



CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON BARIATRIC SURGERY

MEREDITH BESSEY, PHD (C), RD

MAY 6TH, 2022



FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES

(OVER PAST 24 MONTHS)

	Speaker	Advisory	Research	Consultant
AbbVie				
Allergan				
Janssen				
Lupin Pharma				
Mylan				
Olympus				
Pendopharm				
Pentax Medical				
Pfizer				
Shire				
Takeda				



POSITIONING MYSELF

- White, middle-class upbringing
- Thin privilege
- Neurodivergent
- University educated
- Academic background in psychology and nutrition
- Currently a PhD Candidate at the University of Guelph
- I consider myself an anti- or non-diet dietitian, and a Fat Studies scholar

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

-
- An introduction to fat studies
 - Two stories
 - Emma Lind
 - Roxane Gay
 - Why stories matter
 - A brief overview of my proposed PhD research

WHAT IS FAT STUDIES?

- Scholarly iteration of fat activism and fat liberation as political movements
- Views fatness as a natural aspect of human diversity, rather than a medical issue or condition to be treated (Rothblum & Solovay, 2009)

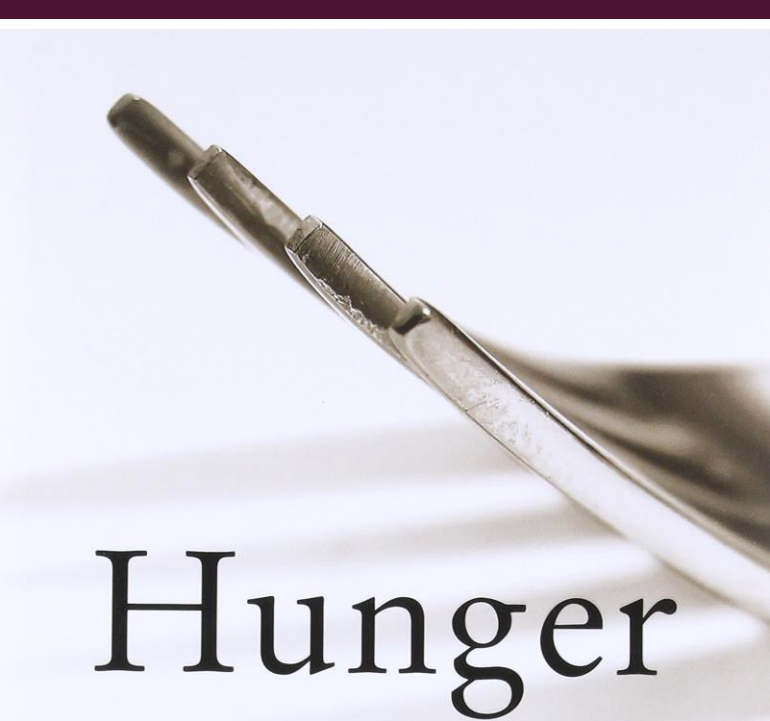




EMMA LIND

ROXANE GAY

- “The truth is that my desire for weight loss has long been about satisfying other people more than myself, finding a way to fit more peacefully into a world that is not at all interested in accommodating a body like mine... As a fat person, I am supposed to *want* to lose weight... I am not supposed to yearn, simply, for people to let me be, to see me, accept me, and treat me with dignity exactly as I am.”
- Excerpt from Roxane’s article about her experience of bariatric surgery, published on Medium



