Promoting Body Trust® in Your Work

Module 2 The Core Elements and Phases of a Body Trust Practice

Module 2.1 What is Body Trust?

Since 2005, we've been holding space for people looking to let go of chronic patterns of dieting, disordered eating, and weight cycling. Our passion is helping people find a way to truly heal and move towards a compassionate, sustainable form of self care. In a culture dominated by weight bias and body oppression, we believe reclaiming Body Trust® is the key to feeling psychologically and physically nourished. This second module will introduce you to the Core Elements and Phases of a Body Trust Practice. This is one way to translate weight inclusive principles into practice. Let's start by defining Body Trust.

**Body Trust is a radical revisioning** of what it means to occupy and care for your body. It is a pathway to acceptance of the body, an alternative dialogue to the conventional paradigm of food, body image, and weight concerns in our culture. Body Trust is paradigm shifting work that invites bravery and fierce body compassion.

**Body Trust is a healing modality**—a way out of the predictable, repetitive pattern of dieting, disordered eating and weight cycling that is fueled by body shame. Body Trust is the proprietary foundation of all the work we do here at Be Nourished, the core underpinnings of the rest of our work. Heavily informed by Health at Every Size®, our work has been greatly influenced by social justice and intersectional feminism, intuitive eating principles, shame resilience theory, motivational interviewing, self-compassion theory, relational cultural theory, mindfulness-based approaches, and post-modern therapeutic thought.

**Body Trust is weight-inclusive.** This work is for all bodies. There isn’t a different set of rules for you, no matter how much you might feel different, isolated, broken, or in need of fixing. Body Trust is an invitation to be part of new conversation about bodies, one that nourishes and celebrates who we are and who we can become, including every way we show up in the world. We want you to know we trust your body, regardless of your size. More importantly, we trust you with your body. No exceptions.

**Body Trust is a birthright.** You were born with an inherent trust for your body. Somewhere along the way you became disconnected from that way of knowing. Body Trust is disrupted by trauma, oppression, illness, and social constructs of gender, race, beauty, health, and weight. We often come from lineages of people that have been disallowed body trust. Body Trust is an invitation to return to a relationship with your body and yourself that you want to be in for your lifetime—flexible, compassionate and connected.
Body Trust is a reclamation. Of pleasure. Of knowing. Of wanting. Of listening. Of your own damn self. Body Trust work is a process of reclaiming our bodies after they've been harmed by stigma, diet culture, shame, difference, and othering, and then further distanced by our attempts to mitigate that harm by trying to control the size, shape or appearance of our body.

Body Trust is repair work. We are healing our relationship with food, our bodies, and ourselves. Just like when you've lost trust in any relationship in your life, it takes time to get it back. When it comes to Body Trust, this trust is reciprocal—you are working on trusting your body and your body is working on trusting you to give it enough to eat consistently. We cannot heal our relationship with our bodies with a plan to make them into what the dominant culture thinks they should be.

Body Trust is a homecoming—a return to the innate wisdom of your own embodied experience—your body’s messages, cues, desires, hungers, and rhythms, knowing that access to this wisdom will vary for everyone over time depending on how much resourcing is available. Much of what we are taught about living in a body is about doing things to and on the body instead of for and with the body. When the very wise ways we’ve adapted and coped for our own survival run counter to the mainstream idea about what a good person or good body should be or do, we are presented with an impossible choice: become buried in shame and self-blame or choose an identity that limits our ability to know and express who we truly are.

Body Trust is liberatory. Our bodies cannot breathe when they are overtaken by cultural demands for assimilation. Our stories and bodies are too complex, too varied and too underexpressed to fit into a simple narrative about disordered eating, or body size, or skin color, or gender. Our bodies, claimed as they are now, are an act of resistance. Resistance does not always resolve oppression but it does bring us closer to humanity and connection. Body Trust is a move towards truth and freedom and a way to enforce boundaries around the prescribed stories and values that do not allow you to heal and know your own truth.

