

Abstract

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In the last decade, the body image literature has begun to extend beyond a primary focus on body image disturbances and examine the construct of positive body image. Similarly, “Body positivity” is a growing social media trend that seeks to challenge dominant societal appearance ideals and promote acceptance and appreciation of all bodies and appearances. The present study provides a content analysis of body positive posts on Instagram. A set of 640 Instagram posts sampled from popular body positive accounts were coded for physical appearance-related attributes and central themes featured. Results showed that body positive imagery typically depicted a broad range of body sizes and appearances. Additionally, while a proportion of posts were appearance-focused, the majority of posts conveyed messages aligned with theoretical definitions of positive body image. This study clarifies body positive content on Instagram, as well as highlights points of overlap and distinction from academic principles of positive body image and other appearance-focused social media content. Accordingly, the results offer theoretical and practical implications for future research and prevention efforts.

17

1. Introduction

18 It is well established that exposure to culturally-based beauty ideals in the media is
19 associated with body dissatisfaction, weight concern, thin-ideal internalisation, and
20 disordered eating behaviours in women (Frederick, Daniels, Bates, & Tylka, 2017; Grabe,
21 Ward, & Hyde, 2008; Groesz, Levine, & Murnen, 2002). More recently, people are
22 increasingly turning to *social* media as a dominant source of information about social norms
23 and appearance standards (Bair, Kelly, Serdar, & Mazzeo, 2012). Over 3 billion people use
24 social media worldwide, with 89% of young adults checking their social media accounts at
25 least once per day, and women checking even more frequently (Pew Research Center, 2018).
26 Recent research suggests that, as with traditional media, appearance-focused social media use
27 is positively associated with thin-ideal internalisation, self-objectification, body
28 dissatisfaction, and disordered eating behaviours in women (Cohen, Newton-John, & Slater,
29 2017, 2018).

30 1.1. Appearance Ideals on Social Media

31 Two predominant appearance ideals presented on social media are *thinspiration*
32 (visual or textual images intended to inspire weight loss), and *fitspiration* (motivational
33 images and text designed to inspire people to attain fitness goals). Content analyses of online
34 media depicting *thinspiration* and *fitspiration* have found that these images typically portray
35 scantily-clad women with ultra-thin or thin-athletic bodies in sexually objectifying poses
36 (Carrotte, Prichard, & Lim, 2017; Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018).
37 Most images contain messages that glorify the thin or thin and toned ideals, as well as
38 promote dietary restraint and exercise for appearance-motivated reasons (Boepple, Ata, Rum,
39 & Thompson, 2016; Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017; Wick & Harriger, 2018). Given that
40 *fitspiration* is designed to motivate exercise and health, one may assume that it is healthier
41 than *thinspiration*. However, Boepple and Thompson (2016) found that *thinspiration* and

42 *fitspiration* online content did not differ on guilt-inducing messages regarding weight or the
43 body, fat stigmatisation, the presence of objectifying phrases, and dieting messages, with
44 88% of *thinspiration* and 80% of *fitspiration* content containing one or more of these
45 messages. It is not surprising then, that acute exposure to such content has been found to
46 increase body dissatisfaction, negative mood, and decrease appearance self-esteem in women
47 (Robinson et al., 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015).

48 **1.2. Body Positivity**

49 In response to the dominant appearance-ideal messages in traditional and social
50 media, there has been growing momentum to reject these narrowly-defined and inaccessible
51 body ideals in favour of a more inclusive and positive conceptualisation of body image. In
52 popular culture, this momentum has been termed the “body positive movement” or “body
53 positivity.” This movement stems from the 1960s feminist-grounded fat acceptance
54 movement that emerged in reaction to the rise in anti-fat discourse in Canada and the United
55 States at the time (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015). The fat acceptance movement aimed to
56 encourage critical debate about societal assumptions of body image and protest
57 discrimination against fat people (Afful & Ricciardelli, 2015). Similarly, body positivity aims
58 to challenge the prevailing thin-ideal messages in the media and foster acceptance and
59 appreciation of bodies of all shapes, sizes, and appearances (Cwynar-Horta, 2016).

60 In recent years, body positivity has become popularised through the photo-based
61 social networking site, Instagram, which has seen a rise in body positive Instagram accounts.
62 A search of the hashtag #bodypositive on Instagram elicits 7,069,114 posts and
63 #bodypositivity shows 2,195,968 posts (Instagram, September 2018). These hashtags
64 accompany a variety of imagery, including “fat” women practicing yoga with captions like
65 “fat girls can be active, fit and fabulous too!”, and plus-size fashion bloggers wearing the
66 latest trends previously reserved for thin-ideal runway models, with hashtags like

67 #plussizefashion and #styleisizeless. Such posts intend to increase the visibility and
68 normalisation of otherwise underrepresented bodies in traditional media (Saguy & Ward,
69 2011). Other popular body positive accounts share their journeys from body hatred and/or
70 disordered eating to body acceptance and appreciation. For example, @bodyposipanda, one
71 of the most prominent body positive “influencers”¹ on Instagram, describes herself as a
72 “body positive babe [and] anorexia conqueror.” On her Instagram account, she shares her
73 experiences recovering from anorexia nervosa with her 1 million followers and posts
74 messages about accepting one’s body as it is, seeing “beauty in the rolls, folds, lumps and
75 curves on your body.”

76 Unlike traditional media consumption, social media users are both passive consumers
77 and active creators of content. Social networking sites, like Instagram, have become one of
78 the most dominant and influential mediums to cultivate awareness, foster online communities
79 and advocate for social change at a global level (Kasana, 2014). Accordingly, Instagram
80 offers body positive advocates a global platform to reframe the prevailing discourse on body
81 image, beauty, and health in the media to be more inclusive and affirmative. This has been
82 accompanied by a barrage of media outlets urging readers to follow the top body positive
83 Instagram accounts with headlines like “7 Body-Positive Instagram Accounts To Follow For
84 A Confidence Boost” (Moss, 2017) and “13 Body-Positive Influencers You Should
85 Follow on Instagram” (Williams & Williams, 2017).

86 **1.3. Positive Body Image in Research**

87 This shift towards positive body image has also been reflected in the body image
88 scholarship. In the last decade, the body image literature has begun to embrace a more

¹ Influencer is a term used to describe a social media user who has garnered a significant number of followers and has thus established credibility in their specific domain. They therefore have the credibility and reach necessary to influence the behaviour and opinions of a large audience of followers (Halzack, 2016).

