

# FOCUSING ON BODY FUNCTIONALITY FOR A HEALTHY BODY IMAGE

## BODY FUNCTIONALITY

Body functionality is considered to be a way of thinking about the body that is multifaceted, without having to be 'able bodied'. It refers to focusing on body function not appearance, such as appreciating internal body processes, what the body is physically capable of, senses and sensations, communication with others, self-care and creative endeavours & what that may look like for each individual (rather than a metric of 'normal').

## BODY FUNCTION APPRECIATION

Appreciation for how the body functions and what the body can do is considered to be part of the positive body image construct or what is now considered body neutrality. It refers to appreciating, respecting and honouring what the body can do and taking the focus away from appearance (whether positive or negative). Research has shown that focusing on body functionality & appreciation, improves body image.

## WHAT THE BODY DOES

It can be helpful to consider all of the different functions that the body has & all that it can do. What are the internal processes your body does? What is your body capable of? What does it do day to day? Why might this be important? What may be meaningful about this for you?

## WHAT YOU DO WITH YOUR BODY

Consider all of things that you can do with your body including creative endeavours, body movement, connecting and communicating with others, being in relationships etc. What might you appreciate about this and why may these be important to you?

## TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY

In order to recognise and appreciate what the body can do it is important to be able to tune into the body - what does it feel, sense and experience? How does it feel when you engage in various functions? How do you meet your body's needs for rest, relaxation and pleasure?

## BODY FUNCTIONALITY STRATEGIES

Here are some helpful strategies for exploring this further:

- Journal & note what you appreciate about your body
- Reframe body appearance thoughts to body functionality thoughts
- Engage in physical activities that FEEL good & bring joy
- Write out a list of all body parts & consider what each does for you
- Think about your body as a house - what are all of the things that it might need to run optimally? What does your body need to function at its best and feel as well as it can?
- Write a self-compassionate letter to yourself focusing on your body, its functions & all it can do

