

BODY CHECKING & REASSURANCE SEEKING

Most people engage in some form of checking and reassurance-seeking behaviours throughout the day (i.e. checking your appearance in the mirror before you head to work or, asking your friend if you have spinach stuck in your teeth after lunch). The behaviour becomes more problematic when it is done repeatedly and compulsively to alleviate anxiety about your appearance. Often a person will feel a sense of control by engaging in body/appearance checking which may lead to reassurance and reduced anxiety. This reassurance is typically short-lived and you may find yourself engaging in more checking and reassurance-seeking behaviours when the concerns pop back into your mind.

COMMON BODY CHECKING & REASSURANCE SEEKING BEHAVIOURS

- Mirror gazing, and checking your appearance in reflective surfaces (i.e. windows)
- Checking areas of your body visually, by touch, or by mentally scanning that area
- Verifying your appearance by taking a photograph or video footage of yourself
- Measuring parts of your body using tape measure, callipers etc.
- Making comparisons to: photographs of other people, old photographs of yourself, media and other people's appearance (in person)
- Asking family members, friends, and professionals for reassurance (i.e. "Do I look okay in this?"

The goal is not to eliminate all checking and reassurance seeking behaviours, but rather to reduce the behaviours to a helpful level. This allows you to tolerate and accept some uncertainty while decreasing the negative consequences associated with high levels of checking and reassurance seeking.

Use the following "Body Checking Awareness Log" for a few days to understand how often you engage in checking and reassurance-seeking behaviours, and how it impacts your thoughts, feelings, and actions towards your body. Discuss these findings with your Dietitian and work to create a plan to reduce the problematic behaviours.

BODY CHECKING AWARENESS LOG

The purpose of this activity is to raise awareness around when you body check, how and how often you body check, how it affects your mood, and the trends you see as body checking increases and decreases.

BODY CHECKING BEHAVIOUR
(I.E. SCALE, MIRROR, PINCHING,
COMPARING)
AND DURATION OF BEHAVIOUR

WHEN & WHERE DID THE BODY
CHECKING TAKE PLACE?

HOW WAS I FEELING BEFORE
BODY CHECKING?

HOW WAS I FEELING AFTER
BODY CHECKING?

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE BODY CHECKING & REASSURANCE SEEKING

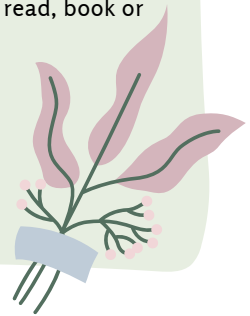
DELAY THE BEHAVIOUR

When the urge to engage in body checking arises, set a timer and see if you can sit with the discomfort. Start with a small amount of time (1-2 minutes) and increase the length of the timer each day. Work to tolerate the discomfort enough that you can eliminate the need to engage in behaviour all together.

While sitting with the discomfort, it is recommended that you practice a grounding technique (i.e. box breathing, 5 senses, 5 finger breathing etc.)

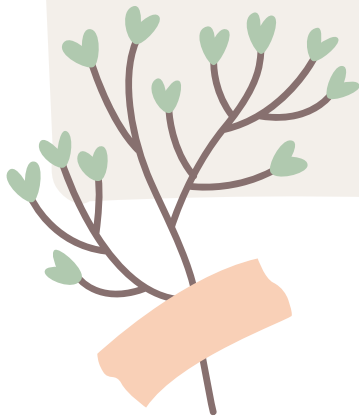
INTERRUPT THE BEHAVIOUR

If you catch yourself while engaging in body checking, see if you can stop the behaviour and engage in an alternate activity. This may look like walking away from the mirror and go to another room, where you can practice a grounding technique and then read, book or watch a show).



REDUCE THE BEHAVIOUR

If you notice that your body checking is part of your daily routine, consider creating a plan that helps you to form a new routine. This may look like getting dressed in a room where there is no mirror or removing the mirror from your bedroom.



EXAMINE THE IMPACT OF THE BEHAVIOUR

Ask yourself:

- What are the **advantages** of this behaviour?
- What are the **disadvantages** of this behaviour?
- How does this behaviour impact how I see, think and feel about my body/appearance?
- Does this behaviour help me to feel better about myself in the long term?
- How much sense does it make to continue with this behaviour?