

Plain Text of:

The LUNA Project and GUFAB resource on Food and Body Positivity.

Breaking down what food and body positivity is, how we can think about this as Disabled and Chronically ill people, and sharing our tip-top-top-tips, and what brings us food and body joy!

(All of the following text are on infographics which have pale yellow backgrounds and big random shapes in faded out colours. In the bottom right hand corner of every slide is the LUNA logo and GUFAB logo faded out. There are 9 slides in total, and slide changes are marked in the plain text. Any other images have their own image description as and when they pop up!)

Slide 1: What is Food + Body Positivity?

Food and body positivity can mean something different for everybody. As a broad movement, it can include anti-diet activism, body neutrality, and fat acceptance. At its core are ideas that our value shouldn't come from our bodies, that we should be able to eat as guided by our desires and needs, and that everybody is deserving of respect. For some people, the positivity part might seem like a big ask. If you have a difficult relationship with food or your body, as many of us do, feeling Positive about either of these things might seem unlikely. As well as this, you might think that feeling positive about our bodies places more emphasis on them than is necessary. Enter body neutrality, which rejects any value being assigned to our bodies at all. Whatsmore, many pioneers of body positivity now advocate for other movements which they feel capture the radical demands of the fat acceptance movement more successfully (if you're interested check out GUFAB's Black Lives Matter, Black Bodies Matter newsletter). The point here is that the different aspects of the body positivity movement can be co-opted to suit your particular needs, all while remembering the movement's radical roots and the people who carved the way

Slide 2 (continuing what is food and body positivity?)

So - what might food and body positivity mean for you? For some people it can be particularly helpful to recognise that a lot of what we feel about our bodies isn't our fault: it's because of the society we live in. Capitalist societies gain from the self-dislike which moves us to consume more: reject capitalism's control and accept yourself! Alternatively, maybe rejecting the patriarchal structure which can make everyone feel as if their sole value comes from aesthetics (and therefore suitability for partners) is what moves you. Equally, making things ideological isn't always helpful. The personal is political, but it's also our everyday. Food and body positivity can simply mean taking back the time and energy you might spend feeling bad about yourself and redirecting it. Ultimately, food and body positivity is about acknowledging all of the negative feelings we might have about food and our bodies and trying to move on from them. It's not perfect, and it might look different for everyone. If food and body positivity is new for you, just take this as proof that there's more to our relationships with food and our bodies than can be 'fixed' by changing ourselves: you're not the problem

Slide 3:

As well as the things that affect everyone's relationship with their body and food, touched on above, there are some challenges that Disabled people come across that non-disabled people don't. We are going to explore these, but it is important to first remember that Disabled people are not a homogenous group, and so their relationship with their body and food will also be influenced by their other identities- their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and culture, amongst other things.

Slide 4: Some reasons why being Disabled/chronically ill make your relationship with food and your body more tricky...

- Weight and being weighed may be a highly stressful part of regular medical appointments.
- Symptoms/experiences such as pain can make you want to be entirely separate from your physical body.
- Allergies, intolerances, and trigger foods can make food highly stressful.
- If you are Disabled and fat, then fatphobia in the medical profession may impact the way you are treated.
- Using mobility aids can make you look different, and stigma around them may impact your confidence.
- Body changes which are not in your control - e.g. joint deformities, atrophy, burns ect
- If you have an "invisible illness" you may experience a difficult discordance between what your body presents as, and the way you experience it.
- When your body doesn't work in the way you need it to, it can be hard to feel positive towards it.
- Changes with medication e.g. steroids can lead to weight gain/loss that is out of your control
- Food can make feel sick/be something that is difficult for a lot of people e.g. Crohn's and gastroparesis
- You may be conscious that your body is different to your peers

Slide 5:

As well as the challenges themselves, Disabled people can often be left out of mainstream conversations about having a good relationship with body image and food- with the problems being discussed not things they relate to, and solutions and advice that is inaccessible or exclusionary. This is really harmful! Having a negative relationship with food and your body is a really lonely experience, and by not being included in these conversations it can make Disabled people feel that what they are experiencing isn't normal. This is why we are talking about Disability and food and body positivity.

Slide 6: Some tip-top-tips....

#1 - Find what speaks to you. We're all different, and the dialogues around food and our bodies that resonate with us most will be different too. Find what speaks to you by having someone speak to you... on a podcast, audiobook or tv programme. Or, maybe try reading books or blogs about food and body positivity. Whatever you fancy!

#2 - Prioritise yourself. It can take time and energy to build a positive relationship with food and our bodies. By recognising these relationships as important and valid, we prioritise ourselves and our own mental wellbeing. Acknowledge your own needs when it comes to the relationship you have with food and your body and know that there is no shame in addressing them.

#3 - Make your feed positive. An easy way to bring some food and body positivity into your life is to follow one of the great accounts making Instagram a better place. Learn more about different food and body movements while breaking up the flow of picture-perfect influencer posts. We like following @sofiehagendk, @fullerfigurefullerbust, @sophjbutler, @crutches_and_spice, @danaemerger, @erinnovakowski, @iamdaniadriana - and so many more. We would love to hear your recommendations in the comments!

Slide 7 and 8: What brings us, at LUNA and GUFAB, food and body JOY?

- I used to go gym with my friends in my last year at Uni but we only did classes we found fun like Zumba and we would just laugh so much during the class and have so much fun and the music was really uplifting so that made me feel body positive and just happy and yeah I miss it so much, just dancing with friends!- Ayah
- Dancing!
- Being outside and feeling the sun, rain, and wind. Sometimes running, sometimes walking, sometimes sitting.
- Sharing food and cooking for other people is something which brings me food joy. I like eating with my flatmates as it brings our focus to our enjoyment of the food rather than anything else. Jess
- Finding a pair of shoes that you love that work with your mobility aids brings me joy!
- I love to bake bread - it's a great combo of some hard work with hands to nurture and breathe life into something - watch it grow in the warmth and enjoy it fresh and hot !
Amber T
- Baking and dancing round the kitchen!- Amber
- One thing that helps give me food and body joy is focusing on what my body can do, rather than how it looks. This helps bring about more respect for my body, and helps eliminate any food guilt over eating what it wants and deserves. Ruth
- Being in water! On good health days (before COVID) this was swimming, on bad days this is being in the bath
- Cooking and eating with my flatmates. Everyone hypes up what has been cooked, making everyone feel like a chef, and the evenings of eating together feel like celebrations!
- A big bowl of homemade soup- Mirren

(ID- on these slides there is also a picture of a bowl of warm orange soup with toasties to the side, next to Mirren's comment about her soup. The soup was made by Mirren. There is also a picture of some colorfully decorated cupcakes, which look like different flowers. These were made by Amber and are next to her comment about baking!)