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BEYOND THE
BASICS: BODY
IMAGE WORK
THROUGH AN
INTERSECTION
AL LENS

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TOPICS OF CONVERSATION

WHAT IS BODY IMAGE?

PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS OF BODY IMAGE?

WHAT IS INTERSECTIONAL
BODY IMAGE?

EXPLORING PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF
BODY IMAGE

EXPLORING SOCIAL ASPECTS OF
BODY IMAGE
ACTIVELY

WHAT IS BODY IMAGE?

AWARENESS VERSUS PERCEPTION

BODY AWARENESS

body awareness is the mental map our brain has of our body. it helps us understand our body in relation to the world around us.

BODY PERCEPTION

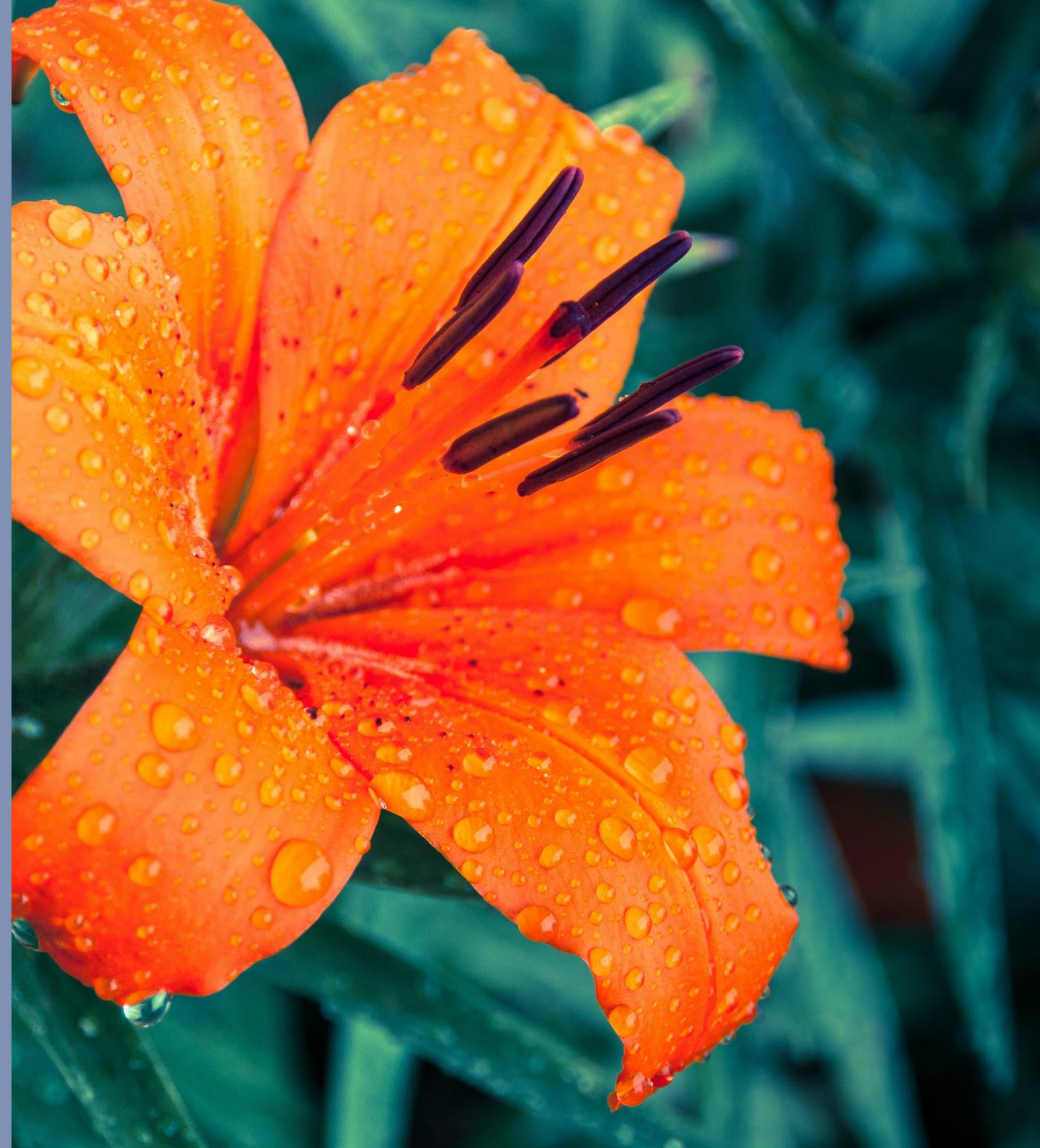
body perception is the way that our brain assess or judges your body in based on cultural standards and other measures.

