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Content Warning: Eating Disorders, Depression, Anxiety, Fatphothers this zine is free to copy and distribute for noncommercial use with credit	
I want to say a BIG THANK YOU to all the people who supported me while I worked on this project. Special thanks to Alex Warren, Anne Stuart Cox, Eliza Staples, Emma Akerhielm, and my mom for sharing so much wonderful content with me. Thank you especially to Lauren Kahme for editing my writing before I decided to make it a zine. Finally, thank you to all the artists for letting me use your work. You ALL made this project so beautiful and meaningful.	

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TOM NOME

Life feels so different right now; it feels like an unstable transition with no end in sight. I keep hearing phrases like the "new normal" and "unprecedented times." The media reflect this feeling: every news site seems to pump out handfuls of updates every day, popular culture media are changing their rhetoric, even how we communicate is evolving. Social media is especially prevalent as we are trying to stay connected with each other despite our **obligation** to social distance. I have the privilege of staying home at this time. I fill my days with baking, writing, exploring, and scrolling. In my allotted time for scrolling through my phone, I noticed a new message spreading across social media platforms—"use this time to become a better version of yourself"—often accompanied with workout and dieting tips. Additionally, I find that in periods of stillness, demons arise from below the surface. I started to wonder how the message that now is the time to better yourself as well as society's pre-existing fatphobic agenda were going to affect body image while the world shuts down. How are deep-seated insecurities going to influence our lives right now? How will this pandemic affect our relationships with our bodies?

Fathouse Soval Modia

Weight-loss media are exploiting quarantine to promote the idea that now is the perfect time to work on your "summer body." I see this message everywhere—advertisements, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter—and in many different forms. An Instagram meme account I follow posted a slideshow including a Tweet that reads, "quarantine idea: start getting your summer bodies now with this home workout app that's free." Preceding this was another Tweet about using cocaine



via ig @nugget

to lose "15-20 pounds in 30 days" and a meme including side-by-side images of a muscular man and a fat man with the words, "there's [sic] two ways to come out of quarantine." Weight-loss rhetoric has also infiltrated TikTok, like with the popularity of detox drink recipes. These concoctions consist of fruits, spices, and sometimes vinegar and promise to make you lose a number of pounds in a weeker

two. These weight-loss messages show up in places where they should not be. Messages that scorn or

endorse a certain body type should not be mixed in with entertainment. Meme accounts and TikTok For You Pages (the curated feed that TikTok recommends for each user) have been infiltrated by fatphobic media that are trying to sell products to vulnerable populations and set body standards that idealize thinness. These messages are so incorporated into our feeds that we are desensitized to them. In scrolling past

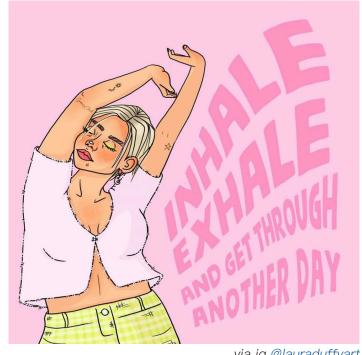


via TikTok @whatfloor69

these posts, we barely give them a thought, and we internalize the messages; they are normalized. As these messages grow more ubiquitous, they contribute to an overarching diet culture that governs how we view ourselves.

And South Modern

While diet culture is nothing new to society, this pandemic is presenting new ways for fatphobia to invade our lives. New terms like "quarantine" 15" are being coined to describe weight people are inevitably gaining. If we have the privilege of staying home, we are moving our bodies less and likely cooking more. Some extra body fat is a natural result of these conditions. Weight-gain is just a side effect of doing our duty as citizens right now: social distancing. Promoting the idea that quarantine is the time to get in shape antagonizes people for the natural outcome of this duty. Plus, it guilts people for taking care of themselves in ways that may be more beneficial to them, like baking or watching movies, for example. The unfamiliarity of this situation, as well as the notion of living through a pandemic, induces stress. Supporting each other (from a distance) and taking care of our mental health while enduring the realities of a pandemic are the most important things right now, and scorning people for weightgain only creates destructive pressure.





