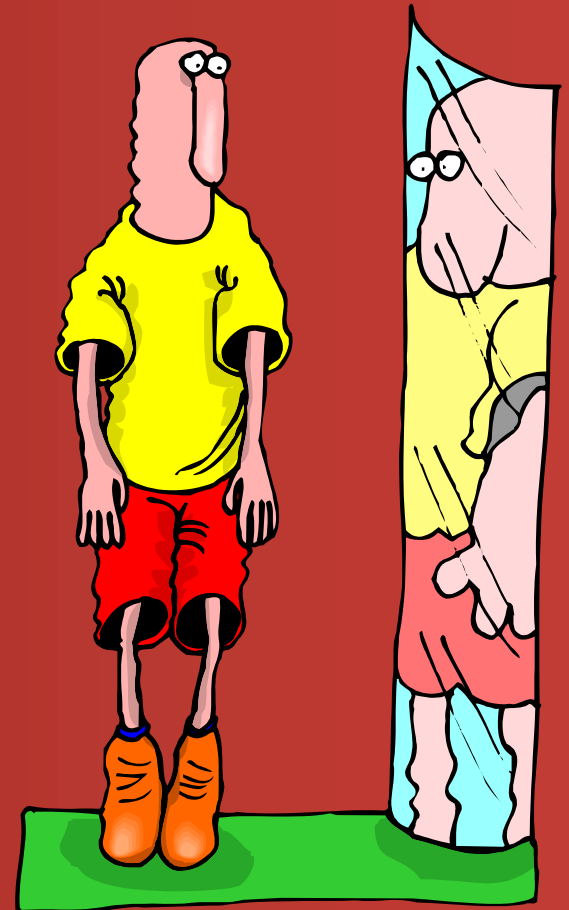


BODY IMAGE AFTER WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY

Lisa Huff, LCSW



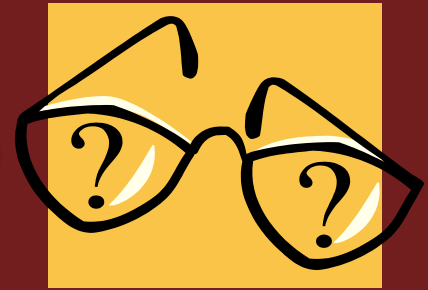
IS THAT ME?



- Body image is the mental picture that you make when you think about your body. It is also the perception that you have of how others see you.
- People will regard you differently and there will be a variety of comments and opinions. Whether you like this or not, the way that others look at you will also become part of your self-image



WHY DON'T I SEE IT?



- When your body changes rapidly, your mind is not able to keep up.
- You have looked at your heavier self for so long, that your brain has programmed itself to see you this way. You may see the “heavier you” for quite a long time.
- It is not uncommon for surgical weight loss patients to not see the immediate changes in their body size

WHEN YOU DO NOT RECOGNIZE YOURSELF

- When you discover that your image looks far better than you expected, this can be fun; however, not recognizing yourself can also make you feel that you have lost your identity.
- The negative impact of losing your identity is regained weight. As unhappy as you thought you were heavy, at least you knew who you were.

BEHAVIORS DUE TO DISTORTED BODY IMAGE

- You may walk through a door sideways as if you are too large to fit walking straight through it.
- You look for a table, rather than a booth, when you are in a restaurant.
- You look for the weight capacity on medical equipment, tanning beds, etc.
- When having a medical appointment, you expect to be given the larger cuffs, gowns, etc.
- Others?

MIRRORS



- Some surgical weight loss patients do not recognize themselves in mirrors, others do not see the changes when looking in a mirror. Why the difference?
- The mirror reflects the changes you have had, but your mood and thoughts interpret how you see that image. The image is often a “filtered impression”.



BODY IMAGE DISTURBANCE



- When you are so unhappy with the way you look because of your misperception, this is called body image disturbance.



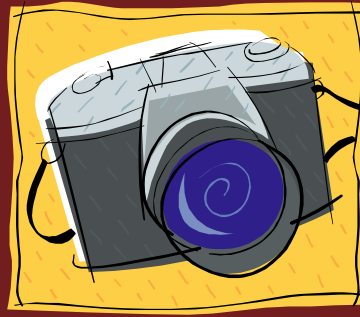
THE IMPACT OF BODY IMAGE DISRUPTANCE

- You feel that people are complimenting you just to make you feel better
- Friends and family feel that they are constantly giving you recognition and you are unappreciative.
- Others?

TIPS TO IMPROVE BODY IMAGE



- When you look in the mirror look at the whole you, not just your physical appearance. Be positive about what you have accomplished and remember that your body reflects everything you have been through in your life and it will not erase years.
- Remember, your new body will give you improved health and life benefits



- Look at your before pictures and carry them with you. You may not remember what you looked like before surgery.
- Take current pictures and hold them side by side to see the differences. This strategy is more effective than comparing before pictures with a mental image of what you look like now

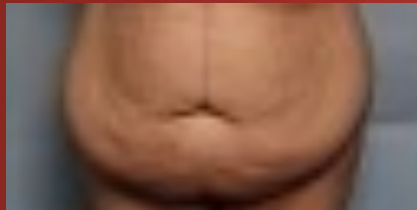




- Exercise and make note of what you are now able to do that you could not before.
- Put on before clothes to see the changes, but avoid wearing these clothes on a regular basis
- Remind yourself that if you are not drinking enough water or eating adequate protein, your skin will appear older

WHAT ABOUT ALL THIS SKIN?

- Excess skin adds to the visual misperception of weight loss. When you see sagging skin, you often do not see the smaller you.



TIPS TO HELP WITH EXCESS SKIN

- If plastic surgery is not an option, work on your clothing by tailoring. This will help it fit more properly.
- Wear clothes to keep up with your “shrinking body”.
- Try on clothes rather than picking sizes. Manufacturers are making clothes differently than in past years





- Shop in consignment stores or exchange stores
- Buy some clothes that are flexible and forgiving and will shrink as you lose weight.
- Wear spandex to hold skin in and look into specialized compression garments

CHANGE YOUR THINKING

- You have made a giant step to change your life. Do not allow your mind to stay negative. When you look at yourself in the mirror each morning, tell yourself that you are a healthier, happier person and you are ready for a healthier and happier life. Remember.....



- YOUR BODY IMAGE IS WHAT YOU INTERPRET IT AS, SO..... MAKE THE BEST CHOICE AS TO WHAT THAT INTERPRETATION IS AND CHANGE YOUR THINKING TO SUPPORT IT.

