

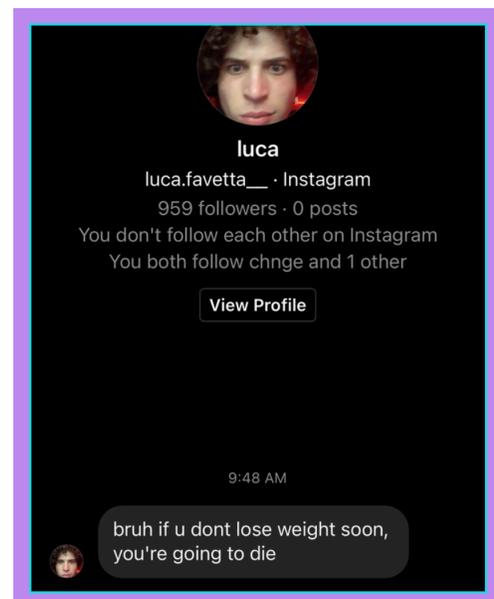
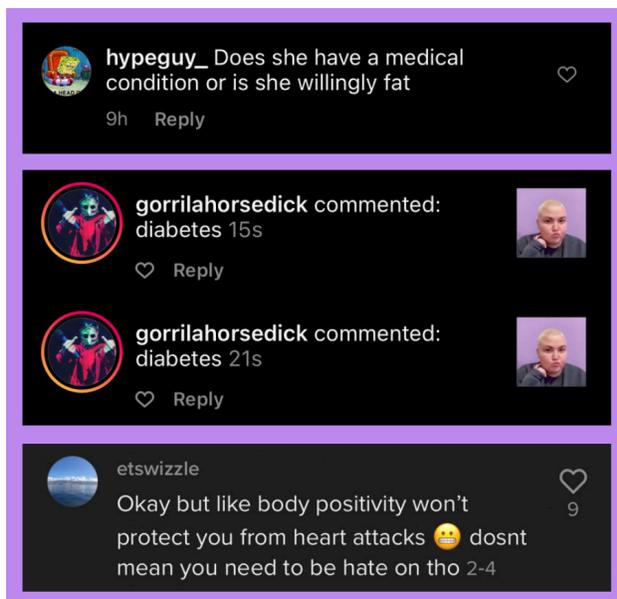
# Concern Trolling

@jordallenhall

Concern Trolling (verb) (informal) - the action or practice of disingenuously expressing concern about an issue in order to undermine or derail genuine discussion  
-definition via Oxford languages

For fat folks, particularly larger fat folks, concern trolls are everywhere; they exist online, IRL, on the street, at home, and they don't wait for anyone to ask for their opinions before voicing them. They take fat folks' bodies as an invitation to express "concern" and offer "advice." They play the part of personal physician without having any information about a person's health other than their body size. If any pushback is given, they will inevitably lament about how they are just trying to help.

Here are some examples of concern trolling online:



*"Does she have a medical condition or is she willingly fat"*

*"Diabetes"*

*"Diabetes"*

*"Okay but like body positivity won't protect you from heart attacks [cringe emoji] doesn't mean you need to be hate on tho"*

*"Bruh if you don't lose weight soon, you're doing to die"*

When we accept concern trolling as genuine, we disregard the fact that

- You cannot tell a person's health from looking at them
- A person's health is not something that is anyone's business but their own and the people in their lives that they choose to have involved

- A persons health should never be an indicator for how you treat them. Nobody owes you proof of health to deserve decency and respect
- Mental health exists

Concern trolling can happen IRL too. There are significant links between concern trolling and medical fatphobia, as well as the general fatphobic rhetoric that is spread through mainstream media. Fat folks are dehumanized both in media and in medicine, which gives permission for people to communicate with fat people with no regard for our humanity, allowing them to use our own health as a weapon against us, gatekeeping existence without ongoing abuse and harassment. Concern trolls are validated not only by fatphobic medical practices, and mainstream media/reporting on the “ob\*sity crisis,” but also by government programs that focus on stopping fatness instead of improving public health through resource distribution.

additional reading: “Killer Fat: Media, Medicine, and Morals in the American ‘Obesity Epidemic” by Natalie Boero

It is on non-fat folks to combat this rhetoric, because the people spouting it have already decided that we, as fat folks, are subhuman.

The first time I heard this rhetoric of fatness = death, I was 8 years old. For so long I never pictured myself growing old, I never pictured myself being loved, I didn’t have any concept of a life that was worth living in a fat body. When we normalize this rhetoric we’re allowing fat and thin folks alike to believe that you cannot live in a fat body. I worry about the short and long term health effects of telling people from childhood that they’re destined to die if they are unable to change their bodies.