Body Image, Media, and Spirituality in College Females

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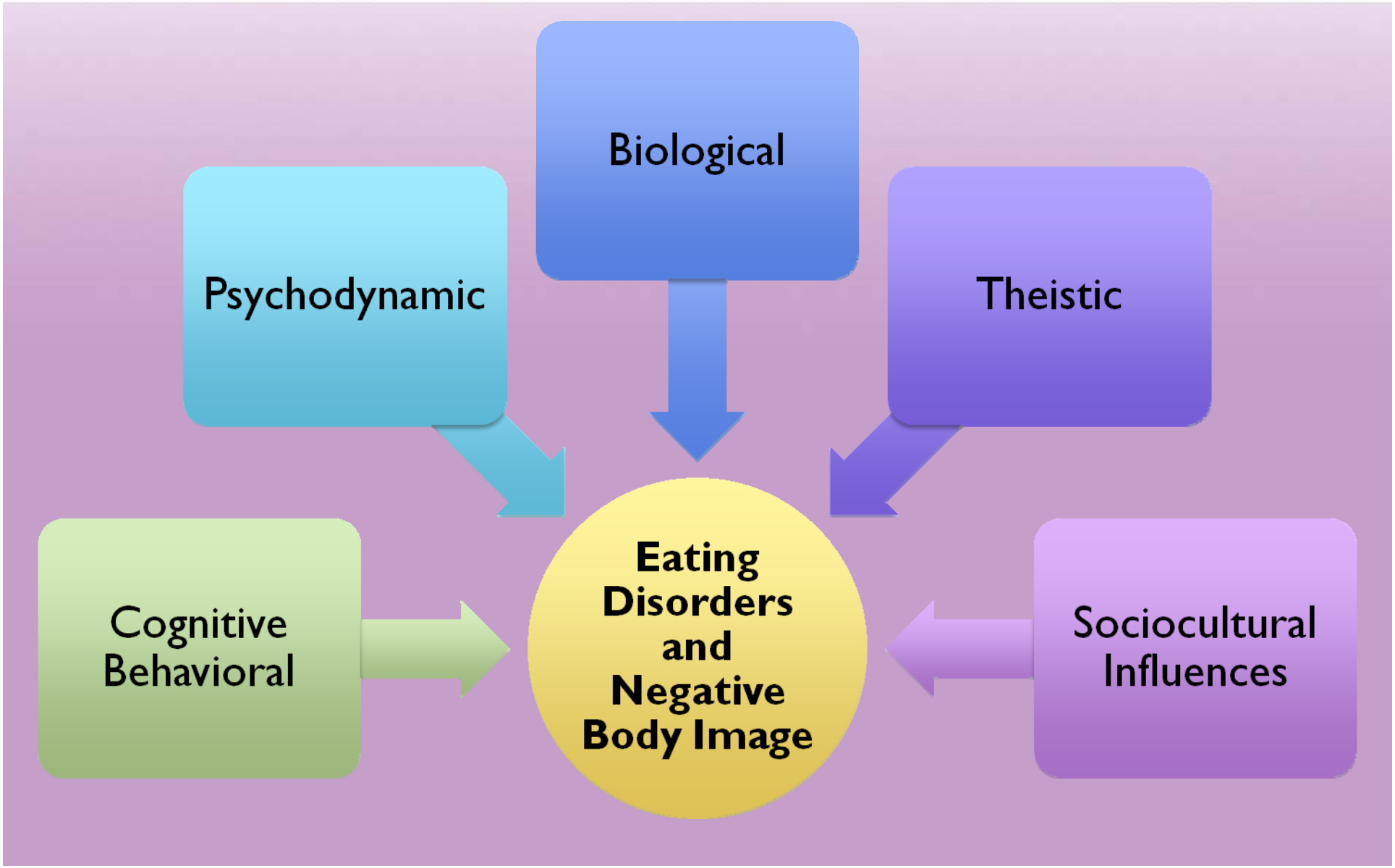
Continuum

Unhealthy	EDNOS	Healthy
Anorexia Bulimia Binge Eating	Chronic Dieting Occasional Purging Occasional Binging Constant Focus on Weight[1]	Healthy Eating Healthy Exercise Healthy View of Body