89 holistic understanding of body image by moving beyond a singular focus on body image
90 *disturbance* and investigating the concept of *positive* body image (Tylka, 2012, 2018).
91 Positive body image has been defined as an overarching love and respect for the body,
92 consisting of six core components: (1) body appreciation (gratitude for the function, health,
93 and unique features of the body), (2) body acceptance and love (accepting aspects of the body
94 that are inconsistent with idealised media images), (3) conceptualising beauty broadly
95 (perceiving beauty based on a variety of appearances and internal characteristics), (4)
96 adaptive investment in body care² (tending to the body’s needs through exercise, sleep,
97 hydration etc.), (5) inner positivity (feeling beautiful on the inside which may radiate to the
98 external appearance and behaviour, e.g., kindness, mindfulness), and (6) protective filtering
99 of information (rejecting negative body-related information while accepting positive
100 information) (Tylka, 2012, 2018; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b).

101 A growing body of research shows that positive body image is related to greater
102 emotional, psychological, and social well-being, as well as physical health outcomes
103 (Andrew, Tiggemann, & Clark, 2016a, 2016b; Swami, Weis, Barron, & Furnham, 2018;
104 Tylka, 2018). Moreover, research has found associations between positive body image and
105 adaptive behavioural outcomes, including healthier eating patterns in adolescent and adult
106 women (Andrew, Tiggemann, & Clark, 2014; Andrew et al., 2016b; Augustus-Horvath &
107 Tylka, 2011), prosocial behaviour and self-care (Tylka, 2012), increased exercise frequency
108 (Homan & Tylka, 2014), and improved sexual functioning (Satinsky, Reece, Dennis,
109 Sanders, & Bardzell, 2012).

² This was previously called “adaptive investment in appearance” (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b) but for the purpose of ease of interpretation and coding in this study, it will be referred to as “adaptive investment in body care” as recommended by T. L. Tylka (Personal communication, January 15, 2018).

110 Research based on consumer preferences suggests that providing women with greater
111 diversity of appearances in media images and developing social networks that focus on
112 positive, non-appearance focused qualities, are worthwhile avenues to promote positive body
113 image at a macro-level (Paraskeva, Lewis-Smith, & Diedrichs, 2017). Qualitative research
114 has shown that individuals with a positive body image tend to interpret appearance-related
115 information in a body-protective manner, internalising positive information and rejecting or
116 reframing negative information (Holmqvist & Frisé, 2012; Wood-Barcalow, Tylka, &
117 Augustus-Horvath, 2010). Accordingly, body positive Instagram accounts, which purport to
118 offer online communities dedicated to sharing appearance-ideal resistance strategies and
119 fostering appreciation for a wider variety of body appearances, may play an important role in
120 the development and maintenance of positive body image in young women. Therefore, it is
121 important to examine body positivity on social media in order to enrich our understanding of
122 consumer experiences of positive body image, and potentially discover a novel avenue to
123 promote positive body image at a macro-level.

124 **1.4. Potential Negatives of Body Positive Social Media Content**

125 Despite the ostensible benefits of body positive content on social media, some
126 researchers have questioned whether the large number of images of women's bodies and the
127 emphasis on "loving your looks" continues to reinforce, rather than nullify, society's
128 preoccupation with appearance over other attributes (Webb, Vinoski, Bonar, Davies, & Etzel,
129 2017a). Others are critical that, aside from portraying higher weight individuals, influential
130 body positive accounts typically depict conventionally attractive White women and often
131 exclude other marginalised bodies, such as diverse ethnicities, individuals with a physical
132 disability, and gender non-conforming bodies (Dalessandro, 2016). Moreover, some critics
133 argue that, just like thin-ideal accounts, body positive accounts are becoming commodified as
134 they grow in popularity, whereby influencers are paid to promote commercial products

135 (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). Cwynar-Horta (2016) further argues that, during this
136 commodification process, body positive advocates deviate from their initial body positive
137 ideals and their Instagram content begins to resemble the more dominant appearance-focused
138 content on Instagram.

139 Despite these concerns, no research to date has systematically examined body positive
140 content on social media to determine whether it does in fact promote what it intends. For
141 example, *fitspiration* is ostensibly intended to promote health and fitness, yet content
142 analyses have found that it promotes thinness and disordered eating (Boepple et al., 2016;
143 Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018; Wick & Harriger, 2018). In
144 addition, viewing such content has been found to be associated with greater body
145 dissatisfaction and have no relationship with actual exercise behaviour (Robinson et al.,
146 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). Similarly, research examining body positive content is
147 necessary to further develop our understanding of the emerging social and cultural influences
148 that may be contributing to the shifting body image landscape.

149 One content analysis, however, examined the different types of fat acceptance
150 messages on Instagram by comparing 200 images tagged with the hashtag “#fatspiration” and
151 200 images tagged with “#healthateverysize” (Webb et al., 2017a). Images across both
152 groups were found to represent predominantly White women of high “normal weight” to low
153 “overweight” body mass index (BMI). Despite these similarities, images associated with
154 #fatspiration more frequently conveyed messages of fat acceptance through fashion and
155 beauty-related activism (i.e., selfies, clothing item or fashion accessory prominently featured,
156 additional fashion and beauty hashtags), whereas images tagged with #healthateverysize
157 more often endorsed physical activity, health, and wellness. Surprisingly, posts tagged with
158 #healthateverysize were associated with fat stigmatising content. Webb et al. (2017a)
159 speculated that this weight stigmatising content may stem from the public’s scepticism that

160 an individual can be both “fat and fit,” and the resulting belief that this type of content may
161 negatively impact users’ motivation to seek support for engaging in healthy lifestyle
162 behaviours. Whilst this content analysis demonstrated the multi-faceted nature of fat
163 acceptance messages on Instagram, it did not examine broader body positive content (Webb
164 et al., 2017a).

165 Accordingly, despite body positivity’s growing influence and popularity on
166 Instagram, it remains unclear what messages are being disseminated across leading body
167 positive accounts, and how closely these messages align with the theoretical understandings
168 of positive body image. If predominant body positive accounts are aligned with positive body
169 image constructs, this may present a unique avenue to foster positive body image in young
170 women. Alternatively, if appearance-ideal attributes and messages are heavily featured
171 instead, this type of imagery may contribute to negative body image similar to other
172 appearance-focused social media content. Therefore, a systematic analysis of this body
173 positive content may provide valuable information for future prevention research and
174 initiatives.