Body Trust is a practice. So much of what we desire to bring into our lives takes time and practice. Body Trust is not a new plan, a gimmick, or a short-term solution. It’s a way to truly heal—an opportunity to focus on finding joy and pleasure again, as you turn your attention towards the parts of you that perhaps you lost sight of while dieting or trying to fix yourself. Body Trust is not a place we arrive, but a connective energy we cultivate. It is an ever-evolving relationship that changes with our healing, our complicated lives, and as we age.

Take a moment to sit back, close your eyes, and notice your reaction to reading about this work. What statements stand out to you? Why?
Module 2.2  Reclaiming Body Trust

We are born embodied beings, feeling the life of the body from the inside out. In her three part-series on Embodied Awareness, Tara Brach says, “Human beings are habituated to leave...and when we leave the body, we disconnect from empathy, and lose a sense of vitality, creativity, and love.” We often begin our workshops, retreats, and speaking engagements with a brief centering and the question:

What’s between you and being at home in your body, as it is right now?

Take a moment to pause, close your eyes and repeat the question to yourself:

What’s between me and being at home in my body, as it is right now?

Niva Piran has been researching embodiment for twenty years. In her book, Journeys of Embodiment at the Intersection of Body and Culture: The Development Theory of Embodiment, she writes about the core construct that emerged in her research. Here are the five dimensions of the experience of embodiment, reflected along a continuum from positive to negative:

1. Body connection and comfort versus body disconnection and discomfort
2. Agency and functionality versus blocked agency and restraint
3. Experience and expression of desire versus disowning desire
4. Attuned self-care versus disrupted attunement, neglect and harm
5. Inhabiting the body as a subjective versus as an objectified site

As you likely can already begin to see, there are so many different factors that impact our ability to feel at home in the body:

- Trauma, oppression, stigma, ableism
- Social constructs of gender, race, beauty, health and weight
- Puberty and sexuality
- Chronic illness and health concerns
- Engagement in physical activities growing up
- Socioeconomic status
- Health information
- And more

As we stated in the last lesson, Body Trust is a homecoming—a return to the innate wisdom of your own embodied experience—your body's messages, cues, desires, hungers, and rhythms, knowing that access to this wisdom will vary for everyone over time depending on how much resourcing is available. Tara Brach says:

“When we enter the body, we are entering the wilderness. We are leaving the domain that is mapped and controlled by the brain.”
It makes sense that this homecoming does not necessarily come easily, and people may need to work on safety and the ability to resource before their body becomes a safe and welcoming home. We usually begin by asking people these foundational questions:

*How did you come to learn your body was a problem?*

*When and how did you begin to lose trust in your body?*

One of the Core Elements of a Body Trust Practice is to **explore, name and reclaim your body story.** *What is a Body Story?* It's a lot like it sounds, it's the story of your body as you experience it. It is the story about what it has meant to live in your body. Our bodies have been with us our entire lives through everything we've done. Every breath we've taken. Every beat of our heart. It has survived our scrutiny, our shame. It has been impacted by oppressive ideas that have been fed to us. It has changed with our relationships, our loves, our fears and our struggle. It has survived living in a culture that encourages many to act violently upon their bodies in order to try to fit into a narrowly defined standard of acceptance. It has underscored your very perception of what it means to be you and to be alive. *Our Body Story Archive* is an online place for people to share their body stories. To witness and be witnessed. To name our grief. And ultimately, to reclaim.

We encourage you to take some time reading the body stories in our archive. In the next several emails, we'll discuss the Core Elements and Phases of a Body Trust Practice.

### 2.3 Core Elements of a Body Trust Practice

The [Core Elements and Phases of Body Trust](#) are the set of tools, practices, and processes we've identified which help people shift the focus away from body blame and disconnection to body respect and trust. We have had the privilege to watch a healing process unfold in our clients over and over again. *These elements* are the core change agents that support people in bravely turning their backs on diet culture to move towards a new way of occupying, relating to, and ultimately trusting their bodies.

