Lesbian Overweight and Obesity Research

“Tackling the Lesbian Obesity Epidemic” Messaging and Images Report

Prepared By

Out to Market Communications
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BACKGROUND

Due to a variety of factors, obesity in the United States is now epidemic. Obesity and overweight are critical factors in the nation’s health because they are known risk factors for many diseases including heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “American society has become an ‘obesogenic’ society characterized by environments that promote increased food intake, non-healthful foods, and lack of physical inactivity. These behaviors directly lead to overweight and obesity.”

In the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report of July 24, 2009 - 58(RR07);1-26 obesity rates in the U.S. were shown to have increased dramatically over the last 30 years. Their data indicates that two-thirds (approximately) of U.S. adults and one-fifth of U.S. children are either obese or overweight.

Lesbians and Overweight/Obesity

Most importantly for this messaging research report, data indicates that lesbians in the United States have higher rates of overweight and obesity than their heterosexual counterparts. As one study found, the rate of overweight and obesity was twice as high among lesbians when compared to their heterosexual counterparts.

The causes of obesity and overweight among the general population in the U.S. have been the subject of much research over the past several decades. The causes of obesity and overweight among lesbians have not been as well researched and are not clearly understood, although they seem to be linked to complex social, psychological, cultural and behavioral influences as well as genetics, calorie intake and lack of physical activity.

The impact of societal norms on behaviors related to health is a well-studied area of sociology and medicine. Societal norms are developed by long-held cultural beliefs that influence a large group of people and become the acceptable way of expression and life. Lesbian and bisexual women (other terms for these groups include queer and sexual minority women) live among many different cultures, including the “gay culture,” with differing societal norms emanating from each.

Hypotheses about the causes for higher rates of obesity among lesbians include reactions to the stress of being stigmatized, family rejection, and a backlash against societal standards of beauty. These community norms, however, have a negative impact on sexual minority women’s health, with overweight and obesity contributing to higher rates of cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

Currently in the District of Columbia there is no program available designed to address the specific needs of sexual minority women. Mautner Project: the National Lesbian Health
Organization recognizes the critical need for a “health” awareness campaign and intervention designed specifically for lesbians/sexual minority women. A recent study conducted in Atlanta identified that lesbians are more apt to seek help for weight loss because of health-related concerns as opposed to wanting to improve their appearance.

The same study found that the weight loss/risk reduction needs of this population include: 1) an environment that provides a sense of safety (defined as free from sexual identity-based judgments); 2) a program that allows for attention to individuals’ specific needs (defined as the ability to openly refer to their partners or other sexual identity-related concerns); and 3) a program that inherently supports the development of community. The intervention to be tested through this project incorporates all of these community-identified needs.

The few studies that have been done to understand what drives the norms and behaviors of lesbian/sexual minority women and to devise effective interventions have concentrated on white women, which marks a deficit in the research and in programming. It is known that there are differing norms about women’s body size within African American and white communities generally, which suggests we cannot generalize for all women from all-white groups.

Mautner Project is undertaking the “Tackling the Lesbian Obesity Epidemic” project to address the issue of obesity among lesbian/sexual minority women by strengthening the sense of community through a messaging and advertising campaign and by implementing a weight loss/risk reduction intervention designed specifically by and for this population.

In this report, potential messaging and imagery that will encourage lesbian/sexual minority women to address and/or reverse their continued weight gain and to enter the intervention program are explored and discussed.

**Defining Overweight and Obesity**

Overweight and obesity are both labels for ranges of weight that are greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height. For adults, overweight and obesity ranges are determined by using weight and height to calculate a number called the "body mass index" (BMI).

BMI is used for most people because it closely correlates with their amount of body fat though it does not directly measure body fat.

- An adult who has a BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight.
- An adult who has a BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese.
Overweight and Obesity - Causes

Generally it is thought that the causes for overweight and obesity among the general population include:

**Calories**
A variety of factors play a role in overweight and obesity making it a complex health issue to address. Technically, overweight and obesity result from an imbalance of energy in the body involving eating too many calories and not getting enough physical activity to burn off the excess calories consumed. A calorie is defined as a unit of energy supplied by food, and is found in all foods whether they take the form of carbohydrates, fats, sugars, or proteins.

**Eating and Physical Inactivity**
According to the U.S. Surgeon General’s 2001 report *Call to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity*, the choices a person makes in eating and physical activity play the largest roles as causes for people to be overweight and obese. Healthier eating and more physical activity are logical areas for prevention and treatment for most people who are overweight and obese.

**Environment**
According to the Surgeon General’s *Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity 2001*, people may make decisions based on their environment or community. For example, a person may choose not to walk to the store or to work because of a lack of sidewalks. Environmental factors beyond the control of individuals (including lack of access to full-service grocery stores, high costs of healthy foods, and lack of access to safe places to play and exercise) contribute to increased obesity rates by reducing the likelihood of healthy eating and adequate physical activity.

**Genetics**
Some research indicates that genetics plays a role in obesity and that genes can directly cause obesity, for instance in disorders such as Bardet-Biedl and Prader-Willi syndromes. However genes do not always predict whether a person will become overweight or obese. Genes and behavior may both be involved when a person is overweight.

According to James Hill and Frederick Trowbridge in their article *Childhood Obesity: Future Directions and Research Priorities*, “despite obesity having strong genetic determinants, the genetic composition of the population does not change rapidly. Therefore, the large increase in [obesity]... must reflect major changes in non-genetic factors."
Health Effects of Overweight and Obesity

Research shows that as weight increases to the levels referred to as overweight and obese it raises risks for the following:

- Coronary heart disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon)
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Dyslipidemia (for example, high total cholesterol or high levels of triglycerides)
- Stroke
- Liver and Gallbladder disease
- Sleep apnea and respiratory problems
- Osteoarthritis (a degeneration of cartilage and its underlying bone within a joint)
- Gynecological problems (abnormal menses, infertility)
MESSAGING OBJECTIVES

The goal of this report is to provide analysis and context for the messaging and advertising campaign that will be a part of Mautner Project’s “Tackling the Lesbian Obesity Epidemic” program. Using the results of online survey research conducted from September 20, 2010 through November 30, 2010 and focus group research conducted on November 15 and November 17, 2010, this report will encapsulate findings and make concrete recommendations.

This analysis will be used to assist advertising art designers with the creation of salient messaging and imagery for the advertising campaign. This campaign will encourage lesbians/sexual minority women over the age of 18, African American and white, in any Ward in the District of Columbia, and who have a starting BMI of “overweight” or “obese” to join an intervention program hosted by Mautner Project. The objective of the intervention program will be to reduce obesity and overweight among the women who participate.

The advertising campaign will also be used to create education and awareness of the community support available for lesbians/sexual minority women who would like to engage in healthier eating and physical activity choices.

Utilizing the “themes” or slogans and messaging and imagery identified as persuasive by this research, Mautner Project will work in conjunction with marketing and advertising experts to create advertising that conveys an alternative healthier community norm regarding weight. Mautner Project will also “pitch” the story of this campaign to local LGBT media (such as the Washington Blade and Metro Weekly) to enhance public relations outreach and garner “earned media” if possible.

Mautner Project will also provide direct, person-to-person education with the researched messaging at diverse community venues. These places may include local LGBT-friendly churches; large events heavily attended by the LGBT community, such as Capital Pride, Black Pride, and Youth Pride; and entertainment venues and restaurants frequented by members of the LGBT community. At these events Mautner Project will distribute advertising collaterals such as palm cards or flyers about Mautner Project interventions.

Specifically the goals for the creation and implementation of the messaging and advertising campaign are:

- Use online survey and focus group research analysis to create messages and implement tested imagery elements for an advertising campaign geared to lesbians/sexual minority women in the District of Columbia.

- Determine motivating factors for weight loss and weight gain, increased physical activity and better overall health for lesbians/sexual minority women to help create the advertising campaign.
• Discover salient messengers and messaging “themes” for the advertising campaign targeted to lesbians/sexual minority women. For instance, who would be the right “spokesperson” or messenger for health messages geared to this audience and what tone or “theme” should be included those messages.

• Discover which media channels would be best to deliver the messaging to the D.C.-based lesbian/sexual minority women audience?

The Intervention Program

Overall, the intervention program has three components/goals though only the first goal of messaging and advertising is addressed in this report.

1. Messaging/Advertising: A broad public outreach campaign with advertising on buses, bus shelters and in print media. The messaging and imagery for the ads will be designed to challenge existing norms within the lesbian/sexual minority women community around “fat acceptance” and will endeavor to create a new community norm of aspiring to good health.

2. Intervention Group Sessions: The intervention program will reach smaller numbers of women through group sessions utilizing culturally competent discussions, a free exercise program, nutrition education and on-going evaluation. These sessions will be evaluated by an outside evaluator, Professor of Nursing Sarah Fogel, Ph.D., R.N. of the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, and adjusted as needed throughout the project period.

The group sessions will address the need for weight loss, increased exercise and greater knowledge and practice of sound nutrition within the community of sexual minority women in the District of Columbia. According to data gathered by The Williams Institute, approximately 8.1% of the adult population of the District of Columbia is LGBT (Gates).

3. Program Replication: Results, replicable programs and recommendations for physicians and clinics in the District of Columbia who work with lesbians/sexual minority women will be distributed at the conclusion of this project.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to better understand the motivations and barriers to successful weight reduction, an online survey and two in-person focus groups with overweight and obese lesbian/sexual minority women were conducted by Mautner Project and its research partner Out to Market Communications. The research investigated the attitudes and needs of African American and white lesbian/sexual minority women, and explored messaging and potential advertising imagery that could reach African American and white lesbian/sexual minority women throughout the District of Columbia.

The online survey was created between August 2 and September 15, 2010 and opened for response collection September 20, 2010. The online survey closed on November 30, 2010. A total of 283 online questionnaires were started with 242 questionnaires completed.

Participants in Focus Groups: The in-person focus groups consisted of one group made up of five Caucasian women, two women of Hispanic heritage and one woman of Asian heritage who self-identified as lesbian/sexual minority women. The second focus group was made up of eight African American women who self-identified as lesbian/sexual minority. Women in both sets of focus groups were prescreened to determine that they had a BMI placing them in either the “overweight” or “obese” categories and that they were residents of the District of Columbia. The BMI’s of the women in the first focus group ranged from 29 to 51 and in the second group the BMI’s ranged from 28 to 44.

Respondents to the online survey included:
- 185 or 68.8% who self-described their sexual orientation as lesbian;
- 39 or 14.5% who self-identified as queer;
- 21 or 7.8% who self-identified as bisexual;
- Nine or 3.3% who self-identified as same-gender-loving (woman);
- Four who checked “other;”
- Three who identified as gay;
- One respondent or .4% who identified as two-spirit; and
- One respondent from Arizona, six from California, five from Canada, one from Delaware, 59 from the District of Columbia, three from Florida, two from Georgia, two from Illinois, one from Indiana, one from Kentucky, 59 from Maryland, one each from Michigan, Missouri and Nebraska, 19 from New York, two each from North Carolina and Ohio, one from Oklahoma, 12 from Pennsylvania, two from Tennessee, three from Texas, 35 from Virginia, and 33 from Wisconsin.

In both the focus groups and the online survey the research questions were designed to uncover attitudes about body size, the role of communities (racial and sexual minority) in affirming or challenging “norms,” past experiences with weight/risk reduction attempts, and ideas about what program content could help motivate in the arena of weight risks and weight loss promotion.
The focus groups and the online survey also delved into a variety of messages, messaging themes, media channels and imagery for print advertisements. Images of women as singles, couples, and in groups, women from a variety of racial and ethnic diversities, women who were non-celebrities and celebrities, and women in a variety of “activities” and “expressions” were included in the imagery testing.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this study a snapshot of the attitudes of the lesbian/sexual minority women regarding the issue of overweight/obesity emerged. Women who participated in the focus groups and online survey, including members of a community who traditionally may not have been included in other formal research gave insightful answers to the questions posed to them.

Key Insights in this Report include:

- A majority of respondents (185 or 68.8%) to the online survey self-described their sexual orientation as lesbian; 39 (14.5%) self-identified as queer; 21 (7.8%) self-identified as bisexual; nine (3.3%) self-identified as same-gender-loving (woman); four respondents checked “other;” three respondents identified as gay; and one respondent (.4%) self-identified as two-spirit.

- In rating their health in the online survey 15.3% of respondents said their health was excellent, 41.8% said their health was very good, 32.9% said their health was good, 8.4% said their health was fair while 1.6% of respondents said their health was poor.

- While a majority of online respondents indicated their health was excellent, very good or good, a majority also responded that they should increase their exercise (78.7%) and/or lose weight (64.9%) to improve their health.

- A majority (68.0%) of the online respondents also indicated that they had been advised by a health care professional to take action to improve their health.

- A high percentage of online survey respondents were working on increasing their exercise (64.4%) and/or losing weight (52.8%).

- Over half of the online respondents (50.5%) categorized themselves as heavier than average when asked what body type most represented them with 39.7% of respondents checking “heavier than average” while 10.8% checked “much” heavier than average.

- When asked “what would help you to accomplish” health goals including losing weight, lowering cholesterol, lowering blood pressure and increasing their exercise 46.7% of online respondents said that peer or partner support would help while almost as many (46.3%) said having a buddy or coach would help. Additionally 37.6% said that working with a group of lesbian/bisexual women for support would help.

- When asked what would prevent them from working on their health goals, almost one-half of respondents (49.6%) said cost would prevent them while 42.9% said that they are not motivated to pursue their health goals. Of those who responded to the question, 39.3% answered “other” along with an explanation.

- Of the explanations given in the comments section of the “what would prevent you from working on your health goals” a majority said that lack of time was what prevented them
from working on their health goals. Other interesting answers included, “live too far from the ‘lesbian community’ in my city,” “I fill my time with too many other things, mostly unimportant,” “fear of success. I have a jealous partner and if I became super fit she would be even more insecure,” and “lack of support from partner-she does not want to work on her own issues and so then sabotages mine.”

- Focus group participants most often mentioned bus and Metro placards as the best mediums/channels to place advertising that would reach them. They also most often mentioned placement of the placards on the inside of the buses or Metro trains and on the sides of buses and at bus stop waiting areas.