175 **1.5. The Present Study**

176 The present study aimed to investigate the content depicted in prominent body
177 positive Instagram accounts, and to examine how closely this content aligns with the
178 theoretical core components of positive body image, as outlined by Tylka (2012, 2018) and
179 expanded by Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015b). Previous content analyses of *fitspiration*
180 and *thinspiration* social media content have found that the women depicted in these images
181 typically subscribe to ultra-thin or thin-athletic body ideals and are often posing in an
182 objectified way. We therefore aimed to examine the visual depiction of individuals in body
183 positive accounts, in terms of appearance and level of objectification. In response to the
184 potential criticism of body positive accounts as still being heavily focused on appearance, a

185 further aim was to examine appearance-focused themes. Based on a scoping review of
186 current popular accounts (elaborated in the Method), we hypothesised that body positive
187 Instagram accounts would depict a broad range of bodies and depict themes congruent with
188 positive body image, but would also contain appearance-focused content.

189 2. Method

190 2.1. Sample

191 To acquire the sample frame of popular body positive Instagram accounts, the search
192 term “top body positive Instagram accounts” was entered into the three most used online
193 search engines (Google, Bing, and Yahoo!). This purposive sampling approach is consistent
194 with previous content analyses interested in the predominant appearance-related messages
195 being communicated to consumers in magazines, books, and television (Aubrey, 2010;
196 Boepple et al., 2016; Conlin & Bissell, 2014; Herbozo, Tantleff-Dunn, Gokee-Larose, &
197 Thompson, 2004; Wasylkiw, Emms, Meuse, & Poirier, 2009). The search was conducted in
198 January 2018 from a public library computer on a private browser to avoid targeted responses
199 based on previous search histories and cookies. Consistent with Boepple et al. (2016), links
200 were sampled from the first webpage returned by each search engine, because this presents
201 the most widely accessed and influential websites (Hindman, Tsioutsoulouklis, & Johnson,
202 2003).

203 The search returned 16 unique links. Links were excluded if they did not list
204 individual accounts ($n = 1$) or if they were older than December 2016 ($n = 4$), yielding a final
205 sample frame of 11 website articles listing 67 unique Instagram accounts in total. Inclusion of
206 each account was determined by four main criteria: (1) popularity (minimum 50,000
207 followers; $n = 20$ removed), (2) activity level on Instagram (minimum 100 posts, including
208 the most recent post being made within two weeks of sampling; $n = 4$ removed), (3) body
209 positive-related content (e.g., account biography references body positivity/positive body

210 image; $n = 10$ removed), and (4) English as primary language used in posts ($n = 1$ removed).

211 All body positive accounts that met criteria were retained for coding ($n = 32$).

212 Twenty posts were then randomly sampled from each account, generating a final
213 sample of 640 posts for coding. The target sample size was selected based on previous
214 research (Boepple & Thompson, 2016; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). Posts were randomly
215 sampled using a random number generator across the 2017 calendar year to ensure the
216 sample represented up-to-date body positive content without the potential biases that would
217 arise from sampling consecutive posts during a particular week or month (e.g., only summer).

218 **2.2. Coding Procedures**

219 Since there was no prior codebook of body positive content on social media, a
220 codebook was created for the present study based on theoretical concepts, prior content
221 analyses of social media content, and a scoping review of body positive content. Specifically,
222 the body positive coding categories were developed based on Tylka (2012, 2018) and Tylka
223 and Wood-Barcalow's (2015b) core components of positive body image. Appearance-
224 focused coding categories were derived from previous content analyses of appearance-related
225 content on social media (Boepple et al., 2016; Webb et al., 2017a). In addition, the first and
226 second authors conducted an initial scoping review of the images to determine which
227 variables were relevant for the analysis. Six additional attributes/themes emerged from this
228 scoping review: two additional demographic and body-related attributes (i.e., visible physical
229 disability and perceived "flaws") and four other relevant themes (i.e., commercialism, mental
230 health, eating disorders, and activism).

231 The first author and the main coder (second author, postgraduate psychology student)
232 met for a series of training sessions involving an iterative process of consensus coding and
233 making updates to the original codebook. Following this process, two rounds of pilot coding
234 were conducted using posts captured in February 2018; 32 posts were analysed each time

235 (not included in the final analysis). Each coder rated the posts independently and then met to
236 discuss any discrepancies. This resulted in finalising the coding instrument. Following
237 training and codebook refinement, the main coder went on to code all 640 official posts. To
238 establish inter-rater agreement and reliability (Table 2), a second coder (third author, PhD-
239 level clinical psychologist) was trained in the coding procedures and coded a random
240 selection of 10% of the posts for all study variables according to the codebook. The total
241 agreement across all coding was 94.23%, indicating a high level of inter-coder agreement.
242 Inter-rater reliability was calculated for nominal variables using Cohen's Kappa (average κ
243 =.85, indicating high reliability; Landis & Koch, 1977), and for continuous variables using
244 two-way mixed intra-class correlation coefficients (average ICC = .95, indicating excellent
245 reliability; Cicchetti, 1994). A third coder resolved any discrepancies.

246 **2.3. Coding Attributes and Themes**

247 The Instagram posts were coded on three levels: (1) Imagery (not including caption);
248 (2) Human subjects (if present in Imagery); and (3) Post themes (including imagery, caption,
249 and hashtags).

250 **2.3.1. Imagery.** The visual component of posts was coded as: (a) visual image only
251 (human figure/s, cartoon figure/s of humans, or non-human image of nature, food, animals);
252 (b) text only (motivational quote, educational text, humorous text, opinion, other); (c) visual
253 image and text combined (e.g., quote overlaid on an image); or (d) video.

254 **2.3.2. Human subjects.** Imagery containing humans or cartoon figures of humans
255 were coded further for demographics, body-related attributes, clothing, activity, and
256 objectification. If the imagery contained more than one dominant human figure, each figure
257 was coded individually for these features. Still images and videos were coded in the same
258 way, with videos coded at the overall video level in line with prior content analyses of video
259 content (see for example, Aubrey & Frisby, 2011).

260 **2.3.2.1. Demographics.** In line with Webb et al.'s (2017a; 2017b) rating schemes,
261 human subjects were coded for perceived gender (female, male, other), age range (<15-years-
262 old, 15-20-years-old, 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s or older), and race/ethnicity (African-
263 American/Black, Asian, White, Indigenous, Middle Eastern, or other). Additionally, subjects
264 were coded for the presence of a physical difference or disability (e.g., missing limb,
265 wheelchair, obvious scarring on body, and colostomy bag).