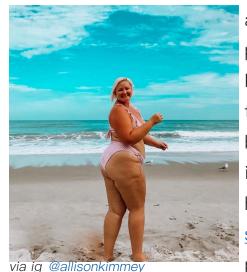


via ig @where_are_my_tits



vines via <u>freesvg</u> flowers via needpix

Although fatphobia persists in our feeds, positive messages are spreading as well. Many accounts are reminding people to take care of themselves in whatever manner works for them. One of my favorite body positivity influencers, Allison Kimmey, posts dazzling bikini pictures with captions about the harms of diet culture and the importance of self-love. A video she posted on Instagram TV brought to light



another aspect of fatphobia stemming out of this pandemic: Covid-19 specific "health concerns." Kimmey receives messages claiming that she "is going to die from coronavirus" because of the shape of her body. Statements like these demonstrate how fatphobia is often hidden under the guise of concerns for one's health. Internet trolls see a big person online and spread hate using assumptions they make about the person's health. They likely make these assumptions

because the health implications of body fat are blown out of proportion in the public eye. In the book Fat Politics, author J. Eric Oliver draws a comparison between obesity and automobiles as two public health issues. Far more Americans die in automobile wrecks than the estimated number to die from "weighing too much" (Oliver 77). He writes, "given the general lack of concern about driving relative to its

real impact on deaths, it seems highly implausible that we are worried about obesity because of its health consequences" (77). The thin ideal—the concept that skinny bodies are ideal—is not rooted in concern for anyone's wellbeing; rather, it is rooted in a hatred of fat and an even greater hatred for people who do not subscribe to the thin ideal. Using someone's body as an excuse to pretend to care about their health is just a shallow way to make someone feel shitty.



via ig @recipesforselflove

MORE SOCIAL MEDIA

A popular internet quarantine activity is the making and posting of food trends. I love that so many people are experimenting in the kitchen and sharing recipes. Instagram and Facebook are flooded with photos of golden sourdough and banana bread loaves. However, with the increased popularity of baking, a new rhetoric of expanding waistlines and "quarantine bodies" is emerging. I post pictures of my creations on my food Instagram, and it always hurts my heart when people ask questions like, "how do you bake so much and not get fat?" or claim they are too fat to bake as much as I do. It feels impossible to enjoy the glories of such a positive activity without the burdens of diet culture. I remember when I sold pastries at a farmers market. people would pass by my booth saying, "I would buy something if I were not trying to lose weight." On the flip side, weight-loss is often remarked upon as a compliment. Like when Billy Joel belts, "You lost weight I did not know / You could ever look so nice after / So much time" in "Scenes from an Italian Restaurant."

This rhetoric is anchored in fatphobia. It promotes self-denial of some of life's greatest joys, and the notion that skinnier is better. Weight-loss is not necessarily a good thing, and to remark upon it brings unnecessary attention to someone's relationship with their body. Baking and enjoying food are not naughty activities, and we are not alive to lose weight. The villainization of food is detrimental to our feelings towards one of the few activities we can enjoy right now.



via ig <u>@recipesforselflove</u>



via ig @where_are_my_tits



My Banana Broad Roops

recipe adapted from Bon Appétit

Ingredients

- 120 g (1 cup) all-purpose flour
- * 85 g (1/2 cup) semolina flour (optional. alternatively, replace with ap flour)
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda
- * 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 100 g (1/2 cup) (packed) dark brown sugar
- 100 g (1/2 cup) granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup mascarpone, plain whole-milk Greek yogurt, or sour cream
- 1/4 cup room temp butter
- 2 large eggs
- 4-5 large very ripe bananas, mashed (the fifth for decoration)
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted walnuts / pecans (optional)

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter and flour a metal loaf tin.
- Whisk flours (reserving about a teaspoon of the ap flour to toss with the nuts, if using), baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl.
- Using an electric mixer on medium-high speed, beat sugars, yogurt, and butter in a large bowl until light and fluffy, about 4 minutes. Meanwhile, mash 4 bananas with a fork, and if you have a 5th, cut it in half.
- Add eggs one at a time, beating to blend after each addition and scraping down sides and bottom of bowl as needed.
- Fold in the flour mixture until just combined. Add the 4 mashed bananas and mix just until combined. In a small bowl, toss nuts (if using) with reserved teaspon of flour, and fold into batter. Scrape batter into prepared pan; smooth top. Add either both halves or one half of the fifth banana on top, seed side up, if using. Gently press to settle it into the batter.
- Bake bread until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean or with just a few crumbs, 58-62 minutes if using nuts, 50-55 minutes otherwise. Transfer pan to a wire rack and let bread cool in pan for about an hour. Turn out bread and allow to finish cooling on the rack.
- Make a simple glaze with milk, powdered sugar, vanilla, and cinnamon, and glaze the bread after it has cooled slightly.