- Focus group participants in both groups also mentioned Facebook as a good channel through which to reach them, specifically with positive/healthy weight messages. They were also open to email.

- In addition, focus group participants in Group One (white, Hispanic and Asian) were especially put off by weight loss advertising that used “skinny” women or women who did not look “real.” They also strongly objected to ads that used pills or “quick fixes” that did not mention realistic weight loss techniques.

- In the second focus group, consisting of all African American women, participant discussion often centered on how women in the picture imagery they were shown were either good looking or, especially, “sexy.” While the discussion in this focus group was lively and filled with humor-related content that connoted good looking or “sexy,” it was difficult to determine their opinion of attractiveness with regard to weight.

- A majority of all focus group participants felt that advertising about weight should emphasize health. They mentioned “huffing and puffing up escalators” and “…‘your body is your temple’ and following that quote, if I was practicing [good] physical health I would be treating my body like a temple.”

- When asked what body type most represented them, most respondents thought that they were either heavier than average (39.7%) or average (39.7%). In addition, of respondents who answered the question 11.6% believed their body type to be “thin” and 10.8% believed their body type to be much heavier than average.

- On the question of which image would be their number one choice to appear in an advertisement, 28.6% of respondents chose image M – that of a woman of undetermined race or age eating a small dish of fruit dressed in a sleeveless pullover shirt and with a towel draped over her shoulders. The image that garnered the second highest number one choices was letter F – an image of a group of younger women of various races and ethnicities. Image H garnered the third highest number one choices. Image H is of a woman in a two piece sports/workout outfit who is perspiring while doing abdominal crunches. She is a woman with medium dark skin of indeterminate race – she may be Hispanic or she may be Asian or she may be African American.
REFERENCES USED IN THIS REPORT


RELEVANT FINDINGS

This research investigated the attitudes and needs of African American and white lesbian/sexual minority women toward overweight and obesity and toward body size and image appeal. Additionally the researchers also explored messaging and potential advertising imagery that could reach African American and white lesbian/sexual minority women throughout the District of Columbia;

The research consisted of an online survey which opened for response collection September 20, 2010 and closed on November 30, 2010. A total of 283 online questionnaires were started with 242 questionnaires completed.

Respondents to the online survey included: 185 or 68.8% who self-described their sexual orientation as lesbian; 39 or 14.5% who self-identified as queer; 21 or 7.8% who self-identified as bisexual; nine or 3.3% who self-identified as same-gender-loving (woman); four who checked “other;” three who identified as gay; and one respondent or .4% who identified as two-spirit.

Two in-person focus groups were also held and consisted of one group made up of five Caucasian women, two women of Hispanic heritage and one woman of Asian heritage who self-identified as lesbian/sexual minority women. The second focus group was made up of eight African American women who self-identified lesbian/sexual minority. The BMI’s of the women in focus group one ranged from 29 to 51. The BMI’s of the women in the second focus group ranged from 28 to 44.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16. What do you think you should do to improve your health? (Check all that apply)</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower my cholesterol</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower my blood pressure</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower my blood sugar</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lose weight</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain weight</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat more fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase my exercise</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See a doctor more often</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take prescribed medication</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink less alcohol</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink more water</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quit smoking</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce stress</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get more sleep</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In both the focus groups and the online survey the research questions were designed to uncover attitudes about body size, improving health, past experiences with weight/risk reduction attempts, and ideas about what images and messages or slogans might help persuade women about the risks of obesity and the path to weight loss. The following are findings relevant to images, themes/slogans and advertising mediums from the research.

**Attitudes about Body Size**

When asked about whether they thought there was a norm in the lesbian/bisexual community about what body types are attractive the majority of respondents to the online survey said they did not think there was a norm (51.9%). Additionally, 24.9% of those who answered the question thought “muscular” was attractive while 23.2% answered “average weight” was attractive. Only 10.7% of respondents thought heavier than average weight was attractive and 10.3% responded that thinner than average was attractive.

When asked what body type most represented them, most respondents thought that they were either heavier than average (39.7%) or average (39.7%). In addition, of respondents who answered the question 11.6% believed their body type to be “thin” and 10.8% believed their body type to be much heavier than average.

When respondents to the online survey were asked if they considered themselves “butch/dom,” “femme/lipstick lesbian,” “androgynous/in-between,” or “none of these apply,” 34.4% chose androgynous/in-between. Additionally 33.9% chose “none of these apply” while 23.8% considered themselves “femme/lipstick lesbian” and only 10.1% considered themselves “butch or dom.”

**Experiences with Weight/Risk Reduction Attempts**

While a majority of online respondents indicated their health was excellent, very good or good, a majority also responded that they should increase their exercise (78.7%) and or lose weight (64.9%) to improve their health.

When asked what most influenced what they ate, online survey respondents said that “taste/flavor” (74.2%) most influenced them with nutritional values garnered the second most responses (63.1%). Other choices regarding what most influenced what they ate that received more than 50% were preparation time (59.7%) and convenience/availability (54.1%).

Approximately half of all online survey respondents who answered question 44 – “Do you exercise regularly?” said that they did and the other half said they did not. Of those who exercise regularly 83.2% exercise alone and 23.6% exercised with a buddy/other people.

A high percentage of online survey respondents were working on increasing their exercise (64.4%) and/or losing weight (52.8%).
Respondents to the online survey used exercise (81.3%) as an action when trying to lose weight in the past while 70.3% ate less food and 63.9% switched to foods with lower calories. In addition 47% ate less fat when they tried to lose weight, 23.7% skipped meals, 22.8% ate diet foods and 17.8% joined a program such as Weight Watchers or Overeaters Anonymous while only 6.4% took diet pills prescribed by a doctor.

When asked “what would help you to accomplish your health goals” including losing weight, lowering cholesterol, lowering blood pressure and increasing their exercise, 46.7% of online
respondents said that peer or partner support would help while almost as many (46.3%) said having a buddy or coach would help. Additionally 37.6% said that working with a group of lesbian/bisexual women for support would help.

When asked what would prevent them from working on their health goals, almost one-half of respondents (49.6%) said cost would prevent them while 42.9% said that they are not motivated to pursue their health goals. Of those who responded to the question, 39.3% answered “other” along with an explanation.

Of the explanations given in the comments section of the “what would prevent you from working on your health goals” a majority said that lack of time was what prevented them from working on their health goals. Other interesting answers included, “live too far from the ‘lesbian community’ in my city,” “I fill my time with too many other things, mostly unimportant,” “fear of success. I have a jealous partner and if I became super fit she would be even more insecure,” and “lack of support from partner-she does not want to work on her own issues and so then sabotages mine.”

**Persuasive Images**

On the question of which image would be their number one choice to appear in an advertisement, 28.6% of respondents to the online survey chose image M which was the highest percentage for any of the images. Photo M was of a woman of undetermined race/age eating a small dish of fruit dressed in a sleeveless pullover shirt and with a towel draped over her shoulders.
The image that garnered the second highest number one choices (14.1%) was letter F – an image of a group of younger women of various races and ethnicities. Image H garnered the third highest number one choices (11.9%). Image H is of a woman in a two piece sports/workout outfit who is perspiring while doing abdominal crunches. She is a woman with medium dark skin of indeterminate race – she may be Hispanic or she may be Asian or she may be African American.

Image J of a naked white woman sitting and who has discernable belly fat garnered the next highest number one choices (11%). The image of a plus size black woman sitting (letter E) came in next with 9.7% of respondents choosing this as their number one image. An image of two women with two children, letter C, received the next highest amount of number one choices (7.9%). The women appear to be lesbians and they are of average weight.

In the focus group of African American women, participant discussion often centered on how women in the picture imagery were either good looking or, especially, “sexy.” While the discussion in this focus group was lively and filled with humor-related content that connoted good looking or “sexy,” it was difficult to determine their opinion of attractiveness with regard to weight.

Participants in the white, Hispanic and Asian focus group were especially put off by weight loss advertising that used “skinny” women or women who did not look “real.” They also strongly objected to ads that used pills or “quick fixes” that did not mention realistic weight loss techniques.
Additional Insights about Potentially Persuasive Imagery

Some of the comments to the online survey question in which images of women were shown included:

“I like F AND K...the group of women who best represented me. I liked that it did not single out one certain person or body and everyone looked happy and connected. I also liked the “fat cat” as I am a cat-lover (some lesbian stereotypes apply!) and would not want my cat to be unhealthy like the cat in the picture.”

“The first thing I noticed [about image J] was her cute little belly ‘pooch.’ She’d totally a healthy weight, but has something I find attractive that popular media finds unattractive and things like that should be better normalized.”

“I chose E because she’s not skinny, but she does not appear to be significantly overweight to an unhealthy degree. She looks beautiful, but real. My second choice would have been J because she looks like a real person, not a model. E was my first choice because her age suggests that she’s made it through life and is still confident, healthy, and happy and would have advice to give a younger person like me.”

Focus group participants suggested that imagery of women outdoors, moms with kids, women in the gym, a group of women at a dining table, women hiking and or bicycling, could potentially be persuasive images for advertisements about health weight for lesbians/sexual minority women. They also suggested ideas such as overweight women who looked uncomfortable and a bit sad in movie theater seats, in bathing suits at the pool, at a backyard party in folding chairs and in bus seats or arena seats (such as at Verizon Center for a Mystics game) were potentially persuasive images.

Other creative ideas for imagery included a series of women voluptuous to skinny with their BMI numbers tattooed on their bodies, images of women who might “look lesbian” at the grocery store shopping for healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables and images of healthy weight women on the dance floor at the Phase One bar.

Persuasive Messages and Slogans

List of Potential “Losing Weight” Themes/ Slogans

Which one of the following slogans do you feel might resonate with lesbians in an advertisement about healthy weight?

- What Is My Healthy Weight And How Do I Get It?
- Body Mass Index - Not Just for Math Geeks
- You Are More Powerful Than A Cheeseburger
- Weigh Less. Feel Better - It’s That Simple
- Looking For That Healthy Weight? Let Us Help You Find It.
- Healthy Weight - The New Sexy!
- Love Women, Love Your Health!
- Know Your BMI - It’s Not Just For Policy Wonks
- Are You A Healthy Weight Lesbian?
- Healthy Weight Is A Lesbian Issue
- We don't have to “look good for our man,” we just have to live healthy
- Can A Healthy Weight Have You Feeling Strong and Fit? You Betcha!
In the online survey, when asked to choose from among slogans that might resonate with lesbians in advertisements about healthy weight, the slogan rated number one was “Love Women, Love Your Health” (45.6%). The second choice from among the slogans with 17.1% of respondents saying the slogan might resonate was “Weigh Less, Feel Better – It’s That Simple.”

“Healthy Weight is a Lesbian Issue” was the next choice with 14.9% of respondents choosing it. The next choice was a tie at 12.3% for “You Are More Powerful than a Cheeseburger” and “Looking for That Healthy Weight? Let Us Help You Find It.” “What Is My Healthy Weight and How Do I Get It?” was next with 10.1% of respondents choosing it and “Healthy Weight – the New Sexy” garnered 9.2% of respondent’s votes.

Some participants in the focus groups and the online survey also suggested additional slogans including: “Learning to Love Yourself is the Greatest Love of All,” “LesBeHealthy,” “Where do you want to be? How do you plan to get there?,” “Healthy Weight is a Sexy Lesbian Issue,” “Love Yourself, Love Your Woman and Love Your Body,” Love Women, Love Yourself,” “Health. It’s Finally Your Turn,” “Lose Weight for Those You Love,” and “Weigh in on Your Health.”

### Persuasive Advertising Mediums

Focus group participants most often mentioned bus and Metro placards as the best mediums/channels to place advertising that would reach them. They also most often
mentioned placement of the placards on the inside of the buses or Metro trains and on the sides of buses and at bus stop waiting areas.

Focus group participants in both groups also mentioned Facebook as a good channel through which to reach them, specifically with positive/healthy weight messages. They were also open to email.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The images presented for this study moderately succeeded in ascertaining a specific type of image to use in the advertising campaign. The image that resonated highest among the women who self-identified as lesbian/sexual minority women was image M - the woman of undetermined race/age eating a small dish of fruit dressed in a sleeveless pullover shirt and with a towel draped over her shoulders.

The choice of photo M combined with the fact that a majority of respondents in both the online survey and focus groups suggested that positive images of a “healthy woman” or “healthy women” would be best. This aspect is important because it indicates that a positive image would be better received than a negative one even though there were several discussions about showing overweight women in uncomfortable but realistic “size” situations to make the point that it is not fun to be overweight or obese.

It is recommended that Mautner Project consider the following:

✓ Develop ad creative that conveys that the woman/women pictured are lesbian/sexual minority women.

✓ Develop ad creative that evokes the feelings of the positive effects of weight loss on lesbian’s/sexual minority women’s health.

✓ Develop creative that utilizes images of women in some sort of physical activity scenario – hiking, biking, at the gym, doing yoga, etc.

✓ Develop creative that conveys a sense of “community” support – i.e. a group of women together at a dinner table filled with healthy foods, women together at the grocery store shopping for healthy foods, women together in a setting outdoors who are exercising, women together indoors – at a gym or other – who are exercising.

✓ Develop creative that uses diverse imagery in all versions of individual ads or the ad series.

✓ These research results indicate that Metro bus, Metro train and Metro bus kiosks would be the most effective advertising channels for the messages to the lesbian/sexual minority women audience.

✓ Advertising messages on Facebook and online would also be effective and should be pursued.

✓ Direct person-to-person education at bars and other venues frequented by lesbian/sexual minority women is a possible channel to pursue as well as advertisements in the City Paper, Washington Blade and Metro Weekly were occasionally read by focus group members and may be beneficial publications in which to place advertisements if the budget allows.
**NEXT STEPS**

This Report has provided information that can help inform advertising design decisions for the communication about and marketing of an intervention program to help lesbians/sexual minority women lose weight and gain health.

The creative aspects of the marketing campaign will require careful planning to connect the healthy weight for lesbians vs. “too skinny” and “doesn’t look like me” messages for this community.