266 **2.3.2.2. Body-related attributes.** Consistent with previous content analyses of
267 multiethnic samples (Thompson-Brenner, Boisseau, & Paul, 2011; Webb et al., 2017b), the
268 subjects' body size was rated according to Pulvers' (2004) Figure Rating Scale. This scale
269 consists of nine drawings depicting progressively larger body sizes (correlating with BMI
270 scores), ranging from underweight (Figure 1) to obese III (Figure 9; Pulvers, Bachand,
271 Nollen, Guo, & Ahluwalia, 2013). Ratings consisted of selecting the figure that most closely
272 corresponded to the body size of the human figure in the image. Following Boepple et al.
273 (2016), coders rated the extent to which the subject met other culturally-based beauty ideals
274 (i.e., clear, blemish free skin; neat, shiny hair; symmetrical features; and straight, white
275 teeth). These features were considered collectively to give an overall rating, ranging from 1 =
276 not at all to 4 = to a great extent. Based on a scoping review of body positive content,
277 subjects were also coded for the presence or absence of perceived "flaws" visible in the
278 image (i.e., attributes incongruent with societal beauty ideals such as cellulite, stretch marks,
279 acne, bodily hair, and rolls of fat on stomach).

280 **2.3.2.3. Clothing, activity, and objectification.** The subject's level of
281 clothing/exposure was coded in line with previous research (Conlin & Bissell, 2014; Simpson
282 & Mazzeo, 2017; Wasylkiw et al., 2009; Webb et al., 2017b). Clothing/exposure was
283 classified as 1 = not at all revealing (e.g., long pants and long-sleeve shirt, long dress), 2 =
284 slightly revealing (e.g., shorts and top, shorts and skirt, sleeveless dress), 3 = moderately

285 revealing (e.g., tight workout attire, midriff top, short-shorts, mini skirt), 4 = very revealing
286 (e.g., bathing suit, lingerie), 5 = extremely revealing (e.g., nude), or 0 = not shown (e.g., face
287 only). In line with previous content analyses (Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017; Tiggemann &
288 Zaccardo, 2018; Wasylkiw et al., 2009; Webb et al., 2017b), the activity in which the subject
289 was engaging in was categorised as: active (exercising or moving) or non-active (glamour
290 posing or passive posture). Activities coded as “exercising” included exercises such as
291 running, gym workouts, and active yoga poses, whereas “moving” referred to any general
292 movement of the body not for exercise (e.g., “jumping for joy”, shaking the body, frolicking
293 on the beach). Finally, subjects were coded for the presence or absence of three objectifying
294 features: focus on a specific body part, a sexually suggestive pose, or absence of a clearly
295 visible head and/or face (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018).

296 **2.3.3. Post themes.** Each image and caption (including relevant hashtags) were coded
297 together to determine the overall theme of the post. Thematic codes were not mutually
298 exclusive, such that multiple thematic codes could be applied to one post. More detail for
299 each theme can be found in Table 1.

300 **2.3.3.1. Positive body image themes.** Posts were coded for the presence of the six-
301 core positive body image themes: (1) body appreciation, (2) body acceptance/love, (3)
302 conceptualising beauty broadly, (4) adaptive investment in body care, (5) inner positivity, and
303 (6) protective filtering information in a body-protective manner.

304 **2.3.3.2. Appearance-focused themes.** Appearance-focused themes were adapted from
305 Boepple et al. (2016) and Webb et al.’s (2017a) analyses and included: (1) weight
306 loss/exercise/diet-appearance, (2) clothing/beauty-appearance, (3) thin praise, (4) weight/fat
307 stigmatising, (5) thin stigmatising, and (6) body/weight/food shame.

308 **2.3.3.3. Other relevant themes.** Finally, based on a scoping review of the body
309 positive content, other common themes emerged that were included as coding variables: (1)
310 commercialism; (2) mental health; (3) eating disorders; and (4) activism.

311 **3. Results**

312 **3.1. Imagery**

313 Overall, 71.88% of posts were visual images only, 12.34% were videos, 10.47%
314 visual and text combined, and 5.31% text only. Of the imagery containing text (i.e., “visual
315 and text combined,” and “text only”), 41.58% were rated as motivational, 24.75%
316 educational, 21.78% opinion, 3.96% humorous, and 7.92% other. Majority of imagery
317 (90.78%) contained at least one human figure.

318 **3.2. Human Subjects**

319 **3.2.1. Demographics.** Of the imagery that contained at least one human figure,
320 95.87% contained a female, 5.85% contained a male, and zero contained a non-binary person.
321 Of the imagery that contained at least one human figure, 51.12% featured a human coded as
322 White, 35.11% as African-American/Black, 12.22% as Asian, 6.2% as Other, 3.10% as
323 Middle Eastern, and 2.58% ethnicity could not be determined. The majority (65.58%) of
324 imagery containing humans depicted humans in their 20s, followed by 22.20% in their 30s,
325 4.30% perceived to be adolescent or younger, and only 2.75% perceived to be in their 40s or
326 older. Only 2.24% of imagery featured human figures with a visible physical disability.

327 **3.2.2. Body-related attributes.** Body sizes ranged from underweight (Figure 1) to
328 obese III (Figure 9; Pulvers et al., 2013). Only 1.72% of imagery containing humans featured
329 bodies perceived as underweight (Figures 1-2), 25.81% as normal weight (Figures 3-4),
330 33.22% as overweight (Figure 5) and 35.11% as obese (Figures 6-9). Just under half
331 (39.59%) of imagery containing a human depicted at least one perceived “flaw,” with the
332 most common “flaw” displayed being cellulite (29.19% of all occurrences), followed by

333 stomach rolls/soft belly (24.05%), stretch marks (16.49%), acne/skin blemishes (5.41%), and
334 bodily hair (2.43%). Additionally, other “flaws” were depicted including facial hair, scars,
335 wrinkles, and rolls of fat on the back (24.32%). Apart from body weight, 25.47% of imagery
336 containing humans featured humans who met other culturally-based beauty ideals to a great
337 extent, 17.97% somewhat, 20.16% very little, and 24.22% did not at all meet other culturally-
338 based beauty ideals.

339 **3.2.3. Clothing, activity, and objectification.** Of the imagery containing humans,
340 83.82% were in a non-action pose and 15.15% in an action pose (i.e., exercise or movement).
341 Almost one third (31.67%) of imagery containing humans depicted bodies in extremely
342 revealing (5.85%) or very revealing (25.82%) clothing, 30.46% were in moderately
343 revealing, 25.13% in slightly revealing, and 14.29% not at all revealing clothing. Just over a
344 third (34.25%) of imagery of humans featured at least one of the specified aspects of
345 objectification; the majority were posing in a suggestive manner (84.42% of instances of
346 objectification), followed by the head/face being absent or not clearly visible (24.12%), and a
347 specific body part being the focus of the image (22.61%).