Framing The Time

- Discuss causes of eating disorders
- The media and its effects on body image
- What does spirituality have to do with it?
- Research conducted
- Implications of the research
- Your thoughts

Causes of Eating Disorders



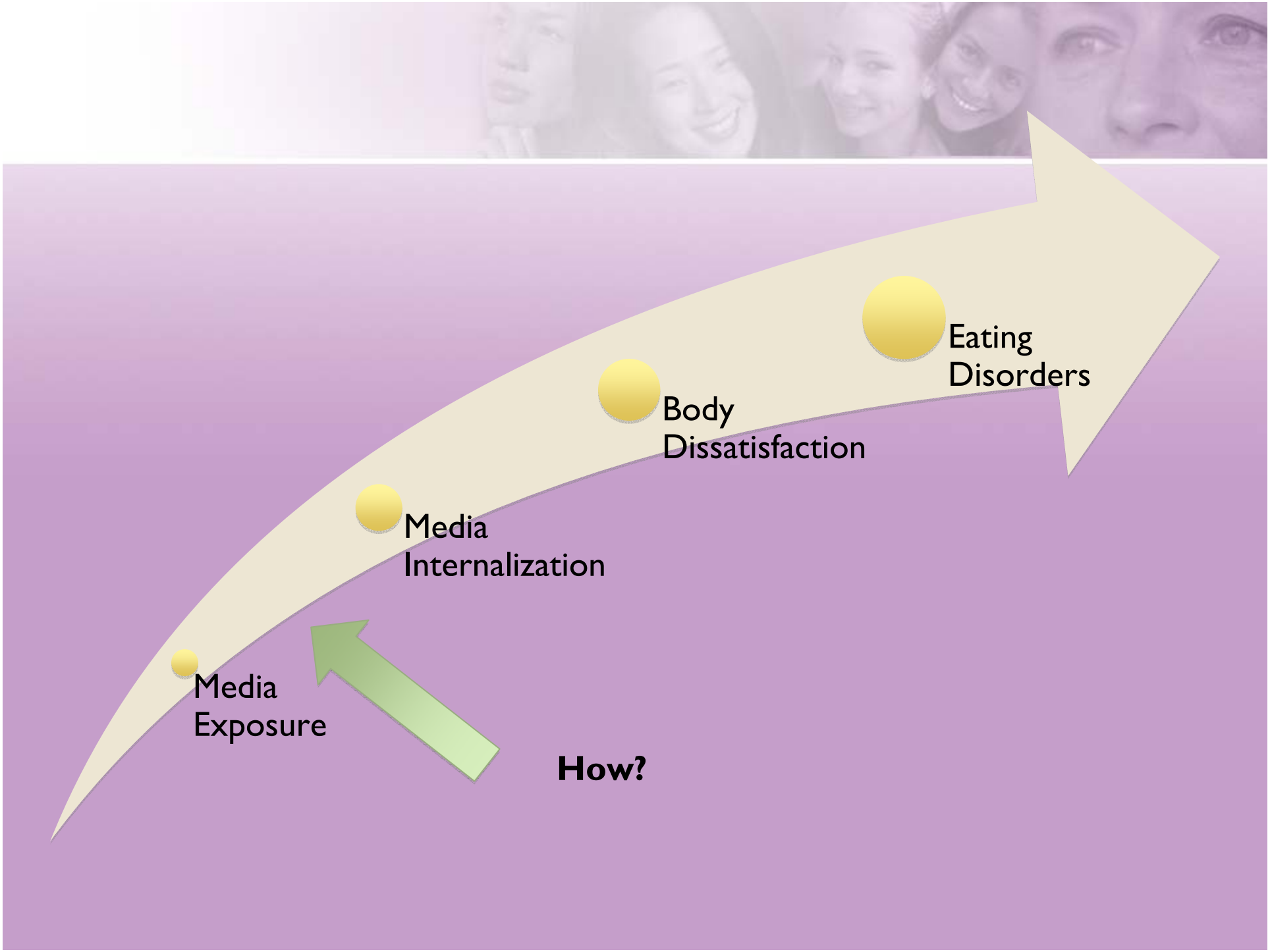
A Closer Look at Theistic Theory

My eating disorder will…

- give me control of my life and emotions.
- effectively communicate my pain and suffering.
- make me exceptional.
- prove that I am bad and unworthy.
- make me perfect.
- give me comfort and safety from pain.
- give me a sense of identity.
- compensate or atone for my past.
- allow me to avoid personal responsibility for life.
- give me approval from others [2]

