be necessary to include other study
designs such as quasi-experimental,
observational studies and qualitative
research.

[1]As informed by the work of Tykla and Wood-Barcalow (2015b) and Webb, Wood-Barcalow and Tylka, (2015) and Piran (2015).
[2] Media defined as comprising of television, books, magazines, newspapers, advertising, music, films, and internet.
[3]Including body satisfaction as this concept represents the opposite of body dissatisfaction and is a separate concept to positive body image.

Search Process

Papers for review were identified initially via searches of the following electronic

databases in March 2020: Psychinfo, Psycharticles, Web of Science, ERIC (EBSCO),

Sciencedirect and Pubmed. Informed by definitions of PBI (Tykla & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b;

Webb, Wood-Barcalow & Tylka, 2015), titles and abstracts were searched for the following

terms: ("positive body image" or "body appreciation" or "body acceptance" or "body love"

or "broad* concept* beauty" or "adaptive appearance investment" or "body protective" or

"positive rational acceptance coping" or "body image flexib*" or "body sanctification" or

"body pride" "positive body talk" or "self-accepting body talk" or" body functionality" or

"embodiment") and (media or book or television or internet or magazine or newspaper or

advert* or music or film or movi*). Reference lists of key papers were hand searched and a

final overview search of google scholar was conducted for comprehensive searching.

Duplicate papers were filtered out using Microsoft Excel[TM] and the remaining papers

taken through an iterative process of scanning titles, then abstracts, then full-text scanning

and reading, for adherence to the predetermined criteria specified above (Figure one). This

process identified 14 papers for review, summarised below in Table 2.
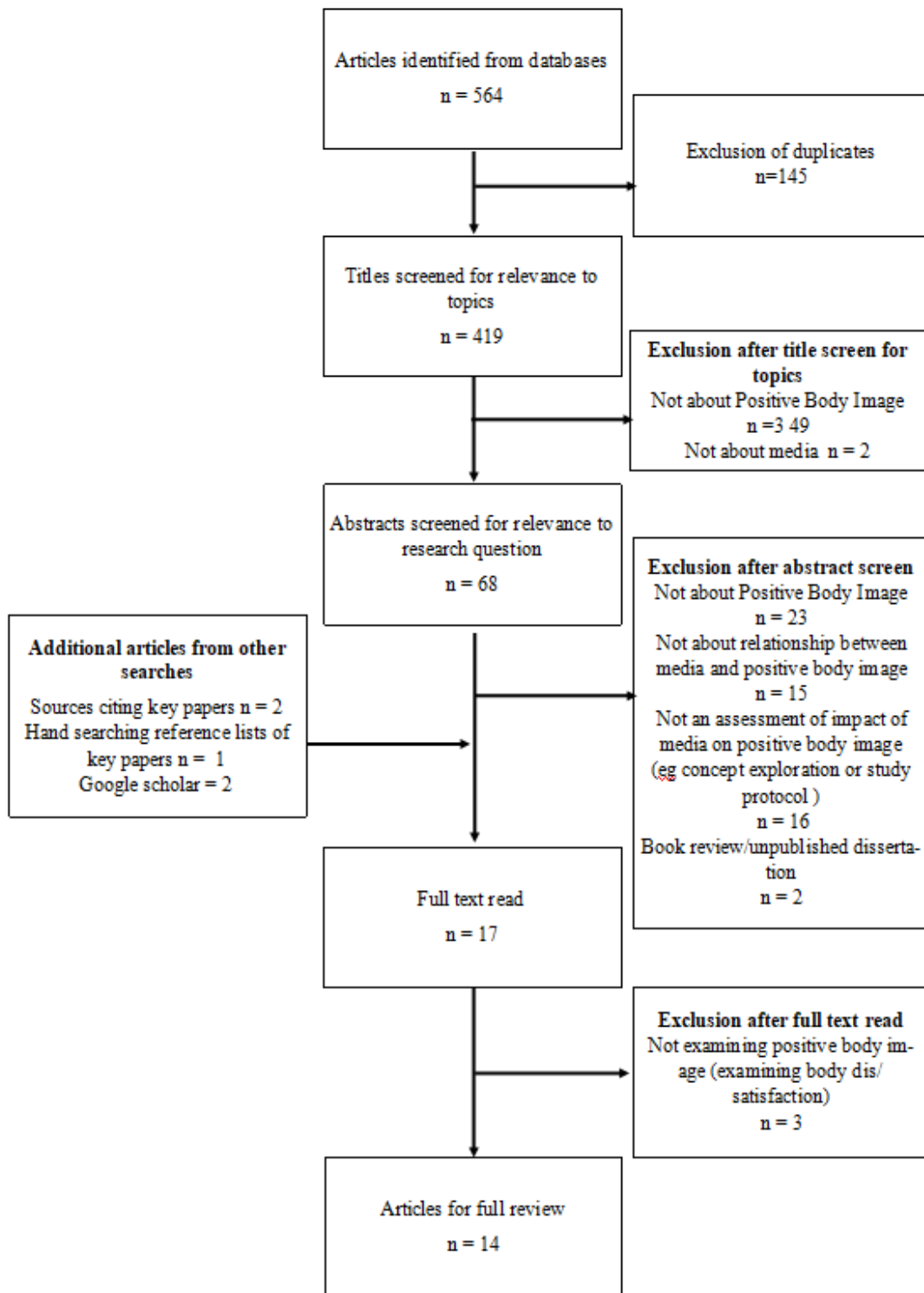
Figure 1. Flowchart indicating the search and inclusion/exclusion process of selecting papers for the current review.

Improving body image in an idealised media culture: Community solutions and positive body image interventions.

Table 2
Summary of papers included in review

Study	Title	Sample	Design	Media element of intervention/experimental manipulation	Measures	Intervention /experimental groups	Analysis
Paper 1 Swami and Tovée (2009)	A comparison of actual-ideal weight discrepancy, body appreciation, and media influence between street-dancers and non-dancers	83 female, recreational, regular (at least weekly) street dancers (aerobic training and choreographed dance) from street dance studios in London. 84 age-matched female non-dancers from public community locations in London	Observational Case Control	Examining the impact of street dance on how women engage with western media (and their associated positive body image).	Photographic Figure Rating Scale (PFRS; Swami, Salem, Furnham & Tovée, 2008) to measure actual-ideal weight discrepancy Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos, Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2005) to measure 4 aspects of positive body image. Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3; Thompson, ven den Berg, Roehrig, Guarda & Heinberg, 2004) to measure multi-dimensional impact of sociocultural influences on body image. Demographics (including height and weight to calculate Body Mass Index)	n/a observational Street dancers and non-dancers	ANCOVA Correlation Multiple Regression
Paper 2 Alleva, Veldhuis and Martjin (2016)	A pilot study investigating whether focusing on body functionality can protect women from the potential	70 female undergraduate students (35 intervention, 35 control) from Maastricht University. Aged between 18 and 28.	Between-subjects randomised experimental design	Examining the impact of viewing thin ideal images after completing differently focussed writing reflection tasks.	Visual analogue scales to measure appearance satisfaction and body functionality (rating two items: current satisfaction and dissatisfaction) for both. (Birkeland et al., 2005; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995).	Intervention group: body functionality writing task Control group: route writing task.	ANCOVA

					The Self-objectification questionnaire (SOQ; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998) The Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a).		
Paper 3 Norwood, Murray, Nolan and Bowker (2011)	Beautiful from the inside out: A school-based programme designed to increase self-esteem and positive body image among preadolescents	77 male (n = 36) and female (n = 41) pre-adolescent students attending a Canadian school. Mean age 10.86	Between-subjects experimental	Intervention program consisted in part of media literacy training: "Students were informed about the unrealistic images portrayed in the media today and engaged in discussions regarding the stereotypes that are reinforced by the media. Programme facilitators lead a discussion on the mechanisms that the media uses to make models look "perfect." Students were given the opportunity to work in groups and take pictures of real beauty."	The Self-Description Questionnaire-I (SDQ-II; Marsh, 1992): two concepts used, general self-esteem and physical appearance esteem. The Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESCAA; Cecil & Stanley, 1997; Mendelson, Mendelson & White, 2001): only the appearance satisfaction and weight satisfaction sub-scales. The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ; Heinberg et al., 1995)	Gender (male/female) used as between-subjects variable, time (pre/post intervention) as within-subjects variable.	MANOVA
Paper 4 Mulgrew, Pritchard, Stalley and Lim (2019)	Effectiveness of a multi-session positive self, appearance, and functionality	117 women aged between 17-35 years, predominantly Caucasian and university students, recruited	Randomised Controlled Trial	Intervention program consisted, in part, of exposure to resources (videos and images) from functionality-based public health programs	Visual Analogue Scales: four items measured appearance satisfaction (Mulgrew & Tiggeman, 2018), four items measured functionality satisfaction (Mulgrew, Stalley & Tiggemann, 2017).	Intervention: Body Image Program Active Control: Stress	ANOVA

	program on women's body satisfaction and response to media	from an Australian university and the local community.			Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a) State adaptation of the BAS-2 (Homan, 2016) The Revised Body Esteem Scale (BES; Frost, Franzoi, Oswald & Shields, 2018) The Self-Objectification Questionnaire (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998)	Management Program	
Paper 5 Diedrichs and Lee (2010)	GI Joe or Average Joe? The impact of average-size and muscular male fashion models on men's and women's body image and advertisement effectiveness	619 men and women aged 17-25 (men = 330, women = 289). All university students enrolled on first-year psychology course at an Australian university. Sample was predominantly white Australian.	Experimental between-subjects with restricted randomisation procedure.	Exposure to advertisement images manipulated to depict average-sized and muscular male fashion models.	Advertising effectiveness: 5-item Likert style response scale rating reactions to adverts and intention to purchase the product. (Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004) Model attractiveness: 1-item Likert response scale rating the attractiveness of the model. Body Image States Scale (BISS; Cash, Fleming, Alindogan, Steadman & Whitehead, 2002) Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3; Thompson et al, 2004) Demographic Questions	Exposure to different male model images, 4 conditions: No model, muscular model, average-slim model and average-large model.	ANCOVA Hierarchical Moderated Multiple Regression
Paper 6 Mulgrew, Stalley,	Positive appearance and	230 women aged between 17-35, predominantly	Randomised between-	Exposure to images depicting posed models (body-as-object) or active	State appearance satisfaction: 4 items assessing "how I feel right now" on a 10-point Likert scale about	Reflection task x2: appearance	Mixed design ANOVA

and Tiggeman (2017)	functionality reflections can improve body satisfaction but do not protect against idealised media exposure	Caucasian and university students, recruited from a regional Australian university and general community, via the internet.	subjects experimental	models (body-as-process, such as weights, running or dancing).	appearance (Mulgrew &Tiggemann, 2018). State physical functionality satisfaction: 4 items assessing "how I feel right now" on a 10-point Likert scale about body functionality (Mulgrew & Tiggemann, 2018). State social comparison: three items each to assess appearance-based comparison and functionality-based comparison, "how much do you compare […] to the models previously viewed?" on a 10 point likert scale. (Mulgrew & Tiggemann, 2018). Two items to assess the direction of comparison (much worse or much better) of appearance and functionality comparisons. (Galioto & Crowther, 2013).	focussed, and functionality focussed Idealised image viewing x 3: posed, active, control	Pairwise Comparisons Partial Correlations Hierarchical Regressions
Paper 7 McVey, Kirsh, Maker, Walker, Mullane, Laliberte, Ellis-Claypool, Vorderbrugge, Burnett,	Promoting positive body image among university students: A collaborative pilot study	37 male (n = 6) and female (n = 31) students. Mean age 22.65. All enrolled in peer health educator training at one of three Canadian universities.	Before and after quasi-experimental design	Intervention program include media literacy training consisting of "critical analysis of unrealistic ''ideal'' body shapes portrayed in the media and how these images are related to self-perceptions, as well as the various methods that the media	The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ) (Heinberg et al, 1995) Body Satisfaction Scale (BSS; Slade, Dewey, Newton, Brodie, & Kiemle, 1990) Demographics Open ended program satisfaction question	1 intervention group, pre and post measures only, no control group	ANOVA

Cheung and Banks (2010)				employ to create a ''perfect'' image of beauty"		
Paper 8 Dohnt and Tiggeman (2008)	Promoting positive body image in young girls: An evaluation of Shapesville	84 girls, aged between 5-9 years, predominantly Caucasian from middle to upper-class families, recruited from four South Australian private primary schools.	Between-subjects randomised experimental design	Intervention in the form of a children's book which celebrates positive body image by encouraging self-acceptance and diversity.	Children's Figure Rating Scale (Tiggemann & Wilson-Barrett, 1998) used to measure desire for thinness

Appearance satisfaction measure created by authors: asked whether they are more like a picture of a girl who is happy with the way she looks or a picture of a girl who is not happy with the way she looks and a 1-item Likert type scale rating how often they are happy with their body.

Measures of underweight and overweight stereotyping created by the authors. Shown figures from Children's Figure rating scale (underweight and normal, then overweight and normal) and asked three questions about which figure is more socially desirable. Names and dress colours counterbalanced.

Media internalisation: asked two yes/no questions. First, 'Do you wish that you looked like the women and girls on television?', and second, 'Do you wish you looked like the pop stars in music videos?'.

Asked "What special talents do you have?" | Being read the Shapesville (Mills & Osbourne, 2003) book (intervention) or a different story book (control) | Repeated Measures ANOVAS

Pairwise planned comparison with paired samples t-tests and independent samples t-tests.

Chi-square tests. |

					Asked "Do you know what the five food groups are?" Asked questions about their enjoyment of the book and what they learned.		
Paper 9 Williamson and Karazsia (2018)	The effect of functionality-focused and appearance-focused images of models of mixed body sizes on women's state-oriented body appreciation	374 self-identified cis-gender females aged between 18-29 recruited from the U.S. public via online survey.	Between-subjects randomised experimental design	Exposure to images depicting posed models or active models (for example running or stretching), with varying body sizes (thin or full-figured)	Sociocultural Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire 4 (SATAQ-4; Schaefer et al., 2015). State Body Appreciation Scale (SBAS-2; Homan, 2016).	5 experimental groups (body size, x2, pose type x2 and control) -Full body appearance pose -Thin body appearance pose -Full body functionality pose -Thin body functionality pose -Control image of nature	Mixed Model ANOVA Hierarchical regression.
Paper 10 Sundgot-Borgen, Friborg, Kolle, Engen, Sundgot-	The healthy body image (HBI) intervention: Effects of a school-based cluster-	2446 school pupils (reducing to 1080 at 12-month follow-up) recruited from 30 Norwegian secondary	Between-subjects randomised experimental design	Intervention protocol included media literacy workshops which: "aimed to improve critical awareness of unhealthy body and lifestyle idealization, critical and	Experience of Embodiment Scale (EES; Piran & Teall, 2012). KIDSCREEN-10 (Ravens-Sieberer, 2006) measure of health-related quality of life.	2 experimental conditons: allocation to the Healthy Body Image Intervention	Factor Analysis Linear mixed regression

Borgen, Rosenvinge, Pettersen, Torstveit, Piran and Bratland-Sanda. (2019)	randomized controlled trial with 12-months follow-up	schools. Mean age 16.8.		constructive use of social media, including consequences of current body ideals for boys and girls."	Demographics	or control group (teaching as usual)	
Paper 11 Diedrichs and Lee (2011)	Waif goodbye! Average-size female models promote positive body image and appeal to consumers	291 female (n = 171) and male (n = 120) university students, aged 17-25 years, recruited from an Australian university via online survey Predominantly White Australian	Between-subjects randomised experimental design	Exposure to advertising images with varying model body sizes.	5-item measure of advertising effectiveness (Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004). Body Image States Scale (BISS; Cash et al., 2002) Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-3 (SATAQ-3; Thompson et al., 2004) Demographic questions Open-ended questions about media images and model size.	3 groups (1 control): Exposure to mock advertisements showing either a thin model, average sized model or no model (control).	ANOVA Hierarchical moderated multiple regression Simple slopes analysis
Paper 12 Rogers, Kruger, Lowy, Long and Richard (2019)	Getting Real about body image: A qualitative investigation of the usefulness of the Aerie Real campaign	35 female university students aged between 18-23 (M = 19.48) recruited from a U.S. university. Predominantly Caucasian.	Qualitative investigation	Exposure to marketing campaign images representing diverse body shapes, sizes and colours.	Interview by trained interviewers, (female, aged 21-29) following a protocol and covering the following areas: "their attitudes towards Aerie as a brand, their intentions to purchase products from Aerie, and their opinion on the usefulness of requiring other companies to make similar changes to promotional images."	Interviews followed exposure to advertising images from the brand "Aerie"	Thematic analysis: both inductive and deductive.

Paper 13 Swami, Pickering, Barron and Patel (2018)	The impact of exposure to films of natural and built environments on state body appreciation	39 undergraduate students (19 women, 17 men) from a university town in England. Ages ranged from 18 – 29 years (M = 20.47, SD = 2.22)	Before and after with two different conditions. 2x2 repeated measures.	Exposure to films of nature compared against films of built-up areas.	State Body Appreciation Scale-2 (SBAS-2; Homan, 2016) Demographics	Exposure to film (nature or built-up area) with pre and post measures. Each participant viewed both films, 2-weeks apart, counterbalanced exposure order.	ANOVA
Paper 14 Slater, Varsani and Diedrichs (2017)	#fitspo or #loveyourself? The impact of fitspiration andself-compassion Instagram images on women's body image,self-compassion, and mood	160 female undergraduate students from the South West of England and Wales. Aged between 18-25 years (M = 21.21, SD = 2.06)	Randomised, between subjects, experimental design with four conditions	Exposure to one of four Instagram accounts, showing either "Fitspritation" images, self-compassion quotes or a combination of fitspiration and self-compassion quotes, or interior design images (control)	Self-reported social media usage (including Instagram) State Body Satisfaction using three visual analogue scales (VAS) (satisfied with my weight, satisfied with my overall appearance,and satisfied with my body shape) State body appreciation using three visual analogue scales ('Despite my flaws, I accept my body for what it is,' 'My feelings towards my body are positive for the most part,' and 'My self-worth is independent of my body shape or weight') taken from the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos et al., 2005) Self-compassion using two visual analogue scales ("I give myself the caring and tenderness I need" and "I	Exposure to one of four collections of a types of Instagram image, with pre and post measures.	Hierarchical moderated multiple regression

try to be patient and understanding towards the aspects of myself I don't like") adapted from the Self-compassion Scale (Neff, 2003)

State negative mood using four VAS asking participants to report on how 'anxious,' 'depressed,' 'happy,' and 'confident' they were feeling 'right now.'

The Physical Appearance Comparison Scale (PACS; Thompson, Heinberg, & Tantleff, 1991)

Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Scale-3 (SATAQ-3; Thompson et al., 2004).

Quality Appraisal

Once selected, the papers were read in full[2] and quality assessed using the relevant Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (2019a, b, c) guidelines. Full critical appraisal can be found in Appendix A. The appraisals indicated that all papers were of sufficient quality for inclusion. However, some conflation was found in the PBI measures employed, between those which measured factors consistent with the conceptual definition and those which, although labelled as PBI measures, examined negative body image, or a lack thereof. As such, Papers 3, 5, 7, 8 and 11 were excluded from the synthesis, for not measuring factors consistent with the conceptual definitions of PBI (Tykla & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a; Webb et al., 2015; Piran, 2015). Inclusion of these papers may have suggested additional avenues for promoting PBI, but would not have offered any evidence about the impact of these avenues on PBI as separate concept to improvements in poor body image.

Data Synthesis

The findings of the nine research papers which examined interventions or experimental interventions aimed at promoting PBI in relation to media engagement are synthesised below into a narrative analysing the relationships between the findings reported and providing an overall assessment of the robustness of the evidence base (Tacconelli, 2010).

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[2] Given the size of the current review it was not deemed necessary to systematise data extraction.

Results

Descriptive summaries of each paper's key findings, as they relate to the review question, are presented below in Tables 3 and 4, followed by a synthesis of how the papers contribute to our understanding about how western media influences PBI, and how to intervene effectively in this area.

Improving body image in an idealised media culture: Community solutions and positive body image interventions.

Table 3
Summary of findings from interpretation-focussed interventions.

Study	Intervention Content or Experimental manipulation	How was media impact examined?	How was impact of positive body image measured?	Outcome on PBI	Media influence on PBI	Reported Key Conclusions
Paper 1 Swami and Tovee (2009)	Observational

Participation in street-dance vs people who do not. | Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire -3 (SATAQ-3; Thompson, et al., 2004) media specific factors: - Information (extent to which media is considered an important information source about being attractive) - Pressure (from media to strive for beauty ideals) - Internalisation-General (endorsement, acceptance | Body Appreciation Scale (BAS; Avalos, Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2005) to measure 4 aspects of positive body image: - favourable opinions of one's own body, - acceptance of the body in spite of imperfections, - respect for the body, - protection of the body. | Street dancers had significantly higher BAS scores than non-dancers | In street-dancers and non-dancers, BAS scores were significantly and negatively correlated with the information, pressure and internalisation-general SATAQ-3 factor scores.

Internalisation general and Internalisation athlete significantly predicted BAS scores in street-dancers

Information significantly predicted BAS scores in non-dancers. | The finding that street dancers had significantly higher body appreciation suggests that they "may be more accepting and respectful of their bodies" than non-dancers.

For both groups, placing increased importance on the media, and increased internalisation of media ideals, was associated with reduced body appreciation.

Internalisation-athlete was only found to correlate significantly with dancers' body appreciation, "suggesting that media representations [may] have a significant effect on dancers, because these representations often depict women who are toned and athletically fit." |

		of and striving towards unrealistic ideal media messages.				
Paper 2 Alleva, et al. (2016)	Participants assigned to either intervention or control writing task (writing about familiar routes) Functionality focussed writing task. Participants were given a description of body functionality & some prompt body functions, then asked to write for 15 minutes "about the functions of their body and to reflect on why those functions are personally meaningful." After the writing task both groups were exposed to 15 advertisements (12 containing thin and attractive models), for 20s each, followed by the post-test measures.	Changes to body image scale scores following exposure to idealised media images.	The Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Visual analogue scales to measure body functionality satisfaction (rating two items: current satisfaction and dissatisfaction) (Birkeland et al., 2005; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995).	BMI was found to significantly effect body appreciation scores.	Being part of the functionality writing group appeared to protect against the impact of exposure to the idealised images for both body functionality scores and body appreciation scores. Body functionality: significant effect of group, with the functionality writing task group showing higher body functionality scores after exposure to the idealised images than the control group. Body appreciation: significant effect of group, with the functionality writing task group showing higher body appreciation scores	Completing a functionality focussed writing task provided a 'buffer effect' against the impact of thin-ideal media exposure: Women who completed the functionality writing task experienced greater functionality satisfaction and body appreciation after exposure to thin-ideal imagery, than the women who completed the unrelated writing task. However, writing about body functionality did not lead to greater appearance satisfaction or lower self-objectification.

				after exposure to the idealised images than the control group.	
Paper 6 Mulgrew et al. (2017)	Each participant assigned to one of 2 intervention groups (self-reflection on either body appearance or body function) and one of 3 experimental manipulation groups (including 1 control

Self-reflection group: asked to reflect on and write about positive elements of either their appearance or functional capabilities of their body, ultimately generating 10 positive statements.

Followed by random allocation to exposure to either idealised image (active or posed) or a control image (scenery) | Changes in measures of Positive Body Image following exposure to idealised images representing the western female body ideal, post-reflection task. Idealised image either posed, active or a control image of scenery.

Engagement with images was encouraged with questions about each image and a memory task alongside the images | State physical functionality satisfaction: 4 items assessing "how I feel right now" on a 10-point Likert scale about body functionality (Mulgrew & Tiggemann, 2018).

State appearance satisfaction: 4 items assessing "how I feel right now" on a 10-point Likert scale about appearance (Mulgrew & Tiggemann, 2018). | Functionality satisfaction showed a significant effect of time: post reflection task (no effect of task), body functionality increased for both groups after completing the intervention task. | Viewing both posed and active images reduced functionality satisfaction for both reflection task groups. Viewing control (scenery images) did not reduce functionality satisfaction.

More upwards social comparison was predictive of less satisfaction with both appearance and functionality satisfaction post-idealised image. | The reflection tasks were not sufficient to create a 'buffer effect' against the impact of viewing thin-ideal imagery, regardless of whether the images used showed posed or active models.

The positive impact on body functionality seen after both reflection tasks was only maintained in the control condition, therefore the effects were not strong enough to protect against the negative impacts of idealised imagery on positive body image. |

		(participants who did not pass excluded from analysis)				
Paper 10 Sundgot-Borgen et al. (2019)	Healthy Body intervention (HBI), or school as usual control group. HBI delivered in school by female study authors over 3 90-minute workshops over a 3-month period. Themes of the intervention were body image, media literacy and lifestyle, with the aim of improving "critical awareness of unhealthy body and lifestyle idealization, critical and constructive use of social media, including consequences of current body ideals for boys and girls." Media literacy theme covered the following content: -Social media perception and use. Empower yourself to choose mood enhancing over	No specific measure: impact of media literacy element of intervention on EES scores, was measured as part of intervention impact on EES scores	Experience of Embodiment Scale (EES; Piran & Teall, 2012).	Boys: There was no main effect of intervention group or time, nor a significant interaction effect, on positive embodiment scores. There was a significant improvement in positive embodiment scores post-intervention that was not maintained at either follow-up time point. Girls: There was a significant main effect of group but not of time nor a	There was a main effect of no. of workshops attended for girls: more workshops produced a greater improvement in positive embodiment. Boys needed to attend at least 3 workshops to benefit and girls at least 2.	The HBI intervention, improved positive embodiment for boys only immediately following the intervention and for girls it produced immediate and sustained improvements, with the strongest effect sizes at 12months. This suggests that media literacy training (as incorporated into the intervention) can be an effective tool in promoting positive body image, although the specific effects of media literacy, relative to the other elements of the intervention cannot be determined.

mood destructive content
-Extreme exposure
without filter equals need
to be critical to sources of
information and
awareness of retouching
-The nature of
comparison, how to
recognize
destructive comparison
and reduce its
presence in everyday life
-Strengthen acceptance
and love for individual
differences, defining
characteristics of ones'
own and among friends.
Students write
down compliments to a
friend and
him/herself unrelated to
appearance
-Experiences and benefits
of positive self-talk

significant
interaction
effect.
There was a
significant
improvement
in positive
embodiment
in the
intervention
group,
relative to the
control group,
which was
maintained
across both
follow-up
time points.

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Table 4
Summary of findings from content-focussed interventions.

Study	Intervention Content	How was media impact examined?	How was impact of positive body image measured?	Outcome on PBI	Media influence on PBI	Reported Key Conclusions EXPLICITLY STATE MEDIA FINDINGS
Paper 4 Mulgrew et al. (2019)	Intervention vs active control Intervention consisted of 2 session online program facilitated via survey monkey – not more than 1 week apart Session 1: Exposure to specifically designed-videos and images from public health campaigns created with the intention of reducing objectification These depicted non-objectified women engaging in physical activity and having fun + writing tasks for engagement with the media. Session 2: 3 written tasks - reflect on way their body functions - reflect on positive aspects of their appearance	Changes in measures of Positive Body Image following exposure to idealised images representing the western female body ideal, post-program. Intervention task which involved exposure to non-idealised media images. Engagement with images encouraged with questions about each image and a	Trait: Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015) State: State adaptation of the BAS-2 (Homan, 2016) Visual analogue scales: four items measured functionality satisfaction (Mulgrew et al., 2017).	Women in both the intervention and active control group showed significant improvements, post-intervention in state levels functionality satisfaction, and there was a trend, although not significant, towards increased state body appreciation. Women in the Body Image intervention group experienced a significantly larger	For both groups, no difference in state body appreciation was found following exposure to thin-ideal media. However, functionality satisfaction decreased after viewing the idealised images.	Engagement with media campaigns specifically designed to promote positive body image, alongside space to reflect positively on their own appearance, body functionality and unique features can improve positive body image. Women across both programs experienced small improvements in trait body appreciation, with the body image intervention leading to a significantly larger increase in body appreciation than the active control group. The usually reported negative effects of thin-ideal media exposure were not found: this could reflect a buffering impact of the interventions on this phenomena (such as reducing the harmful effect of thin ideal media on positive body image) or could reflect the media exposure task not eliciting the intended response.