348 **3.3. Post Themes**

349 **3.3.1. Positive body image themes.** Overall, 80.15% (513/640) of all posts contained
350 at least one explicit positive body image theme, with a total of 875 positive body image
351 themes across all posts. Of the posts containing at least one positive body image theme, the
352 most frequent theme depicted was conceptualising beauty broadly (65.89%), followed by
353 body acceptance/love (33.53%), inner positivity (31.38%), protective filtering of information
354 in a body-protective manner (18.13%), adaptive investment in body care (11.11%), and body
355 appreciation (10.53%).

356 **3.3.2. Appearance-focused themes.** Overall, 41.09% (263/640) of all posts contained
357 at least one appearance-focused theme, with a total of 264 appearance-focused themes across

358 all posts. Almost all of the posts that were coded for appearance-focused themes depicted
359 clothing/beauty-appearance (98.86%), with only 1.52% of appearance-focused posts
360 depicting weight loss/exercise/diet-appearance. There were no instances of thin praise,
361 weight/fat stigmatisation, thin stigmatisation, or body/weight food shame (all 0%). Of note,
362 only 2.50% of all posts featured food and 4.00% featured exercise.

363 **3.3.3. Other relevant themes.** Overall, 39.53% (253/640) of all posts were rated as
364 promoting a commercial product (26.09% of these posts included self-promotion, e.g.,
365 personal blog, workshop, or book). Mental health was referred to in 1.88% of all posts and
366 eating disorders were referenced in 3.75% of all posts. Activism/rhetoric was present in
367 16.09% of all posts, with 123 counts of activism across 103 posts. Of the posts containing an
368 activist message, the majority were related to feminism (44.66%), followed by racial equality
369 (34.95%), LGBTQI+ rights (18.45%), environmentalism (7.77%), disability rights (7.77%),
370 and other (5.83%).

371 **4. Discussion**

372 **4.1. Body Positive Attributes and Themes**

373 The present study aimed to provide a detailed content analysis of posts found on
374 popular body positive accounts on Instagram. In line with our hypothesis regarding body
375 attributes, the analysis clearly showed that the body positive accounts depicted diverse body
376 sizes, with just over two thirds of bodies perceived to meet overweight or obese BMI criteria.
377 This diversity is in contrast to content analyses showing that *thinspiration* and *fitspiration*
378 images represent a limited range of body sizes, with an overwhelming majority of the bodies
379 featured being perceived as thin and toned (ranging from 75.2% - 97.82%; Boepple et al.,
380 2016; Carrotte et al., 2017; Talbot, Gavin, van Steen, & Morey, 2017; Tiggemann &
381 Zaccardo, 2018). Further, in contrast to Boepple et al. (2016), who found that majority of
382 *fitspiration* images featured women who met culturally-based standards of beauty ideals, the

383 body positive posts contained more diversity in the extent to which individuals pictured met
384 culturally-based beauty ideals.

385 Almost half of the imagery of human bodies displayed attributes incongruent with
386 societal beauty ideals such as cellulite, stomach rolls, stretch marks, and skin blemishes. This
387 finding is unique, given that social media feeds are often referred to as “highlight reels”
388 (Steers, Wickham, & Acitelli, 2014; Weinstein, 2017; Wiederhold, 2018). Social media users
389 have been found to portray their best version of themselves, carefully posing, selecting, and
390 even editing their photos before posting to hide or remove such societally deemed “flaws”
391 (Cohen et al., 2018; Fox & Vendemia, 2016). Acne, cellulite, and stretch marks are only
392 typically depicted in mainstream media in the context of a celebrity’s body being scrutinised
393 for such “flaws,” or an advertisement for a beauty product to eliminate them.

394 These findings of diverse body attributes are somewhat contrary to criticism that
395 popular body positive accounts typically depict conventionally attractive White women
396 (Dalessandro, 2016). Compared to the largely White samples found in other online trends
397 (e.g., Fitspiration, Fatspiration, and Health at Every Size; Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017; Webb et
398 al., 2017a), only half of the current sample were rated as White. Nevertheless, the posts
399 predominantly featured female subjects in their 20s, which is similar to other social media
400 trends (e.g., Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015; Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo,
401 2018), and accordingly there may be scope for body positive accounts to include greater
402 diversity of age and gender.

403 In addition to examining the body attributes displayed in body positive posts on
404 Instagram, the current study was also interested in how body positive content aligns with the
405 theoretical definition of positive body image. In support of the hypothesis, an overwhelming
406 majority of posts contained messages in line with at least one of the six core features of
407 positive body image (Tylka, 2012, 2018; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). This finding

408 suggests that popular body positive accounts on Instagram currently exemplify core
409 components of positive body image.

410 Of the posts containing positive body image themes, the most common theme was
411 broad conceptualisation of beauty, which was depicted by two thirds of these posts. These
412 posts ranged from cartoon images of a woman’s cellulite and stomach fat with a caption
413 stating “...all those parts you see as flaws whenever you look in the mirror... they are
414 natural, beautiful parts of the human body...,” to an image of @Ashleygraham posing in a
415 bikini for a photoshoot with untouched fat rolls and cellulite, and the caption “Summer is
416 Here. And so am I. #swimsuitsforall.” The next most common theme was body
417 acceptance/love, which included posts like a close-up photo of @harnaamkaur, a British-
418 Indian woman in her 20s with a beard (due to a medical condition), and the caption “Self-
419 love is a sense of self liberation that you feel for yourself for every ‘flaw’ that you have.
420 You’re unique and beautifully special!” A third of body positive posts focused on cultivating
421 inner characteristics and positive feelings (inner positivity), such as an image of a billboard
422 stating, “We get so worried about being pretty. Let’s be pretty kind. Pretty funny. Pretty
423 smart. Pretty strong.”

424 Though less common, a proportion of posts also depicted protective filtering of
425 information in a body-protective manner (e.g., two images of @bodyposipanda side-by-side;
426 the first posed and edited, and the second unposed and unedited with the caption, “the photo
427 on the left is staged as hell....these are the types of images we compare ourselves to
428 everyday!”), adaptive investment in body care (e.g., photo of @nolatrees in a yoga pose with
429 the caption, “time for self-care continuously changes my relationship with my body, with my
430 mind, and with the entire world around me”), and body appreciation (an image of @bostanley
431 surfing in a bikini with the caption, “...when I see a belly or fold in surf shots I love it
432 because I am moving my body in amazing ways because it's strong, capable and healthy”).