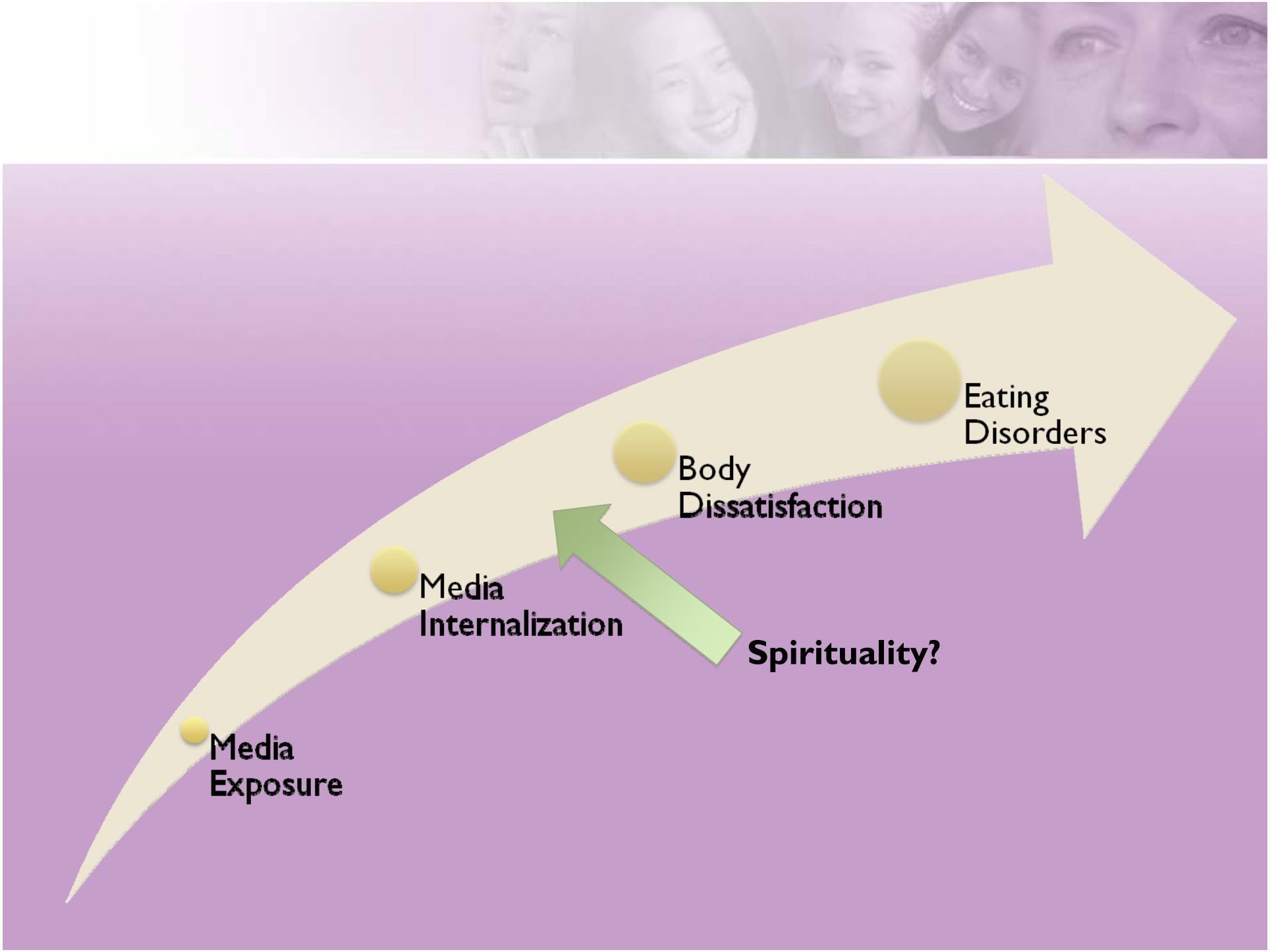
The Media's Effects

- 1500 advertisements a day[3]
- "Sacred texts"[3]
- Effects of the media:
  - Exposure negatively impacted body satisfaction [4]
  - Influences moods and self-esteem [4]
  - Increases preoccupation with weight and fear of not being the thin-ideal [5]
  - Internalization of media led to eating disturbances [6]


Eating
Disorders
Body
Dissatisfaction
Media
Internalization
Media
Exposure
How?