	- reflect on unique things that make them who they are. Active control group consisted of a stress-management program, matched for activity type (viewing media, which was unrelated to bodies, and writing tasks)	memory task alongside the images which all participants passed.		increase in body appreciation than women in the active control group.		
Paper 9 Williamson and Karazsia (2018)	Exposure to 10 images from one of five conditions, formatted as a slideshow, one at a time with engagement questions in between. Images for conditions represented either an appearance-based pose or a functionality-based pose and either a full-bodied woman or a thin-bodied woman. There was also a control image condition with an image of nature.	Changes in SBAS-2 scores following exposure to different images of women.	State Body Appreciation Scale (SBAS-2; Homan, 2016).	Body size conditions: within-subjects effect of time on SBAS-2 scores. Body size of models significantly impacted on state body appreciation, but the pose of the image did not.	Women who viewed images of full-figured women experienced statistically significant increases in SBAS-2 scores between pre and post-test. Women who viewed control images of nature experienced statistically significant increases in SBAS-2 scores between pre and post-test.	Exposure to images of full-figured women and nature can improve positive body image. This increase is not seen in women exposed to images of thin-figured women. No effect on positive body image was found in the different image pose conditions. No interaction effects of internalisation were found. Findings support the idea that body appreciation is a separate construct to body satisfaction
Paper 12 Rogers et al. (2019)	Exposure to advertising images from the Aerie Real campaign. This campaign had been launched with the brand declaring intentions to cease airbrushing the	Reponses to interview questions following exposure to the	Interview Interview by trained interviewers, (female, aged 21-29)	The majority of participants reported improved positive body image,	Two mechanisms were elucidated for how the advertisements lead to increased positive body image.	"Young women react very positively to images of women that have not been digitally modified and represent diverse bodies, and they perceive the presence of such images in the media as a helpful strategy for promoting positive body image."

	models depict ed and make efforts to increase diversity among the models used to represent the brand.	advertising images.	following a protocol and covering the following areas: "their attitudes towards Aerie as a brand, their intentions to purchase products from Aerie, and their opinion on the usefulness of requiring other companies to make similar changes to promotional images. Interviewers asked follow-up questions for clarification or elaboration when appropriate"	reporting increased acceptance, confidence and positive evaluations of their own appearance. However, some participants indicated greater ambivalence about their own positive body image, and some suggested a negative impact, which was associated with the models being closer to the societal ideal than herself.	1. Most participants reported engaging in social comparisons, however these were mostly described as horizontal comparisons, as the models were perceived as being the same as them. Some participants explicated stated these horizontal comparisons as the mechanism for their increased positive body image after seeing the adverts. 2. Several participants described seeing the models depicted as demonstrating their own positive body image and acceptance of their appearance, which was described as empowering them to feel able to be more accepting of their own appearance.	"Findings indicate that women may experience more positive body image if they (a) perceive themselves as being of equal standing with respect to the appearance of a model, and (b) perceive the models as feeling comfortable with their own unmodified image in an advertising campaign."
Paper 13 Swami et al. (2018)	Participants exposed, 2-weeks apart, to intervention film and	Changes in SBAS-2 scores	State Body Appreciation Scale (SBAS-		State body appreciation measures were	Films of a short walk in nature resulted in significant improvements in positive body

	control film (depicting a simulated walk in a built-up environment). Film presentation order was counterbalanced. Intervention condition was exposure to a short film (3mins) depicting a simulated walk in a natural environment.	following exposure to the different films.	2; Homan, 2016).		significantly larger at post-test, following exposure to the nature film, than they were at pre-test. State body appreciation did not differ pre and post exposure to the built-up area film.	image, which were not seen following films of a built-up area. The effect size of the film on positive body image was comparable to those found following actual walks in nature and larger than those found following exposure to images of nature.
Paper 14 Slater et al. (2017)	Four Instagram exposure conditions: "Fitspritation" images, self-compassion quotes or a combination of fitspiration and self-compassion quotes, or interior design images (control) Intervention was exposure to an Instagram accounts depicting self-compassion quotes. All pre/post measures and exposures were completed using an iPad. Participants were exposed to an Instagram account with 20 images and were given 5 minutes to look at the images.	Changes in State Body appreciation VAS ratings following exposure to different Instagram images.	State body appreciation using three visual analogue scales ('Despite my flaws, I accept my body for what it is,' 'My feelings towards my body are positive for the most part,' and 'My self-worth is independent of my body shape or weight') taken from the Body Appreciation Scale	Women who viewed self-compassion images reported significantly greater state body appreciation than those who viewed the control images.	No post exposure difference in body appreciation between the control condition and the fitspiration images. No post exposure difference in body appreciation between the control condition and the self-compassion and fitspiration images. Viewing self-compassion images alongside fitspiration images resulted in significantly higher state body appreciation than	Brief exposure so self-compassion quotes on Instagram may be beneficial for women's positive body image. Viewing self-compassion images amongst fitspiration images also may be beneficial for positive body image in women. However, because the study did not find the expected significantly poorer body image following exposure to fitspiration images it was not possible to demonstrate a buffering effect of viewing self-compassion quotes.

Improving body image in an idealised media culture: Community solutions and positive body image interventions.

(BAS; Avalos et al., 2005).

just viewing fitspiration images.

Synthesis of Findings

Findings about the Relationship with Media and Positive Body Image

The findings reported here indicate that exposure to typical, thin-ideal, western media is detrimental to PBI. Papers 4 and 6 found that in-the-moment satisfaction with body functionality decreases after exposure to thin-ideal media, even following interventions which increased it. Similarly, for body appreciation, Papers 2 and 4 found that body appreciation reduced in their control group, who received no PBI intervention, after exposure to thin-ideal images.

Evidence from Interpretation-focussed Interventions and Experimental Manipulations

Although not researched as an intervention, Paper 1 found an impact of engaging with dancing as a regular activity on the extent to which internalised media ideals affected body appreciation. Across all participants less endorsement of socio-cultural appearance ideals was associated with higher body appreciation, but this relationship was stronger for the dancer participants. Increased internalisation of messages was more predictive of reduced body appreciation in dancers, relative to non-dancers. The authors hypothesise that idealised media representations may be more detrimental to the PBI of women whose bodies are closer to the thin-ideal, as the dancers involved were more likely to be toned and physically fit. Overall, this paper suggests that how women relate to idealised media can impact their PBI, with less internalisation of the ideals portrayed being linked to better PBI.

Regarding interventions to reduce the impact of idealised media on PBI, Paper 2 found that a writing task encouraging participants to focus on their own body's functionality increased body appreciation. The task also appeared to provide a 'buffer' against the negative impacts of exposure to thin-ideal advertising images, protecting them from a post-exposure

decrease in body appreciation, suggesting that focussing on body functionality might impact how people relate to idealised media.

This effect was not replicated by Paper 6. Unexpectedly, they found that both body-functionality satisfaction and their body-appearance satisfaction writing reflection tasks increased PBI, as measured by in-the-moment body functionality satisfaction. Moreover, these improvements were not maintained after exposure to idealised images. Thus, no 'buffer' effect of reflection tasks was found for satisfaction with body functionality.

Paper 10 was the only paper to include media literacy training within the intervention program to explicitly influence how participants engaged with idealised media. It examined the impact of the "Healthy Body Image" intervention, which aimed to improve participant's positive embodiment by teaching them "critical awareness of unhealthy body and lifestyle idealization, critical and constructive use of social media, including consequences of current body ideals for boys and girls" (p.125).

This study differed from those reviewed above as participants were adolescents, rather than adults. Boys and girls were included in the same intervention and the outcomes were analysed separately, with different impacts found between the genders. For girls, embodiment scale scores (a broad measure of PBI) showed improvement immediately post-intervention and at both follow-ups, with the largest improvements seen at 12-months. For boys, improvements were only seen immediately post-intervention and were not maintained at either follow-up. This indicates that teaching a critical analysis of the media allows people to engage with it differently, in a way which increases PBI, at least in the short-term and for girls over a longer-term. However, it should be noted that the specific impact of the media literacy training relative to the other aspects of the intervention was not examined.

Evidence from Content-focussed Interventions and Experimental Manipulations

Two papers investigated the impact of using media specifically designed to promote PBI, either through videos of walking in nature[3] (Paper 13) or exposure to Instagram profiles with self-compassion messages instead of, or alongside, "Fitspiration" imagery (Paper 14). Paper 13 found that viewing videos of a first-person perspective nature walk resulted in increases in PBI, to an extent comparable with actual walks in nature (Swami, Barron & Furnham, 2018). Paper 14 found that brief exposure to self-compassion quotes and messages via Instagram could improve body appreciation, even when these quotes were amongst idealised 'fitspiration' images. However, mirroring Paper 6, they failed to find specific evidence of the protective 'buffer effect' mentioned Paper 2; they found no decrease in body appreciation from exposure to only the 'fitspiration' images, so could not conclude that the self-compassion messages protected against this. These findings indicate that media can be used as a tool to promote PBI, perhaps alongside and interspersed with usual thin-ideal media, rather than replacing.

Papers 4 and 9 examined the impact of images that were explicitly intended as alternatives to the usual thin-ideal. Paper 9 exposed women to images of models who were either fat or thin and posed or engaged in activity, alongside a control group who viewed pictures of nature. They found that viewing images of fat people, regardless of pose, and images of nature increased in-the-moment body appreciation. Notably, this corroborates the

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[3] Actual walks in nature have been found to improve positive body image, with it being theorised that the walk encourages a general psychological well-being that extends to body appreciation (Swami et al., 2018).

findings reported in Paper 6 which looked another element of PBI, body functionality satisfaction, and found no difference in impact between functional or posed images.

Paper 4 used an intervention consisting of exposure to public health and marketing campaigns depicting non-objectified women doing physical activity, alongside a reflective writing task about their own positive characteristics, including appearance, body functionality and personality, before exposure to idealised images of models. The intervention led to increased body appreciation, both in-the-moment and trait, and increased in-the-moment body functionality satisfaction. Interestingly, their control group, who completed a stress-management program, also showed increased body appreciation, although this was non-significant.

This suggests that media campaigns depicting non-objectified models could potentially positively influence PBI. However, as with Paper 10, the paper did not differentiate the specific effects of media exposure from other elements of the intervention and, given the findings from Papers 2 and 6, it is possible that improvements in PBI were more strongly influenced by the reflection task than the non-objectifying media.

Through using qualitative data to explore how participants understood the impact of alternatives to the thin-ideal on their body image, Paper 12 provides some evidence that media itself is impactful. The women had viewed an advertising campaign which explicitly offered a counterpoint to the thin-ideal by incorporating diverse body shapes, sizes and skin colours, and reported greater PBI after having done so. This bolsters Paper 4's conclusions about the media itself being causal in improving PBI.

Elucidating some of the mechanisms involved in improving PBI, the authors found a theme of horizontal comparison; the women who reported increased PBI also reported judging themselves as equal or similar in terms of appearance to the models. This mechanism

is corroborated by the women in the sample who did not report increased PBI reporting that they compared themselves unfavourably to the models; perceiving the models as closer to the thin-ideal than themselves.

Consequent Conclusions about Media-related Strategies for Promoting Positive Body Image

Interpretation-focussed Strategies.

A key finding of this review is that it is possible to improve PBI using interventions which alter how people engage with idealised media. These interventions need not be time consuming, for example short written reflection tasks (Papers 2, 4 & 6), and suggest that even a little time spent reflecting on one's positive attributes, be that appearance, body functionality or unique characteristics, can result in healthier engagement with idealised media.

Paper 4 indicates that maintaining this positive reflective focus, particularly on body functionality could result in increased PBI. Currently, the evidence base lacks findings about the longer-term impacts on media engagement of the shorter, less formal interventions, although, as concluded by Paper 9, targeting in-the-moment body appreciation appears to be a useful first step in improving PBI. Moving beyond reflections, Paper 1 indicates that activities which include a focus on body functionality, may also influence engagement with media and support PBI, although specific causal relationships cannot yet be established.

Media literacy training, which attempts to explicitly teach new ways of engaging with media, is also identified by this review as an intervention for PBI, with Paper 10 indicating this can strengthen protective filters for internalising media messages and reduce comparisons with unattainable ideals. Contrary to previous research conclusions, Paper 10

found that mixed-gender intervention groups may contribute to the effectiveness of the intervention, rather than being detrimental to it, provided the content is relatable for each gender. Paper 10 also concluded that single session intervention programs do not suffice, with girls needing at least two sessions and boys at least three to influence embodiment, and that there is a dose-response effect for girls of more sessions further improving embodiment.

Content-focussed Strategies

The papers reviewed here (6, 9, 12, 13, & 14) show clearly that modifications to the media consumed can produce benefits to PBI for at least women, and possibly men and adolescents also.

Paper 9 indicates some alternative media images, fat women and nature, that can improve PBI, suggesting a focus on these over and above thin-idealised images may reduce the current detrimental impact of western media on PBI. Supporting this, Papers 13 and 14 indicate that increasing the prevalence of non-body focussed images (Paper 13) media encouraging self-compassion (Paper 14) relative to thin-idealised media, would promote better PBI in those consuming media.

Paper 12 elucidates which elements of alternatives to the thin ideal women perceive as improving their PBI. Their findings suggest reducing use of idealised, sexualised, objectifying and unobtainable images of women in advertising, and increasing representation of realistic, natural, and diverse[4] images would have positive impacts on PBI.

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[4] In terms of body shape, size, skin colour.

Crucially, Paper 12 also reports that participants received the modified advertising campaign positively. They reported no detriment, with some reporting an increase, in their intentions to buy the products, countering the oft used argument that the thin-ideal is necessary to sell products (Caballero & Solomon, 1984; Kahle & Homer, 1985).

Methodological Considerations

The above conclusions, whilst they suggest promising avenues for promoting PBI in relation to idealised western media, need to be interrogated in terms of the quality of the research.

Elements of the studies' designs, samples and outcome measurements will be critiqued below. The extent of the unexpected findings reported will be considered first. These were found in four of the nine studies reviewed (Papers 4, 6, 9, & 14), in various ways, such as control conditions having a similar impact to the intervention on PBI (Papers 4 & 9). This may reflect issues with study design (see below) and could therefore indicate issues with the robustness of the findings. However, given the emergent nature of this research base, it could reflect a more general lack of robustness in the current understanding of the relationship between PBI and western media; the unexpected findings reported here may reflect added depth to current knowledge more than problems with the robustness of the research methods.

Design

A significant limitation to research reviewed is the lack of follow-up data, meaning conclusions about the longer-term impacts of the interventions cannot be established. Paper 10 did gather follow-up data and found the impact of the intervention increased over time, with the largest effect size seen at the last time point. We can tentatively suggest that impacts

on PBI could potentially develop over time as participants practice strategies from the interventions in their day-to-day lives, so further research into this is indicated.

Given that PBI research is still emerging and the links between PBI and media not yet well understood, it is worth noting that no papers addressed potential adverse effects of their interventions. Within body image research, early education-based interventions were found to increase risks of eating pathology, leading researchers to propose 'first do no harm' as a key tenet of these interventions (O'Dea, 2000; 2005), so it is concerning that no papers addressed this.

Finally, as aforementioned, a key limitation of the design of the intervention program studies (Papers 4 &10) is that they were not able to determine causal relationships between different components of the interventions and PBI measures, therefore failing to elucidate specific factors which influence PBI.

Sample

The most significant limitation of the reviewed research is the lack of generalisability, with most studies sampling only university students (Papers 2, 4, 6, 12, 13, & 14), or women (Papers 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12 & 14). This limits the extent to which the findings can be assumed to be representative of the general population, especially for body image in men. However, given that body image concerns are most common in women and young adults (Tiggemann, 2004), it could be argued that women and university students adequately represent a useful target population.

Nonetheless, more studies with a variety of populations, such as Paper 10 sampling adolescents, would have enabled more generalisability, which is needed given more recent findings that PBI is beneficial for men, and that adolescents and children might be prime targets for PBI promotion work before they develop intractable adult traits (Halliwell, 2015).

Outcomes

Most papers used adequate measures for impact on PBI, although there were some limitations. The most common measure used to assess PBI was the BAS or BAS-2 (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). This measure can be found at the centre of PBI assessment (Webb et al., 2015) with both versions having good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha, BAS = .91-.94, BAS-2 = .93-.96) and test-retest reliability over a 3-week period (r=.90), for various populations, including men and women (Webb et al. 2015). It has good convergent reliability, correlating positively with measures of body esteem and inversely with body dissatisfaction, but retains discriminant validity in measuring a separate construct to high levels of appearance satisfaction (Webb et al., 2015).

BAS or BAS-2 has however been critiqued for its cross-cultural limitations, as the factor structure has been found to change when it is used with non-western samples (Ng, Barron & Swami, 2015). Although less relevant to the current review, this critique does suggest that the conceptual constitution of body appreciation may vary between cultures.

BAS or BAS-2 is also limited in its scope; by only measuring the body appreciation component of PBI, it lacks the scope and depth to fully assess all PBI characteristics of PBI.

Consequently, the conclusions about the relationship between media and PBI drawn above relate predominantly to body appreciation as a component of PBI, more than the whole, multi-faceted construct.

Piran's EES (Piran & Teall, 2012) was the only measure employed (Paper 10) to represent a multi-dimensional framework for understanding PBI. The EES covers 5 domains: (a) body connection and comfort, (b) functionality and agency, (c) experience and expression of desires, (d) attuned self-care, and (e) the body as a subjective vs. objective site, and has been evaluated as having good reliability and validity (Piran & Teall, 2012). Paper 10's

findings may therefore represent the most robust in this review for drawing conclusions about PBI as a whole, multi-dimensional construct.

A further limitation to the measures used is the lack of consistency between measurement of state (in-the-moment) PBI and trait PBI. Some studies therefore reported smaller, more immediate changes (Papers 4, 6, 9, 13 & 14), and some more long-lasting changes (Papers 1, 2, 4 & 10), making it difficult to draw conclusions about PBI across the studies.

The most used in-the-moment measure of PBI (Papers 4, 9 & 13), the SBAS-2 (Homan, 2016), is relatively robust. Created to be more sensitive to fluctuations than the BAS-2, it has a one-factor structure, satisfactory convergent validity, incremental validity, internal consistency, and sensitivity to situational contexts, with Homan (2016) concluding it to be a useful tool for examining the dynamic nature of body appreciation. Papers 6 and 14 however used shorter, adapted measures of state PBI components, without validation or well-established reliability, limiting the validity of their conclusions.

Moreover, and arguably the largest limitation of the measures employed, was the heavy reliance on self-report measures throughout all the papers. This left the findings open to the confounding impact of demand characteristics and means that less conscious processes which influence PBI, such as moment-by-moment attention to idealised, media were not examined.

Discussion

Given the above methodological considerations, the existing research base about promoting PBI in the context of idealised western media is, at this point, not very robust. Consequently, few definitive conclusions can be drawn about how best to promote PBI in the face of prevalent, unattainable body ideals purported by the media. Our understanding of the

mechanisms at work and the precise relationship between western media and individuals' PBI is only just emerging.

Several tentative conclusions can be drawn, starting with the conclusion that PBI is detrimentally affected by idealised western media in a similar way to negative body image. Beyond this, several starting points for reducing this detrimental impact have been identified:

- Increasing the diversity of images depicted in the media, to include more diverse body types, and increase the prevalence of these and other images such as nature, or self-compassion quotes, relative to thin-ideal images, to buffer against the thin-ideal's impact,

- Encouraging individuals to focus and reflect on their own body's functionality as a way to alter how they engage with idealised media,

- Providing media literacy training interventions to encourage individuals to engage critically with idealised media, with an awareness of its unrealistic nature and the messages being communicated.

The findings of this review mirror those of Halliwell (2013) who concluded that targeting specific elements of PBI, for example in-the-moment body appreciation, works as the starting point for improving trait positive body image (Halliwell, 2013). Halliwell (2013) notes that these interventions are not necessarily time or resource intensive, such as brief reflections on body functionality, and therefore have good feasibility as public health interventions.

The current review supports this conclusion, despite the findings from Paper 9 showing a reflection task which did not impact in-the-moment PBI. In light of research showing that focussing on a model's body's functionality can cause poorer body image (Mulgrew et al., 2017), Paper 9's intervention may not have been effective because it relied

on participants focussing on a model's body's functionality, not making positive reflections on their own body's functionality. This is noteworthy as media depictions of women in action, drawing a focus to their body functionality, have become more common, for example with the rise of 'fitspiration' on social media, but these images often still conform to the thin-ideal (Carrotte, Prichard, & Lim, 2017). Understanding how women make sense of the appearance and functional elements of their body is therefore increasingly important (Rodgers et al., 2018), especially as women may now be experiencing a blend of function and form (Abbott & Barber, 2011), facing the double pressure to be thin and athletic (Mask, Blanchard & Baker, 2014). This provides supporting evidence for social comparison theory (Festinger 1954), with continued upward social comparisons with thin-ideal media being detrimental to PBI, whereas objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) would predict this effect to be reduced when viewing active models, which don't portray women as objects.

The most robust findings from the interpretation-focussed studies were found following a multi-session media literacy intervention (Paper 10). The single session interventions encouraging a focus on the positives of one's functionality or appearance appear to have less sustained impacts on PBI, appearing unlikely to have had an ongoing protective impact on the way participants engage with thin-ideal media. The authors of Paper 10 conclude that more than one session is needed to produce change, alongside finding a dose-response effect for girls of having attended more sessions. This contrasts with past evidence which indicated that single session interventions might suffice for improving PBI (Wilksch, 2017). However, it aligns with research about body image generally, with a review conducted by Alleva, Sheeran, Webb, Martijn and Miles (2015) finding that interventions

which involved group delivery, with a facilitator, over multiple sessions were associated with better outcomes.

At the system-level, it is interesting to note that exposure to alternative forms of media in the papers reviewed did not necessarily need to involve replacing the thin-ideal; alternative media presented alongside it could improve or at least protect PBI. Examples include exposure to self-compassion quotes and videos of nature. There is promising research here to justify further investigation of the benefits of nature related media exposure and self-compassion media to PBI, particularly as the effect size of the impact found in Paper 14, with a video simulated nature walk, was similar to effect sizes of actual exposure to nature, and larger than for images of nature (Swami et al., 2018).

Content vs Interpretation-focussed Approaches

Broadly, this review suggests two main paths towards promoting positive body image in the context of idealised western media: change the media or change how people engage with the media, with ways of promoting change being tentatively put forward for both levels. What this review has not been able to do is establish conclusively which of these approaches is the most effective.

It is worth noting that implementing societal changes to media content will be a time consuming and effortful task, given the prevalence of the thin-ideal and the industries that profit from its existence, such as the diet industry (Tylka & Augustus-Horvath, 2011). Crucially, the finding of Paper 12, that diverse models were perceived as effective for advertising purposes, replicates other research which has found that average-sized models are rated as equally effective in advertising as thin ideal images (Dittmar & Howard, 2004; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004). Self-report of advertisement effectiveness is not the same as measuring the actual spending behaviour of those exposed to adverts, however it does reflect

a commonly used market research technique (Joyce, 1998), and therefore indicates that the economic impacts of introducing alternatives to the thin-ideal may not be the negative ones feared by the media industry.

Given the barriers to changing western media, Alleva et al. (2015) argue the importance of interpretation-focussed strategies, such as focussing on body functionality, as strategies for people to use in the face of pervasive and unrealistic beauty ideals. For this to be effective, interpretation-focussed strategies need to target processes which are amenable to change, as efforts to target an individual's tendency to make social appearance comparisons (Festinger, 1954; Morse & Gergen, 1970) may prove to be ineffective. This is indicated in Paper 12 where all participants, regardless of PBI, reported social comparisons, reinforcing the hypothesis that these are largely automatic processes (Want, 2009). Influence over PBI was instead attributed to the type of social appearance comparisons; horizontal rather than upwards comparisons, indicating that broadening the diversity of body shapes and sizes in the media, such that people can compare themselves equally with the purported 'ideal/s' would be beneficial for PBI (Fardouly et al., 2017). This needs to be approached with caution though, as some research has indicated that advertising campaigns with increased diversity of body size can actually be detrimental for women; when the focus is on the 'difference' on display, this can serve to further highlight own difference from the thin-ideal for women viewing the adverts (Anschutz, Engels, Becker & Van Strien, 2009). It is therefore worth exploring whether, if use of body shape and size diversity becomes more common, the impact of social comparisons on body image shifts as the notion of a thin-ideal to internalise is dismantled.

Reducing the tendency to make upwards appearance comparisons is often a target of media literacy interventions, however if the process is automatic this element of the training

may not produce effective changes in how people relate to media. This might shed some light on the findings about appearance comparisons, which were targeted by the previously reported interventions (media literacy) and did not always show an impact on PBI. In Paper 12 comparisons were reported by all participants and the authors posit these as largely automatic and therefore less amenable to change.

However, Mask et al (2014) note that increasing awareness of these automatic comparisons and providing individuals with strategies for managing the effects of them may well be helpful, even if frequency of comparisons is not affected. This aligns with ideas from cognitive theory, which posit that the responses people have to their experiences are influenced by their appraisals of the meaning of the experience and their ability to cope (Lazurus & Folkman, 1984). Media literacy training is likely offering people new meanings, for example about the importance of appearance relative to other personal characteristics, with which to primarily appraise the experience of media-induced automatic comparisons, indicating it can influence idealised media's impact on PBI, without necessarily targeting the frequency of social comparisons.

Overall, given the lack of support for one approach over another, currently we can conclude that both content and interpretation-focussed strategies are appropriate. Interpretation-focussed strategies to influence how people engage with media will complement and be complemented by approaches which directly address the prevalence of the thin-ideal (Diedrichs & Lee, 2011).

Limitations of the Current Review

The biggest limitation of this review is that this is an emerging research base, with conflicting findings and limited generalisability to wider populations beyond female

university students in western cultures. This means that only tentative conclusions about starting points for intervening in the relationship between PBI and western media can be drawn at this time. Additionally the small research base necessitated including papers examining a broad range of ages, including adolescence. Given the significant developmental differences between adolescents and adults (Sugarman, 2001) and the qualitative differences in body image found between adolescents and adults (Cash & Pruzinsky 2004), it is possible that including studies across age groups conflated the findings somewhat.

It is also worth noting that the reviewed papers focussed only on the body size aspects of PBI, and there are many other appearance related factors (such as facial appearance) and diversity issues, such as disability or race, that this review is not able to address. This is especially important when we consider racial diversity. The review examined the impact of western-idealised media within western cultures, but this obscures the myriad cultural and racial backgrounds of the people within the umbrella of 'western' culture, and the different relationships to the idealised media that are likely to exist therein. How these different relationships to western idealised media might impact upon the interaction with PBI is something which this review and the current evidence base lacks. Similarly, another significant limitation of the research is the complete lack of research addressing the relationship between media and PBI for transgender or non-binary people, as all studies only reported findings for men or women.

More generally, this review is limited by the lack of access to unpublished research for inclusion in the review, leaving the findings open to the 'file-drawer' effect (Rosenthal, 1979).