433 Taken together, the current findings indicate that body positive accounts on Instagram
434 may provide a unique perspective in an otherwise perfectly manicured environment for
435 young women to view bodies much like their own with natural “lumps, bumps, and curves”
436 that are displayed openly. Previous experimental research has found that viewers’
437 experienced greater acceptance of their own bodies following exposure to bodies that do not
438 conform to the thin-ideal (Williamson & Karazsia, 2018), and self-compassion quotes on
439 Instagram (Slater, Varsani, & Diedrichs, 2017). Notably, a recent experimental study has
440 shown that exposure to body positive content on Instagram has an immediate positive effect
441 on women’s mood, body satisfaction, and body appreciation (Cohen, Fardouly, Newton-John,
442 & Slater, 2019). Further research is necessary to more fully understand the impact of viewing
443 such imagery on viewers’ perceptions of their own bodies.

444 **4.2. Appearance-focused Attributes and Themes**

445 In line with prior content analyses of appearance-focused media content (Boepple et
446 al., 2016; Conlin & Bissell, 2014; Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018;
447 Wasylkiw et al., 2009; Webb et al., 2017a) and objectification theory (Fredrickson &
448 Roberts, 1997), posts were coded for objectifying attributes as well as appearance-focused
449 themes. Interestingly, most subjects were in a non-active pose, and around a third of the
450 women were in very or extremely revealing clothing and featured some degree of
451 objectification, predominantly posing in a suggestive manner. Similarly, over a third of posts
452 emphasised clothing and beauty for appearance. It has been suggested that a focus on
453 appearance is intrinsic to the photo-based platform of Instagram, whereby users primarily
454 post images of themselves explicitly for others to look at (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). Of
455 note, the overall frequency of body exposure, objectification, and appearance-focused themes
456 was considerably lower than in other appearance-focused content analyses (e.g., Boepple et
457 al., 2016; Ghaznavi & Taylor, 2015; Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo,

458 2018). Nevertheless, these findings suggest that a proportion of body positive posts on
459 Instagram may emphasise appearance over other attributes, just like other forms of
460 appearance-focused social media.

461 On the other hand, this appearance focus may be intentional given that a purported
462 aim of body positive advocates on Instagram is to take up space in an arena where their
463 bodies have previously been excluded (Cwynar-Horta, 2016). Indeed, Webb et al. (2017a)
464 similarly pointed out the difficulty teasing apart positive body image and body objectification
465 in fat acceptance communities. Women of larger bodies proudly posing in body-revealing
466 attire could both be seen as an expression of positive body image, demonstrating acceptance
467 of and pride in their body, or self-objectification, reflecting a focus on one's appearance over
468 other attributes (Webb et al., 2017a). This idea is supported by one influential body positive
469 advocate, Megan Crabbe (@bodyposipanda), who stated, "posting pictures that challenge the
470 conventional unrealistic standard of beauty is a way to use the system to change the system"
471 (Ciuca, 2018). Accordingly, when viewed in this context, the photo-based and user-generated
472 features of Instagram may provide a unique platform for body positive advocates to represent
473 a broad range of appearances and bodies as beautiful.

474 Indeed, the majority of posts that were coded for clothing/beauty-appearance were
475 simultaneously coded for Tylka (2012, 2018) and Tylka and Wood-Barcalow's (2015b)
476 positive body image concept of "conceptualising beauty broadly." Furthermore, almost all of
477 the posts coded as "appearance-focused" referred to clothing/beauty-appearance. There were
478 minimal references to more "dysfunctional" appearance-focused themes (i.e., weight
479 loss/exercise/diet-appearance, thin praise, weight/fat stigmatisation, or body/weight/food
480 shame), which are commonly found in *thinspiration* and *fitspiration* content (Boepple et al.,
481 2016; Boepple & Thompson, 2016; Simpson & Mazzeo, 2017). Together, these findings
482 suggest that body positive posts with an appearance-focus are qualitatively different to

483 *thinspiration* and *fitspiration* posts. Nevertheless, the overlap between appearance-focused
484 and positive body image features requires further investigation to determine whether or not it
485 has similar effects on body image as other appearance-focused content.

486 Two additional themes emerged as relatively common in the body positive content:
487 commercialism and activism. Over a third of all posts were rated as promoting a commercial
488 product or self-promotion. This finding is consistent with prior criticism of the
489 commodification of body positivity on social media (Cwynar-Horta, 2016), and is not
490 surprising given that the sample consisted of popular Instagram accounts with at least 50
491 thousand followers each. Typically, such “influencers” with large followings monetise their
492 platforms to earn an income (Smith, Kendall, & Knighton, 2018). This may be through
493 sponsored posts, whereby influencers are paid to feature a brand in their post, or by selling
494 their own products such as a new book or upcoming yoga workshop. However, Cwynar-
495 Horta (2016) also suggested that during the commodification process, the content of body
496 positive accounts diverge from body positive ideals in favour of consumption practices. In
497 contrast to this claim, the current study found that even with 39.5% of posts advertising
498 products, the majority (80%) were still promoting messages consistent with positive body
499 image. Lastly, a sixth of posts encouraged others to support a social cause outside of body
500 positivity, such as feminism, racial equality, and LGBTQIA+ rights. This finding indicates
501 that, though originally created to encourage acceptance of all body sizes, body positive
502 Instagram advocates are expanding their focus to include and advocate for broader forms of
503 equality.

504 Interestingly, there were minimal explicit references to food and exercise across body
505 positive posts. Many body positive advocates and followers are recovering from an eating
506 disorder (Cwynar-Horta, 2016), and therefore it is possible that the minimal references to
507 food and exercise are deliberate. For example, @FatGirlFlow, a body positive activist with an

508 eating disorder history, explicitly aims to “keep dieting out of body positivity” (Petty, 2018).
509 This finding of minimal references to food and exercise (with the exception of yoga) across
510 the posts is also interesting in the context of recent claims that body positivity may promote
511 obesity and adverse health outcomes (Muttarak, 2018). To date there has been no empirical
512 evidence to support this assertion (Alleva & Tylka, 2018). Instead, such claims may reflect an
513 inherent weight bias that equates fat with unhealthy behaviours and assumes accepting one's
514 body means not taking care of it (Puhl & Heuer, 2009).