ORIGINAL UNDERSTANDING OF BODY IMAGE

A E S T H E T I C S

in working with individuals who are struggling with their relationship with food and their body, professionals have previously worked through the beliefs someone has about the appearance of their body.

this work is important but does not challenge many of the beliefs and cultural norms that lead to poor body image beliefs.



INTERSECTIONAL BODY IMAGE

WHAT ARE THE CROSSROADS?

body size hair texture financial standing

ethnicity/race exposure to body diversity food (in)security

immigration status skin color chronic illness job/career path

disability status access to accessibility exposure to microaggressions

degree of assimilation/acculturation family of origin

INTERSECTIONAL BODY IMAGE

WHAT ARE THE CROSSROADS?

intersectional body image explore the impact of the multiple identities that an individual might hold on their body image beliefs and practices.

exploring the intersections of one's identity allows us to dig deeper into what maintains unhelpful beliefs about one's body.

exploring the intersections also allows one to build skills to care for themselves with systems they may have less influence to change.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF BODY IMAGE

BODY EXPERIENCES INFORM
BODY BELIEFS

physical aspects of body image include what we can see or feel. this can include the appearance of someone's body (size, weight, shape, height, cultural features, visible disability, hair texture/color, skin tone, etc.).

physical aspects of body image can also include aspects that we cannot see or feel such as invisible disability and chronic illness.

each of these aspects can be explored to determine their impact on one's body image beliefs and how those beliefs can be neutralized for more neutral body image days.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF BODY IMAGE

NEUTRALIZING AND SOFTENING BELIEFS TOWARDS YOUR BODY

we are most familiar with discussing and shifting beliefs about the physical aspects of one's body image.

how do the beliefs you hold about how your body looks or feels prevent you from caring for your body compassionately and radically? is the care you have for your body conditional to its⁸ perceived worth? where did you learn these beliefs?

what might it be like for you to care for your body unconditionally? what would you include in that practice?

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF BODY IMAGE

COMMUNAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO BODY IMAGE

social aspects of body image include the beliefs about bodies and body-focused practices that are held by a culture/community (including family of origin).

this becomes intersectional when someone exists within multiple communities. this individual now works to balance sometimes differing beliefs and body-focused practices.

these beliefs and body-focused practices may contribute to poor body image. the sometimes-conflicting stances between communities can also contribute to poor body image.

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF BODY IMAGE

REFLECTING ON COMMUNAL CONTRIBUTIONS

we all exist within at least one community. what are the body beliefs of the communities you are a member of? what are the body-focused practices of these communities?

what feels authentic to you? what doesn't feel authentic to you? what would feel more authentic for you to believe/practice?

what boundaries do you need within yourself and with others to develop and embody these new beliefs/practices?

IN THE LAB

LET'S PRACTICE

0 1 select a belief you have about your physical body. ¹¹

0 2 write this belief down.

0 3 write down 3-5 things that are true to challenge this belief.

0 4 what do observe about this practice? what would it be like to repeat with other beliefs about your body?

IN THE LAB

LET'S PRACTICE

0 1 select a body-focused practice from your community ¹²

0 2 write this practice down.

0 3 what body practices would you like to adopt to replace this unhelpful body-focused practice?

0 4 what do you notice about when you think of the body practices you would like to adopt? what do you notice when you think about the unhelpful body practices?