Research Implications

The limitations and the evidence reviewed provide many avenues for future research. Crucially, further research is required to unpack the differential effects of intervention elements. For example, in Paper 4 we cannot determine the impact of changing the media presented from the impact of positive self-reflections, and in Paper 10 we cannot determine specifically the impact of a media literacy intervention on PBI, as the intervention included additional elements. Research to parcel out the different intervention elements, or which includes measures such as the SATAQ-2 (Thompson et al., 2004) to determine how the impacts on PBI interact with how people engage with media, would enhance our understanding of the effectiveness of specific intervention elements in promoting PBI.

Other directions for future research include the need for more studies with follow-up data to establish the longer-term impacts of these interventions, especially as Paper 10 indicates these are likely to be positive. There is also a need for more qualitative research to further uncover and deepen our understanding of the mechanisms by which certain factors related to the media impact upon positive body image. The predominant use of self-report measures in the papers reviewed points to the need for future research to investigate whether these changes extend to other processes involved in body image, such as the automatic process of attention allocation (Mulgrew et al., 2019). More investigations of mixed gender interventions will also be important, as these are likely to be more inclusive of gender non-conforming individuals who may have previously been excluded or felt overlooked by gender-specific interventions. Indeed, each aforementioned limitation, with regard to conflation and obscuring of effects across and within different genders, ages and racial backgrounds provides an avenue for further research to distinguish specific impacts and relationships between PBI and idealised media for different groups.

Social Media

More attention also needs to be given to the differential role of social media as compared to mass media. Only one Paper (14) reviewed specifically considered the impact of a social media exposure, finding that text accompanying thin-ideal images, often found on social media, can improve PBI, for example text prompting self-compassion. Social media is now a significant avenue through which people access media (Bair et al, 2012) and existing research into social media on body image has, like body image research historically, focussed on the detrimental impacts (Fardouly et al., 2015a; Fardouly & Vartanian, 2015; Tiggemann & Miller, 2010; Tiggemann & Slater 2013; 2014). Social media allows individuals to take more control over the images they are exposed to, and some users are making explicit choices to view and share images which explicitly challenge societal ideals by promoting self-compassion and increased diversity (see body positivity; Cohen, Irwin, Newton-John & Slater, 2019). Future research would do well to examine the impact of explicitly choosing to engage with alterative media on social media platforms and investigate further the relationship between social media exposure and PBI.

Clinical Implications

With regard to clinical practice, these findings indicate that working with people to improve their PBI is viable for promoting well-being, despite the prevailing detrimental impact of idealised western media. The findings, especially those from the interpretation-focussed papers, offer suggestions, in line with ideas from cognitive theory (Lazarus & Folkman 1984), for intervening to improve PBI: promoting primary-appraisals about exposure to idealised media that are less detrimental to self-image, for example by supporting people to develop alternative associated meanings with idealised media. These approaches may become increasingly important as the media landscape changes and people engage

increasingly frequently with idealised images of their peers on social media (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016)

Conclusions

In conclusion, although still emerging, the current research base indicates that in the context of detrimental, idealised western media, it is possible to intervene to promote PBI, with this review highlighting several potential strategies for achieving this, using both content-focussed and interpretation-focussed approaches. Increasing the diversity of the images portrayed in the media, encouraging individuals to focus on their own body's functionality and providing media literacy training are all indicate as potentially promoting PBI, although limitations in the studies reviewed mean that any conclusions about the effectiveness of these interventions are still tentative. At the current time, neither content nor interpretation-focussed approaches appear to be superior to the other, with both levels providing complementary intervention approaches, indicating that attempts to promote positive body image should draw on both levels to implement changes. This review therefore identifies avenues for further research to establish the robustness of these findings and elucidate further the specific elements of interventions that effect the most change.

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SECTION B

"I just feel more able to live my life": An interpretive Phenomenological

Analysis of women's experiences engaging with body positive social media.

Word Count: 8299 (7998 + 301)

Improving body image in an idealised media culture: Community solutions and positive body image interventions.

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Abstract

In recent years body positivity, a social activism movement which challenges unrealistic societal beauty standards and promotes self-acceptance, has emerged on social media. A limited research base indicates that body positivity has the potential to reduce body dissatisfaction and increase positive body image, alongside critiquing the movement's potentially harmful appearance focus.

The current study used interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore the personal experiences of eight women who regularly engage with body positive social media; aiming to add depth to our current understanding of the phenomenon.

Four themes were identified, representing participants' journeys through engaging with body positive social media spaces and their sense-making of their experiences therein. Each participant's experience of their journey involved developing their own understanding of body positivity, within the broader umbrella of accepting all bodies, belonging to a new social group and activist movement, and actively developing their relationships to themselves and their bodies through slowly internalising new values. The final theme encompassed the changes participants understood as having emerged from their journeys: living in-line with their new values and experiencing self-acceptance, alongside residual emotional pain.

Implications for current body image theory, research and clinical interventions are discussed, with reference to the need for the inter-personal and activism elements of body positive social media to be recognised.

Key words: Body Positivity, Social Media, Body Image, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

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Social media is a pervasive part of modern culture, used daily by 89% of young adults (Pew Research Center, 2018). Current research findings about its impact are equivocal, (Baker & Algorta, 2016; Seabrook, Kern & Rickard, 2016), with only weak associations found between time spent on social media and indicators of both well-being and mental ill-health (Huang, 2017). Within body image research, the effects are more clearly established. Current consensus views the prevalence of idealised images of women on social media as detrimental to women's body image, (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016; Holland & Tiggemann, 2016; Rodgers & Melioli, 2016), with social media usage linked to greater body image disturbances and disordered eating (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016)

Instagram, as a visual, photo-based medium, is noted as a potent source of images conveying appearance ideals, (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015) to which social comparisons are made (Cohen, Newton-John & Slater, 2017). Young women report making these comparisons (Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian & Haliwell, 2015), usually in an upwards direction, comparing themselves less favourably (Fardouly, Pinkus & Vartanian, 2017), which is associated with increased body dissatisfaction (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2004; Krones, Stice, Batres, & Orjada, 2005).

Body Positivity

As a counterpoint, body positivity, or the body positive movement, is a type of social activism (Tiggemann, Anderberg & Brown, 2020) that has emerged on social media in recent years, aiming to "address unrealistic ideals about beauty, promote self-acceptance, and build self-esteem, through improving self-image and living life to the fullest." (Cwynar-Horta, 2016, p.40), regardless of body shape, size or appearance (Sastre, 2014). Emerging from the fat acceptance movement which tackled issues of discrimination against fat bodies, body positivity encompasses a broad range of issues, including disabled bodies and other

appearance differences (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). Focussing on what bodies can do (functionality), is encouraged and social appearance-based comparisons discouraged (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Sastre, 2014). The western thin-ideal beauty standard is critiqued, and physical and mental health is promoted over weight loss, often within social media spaces which allow people to share stories and images of their bodies (Sastre, 2014). The movement further aims for systemic change, promoting respect, acceptance and celebration of all bodies (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Sastre, 2014).

How Might Body Positivity be Helpful

Existing body image research and theories offer some insights into how body positivity might be beneficial. Ideas aligned with body positivity have been found to improve body image; interventions targeting body acceptance, self-compassion, promoting a focus on body functionality and which involved exposure to non-thin-ideal images, have all been shown to improve body image (Albertson, Neff & Dill-Shackleford, 2015; Alleva et al., 2018; Williamson & Karazsia, 2018).

Thin-ideal Internalisation

The movement's rejection of western beauty standards may offer protection from the negative impacts of thin-ideal internalisation. Described as the extent to which someone 'buys into' and attempts to emulate socially prescribed appearance ideals, thin-ideal internalisation is understood as a significant risk factor for body-dissatisfaction and eating disorders (Thompson & Stice, 2001). Conforming to the ideal is understood to convey social acceptance benefits (Hohlstein, Smith, & Atlas, 1998), with the ideal having been internalised through the attitudes of socially significant others, such as peers, parents and media (Kandel, 1980). Body positivity may protect against this internalisation, through explicitly rejecting

socially prescribed appearance ideals and offering an alternative mechanism for garnering the social 'rewards' of the thin-ideal, such as acceptance (Thompson & Stice, 2001).

Consequently, body positive social media may protect against body image disturbances and eating disorders, with prominent figures in the movement seeing it as crucial to their eating disorder recovery (Crabbe, 2017). Interventions which encourage dissonance from the thin-ideal support this, finding a reduction in internalisation of the ideal, dieting attempts and eating disorder symptoms (Stice, Rohde, Gau & Shaw, 2009).

Positive Body Image

In promoting body acceptance, valuing your body and living life to the fullest (Cwynar-Horta, 2016), body positivity echoes the shift in recent research towards a focus on positive body image (PBI): an over-arching love and respect for the body (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

PBI is a multi-dimensional construct which represents more than just a lack of body dissatisfaction; appreciating the body's uniqueness and functionality, broadly defining beauty, filtering information through a body-protective lens, and mindfully connecting to the body's needs with compassionate acceptance, regardless of appearance (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Prominent body positive Instagram accounts have been found to share content which is largely consistent with the key theoretical tenets of PBI (Cohen, Irwin, Newton-John, & Slater, 2019).

PBI is associated with emotional, psychological and social well-being outcomes (Swami, Weis, Barron & Furnham., 2017), including health-promoting behaviours like exercise and intuitive eating, (Andrew, Tiggemann & Clark, 2016a, b; Avalos, Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2005) and is protective against the impact of media exposure on body

dissatisfaction (Halliwell, 2013). Researchers advocate incorporating PBI promotion into eating disorder treatment, to help move patients towards well-being (Cook-Cottone, 2015).

Body positivity therefore, if it is successfully promoting PBI, could provide significant psychological benefits and be useful in interventions for eating disorders.

Critiques of Body Positivity

The utility of online body positivity has been critiqued by media and researchers (Cohen, Newton-John & Slater, 2020). It has been reported that white, thin, attractive women have appropriated the movement, (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Sastre, 2014), to an extent that body positive images no longer challenge dominant ideals, and the captions about self-acceptance become disingenuous (Tiggemann et al. 2020). Others see the ideas as reduced to a trite and monolithic ideal of self-love, ignoring the lived ambivalence and pain of fat women (Cooper, 2016), yet another pressure for women to manage (Oltuski, 2017).

Furthermore, the content tends to reinforce a focus on appearance (Webb et al., 2017). Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) posits that women in societies that sexually objectify them view themselves as objects to be evaluated by appearance. This self-objectification is associated with body shame, appearance anxiety, disordered eating and sexual dysfunction (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Cohen, Irwin et al. (2019) found 1/3 of popular body positive Instagram content to feature revealing clothing and/or body objectification, suggesting that body positivity may perpetuate some of the impacts of self-objectification.

Mainstream media has critiqued body positivity for promoting obesity and unhealthy habits (Nomi, 2018). There is no evidence to-date supporting this; much body positive content promotes body care and health-seeking behaviours, making it more plausible that

body positivity is associated with adaptive health behaviours (Cohen, Irwin et al., 2019) by creating an inclusive and empowering environment (Haskins, 2015).

Body Positive Social Media Research

There is an emerging research base examining body positive social media (Camarneiro, 2017), predominantly using experimental designs to measure the impact of exposure to this content.

Exposure to make-up free selfies or natural, unedited images of women have been found to reduce facial and body-dissatisfaction (Fardouly & Rapee, 2019; Tiggemann & Anderberg, 2019; Tiggemann & Zinoviev, 2019). In-the-moment body satisfaction has been shown to be improved by exposure to body positive song lyrics and music videos (Coyne, Roger, Zurcher, Stockdale & Booth, 2020). Stevens & Griffiths (2020), using ecological momentary assessment, found that most body positive content was accessed through Instagram, and exposure to it was related to in-the-moment increases in body satisfaction and positive affect. Cohen, Fardouly, Newton-John and Slater (2019) found brief exposure to body positive Instagram posts was associated with improved body-satisfaction and body-appreciation, relative to thin-ideal and appearance neutral posts. They also found that body positive and thin-ideal posts increased appearance focus, suggesting that both increased self-objectification, raising a question around how this can co-exist with body appreciation.

Body positive captions have been shown to be impactful, even when accompanied with idealised body images: they can increase self-esteem and reduce social comparisons (Lewallen, 2016) and increase in-the-moment body satisfaction in young women (Davies, Burnette & Mazzeo, 2020). However, Tiggemann, et al. (2020) found no impact of body positive captions on women's body dissatisfaction, and that body positive captions alongside thin-ideal images actually reduced body-appreciation in women who had high thin-ideal

internalisation. This indicates that the role of social commentary in body positivity is not straightforward: the images used are powerful and may detract from the effectiveness of body positive captions when they closely represent the thin-ideal.

Overall, these findings link body positive social media to positive outcomes, however more research is needed to establish these outcomes more robustly and with more depth.

Connection and Community

Given that social media is often integral to engaging with body positivity, it is notable that research has not examined any social or inter-personal factors. Using Thompson and Stice's (2001) socio-cultural theory of body image, we could understand body positive social media as providing an online community that espouses new, possibly healthier, social norms about body appearance. Furthermore, emerging evidence indicates that bringing people with shared concerns or interests together online can have psychological benefits (Coulson, Bullock & Rodham, 2017; Erfani, Abedin & Blount, 2017; Nimrod, 2014; Rogers & Chen, 2005). It is likely these benefits are also conveyed by body positive social media, given the purported inclusivity and opportunities for positive interactions, social support and social connectedness, which are linked to lower levels of depression and anxiety (Seabrook, et al., 2016).

Current Study

The preliminary evidence suggests that body positive social media is beneficial, and given that it is easily accessed over the internet, freely available, non-timed limited, and favourably perceived by young women (Cohen, Fardouly et al., 2019) it may represent a useful population level tool for promoting positive body image.

Further research is therefore warranted into body positive social media content, to establish if and how it is experienced as effecting changes and understanding how the people who use it make sense of its meaning.

The current study will take a qualitative approach, focussing on personal meanings and experiences, aiming to add depth to our current understanding of how people relate to and experience body positive social media. It will focus on women, as they are susceptible to body image difficulties relating to internalising the thin-ideal (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016; Holland & Tiggemann, 2016; Rodgers & Melioli, 2016), and often the intended recipients of body positive content (Cohen, Irwin et al., 2019), with some social media spaces explicitly named as female only (Cwynar-Horta, 2016).

Research Questions

1. What does "body positivity" mean to women who engage with it on social media?

2. What experiences have they had engaging with body positive social media, including any experiences of change?

3. How do they make sense of their experiences engaging with body positive social media, and how do they understand the relationships between these experiences and other aspects of their lives?

Method

Design

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), with a social constructionist stance, was chosen to explore the experiences of women who had used body positive social media. IPA investigates personal meanings and interpretations made about a specific phenomenon,

from a particular perspective, within a particular context (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). It uses a dynamic interpretation process, with both the participant's reflections on their experiences and the researcher's own experiences, perspectives and biases being fundamental to the subjective and reflective interpretation of the findings (Smith et al., 2009). IPA was chosen as it is particularly useful for exploring under-examined research areas (Smith et al., 2009) and body positive social media is a relatively new phenomenon. The research questions were developed from a social constructionist stance, focussing on the experiential process of engaging with body positive social media and how participants personally made sense of these experiences.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used to gather qualitative data for analysis, guided by an interview schedule comprising over-arching question areas and prompts, to allow for exploration of each participant's unique experiences and meaning-making.

Participants

Inclusion criteria consisted of currently engaging regularly with body positive social media, self-identifying as female, being a U.K resident, aged over 18 and able to give informed consent. A non-clinical sample were targeted; participants were invited to share any mental-health experiences with their demographic information. There were no additional exclusion criteria. Recruitment difficulties meant that sampling from one body positive social media group was not possible, so participants were sampled from several social media sources (Table 5).

A sample of 8 women, as per IPA guidelines (Smith et al., 2009), aged between 21-50 (Table 6) were recruited. The homogeneity of the sample was compromised somewhat by the need to recruit from more than one online source, however the consistency of gender identity

and similar content about body positivity used across the sources was deemed sufficiently

homogenous.

Table 5.
Facebook groups and Instagram hashtags used to advertise the research to participants.

Online recruitment sources	Hashtags used on Instagram
Facebook.com groups	-
Body Positive Community	-
Health at Every Size	-
Fit Fatties	-
Fat Studies	-
Body Positivity	-
Reddit.com message boards	-
r/bodyacceptance	-
r/bodypositivity	-
Instagram	
Primary Researcher's personal Instagram account	#bodypositive
	#bodypositivity
	#bodyacceptance
	#bopo
	#effyourbeautystandards
	#bodypositivemovement
Anti-Diet Riot Club Instagram stories and accompanying blog.	

Table 6
Participant Demographic Information

Name[1]	Recruitment Source	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Educational Level	Religion	Employment Status	Rural or Urban home	Previous experiences with mental health difficulties[2]	Previous receipt of mental health treatment
Lucy	Body Positive Community Facebook Group	21	Female	White European	Single (never married)	University undergraduate	Christian	Unemployed	Rural	Yes Depression and Anxiety Disordered Eating	Yes
Phoebe	Instagram	27	Female	White British	Widowed	University post-graduate programme	None (Atheist)	Self-employed part-time	Rural	Yes Anxiety and Depression	Yes
Hazel	Instagram	31	Female	White British	Married or in a domestic partnership	University post-graduate programme	Christian	Full-time employment with an organisation/ company	Rural	Yes Anxiety and Depression	Yes
Danielle	Health at Every Size Facebook group	28	Female	White non-British	Married or in a domestic partnership	Doctoral degree	Agnostic	Full-time employment with an organisation/ company	Rural	Yes Depression and Anxiety	Yes
Sadie	Fit Fatties Facebook Group	23	Female	White Irish	Single (never married)	A-levels or equivalent	None (Atheist)	Self-employed full-time	Rural	Yes Depression and Anxiety (Managed by	No

										medication and therapy)	
Mary	Fit Fatties Facebook Group	45	Female	White British	Married or in a domestic partnership	University undergraduate programme	None (Atheist)	Full-time employment with an organisation/ company	Rural	Maybe Probably depression (undiagnosed)	No (but saw a therapist)
Ruth	Fit Fatties Facebook Group	50	Female	White non-British	Married or in a domestic partnership	University post-graduate programme	None	Self-employed full-time	City	Maybe Depression and Anxiety (Undiagnosed)	No
Juliette	Fit Fatties Facebook Group	28	Female	White British	Single (never married)	University post-graduate programme	None (Atheist)	Full-time employment within an organisation/ company	City	Yes Depression Eating Disorders	Yes

[1]Pseudonyms used to preserve participant confidentiality.
[2]Described using participants own words.

Recruitment

Purposive sampling was used (Smith et al., 2009), Participants self-selected via research advertisements (Appendix B) posted on body positive Facebook groups, public Instagram posts and reddit message boards (c.f. Table 5). Adverts were initially posted sequentially, however recruitment struggles necessitated recruitment from several body positive social media spaces concurrently. Not all groups yielded participants, with the final sample coming from three Facebook groups and Instagram (c.f. Table 6).

Ethics

The study was conducted in accordance with the British Psychological Society's Code of ethics and conduct (2018). Ethical approval was granted by Canterbury Christ Church University's Ethics Committee (Appendix C).

Risk of harm was considered minimal but monitored throughout, with acknowledgement that participants may discuss distressing experiences; information about sources of support was provided to all participants (Appendix D). People responding to the research adverts were emailed details about the research (Appendix E) covering confidentiality, the low risk of the interview causing distress, and their right to withdraw consent at any time. Interviews were arranged once participants gave informed consent via emailed consent form (Appendix F).

All participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality and raw transcripts were only viewed by the research team. All data was securely stored electronically with pseudonyms as identifiers.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews, with broad, open-ended questions were used to focus the interviews around reflections on body positive social media whilst allowing flexibility in extracting data about participants personal experiences and minimising the interviewer's input (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Two women who run body positive Instagram accounts ("Not Plant Based" and "Anti Diet Riot Club") were consulted about the study, contributing to the development of the research question and interview schedule, alongside offering support with recruitment and dissemination.

Questions covered background information about the participant, their understanding of body positivity and experiences engaging with it on social media, followed by whether they understood any changes to have emerged from their engagement, and how they made sense of these. Prompts were used when necessary to clarify questions or gain further depth (see appendix G, full interview schedule). A pilot interview was conducted to ensure the questions were coherent and sufficient. During each interview, the schedule guided the focus towards body positive social media, and offered prompts for seeking further depth, but was used lightly to allow the interviewer to follow each participant's experience and stay close to their individual sense making.

Prior to interview, each participant provided their demographic information via Google Form. Interviews were arranged via email and held over the internet using Skype video-calls. Length varied between 55mins and 1hr 20, with participants being asked to allow 1h 30m, giving time for introductions, putting participants at ease (Smith & Osborn, 2003), flexibility in exploring participant experiences and an ending debrief immediately after the

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interviews. All participants reported enjoying the interview process; some added that it had been a useful reflective experience. No participants reported or exhibited any distress.

Interviews were recorded using Skype's native audio recording and a Dictaphone. Interviews took place over a 12-month period and the data stored securely as per ethical guidelines and data protection legislation. Interviews were transcribed verbatim using MS word, with consideration of the interpretative process of transcription (Smith et al., 2009).

Data Analysis

Each interview recording was listened to, and each transcript read, several times, to achieve immersion and familiarity with the data (Smith and Osborn, 2003). Transcripts were analysed consecutively: through initial noting of descriptive, linguistic and conceptual features and recording the themes emerging from the notes, to reviewing these against the whole transcript, coding representative quotes in NVivo and drawing together themes and subthemes with a close connection to the words of the participant (Smith & Osborn, 2003; (see Diagrams, Appendix I). Reflective memos were kept and referred to throughout (Appendix H). After repeating for each transcript, themes and sub-themes were hand compared and grouped together across participants (Appendix J). These groupings were transferred back into NVivo and further refined, resulting in a final diagram of superordinate and subthemes (Appendix K). A table of themes was produced, and compared against original transcripts to identify representative quotes and ensure the findings reflected the breadth of experiences reported.

Quality Assurance

The lead researcher met Garfinkel's (2002) 'unique adequacy requirement' of familiarity with the phenomenon examined, as someone who had used body positive social

media themselves and felt aligned with its values. This requirement necessities heightened reflexivity (Garfinkel, 2002), so bracketing exercises, an interview based on the research questions and mind-mapping the subjective perspectives that arose during the interview (Ahern, 1999; Fischer, 2009, see Appendix L), were used to conceptualise and make sense of the researcher's own experiences of the phenomenon. This process highlighted the researcher's experience of body positive social media helping them to feel body-acceptance, as an 'overweight' person who struggled at times with body image, and assumptions therefore that it was a helpful phenomenon. Making these preconceptions and assumptions conscious allowed reference to them during analysis, to reduce bias in interpretation. The researcher also kept a reflective research diary (Appendix M).

Participants were invited to check their interview transcripts for accuracy, and subsequent corrections and comments from the participant who accepted were included in the analysis. Commitment and rigour with regards to the analysis process was accounted for by following established methodological guidelines for IPA (Smith et al., 2009), and this is made transparent in the description above, an example annotated transcript (Appendix N) and direct quotes supporting theme interpretation.

Initial noting and emergent themes of the first transcript analysed were reviewed by the research supervisor for closeness to the raw data, as were the superordinate and subthemes. Inter-coder agreement (Yardley, 2008) was not used, reflecting the central role of researcher subjectivity in IPA

Results

Each participant's experience of online body positive content was unique, as was the sense they made of it; four superordinate themes emerged illuminating the process from making sense of body positive content, through engaging with it online, to the changes they

understood as arising from their engagement, centred around their relationships to their

bodies and living their values.

Seventeen subthemes were subsumed within the super-ordinate themes. All themes

are shown below in Table 7, followed by a results narrative.

Table 7.
Superordinate themes and sub-themes

Superordinate theme	Sub-theme	Quotes
Making Sense of Body Positivity	Accepting All Bodies as They Are	*"...for me it's more like that doesn't matter, erm, you know, your size your look, your, you know, your health, it's all kind of, we're all deserving of respect and erm, you know basic, kind of kindness and stuff, regardless of whatever it is. Um, so for me it is kind of like, you know, loving and respecting ourselves, but also other people, kind of regardless of what this [gestures to body] is and you know, on the inside really, or the outside" (Sadie, p.2).* *"...basically what I think was intended as, which is more to be positive about whatever body you're in, so that whatever body you're in is Ok, it's totally fine to exist in that body, there is no problem with your body and you live in it in the ways you want to live in it, and enjoy it and that's perfectly ok" (Danielle, p.3).*
	Subtle Challenges to Unconditional Body Acceptance	*"I think the parameters are quite damaging, because they're basically the same as the diet industry in a lot of ways. its saying "oh just change this and that and the other and then you'll be happy" or "just change this and then you'll feel positive about your body" (Danielle, p.5).* *"'You can like yourself, if you're being healthy', as opposed to just it being all the time. I guess there's also people that will never be fully healthy if they, have chronic illness and things like that. So it kind of excludes them from it" (Phoebe, p.2).*
	Fat Acceptance	*"If I had a choice between sort of a fat activist space online and a body positive space, I would choose the fat activist space over the body positive space" (Juliette, p.4).* *"...it's not socially acceptable, like the fat acceptance movement is so out there" (Ruth, p.8).*
Validating and Belonging: Experiences of the Movement.	Witnessing and Sharing Experiences – Validating and Eye-opening	*"...happy that it was out there that people were seeing it, not just me but just that it's out there for the world. Um, I don't know I guess it's nice to see someone else has the same [pause] things... I was trying to think of a word then... as you, like the whole stretch marks and that kind of thing" (Phoebe, p.5).*

"...it's kind of seeing other people's mindsets and other people's perspectives on things" (Mary, p.14).

"...just speaking your truth, sometimes it's not even about the responses, it's more about sharing what you go through I suppose, yeah, and, and voicing, voicing that experience, (yeah) having it heard rather than um, invalidated or... (yeah) rejected I suppose" (Lucy, p.8).

Sharing a Validating Ideology	*"...for the most part it's just is really validating to be in groups of people like me, erm and be able to see bodies like mine, erm, or you know, talk about issues that I might have, or just see that other people kind of, you know, go through similar stuff, erm, so I find it, yeah really really validating. It makes me feel really good in myself"* (Sadie, p.7).

"I think generally the people in those groups are really open and tend to be quite liberal in their thinking. So in a lot a lot of those communities I feel like there is nothing I could say that would make them be weirded out like even, obviously body liberation related stuff but also other liberal ideas such as sexual orientation. I don't know. Yeah. So that has been very nice that they are very accepting of other ways of living life" (Lucy, p.12).

Awareness of Invalidating Social Narratives, re Beauty and re Fatness.	*"There's such a lot in society that is um, almost designed to make women feel bad about themselves for the purposes of selling products and services of various sorts"* (Mary, p.4).

"I've recently started to realise that it's also about skin colour and European features that are sort of the ideal, ideal features for example" (Lucy, p.4).

"I think it's just that idea that, you know, fat is bad and particularly bad, you shouldn't be fat [...] if you're fat, you can't possibly be beautiful or empowered" (Juliette, p.8).

"I mean, you're, you're constantly looking at all these sort of infuriating things that are out there (mmhmm) and reading, reading things that are kind dehumanising, um about people like you" (Ruth, p.12).

Emotional and Practical Support	*"I mean I can talk to those people about that and they get it, they get like why it bothers me and um, also, they'll be like, 'it's ok!' you know, 'you don't have to feel ashamed of that'. So yeah, yeah it's kind of a support system"* (Ruth, p.19).

"...giving practical solutions, 1. it's kind of like not erm, it's being really matter of fact, so you know some people saying, someone asked for a sleeping bag recommendation, and you know, do you know what I haven't fit into any of the single ones, so I use a double sleeping bag" (Sadie, p.6).

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"...other people are then supporting it and going like "yay go you, I wish I could walk up a flight of stairs" or "yeah, it feels brilliant when you walk up a flights of stairs doesn't it?" you know just just that kind of support and that um, that recognition that whatever stage you're at you've done something that was good for you" (Mary, p.6).

