



# Oxford Handbook of the Psychology of Appearance (Oxford Library of Psychology)

By Nichola Rumsey, Diana Harcourt

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## Oxford Handbook of the Psychology of Appearance (Oxford Library of Psychology) By Nichola Rumsey, Diana Harcourt

We live in a society in which messages associating physical attractiveness with success and happiness are pervasive. There is an epidemic of appearance concerns amongst teenagers and adults in westernised countries and body image dissatisfaction is now considered normative. Large numbers of people experience negative impacts on wellbeing and, for many adolescents, adults, and even children, appearance concerns are influential in choices about a range of health behaviours. The challenges facing them include difficulties with social encounters and the problem of having to cope with negative self perceptions.

The *Oxford Handbook of the Psychology of Appearance* is a comprehensive reference text written by experts in the field. It examines how people feel about the way they look, and why it is that some people are happy with their appearance whilst increasing numbers are troubled by the way they look - reporting that these appearance-related concerns affect many aspects of their lives including relationships, health and well-being. It considers the influence of other people and how the media affects thoughts and behaviours related to appearance. It explores the experiences of people living with a disfigurement in a society that seems to be increasingly focussed on appearance and the pursuit of an idealised image of beauty, size and weight.

Exploring a topic that has been often neglected in the psychological literature, this book will be invaluable for health, clinical, and social psychologists, health professionals working with patients with visible differences, and those in the field of public health and education.

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## **Oxford Handbook of the Psychology of Appearance (Oxford Library of Psychology) By Nichola Rumsey, Diana Harcourt Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #2985939 in Books
- Published on: 2012-07-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.00" h x 1.60" w x 9.80" l, 3.17 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 736 pages

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#### Review

"The start of an overall affirmation has been made by the editors of this book. Nichola Rumsey and Diana Harcourt have done a necessary and excellent job in the creation of *The Oxford Handbook of the Psychology of Appearance*, and one hopes for sequels. Yes, the psychology of appearance should have a place in the sun." -- *PsycCRITIQUES*

#### About the Author

Professor Rumsey is VTCT Professor of Appearance Research at UWE and is Co-Director of the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR). Following the completion of her PhD "Psychological Problems Associated with Facial Disfigurement" in 1983, Nichola has built an international reputation for her research in this field and has attracted funding from a variety of bodies to support research on appearance. Nichola was awarded a personal Chair by UWE in 2002. She was elected President of the Craniofacial Society of Great Britain & Ireland in 2003-4 (the first psychologist to be elected to this position), and Chair of the British Psychological Society's Division of Health Psychology from 2005-6. She was awarded honorary membership of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons in 2009.

Dr Harcourt was appointed Reader in Health Psychology at UWE in 2006, and is Co-Director of the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR). Her interest in the psychological consequences of changes to appearance led her to conduct her PhD research into women's experiences of mastectomy and breast reconstruction after a diagnosis of cancer. Her PhD was supervised by Professor Nichola Rumsey, with whom she has worked closely since the inception of the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) in 1998. She was Chair of the British Psychological Society's Division of Health Psychology from 2009-10.

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