



ANTI DIET ELON: A DIGITAL EATING DISORDER RECOVERY RESOURCE

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In High School, I, like many other people in my age range and background, struggled with an eating disorder. The extreme diet culture was so normalized at my school that I didn't think I had a problem, but instead was making smart and healthy food choices. This skewed view of exercise and food soon turned from disordered eating to bulimia and body dysmorphia. I wanted to control what I ate and I didn't feel like I could tell anyone about these problems I was experiencing. However, through the support of my community and my own desire to get to a healthier place, I began my journey towards recovering and developing a positive relationship with food, exercise, and my body.

I have worked very hard throughout the end of high school and well into college to avoid triggers and vocalize when I am struggling, but sometimes there were small moments where I felt uncomfortable and seemed to take several steps backward in my recovery journey. I never thought of using the word "trigger" because I wanted to reserve that word for something I thought was truly traumatizing. But the more I started to feel affected by the words and messages of disordered eating all around me, the more I felt passionate about speaking up for myself when someone made me uncomfortable and sharing resources with others about how they can be an ally to people in recovery and not promote a toxic culture around food and health.

My project is a social media campaign and campus strategy focused around educating female students about eating disorder triggers and providing a positive space for body neutrality. The project involved creating infographics in social media posts through a variety of formats to educate others, build a community of students, and provide helpful resources. I also connected with specific areas of campus and partnered with leaders in that field in order to draw attention to the information provided, In addition to market research, I researched more about eating disorders in college students and how triggers work for people in recovery. My hope was that these infographics did not cast blame, but instead informed and pointed others towards helpful tools. I hope this project helped to break the stigma around eating disorders and allowed people to talk about their history with food and their body in an empowering way.

I wanted this project to help students at Elon University who were struggling with an eating disorder or disordered eating. I also wanted this project to help other members of the Elon Community that might be saying or participating in triggering things that could be negatively impacting their friends and peers. Eating disorders can feel super isolating and like an individual experience, however through a digital community of people engaging in content and sharing the resources to their digital circles, it created a group discussion and sent the message to others that there is help available and they do not have to struggle alone.

STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND RHETORIC

Professional Writing and Rhetoric was at the center of my project because I saw the strategic communication of this topic as extremely connected to my goal of education. My target audience was female college students at Elon University, so in order to effectively communicate to this audience, I needed to conduct a quality audience analysis of target accounts and forms of media that this group uses in order to create a product that was engaging to a person considering following the account and something that will continue to be visually interesting to create a continued engagement from a user.

I also talked with specific members of the Elon community and performed usability tests for the account in order to ensure that my project came across as educational and engaging and not judgemental and boring. This practice helped me hone my ethos into something that felt relatable to a student while also holding the distinction of an education account with factual information and personal testimony. I believe an argument made stronger with a personal storyline is connected to the product, which is why I tried to include my own eating disorder recovery experience. Although the step towards vulnerability felt uncomfortable, I believe it is what made the tone so unique to my account. I also was asking a level of vulnerability of my followers through my questions at the end of my posts, so I felt it was important to lead with that same level of vulnerability as I was asking.

I also focused on logos as the primary way to communicate information because I wanted the education to be centered in fact and not just personal testimony, emotion, or reputation. I see a lot of misinformation about health, wellness, and nutrition, so it was important to me to present factual information that people can trust and relate to. When using logos, I believe supporting the eating disorder community becomes a very logical choice and a strength of my tone. Although some people might disagree with how recovery is handled, I think the factual information about how prevalent eating disorders are on college campuses are facts that can unite a following and hopefully point towards solutions and support.

I also used You Attitude in order to center the posts around the audience and not me. I believe this helped the account work towards the needs of the audience and show how the information can be beneficial to them and point to a specific actionable step. You attitude has been one of the most interesting rhetorical devices that I learned in my time as a PWR student and I believe that at the center of every great brand or account is a tone that is focused not on the company, but the consumer.

CRAP principles are possibly one of the most important tools that I used in this project because if the information was not presented in an effective way, it would have been much less likely to connect with the audience. Additionally, because the deliverable was an Instagram account, the product required a strong emphasis on visual rhetoric. I also wanted the account to work with the comparable and target Instagram accounts, which all had a strong focus on aesthetics. I believe that my multimedia work and focus on contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity helped the account have strong information that was presented well.

Rhetorical devices were at the center of my strategy and I am happy with how this project reflects my knowledge of professional writing and rhetoric in a multimedia way.

