

Body Neutrality

WORKBOOK

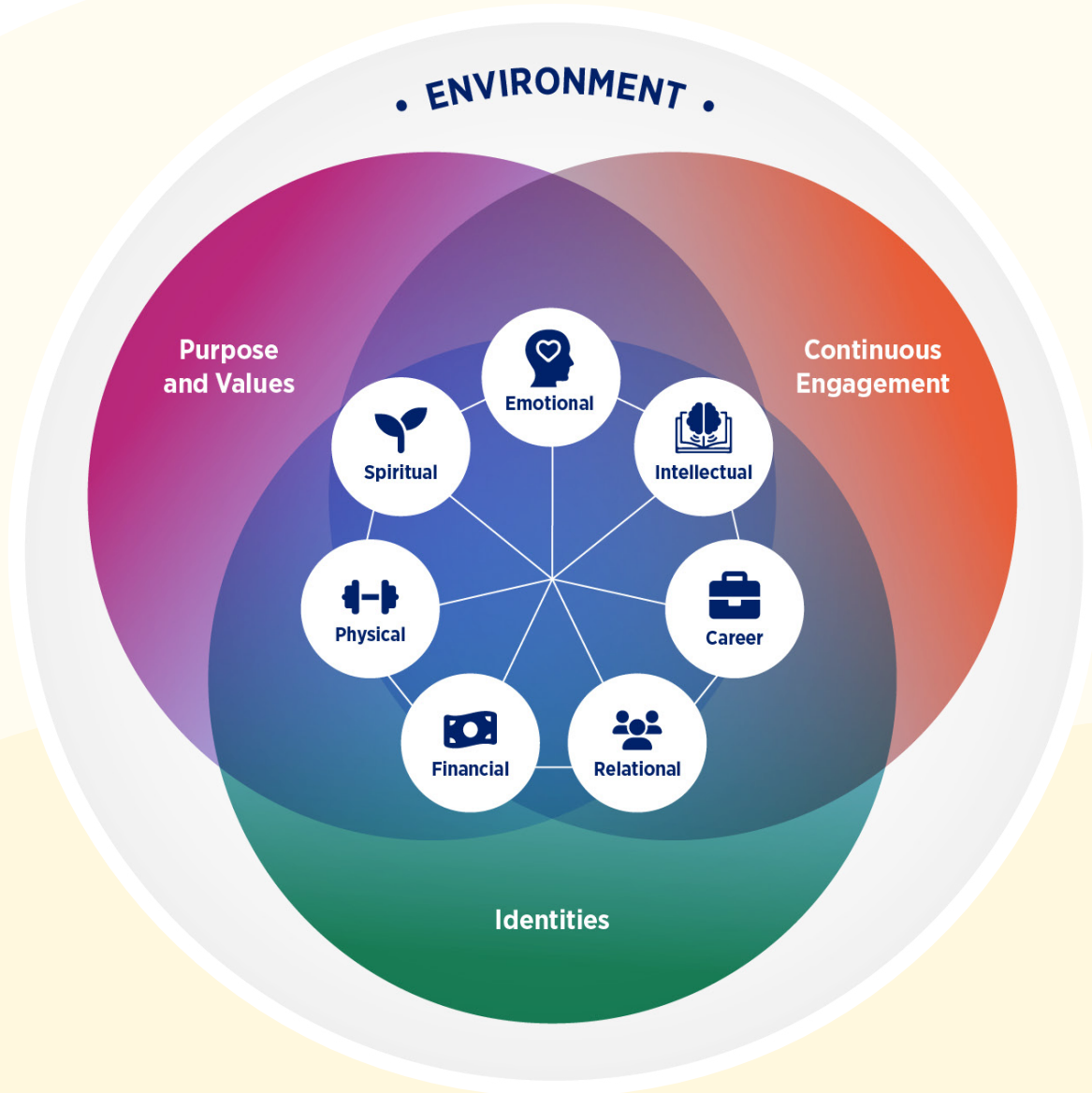


Table of Contents

Dimensions of Well-being: Overview	1
Why discuss body neutrality? What are some keys terms to know?	2
What is body neutrality?	3
Body Neutrality & Self-Compassion	4
Strategies to Practice Self-Compassion	5
Resources	8

Dimensions of Well-being:

OVERVIEW



Well-being is individual to everyone, and it ebbs and flows.

**It's dynamic and changes through your life and will be different for everyone.
Well-being is not something you can achieve or an end goal.**

Why discuss body neutrality?

We recognize that conversations around body image can be extremely personal and potentially activating as you consider your own health journey.

Please note that the activities in this workbook will center around reframing how we think about bodies, as our relationship with our bodies can ebb and flow over time. This can be at different life-stages, or can even change day-to-day. Body neutrality is about meeting ourselves where we are at and respecting that it may not be perfect.

What are some keys terms to know?