By moving forward with its stated objectives, goals, timetables and measures of success, Mautner Project can use the communications and marketing themes uncovered in this research to promote healthy weight concepts and an intervention program to the lesbian/sexual minority women community.
Appendix A: Select Transcripts from Focus Group Discussions

November 15, 2010 Focus Group (Group One - composed of five Caucasian women, two women of Hispanic heritage and one woman of Asian heritage)

1. LESBIAN/SEXUAL MINORITY WOMEN, ADVERTISING, AND WEIGHT LOSS

LEADER: “We’re going to talk about imagery and advertising imagery, and slogans and things that you might see. We are conducting this focus group in order to find out how to get women to come to an intervention or just to talk about health, weight loss and physical activity. I know that you’ve all probably seen weight loss advertising. What I’d like to know is what you found annoying, counterproductive – doesn’t matter what medium you saw it in.

PARTICIPANT: “I think when you talk about weight loss and you’ve got somebody really skinny talking about it- it irritates the crap out of me. It really does. I like when - and it’s been a long time now - but like when Dove started putting out, you know, more of an average sized women, you know. I think a couple of bra companies did the same thing, but I mean it feels better to have – I’m a consumer I want somebody who looks like me –

PARTICIPANT: “..more realistic”

PARTICIPANT: “you know, yeah, especially now, you know, with the economy what it is, if I’m going to spend money I – I want it to – it – you know, kinda come toward me as me being me, not, you know, somebody who’s five - feet taller than me and you know, and weighs nothing.”

PARTICIPANT: I think that – I think the stuff - like detoxing, and like purifying, and like cleansing, and stuff, you know, I mean with all the stuff that you see like how much more dirty can you feel about yourself? [laughter] I mean, you know I get that’s what a lot of advertising does. I just kind of like my food. I enjoyed how I got to my size, frankly, I mean not the processing part, but I just hate those, I mean – it makes me sound like this like this chemical mess or something.”

PARTICIPANT: “Or that little asterisk in the corner: ‘results are not typical’ [laughter] It’s like you’re BSing us. Why are you wasting my time showing me somebody who’s rich and famous before and after?

PARTICIPANT: “I feel angry – more than annoyed – but angry at the stuff I know especially like what young teenage girls fall for. You know, the stuff that’s really going to make people sick. And so when I see those advertisements, you know, the side of the bus - “may cause death” or you know, like all these horrible things – ...it’s – I don’t know how else to describe it, but I feel angry when I see the things. Like I’ve never tried any of those things, so I’ve ...

LEADER: “Can you be more specific about the ‘things’?”
PARTICIPANT: “Oh, like pills, or I don’t’ know exactly what they are but the ones for depression. It’ll take the depression away, but then you’ll have bladder problems. You know, it’ll cause stroke or heart – they have all those side effects. I guess it’s diet pills or things that they say you take this pill and it will help …like get rich quick – get skinny quick schemes.

PARTICIPANT: “I don’t really like the advertisements like the before and after advertisements – maybe it’s just me, but like I’d much prefer just like some happy people eating some apples or something – I don’t know - like I don’t really- like – like - they always just like take the before picture and like make it really terrible and put bags under people’s eyes and it’s just…..”

PARTICIPANT: “no make-up”

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah, and it’s just like – and then they like do up the - the after picture oh really much – like if you just took like the average and just like put a nice, you know, person running or playing tennis or eating an apple or something – that would be, like a lot more appealing to me than the sort of overdone extremes.

PARTICIPANT: “They’re also so gender-specific … in that regard. I remember a few years ago there was an ad for what was it Meridia – the diet drug. And they were these – it was this commercial with like two or three different women talking about how they wanted to lose weight and Meridia was going to be this great thing to help them lose weight and I remember specifically one of them, she had a husband and the husband was not slender either. But nowhere in the commercial did they talk about the husband needing to lose weight and to make his life better. So I find the fact that so much of it is geared toward women – in addition to all the manipulation that’s already been talked about to make these images and pictures influence us—the fact that they pretty much almost exclusively ignore men is also incredibly offensive. And in terms of the whole sort of like making the before and after - the before like – you’re like you’re a social piranha until you magically lose weight and then you’re the ball – you know the princess of the ball and that sort of [thing] is really offensive. I don’t know why it can’t be just stuff folks - - - self care. Right? You care about yourself, you love yourself you want to nourish yourself, treat your body right, you know, and talk in that sort of language. You know, very much the sort of – you know, maybe it’s bit sort of – new-age-y but talking more about just sort of you know taking of the body you have instead of having to tear the body down to get a new one, I - I think is just a – a more effective approach.

PARTICIPANT: “I once saw a – a little cartoon of a diagram of a very fat woman and it was - maybe it showed organs in side or something - and it said “Your Body is Where You Live” and I found that really, really powerful. “

LEADER: “Let’s move on to ads that you’ve seen that might be motivating. Can you recall seeing any advertising about weight, health, and/or weight loss on TV, print, radio, online – any medium that you thought were good or motivating?

PARTICIPANT: “I remember when I ran into - there’s this website called “SparkPeople” and... “SparkPeople –one word – so it’s sparkpeople.com. And I’ve sort of been - it - it’s basically – it –
it’s – it has like a free version – I’m sure there’s like a pay version but anyway like it it’s basically supposed - it purports itself as an online community that offers like whole host of stuff – it has like articles, you can join like support groups that are online, which I don’t because I – I prefer my support to be like in person not on the Internet – online as such. But it offers like diet plans and exercise plans and all that stuff, you can streamline it down as much as you want or like use as much of the gadetry as much as you want and I guess I like that because first off, it’s free so .... You know, it wasn’t ... there’s no like – no like flashy like skinny people coming at you – things like that. You know, it’s just all kinda like access information at your own pace and what you want. And I’ve been – I’ve been using that, and I – I use a very streamlined version in a sense it’s like I will like say I exercise 30 minutes, it’s like you can also have like 10 different exercises you can check off. I choose not to do that. But it like – the fact that you can like customize things and it’s online – god knows I’m online a lot so – that was something I thought was useful.

PARTICIPANT: “Something I like along the lines of the kind of online support I guess more of a program than an advertisement but LiveStrong Campaign has a really good website when it comes to like being healthy and that kind of thing and so along with of the all information that they have about losing weight and that kind of thing you can also kind of along the lines you can also kind of track goals farther – I guess it’s an advertisement but you can kind of track goals – it may talk a lot more about like physical goals maybe like running a mile or something like that rather than counting calories or something and so I guess I find the like LiveStrong-type idea more compelling as an advertisement that like lose weight when you – when you show like stronger people or people doing some sort of physical activity that’s more compelling to me.

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah – connected to that. There was this thing that came out called Women’s Activity Tracker – no Women....something like that Women’s Activity Tracker – I think it was even .Gov. And it was about it was a month of focusing on activity – no, physical activity and I – it was like – it had – it was like “see what you can do, see how many of your friends you can get on it” and I like put on Facebook. It had some friends like we all signed up – Women’s Activity Tracker, yeah - so that was the same kind of thing – that was focused on doing physical exercise because I mean, aside from any physical disability like you know you can do that – to me that’s easier to do than changing the eating.

LEADER: When you see ads you like, do you think about them in terms of lesbian women or just women in general? How do you think lesbian women view the ads are motivating or the ones you find positive?

PARTICIPANT: I don’t think I’ve ever thought of you know - looking at it as sexuality or preference. Again, mine just kinda goes back toward somebody who looks like a normal human being, you know, as opposed to a model or what’s being airbrushed for me to see and never meet or be around.

PARTICIPANT: I was looking I was looking for a gym around here when I first moved here like a year ago and I went and I looked at ads and looked at their websites and tried out some different gyms and I just like sort of rejected things like Vida and Results outright because all
the people were too nice and all the stuff was too nice and maybe that was like you know most people look for nice stuff in their gym but it just seemed too shiny and new and that kind of thing and I ended up going - I go to the – just the Jewish Community Center and that was more my style and their ads were like just some people on the treadmill, doing some classes, like very low key and that was -- you know I looked at their materials that was sort of appealing to me – people that looked, yeah like you said kinda looked like you or just were, you know, a variety and looked like a situation that you’d feel comfortable in.

PARTICIPANT: I don’t know if you have asked a question - what might appeal, but I know for me what would appeal is pictures of professional female athletes of different sizes because like for example softball. A lot of those Olympic softball players are big girls and their BMI’s would classify them that way. But they’re Olympic athletes so obviously they’re healthy and fit. So I know, as a sexual minority woman, seeing images of powerful athletes of different sizes in a campaign for healthy behavior would be very – something that would appeal to me.

PARTICIPANT: “That’s a good idea.”

PARTICIPANT: “I think that would work because it’s like I know like for me like some people will like look at me and say, “Well you know you’re not tremendously big – things like that. What are – what are your issues?” Or something like that. It’s like , Well the fact that I can’t run very far without like huffing and puffing like is a huge problem that I have, so it’s like being able to see more so than like- like you were saying, it’s not necessarily like the BMI’s and like the numbers things that impress me. It’s like my ability to exert myself a little bit further than before like making sure that ... making ... more healthful ... than like the numbers or like images. It’s like that I guess....

2. IMAGES DISCUSSION

LEADER: “So, we’ll now take a look at these photos and basically question which of the images would be your first choice if you were an ad agency and you had to come up with a campaign for our whole alphabet soup of lesbian/sexual minority women. Which photo strikes you as one that would make you feel positive or motivate you?

PARTICIPANT: “E. I like E.”

LEADER: “What do you – why do you like E?”

PARTICIPANT: “Because it’s a woman who seems happy in her body and she looks healthy and I think she represents the diversity of our community. So I like that as well. Ideally, I would like an image that had, perhaps like F, but with more diversity of body sizes, ages...where you’d see more than just their faces I think would be the ideal pictures to appeal to our community.”

PARTICIPANT: “The only reason I didn’t pick D like D and E are pretty close, but D looks a little too hetero-normative for me. But I like the idea of “Yeah, I’m happy in the body that I have.”
PARTICIPANT: “I like D – just because it’s – I like E as well. But I like that movement, yeah, like she’s happy, but, you know, she’s moving, you know “I can dance, you know, if want to kind of thing.”

PARTICIPANT: “I’d probably like F with a little less makeup. [laughter] and like a little heavier.”

PARTICIPANT: “I like C because that’s what I’m looking for right now. To build a family...to find a partner and build a family. I identify with it.”

PARTICIPANT: I like the woman in A if you could put her in with some other people. Like, if you’re looking for some – like one person as – just like as an identifier, like I look at her and I think “Oh yeah. You know, that would, that would appeal to me especially, you know, if you put her in, like an ad for something else. Or in... you know.”

PARTICIPANT: “I think I’m going to... in all this. But it’s kind of hard to typify ...a queer woman to respond to things. For me, I am J. Appealing while they may be hetero-normative I think that for me looking at something like this that would be what is appealing not only but like happiness but maybe just – I know that J came from like a magazine. This is pretty breakthrough in terms of model being naked and not being perfect so maybe that’s my motivation, but that’s how I’d respond.

PARTICIPANT: I like J too. Just ‘cause you can see that she’s got a stomach you know, and not just – you know - bones.

PARTICIPANT: I have to say I don’t like the thin nudity ones that are... for what you are advertising for with a healthy weight campaign. That doesn’t - that wouldn’t appeal to me. Just – I don’t know – I associate it with Dove commercials and soap – you know, with these sorts of strategically placed arms and things. And like it doesn’t say, like, it doesn’t say activity, and you know, thighs, and a group of queer women and discussion – it says soap. So ... [laughter]

PARTICIPANT: “I like M because it’s promoting like healthy eating and also exercising.

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah, I liked M a lot when I first looked at it too.”

LEADER: “... do you associate a race with M?”

PARTICIPANT: “I think M focuses on the fruit more than color.”

PARTICIPANT: “I thought she might be a Hispanic or Latin American which is not really a race.”

PARTICIPANT: “…Latina.”

PARTICIPANT: “You know, like an M with an A or something. I don’t know, I like variety – I think it’s important. It’s not necessarily all of them are like happy groups of, you know, correctly chosen races of people. But if - within a variety of advertisements there were different - you
have a single person in one but as you’re walking through the city you see several and they represent different ages and ethnicities.

PARTICIPANT: “Sometimes it seems like if you just pick the perfect ethnically and age diverse group all together in one little advertisement that is just a little too perfectly planned and executed.”

LEADER: “What are your reactions to G and H from the standpoint of –we all know who G is, but we had one suggestion is to have well-known women athletes or just women athletes – in different sports so that different sizes of women are represented. Or how about other people who are well known – how do you feel about that?

PARTICIPANT: “Too buff”

PARTICIPANT: “In G, it’s hard for me to think that Michelle Obama’s image would appeal to queer women who have issues with their body size because I’ve heard Michelle Obama say she’s never had an issue with her body size – she’s always naturally thin – slender – and she’s not queer, so I don’t – she doesn’t appeal to me as someone I would think is someone who could speak to my life and talk about my body knowledge.

LEADER: “So taking the next step, what if the ad had a celebrity who was an out lesbian, would that be motivating?”

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah, that would definitely be, or someone perhaps – or perhaps it’s my own bias, but perhaps - they could not necessarily be out but if they had sort of because I obviously gravitate toward more masculine images of women, she doesn’t necessarily have to be out, but if she had sort of a tom-boy image, that would, you know – that would work for me.”

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah, I’m not feeling good with Michelle Obama doing outreach to me as a lesbian. I want to go see her for a lot of other reasons and have some other topics she’s talking about, but that, she’s too straight to do outreach to me, that’s how I felt. Like sort of, she’s tryin like, like it’s a condescending, like she’s knows more than I do about .... I’d rather have someone the same I’m mean who’s also queer.”