polaroids via <u>needpix</u>

MENTAL HEALTH IN QUARANTINE

While the virus directly affects physical health, we must acknowledge how it will affect mental health as well. This is a critical moment for the development of our minds because we are in the midst of an unfamiliar global circumstance and thus particularly vulnerable. We are vulnerable because our lives and communities feel threatened, and we are obligated to conform our habits to new protective conditions. I am curious about how changes in mental health will affect our relationships with our bodies.

To try to understand how this pandemic will affect mental health, I used Tirril Harris's chapter in *The Female Body in Mind*, "Society and women's distress." Harris's text focuses on the mental health of women. I must acknowledge the shortcomings of Harris's text. While women are generally more targeted by diet culture, people of all genders suffer from eating disorders and exposure to body standards. Harris provides a model—adapted from psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological systems—of societal influences on human development. Bronfenbrenner's original theory models the influences on people of all genders. For this reason, I believe Harris's text will provide insight into the experiences of people of all genders.

Harris uses Bronfenbrenner's theory to understand the development of unipolar depression, but she emphasizes that "a similar theoretical framework is also applicable to numerous other disorders" (149). The model consists of aspects of society that impact women's mental health, and I noticed that quarantine directly influences several of these aspects. For example, "severely stressful life events and ongoing difficulties arising in the outer world" appear to provoke depression (Harris 153). Additionally, we may be particularly vulnerable to depression right now because of the loss that the pandemic represents: loss of our routines, our spring and summer plans, and possibly people we know. Harris—

MENTAL HEALTH IN QUARANTINE

writes that "loss events, especially losses of cherished ideas...are particularly associated with depression" (157). The pandemic may also lead to an increase in anxiety disorders, which are often triggered by dangerous events that alert "the individual to take necessary actions against them in the future" (Harris 157). I will forever be more keen on washing my hands before eating after this pandemic. Although this is just a minor example of long-term behavioral effects created by this pandemic, it exhibits how our mentalities about social contact and hygiene will permanently change.

Another aspect of society that impacts mental health is maintenance of social relationships. We have lost significant accessibility to in-person socializing. Harris highlights a "relation between social integration and good health found in many studies," which suggests that losing this sociability may negatively affect mental health (151). We also have less access to many "intimate one-to-one relationships," which provide us with support via advice, reassurance, and trust (Harris 152). While these relationships can be maintained using technology, in-person contact is easier and generally less burdensome. After all, chatting with someone in a dining hall is easier than scheduling a FaceTime session, making sure to find a secluded nook with a nearby outlet for your dying phone battery, and handling the inevitable network connectivity problems. However, maintaining intimate partnerships even with these inconveniences is beneficial to mental health. According to a study that Harris examines, having a "confiding relationship" significantly decreases the chances of women developing depression "after a severe provoking factor" (153). In the conditions of isolation, we lose significant access to social relationships which provide us with support and promote mental health. Thus, the loss of these supportive social relationships may contribute to depression and prove detrimental to our mental health.

MENTAL HEALTH AND BODY IMAGE

After discovering these likely outcomes that quarantine will have on mental health, I wondered how this related to our relationships with our bodies. According to Regina C. Casper M.D. in "Depression and eating disorders," numerous clinical studies show the presence of depression and depressive symptoms in patients with eating disorders. Casper explains that other syndromes such as anxiety and OCD probably contribute equally to the "development and maintenance of eating disorders" (101). This suggests that in accordance with increased depression and anxiety, eating disorders may become more prominent after this pandemic. This led me to see a clear connection between body image and mental health: we are more critical of ourselves in times of vulnerability. Psychological disorders like depression diminish our self-esteem and make us more susceptible to developing eating disorders and internalizing harmful messages about our bodies. Both Casper's and Harris's articles support this claim. Casper explains how patients with anorexia nervosa consistently reported experiencing "disturbances in selfconcept, including self-critical attitudes which extend to the body and undermine self-esteem," and Harris explains a study in which "an overall negative evaluation of self...interacted with severe life events to predict depressive onset" (Casper 97; Harris 155). This concept relates back to another societal influence on mental health that Harris examines: self image. Harris describes a "self-monitoring process" which is "modelled on other people's views about us" (152; 153). In fact, Harris identifies this self-image as "the bridge between society and emotional distress" (154). The strength of our self-esteem controls how society and

social media affect us. With the pandemic affecting our mental health and therefore our self-esteem, we are more susceptible to body-shaming.