	Social Pressures: Challenges to Belonging	*"...a lot of people found me annoying, because I was this person that was like 'Yeah I'm going skiing, I'm going skating, you know, I work out four times a week and you know' and um and, and they were like 'you don't even look fat', and I'm like 'dude my my BMI is like 34! Every time I go to the doctor they tell me obese, I'm obese. What do you mean I don't look fat?'" (Ruth, p.5).*
		"...it's another, no matter how, you can't escape this idea that there's still this idealisation, no matter what that is. Um, and the, the fat people I see on social media and their body positive spaces are still idealized figures (mm) and I still compare myself to them and come up inadequate by my measure" (Juliette, p.5).
Developing Different Relationships to Self and Body	Understanding History of Body Shame and Pain	*"My relationship with my body has kind of been a bit, um [pause], I don't know what the word would be, [pause] um, it's just not been positive (mmhmm), I've been hating on myself sort of thing and always unhappy with myself" (Hazel, p.10).*
		"My thoughts about myself and the way I talked to myself were very aggressive and I suppose abusive as well" (Lucy, p.14).
		"...starving myself (OK), and exercising for hours in a day to try and be something that my body's never going to be" (Juliette, p.10).
	Determination to Work on Self-Image	*"I have worked a lot on liking myself, I didn't always like myself" (Lucy, p.2).*
		"I'd say just in terms of growing up fat, I kind of grabbed it with both hands, just because I'd been fat for all my life and I did-couldn't really imagine getting less fat"(Danielle, p.12).
	New Thinking in Relation to Pain	*"...when I was looking in the mirror I would try and like stop negative thoughts straight away and then eventually start to bring in like "oh but I like this about myself" and things like then. And then eventually that morphed into looking in the mirror less and less [pause] and now I hardly ever just stare at my body" (Phoebe, p.6).*
		"I just want my body not to matter" (Mary, p.4).
		"I may as well do it, why am I not doing things that I want to do, erm, like is it just because I'm scared people are going to judge me because that's like, I feel like I have more resilience" (Sadie, p.8).

	The Influence of Life, Learning and Personal Values on Developing Self-Image	*"I don't think it was the body positive stuff that made me feel good, I think it was being pregnant just had a really positive effect on me (ok). Well, I dunno, if I was able to recognise it, in a way? And those messages were kind of, reinforcing how I was feeling, sort of thing, so. Yeah. It's hard to kind of pull it all apart I suppose"* (Hazel, p.12). *"I'm not saying that going to university magically fixed everything and it certainly didn't, um but I think my self-confidence grew a bit just being out on my own and having to do things for myself"* (Danielle, p.2). *"...when you think about the violence of that car accident, um I was walking again in two weeks [...] I was 19 years old, um, I, I healed really really fast. And that actually made me think you know what, I don't have a bad body. (mm). It's actually, it it actually works really well"* (Ruth, p.3-4).
	Remaining Pain – Ongoing Journey	*"I think what I'd like to say is that it's like allowed me to exist and fully embrace who I am and oh, that's great . And I don't think that's true"* (Juliette, p10.). *"I'd like to think I can continue working to improve on my perception of myself"* (Danielle, p.21).
Living Their Values	Feeling Self-Acceptance	*"I feel like my life is different, honestly, it's had such a big impact, yeah I just more generally like I've started to listen to what my body wants, accept what, accept what my body looks like naturally without me trying to change it, um I've started to really like my body and in the process I've also started to like myself more generally, be more confident, er engage with other people on a deeper level, be more vulnerable generally, accept my flaws, try not to be ashamed of my flaws.; Yeah, I feel like it has had a big impact on how I interact with the world, generally –[...] accepting my body, definitely triggered me accepting other parts of myself and being open to the idea of "I don't have to be perfect to deserve love and friendship" and "I do bring something to other people's lives"* (Lucy, pp.10-11). *"On the whole I feel quite, relatively, um, you know, happy with who I am"* (Sadie, p.1). *"I'm not bothered about becoming smaller as a person"* (Danielle, p.2).
	Consciously Using Their Revised Values for Themselves	*"...it's helped to stop doing practices that I would now consider to be um, negative, like, it all came after my stint of trying weight watchers and slimming world and all the rest of it. [...] I have something in my armoury as it were, to try and encourage me to go down a genuinely healthy route"* (Hazel, p.6).

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"I've also done performances with um, fat cabaret, which I've found amazing and it's the most positive space I've ever been in, just because I was surrounded by other fat people and we were all just being performers (yeah) and doing what we do but in this really positive environment" (Danielle, p.7).

"I'm just much more kind and compassionate I suppose, um, and I used to be very, my thoughts about myself and the way I talked to myself were very aggressive and I suppose abusive as well. So I try not to do that anymore. Um, yeah, I'm just much kinder to myself I suppose, yeah, yeah" (Lucy, p.14).

Consciously Using their Revised Values with Others	*"I've felt a lot more able to say 'you know can we maybe not discuss that? I don't really want to talk about diets and x y z' and it's been really positive for my relationships with other people because instead of sitting there silently and thinking 'oh god I don't want to talk about this' I've felt able to actually express it"* (Danielle, p.17).
	"I've started to just tell people what I like about them more. [...]I've made a conscious effort now that if I have a thought like 'oh so and so's hair looks nice today' 'so and so's outfit or whatever about them looks nice today', I'm like 'just say it out loud'" (Phoebe, p.13).
	"What I've tried really really really hard to do is avoid verbalising or, or demonstrating a negative body attitude to myself in front of my children [...] I feel like I have hopefully given [my son] a much more positive attitude even though it was still a learning journey for myself that I was going through at the time" (Mary, p.11-12).
Hope and Action for Systemic Change	*"I'm educating myself, um and that is really excellent in terms of work, because I feel like I know more, I'm more knowledgeable, I can direct people to different accounts and therefore can help educate young people, which is excellent"* (Hazel, p.7).
	"I'd like to think is me contributing to other people beginning to maybe feel how I do, erm, you know because my journey has been entirely through other people, erm, so you know if I can be a part of someone else's that would be great" (Sadie, p.8).

Making Sense of Body Positivity

This superordinate theme represents the meanings and values which participants

understood as representative of body positivity on social media.

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Accepting All Bodies as They Are

Acceptance of all bodies, without pressure to change them, was seen to underpin the core values and actions of body positivity. This was identified both in terms of encouraging individuals to develop better relationships with their own bodies and encouraging a broader acceptance and inclusion of all types of bodies:

It's about um, feeling positive and accepting the skin that you're in (mmhmm), um and in turn uh, respecting other people um, no matter what, er, [pause] um, making sure, going beyond acceptance, […] making it, all experiences positive no matter what somebody's body may be like (Hazel, p.3).

Participants put forward the ideas they identified as representing body positivity quite tentatively, with a clear sense that they were viewed as the ideal, or what body positivity should be: "I find it quite loaded term. I want to believe that it means um, kind of acceptance and encouragement of um, er, a neutral to happy relationship with your body, regardless of its shape, size, ability, colour, anything" (Juliette, p.1).

Subtle Challenges to Unconditional Body Acceptance

A theme emerged of participants experiencing much body positive content as only superficially aligned to the original meaning. Often they felt it subtly challenged the idea of unconditional body acceptance, by adding parameters or perpetuating other beauty ideals: "Well you've got a stylist and you've done your make up and (mmhmm) and you're really pretty anyway so there's no body positive message in that for me I don't think (Hazel, p.9),

'You can have sort of a straight up and down body part or you can have a body part with slight curves. you know, either one is ok!' [laughter]. you know that kind of body positivity, as long as you're not actually large [laughter] (Ruth, p.9).

Some participants experienced the messages about self-love as incompatible with self-acceptance, viewing them as replacing one social pressure for another: "it moralises the idea of feeling positive about your body, um, which actually is not that straightforward" (Juliette, p.1).

These challenges to body-acceptance were understood as consumerist in nature, a way to appeal to a mainstream audience, that consequently excluded people outside the mainstream; "I feel like body positivity is very much something that er, people in medium or smaller sized bodies find easy to support. It's not super radical like '[…] accept your flaws and imperfections, but only to a certain extent'" (Lucy, p.16).

Fat Acceptance

Some participants found that fat acceptance was a way of engaging with similar ideas to body positivity on social media, that was much more powerful and political, and more protected from within-movement challenges to body-acceptance: "Fat acceptance is kind of body positivity but a bit more radical maybe and not a space for non-fat people" (Sadie, p.3),

> "I personally don't really like the term body positivity; I prefer fat acceptance movement […] I reject the notion of um, yeah, 'if you love your body you will, I dunno, try to be healthy by losing the weight'" (Lucy, p.2).

Experiences with fat acceptance and body positivity were frequently intertwined and the impacts and specific ideas of each hard to separate from each other: "If you count fat acceptance as something that's related to body, online body positivity, or that's sort of at the root of it or something like that then it's had a huge impact on me" (Ruth, p.18)

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Validating and Belonging: Experiences of the Movement

This super-ordinate theme captures the experiences participants had of being accepted and validated, but also trying to belong and fit-in, when engaging with body positive social media.

Witnessing and Sharing Experiences – Validating and Eye-Opening

This theme captures how participants were using body positive social media. Primarily this involved witnessing others' experiences as they were shared by people with both similar and very different life stories: "people would just share their daily experience of living in a larger body, […] and I feel like someone is having a shared experience of life" (Lucy p.6), "looking at things that wouldn't um, otherwise stick out to me about accessibility and stuff, I find that really interesting and educational, […] I feel like I'm able to be a more inclusive person" (Hazel, p.8), "somebody says 'oh I did this for the first time' or […] 'I did something' you know that's, something that they're obviously proud of and that they've done a good job" (Mary, p.7).

Some participants shared their own experiences and perspectives on social media, however the idea of there being a power in passively witnessing was more strongly represented; "honestly even just the exposure of seeing different bodies than you know, the kind of erm these amazing, like, stick thin, beautiful, flawless people, erm, even that was incredibly helpful for me" (Sadie, p.5).

Sharing a Validating Ideology

This theme captures the acceptance and validation participants attributed to being part of social media spaces where they felt everyone held the same values, and how this impacted on them: "I feel really positive when I'm able to ask a question of people who I feel have a

shared experience or at least a similar level of understanding" (Danielle, p.10). One of the

particular benefits of this shared ideology was attributed to it being very different to the

ideologies and beliefs of the outside world, which created trust and feelings of safety:

> It was my lifeline I think, […] everyone around me was er dieting and telling me that
>
> my body was wrong, especially my mum, and then suddenly to have this space where
>
> I was accepted as I was and people had a shared experience of feeling crazy and out
>
> of control around food and hating their bodies so much, er, and being willing to
>
> sacrifice anything to be thin, um that was, I think that was really life changing (Lucy,
>
> p.5).

Awareness of Invalidating Social Narratives, re Beauty and re Fatness.

Participants shared the ways in which their awareness of invalidating social narratives

and how they related to these had changed through engaging with body positive social media.

This involved processes of bringing often dehumanising and pejorative narratives into a more

conscious awareness: "some people really really dislike fat people, for kind of no reason,

other than just their existence" (Sadie, p.18), as well as coming to understand how they had

been affected by and internalised the narratives; "there was a fat woman on the cover and it

was the end of days because how dare they tell someone they're ok in their own skin (mm), so

it makes it quite difficult to feel that way about yourself" (Danielle, p.2),

> … to be aware of this stuff and to sort of name it. Like to say, that's what they're
>
> doing here. And not, and not just keep on being the person reading that like
>
> everybody else was, feeling just vaguely like oppressed by it (Ruth, p.14).

For some participants this changing relationship to the narratives came with

downsides, for example increasing feelings of depression and anxiety, or removing

enjoyment from media consumption; "I can't even watch TV anymore without being

triggered and going into a rant about all of the problematic… […] it takes away the pleasure from some things I suppose" (Lucy, p.13).

Emotional and Practical Support

This theme represents the support that participants experienced through engaging with body positive social media. This support was both received from and offered to other people on social media, and involved emotional support, celebration of achievements and also practical advice: "It's really pleasant to be able to talk to somebody about modifications and different workouts or just to be able to exchange information or tips or ask for advice from people who understand" (Danielle, p.9), "I haven't posted that often, maybe like three or four times, but every time I've done so, um, the responses were really really positive and made me feel very validated" (Lucy, p.7).

This was seen as unique support that they wouldn't be able to get elsewhere, because it came from people with shared experiences; "they will always be the people that um, that I can talk to about body issues and know that they're coming from the same place as me" (Ruth, p.19).

Social Pressures: Challenges to Belonging

This represents the social pressures experienced by the participants, which posed challenges to their sense of belonging and safety in the body positive online spaces. These challenges were noticed in the form of new social rules;

> I do find it, sometimes a bit difficult with some of the like rules of, you know. Some
> stuff I'm just getting used to and I, get a bit nervous about making mistakes erm but
> because I do think online communities, are, can be cut-throat (Sadie, p.7),

continued replication of societal patterns of beauty ideals; "Yeah, well you've got a stylist and you've done your make up and (mmhmm) and you're really pretty anyway…" (Hazel, p.9), and the participant's own continued experience of negatively comparing their appearances and experiences to others;

> …instead of just comparing myself to really thin movie stars, I was comparing myself to well groomed, glamorous people who were able to express confidently a lot of these very positive things about their body. And I was still very much in the like "I don't want a picture taken of me, I'm ashamed" (Juliette, p.3)

Developing Different Relationships to Self and Body

This super-ordinate theme represents the participants' journeys to new relationships with themselves and their bodies, through their engagement with body positive online social media.

Understanding History of Body Shame and Pain

All of the participants shared experiences of significant emotional pain and feelings of shame about their bodies; "I mean I used to hate myself so much! Erm, I really did dislike myself intensely" (Lucy p.11), "I'd always thought that my, I had a horrible body" (Ruth, p.3).

This shame was often related to fear of what it meant to be fat, and fear of being judged by other people; "oh, I must lose weight because I'm a horrible person if I don't lose weight" (Mary, p.2), and was accompanied by negative actions and thoughts; "just spending far too much time stood in front of the mirror telling myself how awful I look" (Phoebe, p.10), "I literally used to run at night in dark clothing around an essentially abandoned wood, because I was so scared of people seeing me and making fun of me" (Danielle, p.14).

A further compound to this pain for some was having it invalidated by those around

them, often because of their body size:

>…no one took my concerns and my the pain I felt, because I hated my body so much,
>
>serious, seriously, […] I think it's this, this gas-lighting aspect, um, that no one in my
>
>life at that point um, was, could relate…" (Lucy, p.9).

Determination to Work on Self-Image

This theme represents participants' determination to change the painful relationships

they had with their own bodies; "I guess I felt like, you know, I've already had this [being

fat] in a, in a shameful way, erm, it's about time that I have it in a, at least a neutral way

(Sadie, p.11), with body positive social media offering a start to this journey; "'oh my god

there's a possibility that I could not hate myself!' and that was quite exciting" (Danielle,

p.12).

For most participants, their commitment to continue the journey helped them keep

going through setbacks and lapses in faith in the messages from body positivity;

>I definitely had those moments when it'd be like "I'm fine, it's great, it's amazing!"
>
>and then, I'd like catch my reflection in the shop window and the world would come
>
>crashing down and I'd go and hide for two days (mm hmm) kinda thing. So definitely
>
>not smooth. Um, but yeah, like, I guess it's that drip feed isn't, little and often, kind of
>
>drip feed, like it gets in your brain eventually (Juliette, p.13).

New Thinking in Relation to Pain

Participants' described developing new ways of thinking as they took on board the

values of the group and applied them to their own painful experiences; "…it's definitely made

me think that actually, like I'm, I'm valid and valuable and have things to say and I'm okay as I am" (Juliette, p.10).

Strategies participants identified included deliberately thinking kind things about themselves and making effort to identify things they like about their bodies,

I don't like my legs, I find them difficult as a part of me to love and accept and so on and so forth, but, they're also with me all the time, they carry me everywhere I go, they boogie with me, they climb mountains with me, they do all this cool stuff with me (yeah), so actually they're pretty great! (Danielle, p.14),

as well as relating differently to their existing thoughts, challenging and questioning those that didn't align with their developing values; "It's made me more um, dismissive of the negative voices in my head. 'fuck it just wear it'" (Hazel, p.12), "'Oh there's this framework I was in and I didn't even realize I was in it.' And now that I can see it, I can dismantle it" (Mary, p.14).

The Influence of Life, Learning and Personal Values on Developing Self-Image

This theme represents how each participant's journey to a different relationship with themselves and engagement with body positive social media, was shaped by their life experiences, personal growth and individual values.

Some found that engaging with body positive social media enabled them to work towards their values, such as learning and educating themselves or showing compassion and helping others. Others found that they engaged easily with the content because of their familiarity and reliance on the internet; "most of my friends I'd say are online rather than um in the real world" (Mary, p.1).

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All participants described some element of their own life experiences leading to new perspectives about their bodies, which in turn influenced how they approached the ideas they found in body positivity:

> I suppose the XXX dying thing is the biggest thing that's affected me and body pos- body positivity (mm hmm). […] I'd say it fast tracked me, but it also made me take a step back because like my brain was too full of other things to care what people were posting online. But then it also fast tracked me in that, I didn't care what I looked like because I was too busy worrying about other things (Phoebe, p.8).

Remaining Pain – Ongoing Journey

Participants understood their journeys to a new self-image as incomplete, with them still experiencing painful emotions about their bodies; "I don't think like those feelings have just vanished. And I think that actually like if I unpicked, if I unpicked a layer, they'd probably still be very raw and under there" (Juliette, p.10).

This was usually accompanied by both hope and intention to continue with the journey, perhaps without there being an end point; "I think the next step for me is to, you know, to bring things just a little bit more into real life, err cause there's only so much, there's only so much you can do online" (Sadie, p.20).

Living their Values

This superordinate theme characterises the various changes participants understood as resulting from their experiences with body positive social media content, encapsulated by the idea that they are now able to live more in alignment with their values.

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Feeling Self-acceptance

Participants described feelings of acceptance about their bodies, without a need to change them, sometimes even liking them, representing a dramatic shift away from their previous shame; "well, I definitely feel ten thousand times better about myself, definitely. Um, er, partly that um regardless of what my body shape is it's fine, and partly that it doesn't matter what my body shape is" (Mary, p.13). For some participants, these feelings of acceptance extended beyond their bodies to a more general self-acceptance and improved self-esteem; "…I've become much happier in who I am and […] in my body" (Sadie, p.8).

Consciously Using their Revised Values for Themselves

This theme represents how participants were able to be guided by their new values, taken on from body positive social media, to consciously improve their lives. This involved greater self-compassion: prioritising and valuing their own rights and needs, making space for pleasure, and forgiving themselves rather than holding themselves to cultural ideals; "I just eat what I want, um because I want to and I don't guilt myself about eating" (Juliette, p.10), "It's like just given me time and freedom and just allowed me to focus on more important things" (Phoebe, p.10).

For two participants, living to their value of self-care had enabled them to lose or maintain a lower weight, for others they described feeling comfortable visibly taking up space and existing in the world; "I'm accepting now that like I am tall and broad and I take up quite a lot space, and like why not kind of accept that, and play with that a little bit" (Sadie, p.15).

Consciously Using their Revised Values with Others

Participants were also using their new values in their interactions with the people in their lives. Building on the above ideas around self-compassion, participants spoke about feeling empowered to prioritise their needs above maintaining their relationships to others, in a way that protected them from damaging social messages; "I'm unwilling to accept emotional violence surrounding my body" (Lucy, p.12), "my weight is pretty much off limits. I don't talk about it, I, and if people start talking about dieting, I walk away" (Ruth, p.16).

This new way of relating to others could create challenges in their close relationships: "I think [they] are quite offended, because obviously weight loss is always such a positive thing for people, that, they find it, quite aggressive when somebody won't engage with that" (Danielle, p.19), but was judged to be worth the difficulty: "It is kind of exhausting but... Yeah, it feels very it feels very liberating to do it" (Lucy, p.12). Benefits to close relationships were also found;

> I guess if I compare the friendships I have now, after I've spent a lot of time engaging
> in those spaces, to the friendships that I had previous to that, um I would say that
> they're a lot more positive, accepting. Everyone uplifts each other (Juliette, p.11).

Hope and Action for Systemic change

This theme captures the activism and desire for systemic change in the way people's bodies are understood at a cultural and social level, that participants took from engaging with body positivity on social media.

Participants spoke of various methods for putting this value into action: taking the ideas they had gleaned from body positivity and subtly introducing them in conversations in day-to-day life, taking time to become aware of their own social biases and privileges, and taking explicitly systemic-change focussed actions, all with a hope that their actions and the

existence of body positive social media could lead to systemic changes in the way people's bodies are accepted by society; "I want to do my dissertation on medical fat phobia" (Lucy, p.6),

> I'm now I'm moderating a Facebook group called fat cheers for fat queers, erm and I kind of semi- not very, on and off, erm, run a little Instagram or have a little Instagram profile erm that is called fat and outdoors (Sadie, p.5).

Furthermore, this wider focus on change beyond oneself was understood for some as being significant for allowing their own relationship to themselves to change; "I haven't got any really big issues, so come on, get over it, and be more proactive in allyship" (Hazel, p.11), "I think it's given me a kind of a goal and a drive in my life" (Juliette p.9).

Discussion

This study found that women understand engaging with body positive social media as beneficial to their lives, with various positive impacts, supporting the existing research base showing it to be a helpful phenomenon. It goes beyond previous findings showing in-the-moment improvements (Stevens & Griffiths, 2020), showing that participants understood their experiences as creating change over time, and illuminating how they made sense of this.

The superordinate themes show how participants understood the experiences they had engaging with body positive social media as influencing how they came to understand the meaning of body positivity. Their engagement and understanding then interacted together as a way for participants to intentionally, and with commitment, change their relationships to their bodies and themselves. The final superordinate theme represents the changes experienced from this complex process; a feeling of self-acceptance and freedom from the restraints of emotional pain. The pain was still present, but participants were relating to it

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differently, and allowing themselves to engage in actions and ways of thinking which prioritised their psychological wellbeing and physical health.

Thin-Ideal Internalisation

This study suggests interactions between using body positive social media and internalisation of the thin-ideal (Thompson & Stice, 2001). Participants reported becoming consciously aware of pejorative social narratives about beauty, in-line with those understood as influential in body dissatisfaction and eating disorders (Frederick, Daniels, Bates & Tylka, 2017; Grabe, Ward & Hyde, 2008; Levine & Murnen, 2009). Social media then provided them with ways of developing challenges or new relationships to these narratives. This appeared to reflect a conscious process of developing a beneficial body-protective information filter, noted as protective against the effects of thin-idealised media on PBI (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). This supports Cohen et al.'s (2020) assertion that a useful focus for body positive social media is emphasising filtering information in a body-protective manner.

This process of information filtering can also be seen in the theme of participants' making sense of body positivity for themselves. The subtle challenges to body-acceptance sub-theme seems to reflect participants' experiences of body-positive content being mis-appropriated (Cwynar-Horta, 2016; Sastre, 2014). It also appears to reflect the continued appearance focus and encouragement to self-objectify found by Cohen, Irwin et al., (2019). These mis-appropriated ideas were understood as frustrating more than detrimental to well-being; participants reported that this content tended to prompt them to make appearance-based social comparisons and feel less good about their bodies, but that this co-existed with self-acceptance and body-appreciation, similar to the findings of Cohen, Fardouly et al. (2019). In this context the super-ordinate theme of making sense of body positivity may

represent a process of applying the body protective information filters participants had developed from social media to the social media content itself.

Furthermore, this study indicates that body positive social media provides avenues for internalising new ideals as espoused by respected social others, and receiving social acceptance based on these new ideals, as per Kandel (1980) and Hohlstein et al.'s, (1998) proposed mechanisms for internalising attitudes. Consequently, body positive social media may not only offer protection from the effects of internalising the thin-ideal, but may also offer new, more beneficial, ideals to be internalised instead.

Positive Body Image

In addition to appearance comparisons, participants described continued experiences of emotional pain about their bodies, akin to body dissatisfaction, alongside their newer body appreciation and self-acceptance. This reflects previous evidence establishing that features of PBI can co-exist with body dissatisfaction, establishing it as distinct concept (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

The current participants reported a deliberate, conscious effort to improve their relationships with their bodies, with the values shaping this process reflecting a conscious effort to improve PBI; appreciating the body's functionality, broadly defining beauty, filtering information through a body-protective lens and connecting to the body's needs with compassionate acceptance. These efforts were understood to have led to feeling self-acceptance, which may not always have involved positive feelings about their bodies but did involve much less emotional pain and a freedom to live fuller and richer lives, with participants describing outcomes like self-esteem and health-promoting behaviours (Andrew et al., 2016a; b; Avalos et al., 2005) which are associated with PBI.

Overall, this indicates that PBI may represent an intentional process, with body dissatisfaction more emotionally rooted and perhaps harder to affect, suggesting new research avenues for promoting PBI to protect against the impacts of body dissatisfaction.

Activism

Unlike previous research, this study explicitly examined the social connection and community aspects of body positive social media. These factors were understood to be fundamental to the positive experiences described by participants, suggesting that body positive social media provides a way of bringing together people with shared concerns/interests which can lead to psychological benefits (Coulson, et al., 2017; Erfani, et al., 2017; Nimrod, 2014; Rogers & Chen, 2005).

A novel finding of this study was the importance of the social justice activism elements of body positivity. Participants' narratives included frequent references to oppression, discrimination and working towards systemic change. One participant identified activism as fundamental to changing her relationship to herself, by providing perspective on her experiences. This element was especially salient for participants who were more fat acceptance oriented; fat people were understood as a marginalised group that participants were either part of or allied to.

The significance of interpersonal experiences found in this study converges with research into experiences within in-person social justice activism groups, where relational aspects, sharing identities and values, have been identified as central to disrupting experiences of exclusion, isolation and invalidation; enhancing empowerment and wellbeing (Hagan, Hoover & Morrow, 2018).

Experiences with body positive social media can be understood as engaging with feminist activism that increases personal strength, resilience, and empowerment (Morrow et

al., 2006; Worell & Remer, 2003), and can provide a sense of purpose to life (Hagan et al., 2018). This lens highlights the need for future research distinguishing between the activism, interpersonal and conceptual impacts of body positive social media, and the need to consider all three elements when considering interventions based on body positivity.

Limitations and Future Research

These findings should be interpreted in light of certain limitations and potential biases. As with most qualitative research, the small sample size means that the findings are not generalisable beyond the sample; any conclusions or clinical implications can only be tentative until they are established with larger samples.

In terms of the sample itself, the homogeneity was compromised somewhat by combining analysis of engagement with different body positive social media platforms into one IPA, potentially overlooking significant differences in experience between platforms. For example, a tendency appeared for participants to have had different experiences between Facebook groups and body positive Instagram which warrants further research.

The sample may also have biased the findings towards showing benefits of engagement with body positive social media; participants self-selected, from within body positive social media spaces, meaning recruitment would not have accessed people who found the content unhelpful and stopped engaging. Furthermore, social pressures to please the researcher or promote their new ideology may have deterred participants from sharing negative experiences. This effect does appear to have been moderated by explicit questions about non-positive experiences, and participants did share challenges, unpleasant experiences and scepticism of mainstream body positivity.

Future research should investigate how body positive social media is experienced by people of all genders, as it is not exclusively for women, and establish more concretely it's

impacts over longer periods of time. Finally, more investigation is needed to determine the causal and mediating relationships between the different elements of body positive social media and the impacts associated with it.