Body Image:

Your perception, thoughts, and feeling/emotions that you have about your body



Body Neutrality:

Neither loving, nor hating one's body; based in acceptance and respect for one's body



Self-Compassion:

Treating oneself with warmth and understanding and recognizing that it's human to make mistakes



Activity:

**What cultural factors influence your body image?
Select the factors which personally impact you!**

☐ Social media
(ex: fashion trends, fads, celebrities)

☐ Social/political landscapes

☐ Family/peer influence

☐ Self-esteem

☐ Values

☐ Societal expectations

What is body neutrality?

Body neutrality:

Focuses on appreciating our bodies for their function, what it does for us



Neither loving, nor hating our bodies —but, demonstrating respect for it — your value is not tied to it

Body positivity:

A perspective which notes that you should love or appreciate your body, no matter what and feeling good about how one looks



Rooted in having a positive self-image of your body

Why is body neutrality inclusive?

True body neutrality considers and respects different identities and lives experiences. Having a body is a universal human experience.

Bodies change over time for many reasons and people may experience:

- Different approaches to what is 'healthy' or 'normal'. Managing a chronic disease or disability changes what being normal means for a person.
- May move away from Eurocentric or "western" beauty standards and expand how we define 'looks' or beauty based on unique physical characteristics.
- Valuing different personal styles or tastes which reflect a person's sense of self, rather than focusing on their body or physical appearance. This could help people feel more aligned with their gender identity, how they wish to present to the world, or how they want to look.
- Experiencing comparisons with body types that are online or idealized on social media.
- Different body shapes and sizes.



Activity:

Write your own examples of affirmations or body neutral statements.

By using body neutral statements, we can understand, appreciate, and allow our bodies to exist without our self-worth being tied to our appearances. This practice offers less pressure and allows space for acceptance of how your body is in the moment, who we are as people, and seeing others for who they are, in a way that is sustainable and realistic. *Examples: I accept my body as it is; my body works hard and deserves kindness; My body helps me in many ways.*

Body Neutrality & Self-Compassion



Practicing self-compassion and adopting a growth mindset.

Self-compassion involves treating yourself the way you treat your close friends or loved ones, not comparing yourself to others, and recognizing that you as a person can change. Mindfulness, self-kindness, common humanity are all elements of self-compassion.

Fixed v. Growth Mindset

People can use different approaches to learning, growing, and changing behavior.

A fixed mindset is one where we assume that we cannot change our behavior or qualities. In a growth mindset, we think about how people can change their approach and use a different perspective. When it comes to body neutrality, shifting to a growth mindset can help you understand the ever-changing nature of your body and the various stages it goes through over time.



Strategies to Practice Self-Compassion

Silencing your 'inner gremlin'. Your gremlin is the inner critic or voice inside your head that forwards fear, doubt, or insecurity. We all have an inner gremlin, but we can use strategies to recognize this voice, name it, and adopt change.

The accumulation of our experiences can contribute to a cycle of negative self-talk or lack of self-compassion when thinking about body image. Silencing your inner gremlin is a way to work towards adopting a body neutral mindset.



Activity:

What does your gremlin look like?

Describe or draw what your gremlin looks like (color, size, etc.)

5 R's

1. Recognize

2. Refute

3. Remove

4. Regain

5. Return

Recognize: Identify any negative thoughts, ask yourself whether they're coming from your "gremlin". Notice any patterns.

Refute: Challenge the thoughts from your "gremlin". What is actually true?

Remove: Take away your inner critic and stop giving your "gremlin" attention. By doing this you'll avoid negative self-talk.

Regain: Rebuild confidence in yourself by remembering that you are where you're meant to be.

Return: Bring your focus back to the present.



Activity: Reflection Questions

- When does your inner gremlin typically come out?
- Did you notice that you treat yourself differently than how you would show up for someone else?
- What can you do to show yourself compassion?



Activity:

Write a letter to yourself.

Why not treat yourself like you would treat a friend? What would you say to treat yourself with kindness?



Be consistent!
This will help you adopt a growth-oriented mindset.

By practicing body neutrality over time, and learning ways to stop comparing yourself to others, you can develop self-efficacy and self-compassion over time to give yourself the grace you extend to others.

Additional Strategies:

- Take a self-compassion break
- Listen to self-compassion meditation
- Keep a self-compassion journal



Curious to dive deeper into body neutrality?
Meet with Alice!

Scan the QR to learn more:



Resources

Columbia University

- **Alice! Health Promotion**
 - Health Education Visits
 - Wellness Coaching
- **Counseling & Psychological Services**
- **Disability Services**
- **Nutritionist, Medical Services**
- **Dodge Fitness Center**

External Resources

- [Ways to Feel Better About Our Bodies](#)
- [Steps to Body Neutrality](#)
- [Ways to Practice Body Neutrality](#)
- [Why Body Neutrality is Important](#)
- [Shifting from Body Positivity to Body Neutrality](#)
- [Psychology Today Therapists](#)
- [Public Programs](#)
- [Fitness Videos, Classes, Discounts and More](#)
- [Resources Based on Needs](#)
- [Make NYC Your Gym](#)

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