PARTICIPANT: “I think someone like Martina Navratilova would be just - I mean having, you know, met her before too, but she’s got a book out, you know, on – and it’s not just because she’s, you know, world famous as to what she’s done but she’s actually really taken into account about getting all of her – not trying to be, you know, just thin, but she’s got muscle you know muscle mass and it’s not about constantly cleansing yourself out, you know, and things like that – but more of , like, outdoor or that movement thing that you’re kind of talking about. And we all know that, you know, all the kinds of regimens that she does, but she’s also got a very calming effect of her that just seems, you know and she’s out and she - she just seems all– round the wholesome kind of thing. That she’d be - you know- the - you know - this kind of movement on the Wheaties box for, you know, women."
**LEADER:** “Does the age matter?”

**PARTICIPANT:** “I imagine age would because you’re not going to look like someone who is 15 – so you can identify with someone who is more - closer to your age.”

**PARTICIPANT:** “That was one thing I was thinking with image – I – reminds me a little bit of the “Show Me Love” kind of thing that’s going on in the city right now, and I think all those images - all those people look to be the same age range which is like 20’s and 30’s so for this campaign I’d be more interested if it had a wider range of ages, not just the demographic – the target demographic of 18-34 or whatever it is you hear about in advertising. That it actually included, you know, women past the age of 40.

**PARTICIPANT:** “Now that you’re mentioning that ____, wonder how old I would think the girl on D is, ‘cause I think she’s younger-- definitely younger, but it’s just maybe not so much her age – it’s her funness makes her seem younger. You don’t really see her face I don’t know I think kinda the body image would be more important – I don’t want to see somebody who is extremely thin talking to me about weight loss – That doesn’t mean that they can’t be happy. You know?

**PARTICIPANT:** “Are you sort of referring to the idea that women who are dieting or who stay really thin are often not happy? That’s just something that I’ve heard.”

**PARTICIPANT:** I think a lot of comedians and stuff have said that. You know, Kathy Griffin’s got a huge thing about, you know, I’m saying, you know I’m skinny but I’m – I’m pissed off because I’m hungry.[laughers] But I think that they - I don’t think you have enough people who have - you know - have weight on them, you know, or are different sizes. I don’t think they are shown in the most favorable light or that they’re really happy, you know? It’s kinda like the before and after pictures that you said before. It’s like you get, you know, drab clothing and, you have to wear black because then you’ve got to look thinner or something like that, and that’s how people show up in advertisements and stuff. Where like in this one, with, you know, even like on B you know when you’ve got some color, you know, and some brightness around these people, it’s nice. And so you don’t need somebody, I mean – I – I, you know, just chose you, ___ happiness and it’s like that you can be happy at different ages and different sizes.

**PARTICIPANT:** “I wouldn’t really feel like they knew they were gay or it was appealing to me. I mean, but like, it’s not, it seems very, like in a very hetero-normative way it doesn’t really seem like, I wouldn’t necessarily identify either of those people as gay, so having at least some of the people who are represented have a more masculine look or-or typically – I don’t know – stereotypically gay look would help me identify that it was something targeted toward me – even if I don’t necessarily look like that - would attract my attention more.

**LEADER:** So “happy” is a possible theme here? Do you think things that are funny, that make a point with humor – are appealing? Would you like some sort of play on words or something that strikes you as humorous in an ad campaign geared to you?
PARTICIPANT: I think that stuff gets tricky – I’m hesitant because it’s like with weight loss I’m not sure how much humor stuff in terms of weight loss, but I’d be concerned about treading the line between funny and self-deprecating as heavier people so it would have to done.... I think the margin of error would be really big [laughter].

LEADER: How about charts? Does everybody in the room know their BMI number? Does that make any difference in your lives? Do you care about things that could be shown in charts?

PARTICIPANT: Depends. I mean, the CDC themselves have come out with figures that say that people are in the overweight category for BMI have the longest longevity, so I think without context, those numbers are meaningless. So for myself, I would be less interested. The more sort of like – let’s classify and quantify you – the less interested I would be, because it doesn’t sound positive. It sounds like I’m being put in a little box and therefore I’m being labeled. I want to be in charge of how I label myself I don’t know want somebody who has a piece of paper they’re somehow more important than me you know putting a label on me.

LEADER: How about a really diverse group of women – age, ethnically diverse - doing something together, like riding bikes or playing volleyball... group just having fun?

PARTICIPANT: I don’t know that I would know it was appealed to me. You know? There would have to be – if you’re advertising for a particularly queer audience there would have to be something queer about it and maybe it’s something that it’s not – it’s picked up by queer people and not by other people but like...

PARTICIPANT: Yes, if you did a Women’s sports advertisement you would get amazing results I’m sure.

PARTICIPANT: Softball?

PARTICIPANT: Exactly! Perpetuate the stereotypes! (laughter)

PARTICIPANT: I’m on that same line. I think it would be hard in a public advertisement to walk that line between making it clear that - without saying “this is for queer women” to make it clear, but pictures whether or not they’re queer – that makes sense. Obviously you want to look at it and say, oh this is for me, but at the same time it’s a little offensive the other direction not for what you’re saying, just if somebody could take offensive seeing that and being like. Oh so you think I’m going to go here because you have this certain person here. Is that who I am to advertisers? Kind of like putting us in boxes? It’s hard to put pictures of queer women on a mass advertising campaign without putting us in boxes and how you think we’ll respond to certain thing. Obviously, that’s the point of advertising – how we’ll respond to different things. I get that. It’s a hard line to draw.

PARTICIPANT: ...For me, obviously seeing Mautner on it would be enough for me. But I’m just sort of wondering – in terms of pictures and stuff – god forbid you have something standard and you slap a rainbow or a triangle on it – does that do it?
3. POTENTIAL ‘LOSING WEIGHT’ THEMES/SLOGANS

LEADER: Next we’re going to talk about a list and have you tell us which things are the most appealing to you and why. Then we want to know which ones do not appeal to you and why.

PARTICIPANT: Two of these slogans that jump out at me that are similar “Love Women, Love Your Health!” and “Healthy Weight is a Lesbian Issue.” I think that I like it because it references the health issue and makes it forefront as opposed to necessarily like being skinny and then also it speaks to community and the lesbian community and you can kind of draw on – it’s not just you that’s working on this and it’s not just you that’s rooting for yourself – it’s an entire community that cares about it. So I think creating that kind of community-wide basis and for healthy behavior is really important.

PARTICIPANT: I picked those exact two also, but I didn’t – I wasn’t in touch with ‘why’ – I just know that that they worked for me so what she said [laughter]

PARTICIPANT: I love that “Love Women, Love Your Health” one. I actually do like “You Are More Powerful Than a Cheeseburger.” Sometimes I am and sometimes I’m not but it does have that kind of “funny” to it. It could make you also think.

PARTICIPANT: “Weigh Less, Feel Better – It’s That Simple.” I think that is extraordinary.

PARTICIPANT: I don’t really like the ones that focus on weight – I prefer the ones that – like – Love Women Love Your Health, or Healthy Life instead Healthy Weight or something. It just – again, this sort of thing would appeal to me if it were about healthy lifestyle rather than weight loss per se.

PARTICIPANT: With that “Love Women Love Your Health” you could see it where you had all different kinds of ages of women and from young to older – again, happy. Because it’s such a happy little message.

LEADER: What does the term “health” mean to you?

PARTICIPANT: Well, it’s a catch-all – mental and physical. I toss the mental in there because I think part of the reason why I’m overweight is because of the tremendous stress that has come down on me, so I sort of combine all that together.

PARTICIPANT: Things like balanced living sort of –

PARTICIPANT: I think with me for health and – it’s just a matter of feeling better. Sometimes it seems like it slows you down – truly physically it does. But mentally in that it just tires me out some certain times. I don’t feel like my body’s doing what I know if I took better care of it, it could. I don’t know how much better it could get there, and I’m not one that’s going to go that 10 extra miles to do it. But I do want it to be better that what it is. For me I personally know when I’m not at my best. So when I would feel better about it would be what I would consider healthy.
PARTICIPANT: I think for me, I don’t think you can have physical health if you don’t have mental health so any sort of program that makes sure it integrates - you know - feeling good about yourself independent of any external factors that supposed label that you’re doing something right – so if the - in terms of like, you won’t know you’re doing something good for your health until certain numbers change. If it’s all about just feeling good in the package you have - you know - with everything that’s available to you. That, to me, is health. Because it’s holistic. So for me, if you don’t have the mental health, it doesn’t matter how great your physical body is because you still feel like crap and a lot of people feel like crap because the only reason they have a healthy weight is because society tells them they need to be a certain – wear a certain dress size or whatever. So to me that’s not health. If mentally you hate yourself and you feel like lower than low if you gain one pound. Those sort of things I just find worse than excess weight – hands down, so for me any sort of message that plays up those sorts of categorizations are going to be a turn off for me. When you don’t love yourself, you don’t want to take care of your body and you love yourself by starting with your head, not your ass.

PARTICIPANT: I’ve been sitting here listening – very uncharacteristic of me. I’m struck by how we’ve talked a lot about exercise and movement and not very much about food. In the whole night, we’ve almost never talked about food. You had one comment about not wanting – not liking to feel deprived. And that’s something I resonate to – I eat because I really like food. I really like to eat, and so I’m just wondering if there’s any response to that observation. Is it easier to talk about movement than it is to talk about food? Is it easier to think about adding exercise than it is about removing food. I know it is for me – I exercise quite a lot and eat quite a lot. And it’s much easier for me to spend another half hour walking or in the gym than it is to not have that second helping of something.

LEADER: “Do other people feel that way?"

PARTICIPANT: Well... when I said earlier that yeah, exercise – I feel better when I exercise. But anything to related to controlling the amount of what I eat – not what I eat, but the amount of it is – I’m not interested. It’s something I need to work on, and I’ve attempted to, but I’m – I have – I’m at a block with it because it brings up issues of you know, loss of control, or deprivation or loss of freedom. Exercise is good, that I can do.

PARTICIPANT: I think for me it’s probably a control issue in the sense that it kinda like you can either exercise or not exercise, and if you exercise it’s good and if you don’t exercise it’s bad. With food, in our diet, even things that seem like they’re good for you either you find out later they’re bad for you, or they’re full of fat anyway because it’s the American diet and so I feel like that’s not something I can control, because I have to eat so unless I’m literally eating like vegetables then I’m going to be consuming unhealthy for me. Well, with exercising it’s just good. That’s it. It’s a control issue.

PARTICIPANT: For me, I’m the opposite. It’s easier for me to make changes in my diet than to add exercise. And I went to a nutritionist and we talked about food choices I was making and the amount of food I was eating and you know what you had talked earlier there’s good plants and not-so-good plants, and it should be okay to just eat a plant. And I remember asking her, I
said, “It’s easier for me – some of the dishes that I like to make I used canned vegetables. Is this really horrible?” She’s like, “No, canned vegetables are good, it’s just that fresh vegetables are better.” So if we could just maybe cut out a lot of those moralizations about food and instead, just you know, I’ve heard this idea of intuitive eating which I don’t know that I necessarily got, but the idea that your body tells you when you’re hungry and what you’re hungry for, and we could just get rid of all the sort of external messages about good food, bad food, and so on and so forth, we could listen to our body and if we needed protein we’ve crave protein, and if we needed, you know, spinach we’d crave spinach or what have you, so for me it’s all about just sort of trying to figure out what my body’s telling that it wants and what’s the best choice I can make – it may not be the best choice overall, but if I can make a great rice and bean and vegetable dish with canned beans and canned vegetables that my nutritionist says is good it may not be the greatest thing in the world, I think it’s better to encourage that than it is to sort of make people to feel it’s all or nothing. You can either just eat great food or crappy food. And the reality is you know you can make great choices that fall somewhere in the middle. And you can occasionally even make bad choices, but if you balance them out if you balance them out with better choices the overall picture is better than if you don’t try at all. And so much of our culture is based on - you succeed or you fail instead of just doing the best can each day is really the best thing to do for your health. But I still can’t figure out how to put exercise into my … [laughter]

PARTICIPANT: And I’m kinda that same way too where I see more – it’s less likely for me to do exercises again – it’s you now, arthritis -- it’s because I treated my body really bad in my past that I have problems now with asthma and arthritis and stuff – but there is that theme “You’re More Powerful Than a Cheeseburger” because there are times when I’m like - I know I shouldn’t but I want it. It’s really that same thing, I don’t want to – it’s like if I want it I should be able to have it. I do so many other things I don’t want to do, why can’t I do this thing that I do want. So that’s kind of where food plays with me.

LEADER: Would each of you say that you know for yourself medically, spiritually and mentally – what health is for you –do you have something specific in mind when the word health comes up? Do you think about yourself and in what way you are healthy and what ways you’re not healthy or that you need to be more healthy or that you could be more healthy.”

PARTICIPANT: I think that consideration may be really age-specific because I’ve noticed that my blood pressure and cholesterol have suddenly gone way up. And I’m thinking what is it? Stress? It’s the only thing I could figure out, but it might be age on top of what we were talking about before – if you’re overweight then arthritis and this and that and the risk of diabetes, but all of a sudden to see things going up 20 percent and 15 percent, in short order, it’s quite a call and a lot of – a lot of – for example the photos didn’t call out to me at all because they are young people and you may find in this sort of campaign that you’d have different demographics to market to.

PARTICIPANT: I think, for me, one way I define health is that with the exception of being tired, as in literally tired and not stressed tired I feel pretty much the same at the end of the day as I
do at the beginning. So for me, that’s a good gauge for me – and I mean that mentally and physically. Nothing aches at the end of the day that didn’t ache when I woke up. I don’t feel – I didn’t wake up angry - I don’t feel angry at the end of the day. So just sort of feeling sort of equilibrium throughout the day – an equilibrium that I want to feel – for me is the definition of health.

PARTICIPANT: Health is like making the time to exercise and making the time to write and making -- I feel like that’s for me why it goes back to what I would call balanced living – like not working 80 hours a week and making time to go to the grocery store and making the time to make good food and making the time to exercise and making the time to see my friends socially. And you know, like having a life style where I’m not exercising all the time, I’m not going to work 80 hours a week and I’m not doing all of these other things – when I think you know what’s my health life like that’s very specifically that’s what I’m thinking about.

4. ADVERTISING MEDIUMS

LEADER: Finally... Where do you think these images and slogans should be placed to be the most effective in reaching lesbians and sexual minority women?