via ig @lauraduffyart

Gallery

All Bodies are Good Bodies







by Morganê Prodanovic ig @coeurnoirvide

by Leyla Mizrahi, Barnard '18 ig @meartyou



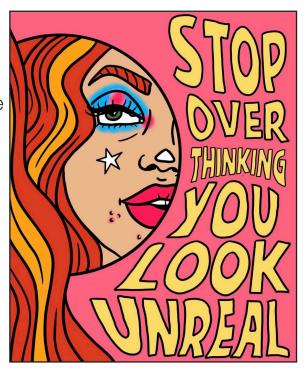
by ig @meartyou



by ig @full_of_freckles_illustrations

Industrializing fatphobio

The powers who aim to establish a thin ideal use the deterioration of our self-esteem to their advantage. If everyone suddenly stopped wanting to diminish their bodies, the weight-loss industry—including any form of media that advertises diet culture—would go out of business. This industry capitalizes on our hatred of our bodies. It has to maintain the message that we are not perfect...yet. If any one product morphed everyone into a skinny legend, there would be no need to advertise more products, and the weight-loss industry would go out of business. This



via ig @lauraduffyart

includes everything from companies selling weight-loss supplements, to celebrities sharing how they maintain a flat tummy, to websites promoting the keto diet. I stumbled across an interesting example of this cycle of spending, dieting, and disappointment in an NPR broadcast titled "Diet Books: Fat On Profits, Skinny On Results?." A representative of Barnes and Noble, Edward Ash-Milby, appears in the broadcast and explains why diet books continue to sell. He asserts:

The way they attract customers to the book is by having an interesting title and, you know, offering that promise. It's very compelling. I mean, how could you not want a flat belly?...The diet category offers a tremendous amount of repeat business, because people—they'll hook into one diet, it doesn't work so well for them, and you just don't know how well they follow it. And then they find that there's another diet that sounds more interesting.

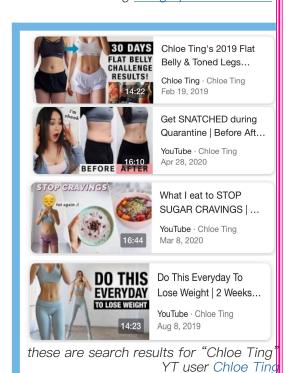
This example is particularly ironic because the broadcast advertises yet another diet book! The author appears in the broadcast and uses the-

Industrializing fatphobia

acknowledgement of how diet books usually fail to testify that her book is different because it actually works. However, this broadcast does articulate the lucrativeness of our repeated failures. The industry thrives on our failures, and thus these products fail by necessity. This repeated failure damages our self-esteem and sends us into a cycle of never-ending dieting. I feel like I spent nearly all of my teenage years trying to lose weight. We are not alive to lose weight. But when we are locked into the mindset that being thin is the equivalent of being happy, we fall into a cycle that is fueled by our "failures" to get skinny. Another tactic these industries often use to damage our self-esteem is the villainization of fat. The lead speaker of this broadcast uses the phrase, "battle against the bulge," to describe the author's weightloss journey. Similarly, trending Youtuber and weight-loss influencer Chloe Ting puts bolded phrases like "tiny waist" and "stop cravings / fat again ;(" on her thumbnails. These messages instill in our minds the idea that fat is the enemy. They pit us against our own bodies, and use our self-hatred to get more clicks.