515 By contrast, research suggests that positive body image is related to health promoting
516 behaviours, including intuitive eating, physical activity, and health-seeking behaviours, and is
517 negatively associated with health compromising behaviours, such as dieting, alcohol, and
518 cigarette use (Andrew et al., 2016a, 2016b). In fact, although explicit references to food and
519 exercise were minimal, the message of adaptive investment in body care (Tylka & Wood-
520 Barcalow, 2015b) was featured in one tenth of all body positive posts. These posts focused on
521 self-care behaviours like rest, hydration, and physical activity for health and enjoyment
522 reasons. Moreover, any reference to appearance-related self-care (i.e., grooming, makeup,
523 and clothing) were framed in terms of how they made the subject feel rather than how they
524 looked (e.g., “sparkly eyeshadow makes me happy”). Body positive advocates have argued
525 that increasing the visibility of a diverse range of body sizes empowers larger women to
526 partake in health-promoting behaviours by breaking down weight stereotypes and perceived
527 barriers to health-promoting behaviours (Haskins, 2015). Here, of note, two of the Instagram
528 accounts analysed were yoga-focused accounts, @mynameisjessamyn and @nolatrees, who
529 both promote practicing yoga regardless of body size. In contrast, considerable evidence
530 demonstrates that weight stigmatisation and shame is linked with maladaptive eating
531 behaviours and weight gain (Puhl & Suh, 2015). Moreover, *fitspiration* content, aimed to
532 inspire healthy eating and exercise, has been found to have harmful psychological outcomes

533 and have no impact on actual exercise engagement (Robinson et al., 2017). Accordingly, it
534 would be worthwhile for future research to investigate the relationship between viewing body
535 positive social media content and actual health behaviours.

536 **4.3. Implications and Future Directions**

537 Positive body image has become increasingly recognised as an important component
538 of body image and eating disorder prevention (Webb, Wood-Barcalow, & Tylka, 2015).
539 Research links positive body image with numerous psychological and physical health
540 benefits (e.g., Andrew et al., 2014, 2016a; Homan & Tylka, 2014; Satinsky et al., 2012;
541 Swami et al., 2018; Tylka, 2012, 2018), as well as a potential protective role against media-
542 induced body dissatisfaction (Andrew, Tiggemann, & Clark, 2015; Halliwell, 2013). Given
543 this research, it is plausible that engaging with body positive content on Instagram, which
544 espouses key tenets of positive body image, may be associated with similar benefits for
545 women. Whilst causal effects cannot be inferred from this content analysis, these preliminary
546 findings suggest that popular body positive accounts on Instagram both depict a diverse range
547 of appearances and promote messages in line with important components of positive body
548 image, and therefore may present a fruitful avenue for future prevention research.

549 Social media usage is at an all-time high amongst young women (Pew Research
550 Center, 2018), and Instagram is one of the most dominant mediums for influencing user's
551 attitudes and behaviours (Kasana, 2014). Accordingly, it is imperative for research to identify
552 which types of content may be potentially beneficial or harmful in order to offer best practice
553 guidelines for social media consumers who may be at risk of body image issues. Susceptible
554 young women may be encouraged to minimise exposure to appearance-focused social media
555 content like *fitspiration* and *thinspiration* to reduce body image disturbances (Tiggemann &
556 Zaccardo, 2015). Concurrently, this study, together with preliminary experimental evidence
557 (Cohen et al., 2019; Slater et al., 2017; Williamson & Karazsia, 2018), suggests that young

558 women may usefully be encouraged to follow body positive accounts as a possible avenue to
559 enhance positive body image. Nevertheless, research shows that body dissatisfaction and
560 disordered eating occur in both women and men of all ages (Mangweth-Matzek & Hoek,
561 2017). Accordingly, there may be scope for body positive accounts to include greater
562 diversity of both age and gender.

563 Interestingly, the theme of body appreciation was rated less frequently across the
564 Instagram posts compared to the other positive body image themes, yet body appreciation is
565 the most commonly studied aspect of positive body image in the literature (Webb et al.,
566 2015). Of note, our definition of body appreciation, taken from Tylka (2012, 2018) and Tylka
567 and Wood-Barcalow (2015b), is more consistent with functionality appreciation (Alleva,
568 Tylka, & Kroon Van Diest, 2017) than the body appreciation construct assessed by the Body
569 Appreciation Scale (BAS and BAS-2; Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005; Tylka &
570 Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). The BAS and BAS-2 conceptualise and assess body appreciation as
571 an overarching construct of positive body image which contains many of the positive body
572 image components within its items, such as appreciating the unique features of the body,
573 body acceptance and love, broadly conceptualising beauty, inner positivity, adaptive
574 investment in body care, and protective filtering. Nevertheless, it is important to examine
575 each component of positive body image separately within research, and scales are now being
576 developed to achieve this goal (Tylka, 2018).

577 Broad conceptualisation of beauty emerged as the most common theme across the
578 body positive posts, but has been less extensively researched apart from the body
579 appreciation construct assessed by the BAS-2. Our findings provide a better understanding of
580 consumer experiences of positive body image and highlight that broad conceptualisation of
581 beauty may be a particularly important component of positive body image for social media
582 users. Accordingly, the study's findings identify broad conceptualisation of beauty as an

583 important component to investigate for future research, which can be done using the Broad
584 Conceptualization of Beauty Scale (Tylka & Iannantuono, 2016).

585 **4.4. Limitations**

586 The present findings should be interpreted within the context of the following
587 limitations. First, the findings are limited to the sampling frame used. It is possible that the
588 accounts featured on the websites may have paid to be listed in those articles, or were
589 purposefully selected by the articles' authors based on personal preferences. Despite these
590 potential selection biases, online articles are a common way that the public may encounter
591 such accounts, and therefore this search method is unlikely to impact the external validity of
592 these findings. Furthermore, various inclusion criteria were used to ensure the accounts
593 sampled were in fact relevant to body positivity, currently active, and popular. This sampling
594 frame was the preferred approach given that our main aim was to analyse the current state of
595 content depicted in prominent body positive Instagram accounts. Nevertheless, it would be
596 informative for future research to conduct a corresponding analysis of body positive-related
597 hashtags to understand how the broader community of Instagram users are interpreting and
598 engaging with body positive content online.

599 Second, the exploration of body positive characteristics evident in body positive
600 Instagram posts is limited by the themes selected for coding. For the purpose of this content
601 analysis, Tylka (2012, 2018) and Tylka and Wood-Barcalow's (2015b) six core components
602 of positive body image were used to code the posts for body positive themes. Given the
603 emerging field of positive body image research, several other constructs of positive body
604 image have also been developed. These include body functionality (Alleva, Martijn, Van
605 Breukelen, Jansen, & Karos, 2015), body image flexibility (Rogers, Webb, & Jafari, 2018;
606 Sandoz, Wilson, Merwin, & Kellum, 2013), and body compassion (Altman, Linfield,
607 Salmon, & Beacham, 2017). Accordingly, future research would benefit from exploring how

608 some of these other contemporary positive body image constructs may be expressed in the
609 social media environment.