In this and the next module, we will share our core elements with you. In module 2.5, we will discuss the phases people go through as they adopt a Body Trust practice.

**Root self-care practices in weight-neutrality**

Self-care rooted in shame and body blame does not last—it's like rooting change in quicksand. Many of the behaviors people adopt in the name of thinness (and/or “health”) are not sustainable for them, which leads to yo-yo dieting, disconnected and/or disordered eating, and an seemingly endless cycle of shame and self-blame. In order to make space for healing, we focus on self-care for the sake of self-care. In module 1.5 we discussed the difference between the terms weight-inclusive and
weight-neutral. Weight-inclusive care is necessary to create the conditions for weight-neutral self-care in our clients. As a provider offering this work, you can uphold, model and illustrate what the possibility for healing looks like when weight is taken off the table as a focal point. If you have not yet experienced a weight-neutral environment yourself (many of us haven’t!) you may find value in exploring this next question yourself, as well as with your clients.

“If you woke up tomorrow and lived in a weight-inclusive, body positive world, where you would never have to worry about weight bias again, what would you want to do to take care of yourself? What would you do more of? Less of?”

Externalize shame, blame and bias
When people start to explore how they lost trust with their bodies, the anger they've focused on themselves starts to be externally directed toward the relationships, systems and institutions that perpetuate weight bias and have caused harm. Our fundamental work as clinicians in this paradigm is to separate what has been labeled “the problem” in other settings from the bodies of our clients. Sonya Renee Taylor, in her book The Body is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love (2018) asks, “Whose agenda is your self-hatred? Who gets to benefit from that?”

Imagine that our work is helping others identify and unearth the internal voices and subsequent coping that have been working in service to internalized oppression, assimilation and acquiescence. To begin to name some experiences that have objectified their body and inhibited embodiment and agency. Our clients deserve trauma-informed care that works in service of amplifying who they are and celebrates non-conformity as the fuel that will heal not only themselves, but will liberate those around them. Just as we teach our clients that Body Trust is reciprocal, we, as helping professionals, must acknowledge that trusting our client's ways of knowing, inclinations, and bodies aids the path to their liberation.

Explore, name, and reclaim your body story
We all have a body story. Exploring our body stories allows people to widen the lens and expand the narrative. We get to imagine and write an ending that would not have existed if we had not examined it in the first place.

Unfortunately, body stories tend to be told through cultural storytelling arcs (ex. stories about weight loss must be triumphant, eating disorders happen in thin people) and these common stories tend to drive what we believe is possible. Cultural stories that have been told through the male gaze, the medical model or through the scope of the dominant culture limit the possibilities of those who do not and should not fit those molds. Unearthing our body story is one of the places where we can begin to take ownership of the pieces that are ours to keep and externalize the pieces that are not ours to incorporate. In fact, understanding one’s narrative identity contributes to increased well-being (Adler, 2016) and creates a doorway for reclamation of what had previously not been seen or truly understood. Some questions that can connect someone to a deeper body story are:
How did you lose trust with your body?  
What experiences impacted your ability to feel at home in your body?  
How has your body, just as it is, helped you survive in the world?

**Look and listen to yourself with kindness and curiosity**  
We are pretty sure that if hating our bodies into a version that we loved worked, we all would have arrived long ago. The truth? It's hard to take care of something you don't like. Practicing self-compassion is where many find freedom. When we look at our behaviors with shame and scorn, we learn very little about ourselves. When we look with kindness and curiosity, wisdom follows.

Self-compassion practices can improve body appreciation (Homan, 2014 & Albertson, 2014) by decreasing negative self-talk, widening the lens on the acceptability of a variety of bodies, and decreasing hyper-focus on perceived flaws. As Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer describe (2013), self-compassion has three elements: self-kindness, mindfulness, and common humanity. While many practitioners are likely to advocate for all their clients to practice kindness and mindfulness (or curiosity), we would like to see more providers asserting—especially to those who experience regular body blame and bias—that the client's suffering is something that connects them to the rest of humanity and that their suffering is not their fault. Self-compassion informs our relationship with the world as well as ourselves. This element is essential for the development of Body Trust.