Clinical Implications

The findings align well with ideas from narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990) about the stories people have about themselves impacting their experiences of the world. Struggles with body image emerged as a dominant narrative for participants, one that subjugated other narratives of strength and impeded their living in alignment with their values. Engaging with body positive social media was understood as enabling reflection on the stories they held about themselves, allowing witnessing of new perspectives and illuminating their existing strengths. This in turn was understood as allowing development new stories about themselves, stories of strong, kind and active people, making space for valued changes in their lives.

The perceived improvements in participants' self-esteem, thoughts about themselves and others, and healthy behaviours, may have implications for both psychological wellbeing and health promotion, adding some supporting to existing conclusions that body positive social media could provide a scalable, easily accessible, public health promotion tool (Cohen et al., 2020). Specifically, the finding that engagement with body positive social media may reflect a process of strengthening PBI could indicate body positive social media as a useful resource for interventions to protect against the negative impacts of poor body image (Swami et al., 2017) or promoting flourishing in eating disorder treatment (Cook-Cottone, 2015).

 In addition to narrative ideas, cognitive theory offers some insights into how participants' described experiences may have improved their PBI. Accessing body positive social media offered new meanings and ideas with which to appraise their experiences of

their bodies (Lazurus & Folkman, 1984), e.g. appraisals of clothes not fitting being okay because fatness is acceptable. Furthermore, their experiences of receiving support online can be understood as influencing their secondary appraisals (Lazarus a& Folkman, 1984), such that they could appraise the online spaces as providing the resources to protect them from potentially damaging body image experiences. When considering body positive social media as a resource, the human connection and activism elements should not be over-looked, as this study shows them to be integral to the benefits experienced by participants.

Furthermore, the complex interactional influence of each participant's life events and personal characteristics is important to note; body positive public health interventions are unlikely to be a panacea for body image issues, and individual interventions will need to account for these idiosyncrasies in engagement with body positive social media.

Reflexivity

Throughout this research, I reflected on my personal experiences with body positive social media and clinical work with people with body image difficulties. This started with a bracketing interview and continued by keeping a research diary and using supervision, to reflect on my experiences and pre-suppositions, for example during data-collection and analysis when the data overlapped with my own experiences and/or were surprising and challenged my ideas. This reflexive process was extremely important during recruitment, when I was personally removed from a body positive space which I had previously valued. This was distressing and necessitated my being aware of my changing thoughts and feelings towards the group, allowing my work to continue without becoming too biased.

Conclusion

This study explored the experiences and impacts of engaging with body positive social media for eight women. Each woman experienced a unique journey, through developing an understanding of the meaning of body positivity, using social media in different ways to connect with other people and ideas and engage with social justice activism, whilst seeing themselves slowly internalise new values and develop their relationships to themselves and their bodies. These journeys were understood to result in various impacts, summarised as enabling living in alignment with their values and experiencing self-acceptance. This study adds depth to the emerging research base about the benefits of body positive social media and tentatively suggests it could provide a resource for clinical interventions to draw on and enhance their effectiveness.

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SECTION C

Appendices of Supporting Material

Appendix A

Table 8
Critical Appraisal using Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP; 2019a) quantitative research standards for studies with randomised experimental designs without repeated measures, and studies with non-randomised experimental design.

	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 5	Paper 7	Paper 11	Paper 13
Authors	Alleva, Veldhuis & Martjin (2016)	Norwood, Murray, Nolan & Bowker (2011)	Diedrichs & Lee (2010)	McVey, Kirsh, Maker, Walker, Mullane, Laliberte, Ellis-Claypool, Vorderbrugge, Burnett, Cheung & Banks (2010)	Diedrichs & Lee (2011)	Swami, Pickering, Barron & Patel (2018)
Study Design	Between subjects randomized experimental design 1-tailed hypothesis	Non-random between-subjects experimental design with repeated measures. 1-tailed hypothesis	Randomised between-subjects experimental design 1-tailed hypothesis	Before and after, repeated measures experimental design with no control group. 1-tailed hypothesis.	Randomised between-subjects experimental design 1-tailed hypothesis	Before and after, repeated measures, experimental design, with each participant exposed to both experimental conditions in counterbalanced order. 1-tailed hypothesis.
Did the trial address a clearly focused issue?	Yes Clearly defined and evidence informed intervention protocol. Sample, recruitment procedure, control group procedure and	Partially Clearly defined and evidence informed intervention protocol. Recruitment procedure and	Yes Clearly defined and evidence informed intervention protocol. Sample, recruitment procedure, control group procedure and	Yes Clearly defined and evidence informed intervention protocol, including collaboration with stakeholders in developing the intervention protocol.	Yes Clearly defined and evidence informed intervention protocol. Sample, recruitment procedure, control group procedure and	Yes Clearly defined and evidence-informed intervention protocol. Sample, recruitment procedure, control group procedure and

	outcomes clearly described. Status as pilot study to test feasibility clearly explained.	outcomes clearly described. Sample demographics not fully reported. Procedures for maximizing engagement with intervention described.	outcomes, clearly described Procedures for engagement and some measures of engagement with materials clearly described	Sample, recruitment procedure and outcomes clearly described. Procedures for maximizing engagement with the intervention described. Status as pilot study to test feasibility clearly explained.	outcomes, clearly described Procedures for engagement and some measures of engagement with materials clearly described	outcomes, clearly described Procedures for maximizing engagement with the intervention described.
Was the assignment of patients to treatments randomised?	Yes Reference made to software used to randomize.	No Between-subjects condition allocation based on gender: male or female	Partially Restricted randomisation procedure used, fully explained and supported with previous research.	No	Partially Restricted randomization procedure used, fully explained and supported with previous research.	No All participants completed both conditions in counterbalanced order
Were all of the patients who entered the trail properly accounted for at its conclusion?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Attrition rate published, and completers only included in analysis. No analysis of those who did not complete treatment	Yes	Yes Missing data found to be missing at random using Little's Missing Completely at Random Test. Missing data imputed using the multiple imputation technique

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Improving body image in an idealised media culture: Community solutions and positive body image interventions.

Were patients, health workers and study personnel 'blind' to treatment?	Partially No reference to whether study personnel were blind to treatment. Participants blind to purpose of study and unaware of experimental manipulation.	No Measures and intervention facilitated by study authors, at different time points. Condition allocation based on gender.	Yes Entire survey (including group allocation and measures) delivered via the internet.	n/a	Yes Entire survey (including group allocation and measures) delivered via the internet.	No Participants aware of different conditions, but aware of purpose of study. Can't tell whether study personnel were blind to condition.
Were the groups similar at the start of the trial?	Yes	Can't Tell Demographics of groups not reported Scores on outcomes at start between groups reported but not statistically compared	Can't Tell Demographics of groups not reported	n/a	Can't Tell Demographics of groups not reported	Yes Conditions repeated with all participants
Aside from the experimental intervention, were the groups treated equally?	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes	Yes
How large was the treatment effect?	BMI included as co-variate, as were pre-test scores. Main analysis compared between groups. Body functionality: significant effect of group, with the	For scores on the self-description questionnaire there was a significant main effect of time, no main effect of gender but a significant time by gender interaction.	For men, there was only a significant difference in Body Image State scores between the average model groups and the no model groups (small effect and medium effect sizes	Significant effect of time found for both body satisfaction scores (large effect) and STAC scores (large effect)	Women: Higher BMI was associated less positive body image. Medium effect Exposure to the advertisements accounted for a significant amount of variance in BISS	State body appreciation measures were significantly larger at post-test, following exposure to the nature film, than they were at pre-test. Medium effect size.

functionality writing task group showing higher body functionality scores after exposure to the idealised images than the control group (medium effect).

Body appreciation: significant effect of group, with the functionality writing task group showing higher body appreciation scores after exposure to the idealised images than the control group (medium effect).

BMI was found to significantly effect body appreciation scores (medium effect).

Once participants who had guessed the purpose of the study were removed, the effect on body functionality became non-significant, although the effect on

Physical appearance esteem had significantly improved post-intervention, but only for boys. Small effect size.

For body image satisfaction there was a significant main effect of time, but not of gender and there was a non-significant time by gender interaction.

There were significant improvements post-intervention in body body-esteem and weight satisfaction for both boys and girls. Small effect size.

Girls: significant main effect of time, both awareness and internalisation had significantly decreased post-

respectively) with the average model groups showing more positive body image.

For women, exposure to average-slim and muscular models showed significantly higher positive body image than exposure to no model (medium effect size for both) The same pattern was found comparing the average-large model to no model conditions although this was not significant (small effect size)

BSS scores were significantly higher post-intervention

SATAQ scores were significantly lower post-intervention.

scores, and this was moderated by levels of internalisation of cultural ideals of beauty.

Women exposed to average sized models had better BISS scores than women exposed to thin models (large effect). or no models (medium effect,)

At low levels of internalisation, there were no significant differences in BISS scores between conditions.

At high levels of internalisation, women exposed to average sized bodies had significantly better BISS scores than those exposed to thin models (medium effect) or no models. (medium effect)

Men:

State body appreciation did not differ pre and post exposure to the built-up area film.

body appreciation remained significant.

intervention (small effect size).
Boys: significant main effect of time, awareness, internalisation and muscular look had significantly decreased post-intervention (small effect size).

Higher BMI was associated less positive body image (medium effect).

Exposure to the advertisements did not account for a significant amount of variance in BISS scores, and neither did internalisation scores, although an interaction effect was found to significantly predict the variance.

There was no predictive effect of advertising condition: BISS scores for exposure to average sized models did not differ from those exposed to a thin model or no model.

At low levels of internalisation, there were no significant differences in BISS scores between conditions.

At high levels of internalisation, men

					exposed to average sized bodies had significantly better BISS scores than those exposed to thin models (medium effect) or no models (large effect)	
How precise was the estimate of the treatment effect?	Power not discussed Insufficient data presented to do post-hoc power analysis	Power not discussed G*Power post-hoc analysis indicates sufficient study power for the effect size found. Confidence intervals not reported.	Post-hoc power analysis reported sufficient power to detected medium and large effects but not small effects. 95% Confidence intervals reported	Power not discussed Insufficient data presented to do post-hoc power analysis Likely low powered as very small sample. Confidence intervals not reported.	Power not addressed Post-hoc power analysis indicates study insufficiently powered for effect size found. Confidence intervals not reported.	A Priori power analysis conducted indicated a sample of 32 would be needed to detect a medium effect size. Study had sufficient power to detect the effect size found.
Can the results be applied to the local population?	Can't tell Detailed demographics of the sample and how these relate to the population not reported Sample limited to only university students	No Sample demographics not reported. Sample recruited from only one school.	Can't tell Restricted generalisation based on use of a university student sample (although this is argued to reflect the population targeted by the advertisements examined) Sample demographics reported but representativeness of	No Very small sample Sample disproportionately female Sample only students who are peer educators Stakeholder involvement in the design improves validity of intervention for population it serves	No Restricted generalisation based on use of a university student sample (although this is argued to reflect the population targeted by the advertisements examined) Sample demographics reported but representativeness of	Can't Tell Restricted generalisation based on use of a university student sample. Sample demographics reported but representativeness of local population not reported.

			local population not reported.		local population not reported.	
Were all clinically important outcomes considered?	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Did not complete all measures at all time-points (for example,. state body appreciation, so it can only be compared between groups)

Did not compare post intervention and post media exposure separately.

Did not measure thin ideal internalization

No follow-up measures | No assessment of general awareness of idealised images portrayed in media

No Positive Body Image measures which meet which concept criteria.

No control group.

No follow-up measures. | Did not consider perceived suitability of images for upwards comparisons

No Positive Body Image measures which meet which concept criteria.

No pre and post measures of body image, only between groups.

Follow-up measures | SATAQ sub-scale scores not analysed separately for males and females.

No control group.

No follow-up.

No Positive Body Image measures which meet which concept criteria. | Racial differences not considered?

No Positive Body Image measures which meet which concept criteria.

No pre and post measures of body image, only between groups.

No follow-up measures | No trait measure of body appreciation used.

Only one measure of Positive Body Image employed.

No follow-up of effects investigated. |
| *Are the benefits worth the harms and costs?* | Can't tell

Adverse impacts not discussed.
Ethical approval process clearly described | Can't tell

Adverse effects not discussed

Ethical approval process not reported | Can't tell

Adverse effects not discussed

Ethical approval process reported | Can't tell

Adverse impacts not discussed: intervention included elements of ED prevention interventions which have been criticized (O'Dea, 2000, 2005) for potentially posing harm to people with ED. | Can't tell

Adverse effects not discussed

Ethical approval process reported | Can't tell

Adverse effects not discussed

Ethical approval process reported |

		Ethical approval process clearly described.

Table 9
Critical Appraisal of studies with case-control designs and qualitative designs, using Critical Appraisal Skills Programme case control research standards (CASP; 2019b) and qualitative research standards (2019c)

Case-control Research		Qualitative Research	
Appraisal Criteria	Paper 1	Appraisal Criteria	Paper 12
Authors	Swami & Tovee (2009)		Rogers, Kruger, Lowy, Long & Richard (2019)
Study Design	Observational Case-Control		Interviews following exposure to adverts from the Aerie Real campaign
	1 tailed hypothesis		Qualitative analysis of the data using Thematic Analysis (inductive and deductive)
Did the trial address a clearly focused issue?	Partially Sample, recruitment procedure and outcomes clearly stated Consistency of engagement with case (street-dance) not measured or controlled	*Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?*	Yes
Did the authors use an appropriate method to answer their question?	Yes	*Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?*	Yes Previously addressed by quantitative research, but research gap around subjective experiences. Further depth needed to elucidate mechanisms
Were the cases recruited in acceptable way?	No Cases not precisely defined. System for selecting cases not explained.	*Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?*	Partially Process for decision to use exposure to adverts within the study not fully justified (as opposed to recruiting women who had naturalistic exposure to the adverts).

			Focus on social comparison theory not fully justified over and above other theories of body image.
Were the controls selected in an acceptable way?	No	*Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?*	Partially
	Control group demographics reported, but representativeness of population not reported.		Recruitment did not mention body image focus, meaning there was less likely to be a bias towards participants with a particular interest in this area
	System for selecting controls not explained. Including element of self-selection.		Recruitment only from university students, who may have increased critical thinking skills relative to the general population.
	Power not discussed.		Recruitment was opportunistic, so participants may not represent general population
Was the exposure accurately measured to minimize bias?	No	*Was the data collected in a way that address the research issue?*	Yes
	Consistency of engagement with street-dance not measured or controlled for.		Clear explanation of interview process for collecting data and training of interviewees for consistency.
			Methods not modified during the study
			Saturation of data not discussed
Aside from the experimental intervention, were the groups treated equally?	Yes	*Has the relationship between the researcher and participants been adequately considered?*	No
			Relationship between researcher not considered
			Relationship between interviewees and participants (similar ages and gender) considered as potential source of bias only in discussion.
Have the authors taken account of the potential confounding factors in the design and/or in their analysis.	Partially	*Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?*	Yes
	Body Mass Index is a potential confound and was found to differ significantly between groups: this was controlled for in subsequent analysis.		
	Other potential demographic confounds (marital status, ethnicity, age) measured and found to be similar across groups.		

How large was the treatment effect?	Other potential confounds, such as athletic or dancer identities of control group not reported. Street dancers had higher body appreciation than non-dancers with a small effect size.	*Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?*	Partially
	Multiple regressions conducted to assess predictive value of significant correlations identified: Street dancers - Media influences (internalization-general) significantly predicted body appreciation. Non-dancers – media influences (information) significantly predicted body appreciation		Good description of analysis process: thematic analysis process clearly explained, including use of code book and independent coding for inter-rater reliability Sufficient data presented to support the findings Contradictory data reported and accounted for. No critical examination of the researchers own role and the potential for bias during analysis and selection of data for presentation.
How precise was the estimate of the treatment effect?	Confound impact of BMI controlled for, although how is not reported. Power not discussed	*Is there a clear statement of findings?*	Yes
	G*Power post-hoc analysis indicates sufficient study power for the effect size found.		
	Confidence intervals not reported.		
	No evaluation of effect of refusal to participate		
Do you believe the results?	Yes	*How valuable is the research?*	Valuable Findings are linked back to existing knowledge and areas for new research are identified. Applications to other populations or uses not considered, although various applications framed within original research question.
Can the results be applied to the local population?	Can't tell Case demographics reported but representativeness of street-dance population not reported.		
Do the results of this study fit with other available evidence?	Yes		

Table 10
Critical Appraisal using Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP; 2018a) qualitative research standards for studies with Randomised controlled trial designs and repeated measures designs.

	Paper 4	Paper 6	Paper 8	Paper 9	Paper 10	Paper 14
Authors	Mulgrew, Pritchard, Stalley & Lim (2019)	Mulgrew, Stalley, Tiggeman (2017)	Dohnt & Tiggeman (2008)	Williamson & Karazsia (2018)	Sundgot-Borgen et al. (2019)	Slater, Varsani & Diedrichs (2017)
Study Design	Randomised between-subjects experimental design with repeated measures	Randomised Between-subjects design with 2 random group allocations per participant and repeated measures.	Randomised between-subjects experimental design with repeated measures	Randomised between-subjects experimental design with repeated measures	Randomised between-subjects experimental design with repeated measures	Randomised between-subjects experimental design with repeated measures
	1-tailed hypothesis	1-tailed hypothesis	1-tailed hypothesis	1-tailed hypothesis	1-tailed hypothesis	1-tailed hypothesis
Did the trial address a clearly focused issue?	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Clearly defined and evidence informed intervention protocol.	Clearly defined and evidence informed intervention protocol.	Choice of intervention procedure clearly defined and evidence informed.	Clearly defined and evidence informed experimental conditions and protocol.	Clearly defined and evidence informed intervention protocol.	Clearly defined and evidence informed intervention protocol.
	Sample, recruitment procedure control group procedure and outcomes, clearly described.	Sample, recruitment procedure control group procedure and outcomes, clearly described.	Sample recruitment procedure not fully explained.	Sample, recruitment procedure, control group procedure and outcomes, clearly described.	Control group procedure clearly explained but not matched to intervention procedure.	Sample, recruitment procedure, control group procedures and outcomes, clearly described.
	Procedures for engagement and some measures of engagement with materials clearly described.	Procedures for engagement and some measures of engagement with materials clearly described.	Procedures for intervention and control group clearly reported.	Procedures for checking engagement with materials clearly. Described.	Sample, recruitment procedure and outcomes, clearly described.	Several outcome measures used created by the authors. Clearly explained but not validated.

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			Most outcome measures used created by the authors. Clearly explained but not validated.		Intervention facilitated by same people each time. No measures or checks of participant engagement described.	
Was the assignment of patients to treatments randomised?	Yes Although process for random allocation not described	Yes Although process for random allocation not described	Yes Although process for random allocation not described.	Yes Randomised using Qualtrics software	Yes Cluster-randomised design: schools randomized to condition by professional not affiliated with the study.	Yes Although process for random allocation not described
Were all of the patients who entered the trail properly accounted for at its conclusion?	No Drop-out between intervention and post-program session not accounted for.	Yes Those who did not complete all measures were excluded from the analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes Dropouts were accounted for. Analysis found no differences between the pre-test outcome variables of those who dropped out and those who completed the intervention. Other differences were controlled for in the analysis.	No Missing data revealed by data screening and removed using list-wise deletion.

Were patients, health workers and study personnel 'blind' to treatment?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Partially	Yes
	Intervention and active control program and measures delivered via internet survey.	Entire survey (group allocation at both stages and measures) delivered via the internet.	Study author read intervention book to children and conducted interviews to gain the data for the measures.	Entire survey (including group allocation and measures) delivered via the internet.	Treatment facilitated by the study authors. Measures completed online by both conditions.	Measures were self-reported on iPad alongside exposure. Participants were not informed about the purpose of the study.
Were the groups similar at the start of the trial?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No There were significant differences between the intervention and control group on various factors including outcome scores and demographic factors such as socio-economic status, but these were accounted for in the analysis.	Yes
Aside from the experimental intervention, were the groups treated equally?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No The control group continued with school as usual and were not engaged in an active alternative workshop	Yes
How large was the treatment effect?	Women in both the intervention and active control group	Appearance satisfaction:	No effect sizes reported.	Women who viewed images of full-figured women experienced	Boys: There was no main effect of intervention group or	Non-significant coefficient for control vs

showed significant improvements, post-intervention in state levels of functionality satisfaction (large effect), and state body appreciation (moderate effect in control group, large effect for intervention group).

For both groups, no difference in state body appreciation was found following exposure to thin-ideal media.

However, functionality satisfaction decreased after viewing the idealised images (moderate effect)

Significant effect of time for viewing posed images and active images Large effect sizes for both. Increase post reflection task and reduction post idealised image exposure. No significant effect of time for women in control condition.

Functionality satisfaction: Significant effect of time for viewing posed images and active images Large effect sizes for both. Increase post reflection task and reduction post idealised image exposure. Significant effect of time for women in control condition, medium effect size increase after reflection task and no change post idealised image.

Social comparison: greater feelings of

There was a reduction in girls desire to be thin in the intervention group and control group, but this was not significant. There were no time x condition interaction effects.

There was significant interaction between time and condition on appearance satisfaction.

There was significant improvement in appearance satisfaction pre to post-test in girls in the intervention group. There was no effect of time in the control group.

There was significant interaction between time and condition on appearance satisfaction.

A significant interaction effect of

statistically significant increases in SBAS scores between pre and post-test (Small effect)

Women who viewed control images of nature experienced statistically significant increases in SBAS-2 scores between pre and post-test (small effect).

No significant effect of image pose condition was found.

time, nor a significant interaction effect, on positive embodiment scores. There was a significant improvement in positive embodiment scores post-intervention (small effect) that was not maintained at either follow-up time point.

Girls: There was a significant main effect of group but not of time nor a significant interaction effect. There was a significant improvement in positive embodiment in the intervention group, relative to the control group, which was maintained across both follow-up time points. The effect size was small between pre to post-test and increased to large between pre-test to 12month follow-up.

fitspiration: no post exposure different in body appreciation between the control condition and the fitspiration images.

Significant co-efficient for control vs self-compassion (large effect size). Women who viewed self-compassion images reported significantly greater state body appreciation than those who viewed the control images.

Significant co-efficient for fitspiration vs self-compassion and fitspiration (medium effect size). Viewing self-compassion images alongside fitspiration images resulted in significantly higher state body appreciation than just viewing fitspiration images.

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	satisfaction post idealised image was associated with downward appearance-based satisfaction. More upwards social comparison was predictive of less satisfaction with both appearance and functionality satisfaction post-idealised image.	time and condition was found in girls self-reported desire to look like television and pop stars. Significant reductions in self-reported desire to look like both television and pop stars was found in the intervention group at post-test and at follow-up. No significant differences in self-reported desire to look like both television and pop stars was found in the control group at post-test and at follow-up.			There was a main effect of no. of workshops attended for girls: more workshops produced a greater improvement in positive embodiment (small effect size) Boys needed to attend at least 3 workshops to benefit and girls at least 2.	
How precise was the estimate of the treatment effect?	Post-hoc power analysis reported sufficient power to detect small effects. Confidence intervals not reported	Post-hoc power analysis reported sufficient power to detect moderate effects. Confidence intervals not reported	Report acknowledged limits on statistical power: small sample and crude measures.	A priori power analysis to determine required sample size required to find medium effect sizes reported as 204 (below sample recruited).	A priori power analysis accounting for cluster randomisation and an intermediate expected effect size required a sample size of 1400. The sample size only exceeded this at the	Post-hoc power analysis reported sufficient power for detecting medium and large effect sizes.

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				Post-hoc power analysis using G*Power indicates study sufficiently powered for effect sizes found. `	first time point, pre-intervention. 95% confidence intervals reported	
Can the results be applied to the local population?	Can't tell Restricted generalisation based on use of a majority university student sample. Sample demographics reported but representativeness of local population not reported.	Can't tell Restricted generalisation based on use of a majority university student sample. Sample demographics reported but representativeness of local population not reported.	No Female private school sample not representative of population.	Partially Some limits to generalisation due to limited age range of sample and potential for qualitative differences between people who use the crowd-sourcing website used for the survey and the general population. Sample demographics appear representative of general population, but this is not directly compared or reported.	Yes Sample broadly representative of adolescent population (although this not directly reported)	Can't tell Restricted generalisation based on use of a university student sample. Sample demographics reported but representativeness of local population not reported.
Were all clinically important outcomes considered?	No No control group without an intervention program.	No No measures of trait positive body image. Although no control group for first group	No Qualitative accounts corroborated quantitative findings	No No measure of investment in appearance used	Partially Follow-up on outcomes at 3 and 12 months	No Validated measures of Positive Body Image with established reliability not used.

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Improving body image in an idealised media culture: Community solutions and positive body image interventions.

	No measurement of social comparison (shown in evidence-base to be a factor in process of media-impact on body image). No follow-up measures	allocation (reflection task). No follow-up measures	No follow-up measures No Positive Body Image measures which meet which concept criteria.	No state body image measures used No examination of internal motivations for decisions and ratings given No follow-up measures	Baseline correlations between outcomes analysed. Students engagement with workshop and perceived credibility of the facilitator not examined. Other measures of positive body image not examined.	Only one component of Positive Body Image measured. No follow-up measures.
Are the benefits worth the harms and costs?	Can't tell	Can't tell	Can't tell	Can't tell	Can't tell	Can't tell
	Adverse effects not discussed	Adverse effects not discussed	Adverse effects not discussed	Adverse effects not discussed	Adverse effects not discussed	Adverse effects not discussed
	Ethical approval process reported	Ethical approval process reported	Ethical approval process reported	Ethical approval process reported	Ethical approval process reported	Ethical approval process reported

Appendix B

Research Advert

Hello (*targeted group)*, I have a few questions to ask,

Do you regularly use this group or other online Body Positivity Communities?

Would you like to see increased awareness of Body Positive Ideas?

Would you like to contribute to research into Body Positivity?

Are you a woman aged over 18?

Do you live in the UK (especially the South East of England)?

If you answered yes to these questions, then I would really like to hear from you!

At the moment there is little research looking at the psychological impact of Body Positivity and the online communities where the ideas are promoted. I want to change this!

As part of my training as a Clinical Psychologist I am running a Doctoral research project and interviewing people like you about their experiences within online Body Positivity communities. This project will delve into what you are taking from the ideas and the community, and lay the foundations for this to be used in future psychological research and clinical practice.

I hope this sparks your interest!

If you are interested in taking part please contact me, Miranda Samuelson, at m.a.samuelson987@canterbury.ac.uk for further information.

RESEARCH INVITATION

What are the impacts
of online
Body Positivity?

Appendix C

Ethics Approval Letter

This has been removed from the electronic copy.

The Salomons Centre for Applied Psychology at Canterbury Christ Church University stores research data for 10 years in a locked filing cabinet in the main office. The office is in a building with 24 hour security. The custodian is Deborah Chadwick, a member of the administration staff. We store only anonymised data on a CD and may consist of transcribed interviews or numerical data from questionnaires. We do not store paper copies, audio or video files. We instruct students and staff to destroy audio and video recordings after transcription and final analysis unless otherwise stipulated in the ethics application.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Paul M. Camic, Ph.D.
Research Director

Appendix D

Sources of Support

Version no: 2
Date: 17.8.18

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Useful Contact Numbers and Sources of Support
If you are concerned or become concerned about your eating habits or mental health, in the first instance you should contact your GP. The following alternative sources of support might also be useful:

Beat eating disorders UK charity providing support to anyone affected by eating disorders or difficulties with food, weight and body image.	https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/ Helplines, open 365 days a year 3pm-10pm Adults: 0808 8010 677 Students: 0808 801 0811 Youth: 0808 801 0711 Email support is available through their website.
Eating disorders support A charity organisation providing help and support to anyone affected by an eating problem such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa or binge eating disorder. It also provides help for those who are caring for or supporting someone with an eating disorder.	http://www.eatingdisorderssupport.co.uk/ Helpline: 01494 793223 Support by Email: support@eatingdisorderssupport.co.uk
SEED Eating disorder support service. Voluntary organisation made up of people with first-hand experiences of eating disorders, offering support and services to people with Eating Disorders to Hull and East Riding, with a nationally available helpline	http://www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk/ Helpline: 01482 718130
Overeaters Anonymous Support group for people struggling with compulsive eating.	https://www.oagb.org.uk/ Telephone for enquiries: 07798 587802 Email: general@oagb.org.uk
British Nutrition Foundation Charity offering impartial interpretation and dissemination of nutrition science knowledge and research.	https://www.nutrition.org.uk/ Telephone: 020 7557 7930 Email: postbox@nutrition.org.uk
Mind U.K. charity providing support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem.	https://www.mind.org.uk/ Infoline: 03001233393 Email: info@mind.org.uk Text: 86463
Supportline Confidential telephone, email and postal support for anyone requiring emotional support.	http://www.supportline.org.uk/ Telephone: 01708 765200 Email: info@supportline.org.uk
Samaritans Charity offering confidential support and a space to talk for anyone experiencing distress.	https://www.samaritans.org/ Telephone: 116 123. Email: jo@samaritans.org

Appendix E

Information Sheet

Version no: 5
Date: 16.07.19

Canterbury
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University

Information about the research

Exploring the personal meanings of membership of online "Body Positivity" communities for women in the U.K.

