



JESSICA WILSON

Dietitian. Author. Community organizer.

Jessica Wilson is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and a Consultant/Activist centering the voices and experiences of those most marginalized in the eating disorder field. She is the co-founder of the #amplifymelanatedvoices movement to elevate content creators – including dietitians, therapists, and body liberation advocates – who are Black, Indigenous or other people of color.

Key takeaways and talking points:

The definition of a “good” and “healthy” body is neither good nor healthy.

The story of the western body has been written by white men (and increasingly, white women), idealizing a thin, white body. However, this ideal doesn't even serve white people. The work before us is to not internalize and punish *ourselves* if we don't “measure up” to this white supremacist ideal while advocating and fighting for the structural change we need for a more body inclusive society.

Dismantling “diet culture” is not the answer.

The problem with this approach is that it completely ignores the overarching structure of body appraisal that white supremacy crafted centuries ago.

Health is a social construct.

People with chronic illness, “bad labs,” or physical symptoms are often made to feel like they are failing because they lack “Health.” But many people live with chronic conditions that cannot be “fixed” by conventional medicine or the Wellness industry. And sometimes that's OK.

The human toll: “I can't be Black *and* fat”

Wilson writes about clients and loved ones who are harming themselves, depriving their bodies of nutrients as a way to avoid the pain of living in a white supremacist patriarchal culture creates. As one client said: “I'm the only Black woman in my graduate program. I can't be fat, too!”

Black women deserve *Basictivity* – a new word for

the urban dictionary, connoting ample time to relax with pumpkin-spice scented candles, the privilege to choose neighborhoods based on proximity to Trader Joe's rather than the likelihood of police brutality, and the opportunity to have one's health complaints taken seriously by doctors, among other things.

Why “body positivity” fails to serve marginalized communities, including queer and trans people.

What if your body isn't a problem for you but the responses of others to your body negatively impacts your quality of life? (Possibly including discrimination, legislation like bathroom bans, or even physical violence.)

How “progressive” ideas like intuitive eating or Health At Every Size can cause harm

With 10.5 percent of American households experiencing food insecurity, it's a privilege to eat only when hungry and stop when only slightly full. And to say that eating is like fueling your body is like saying that sex is only for procreation. Food can be enjoyed for its own sake. It brings pleasure, it connects us to our culture, etc. If that results in some weight gain, that can also be OK.

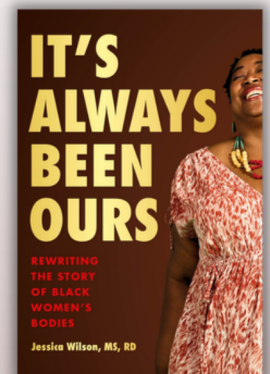
Eating disorders are medically and societally defined in a way that Black women will never fit.

It is very possible to be overweight but under-nourished. While pathologizing Black women's decisions around food is never the answer, the diagnostic criteria for eating disorders can make it harder for people to get treatment.

Narratives of colonization have impacted which foods are seen as good or bad.

Hipster obsession with foods historically tied to Blackness, i.e. fried green tomatoes and okra, is rampant in gentrifying areas while Black and Brown residents are policed and shamed for their food choices.

Forthcoming Book:



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