PARTICIPANT: I mentioned earlier the “Show Me Love” campaign that’s going on in DC right now which is about domestic - intimate partner violence in the LGBTQI community. And I first remember seeing an ad in Metro Weekly, and I saw things on buses. And so, my partner is a previous partner – my partner was in an abusive relationship before this relationship so –and I shared that with my partner and we both thought it was a really strong campaign and so as I said, the two places I saw it first were Metro Weekly and then the Metro buses.

PARTICIPANT: LGBTQ magazines and newspapers definitely.

PARTICIPANT: I spend half my life on the bus, so....

LEADER: Outside or inside? Would the ad be better outside the bus or inside the bus?

PARTICIPANT: Inside.

PARTICIPANT: It seems like counter - I don’t think like postcards in bars and like grocers really work. ... I mean just the stacks of postcards that no one’s going to pick up. I mean it’s really hard to do the take-it-with you sort of media vs. the you-can’t-avoid – not avoid - avoid is such a strong word, but you know like vs. the billboards, buses, and magazines.

PARTICIPANT: I like t-shirts. Mautner had a t-shirt a gazillion years ago that I still have ...

PARTICIPANT: Women taking care of women – taking care of relatives - something like that. Loved that t-shirt.

PARTICIPANT: Facebook works too.
PARTICIPANT: I immediately went to the “e-mail from friends, colleagues, or groups” – I don’t have a TV, I don’t read any magazines, I don’t read any newspapers, I don’t read any Pride things. I don’t really listen to the radio. I’m kind of a Luddite. But like – [laughter] even more than that, I feel like I’m so overwhelmed with media that I tune out a lot of those things. But the thing that got me here, the thing that got me to any other group that I’m a part of is other people I know or listserves that I’ve subscribed to sending me information, so like I’m a member of the __volunteers or whatever, and those things I read. Other things that are – I’m on at least three or four gay-oriented newsgroups that I at least glance over much more than I would post cards at a bar – and I actually circled church because I find out about a lot of – I don’t know if they left postcards about these things, but I find out about a lot of events and things through that because it’s a social network. I would say that those things would have a higher chance or reaching me than ads on Facebook, though I guess it was very targeted and I was like “Wow, they know I’m in DC. And I might be creeped out, but I also – you could also do something else very cheaply and targeted there and you have the information to get to people you need vs. some sort of mass media.

LEADER: How many of you pick up Metro Weekly or the Blade on a regular basis?

PARTICIPANT: Metro Weekly basically has a cover story or something – the rest of it doesn’t really interest me.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I do leaf though it until the back part it’s all gay male stuff or lists of the bars. But I pay more attention to the Blade, especially now that it’s totally local.

PARTICIPANT: It’s hard for me to find the Blade, unfortunately. So that’s why I don’t read it as much as I used to. I just can’t find it.

PARTICIPANT: They’re actually more online now than ....

PARTICIPANT: I do want to say that Mautner – you have a listserv in the past year or whenever it was. It’s great – you have health tips –I read it religiously.

PARTICIPANT: I also wrote on here “Doctor or Medical Provider” – just because I was at one today but thinking about especially if there are places that are particularly LGBT focused in that area that people might already be thinking about health or have gotten some sort of health scare or some bad news that makes them think about wanting to exercise or be a part of... I know that’s kind of negative but at the same time it’s a place where you might be very motivated to want to find exercise or healthy living opportunities and if you find one with an affinity group – all the better.

PARTICIPANT: For postcards, instead of maybe at the bar - restaurants or markets or something like that.

LEADER: ... any other thoughts? We’ve had you focus on specific categories – but while we’ve been talking has something come to mind that we haven’t covered regarding health?
PARTICIPANT: Just on the image, I think we’ve come to consensus that it needs to be wide range of ages and whatever. I think that places and mediums also need to take that into consideration, because I don’t do Facebook. My students keep pounding at me, and I keep saying, “No, I don’t want to get that close to you.”

PARTICIPANT: Also looking at what – obviously - what ages use what media – I for example, don’t use all these forms of mass distribution media and I don’t know how true or not true that is of younger people vs. older people, but if you have a limited amount of targeting, putting more people who might look like audience of each of the things.

PARTICIPANT: I wanted to say your question of what you want as health – I got mental health down – years of therapy – I’ve got it down. I’m a social worker, I’ve got that down. But when I hear “Health” I think of physical health and the – your body is your temple and following that quote, but if I was practicing physical health I would be treating my body like a temple that there’s something about – you know, think of a child in your life and what would you want to feed her and how would you want to ..... So, if I was treating myself the way I would a small child I cared about, that to me is what’s health.

November 17, 2010 Focus Group (Group Two – composed of eight African American women who self-identified lesbian/sexual minority)

1. LESBIAN/SEXUAL MINORITY WOMEN, ADVERTISING, AND WEIGHT LOSS

LEADER: “Let’s now talk about advertising and weight loss advertising and to really try to get us thinking along the lines what kind of advertising would appeal to lesbians. So, the first think I want to ask you all about is to talk about any annoying or counterproductive weight loss advertising you’ve seen, and if it was annoying to you, tell why.

PARTICIPANT: “Mostly men with their shirts off and that’s really not doing anything for me as a woman to want to go the gym to be around that.

PARTICIPANT: “I think a lot – for me it kinda follows on that - it’s like it’s a turn off cause its’ like the women are all, like, bikini-clad, teeny tiny waist – I mean it’s like that’s nice to look at but it doesn’t motivate me you know. It doesn’t motivate me personally – so there’s nothing there that says “Oh Wow – come here. There’s somebody like you here. That’s what would motivate me – not maybe somebody as out of shape as me, just somebody more like me – a little bit more average.

LEADER: “Just to probe a bit more, would you identify more with someone you thought was a lesbian, and an African-American woman or a woman of color?

PARTICIPANT: “How would you make somebody look like a lesbian? [laughter] Put some weights in her hands?
PARTICIPANT: “I was gonna say the thing – I mean more a woman of color. You know, a black woman would be more enticing to me. And I mean – how would I know a lesbian without her being in front of another woman, embracing or something.

PARTICIPANT: “A sports person, like one of the Mystics or DC Divas or someone who you know is gay, even if you don’t …. 

PARTICIPANT: “The thing, when we were talking earlier about, instead of necessarily segregating the group, it’s like locating the program at least – geographically I think is going to say a lot about who is going to attracted. It’s like who are you inviting to this program? You put it in Dupont Circle, you’re not inviting me. You put it in SE, you’re invited. That’s what would communicate that message to me.

PARTICIPANT: “We’re acting like only black people are in SE…. Not anymore …..

LEADER: “So I asked you about annoying or counter-productive weight loss advertising – have you ever seen any commercials that you thought were pretty good. It could have been for a gym, or Weight Watchers, or Jenny Craig or anything that has to do with weight loss.

PARTICIPANT: “Bally’s.

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah, Bally’s commercials, you know, [laughter] – For Bally’s you have the men, but you have the women up there and they on their bikes…… and I’m – okay – There’s not a lot but Bally’s OK. That would make me go.

LEADER: “So what do those women look like – on the bike?

PARTICIPANT: “They look healthy – they like okay [laughter]

LEADER: “Are they the usually skinny women that are doing these commercials?

PARTICIPANT: “You know what? I wouldn’t necessarily say that they were the skinny-skinny ones. Like the model – the almost death-looking ones. Like the models – they look like they can just fall over. You know, ‘cause they have some substance to them.

PARTICIPANT: “They might not have the substance. [laughter] Are you talking about the camera angle when they were on the bike?

PARTICIPANT: “There were Weight Watchers ad – like a couple of years’ ago, and I remember it was – it tied in with some song, and I want to say “Lady in Red” but everybody was in red and they looked like normal women. Normal size. And I actually believed – foolishly though - that these were people who had gone through the program. I knew they were models, I knew they were actors – I knew that had to be because they looked too cute. But they were of the size – and it was – for me – it was the first live action Weight Watchers commercial I had ever seen. You know, as opposed to them flashing whatever. But they were actually people moving through - with a nice little jingle.
PARTICIPANT: “I like Kristie Alley’s commercials too. They were real. She must really – I really like those.

PARTICIPANT: “So was it real because we know she’s been overweight, and she’s been struggling with it. We’ve seen her struggle over the years.

PARTICIPANT: “Well, no. I think it was - It might have been just the person. Her personality came across and even when she lost a lot of weight, she wasn’t real thin or anything like that. The commercial were really smart, I’m trying to remember some of them offhand, they stick in my mind but not the particulars of it. She’s always talked about her struggles in relationship to weight loss – rather than - it wasn’t Weight Watchers – it was Jenny Craig –

PARTICIPANT: “Nutra System?

PARTICIPANT: “No, she was Jenny Craig.

PARTICIPANT: “Anyway, it seemed like she talked more about her struggle during the commercials than - as much she talked about Jenny Craig. It was very interesting.

PARTICIPANT: “I think one of the things that would make me want to go to whatever the place is they’re advertising – it feels more realistic in terms of -- usually you see people working out- they’re already skinny. Or the ones that are bigger – they have the before and then after, but what about like people actually working out who are of size – the size that they are actually are. Because when you look at these commercials it gives the perception that all you see is skinny people. You don’t see the ones who are already big and are trying to work down to that size. I think just making the commercials more realistic as to what you will see when you walk in the gym, period, would attract me more. I’m just tired of seeing skinny people on gym commercials, like I’m not there what about the ones who are working there, like you know – that would attract me more if they actually had my size and you know, things like that.

2. IMAGES DISCUSSION

LEADER: “Okay – I’m going to move on to the next question and for that, we’re going to look at some pictures. Please tell us which of the photo images would be your number one choice to appear in an ad to promote achieving a healthy weight?

PARTICIPANT: “I picked the last one (M). She’s eating a bowl of fruit. You can’t necessarily see that she’s very skinny or anything so it’s kind of neutral in that aspect. But it’s a demonstrating a healthy choice. I like that.

PARTICIPANT: “Let’s see – you know the cat – the cat don’t make no sense. And neither does the dog.

PARTICIPANT: “I look at them and think, ‘man, that would really make me want to work out.’
PARTICIPANT: “You know, as far as them being overweight, because I’m looking at them – I’m like, “They have to be miserable.” You know, the other ones, like, H – I’d be too busy looking at her, so you know, I don’t want to keep doing that… So I have to identify – [laughter] So I’d have to do – K would make me work harder. They look so unhealthy. Poor little things. I just want to take ‘em to the vet, and say, “you know what – put them on some kind of diet, not necessarily put ‘em out of their misery…..

PARTICIPANT: “The cat thing reminded me about that negative reinforcement. You know – negative-positive reinforcement.

PARTICIPANT: “You know you fed this cat. The message is, like you’re lookin at this cat and you did the same thing to yourself. Like, “Put your own oxygen mask on first.” Apparently you have.

PARTICIPANT: “You look at F with the ladies – the girls. They look like “We just ready to go party.” Just bring me a drink and we on…..

PARTICIPANT: “None of these to me really look like lesbian pictures. Like, I don’t feel anything “lesbian” about any of this stuff.

PARTICIPANT: “The one that did it for me was A. She’s, for me, she’s an older woman. She’s got the streaks in her hair.

PARTICIPANT: “I’m in an older group than the rest....

PARTICIPANT: “B – She’s older than us. But age – either way – A looks like the woman I want to be – I want to grow up to be - at a certain age. She looks like she’s on the other side of 60.

PARTICIPANT: “She does? A?

PARTICIPANT: “She could be on the other side of 60 – let’s put it that way.

PARTICIPANT: “B looks like she on either side of 40. But A is the older woman in the group. That’s why I’m relating to her.

PARTICIPANT: “Well, actually C definitely looks like you know two lesbians.

PARTICIPANT: “Well, I think – I like H because she looks like she’s focused and it doesn’t necessarily look like it’s easy, but it’s like – this is a goal and she’s reached it. A is good because she looks like an average woman, she looks approachable, honest – if she is at the gym somewhere she looks like she’s happy about it. And then like M also, she doesn’t look like she fits into a certain body type. Looks like she’s making a good holistic decision and it shows that’s she could possibly be working out with the towel but then also eating right ……. I think to approach it from many different angles would appeal to many different people.

PARTICIPANT: “I like D – is my number 1. She looks like she’s having fun. I like that. She’s not super skinny and
PARTICIPANT: “She’s moving – she’s moving. She looks like she’s dancing. “This is my weight and I love it. “

PARTICIPANT: “You know, I mean, I’m still back to defending – she looks like she could have a flannel shirt. [laughter]

PARTICIPANT: “Okay – she’s got some muscles. Look at the _____. I mean, she looks like a lesbian.

PARTICIPANT: “That’s the sports bra under the flannel shirt.”

PARTICIPANT: “Or there you go – a golfer.”

LEADER: “What about C?”

PARTICIPANT: “They look like lesbians. They all look like they tryin to get healthy. They look like they tired of running after them kids. Like, when is this gonna be over? I don’t have time to go to no gym with these two little baby boys.”

3. POTENTIAL ‘LOSING WEIGHT’ THEMES/SLOGANS

LEADER: “So now we have – passed out the slogans to everyone. They are some potential themes trying to put words together to come up with something that gets the message across right away. Do you like any one in particular? We are open to your additions as well.”

PARTICIPANT: “Well, I think the ones that actually just say lesbian because the other ones – they just seem general to me. So if you’re – I’ll say you are particularly trying to target the lesbian audience, the ones that say lesbian are the ones that stick out. Cause it’s so blunt I guess.

PARTICIPANT: “In general, I like the one “Healthy weight – the new sexy.”

PARTICIPANT: “No, I mean that’s kind of controversial for me because “Healthy Weight – The New Sexy” to me, that’s saying “I’m not sexy unless I have a healthy weight.” And that’s to me, you know what I mean. So - And that’s just for my own.

PARTICIPANT: “Because you can shore can be big and sexy.

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah... You know, so it’s like okay-- healthy weight – okay what is a healthy weight – I mean, it’s so --- controversial.”

PARTICIPANT: “That’s just it – healthy weight, like healthy weight for you is gonna be different than a healthy weight for me.” Healthy weight is gonna be just that –it’s like – an individual thing.