We will let you absorb the concepts in this email and continue discussing the Core Elements of a Body Trust Practice in the next module.

### 2.4 Core Elements of a Body Trust Practice, continued

In the last module, we discussed weight neutral self care, externalizing shame, blame and bias, the importance of knowing your body story, and the role of self-compassion in healing. In this module, we'll look at other Core Elements of a Body Trust Practice.

**Reconnect with your body’s needs and boundaries**  
As we discussed in module 2.2, the ability to sense, hear, and receive messages from one's body is disrupted by many experiences and circumstances, including the impact of living in diet culture. When we say diet culture, we are speaking to the ways the pursuit of health via weight loss has been normalized, packaged and sold. This social construct reinforces beliefs that the body is and should be controllable and mechanistic. Virgie Tovar says, "Human beings need food and movement to survive. Diet culture steals food and movement, deeply pathologizes them, then commodifies them and sells them back to us.”

Most of us are indoctrinated into diet culture before we can consent. Diet culture has made overeating suspect and food restraint ideal. Diet culture comes from the
dominant culture and is disseminated to the masses, reinforcing a thin, white, cisgender, heteronormative version of what it is to occupy and care for a body. Diet culture reinforces healthism by upholding health as the end all and be all to our existence, while ignoring the social determinants of health. Diet culture emphasizes that health is a hustle which ultimately translates into being more performative than authentic in nature, for many people. Performative is not sustainable.

Diet culture disregards the inherent boundaries of the body. It habituates people to leave the body and live like floating heads in the world. Diet culture does not trust bodies and does not often encourage sourcing information from the body. Healing from the effects of diet culture invites reacquaintance with the body's subtle and not-so-subtle messages that tell us what we need and what we desire. In this work, we want to hear and honor our yes's and our no's, and we, as providers, cannot prescribe what people “should” be saying yes or no to. Their own wisdom is trustworthy. It helped them find you.

On a most basic level, we want our clients to know and trust their own decision making process when it comes to when, what, and how much to eat. We want them to be able to distinguish between an embodied yes or no versus a command sourced from diet culture or rooted in their history with disordered eating.

When you begin to use attuned and intuitive eating approaches, you will notice they are ripe with metaphor. Have you heard the cliche, “the way we do one thing is often the way we do everything”? Many times we have noticed a parallel relationship between the way our clients describe challenges in their relationship with others in their lives and the way they describe their food and eating. For example, if one has trouble saying no to people’s requests when their own to do list is piling up, we wouldn't expect NO to all of a sudden show up in their responses to food/eating. Some questions we often ask are:

How do you decide when to eat? When to stop eating?
How are you at setting boundaries with, and saying no to, the people in your life?
How are you at asserting your needs (because you are the only one that can)?
When was the last time you knew, for certain, what you needed?

Focus on small consistent acts to rebuild trust
Diet culture is a quick fix paradigm rooted in rigid, perfectionistic ways of thinking. People often use plans that require dramatic lifestyle changes that are not sustainable. Body Trust® is a long game focused on rebuilding trust that was whittled away by the cycle of dieting and the subsequent body distrust.

