

Mental Health



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Q: My friend doesn't like the way she looks, and I think she dwells on it too much. I think she looks fine. Is this a problem, and what can I do?

A: We all tend to dislike some aspect of our appearance. In healthy people, this dislike motivates us to work at improving ourselves, whether we want to lose a few pounds or look more muscular. This dislike, however, can become self-defeating, and in severe cases takes on the form of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). BDD is an intense preoccupation with an imaginary or minor defect in our appearance.

It is a problem if this person withdraws socially, shows major changes in eating habits, and has sudden work-related problems. The best thing that you can do is be supportive of your friend and encourage them to seek help if they need it.

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