610 **4.5. Conclusion**

611 Despite these limitations, the present study uniquely contributes to the body image
612 and social media literature by providing a systematic analysis of physical appearance-related
613 characteristics and key themes from body positive content on Instagram. Importantly, the
614 current findings indicate that, in contrast to the narrow portrayal of female bodies in
615 traditional media (Conlin & Bissell, 2014; Wasylikiw et al., 2009) and social media content
616 (Boepple et al., 2016; Carrotte et al., 2017; Talbot et al., 2017; Tiggemann & Zaccardo,
617 2018), body positive imagery on Instagram does in fact represent previously under-
618 represented body sizes. Moreover, the findings suggest that popular body positive accounts
619 on Instagram currently exemplify core theoretical components of positive body image (Tylka,
620 2012, 2018; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). The findings extend previous research on
621 appearance-focused social media use and provide an incremental contribution to the positive
622 body image literature.

Table 1. Post themes

Variable	Definition	Examples
Positive body image themes		
Body Appreciation	Post encourages appreciating the features, functionality, and health of the body	Image of subject in yoga pose with caption "I'm feeling especially thankful for my thighs today. I am always in awe of what my thighs help me do, whether it's when I'm walking down the street or powering through balance postures."
Body Acceptance/love	Post encourages acceptance of one's body (or body parts) that don't conform to ideal standards	Image of subject in bikini with stomach rolls with caption "It is possible to love your belly rolls"
Conceptualising Beauty Broadly	Post depicts a wide range of appearances, body sizes/shapes, and inner characteristic as beautiful	Image of women of diverse body sizes and ethnicities with caption "everyBODY is beautiful"
Adaptive Investment in Body Care	Post emphasises respecting and taking care of one's body by engaging in positive, health-promoting self-care behaviours	Image of subject exercising with caption "workout because you love your body, not because you hate it"
Inner Positivity	Post encourages cultivating inner characteristics and positive feelings (e.g., body confidence, optimism, happiness) that may be expressed in outer behaviours (e.g., kindness, mindfulness, helping others etc.).	Image of subject smiling with head held high and caption "be strong by being kind to yourself and by sharing your light with the world"
Protective filtering Information in a Body-Protective Manner	Post challenges the unrealistic nature of media images and appearance ideals, as well as interprets and internalises messages that are compassionate towards one's body.	Side by side images of posed and un-posed images with caption "the photo on the left is staged as hell...These are the types of images we compare ourselves to everyday. Our bodies are glorious from every angle. Posed or un-posed. Polished or not."
Appearance-focused Themes		
Weight loss/exercise/diet-appearance	Post emphasises weight loss, diet and/or exercise to improve appearance	Before and after photo where the subject in the 'after' photo appears thinner and caption "Went back to work today and had a lot of people say I was looking way more toned woohoo!"
Clothing/beauty-appearance	Post emphasises clothing and beauty tips for appearance purposes	Close-up image of hair and make-up with caption "if there's good lighting, take advantage of it for a selfie"

Thin praise	Post positively portrays thinness	Image of a thin and toned person with caption #bodygoals
Weight/fat stigmatising	Post negatively portrays being overweight/having fat	Image of larger woman in bikini with caption “not everyone should be in a swimsuit”
Thin stigmatising	Post ridicules or stigmatises thinness	Image of curvaceous woman with caption “real men prefer women with curves”
Body/weight/food shame	Post expresses guilt or shame about one’s body, weight, or food behaviours	Image of subject at gym with caption “Feeling guilty about how much I ate on the weekend – time to work off that weekend indulgence.”
Other Relevant Themes		
Commercialism	Post advertises or promotes a commercial product or brand	Image of subject in a clothing brand with caption “love this outfit. Shop this look at xxx.com”
Mental health	Post refers to mental health	Side by side images of subject smiling and not smiling, with text overlaid “doing the best she can to cope with anxiety” with captions “remind yourself that it’s okay to respect your own mental and emotional limits”
Eating disorders	Post refers to eating disorders and/or recovery	Before and after photo of subject (underweight to more body fat) with caption “Recovery is going to seem impossible at times – it isn’t. Your ED will scream at you, and tell you you’re nothing without it – it’s lying. You can do this.”
Activism	Post explicitly encourages others to support a social cause outside of body positivity	Image of subject holding re-usable water bottle with caption “Get on the plastic free wagon this July and challenge yourself to do something awesome for our planet and the future.”

Table 2. Inter-coder agreement and reliability for coding variables.

Variable	Inter-rater Agreement (%)	Reliability (Kappa or ICC)
Demographics		
<i>Gender</i>	98.46	.81
<i>Ethnicity</i>	95.96	.86
<i>Age</i>	94.36	.97
<i>Visible physical disability</i>	96.92	.65
Body-related attributes		
<i>Body size</i>	89.69	.91
<i>Culturally-based beauty ideals</i>	80.62	.94
<i>Visible “flaws”</i>	96.41	.80
<i>Visible “flaws”: Cellulite</i>	96.92	.73
<i>Visible “flaws”: Stomach rolls/soft belly</i>	96.92	.86
<i>Visible “flaws”: Stretch marks</i>	95.38	.74
<i>Visible “flaws”: Acne/skin blemishes</i>	100.00	1
<i>Visible “flaws”: Bodily hair</i>	92.31	.80
Clothing, activity, and objectification		
<i>Clothing/exposure</i>	92.97	.98
<i>Activity</i>	89.23	.77
<i>Objectification</i>	84.38	.88
<i>Objectification: Focus on specific body part</i>	95.31	.96
<i>Objectification: Sexually suggestive pose</i>	79.69	.84
<i>Objectification: Absence of clearly visible head/face</i>	92.19	.93
Positive Body Image Themes		
<i>Body Appreciation</i>	96.88	.86
<i>Body Acceptance/love</i>	92.19	.78
<i>Conceptualising Beauty Broadly</i>	87.50	.75
<i>Adaptive Investment in Body Care</i>	96.88	.87
<i>Inner Positivity</i>	89.06	.73
<i>Protective filtering Information in a Body-Protective Manner</i>	96.88	.87
Appearance-focused Themes		
<i>Weight loss/exercise/diet-appearance</i>	100.00	1
<i>Clothing/beauty-appearance</i>	89.06	.76
<i>Thin praise</i>	100.00	1
<i>Weight/fat stigmatising</i>	100.00	1
<i>Thin stigmatising</i>	100.00	1
<i>Body/weight/food shame</i>	100.00	1
Other Relevant Themes		
<i>Commercialism</i>	92.31	.83
<i>Mental health</i>	98.46	.79
<i>Eating disorders</i>	98.46	.85
<i>Activism</i>	98.44	.79

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