Hello. My name is Miranda Samuelson and I am a trainee clinical psychologist at Canterbury Christ Church University. I would like to invite you to take part in a Doctoral research study looking at people's experiences of engaging with online Body Positivity Communities. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you.

Talk to others about the study if you wish. Please read part 1 first for information about the purpose of the study and what will happen if you take part. Part 2 then gives further details for those who decide they would like to take part.

Part 1

What is the purpose of the study?
Recently, there has been a lot of research focused on links between social media use and ~~(miranda.samuelson5@gmail.com) is signed in~~ media is an everyday part of life for many people, so it is worth researching whether social media can have different impacts on body image, beyond merely causing problems.

Body Positivity communities attempt to promote messages of self-acceptance, self-love and rejecting diet culture, which might help to undo some of the negative outcomes found in other studies. However, there is little research in this area, and we do not yet know what impacts these communities are having. This study aims to provide a starting point for understanding the impacts of these communities. It will do this by looking at the experiences of women who are active and engaged members of online Body Positivity communities, and exploring how they have made sense of these experiences and the impact of this in their lives.

Why have I been invited?
You have been invited because I would like to interview between 8 -10 women, who are members of Facebook groups, engage with Instagram posts or are part of other online communities, which promote Body Positivity, about their experiences in the group and the impact of those experiences.

Do I have to take part?
Taking part in the study is entirely voluntary.
If you agree to take part, I will ask you to sign a consent form. You will be given a copy of that consent form to keep. You are free to withdraw at any time, including during and after the interview, without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you would like to take part in the study, then we will arrange a time to for me to conduct an informal interview with you, for about an hour, about your experiences in Body Positivity online communities. We will cover the following topics:
- A bit about yourself
- The concept of Body Positivity
- Your experiences in online Body Positivity communities
- Your personal journey with these communities
- The personal impact of these communities for you

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If you live in the South East of England and can easily travel then we will conduct the interview in person, in a quiet, private room either at the Salomons Centre for Applied Psychology in Tunbridge Wells, or at another convenient public location. If you live outside of this area, or are unable to travel, then we can conduct the interview over video-call.

I will be audio recording the interviews and will ask you to complete a demographic questionnaire about the context of your life, with questions about your age, gender, ethnic origin and other factors. All files will be encrypted and stored securely. Your name will not be included with your data and it will be labelled with a participant ID number to preserve anonymity (see Part 2 for further details).

I will also ask you to leave an email address. This is for several purposes, which you will be able to opt into:
- Receiving a copy of your transcribed interview to check for accuracy
- Receiving updates about the findings from the data
- Receiving a short report summarising the findings/or published research paper.

Expenses and payments
Travel expenses of up to £10 will be reimbursed. This will still be paid even if you chose to withdraw from the study during the interview.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
I don't expect this study to cause you harm, however it is possible that some of the questions might raise difficult or upsetting issues for you.

You do not have to answer the questions asked of you, so you are free to say if you would rather not answer a particular question. If a sensitive or personal topic comes up unexpectedly, or I can see you are getting upset, I will check-in with you about whether you are happy to continue or need a break. This will not affect your participation in the study.

Everyone taking part in the study will have a full debrief after the interview and be given the contact details of sources of support. Should you experience harm or distress as a result of the interview in the few weeks following it, you may contact the researcher's using the contact details on this form.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
I cannot promise that taking part in this study will benefit you personally, but you will be contributing to raising awareness of Body Positive ideas in psychological research and clinical practice. Knowing about the impact of the communities and how this is occurring has the potential to inform clinical practice and public health work into promoting positive body image.

What if there is a problem?
If you have any concerns or complaints about the way you are treated during the study then these will be addressed. Detailed information on this is given in Part 2.

Will information from or about me from taking part in the study be kept confidential?
We will follow ethical and legal practice guidelines and your data will be kept confidential. There are some exceptional circumstances of risks to safety where information about you would need to be shared with others. Further details are included in Part 2.

This completes Part 1.

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If the information in Part 1 has interested you and you are considering participation, please read the additional information in Part 2 before making any decision.

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Part 2

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You are free to end your interview at any time. If you chose to end early, you may choose to include your interview until that point in the study, or you can chose to withdraw from the study completely. If you choose to withdraw I will delete your audio-recording and securely dispose of your questionnaire.

After the interview you are still free to withdraw from the study, at any time, until September 2019. You can do this by emailing me, Miranda Samuelson, at m.a.samuelson987@canterbury.ac.uk saying that you would like to withdraw. I will then delete your data and it will not be analysed or included in the published findings.

Complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of this study, in the first instance please speak to me and I will do my best to address you concerns. I can be contacted either by email at m.a.samuelson987@canterbury.ac.uk or by leaving a message on the following 24-hour voicemail phone number 01227 927070. Please stated that the message is for Miranda Samuelson and leave a contact number and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

If you remain unhappy you are entitled to make a formal complaint. This can be done by contacting Dr Fergal Jones, Research Director, Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology, Canterbury Christ Church University fergal.jones@canterbury.ac.uk, tel: 01227 927114.

Will information from or about me from taking part in the study be kept confidential?

As a participant in this study you have a right to confidentiality. All ethical and legal steps will be taken to provide this.

Your anonymity will be ensured by coding all of your interview and demographic data with a randomly generated participant ID number. Your consent form containing your name will be stored separately from the rest of your data, in a locked cabinet at the Salomons Centre for Applied Psychology Admin office.

You will also be given a pseudonym for use during data analysis and when using direct quotes in the thesis or publication of the research. Quotes that might reveal your identity and break your confidentiality will not be used in the thesis or publication of the research.

You have the right to check the accuracy of data held about you and correct any errors. You will be offered the chance to leave an email address to opt in to receiving a copy of your interview transcript to check for errors. Your email address will be linked to your transcript using your participant ID number. Only members of the research team, Miranda Samuelson as Primary Researcher and Prof Tony Lavender as Lead Supervisor, will be able to view your raw transcript.

The only circumstance where I would directly need to break confidentiality and share your information with a third party would be if, as a result of something you told me, I were to become concerned about your safety or the safety of someone else. I would always inform you before doing this.

Recordings of interviews will be transferred from the Dictaphone to encrypted USB drive following the interview. They will only be listened to by the research team and will be destroyed after about 1 – 1 ½ years, once I have successfully completed the research and been awarded the Doctorate by university. The transcripts will be encrypted and stored on a password protected computer. Your data will be stored for 10 years, or 5 years following publication of the study if that is longer, before being securely destroyed.

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What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results of this study are intended for publication in an academic journal. No identifiable information about you will be included in the published results, although anonymised quotes from your interview may be included.

Additionally, I will ask you to provide an email address if you would like to be informed of the results once the study is written up.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is being funded and overseen by Canterbury Christ Church University.

Who has reviewed the study?
All research in the NHS is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by The Salomons Ethics Panel, Salomons Centre for Applied Psychology, Canterbury Christ Church University.

Further information and contact details
If you would like to speak to me and find out more about the study of have questions about it answered please email me at m.a.samuelson987@canterbury.ac.uk. Alternatively you can leave a message for me on a 24-hour voicemail phone line at 01227 927070. Please say that the message is for Miranda Samuelson and leave a contact number so that I can get back to you.

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Appendix F

Consent Form

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CONSENT FORM

Exploring the personal meanings of membership of online "Body Positivity"
communities for women in the U.K.
Name of Researcher: Miranda Samuelson

Please initial box:

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 16.07.19 (version 5) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time until September 2019, without giving any reason.

3. I agree that an audio recording may be taken of the interview. I understand that this recording will be deleted once a verbatim written record is accurately noted.

4. I understand that relevant sections of my recorded interview may be looked at by the lead supervisor, Professor Tony Lavender in addition to the primary research Miranda Samuelson. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.

5. I agree that anonymous quotes from my interview may be used in published reports of the study findings.

6. I agree to be contacted once the interview is complete, to be offered the chance to review the transcript for accuracy, and to review and amend any sensitive quotes from my interview which are intended for publication.

7. I understand that my data will remain confidential. Some quotes from my interview may be used in the thesis or publication of the research but these will not contain any identifiable information.

8. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant_____

Date_____

Signature _____

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University

Name of Person taking consent: _____

Date_____

Signature _____

2

Appendix G

Interview Schedule

Introduction

To cover:

- Personal introduction
- Confidentiality
- Brief explanation of the study
- Questions
- Consent forms

- Collection of demographic information. To include: age, gender identification, ethnicity, marital status, educational level, socio-economic background, history of ED

Background and context

Can you start by telling me a bit about yourself?

> Prompts: age, ethnicity, what you do, who you live with, social life, interests, family? How do you feel about yourself/how might you describe your relationship with yourself?

Describing the concept of "body positivity"

What does 'Body Positivity' mean to you?

> Prompts: What are the key themes and ideas? Are there any goals? Which ideas are more important to you? Do any ideas seem less important?

Describing experiences in Body Positivity Online Communities

Can you tell me how you started becoming involved with (or aware of) online body positivity?

> Prompts: How long ago was it? What do you think brought this about? How did you feel about the communities at the time? How did you feel about the ideas being shared?

Can you tell me what place online body positivity communities have in your life at the moment?

> Prompts: How do you engage with them? How do you use the communities? What type of content are you engaging with? (e.g. comments, liking, reading, sharing, chats with group members, which groups? Which people?)
> What happens when you do? How do you feel when you engage with them?

Reflection on personal engagement with communities

Have you changed the way you engage with the online communities over time?

> Prompts: In what ways? When have you engaged and used the communities more? When have you used them less? What was the impact of this?

Have you any past experiences which might have influenced your relationship with online body positivity communities?

> Prompts: use of the internet growing up, body image, bullying, mental health, prejudice,

Reflection on the impact of engagement

Would you say that engaging with these communities has impacted on your life? If so, how?

       Prompts: Have you noticed any positive impacts? Have you noticed any negative impacts? Have you experienced a change in how you feel about yourself/others? Do you see yourself differently now? In what ways?

       If there has been any change or impact has this fluctuated? How did any changes come about, e.g. slowly or suddenly?

Has engaging with the communities had any impact on your relationships with other people?

       Prompts: Have you built relationships within the community? If so, how do you experience these relationships, what is good, bad and what has changed over time? Have you seen any change in your relationships with other family and friends, outside of the communities?

       If there has been any change or impact has this fluctuated? How did any changes come about, e.g. slowly or suddenly?

If there has been change or impact, what has allowed this to happen?

       Prompts: Has the way you think about yourself or other people changed? If so, why and what might have prompted the change? Do you do anything differently now? If so, why and what might have prompted the change?

       If there has been any change or impact has this fluctuated? How did any changes come about, e.g. slowly or suddenly?

How do you see yourself in the future?

       Prompts: What, if anything are you taking forward from engaging with these communities? What would it be like to not have the communities? How do you see your engagement with the communities and ideas continuing/changing in the future?

Conclusion

To cover:

- Full debrief about research project
- Choose pseudonym
- Provision of contact details and telephone numbers for sources of support
- Questions
- Discussions of concerns about risk and safety with participant, if necessary.
- Information about dissemination strategy

Appendix H

Examples of Reflective Memos

Memos made as comments alongside the word documents of the interview transcripts and in relation to specific parts of the transcripts.

Memo 1

This comment is flagging my beliefs about the poor diagnostic criteria of anorexia, I suspect she wouldn't have met diagnostic criteria because she started out overweight and her engagement in restrictive eating may not have brought her down to the weight required for diagnostic criteria to be met.

Memo 2

Interpretation here informed by my knowledge that a lot of fat people describe being discriminated against by doctors and not offered appropriate treatment which their issues being blamed on their weight and other causes and cures not sought.

Memo 3

This strikes me as a really powerful impact, humans are fundamentally social beings so I think anything that allows for more social connection will be hugely positive.

Memo 4

I get the sense there is something significant unsaid here about why, perhaps it was something she didn't want to share or felt was not relevant to the research interview but it sounds significant to her and uncomfortable to talk about.

Memo 5

Is this her? Do I know that was how she related to others? Am I over-identifiying? Is this actually me projecting?

Memo 6

Here it feels like damned if she does, damned if she doesn't – I have the sense that if she had not worked full time she would have criticised herself for not doing enough for herself by returning to a job she loves.

Appendix I

Sub-theme Diagrams for Each Participant

Danielle

Hazel

Juliette

Lucy

Mary

Phoebe

Improving body image in an idealised media culture: Community solutions and positive body image interventions.

Ruth

Improving body image in an idealised media culture: Community solutions and positive body image interventions.

I'd always thought that my, I had a horrible body

always been told she was too big and obese — Child — I was first told that I was overweight, probably when I was 7

told by doctors that I was too heavy for so long,

teased about my weight as a kid

paradoxically prevented her from gaining more weight

few actions to change her weight as a child — Child — intention to lose weight when older

problem but not a priority

she refused to join diet group

fat people are bad

observations about fatness in the world

my [fat] Dad was kind of a narcissist

fatness unacceptable and embarassing in her niche of society

fat people should be trying not to be fat

society is shit to fat people

media messages about fatness — Child — dehumanising

fat people are horrible and fat people are ruining society

fat people not celebrated

fatness is your fault

resolve to exist in a fat body — Child — i almost got killed in a car accident aged 19

i just dont have it in me to like, to just pretend to be on a diet to like make people think that i'm being good or something.

sought out other people discussing this experience online

i've never been on a diet

A lot of people in the fat acceptance movement were really, were really snotty about it,

body positivity is the populist version of fat acceptance

first saw term used in the 2000s

frothy - lacks substance

I thought that it would probably lighten a lot of people's burden

personally finding parts of your body to like

recent mainstream representation of fat bodies has been good

whatever your body happens to look like, if your positive about it you're going to appreciate it

there is the idea out there that um Body Positivity is for people that are not obese, or over- or maybe even not overweight my God

logical process of gathering information

loved that fat person stereotypes didn't apply to her

fat acceptance did allow me to be more positive about my body

conditional body positivity

looking good

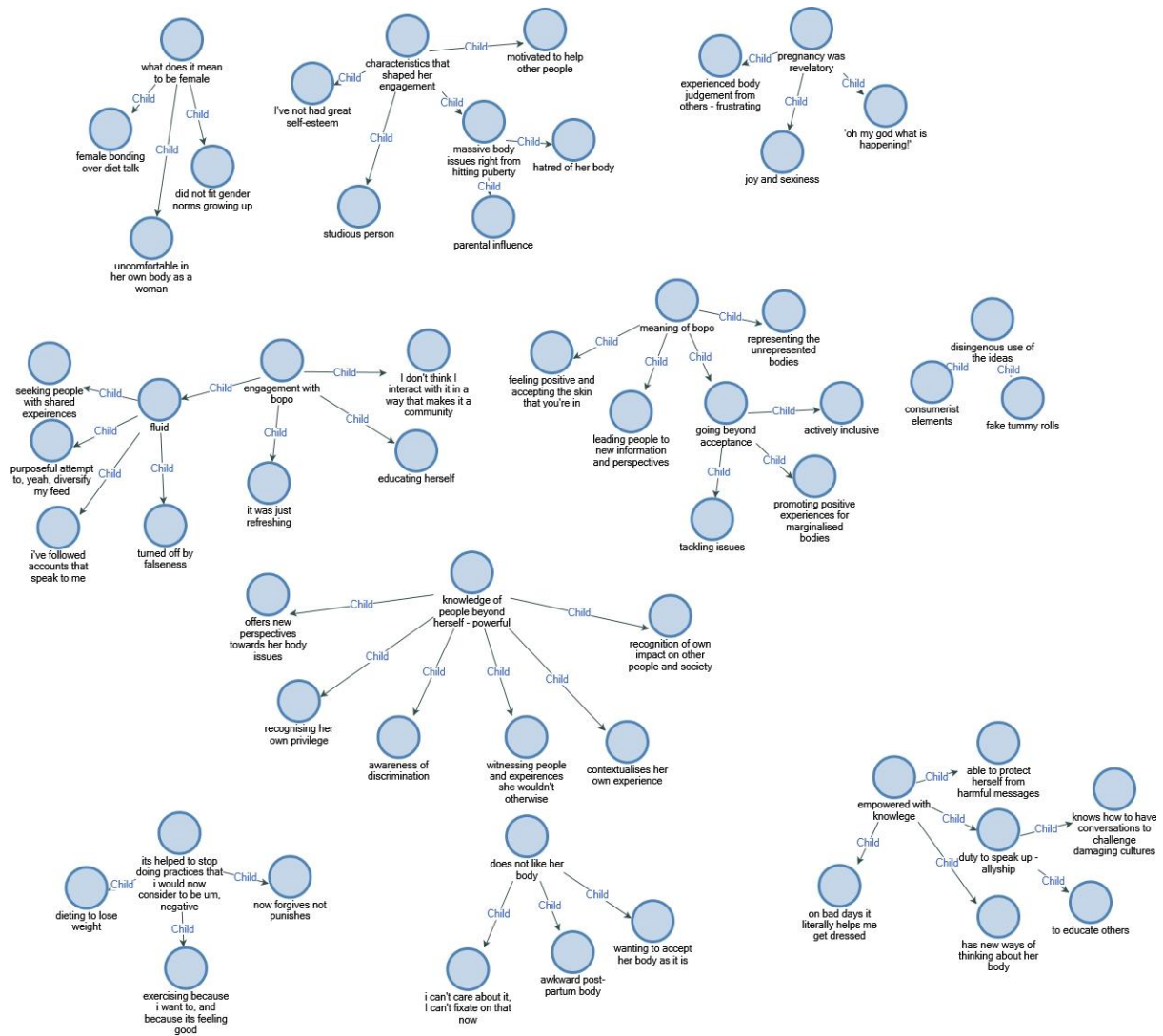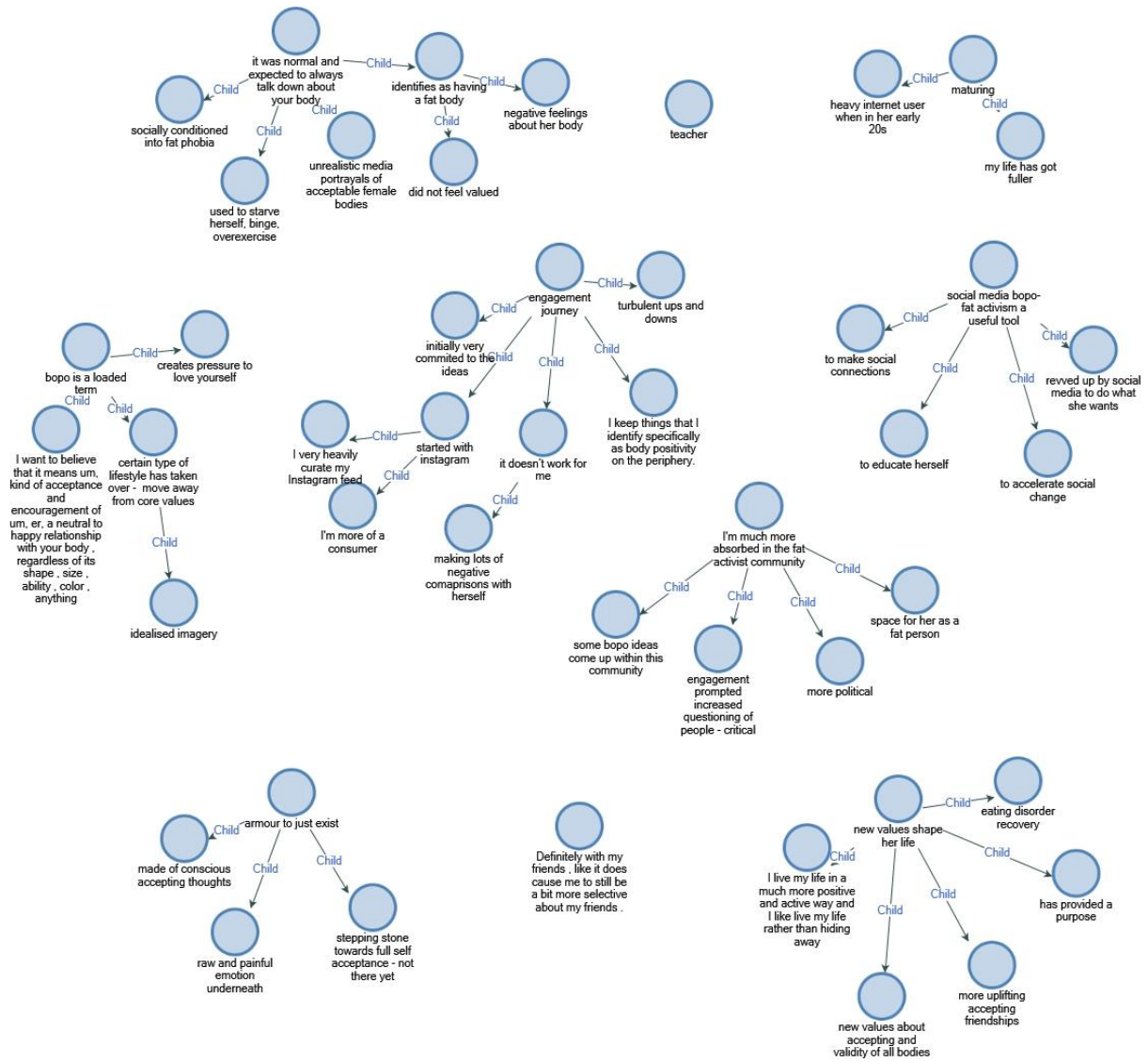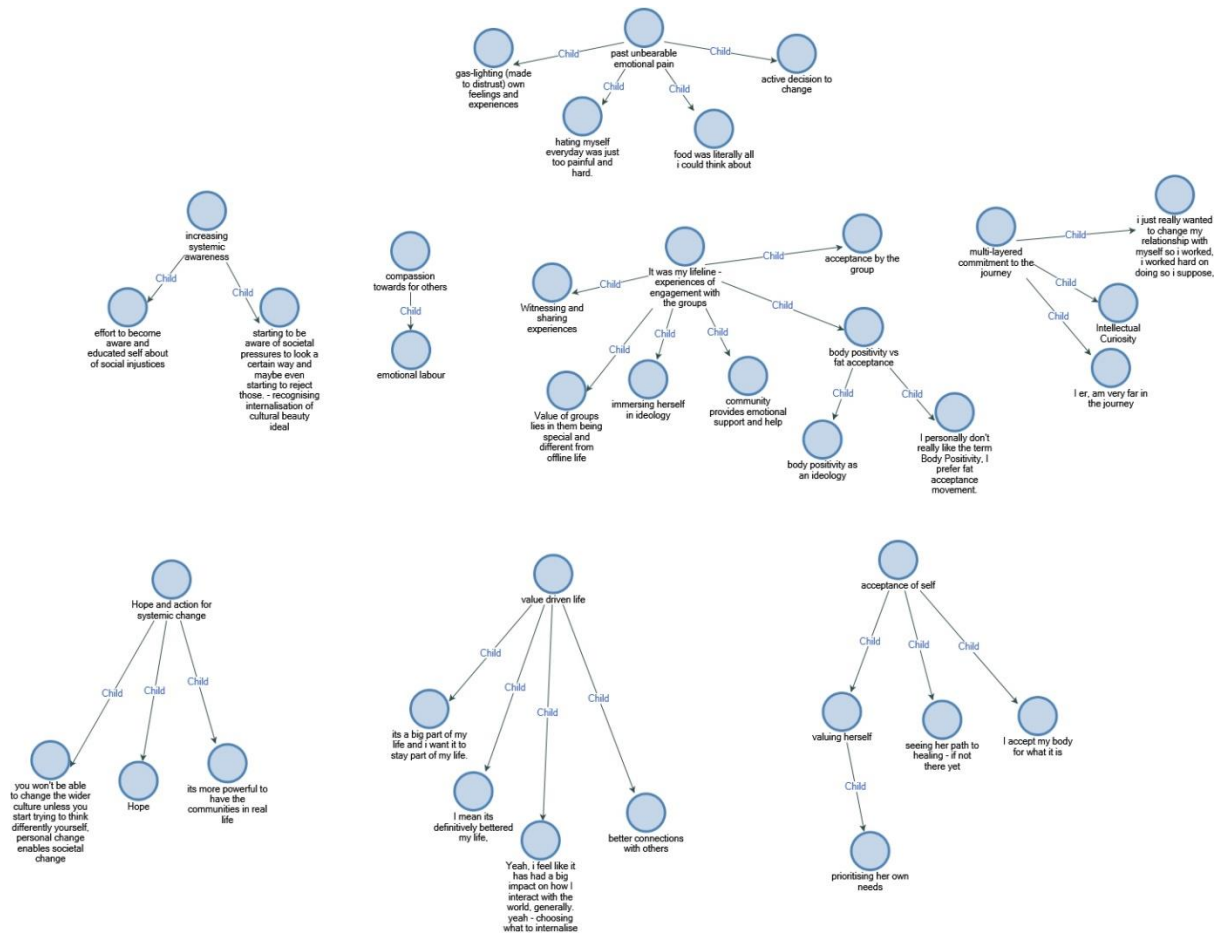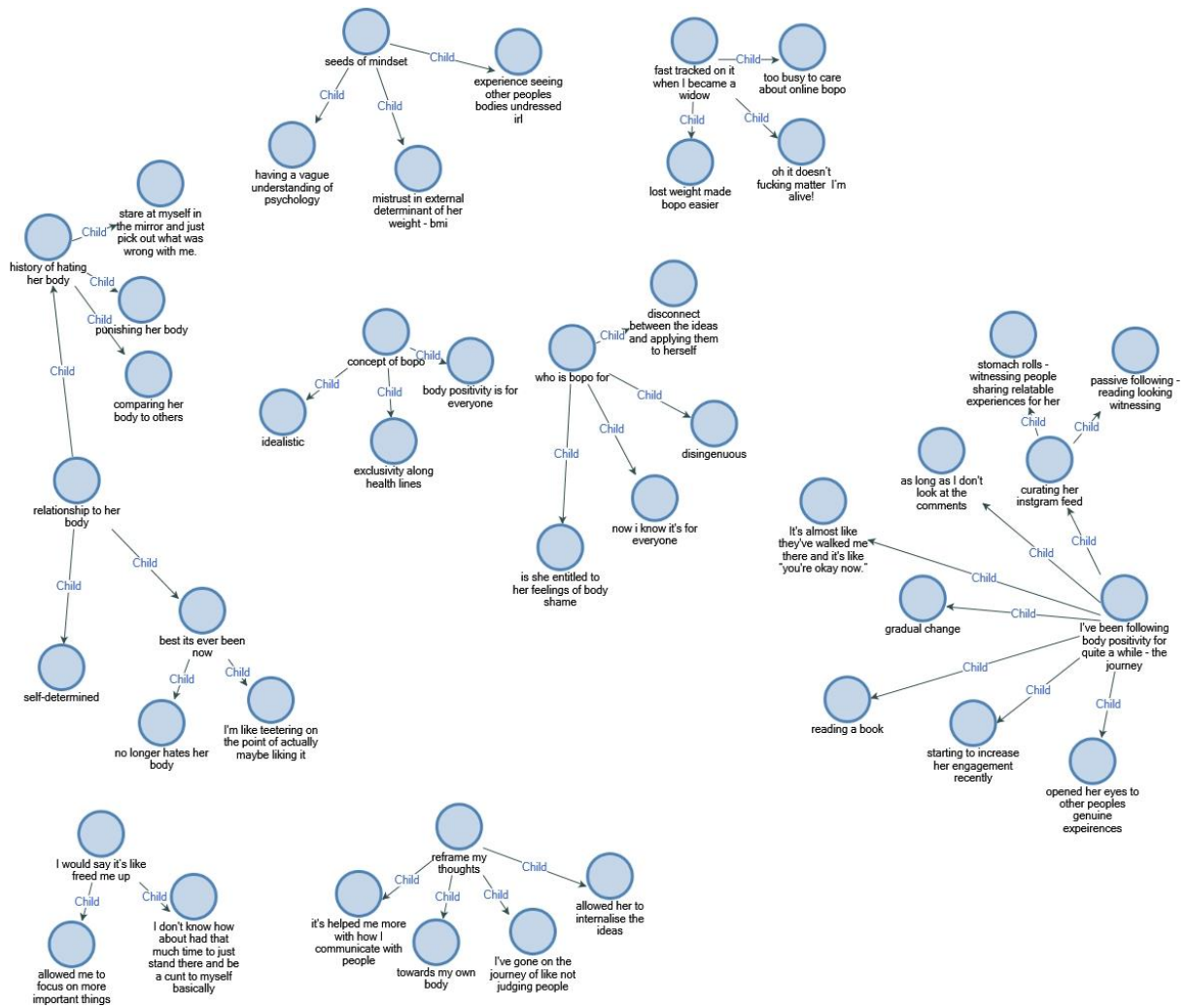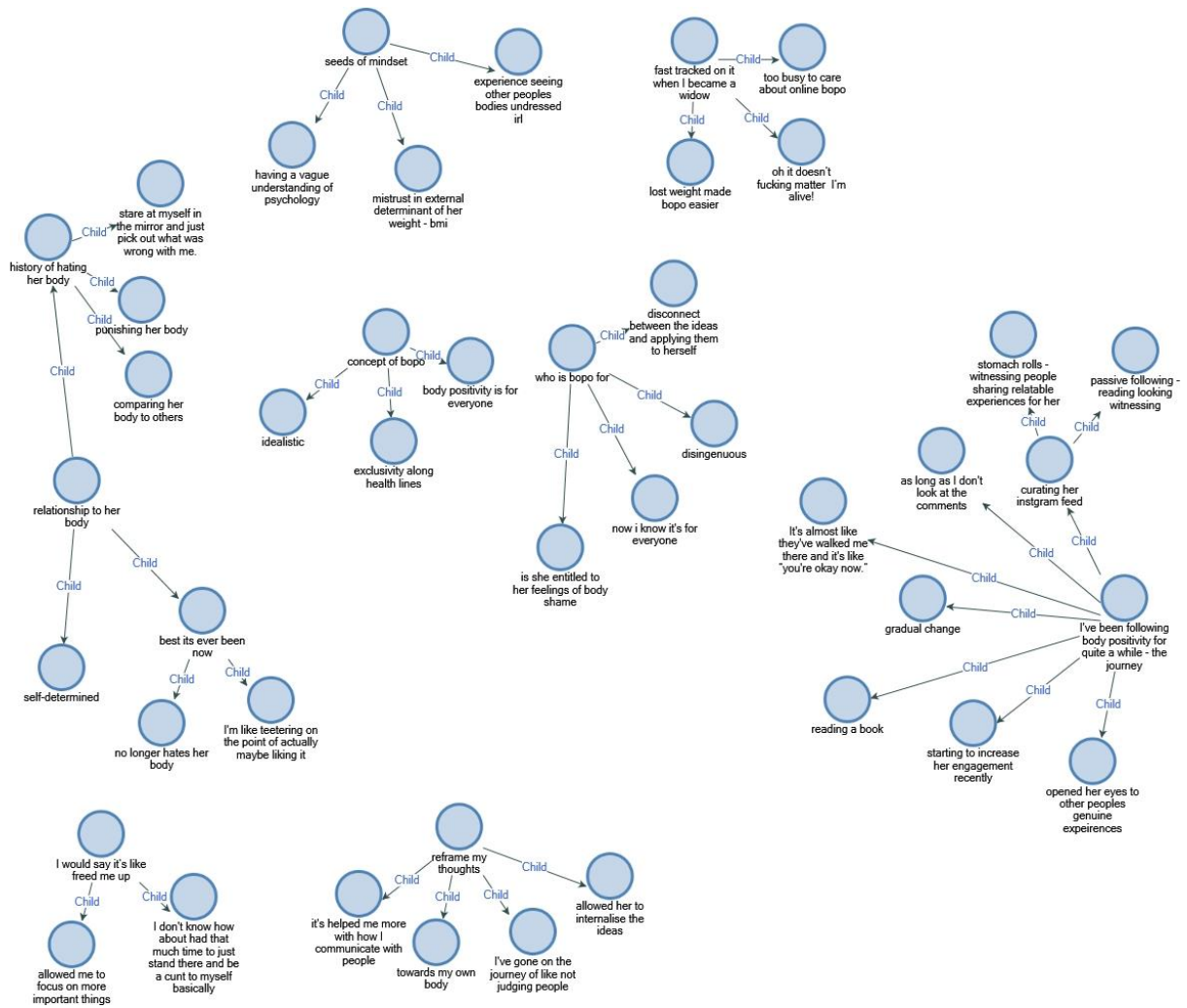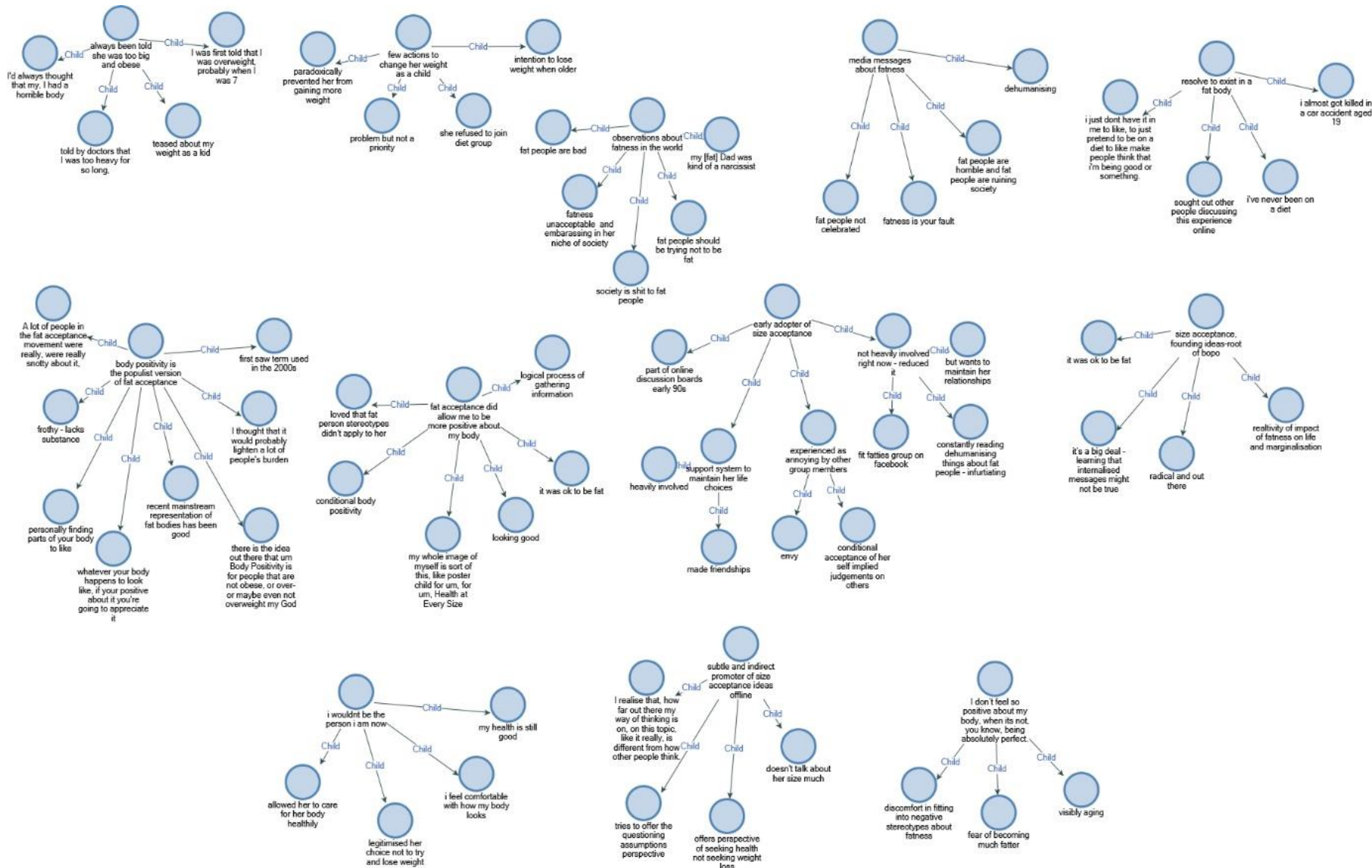it was ok to be fat