via ig @sugarplumbcreations



Industrializing fatphobio

Body fat is especially demonized when the government uses terms like "obesity epidemic" to present fatness as a leading issue. However, in J. Eric Oliver's research, he found that most of the claims "saying that obesity caused various diseases or that obesity caused thousands of deaths were simply not

supported" (x). Additionally, many of the scientists spreading these claims receive funding from the pharmaceutical and weight—loss industries who profit off of treating those various diseases (Oliver x). They financially benefit from contributing to this hysteria. The implications of fat have been blown out of proportion, and industries capitalize off of this deception. It allows them to set standards of beauty while advertising for methods to achieve these very



via ig @full of freckles illustrations

standards. They even present weight-loss as "an individual right and reward, and as a means of power and social mobility" (Harris-Moore 27). In Deborah Harris-Moore's book *Media and the Rhetoric of Body Perfection*, she evaluates an advertisement that was featured in *People Magazine*. The ad shows women in their differing work uniforms—in an attempt to demonstrate that they are real, regular people—and emphasizes the affordability and resulting empowerment from various plastic surgeries (Harris-Moore 46). Each of the featured women is accompanied by a description of how her body modification improved her career and life. For example, one of the women, "a soldier, received a military discount for her breast implants, tummy tuck, and liposuction" (Harris-Moore 48). The message that weight-loss empowers and rewards you suggests that until you change yourself, you are not worthy of success. Plus, there is an inherent contradiction in these messages Harris-Moore points out: "in a society that sets standards for normalcy, power, beauty,...doing anything truly for yourself...is impossible, agency is, in this arena, at best a simulation" (27). This is not to-

say that we should ignore taking care of our mental and physical health; it simply means we should be aware of the messages we are internalizing. The shrinking of your body should not signify empowerment, and coming out of quarantine weighing more does not indicate that you spent quarantine "the wrong way."

The contradiction in advertising diet culture as a personal empowerment reflects an even greater contradiction within capitalism. Deborah Harris-Moore references another article that mentions how "capitalism depends on competition and personal independence as coexisting and yet contradictory foundations," and she explains that individual freedom really implies freedom "to compete and consume" (27). Thus, the foundation of our society is built on our competition with each other. Similarly, the industries promoting these toxic messages that we are not worthy until we achieve a certain form of perfection rely on our competition with each other. We see the standards of perfection in TikToks, YouTube videos, Instagram promotions, and more. When these same platforms are used to promote methods and products to achieve a higher level of "perfection," it creates a competition with ourselves and with each other. Who can look the hottest in their Savage rendition and get the most clout? You can (if you follow a Chloe Ting challenge for 30 days, drink a potion of apple cider vinegar and lemon juice, and do not even think about making banana bread).



via ig @full_of_freckles_illustrations



via ig @coeurnoirvide



TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

Another contribution to diet culture that Deborah Harris-Moore describes is called technological determinism. This is the idea that "technological and medical advancements, which have become more affordable, have also contributed to addictions and obsession with perfection" (Harris-Moore 30). In other words, as technologies that "improve the body" advance and become more accessible, the standards rise, and competition escalates. This concept occurs in a variety of fields. For example, as cosmetic surgery technology advanced, so did the number of patients with body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), "a mental disorder in which people are not able to see their true appearances and only see themselves as ugly" (Harris-Moore 30). A majority of BDD patients "seek cosmetic procedures and surgeries" (Harris-Moore 30). What I take from technological determinism is that as access to weight-loss resources increases, people feel more obligated to take advantage of these resources. Quarantine is an example of technological determinism because time is an essential resource in weight-loss. The media are advertising this downtime as a new opportunity to lose weight; thus, as the resource of time increases, so does the rhetoric around diet culture. In the past, an increase in this rhetoric has led to an increase in eating disorders. Harris-Moore details the increase in eating disorders that



via ig @lauraduffyart

resulted from Michelle Obama's weight-loss campaign. Harris-Moore writes that "this [rise in eating disorders] is most likely no coincidence given the increase in weight-loss rhetoric, and that children are exposed to much the same body perfection rhetoric as adults" (31). After all, when "the government uses terms like 'obesity epidemic' to describe young and old citizens alike, any method of weight-loss seems not only justified, but politically mandated" (Harris-Moore 34-35). We experience

incredible pressure to not only change our bodies, but to hate them too. This rhetoric frames imperfection—as if "perfection" even exists—as the problem, as something we must fight. It is no wonder that eating disorders arise from this pressure, and I fear the impact weight—loss rhetoric in quarantine will have on mental health.

