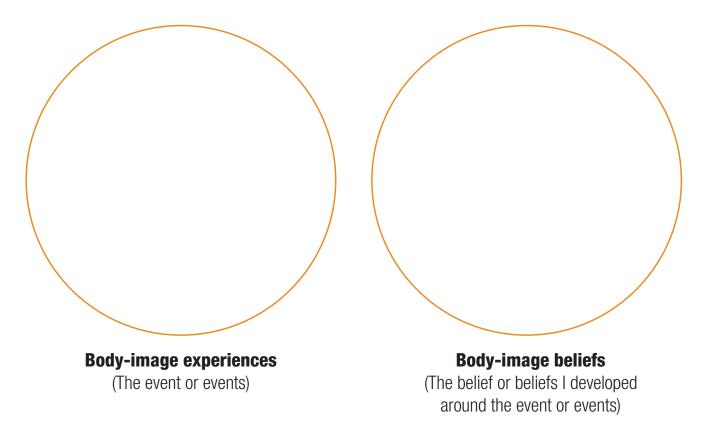


Personal Body-Image Experiences & Beliefs

Activity: Working through unhelpful body-image experiences and beliefs

Often unhelpful personal body-image beliefs stem from uncomfortable situations in our formative years and are developed into later life. With the help of your psychologist, see if you can identify any of these experiences, and any beliefs you formed around them.



While it is often completely understandable that we developed these beliefs we developed about our bodies, this does not mean they are necessarily logical or helpful. They can even become harmful self-fulfilling prophecies, as we start to think, feel, and behave in ways consistent with the beliefs we developed. For example, a client was taller than other children in school, but grew up believing she was "fatter". When she looks back at photos, she realizes that wasn't the case (in fact she was tall and lean), but as she identified herself as "fat", she began to overeat and become sedentary, promoting weight gain. We develop harmful body-image beliefs at times when we are young and emotional, so they are worth reflecting on with an adult mind. Discussing this with your psychologist, reflecting on it yourself, and a task to develop new body-beliefs in the next session can all help with improving old body-image beliefs.



weight management psychology

Personal Body-Image Experiences & Beliefs

Developing mindfulness of your body-image beliefs is an important step in improving your body image. Unhelpful thoughts often control our emotions and actions without our conscious awareness. To help increase mindfulness around these thoughts practice:

- "Naming the story"
- Repeating the thought in your mind, preceded by the phrase "I'm having the thought"
- Imagining the thoughts are like clouds that pass above you or leaves on a stream that float below you

Thinking of your unhelpful thoughts as a story, you may be able to identify a title, and various "chapters" of the story. For example, a chapter of someone's "fat and ugly" story may include the chapters "I can't go to parties", "I don't look good in this", and "people I like aren't interested in me".

Title of my story _____

Chapters of my story