my whole image of myself is sort of this, like poster child for um, for um, Health at Every Size

early adopter of size acceptance

part of online discussion boards early 90s

not heavily involved right now - reduced it

but wants to maintain her relationships

support system to maintain her life choices

heavily involved

experienced as annoying by other group members

fit fatties group on facebook

constantly reading dehumanising things about fat people - infuriating

made friendships

envy

conditional acceptance of her self implied judgements on others

size acceptance, founding ideas-root of bopo

it was ok to be fat

realtivity of impact of fatness on life and marginalisation

it's a big deal - learning that internalised messages might not be true

radical and out there

i wouldnt be the person i am now — Child — my health is still good

allowed her to care for her body healthily

legitimised her choice not to try and lose weight

i feel comfortable with how my body looks

subtle and indirect promoter of size acceptance ideas offline

I realise that, how far out there my way of thinking is on, on this topic, like it really, is different from how other people think.

doesn't talk about her size much

tries to offer the questioning assumptions perspective

offers perspective of seeking health not seeking weight loss

I don't feel so positive about my body, when its not, you know, being absolutely perfect.

discomfort in fitting into negative stereotypes about fatness

fear of becoming much fatter

visibly aging

Sadie

Appendix J

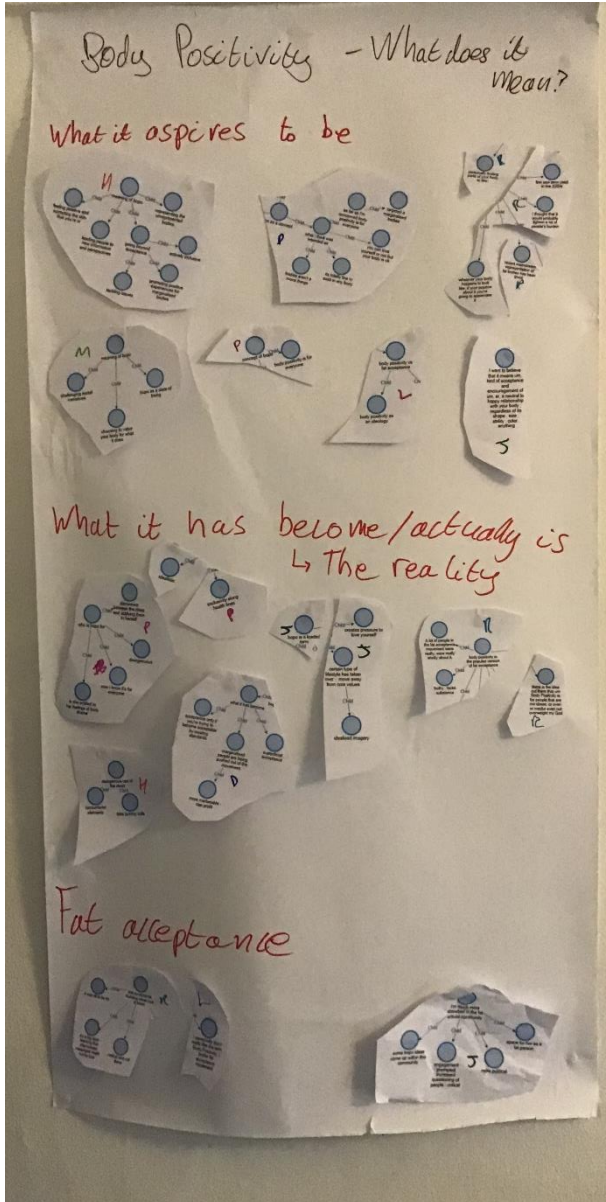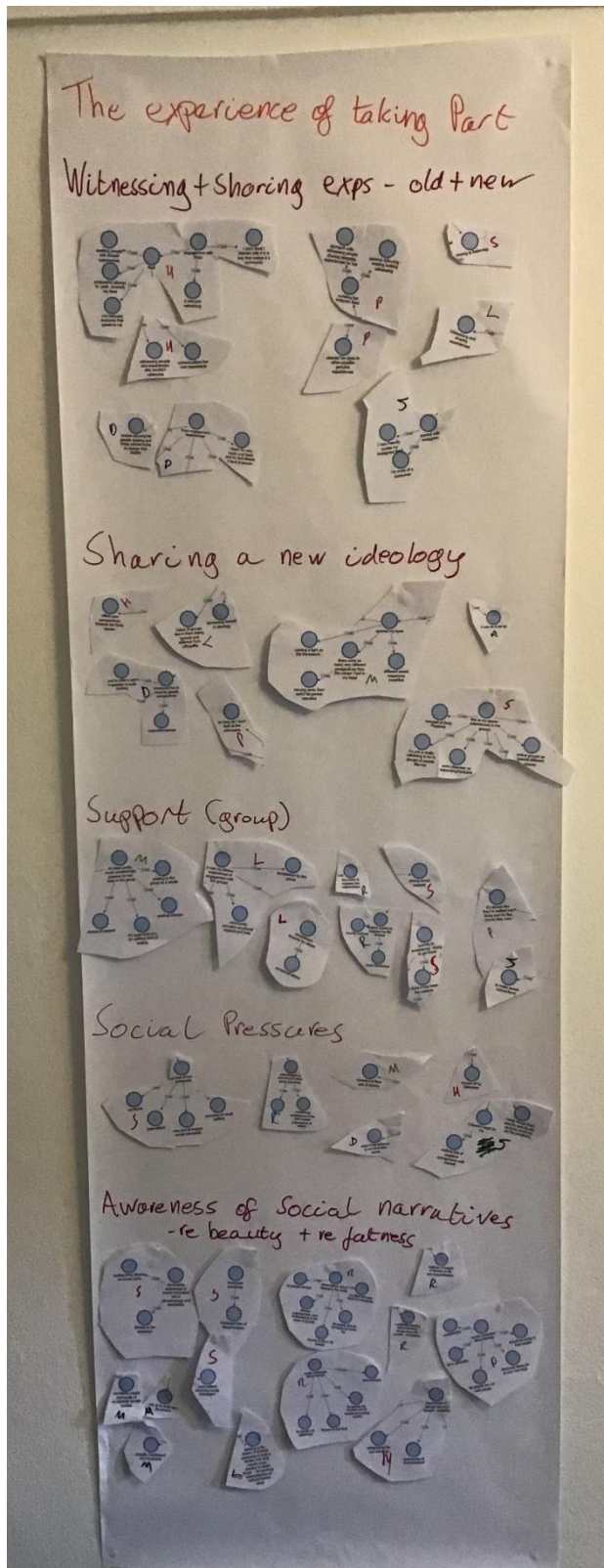## Hand-sorting of Overall Theme Groupings

Relationship to Self + Body

Historical Body Shame + Pain

Motivation to work on it

New Ways of thinking

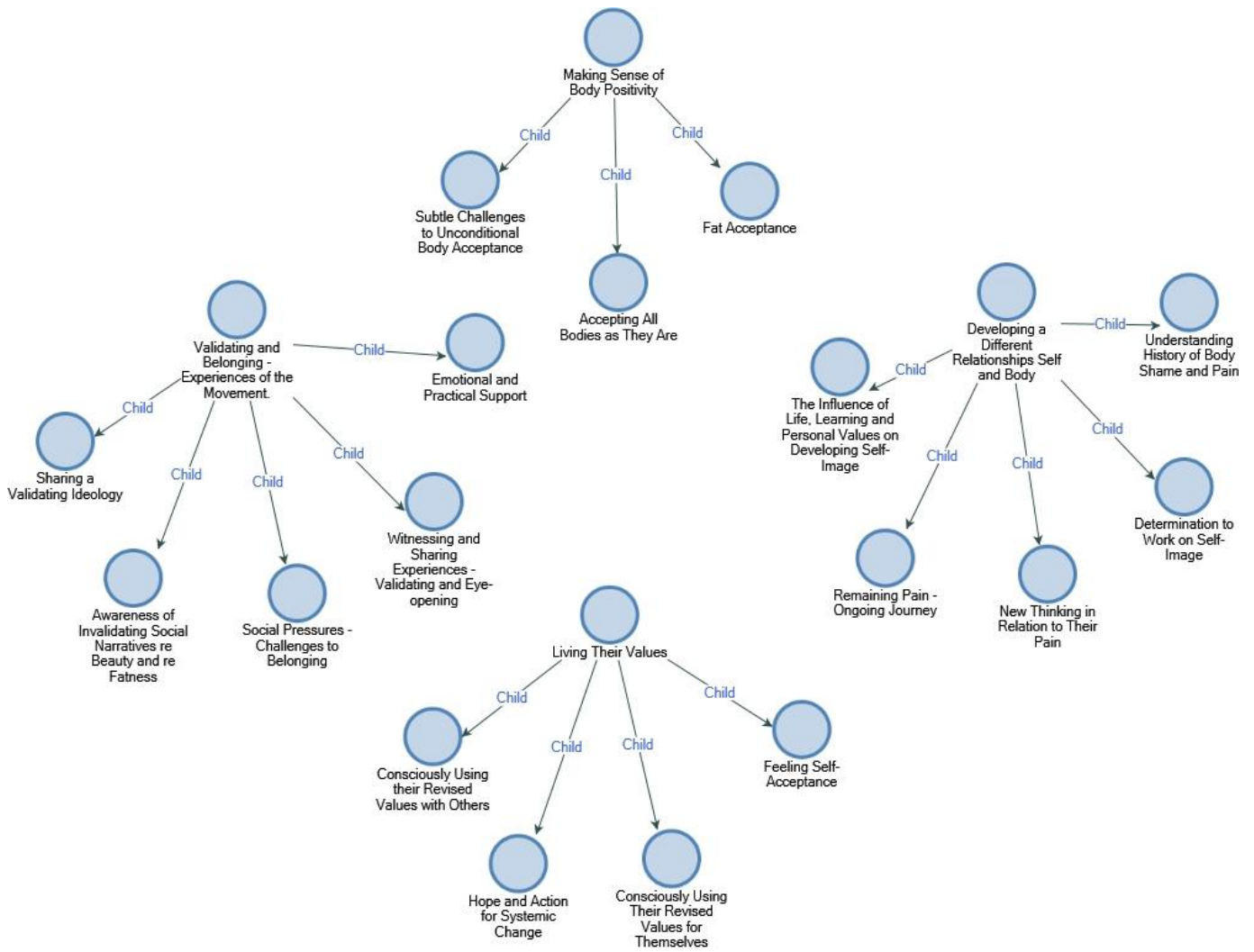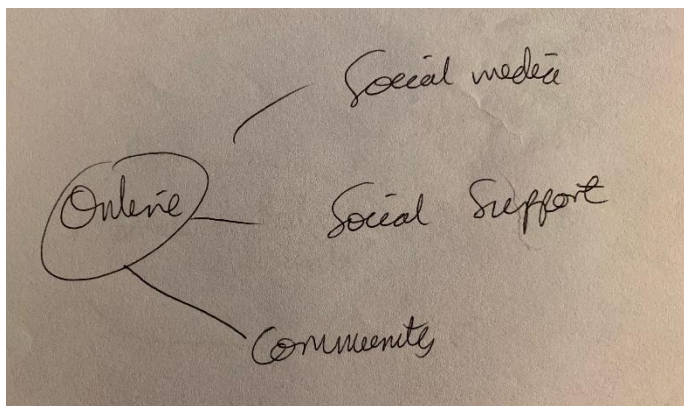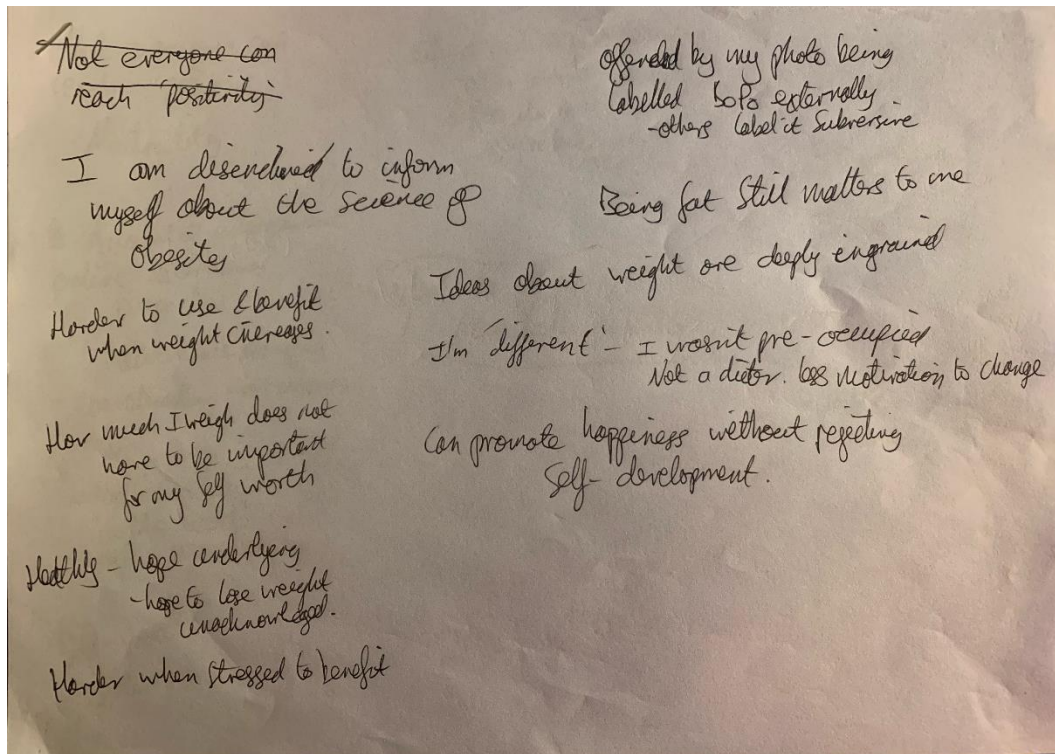Old emotions (pain) remain — still a way to go

Complex inter-related factors

Appendix K

Final Superordinate and sub-theme Diagram

Appendix L

Example Bracketing Mind-Maps

Not everyone can reach 'positivity'
- Neutrality

Amount of engagement online determines impact
- Maintenance/managing
- Counteracting other messages.
↓
Embodied idea
'do the work'
makes the change

Self-worth
Assertiveness

Others get a community
- other people use BoPo differently to me
↳ probably not the case.

(What do people get from Body Positivity?)

No longer preoccupied with weight

It's protective

Enlightenment

Sometimes feel crap

You are not the problem - you don't necessarily need to change

25 mins

Online Communities

reject diet culture

MH
Self-care

body function over aesthetics

counter unrealistic ideas

uniqueness of body

Safe spaces to share

Key points in a journal

Stories & images

qual or quant?

what helps?
↳ range of interpretations?
Consequences?
↗
Origin/ideology?

DoPo

positive body image

bodies protective outlook

full life

empowering

Self-acceptance

compassionate acceptance of body

build self-esteem

Self image — inclusive all shapes, sizes, disabilities

Relationships between self + body image?
what shapes body image
↳ sense of self?

Normative shaping

what do I want to find out from the literature?

Community vs individual?

Look at literature - in relation to evidence
- support for theory
↳ qualitative.

Acceptance of body regardless of aesthetics

Looking after Self - physical + mental

I foreground the fat, overlook the other physical body things people are shamed for

Good
↓
'The Truth' (indoctrinated)

Reject Societal notions of aesthetics / diet culture

What is Body Positivity?

Being a human, worthy of love & respect

Less important

Health foregrounded in discussion

Self confidence/acceptance Seperate from Health

Fulfilling / Injestice

Appendix M

Abridged Research Diary

17/3/19

      Two days after posting my research advert I have found out that I have been removed from the Facebook group which I am trying to recruit from. I am feeling very disheartened and quite upset. I have back-up groups to recruit from but I had chosen the first group specifically because it was very closely aligned to the ideas I am investigating and was previously an online book club so the members are likely to have a good level of engagement with the ideas.

      In trying to rectify this I have been sending messages to the moderators of the group explaining a bit more about the purpose of the research and asking to be allowed to continue to recruit. Apart from it feeling upsetting that I need to do this, I am finding it very difficult to do because I am trying to balance being persuasive about how the research aligns with the groups values and might be beneficial, without undermining the neutral stance of the research of being open to hearing other's experiences. I feels like having to commit to my own Body Positive values coming out in the research to be persuasive, which is not the open, interpretative stance I would like to take.

      Despite this, I am hopeful that the moderators will understand my intentions for the research and will let me post my research advert.

25/3/19

      After several days of emailing back and forth with the Facebook group moderators I have been told that they definitely will not allow me to continue seeking participants.

      I am feeling very hurt, angry and fearful (catastrophising) that this means I will not be able to recruit any participants. I am hurt because I feel like I have been rejected from a group that I was previously part of for personal reasons as well as for the research and I am frustrated that my respect and consideration for the group in putting together the research has not been recognised. I am also feeling angry that the group moderators told me they really liked the sound of research and thanked me for doing it, but won't let me do it with their group.

      It feels as though this is something I should have anticipated, and I am questioning whether I took the right approach. I think perhaps I should have gone beyond the people in the groups that I did contact, and it seems obvious to me now that I should have contacted the group moderators to discuss the research and seek permission to recruit, but this was not something that occurred to me before.

      I have also become aware of how close I am to project and therefore how difficult it is to see it from an outsider's perspective. I am aware that the research is not intended to be harmful or an experiment; my research design is very open and I want my participants to share their experiences with me in a way that is not dis-similar to the purpose of the groups of sharing experiences and discussing ideas. It feels very clear to me that I am offering an invitation to a safe space, however I don't know if this is clear from the perspective of the people I want to recruit. In particular I am questioning the tone of my research advert, which

does not highlight the thoughtfulness which has gone into the research nor does it highlight the 'credibility' of the project (in a way that might differentiate it from someone doing a questionnaire to support an essay). I focussed very hard on making sure the advert was open and neutral because I didn't want to sway people into feeling they can only share positive experiences, but in keeping it as simple as I did, I think I missed making it appealing to the people I want to recruit.