Hunger

A Memoir of (My) Body

Roxane Gay

Author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Bad Feminist*

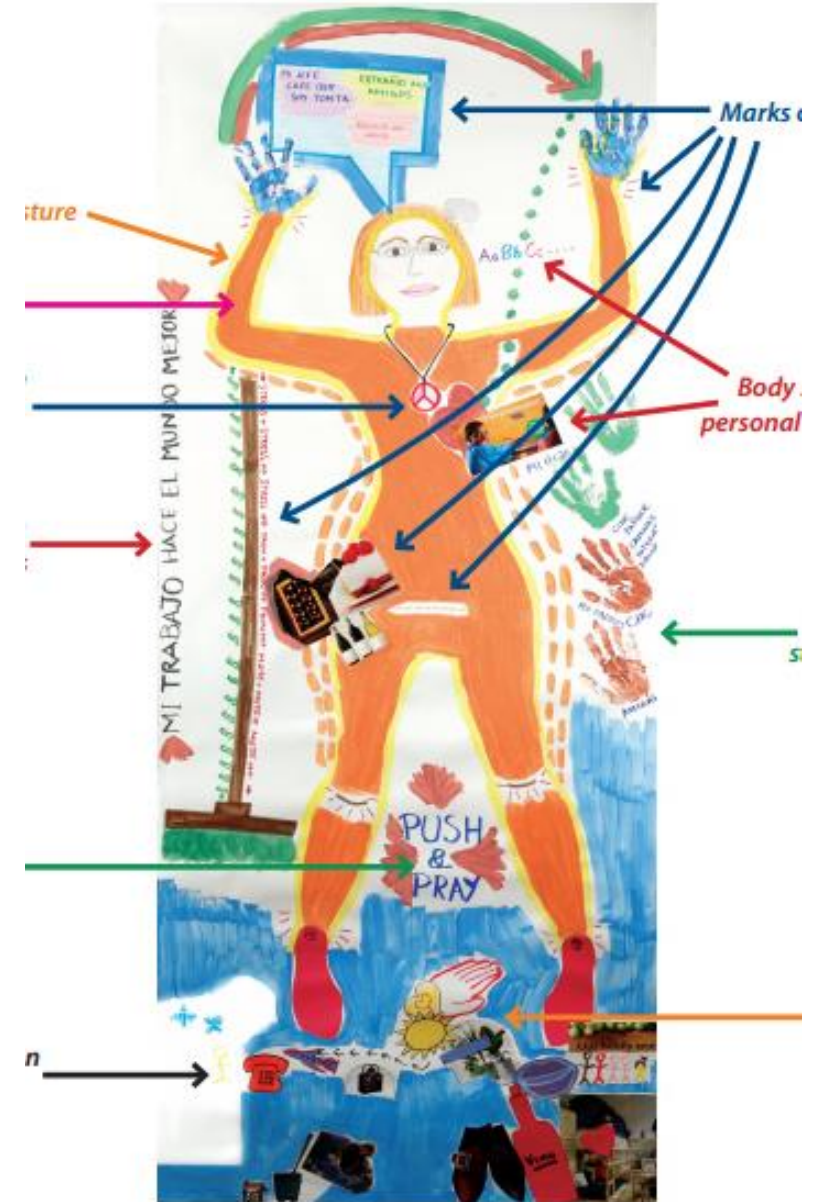
STORIES MATTER



- Quantitative data about bariatric surgery outcomes can only tell us so much
- Decision making about these surgeries is complex in a fat-hating world
 - e.g., Murray, 2010; Trainer & Benjamin, 2017; Trainer et al., 2021; Warholm et al., 2014
- Stories and qualitative research allows us to dig into the complexity of what it means to live as fat in our world

MY PLANNED PHD DISSERTATION WORK

- Qualitative arts-based approach, using methods like digital storytelling and body-mapping (shown here; Gastaldo et al., 2012)
- Theoretically, I will take a critical feminist approach, including intersectionality (e.g., Puar, 2012)
- Gender as an important axis of analysis (e.g., CIHI, 2014; Fikkan & Rothblum, 2012; Temple Newhook et al., 2015)





FINAL THOUGHTS

Photo by
[AllGo - An
App For Plus
Size People on
Unsplash](#)



THANK YOU!

BESSEYM@UOGUELPH.CA



REFERENCES

- Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2014, May). *Bariatric surgery in Canada*. https://secure.cihi.ca/free_products/Bariatric_Surgery_in_Canada_EN.pdf
- Fikkan, J.L., & Rothblum, E.D. (2012). Is fat a feminist issue? Exploring the gendered nature of weight bias. *Sex Roles*, 66, 575-592. doi: 10.1007/s11199-011-0022-5
- Gastaldo, D., Magalhães, L., Carrasco, C., & Davy, C. (2012). *Body-map storytelling as research: Methodological considerations for telling the stories of undocumented workers through body mapping*. University of Toronto. <http://www.migrationhealth.ca/undocumented-workers-ontario/body-mapping>.
- Gay, R. (2018, April 24). *What fullness is: On weight reduction surgery*. Medium. <https://gay.medium.com/the-body-that-understands-what-fullness-is-f2e40c40cd75>
- Murray, S. (2010). Women under/in control? Embodying eating after gastric banding. *Radical Psychology*, 8(1).
- Puar, J. K. (2012). "I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess": Becoming-intersectional in assemblage theory. *Philosophia*, 2, 49-66.
- Rothblum, E., & Solovay, S. (Eds.). (2009). *The fat studies reader*. New York University Press.
- Temple Newhook, J., Gregory, D., & Twells, L. (2015). 'Fat girls' and 'big guys': gendered meanings of weight loss surgery. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 37(5), 653-667. doi: 10.1111/1467-9566.12219
- Trainer, S., & Benjamin, T. (2017). Elective surgery to save my life: Rethinking the "choice" in bariatric surgery. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 73(4), 894-904. doi: 10.1111/jan.13193
- Trainer, S., Brewis, A., & Wutich, A. (2021). *Extreme weight loss: Life before and after bariatric surgery*. New York University Press.
- Warholm, C., Oien, A.M., & Raheim, M. (2014). The ambivalence of losing weight after bariatric surgery. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 9(1), 22876. doi: 10.3402/qhw.v9.22876