Theories Connecting Media and Body Image

- Festinger's Social Comparison Theory
- Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory
- Gerbner's Cultivation Theory
- Internalization:
  - Awareness of standard
  - Achieving standard is important [7]

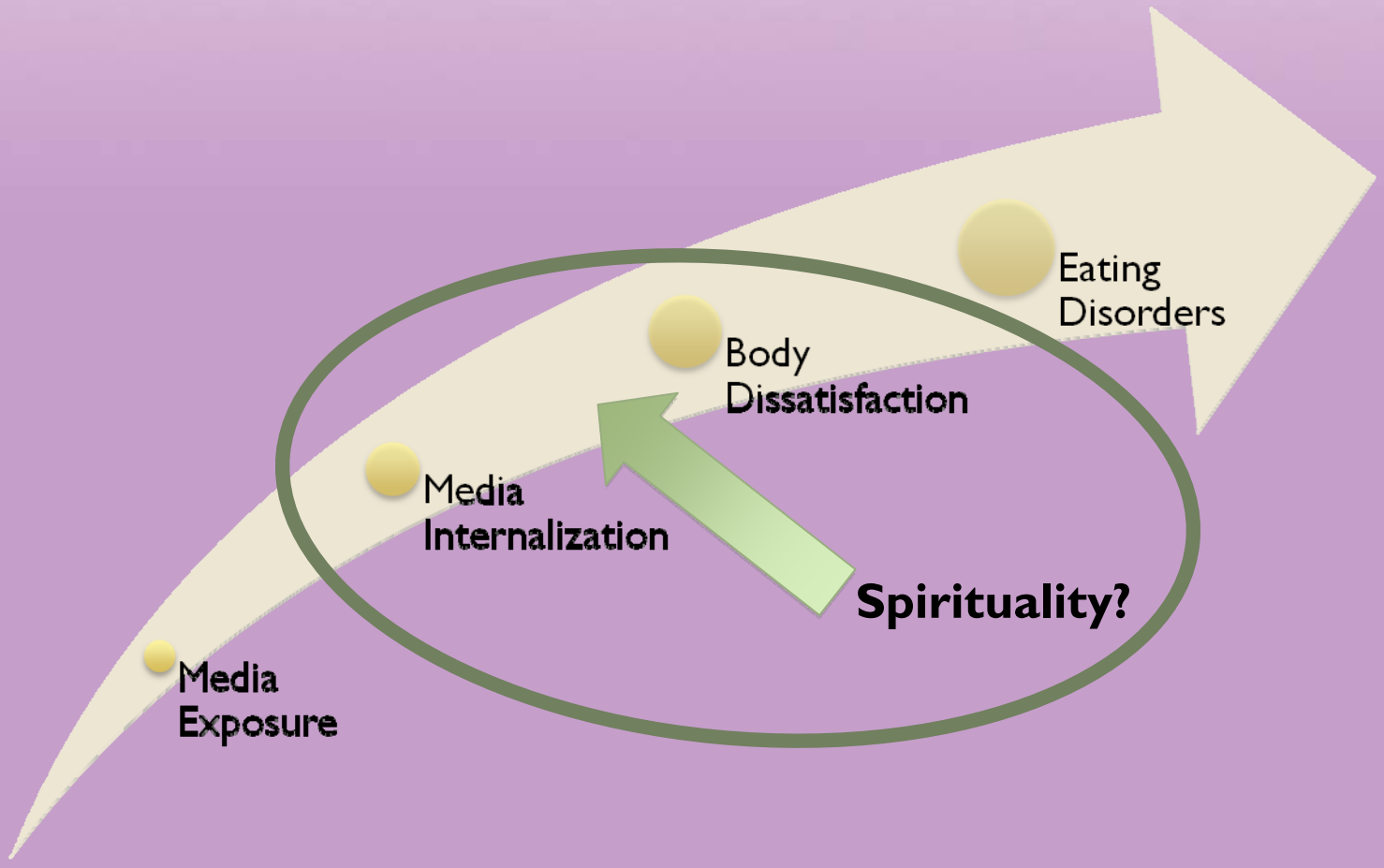

Eating Disorders
Body Dissatisfaction
Media Internalization
Spirituality?
Media Exposure

What About Spirituality?