John Gottman’s research (2015) on approaches to relationships shows that attunement and small consistent acts over time reintroduce trust, not conditional acts or large-scale gestures. We often begin exploring the concept of rebuilding trust by asking clients this question: If you lost trust in another relationship in your life,
what would you need in place to rebuild it? Years ago, we asked our Facebook community about this, and here are some of our favorite responses:

- Time and love, LOTS of love
- If there is no love, you wouldn’t even want to try
- Transparency, a willingness to be vulnerable, and clear (and realistic) expectations paired with ongoing communication
- Forgiveness
- An awareness that trust was broken in the first place
- A willingness to surrender to what the journey brings along the way
- Connecting to something bigger than what was broken and focusing your energy and efforts on that
- Remembering that there is a deeper learning happening inside
- Faith in the process; believing in ourselves
- Releasing fear and choosing love, over and over again

The trust we are building with our bodies is reciprocal—your body is working on trusting you to consistently give it enough to eat of enjoyable foods, and you are working on trusting your body’s messages (feelings, hunger cues, desires, intuition, etc) to guide you. Sometimes you listen to your bodies signals and follow the wisdom, sometimes you don’t. Either way you have an experience of tuning in and noticing the experience and outcome. This information, gathered over time with curiosity and kindness, rebuilds relationship with ourselves and our bodies. It is these small, consistent acts that rebuild trust.

We practice Body Trust in this way because it is effective: increased body connection and intuitive eating improve health-risk factors (Bacon, 2005). We do this because it is healing. And we believe everyone should have a life free from oppressive influences.

**Rediscover, embody, and allow for pleasure**

Many new clients are surprised when one of the first questions we ask is “do you like what you are eating?” They often respond with “What does that have to do with anything?” It’s common for people’s complicated relationship with food to come from a disconnected relationship with desire. As you may remember, one of Piran’s five dimensions of embodiment is the experience and expression of desire. Reclaiming pleasure is an act of resistance in a culture that has made indulgence a “dirty word”. Pleasure takes up space and says I’m here. It is not a shrinking back, but rather an expansion and expression of ourselves. We believe that pleasure, in the absence of shame and guilt, heals.

In the disconnection from our bodies, we often are less aware of our personal limits, desires and needs. We may be more likely to hustle for appreciation and worthiness in an attempt to connect with our value. It is important to remember that we leave the body for wise reasons, as a way to cope or keep going. And reconnecting to the body is not a mandate but an invitation to gently explore, knowing that this will have
differing levels of access and comfort for clients based on their trauma histories and lived experiences.

In the third edition of Intuitive Eating, Tribole and Resch identify satisfaction as the hub of intuitive eating. They write, “it has become more evident that finding satisfaction in eating is the driving force of this process.” Whereas fullness is a more primal reaction, satisfaction has a stronger emotional component. For example, you may have noticed that you can walk away from one meal feeling full but not at all satisfied (and maybe even be left wanting), and you can walk away from a different meal feeling really satisfied and not particularly full. Satisfaction is a relative of pleasure—perhaps a gateway—and is often missing from the lives of our clients who are healing their relationship with food and body. We invite people to consider some of these questions in their quest to reclaim pleasure and satisfaction:

If you could eat anything right now and be guaranteed that it would not affect your health, weight, or reputation, what do you want to eat? What sounds good? What’s the difference between hunger and appetite? What’s the difference between feeling satisfied and feeling full? When was a time that you experienced pleasure? What came up for you? What would you need to feel safe enough to embody pleasure?

Redefine what healing looks and feels like
Body Trust is about healing not fixing—a way out of the predictable, repetitive pattern of dieting, disordered eating and weight cycling that is fueled by body shame. When many start exploring this work, they often think, “It’s not working”, meaning “I’m not losing weight so I must be doing something wrong.” We don’t make promises about what will happen to people’s weight when they do this work (and we recommend you don’t either). We do know people can feel much, much better about it all independent of weight changes. It is possible to find freedom and develop the resilience needed to live compassionately in a weight-biased world.