PARTICIPANT: “But will people take it that way?
PARTICIPANT: “Well, it’s not a question mark.

PARTICIPANT: “No, it’s not. It’s an exclamation – it’s like... okay – healthy weight – the new sexy.

PARTICIPANT: “It is what it is.

PARTICIPANT: “So if you’re at whatever and that’s – I guess –

PARTICIPANT: “That was just for me – do you follow me? That’s what I got from it.

PARTICIPANT: “Are you a healthy weight lesbian? “Do you want to l-i-v-e.” [laughter]

PARTICIPANT: “You know, I was talking earlier about how lesbians are invisible in the greater community and I guess this is one case where I sort of want to be invisible. I rather have a slogan and an image behind it that says lesbian than – but also to identify it as being geared toward lesbians rather than having the actual word out there. Even if it’s just the two symbols or something.

PARTICIPANT: “I like “Weigh healthy – behind that have some kind of ..... or something sort of image that portrays –it’s a lesbian – or this is geared toward lesbian.

PARTICIPANT: “If it said something like, if it said “Healthy Weight is Our Issue” and then have two women’s symbol. That would ...Or two women...

PARTICIPANT: “Right, and an image that would – that lesbians would get.

PARTICIPANT: “But the one I like is “Weigh less, feel better. It’s that simple.”

PARTICIPANT: “I like that. It’s a good one.

PARTICIPANT: “I like that too.

PARTICIPANT: “That’s number one for me.

PARTICIPANT: ‘Yeah, I like that too. Weigh less, feel better.

PARTICIPANT: “For me, I just wondered, like is it 5 pounds less, 10 pounds less, 20 pounds less.

PARTICIPANT: “Well, they do say you lose the first 10 pounds – and what it is, like 10 pounds makes a difference on your joints. So any sort of loss is a plus.

PARTICIPANT: “And then the other one I like is “Healthy weight is a lesbian issue.” Even though that just contradicts everything I just said.

PARTICIPANT: “That goes back to the body image of a woman of a certain age. You know where those Bebo Brinker books? [laughter]
PARTICIPANT: “I been wondering about the term – is the word lesbian still the word that’s spoken in the – is it …. I don’t hear …..

PARTICIPANT: “No, you know what you hear now? You hear, “Pillow Queen, --- they don’t say lesbian– there’s a lot of labels out there – feminine labels. “Pillow Princess.”

PARTICIPANT: “They have different labels, you know so soft butch, hard butch this and that. Femmes. You know.

PARTICIPANT: “I feel like when you say lesbian it’s for someone who is outside the community. And when you say, like, “Femme – it’s more conversational.

PARTICIPANT: “It’s just like with Women in the Life – the printed material may say it, but in terms of the promotional part of it they never use it. But it attracts a lot of people because we know. That’s what I wondered if we needed anything like that in terms of a health issue?

PARTICIPANT: “Do we have a code?

PARTICIPANT: “Did we at one point?

PARTICIPANT: “I think “in the life” – one of the children.

LEADER: “How about the slogan – Love Women, Love Your Health. Do you feel positively to it? Do you feel negatively?

PARTICIPANT: “Anybody who loves women – it’s too wide.

LEADER: “Also thinking about the “weigh less, feel better” and “healthy weight.” Do you think it’s important to associate weight loss? Or to associate something with medical health, such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, gastro-intestinal problems, and diabetes? Is it important to have in the background of the messages?

PARTICIPANT: “I think it’s a turn off for people who are interested in trying to feel better. They don’t want to be reminded what’s going wrong with you –to get you to fix it. It’s –

LEADER: “You want positive motivation, not negative motivation?

PARTICIPANT: “Exactly.

PARTICIPANT: “You hear so much about it, and it just has such a negative …. You hear it from your doctor…..

PARTICIPANT: “That’s why I like the picture, ‘cause it was like the one woman was having fun. And the by-product of it was she was, you know, you lose weight. Like, somebody was sayin they like to dance. And it’s like, Yeah! Do something fun!
4. ADVERTISING MEDIUMS

LEADER: “I’d like to move on to our final topic which is advertising mediums. This topic is about places where you would see an advertising campaign. We’ve talked about images, a little about potential messaging slogans and the third thing to talk about is, ‘Where are we going to put them. What are some places that work well for you?’

PARTICIPANT: “The bus.

PARTICIPANT: “Inside of the bus.

PARTICIPANT: “On the outside. The ones about smoking less were awesome. Put these on the outside of the bus.

PARTICIPANT: “That reaches a wide audience. That’s easy.

PARTICIPANT: “Inside the Metro, like downstairs in the Metro?

PARTICIPANT: “On the kiosks and the---

[agreement spoken among participants...]

LEADER: “Of the things that are on this advertising places page – other ones that jump out that you think would work?

PARTICIPANT: “Online.”

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah, online.”

PARTICIPANT: “I would say “postcards at restaurants”, but I’m not seeing that much anymore.

LEADER: “How many of you pick up Metro Weekly? And how many of you pick up Washington Blade?”

PARTICIPANT: “I go online – online.”

LEADER: “You read the Blade online?”

PARTICIPANT: “Yes, both of them. Metro Weekly too.”

PARTICIPANT: “Yes.”

PARTICIPANT: “I also think of Metro Weekly as a guy thing. I really – every now and then I pick it up.”
LEADER: “What local publications do you pick up more?”

PARTICIPANT: “City Paper?”

LEADER: “How many people pick up City Paper? The Express?”

PARTICIPANT: “The Express, City Paper, what is that DC North or the east of the river paper.

LEADER: “The Hill? The Current?”

PARTICIPANT: “Isn’t the Current the one that’s all over the places?”

PARTICIPANT: “Oh, Current – like the Northwest Current. The Dupont Current?”

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah.”

PARTICIPANT: “Do they have one in Southeast? They don’t do they?”

PARTICIPANT: “I think they do.”

PARTICIPANT: “I want to say Hillcrest.”

PARTICIPANT: “I think there are six around the city. There is one in Southeast. It’s at the bus stop.”

LEADER: “And – radio? Brochures? Just trying to get a read on where you typically get your information.”

PARTICIPANT: “Radio is OK – like 99.5 or 95.5 – The ……”

PARTICIPANT: “I have a question – You gonna have these advertisements – like, are you gonna, there’s gonna be a number on it that we can call? Like, what’s the …… Like how are people …”

PARTICIPANT: “To get involved in the - Yes. It’ll have …”

PARTICIPANT: “To get involved in the groups?”

LEADER: “Yes. Then to be both inspirational and general, but also it will direct people to Mautner Project. So, another question that I would have is would have something symbolic that would indicate lesbian with saying the word ‘lesbian’ – Is Mautner Project well-known enough in the community?”

PARTICIPANT: “Not in my community.

PARTICIPANT: “Not in any significant way.
LEADER: “I would think not – and you’re not offending me. If it said ‘Mautner Project: The Lesbian Health Organization’ would that be helpful?”

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah, I mean, Yeah”.

PARTICIPANT: “The only thing about radio is that people are all so quick to turn the radio station when an advertisement comes on. Cause I’m guilty... I’m so tuned into music, so I’m ...... I mean, radio, I don’t ... I might be wrong but ...”

PARTICIPANT: “If there was a voice over like, if it was, like, the radio personality saying it versus like a commercial where it’s - I feel like I would listen to it ...”

PARTICIPANT: “They all sound so commercialized now....

PARTICIPANT: “I mean, I feel like there are some things than more than other times – like the jingle in the background I just turn it – but when they’re just talking, I’m like, “I might win something..”

PARTICIPANT: “I think t-shirts would be cool too.

PARTICIPANT: “They’re always neat.

PARTICIPANT: “Yeah, they are.

PARTICIPANT: “I guess for some of the churches like Unitarian Fellowship and MCC, and the churches that are signed up to support gay marriage and ____.

PARTICIPANT: “Do you see this as being as a mixed group – like lesbians and straight women?

LEADER: “This is primarily for lesbians and bisexuals and women who partner with women.

PARTICIPANT: “Right, okay. Is that gonna be ...

PARTICIPANT: “That’s what the group’s .......

PARTICIPANT: “I mean, you can use the word, “queer” I’m not going to get hung up on the terms, but – it’s not for heterosexual women.

PARTICIPANT: “That was my first shout out.

PARTICIPANT: “I kinda like that.

PARTICIPANT: “I think there’s a web site called Lez be healthy

PARTICIPANT: “Really?

PARTICIPANT: “I think they’re out of Florida.
PARTICIPANT: “I have one that I want to share.... On that slogan thing – “Weigh less, fit better.”

PARTICIPANT: “I like that – oh yes, that’s a good one.

PARTICIPANT: “Fit has, sort of, a double entendre”
Appendix B: Select Comments from Online Survey - Images

The following select comments/responses are from online survey takers who picked one of the images in the Online Survey Question #48. The question asked, “If you chose one of the images in Question #48 for an advertisement to lesbians about achieving a healthy weight, please give one to two sentences about why that image was your number one choice.”

This woman in the picture is happy with her average body. Not extremely thin, not overweight.

She's eating! And it's healthy yummy fruit. And she looks happy, and glowing (i.e. a "healthy glow"), and like she just had a good workout.

The nudity first attracted me, then seeing that the model was not "perfect".

She appears to be a normal healthy happy person.

She just looks fit. In the gym. Working hard.

I chose Michelle Obama because I admire her and if she had something to say to lesbian/gay/queer women, I would listen. I chose the other picture because the woman was attractive.

I like this image because she looks happy and is eating beautiful, healthy, delicious food. I would actually love a combination - I also liked the one of the two Black girls kissing and the other group of multi-racial women. I like the woman doing the sit-up, but I felt conflicted about promoting such a thin body ideal. What's up with the cat and the dog? And Michelle O's yam?

Self Love.

The beautiful, healthy, happy looking black women drew me in. I wanted to hang out with them!

Michelle Obama has a nice figure, but isn't too skinny, and she doesn't look hungry. Same with the woman with the fruit, who I also like.

I liked the diversity of the women in the photo. And I think healthy weight means something different to every person. Therefore, I think not giving a body image is wise. Further, they are all happy and that fits with my perception of healthy..it should bring internal happiness. She appears to have finished working out and is now eating something healthy. Says that healthy is more than just one thing. She is also not very heavy and not very thin. It doesn't show WHAT type of exercise she did either so that allows for differences.

She looks healthy and happy and confident in her body but isn't too thin.
Shows a diversity of women.

This image gives the impression of someone that is active (attire and towel around neck), and someone that is conscious of her food choices.... a winning combo. I would venture to say, though, that this image is a bit difficult for many/most lesbian women to identify with.

Showing exercise and healthy foods in the picture and the woman was of average weight. There was not a pressure to be super thin or fit, just healthy!

Shows an older womyn feeling happy about her body as it is.

I chose M-scroll to the bottom to read only that. Letter E of the older black woman with something to hold on to, which is really all we ever want. Then, Letter G which was Michelle Obama, and she's GORGEOUS, but is that healthy weight? Or is she what SOCIETY has made us believe is healthy, and WHAT does that have to do with lesbians? We know her husband! Letter H was the girl working out, which promotes exercise, and she was fit, not skinny. Then letter J which was the woman who was beautiful, and had just a little extra skin around her midsection. It shows an imperfection which we ALL have as a BEAUTIFUL part of her. It discourages eating disorders. Lastly, the one where the girl is eating fruit (M) promotes healthy eating, which when I first started dating my partner, it was all about desserts and sitting on the couch with popcorn, or eating out ALL THE TIME or making our signature dishes, which of course has butter, and oil, and cheese, and bread/pasta, and salt with a dessert to follow, of course. They're all good, but G doesn't advertise to lesbians. J encourages woman after surgery or childbirth. E encourages older lesbians and women of color. H and M are my favorites because H is for racial minority. And M is the best because it includes vegans/vegetarians, women of color or tan Caucasian women, multiracial women, young women, middle aged women, androgynous women, and every woman. She could be a mother, a daughter, a sister, a cousin. She's the perfect representative.

She looked normal; not too thin, not overweight. Also she appears happy and healthy. she's exercising and looking fit.

The person didn't look too thin or too fat, but clearly had just been to the gym and was actually eating food, but healthy food.

Looks like a relatable individual, appears to be an individual i would believe and listen to, and follow or participate in the suggestions they present ambiguous race, modeling, healthy behavior.

Because it shows a picture of different people.

Fit and happy.
I like that they look happy, that they look gay, that they are of color, the focus isn't on their particular body, but they seem energetic and happy and connected.

As a young black woman, I chose this image because it immediately resonated with me on an emotive and physical perspective because I could instantly identify with it.

Not stereotypical, and not someone who appears to have no problem with weight issues.

The woman depicted seems happy, of average body weight, and seems to be anticipating the enjoyment of a healthy food choice.

She appeared healthy, wasn't overly thin.

If we got out and exercised more for our pets' sake, we'd be more inclined to do it - and that puppy clearly needs exercise.

The woman is healthy and fit, but still has normal body curves.

--family image --2 different body types.

The women look happy and healthy, but they could be a variety of shapes--whatever's healthiest for their bodies. I'm in pretty good shape, so I am thinner than some of the women in the pictures, but I would never realistically be able to look like the woman doing sit-ups. When there's only one woman in the picture, I compare my body to hers, and if the comparison seems unrealistic, I move on. I am more inspired by women who are not super-skinny, but who look fit and strong (and I do consider myself to be femme).

She appeared to be strong and actually working out... she isn't necessarily straight (or white) appearing... and she's attractive.

I liked F and K.. the group of women who best represented me. I liked that it did not single out one certain person or body and everyone looked happy and connected. I also liked the "fat cat" as I am a cat-lover (some lesbian stereotypes apply!) and would not want my cat to be unhealthy like the cat in the picture. easier to relate that to myself without feeling shame.

The energy feels good.

The woman in it was recognizable - she was holding a sweet potato that looked as if she grew it or it was locally grown - she is of normal (what I consider normal) body condition/size. She also looks happy.

Seemed the most applicable.
The woman in the picture looked like she ate, was of average weight, and was happy in her own skin.
The woman had chosen healthy food and the towel draped around her neck suggests physical activity.