I also think I have learned that the activism side of the groups, which I was hoping would spur people on to volunteer for the research, may not be as strong as the 'safe space' side. I was told that my recruitment advert was experienced as intrusive by some people in the group and this was again not something I had anticipated, coming from the perspective I have that I am merely offering an invitation to share experiences, that people are free to ignore.

I have resolved to do the following things: contact the moderators of my back up recruitment groups before posting the research advert, and re-think the tone of my advert so that, whilst remaining neutral it conveys some of thoughtfulness which has gone into the planning of this research.

Luckily, I did have one person express interest in the research before the advert was removed, and I have arranged my first interview for tomorrow. I am trying to focus on this and at least park my frustrations about the project enough to make sure that I can go into this interview fully prepared and open to hearing this person's experiences.

28/3/19

I completed my first research interview today, after a bit of confusion about the timing it was finally arranged. I feel much more positive about the whole project now this first milestone is over and I really enjoyed doing the interview. It was good to see the questions I have spent so long working on for the interview land with a person and make sense and have them be able to articulate their opinions and experiences. It felt very satisfying and natural to be doing the interview and I felt confident in my inter-personal skills.

Reflecting on how I conducted the interview, I was constantly surprised by the new things being brought up by asking for more detail or rephrasing questions I was worried I might have already asked! This, and asking for examples, is something I intend to do more of in future interviews.

I was also very aware that my enthusiasm for the topic and my want to share in discussions of the ideas was very strong and I had to keep it at bay. I one point I addressed this, saying that there were lots of interesting things I wanted to jump in on and discuss but I couldn't as the interview needed to remain open and neutral. I don't think this had a detrimental effect, particularly as my belief in the ideas didn't prevent us discussing the limitations and difficulties alongside the positives, but I also think this is something that happened because it was my first interview and I haven't practiced having these conversations much yet, and I don't think I want to take the same approach again. I think in future I will keep my awareness of these impulses to myself and maybe note them down during the interview to refer back to during my analysis.

A few times the participant asked me if I had heard of certain people or things and I often agreed and said yes. Part way through I realised that this was not enough and I should also her for clarification of what she understood these people to be and the ideas they were

promoting, so I added in questions about this and will be more aware of it in future interviews.

Reflection later on: I also could have used more why and how questions so will focus on doing this in future interviews!

25/4/19

I struggling to find a group to agree to post my research advert and this is very frustrating, although the edge of this has come off slightly as I have started to consider contingency plans, such as using other social media sites. My feelings towards the facebook groups that have not agreed to post the advert are mostly anger and a sense of rejection, which is influencing my outlook towards the project and the ideas I am examining. For me the ideas are so bound up in these groups that my faith in the utility of body positivity as something that is worth exploring is starting to feel less strong, and I am questioning whether I am doing a worthwhile project. Perhaps listening back to my first interview (which I am aware I need to do anyway) and this might re-ignite my passion, as I felt it much more strongly after having completed this interview.

Some recent teaching about group dynamics has also helped me to put some perspective on my experience with the first facebook group. I think I found the removal of my advert to be such a shock because I felt as though my research was in line with the group's aims. Using Bion's ideas about the groups primary task, my understanding was that the group's primary task was to promote the ideas of body positivity and provide a space in which these could be explored, which my research, from my perspective at least, sits within. However, having been a passive observer of the group for several months I had witnessed a change in the groups stated purpose, from a specific body positive book club to a more generic club, which had resulted from the groups 'leader' (the person who had founded the group) having to take a smaller role in running the group because of other commitments. It appears that this context of reduced leadership may have been causing the group to act as though its primary purpose is to keep the group going at all costs, and the group may have been operating in fight/flight mode, trying really hard to defend itself from falling apart. I think in this mode, my research advert may well have been perceived as a threat to the purpose of the group: by posting something that wasn't the usual personal story, and asking people to do respond to something, I was being a member of the group who threatened the sameness, and by asking people to take an action I was threatening the aim of to keeping everyone feeling safe so that the group stayed together.

I am not yet sure how to use this learning to inform how I approach another group, but as it is looking likely I will need to approach new groups, I will endeavour to use this experience to inform my approach further.

23/5/19

I am still feeling very frustrated about the recruitment process and have not yet been able to make any progress in getting the research advert hosted on an online space. The groups I have approached have all either ignored the messages or not allowed me to post the advert, so I am still in the process of approaching new groups. The time it is taking to do this is starting to feel concerning and I am now getting more anxious about the whole project. I did have a brief moment of reprieve when I went back to the ethics panel to request that I

recruit from additional online spaces and this was approved, but as the first group I approached after this refused my request to post the advert the reprieve did not last long.

Additionally, the closeness of this to my own personal interests and the significance of it in terms of how important it is for my doctorate is making it very upsetting. It is difficult not to feel personally rejected from the groups and am questioning whether this research is the helpful thing for spreading the ideas of Body Positivity that I want it to be.

In trying to get through my feelings about this I am trying to mentalise more around what the reactions I am getting from the groups are about, rather than take it personally. I have learnt a lot about the defensive position that these groups are finding themselves in, and it has helped me to reflect more on the context of the ideas and the groups, and how this might be affecting the personal experiences of the people within them.

Most recently I was told by a group that they would not host my advert because they get too many 'trolls' who would skew the research findings, which gives me an insight into a sense that the groups may feel under attack from outsiders trying to undermine their ideas and their position as a safe space. This has helped me frame for myself that actual research looking deeply at people's experiences might be threatening for the groups: their ideas are under attack and may feel tenuously held, and any research examining this might expose further the 'bad side' or the negatives of experiences within the group, and the groups may not be in a secure enough positions to tolerate that.

I have reflected on this learning and whether or not I should change my approach to approaching the groups in light of it, and am not sure there is much to be changed as my approach is already quite gentle (and it might be that the threat is inherent to the research itself which at this stage does not feel useful to change). I am however going to be using this awareness and holding onto it when I check in with whether the groups will let me post, as this may be helpful to take the edge of my anxieties.

Perhaps more frustratingly, I am also starting to question the utility of the project and whether I am even looking in the right area. All of my reading around body positivity and the things I am exploring about the online communities are moving away from the concept specifically of 'body positivity' towards more social justice and fat acceptance (rather than a personal journey of coming to accept and appreciate oneself). This really pulls on my own bias/prejudice towards the weight side of body positivity, and so therefore feels very important to me and like an area I should be looking at instead. I am also noticing that many of the online spaces for the groups are not rigorously adherent to specific 'body positivity' ideas and that this again moving those spaces away from the social justice side of the ideas towards the more personal development side. I am wary that I will need to recruit from a group which is less closely associated with the ideas and therefore presents a very different experience for people than those in groups which do have clearly defined group rules and boundaries.

I am holding more weight specific groups in my mind as places to recruit from if necessary, and if I do that I know that I will need to hold for myself an awareness that it is one facet of the body positivity set of ideas and reflect on this throughout.

23/7/19

Feeling relieved – I have agreed with someone on Instagram who runs a body positive account that she will help me recruit, and have just sent across the advert to her. She helped me in setting up the project with the interview schedule and the focus of the work and has

been a keen supporter of the project since then. Her enthusiasm and willingness to help was motivating then and has been the burst of encouragement I've needed recently to keep going and move past my fears that the whole project will fall apart. Hopefully I get some participants!

Separate to, this I have been forced recently to reflect on my own relationship with body positivity, through things in my personal life, separate to the research, and I am noticing how frustrating I find it when I am called upon to defend the ideas. They are very dear to me and deeply held but I struggle to articulate them when it comes to explaining them to people who don't already know them or aren't sympathetic. I have surrounded myself with media which promotes the ideas so much that I no longer feel as connected with the clear explanations of them, they just seem the norm to me and I am shocked and taken aback when I come across things that go against what I see as some of my core values. I think it will be helpful at this point to return to my bracketing work, specifically another bracketing interview.

17/09/2019

I have turned a corner with recruitment in the last few days and it has been interested to reflect on how this came about and what this has told me about the groups. I had posted the advert again on both facebook groups and asked my Instagram contacts to re-post the advert (although I don't think they had done this yet) and fairly quickly I received a comment on a Facebook post from a group member asking if I'd been given consent from the group moderators to post. This made me uncomfortable and immediately made me feel all the rejection I had felt previously when other groups wouldn't allow my research post. However, I was able to manage this distress more easily this time, having worked through the feelings of rejection and understanding how the group is likely feeling defensive, and was able to add comments explaining my position. I felt a pull to explain more and make lots of points but was also wary of appearing defensive myself, and was heartened when other commenters backed up my points and highlighted that I was not experimenting on the group but asking for individual participants. I was also heartened to see that in creating comments the post was getting more attention and 6 people contacted me to say they would like to take part in the research. This was really encouraging and I finally felt a shift in my dread that the project wouldn't get done, as were the comments from people who expressed support for the research. I am still working on turning the offers into actual interviews, but it feels less of an impossible mountain now!

However this evening an interview I had scheduled has not happened as the participant has not turned up. This is frustrating as I'd built myself up to do the interview, it was going to be my first in a long time so I was nervous and now it has fallen flat. I am hopeful the person will be happy to rearrange and I am learning a lot about needing to be a bit persistent in arranging interviews as it is very easy for people to fall through the net. I had emailed to confirm the interview earlier today, which I will endeavour to do for all scheduled interviews, and this participant seemed keen so I am confident they will re-arrange for another time, but it is frustrating that its been so hard to get people to see and take notice of the project and that even once this barrier is crossed its not yet translating into actual interviews. This was however an aspect of recruitment that I anticipated being a challenge so I don't find it as difficult to manage as the other problems I have been experiencing.

22/9/19

Yesterday was a challenging day with recruitment and I had the premise of the research challenged as well as my capabilities as a researcher.

I had posted the advert to a facebook group that, from my understanding was about fat research and more broadly including fat people in research. As it transpired, the group was more focussed specifically on fat justice research and by positing the advert, I had comments from a couple of people very angry at me for doing the research I was doing and for the inclusion criteria I have. Their main points were that as someone who is not a fat scholar I should not be doing fat justice research as I am taking the place of a fat person, that body positivity is not a helpful framework from which to do fat justice research and that in asking for 'women' my research was transphobic. There were comments about contacting my supervisor and ethics board and people expressed concerns about my capabilities as a researcher.

These comments, although not abusive, directed significant anger towards me and left me feeling defensive, hurt, angry and anxious (I was scared my whole was going to collapse around me), and left me questioning both myself and a my project. It seemed as though the two people were simultaneously angry at me for doing research that wasn't helpful for fat justice and also angry at me for doing fat justice research when it wasn't my place to do so.

I took my time in responding the comments, thought carefully about the utility of even responding at all and endeavoured to respond openly, non-defensively and to hear and clarify my position in response to the concerns raised. This had a limited impact and one person was still angry at me after I left what I had decided was my last comment.

I think it hurt for me because I started this research 18 months ago and at that time I was not aware of the problematic nature of the construct. I have been slowly becoming aware that Body Positivity as construct is at times problematic and is being used in ways that reinforce structural oppression for some people, and I have not really wanted to admit this because it seemed like this knowledge undermined my research and I am so desperate to make sure I have an MRP project that is useful! But I am aware now that it is problematic and am now too far down the line to change the project. Although my personal position at the start was "I think this is helpful I want to find out if other people do and why," the project has always been a neutral investigation into what is going on for people who engage with online body positivity. As I've started recruitment and, in reaction to my knowledge about it being such a problematic construct I've wanted to make sure I am inviting people to take part who have experiences of it being problematic, as I firmly believe it would be unethical not make attempts to do this. This is why I have been recruiting from fat specific groups on Facebook, because some of the themes of these groups have been aligned with Body Positive ideas, enough that people in the groups are likely to have had experiences with Body Positive online spaces, but the groups aren't all explicitly 'body positive' and there are discussion about the concept being problematic, so I thought I was likely to find more a diversity of experience with the ideas in these groups.

I now feel as though I understand my position somewhat better with the research, I think the allure of advocating for fat justice research had influenced my judgement for a while, but that is not the research I planned and is not the project I am doing. I am doing psychological, experience-based research into the phenomenon of Body positivity on social

media, examining the impacts (if any) it has had on people. I am not looking for 'why is body positivity great?' and neither am I looking at 'what do fat people say about body positivity'

However, I think I am still holding onto the idea that the concept of Body Positivity is good, but the way it has been used by the current systems of power is problematic. I think I need to do further research into why the concept is viewed as problematic in order to fully inform my perspective.

In terms of the gender criteria I still feel conflicted. In trying to address the concerns I know I said things that where exclusionary and I did my best to apologise and correct these statements. I am trying to own my own mistakes but also I have reached the limits of my understanding, as I no longer see where the mistakes were in my recent comments.

My understanding is that everyone who is questioning the binary of gender is likely to have their own experience of their gender and their own preferred way of referring to it (given the existing language and categories). I know that I would treat each individual in front of me with respect and dignity and would be accepting of their framing of their gender. I am clumsy with the language I use at the moment in referring to groups of people are likely to all identify differently and as such struggled to articulate in a helpful way my stance, which was essentially "I don't care what gender you are, if you think your experience might fit into the category of woman then you are included!" It may be that this stance still would be considered transphobic, again I am at the edges of my knowledge. It is clear to me that I need to expand upon this and build my understanding further, and not rely on others to call me out (for the sake of the people unintentionally oppressed by my language and for my own sake because it has been horrible being called out!).

25/10/19

I have finished recruitment! I am trying to take a moment to celebrate this achievement, as the points at which I felt like this would never happen make it all the more momentous! It happened! And also I'm trying to attribute it to my hard work and determination, rather than luck that it finally came through (I think it was an element of both). And now the project is back in my hands which is scary in its own way (the responsibility now clearly lies with me) but I have confidence in my ability to tackle it from this point onwards.

My next step is to transcribe and I am already thinking forward to coding and analysing and feeling under-confident of my knowledge of IPA and how to do this. I think therefore that it will be useful to refresh my knowledge of the method with some reading (and attending a seminar at uni) even before I start transcribing, as I intend to make notes about codes etc as I go and would like to be setting out on this on the right foot, as far as possible. I also have had one person ask to check their transcript before analysis so need to prioritising transcribing this interview.

I am still reeling a bit from the incident in my last entry, but the feared outcome of discouraging people who had already agreed to take part did not materialise which I am very thankful for.

I do have concerns that my research hasn't covered some of the difficulties surrounding body positivity as a concept. Although I have asked neutral questions and made sure to enquire about participants experiences as both negative and positive, I think the mere fact of investigating a topic in groups which are aligned with it skewed the people who respond to being those who have had positive (or mostly positive) experiences. The people

angry at me for doing the research (and thus those who have a very different perspective about the impacts of body positivity, one that is very likely to non-positive) were never likely to take part. As much as I know this I also wonder whether my opening responses to the anger could have invited them to take part and share that perspective, but I also recognise that going through the process of navigating those comments is probably what allowed me to see how I could have responded differently and that way of responding wasn't one I could see at the start, and also that it probably wouldn't have made a difference. I suppose it comes back again to the idea I had last time about the research not being all things to all people. I am looking at a specific set of experiences with a specific phenomena and can only analyse the information I get from the people who came forward.

5/1/20

Transcribing! I keep thinking about how much I have real trouble with the concept of body positivity having more than one associated meaning, I can hear myself struggling with it in this interview, that the interviewee sees it as two things, the original version and the co-opted version. Personally I just feel frustrated that the co-opted version exists and just write it off as 'that's not real body positivity' but what I see as 'real' may not be what most people encounter. I want to look at the impacts of 'real' bopo, but maybe that's not possible because it doesn't only exist in one form.

5/4/20

About to start diving into properly analysing, having finished writing a first draft of my literature review.

I had a chat with two friends, also doing IPA for their MRPs, showing each other how we have been working on our analysis. This was really refreshing and made me excited about the prospect of doing my analysis and feeling more confident about my ability to do it, having seen someone else's working process and noting the similarities and the differences.

Having written the literature review, I am now much more familiar with several theories of body image: internalisation of the thin ideal, objectification theory and social comparison theory. These theories, although containing some contradictory elements, all make quite a lot of intuitive sense to me, and as I was writing the literature review ideas about body positivity and how it might work in a way that relates to the theories kept coming to me. For example, the idea that women might take choices to become more active and respect their bodies for what it can do, as a way of feeling better about themselves and their bodies, fits with objectification theory. And the social comparison theory ideas, especially about horizontal comparisons being beneficial for positive body image, fit with the idea of exposure to increased diversity and choosing to who follow on social media people in larger bodies, people with different skin colours, people with different abilities , and the theme of people saying they were seeking out

I do have an overarching assumption that body positivity leads to positive body image, which needs questioning and interrogating and putting aside (bracketing I suppose) as I try to come to grips with the experiences my participants are describing. I especially need to keep open to the impacts and experiences people describe which are not necessarily related to body image.

195

10/5/2020

In process of analysing first transcript, noting completed and trying to pull together themes.

I am trying to stay close to what's actually there, feeling conflicted between ideas developed in conversation with my supervisor and the ideas that are emerging as I try and combine the notes into coherent themes. I am trying to hold lightly to the ideas my supervisor and I pulled out around the process of change being one of experiencing unbearable pain at the hands of internalised societal messages about beauty that she didn't fit into, finding the groups which offered alternative narratives as a lifeline to this pain and slowly internalising these new messages via a process of active engagements with the groups to allow her to make positive changes to her life .

The idea of zooming in and zooming out again on the data is in my head and I'm finding it a struggle to hold both perspectives, as drilling down and zooming in is where I have found the depth of interpretation in my noting, and holding onto this depth of interpretation whilst zooming back out to find themes, and staying fluid between the different levels is challenging! I'm an trying to stick closely to the participant's own words to try and capture the power in what she expressed in the interview, but in doing so I feel as though I am compromising the depth of the interpretations I am making.

I am also aware that the concept of 'internalising' as I am using it is not that well defined and could be informed by various psychological models (cognitive, systemic (cultural scripts). It was a word used by the participant so I am trying to use her own words to explain what she meant by it, sticking closely to her experience and trying to park my ideas of models.

19/10/2020

Returning to analysis after a break of several months. Having analysed one transcript so far and noted half of an another.

Feeling overwhelmed by the depth and richness, and thinking about how I could possibly write an entire results section about the analysis so far and worrying that my emergent themes won't be able to fully represent the depth of meaning communicated by my participant. Thinking I should refresh myself with the IPA process.

Currently I am finding myself really interested in the compassion and hope for systemic change aspects that are emerging: past me grouped these as separate themes and reflecting on this now, they seem to be much more inter-twined, as both reasons why people are engaged with body positivity and also why it has had an impact for them.

Organising based on the process: initial starting point, the process and experience of the group and what has emerged for them/the results of being in the group. This makes sense for my first transcript (to what extent is it a product of my questions?), does it make sense for the others and will it illuminate anything useful about the how of these groups?

Does the how? Middle section about the process contain the most useful aspects to focus on? Maybe this should for the focus of my results write-up?

20/10/2020

Analysing a transcript and the participant is talking about how she feels comfortable calling out her friends for their racism but not for their discrimination about fat people. This really chimes with my own experiences and feelings I have had about raising discrimination against fat people at university, as something which is not addressed during our training. We've had teaching about discrimination based on various factors, weight is only included sometimes and has never been addressed in detail and despite my passion and strength of belief that fat people being discriminate against needs challenging I have not found myself able to raise this in the group. I discussed this in my own therapy and we hypothesised about it being my own difficulties putting my own needs first (i.e. as a larger person I would be advocating for myself), but I also feel there is something about what I understand to be socially acceptable that holds me back. This transcript section feels very close to my own experience and in my initial noting I've made an interpretive note about perhaps the participant feeling similarly about not being able to advocate for her own needs. Reflecting on this now I think this made be an interpretive leap too far, perhaps over identifying, as I am struggling to relate it to the other themes that are emerging. I am also trying to keep in mind my research question, and think about the extent to which this interpretation actually answers the question about this pariticpant's experiences in the online spaces.

10/11/2020

Analysing transcript four, phoebe, who was someone not recruited from a Facebook community, but from Instagram and this is evident in her interview about how she uses online body positivity, her experiences are very different and much more centred around consuming media rather than being part of a group of people.

Also her interview aligns much more with what I expected to find when I set out on my research 3 years ago, we talk much more about her responses to the body positivity stuff she see's and her perspectives about what body positivity means as a concept, and the depth about her personal experience is much less, and generally the online body positive stuff seems to have had much less of a meaningful impact on her whole life. Perhaps her body image struggles were much more contained and didn't impact on her whole life as they maybe did for other participants. Worth noticing for me at this point that she doesn't explicitly reference her body size as part of who she is as several other participants did as part of describing their identity (ie I am a fat woman), but she does reference being average sized and I observed this during our interview. Perhaps there is something here about the difference in impact for being thinner, and the difference in the meaning attributed to being part of the community that relates to experiences of being further from the social norm and experiences/fear of experiencing discrimination in addition to personal struggles with body image.

13/11/2020

Hitting a bit of a wall, Personal life issues, feeling a bit unwell, harder to stay focussed and struggling with Hazel's transcript,

I'm finding it hard to unpack my own language and way of framing how I understand the topics of marginalisation, from what Hazel is saying, and I'm having to very consciously hold this in mind when noting and finding themes, so it's slowing me down. The end is so close now that anything slowing me down is not appreciated and I'm finding it frustrating rather than enjoying it for part of the research process and recognising the value in my being aware of these ideas of mine so that I can try and stay closer to what Hazel is saying.

20/11/2020

Having complied my themes, in a very fluid process that is constantly changing, is triggering my anxiety about not giving enough transparency with my submission because my ideas change very quickly and It would be impossible to keep track of every little change in this process. Hopefully I have enough to present!

I am now starting to pair specific quotes with each theme and write my results narrative. My thoughts are flip flopping between 'ohh I have so many quotes I must have stuck closely to the data' and 'oh dear maybe this is too descriptive and not enough interpretive." I am also, again, struggling to balance maintaining depth and a sense of the idiosyncratic nature of each participant's experience alongside necessarily having to condense and lose so much of each person's individual life experiences. Specific issues of discrimination are not emerging as central themes, so they are being left out. I see these as important so am struggling with my own desire to keep them; they feel like things that need to be said, but maybe aren't so helpful in answering the research question so I need to park that bias a bit.

Overall just feeling like the whole project is just too big, really hoping my research supervisor can help guide towards how to shorten it. I think we are going to have an interesting meeting when he has read my results narrative!

Appendix N

Example Annotated Transcript

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Appendix O

Author Guidance Notes for Body Image Journal

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Appendix P

End of Study Notification Letter and Report to Ethics Panel

To Whom it may concern,

RE: "I just feel more able to live my life": An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis of women's experiences engaging with body positive social media.

I am writing to confirm that the study named above has been completed. Please find below a summary of the research.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Yours Sincerely

Miranda Samuelson

Trainee Clinical Psychologist

Summary of Research

Background

Body Positive social media has emerged in recent years, as a social activism movement which challenges unrealistic societal beauty standards and promotes self-acceptance. The existing research base is limited, and lacks depth, but has tentatively established that exposure to the social media content can reduce body dissatisfaction and increase positive body image. However the content is also critiqued for continuing promote a focus on body appearance, which has implications for self-objectification and poor body image.

Aims

The current study aimed to add depth to the existing research base about body positive social media's impacts, and start to elucidate some of the processes underpinning these impacts. A qualitative approach was taken to explore the experiences of women who use body positive social media, and their understanding of any psychological and social impacts they had noticed.

Method

Eight women who regularly used body positive social media were recruited from body positive Facebook groups and Instagram accounts/hashtags and interviewed about their experiences. Interviews were analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), through a process of noting descriptive, linguistic and conceptual factors to inform emergent themes for each transcript sequentially, then linking these themes back to the original data, comparing them across transcripts and developing super-ordinate and sub-themes for the entire data-set.

Results

Four super-ordinate themes emerged: Making Sense of Body Positivity, Acceptance, Belonging and Fitting In: Experiences Within the Movement, Developing a Different Relationship to Self and Body, and Living Their Values. 17 sub-themes were subsumed within these super-ordinate themes, reflecting the depth, nuance, and idiosyncratic experiences of the participants.

The overall impact of engaging with body positive social media for participants is summarised as feeling self-acceptance and being able to live in alignment with their values, across several domains in their lives, alongside some residual emotional pain. The first three

themes represent the participant's journeys to these impacts: through an individual process of building their own understanding of body positivity centred around accepting all bodies, experiencing validation from a new social group and activist movement, and actively developing their relationships to themselves and their bodies through slowly internalising new values.

Implications

Body positivity on social media has already been identified as an easily accessible, affordable and well-received avenue for both individual level and public health interventions for body image difficulties. This study adds some support to these assertions, with a tentative conclusion that engaging with body positive social media mirrors a process of actively trying to improve positive body image.

Furthermore, a previously un-researched element of body positive social media which participants viewed as integral to their positive experiences was the opportunities it provided for activism focussed on systemic change and social acceptance. This has implications for future research and clinical interventions regarding the causal and mediating factors between body positive social media and positive outcomes.

Appendix Q

End of Study Report for Participants

Dear (participant)

Re: "I just feel more able to live my life": An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis of women's experiences engaging with body positive social media.

I am writing to thank you again for your participation in my research project and let you know that the interviews have now been analysed. Please find below a brief summary of the findings, as several participants expressed an interest in hearing more about the results.

I really appreciate you having taken the time to speak with me about your experiences with body positivity on social media. The reflections you shared have helped contribute to a growing research base about what its impacts are for people, both good and bad, and how these impacts come about.

If you have any questions or would like a more detailed account of the research then please do not hesitate to contact me,

Kind regards,

Miranda Samuelson

Trainee Clinical Psychologist

"I just feel more able to live my life": An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis of Women's Experiences Engaging with Body Positive Social Media. Research Summary

Background

Research into the impacts of body positivity on social media is has only recently started to be published. The findings reported so far have indicated that body positive content on websites like Instagram can have in-the-moment positive effects, such as improving body satisfaction. However, the research does not yet tell us much about how these positive effects happen and whether they last longer-term. Existing research has also overlooked the elements of body positivity that involve being part of a group and/or engaging with people who share experiences and interests.

What we Hoped to Find Out

This research project aimed to explore further the individual experiences of women who engage regularly with body positive social media, and how any impacts they had noticed were understood to have come about.

What we Did

Eight women took part, aged between 21-50. Everyone was interviewed about their experiences engaging with body positive social media: how they understood the meaning of body positivity, how they had used and experienced the content on social media and any changes they had noticed as a result.

Interviews were transcribed and analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA is a method of analysis which focusses on how people make sense of their experiences, so was used to illuminate the processes which participants saw as shaping their experiences with body positive social media.

What we Found

We found that all participants noticed impacts, which were summarised as being able to experience self-acceptance and live their lives in ways which aligned more with their values, even if this was sometimes accompanied by lingering emotional pain and dissatisfaction with their bodies.

These impacts were understood as occurring in the context of individual journeys through engaging with body positive social media: building their own understanding of body positivity centred around accepting all bodies, experiencing acceptance and belonging to a new social group and activist movement, and actively developing their relationships to themselves and their bodies through slowly internalising new values. Elements of the journeys influenced each other and were also influenced by each participants' idiosyncrasies, e.g. personality values about education and compassion, or impactful life events.

What This Means

This study has tentative implications for body image interventions which might want to draw on the benefits of body positive social media that were found. Participants' journeys through engaging with body positive social media appeared to reflect a process of actively trying to improve positive body image, which has several associated psychological and physical health benefits. Strengthening positive body image is often a target of body image and eating disorder interventions, so the current findings, if replicated with larger samples, could inform future interventions aimed at improving positive body image. Importantly, the findings of this study are the first to highlight the importance of social acceptance and activism in influencing the positive changes experienced, so any interventions drawing on

body positive social media will need to make sure that these important elements are not

overlooked.

Thank you again for your participation,

Miranda Samuelson

Trainee Clinical Psychologist