Shifting away from the outcome oriented thinking of diet culture means our intentions and hopes become more personal and less oriented towards how one looks on the outside, to how one feels, can stand their ground (agency), their practice of self-compassion, their ability to practice weight-neutral self-care, etc. We have discussed how weight-neutral self-care is expansive and considers the value of addressing a person holistically. When we take this wider lens view of a person’s healing process and well-being, the measure of “what’s working” changes dramatically. We encourage those who are working to heal their relationship with food and body to put thoughts about weight on the back burner so they can begin to measure their “success” or change process differently. We look for change to be happening in the development of new practices that are:

• compassionate
• weight-neutral (self-care for the sake of self-care)
• attuned to body cues
• flexible and forgiving (as opposed to perfectionistic)
• joyful, pleasurable, and satisfying
• focused on metabolic instead of cosmetic fitness

Previous measures of success facilitated through restriction, compensatory measures and/or body checking likely trigger the dieting mind, and are therefore not supportive of healing. The invitation to redefine success is a bid to go deeper and think about what the person truly wants to cultivate in their life. We ask questions like:

What words describe your current relationship with food/body/self?
How do you want it to feel?
What do you want most for yourself in this life?

Find community
Choosing an alternative to diet culture can feel lonely in the beginning because we start to see how pervasive it is in our lives—from dinner conversations with friends to workplace lunchrooms, small talk at parties, and more. Many of us have learned to bond with one another over negative body talk or diet/health tips or fitness plans. When you are first learning about a Body Trust approach to food, weight and health, it can be difficult to talk about with others because we don't quite have the language and many misinterpret it as the screw it plan.

Knowing and participating in community that is focused on weight-inclusion is truly life changing. Think about it: how many times have you been in a truly weight-inclusive space? What would it be like to be in a space like that?

Experiencing body acceptance and offering it reciprocally changes our relationship to our bodies in ways that are monumental. It is essential, if you are to offer this work in the world, that you know where your clients can find a safe and affirming fat community and that your workplace celebrates and supports your local fat community. There are no reasonable reasons not too.

Explore the concepts of community with your clients. Who are the people in their lives that they can talk to about this healing process without having to defend their choice? Help them identify groups in their communities for support. Maintain a list of people and organizations to follow on social media (see our resource list). Make the world bigger and normalize weight-inclusive culture. We'll talk about more about this later on in the course.

Module 2.5 Phases of Moving Towards a Body Trust Practice

Developing a Body Trust Practice is an ongoing process. Over our years of work, we have noticed that people encounter similar and often predictable stages. We've created this image to help people visualize the phases a person goes through on the path to Body Trust. Just like grief, healing is not a linear process. One phase does not necessarily end as the next begins. They may flow into each other, overlap and recur.


**Acknowledge that you can’t go back even if you don’t know how to go forward**

Many clients come to us with some knowing that they cannot continue to use the plans and tactics they have been using to try to manage the size and shape of their bodies. They feel done with dieting and want to move on from disordered eating but they don’t know how to move forward. Diet culture has lost its luster but an alternative path has not emerged or made sense yet. We often start here, welcoming and sitting with ambivalence, exploring how they lost trust in their bodies, and assuring them that their coping has been rooted in wisdom and their struggle has not been their fault.

**Engage in heady exploration of alternative paradigms**

In the beginning, most people spend some time exploring body positivity, weight inclusivity, non-diet approaches, Health at Every Size® and Body Trust through reading, listening to podcasts, and following social media from an intellectualized, heady place. As much as this work is about practicing, this is a place where most people begin. We welcome this stage, knowing that as information builds the likelihood that folks will begin to try to adopt some new strategies will increase with support. During this time, it can be helpful to use the metaphor of this work being like learning to play a musical instrument. It takes time and practice. Intellectually knowing how it works and being able to embody it in our daily practices are two different things. We have to pick up the guitar and play it over and over again, just like we must have eating experiences to relearn how to eat and enjoy food again without the fear of gaining weight.

**Understand how you lost trust with your body**

Stepping back and exploring the ways our relationship to our bodies unfolds and is influenced has a powerful impact on a person’s healing trajectory. Knowing our body story and understanding where and how trust was lost paves the way for healing and new connections. Our [Body Story Archive](#) may be a useful resource for you and your clients.