I chose the image that showed food close to where it came from. the closer people are to the origin of their food, the healthier they are.

She has obviously worked at it (noted the tummy tuck and the extra skin) and her body isn't "perfect". She's not overweight though -- I am not inspired by photos of overweight people when it's about being healthy. That is not healthy. She is white though, and the photo should reflect the ethnic demographic too... so take that into consideration for sure.

A healthy looking family, obviously happy together.

I picked 2 images. Neither promoted thinness or extremely low body fat, and so they didn't promote disordered eating and/or sexist standards for femininity. Additionally, the women looked happy and balanced.

Happy looking people who seem to be happy with themselves.

This woman is beautiful and obviously proud of her body. She is not your vogue model, yet she is gorgeous. She has a great big smile on her face exuding love and happiness.

I. - Eye was my choice, because the women were cute and looked healthy.

Realistic And Healthy.

Someone who's not super skinny but looks good and very comfortable in her body.

Eating Healthy.

She is exercising and is toned.

Real body, not overweight.

The first thing I noticed was her cute little belly "pooch." She's totally a healthy weight, but has something I find attractive that popular media finds unattractive and things like that should be better normalized.

I chose that one because of the family aspect. Most women, even lesbian women think that you cannot take care of yourself and lose weight if you are a parent and busy/tired/stressed.
Diversity of the women pictured—cannot really tell their weight, but they look to be of a reasonable size and look healthy.

She looks happy and active as she is now

The woman in the image is not thin, but appears comfortable and confident about her weight and appearance.

H. Looks how I would like to look.

Looks happy and comfortable with her weight

The couple represents similar age and body size of my partner and me. Also the image did not show young, thin lesbians (I feel my obesity is viewed in a very negative way by that age group)

She is healthy looking, good weight, promotes healthy eating and lifestyle

Shows happiness


The women looked happy in these shots.

They look happy and are attractive.

Michelle Obama is not only so awesome as a woman, she is very conscientious about promoting healthy diet through organic fruits & vegetables. Also, I love the imagery of women loving women. Nothing is better than that and it means the ultimate in well-being to me.

Someone who appears to be a healthy weight, in shape, exercising- seems like a good image to represent that.

H: A woman of color sweating - it's hot but not too sexy and her body is tight but not completely unattainable. I: because she’s a healthy weight, but still has a little belly/softness

It is joyous but the woman is not skinny. It has movement.

It is colorful and shows both exercising and healthy eating

She looks happy and while she is a little on the thin side, her comfort with the bit of belly makes her seem confident. She looks sexy without being done up or perfect.
The person in the photograph seemed "real" - like someone I'd meet in social situations. Their body was not overly large or small, their age was more realistic for my social group (over 35), and they looked happy & healthy.

Fruit is healthy.
The woman looked healthy and happy and was eating a healthy food choice.

Catches your attention, obvious not healthiest weight, funny?

Photo of a healthy, happy lesbian family - this is what I want to achieve for myself, and the photo is great motivation to stay healthy.

I like that the woman in the image was eating a healthful, vegan food and was not unnaturally thin.

I like that the woman is somewhat "overweight" (a bit more than I am), but appears attractive and jpyful in the picture.

Healthy looking.

Solo person, good fruit, unclear ethnicity.

The model is not too thin, as far as I can tell. She has healthy skin, is eating healthy food, and has a serene expression on her face. It seems that she is content, not stressed. Also, she is naturally beautiful/attractive to me. I do like the idea of an image of partners or friends working out together. This would be my second choice, because it shows the element of community - we're not alone in this.

No one was overweight and looked healthy.

The woman I chose looked as though she had had a baby or two but was still healthy looking - not skinny but also not overweight looking. Very soft and attractive.

I liked that it was clearly aimed at women who love women, and both women looked like they were happy. It was also nice to see women of color.

The couple appeared healthy (skin, teeth, arms, perceived weight) and were also happy.
I liked a couple of the pictures. I chose the last one because she seems to be of an average weight. She has a healthy glow. Finally she is eating a healthy food and looks like she likes it. For the record, I think the First Lady definitely looks the part of a healthy woman. She is just not an everyday person to be used in this situation.

Diversity and happiness.
The faces are slim and show our diversity WITHOUT showing bodies as our all.

Conjures thoughts of relationship, support, motivation, future.
I chose that one because it didn't show bodies, but faces. I think how some one looks on a picture is not really associated with their own healthy weight. Someone can be absolutely healthy without being in that range of what society would think is a healthy body.

I like the image that food as a source as coming from the ground. Also that food is something you can grow and have more control over.

Combination of someone who worked out and is eating healthy.

Gives me the motivation to actually work towards my goals seeing someone that seems to be working hard in exercising.

Less focus on her body, she seems happy, approachable.

I chose that image because she was average.

Older woman; heavy, but looked healthy.

Different people who look different. Couldn't really see much about their bodies but they looked happy in their own skin and with the people around them.

It was a positive image.

I chose Michelle Obama because she's a recognizable, strong woman who projects an image of strength and health. Obviously she isn't a lesbian, but I prefer her to the other images.

Healthy looking attractive group of women.

The image I chose is healthy because it is not extreme. Most of the athletic women I know look like that.

I chose E because she's not skinny, but she does not appear to be significantly overweight to an unhealthy degree. She looks beautiful, but real. My second choice would have been J because she looks like a real person, not a model. E was my first choice because her age suggests that she's made it through life and is still confident, healthy, and happy and would have advice to give a younger person like me.

I think Michelle Obama's height and weight are perfect examples of good weight-height proportion. I also think she is good example of how one can juggle a very full and stressful life and maintain her weight.
I chose F because it shows many women of different races— that too me, is what lesbians look like.

She's cute. She looks healthy and content.

She’s promoting eating healthy and maintaining good sense after a workout.

Because it shows a woman of indeterminate weight/age who is eating healthy food (fresh fruit) and has a workout towel around her neck, implying an active, healthy lifestyle. There seems to be no other agenda, no judgment about body type or weight—just a picture of someone who looks happy, healthy, and is depicting healthy behaviors.

Showed her eating healthy fruits, and she's happy, like there's a glow about her.

She's my race.

A group of women who appear happy.

She looks vibrant, healthy and happy!

It reminds me of my own body. Not fat or too thin, but showing a little age.
I initially chose Michelle Obama, but I retracted my choice due to the advertisement being specifically for lesbians. I chose the image because 1.) the weight she is at is realistic, she is not too thin and it looks as though she is a healthy weight with a positive demeanor. 2.) she looks as though she could be a lesbian; a lot of the 'thinner' women don't look like they are lesbians therefore I think it would be a disconnect. This ad makes it look like she could be a lesbian.

She's mid-exercise, so it's a relevant image.

I liked that both women were within a healthy weight range and looked healthy, even though they were quite different from one another and the woman on the right was overweight by conventional aesthetic standards. I liked that they looked happy and comfortable, and not like they were posing. Also, because they have children, it seems clear that they are supposed to be a functional couple, so the image gives the message that women of various shapes can attract a partner.

Because it is showing an attractive woman of normal weight eating healthy.

Be happy from the inside out. For yourself and for her.

She seems comfortable with herself, is at a healthy weight -- not too high or too low.

I think oftentimes people are more comfortable talking about the health of animals than their own health, or the health of others. Plus, it’s got shock value.
I like images that show women at a healthy weight (most of the images we see in the media of women are severely underweight) and that show women of color. I also like images in which women seem joyful, content, and confident enough to look at the camera and show off their bodies. I think this is a picture of health.

I love that she has a loose stomach, looks like mine after giving birth to 2 babies.

I read about this image - this picture was featured in a popular women's magazine and women from all over the country wrote in to say how much they loved the image because it portrayed a woman with extra belly fat who was obviously comfortable in her skin. A very refreshing image to see.

Normal, healthy looking woman eating healthy food.

I chose a few - they were all images of women who were neither overweight (where it would be harmful to their health) nor too thin/skinny (where too much emphasis is put on physical appearance vs. being/eating healthily).

It showed two women of different size, it showed "real" appearing women, it showed partners, it showed a family.

Person of color who is older and average looking and happy
I had a very positive reaction to the image. (It would have been nice to have some options that included more butch images. Butches seem to always be eliminated in promotions and television).

She was eating healthy food and looked like she'd just exercised.

She is overweight, but looks dynamic and like she's having fun and enjoying life.

I chose 3 ... 3 different body types and ages. I think that a healthy weight can be relative. Weight and body type are sometimes not paired with health - just because someone is a bit overweight or has more fat does not mean they are not healthy ... cholesterol and blood pressure and regular exercise are good indicators as well as smoking versus non-smoking. Fat women can be beautiful and healthy.

This is want it would be like if i feel over weight and not care about my health and weight

Because she's sweating. That's hot.

Because it shows a normal family having food together and not emphasizing weight. Average weight, t shirt and towel show active person, fruit bowl shows healthy eating, appears to be eating mindfully.
I like that she's curvy but not overweight. Also that she's naked and seems comfortable with that. Also that she's African American.

The woman on the right looked like me.

Felt like familiar people to me, in a family relationship.

This is a diverse representation of the possible group of women you are attempting to engage however, it would be better to not only address cultural diversity via ethnicity but also to incorporate various age groups.

A group of diverse, healthy looking women

A "normal/reasonable" looking female who appears comfortable in her body. Preference would be to include two healthy/comfortable women, implying a relationship or lesbianism.

Choosing healthy foods. Average weight.

I might have chosen none of them. I don't like the animals. I don't like only head shots or thin women. If the point is to help lesbians achieve a healthy weight, then the woman should look a little overweight. I don't want a naked person.

The towel around her neck looked as if she exercised. Eating a bowl of fruit is healthy. She wasn't all made up with a fancy exercise outfit on.

The fruit denotes healthy eating habits and the towel indicates she just finished working out or was on her way to work out.

Seeing two healthy and beautiful lesbians together and happy could be an added incentive to lose weight.

Subject was fit and engaged in healthy eating. The picture wasn't sexualized.

I related to it - she's got a belly and she looks imperfect (for today's media standards) but happy and healthy and pretty freakin' sexy. I liked the one of the AA woman who was naked as well, but (1) my version of 'healthy' is a bit skinnier than that (belly fat/heart disease/diabetes), and (2) I'm white and I probably related to the white woman more easily. If your primary target is women of color, I like the AA woman. She looks happy and confident! And that's sexy, too.

Showed diversity.
It shows a woman at a healthy weight, with the implication that she has just exercised. It shows her eating a healthy food.

The women look happy together. So the message is, achieving a healthy weight contributes to a happy lifestyle. Many of the other women in the other pictures don't look like they are at a healthy weight. The picture is inspiring in that it gets at the feelings, but you can't actually see what weight or size they are—healthy weight really depends on the person.

They're beautiful and happy and might be gay.

Body is realistic. She features appeal to me as a Black woman.

"M" shows a woman neither too heavy nor too thin, making a healthy food choice. The women eating the fruit.

Because it showed someone exercising.

I don't like the idea of choosing someone who needs to lose weight. I do like the idea of using our social networks to encourage and support us to have healthy bodies.

Because the young woman is a plus size model and is showing one can be comfortable in their own skin.

Michelle Obama is trying to get EVERYONE to pay attention to health and nutrition.

Person was smiling at a healthy food choice. She looked neither thin nor fat.

It promoted a healthy lifestyle...showed healthy foods.

It shows the woman eating healthy.

Using an animal takes the pressure off what we perceive is the "right" body type in humans. Plus, what Lesbian doesn't like cats.

Exhibits a mix of racial backgrounds, all happy and doesn't necessary show body types happy women with real bodies. It didn't look like it was in one of those tacky magazines like Cosmo or Glamour.

She looked healthy, looked like she had just worked out, and had some food. It seems like an attainable look.

Within most of the pictures, the individuals were thin to medium build. My passion is sports so the greater muscular definition is a preference. Likewise, diversity is a key so I prefer images
with different racial groupings although my preference is black women as I've been in an inter-racial relationship for 27 years.

The couple reminds me that I am not doing this alone or solely for myself. She looked like the average woman in America with some curves. she is showing us that she can still exercise and have fun in life. also, she looks or seems happy!

Because the women pictured there look happy and healthy and obviously have some good looking friends. :^)

I chose photo B. The photo was of a woman of color who appeared to be middle-aged. I chose the photo because the person appeared healthy, of average weight, in her mature years, and she was fully clothed. I would avoid any public health campaign that promoted fatphobic, heteronormative, cisnormative, racist, or ageist stereotypes and ideals for women, especially LGBT women. Also, nude photos reinforce women's status as sexually objectified others, so I find them inappropriate for public health campaigns targeting women.

More than one person represented, smiling, happy

I selected E because it showed a woman who was possibly working at losing weight and becoming more healthy, but either way she appeared very joyous about herself.

Kind of body that shows the results of effort.

It shows a group of women working together to achieve good health!

She looked healthy, relaxed, comfortable in her body, and not too thin.

I liked M because it showed a woman eating a bowl of fruit. It seemed to emphasize the healthy choice as opposed to what the woman looked like, in my opinion.

It was a family and I think that, even if we're not living in family arrangement, all relationships should feel like family and we'd want our family to be well, healthy and have a long, fulfilling life.

I chose the one with 2 women, 1 is kissing the other. I chose it because it is an obvious queer womyn image, as opposed to many of the others just featuring womyn. I also chose it because they look happy, and average weight. I think it's important for the image to be obvious for queer women, and that they look happy and average weight.

Two women happy together....and they were actually showing love.

Women look happy--can't see their bodies so no emphasis on weight.
Image C seemed an authentic image of what seems like a real lesbian-couple with children. You feel like they can understand how hard it is to be busy and still stay at the weight we'd like.

She seemed like a real person, but neutral in who she was in sexuality, but completely woman.

I like the community feel of the group photo.

I chose E because she reflects my age, size and the joy or comfort she seems to have with her body.

You can't see her face which makes it more possible for more women to identify. . ."that could be me." The woman in the image is having fun and not ashamed of her body.