- *How* one is religious matters not *if* one is religious [8]
- Spirituality an important part of treatment and recovery of eating disorders
  - Provided a sense of worth and meaning
  - Focus on the whole person
  - Sense of connection returns [9]
  - Important disciplines helped including prayer, forgiveness of others and self, gratitude, service [9]
- Lack of research in the prevention of eating disorders and body image [10]
- Ones conducted have proven spirituality to have a positive effect on the relationship between the media and body image [11]

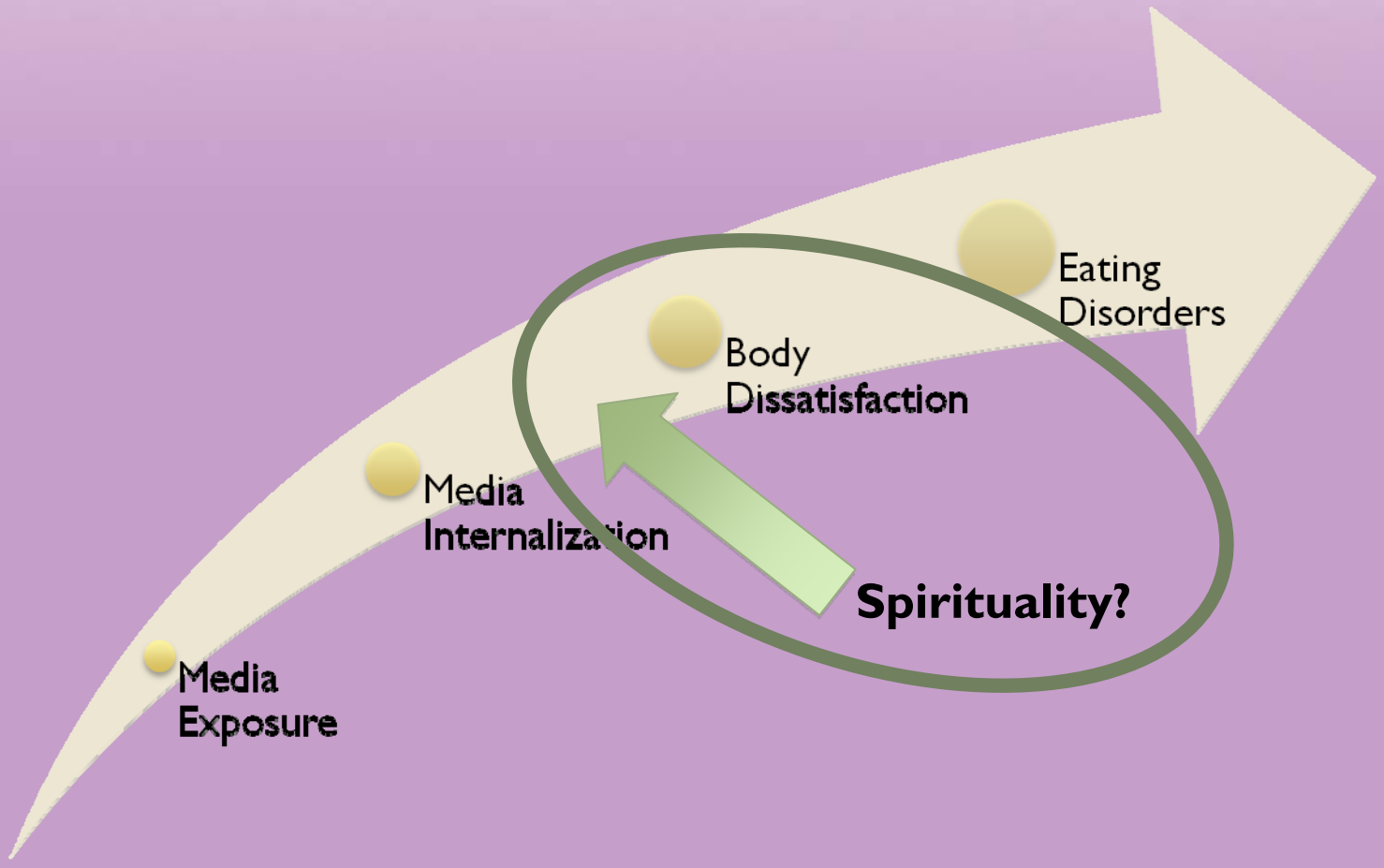
Research Questions

How do media internalization, body image, and spirituality interact in college females?



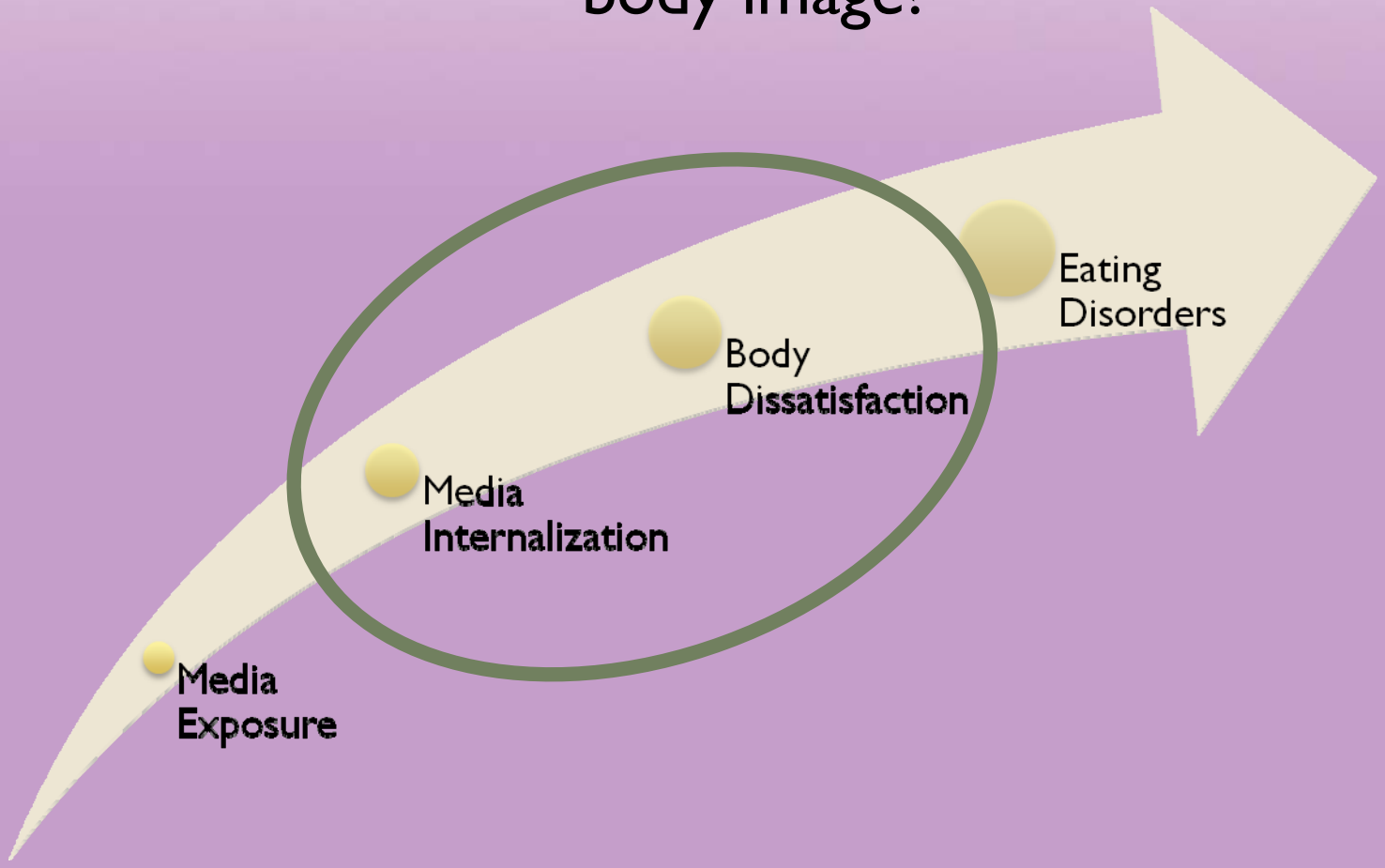
Research Questions

What is the impact of spirituality on body image?