SEFFWORTH

This quarantine, we must not see changes in our routines and bodies as the enemy. In fact, coming out of quarantine with a few extra pounds means we are lucky; we survived a global pandemic while snacking, watching shows, and hibernating. Regardless of whether our bodies shrink, grow, or remain the same, the most important thing is that we do not see our bodies as an enemy. Self-love is powerful. Deborah Harris-Moore



via ig @sugarplumbcreations

made an important point about weight-loss media that stuck with me. She wrote that "it is as unproductive to blame media or surgeons for an individual's insecurities as it is to assume one in absolute control" (50). There is an inherent codependence on our own insecurities and the media that perpetuate them, and to blame either entity entirely is pointless. Rather, if we understand how and why certain messages affect us, we can better understand ourselves and address our insecurities. At the end of Allison



via ig @allisonkimmey

Kimmey's video—the one in which she discusses the fatphobic comments—she explains how she deflects the hateful messages about her body. She says, "my worth, my belief in myself, my understanding [of] who I am is not dependent on what I look like," and she thinks of her body as "a vehicle for [her] to use...to be caring, to—

SEFFWORTH

be loving, to give back, to do what [she loves] to do, to be a mother." She says. "it's a vehicle: something that I use to get from day to day. And it doesn't define me. And I decide what defines me. Not anyone else." She does not let the hate affect her because she internalizes the fact that her worth is greater than anyone's opinion, and that it is not her responsibility to make others understand her. As long as we are not hurting anyone, it really does not matter what other people think. This mentality is so important right now, as it is also our responsibility to take care of ourselves, not to show others that we are thriving by external standards. Diet culture TikToks and problematic jokes about "Covid-19 lbs" do not stand a chance against the knowledge that you are more important than how anyone else sees you.





"I can't spend time worrying about if somebody thinks all I do is eat McDonalds and potato chips. And even if I did, who It's not my responsibility to help you understand me. My responsibility is for me to understand me, for me to bring out the best in me, and for me to be to share what I know and my gifts with the world to make better place. -Allison Kimmey

both photos via ig @allisonkimmey



Closing Thoughts



via ig @artbycassnela



via ig @lauraduffyart



via ig @full of freckles illustrations

Weight-loss culture continues to evolve as times evolve. Of course, bodyshaming and promotion of the thin ideal are sprouting out of quarantine and the surge of media exposure we have while we stay home. However, people are also spreading messages of support and reminders to practice self-care. I owe most of my knowledge about self-love and body positivity to social media, and to deem all media as the enemy to our well-being is not the answer. Rather, we should be cautious with what messages we spread and to which we pay attention. Social media is an essential tool for us to remain connected right now. It can be a place for friendship, (genuine) empowerment, joy, creativity, and so much more! While there is certainly a duality of good and evil on social media during this pandemic, we can use it to support each other and get through this together. When we understand the motive and shallowness behind fatphobic messages, we can reclaim the power those messages hold and redirect that energy into self-love.

BEDY IMAGE DURING A PANDEMIS HICKORY

1	Across
2	2. make sure you aredistancing
	3. technological
	5. The Birth of
3 4 4	9. food is not an
	10. Accept!
5 6	11. you don't have to weight
	while social distancing
7 8	12. Scenes from anRestaurant
	16. I'm a Classy, bougie, ratchet
	17. stop overthinking you look
10 11	Down
	1. all bodies are good
12 13	4. using someone's body as an
	excuse to pretend to care about their
	health is just a shallow way to make
	someone feel
	6. the new
15 16	7. banana is awesome
	8. we are not alive to lose
17	10. end fatphobia disguised as health
	13. the weight-loss
	capitalizes on our hatred of our
	bodies
	14. practice self
	15. love

Allison Kimmey Instagram

Casper, Regina C. M.D.: "Depression and eating disorders"

Chloe Ting Youtube

Harris, Tirril: "Society and women's distress" from *The Female Body in Mind*

Harris-Moore, Deborah: Media and the Rhetoric of Body Perfection

NPR: "Diet Books: Fat On Profits, Skinny On Results?"

Nugget Instagram

Oliver, J. Eric: Fat Politics

The Psychology Notes HQ: "What is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory"

whatfloor69 TikTok

COVERENT

Birth of Venus via Wikipedia Face Mask via Pikist

GEOSSWOE

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