Process of elimination - I don't think showing overweight women sends the right message, the couple might be too limiting for women who are not coupled or don't have children, the working out woman is maybe too over the top, Michelle Obama is a good one, but not a lesbian

Showed the whole body and her appearance was very healthy looking.

Shows healthy person with obvious extra body fat.

Showing you can exercise and eat as long as you make a good food choice

She looked fit, focused, non-stereotypical, and was not doing any of the smirky/flirty things that women do in all the myriads of ads aimed at straight people. Also, what was with those poor fat animals? No! Those belong in animal welfare ads, not ads aimed at people.

i think the images all invoked different feelings from me. so it was hard to pick which would help me achieve a healthy weight. But the skinner people choosing to exercise or eat right would be the best.

The picture is brightly colored, and the woman is clearly making healthy choices. At the same time, to focus isn't on her weight, but on her choices (the food & exercise towel).

healthy eating, ethnically ambiguous woman

It was the 1st Lady Michelle Obama she shows us all the time how she stays fit.

She's eating healthy and has the towel to signify exercise.

She is beautiful. The fruit looks yummy!

Michele Obama -- because we know she's fit and smart and I admire her in general.
Appendix C: Select Comments to Question 48 from Online Survey

The following select comments/responses are from online survey takers who did not chose one of the images in the Online Survey Question #48. The question asked, “If none of the images in Question #48 seemed correct for an advertisement to lesbians about achieving a healthy weight, please give one to two sentences about why none seemed correct.”

You could use just about any image of Martina Navratilova and now she is a cancer survivor also even with practicing an incredibly healthy diet and sports regimen for years....

An eclectic mix of women/ages/ethnicities in clothing that represents the broader community, professional and casual.

I would have 2 or 3 women, diverse in age & race, who are all somewhat overweight; perhaps engaged in conversation.

Women doing more activities. Dog walking, yoga, golf...

A diverse group of women of many sizes/shapes exercising together---either dancing or playing a sport

One image that shows a number of women with a range of body types and of various ethnicities.

As much as I love Michele Obama, picturing her would distract people from the message. I think you could picture a range of healthy, happy, active women of varying ages and notoriety, suggesting that health is not the domain of just one age group or demographic, and not just for the rich and famous (who can afford gyms and personal trainers and expensive diets). Depicting healthy behaviors is the key--regular, vigorous exercise and healthy eating habits. People can adopt these behaviors at any stage in life.

There was something wrong with all the images (this one's too loser-ish, this one's too young, this one doesn't portray enough diversity, this one's too skinny portraying distorted ideal body images...). I would like to see a picture portraying a diverse group of women doing some fun fitness activity together (with some muscles showing!). I suggest you check out some photos of women dragon boating teams (or rowers or canoeists). Typically, dragon boating teams comprise women of all ages, shapes sizes and walks of life, who train and compete together. Some are very competitive - others exist for fun and fitness only. The activity itself is very healthy, but being on the team also provides support and resources for the women involved. Google it- seriously. Might be just what you want. And DC has several good teams out that way - including several women’s teams (of course, Philly is the dragon boating capital of the world... just sayin'...).
Use multiple images - so increase chance of many identifying with the image Oct 26, 2010 2:39 PM

H: The photo was great, but the model's expression didn't work for me.

M: Perhaps show two or more women who are deciding on food options, one healthy meal or snack and one that's not healthy (the items should have the same calorie count). The woman with the bowl of fruit is a pretty and colorful photo, but not convincing on its own—unless it contained a memorable message and tagline!

I think F would be close but I want to see the bodies. But a healthy body is a size 12 or 14. Not too fat, not too thin. A nice, basic athletic body but not a body builder.

M: the women eating fruit seems to promote achieving a healthy weight. Nov 4, 2010 12:52 AM

An ad to promote healthy lesbians should provide the "motivation" to be so. The models should be fully clothed in nice form fitting attire against a pleasing background.

Both older and younger, both white and women of color who are of average weight Nov 5, 2010 3:43 PM

How about an overweight woman on a treadmill? or two overweight women exercising together on a treadmill.

I also liked the picture with all the faces, but they were too young. a mix of ages would be more appealing.
Appendix D: Focus Groups Participant Evaluations

November 15, 2010 Focus Group

What worked well and what didn’t work as well?

“I liked the age diversity of the group. I wish the facilitators would have stuck specifically to questions – I think sometimes their comment led the group. Similarly, maybe it would help people to write/check their choices before speaking, so they could see what they thought before and after others spoke.”

“Loved having a queer women’s space to discuss weight and to be part of a study that is bigger than my individual issues. As a social worker, I’ve used facilitators as neutral and not sharing their own opinions. I would have given it a 10 if facilitators had not shared. Then again, I don’t know the “rules” of how focus group facilitation works.”

“Slogans – would have been good to ask for more ideas.”

“I enjoyed that we all were from different backgrounds and were very open and receptive. Enjoyed the session very much, because this was very much overdue.”

“That we were a mixed age group/glad it ended up being partly “resource share.” [What didn’t work well]

“That we were told early/halfway through that we’re a confirmation focus group. Talking about/saying the intervention currently being studied/implemented could’ve influenced what we said.”

“I think bringing in a different medium like a little bit of a PowerPoint presentation would be a good break. Needed a little bit of “umph” in between hours.”

“It was a good experience and it felt like we were comfortable sharing good data. I’m not personally keen on focusing on weight loss verses “healthy behavior,” but the group seemed receptive to this message.”

“It was very interesting to hear other opinions. It would be more helpful, I think, to segregate the two groups by age, not race! I felt a bit out of place as a young woman feeling opposite of what aging women felt.”

“I liked talking about media/ads aimed at me! I sometimes responded to the specific picture (Michelle Obama) rather than the general idea (celebrity advertising) and I think you could have missed some comments that way.”
“I was bored because I had taken the Mautner Survey they had in their e-mail newsletter and it showed the pictures, so I’d already seen it. Thank you.”

“Ads photos mostly didn’t seem to relate to the subject.”

“Very interesting.”

November 17, 2010 Focus Group

What worked well and what didn’t work as well?

“Extending the discussion time would be great.”

“Didn’t work = timing, adjusting the pacing. Did work = questions directed at previous conversation/dialogue.”

“The freeform discussion. I wasn’t sure how many questions there were to discuss.”

“Flow of discussion was facilitated professionally, with little or no time lags. Considering [the time] having to wait for late participants (very considerate).”

“I enjoyed the informality of the group.”

“It was really great to get the perspective of other women within the community. The fact that this important issue is being discussed is phenomenal. To say it plain these discussions must continue.”

“The open questions and free and open exchange.”

“I think the communication worked well altogether. I wish the age demographic was more diverse.”
Appendix E: Focus Groups Discussion Guide

Reducing Lesbian Obesity - Focus groups Discussion Guide

[Two in-person focus groups of self-identified lesbian, bisexual, or queer women or women who partner with women and who also consider themselves overweight or obese. One focus group is for African American women and one is for non-African American women. Each focus group is designed to uncover attitudes about body size, the role of communities (racial and sexual minority) in affirming or challenging norms, past experiences with weight/risk reduction attempts, and ideas about what advertising content would help promote a desire to lose weight. The Focus groups will occur on Monday November 15 and Wednesday November 17, 2010. ]

1: WELCOME, INSTRUCTIONS, CONFIDENTIALITY, EXPECTATIONS, SESSION RECORDED, GROUND RULES (5 minutes)

Welcome to our Focus Group!

To reiterate - there are no wrong answers in this discussion – your opinions are what we want. We really want to hear what you think about the images and phrases we show you tonight.

Confidentiality

We would like each of you to read and sign, if you are okay with it, our consent and our confidentiality agreements (pass out printed agreements).

As we mentioned in our confirmation of your participation, your specific contact information will NOT be used in ANY report of this discussion – we’re interested in WHAT you have to say, not necessarily WHO says it.

This focus group will be Digitally Recorded

As you know we are recording tonight’s session for the purpose of writing our report. It will help us to be more accurate when we re-listen to your opinions while we write the final report.

Rules of the Road

We would like to ask that you speak one at a time and as clearly as possible with respect for your fellow participants and the moderators. We only have one hour left so we want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak their opinions.

Again, there are no wrong answers – your opinions will not have an effect on what we think but will inform our decisions as we develop a campaign to help women who would like to learn how to lose weight. Please speak freely about what you think or feel during our discussions.
Does anyone have any questions before we proceed with the second half of our focus group?

1: WOMEN, ADVERTISING, THE LESBIAN/SEXUAL MINORITY COMMUNITY AND WEIGHT LOSS

Now let’s talk a bit about weight loss advertising.

Annoying or Counterproductive “Weight Loss” Advertising

What advertising “weight loss” themes annoy you or do you feel are counterproductive in motivating women to lose weight?

Motivating Advertisements

Can you recall seeing any advertising about weight, health and/or weight loss - TV, print, radio, online – any medium – that you thought was pretty good or motivating? Of the weight loss advertising (any medium) that you have seen, what did you like the best about those ads and what did you like least?

Moderator Probes: Do you see or think about sexual orientation differences in advertising when the ads show different body types, styles of dress, make-up versus no make-up, etc.? Are there specific advertisements that you can recall that you easily related to/felt represented you (for instance Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, etc.)?

2: IMAGES DISCUSSION

[Hand out copies of images of women used in online survey.]

Which one of the following images would be your number 1 choice to appear in an advertisement to promote achieving a healthy weight to lesbians?

Moderator Probes: Do the women draw you in any of these photos? For the one that you chose, please talk about why that is your number one choice.

3: POTENTIAL “LOSING WEIGHT” THEMES / SLOGANS

Here are some potential themes for a “lesbians and women who partner with women - let’s lose weight” campaign that would “speak to” LBTQ persons.

Moderator Probes: Please tell us which of these themes are most appealing to you and why. Which ones are least appealing and why. If you had to choose one theme, either from this list or a different theme, what theme would you choose?

List:

- What Is My Healthy Weight And How Do I Get It?
- Body Mass Index - Not Just for Math Geeks
- You Are More Powerful Than A Cheeseburger
Weigh Less, Feel Better - It's That Simple
Looking For That Healthy Weight? Let Us Help You Find It.
Healthy Weight - The New Sexy!
Love Women, Love Your Health!
Know Your BMI - It's Not Just For Policy Wonks
Are You A Healthy Weight Lesbian?
Healthy Weight Is A Lesbian Issue
We don't have to "look good for our man," we just have to live healthy
Can A Healthy Weight Have You Feeling Strong and Fit? You Betcha!
Weigh Less / Fit Better

4: ADVERTISING MEDIUMS

Final topic: Let’s now focus on the question of what “mediums” would be most appropriate for a health/weight loss campaign geared to female members of the LGBTQ community.

Here is a list of potential places you could see or hear ads about losing weight. Which ones do you think are the “best” or most effective to talk to lesbians and women who partner with women about weight loss information? Which ones are the “worst” or least effective. Are there are additional places that you would find effective that we haven’t listed.

List:

- Posters / Billboards
- Online Social Networks
- Email from friends, colleagues or groups you belong to
- Community-group gatherings
- Pride Guides
- Washington Blade
- Postcards at bars
- Curve Magazine
- Lesbian oriented web sites
- Lesbian blogs
- TV
- Church
- LGBTQ Magazines
- Brochures / Tear-Offs
- Radio
- Metro Weekly
- Tee-shirts at Pride Festivals
- Other LGBTQ Newspapers/Magazines
- Mainstream magazines or newspapers
**Moderator Probes:** Can you give an example of your message, or an image and a messenger? Where would you like to see that ad (in a magazine or newspaper, on TV, on the radio, etc.)?

**CLOSING (5 minutes)**

**Thank You**
We want to thank you again for all great feedback on these topics!

**Research Process Evaluation**
It will help us do our best if you can please fill out our evaluation form. It’s a quick one! (*Hand out Evaluation Form*)
Appendix F: Images Used in Online Survey Question #48

A.

B.

C.
Appendix G: List of Potential “Losing Weight” Themes/Slogans

Which one of the following slogans do you feel might resonate with lesbians in an advertisement about healthy weight?

- What Is My Healthy Weight And How Do I Get It?
- Body Mass Index - Not Just for Math Geeks
- You Are More Powerful Than A Cheeseburger
- Weigh Less, Feel Better - It's That Simple
- Looking For That Healthy Weight? Let Us Help You Find It.
- Healthy Weight - The New Sexy!
- Love Women, Love Your Health!
- Know Your BMI - It's Not Just For Policy Wonks
- Are You A Healthy Weight Lesbian?
- Healthy Weight Is A Lesbian Issue
- We don't have to "look good for our man," we just have to live healthy
- Can A Healthy Weight Have You Feeling Strong and Fit? You Betcha!
Appendix H: Advertising Mediums

- Posters / Billboards
- Online Social Networks
- Email from friends, colleagues or groups you belong to
- Community-group gatherings
- Pride Guide
- Postcards at bars
- Postcards at restaurants
- Postcards at grocery stores
- TV
- Church
- LGBTQ Magazines
- Brochures / Tear-Offs
- Radio
- Tee-shirts at Pride
- LGBTQ Newspapers
- Mainstream magazines or newspapers
- Buses – inside
- Bus stops
- In doctor / medical provider offices
- At LGBTQ social group gatherings
Appendix I: Focus Group Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement

Study Title: Lesbian, Queer and Women-who-partner-with-Women Focus Group Study

Principal Investigator: Mautner Project

Thank you on behalf of Mautner Project for participating in this focus group regarding your opinions around Lesbian, Queer and Women-who-partner-with-Women and their health.

Your participation in this focus group is confidential for you and for your fellow participants. By signing this confidentiality form you are agreeing not to repeat or represent what other participants or the group leaders share with you in confidence during this two hour focus group.

Please sign and date below if you wish to proceed with participating this evening.

Name: ____________________________________________   Date:____________________

Confidentiality Agreement
Appendix J: Focus Group Evaluation Form

Please tell us how you would like to rank this Focus Group process on a scale of one to ten with ten being great! (*please circle one*)

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What worked well and what didn’t work as well? (*please write your opinion in the space below*)

On a scale of one to ten, with ten being “I liked the ads discussion,” how would you rank the discussions? (*please circle one*)

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