Research Questions

What is the impact of media influences on body image?



Methods

- Correlation study
- Participants
- Instruments
  - Media Internalization: SATAQ-3 [12]
    - Information
    - Pressures
    - Internalization General
    - Internalization Athlete
  - Body Image: MBSRQ-AS [13]
    - Body Areas Satisfaction
    - Self-Classified Weight
    - Overweight Preoccupation
    - Appearance Orientation
    - Appearance Evaluation
  - Spirituality: Spiritual Maturity Index (Christianity) [14]

Results

- 489 participants
  - 175 Freshman, 148 Sophomores, 127 Juniors, 34 Seniors
  - 153 in co-educational residence halls
  - 329 in single sex residence halls
- Data Analysis
  - MANOVAS
    - 4 2x2 MANOVAS
    - Interaction effects of both media and spirituality on body image subscales
  - Correlations
    - Relationship between spirituality and body image subscales
  - Regressions
    - Predictive value of media influences on body image subscales

How does media internalization, body image, and spirituality interact in college females?

- No significant interaction effects.
  - Spirituality is not a mediating variable in the relationship between media internalization and body image.
- Individually, spirituality and media significantly affected body image.
- Power of media is too great.

What is the impact of spirituality on body image?

- Significant main effect on the appearance orientation subscale ($p < .05$)
- Spirituality is positively correlated with appearance orientation
  - Appearance Orientation: amount of investment put into one's appearance
  - Higher spiritual maturity = Increased investment in appearance
- Pressure to be a certain way or fit a certain mold
- Peers

What is the impact of spirituality on body image?

- Spirituality mildly correlated with overweight preoccupation
  - Overweight Preoccupation: amount of anxiety about being overweight and investment in dieting
  - Higher spiritual maturity = Increased preoccupation about weight
- Body as temple of the Spirit and Self-Control
- Righteousness = thin and Sin = fat [15]

What is the impact of media influences on body image?

- Knowledge of media's ideal was connected with:
  - Increased body satisfaction
  - Decreased anxiety about weight
  - Increased feelings of attractiveness
  - Increased investment in appearance
- The mere knowledge of the ideal is not having a negative impact on body image.

What is the impact of media influences on body image?

- Feelings of pressure from the thin-ideal are connected with:
  - Decreased body satisfaction
  - Increased anxiety about being overweight
  - Increased perceptions of weight
  - Decreased feelings of attractiveness
  - Increased investment in appearance
- Pressures had a significant negative impact on all aspects of body image.

What is the impact of media influences on body image?

- Internalization of media's thin ideal is connected with:
  - Decreased body satisfaction
  - Increased anxiety about weight
  - Increased perceptions of being overweight
  - Decreased feelings of attractiveness
  - Increased in investment in appearance
- Internalization had a significant negative impact on all aspects of body image.

Implications

Prevention efforts focused between knowledge and pressures.

- Media Discernment Programs
- Body Image Programming in required courses

Implications

- Women at faith-based institutions are not immune to the media's thin-ideal
- Awareness of pressures from media but also religious sub-culture
- Spirituality should be offering a new definition of beauty
  - Embracing both the spiritual and physical
  - Focusing on the worth, identity, and meaning

Future Research

- Focus on love, worth, identity, and meaning found in spirituality and its relationship to body image.
- Continued research in mitigating factors for the relationship between the media and body image.
- Focus on other causes of negative body image and eating disorders and their relationships with spirituality.
- Investigating the spiritual sub-cultures and their effect on body image.

Limitations

- Participants self-reported
- Difficult concepts to assess via survey
  - Especially spirituality
- Not randomized
  - Unequal groups (i.e. grade levels and residence halls)

Discussion

How have you seen spirituality aid *negative* body image and eating disordered behavior?

How have you seen spirituality aid *positive* body image and eating disordered behavior?

How do you think spirituality should affect body image in college females?

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