**De-center weight and call out diet culture**

Many of our clients know that dieting doesn’t work and some believe they gave up dieting years ago, only to find out they’ve been leading with dieting mind this whole time. The weight loss and cosmetic fitness industries have caught on to the fact that “diet” is a dirty word, so they’ve co-opted body positive language in their marketing. There are so many diets in disguise. It’s essential to explore the qualities of a dieting mind so that people can learn to name the particular voice of diet culture that has ruled their lives. Let your clients know that we cannot heal body shame with a weight-based intervention and a dieting mind. In this phase, clients work to put weight on the back burner, reduce body-checking behaviors, and learn to name and externalize the influence of diet culture and weight stigma. They may also begin to set boundaries around the influence of diet culture in their social sphere and their role as consumer (i.e., unfollowing people on social media, canceling their Weight Watchers subscription, deleting weight loss and fitness apps, etc).
Illuminate the pattern of coping you developed to survive

Body Trust is a strengths-based approach to healthcare. The patterns our client's have used to cope, numb, distance, and soothe are rooted in wisdom. Building a bridge between these patterns and one's survival widens the lens on the shame that may have long been associated with their behaviors. Illuminating this pattern shines a light into dark and cobwebby internal places, inviting the opportunity to deepen their healing process. A powerfully affirming statement is “look at all you have done to survive.”

Grieve

The path to body acceptance and increased resilience to shame and stigma is one permeated by grief and letting go. We will be speaking to grief more in Module 4.3.

And then grieve some more

Grief shows up throughout the healing process, again and again. The process of claiming our true selves without apology includes letting go of illusionary and assimilatory ideals and moving towards the vulnerability of being who we are in the body that is ours in this moment. We allow for grief over and over again, knowing that without it, we may only move forward on shaky ground.

Experiment and practice with a focus on C work

What's C work? Diet culture flourishes due to the ways perfectionism operates like a shame shield (Brown, 2010). We want people to do C work instead of A work when they are reclaiming body trust. We go for “most of the time but never all of the time”. This is a messy, human process. We will talk a bit more about C work in module 4.4.

Take risks with your eating and embodiment

Eventually, after some heady exploration it is time to practice! This healing process must include trying new experiences with food and embodiment. We cannot learn to be intuitive eaters without involving food or discover what kinds of movement we like without trying things out, just like we cannot learn to play the guitar or meditate just by reading a book about it. When we begin anything, it's clunky. Every day we have moments where we can take risks and practice.

Share your process with people who support your liberation

This healing process benefits from using one's voice and finding like-minded people in our community. When we speak on behalf of a cause or movement, it strengthens our commitment to it and it often helps us find connection and support. It is bold to choose this movement and bolder still to trust others with a process that is counter-culture in its methods and intent. Our clients often feel that they are going first, and when they find others who are doing this work, their healing is solidified. Healing happens in relationships, which is why exploring Body Trust in groups can be especially powerful.
Notice the deepening roots of your Body Trust practice
Body Trust strengthens as we practice it. It is human to forget, to get triggered and to wander away. As we have learned from Sharon Salzberg, the healing is in return to the practice, again and again. There is a deepening and strengthening in the return. And there will come a time in a person’s Body Trust Practice where not doing it will become harder than doing it. Body Trust is an endeavor for a lifetime, and just as our bodies will not stay the same for a lifetime, our practice will shift and change to rise and meet our evolution.

Module 2.6 Summary

Body Trust® is a strengths-based, trauma-informed, scientifically grounded model of care informed by shame resilience theory, social justice movements, and self-compassion while working from the principles of Intuitive Eating® and Health At Every Size®. We hope the information in this module provided a deeper understanding of what this work looks like in practice, and that you have some new ideas to explore in your personal and professional life.

As you can likely now see, this is radical healing work, and this course just scratches the surface. It has taken us more than 13 years to develop this language and philosophy, and there is a pretty big learning curve. Community can help, personally and professionally, which is why we started our Body Trust Provider Certification Program. We’ll share more about this program at the end of the course.

In the next module, we’ll be talking about the value of embodiment.