

GRADES
4-5

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 1.3 | Body Confidence

Timing

45 minutes

Materials

- **Agree/Disagree Signs**—one copy for teacher
- **Competing and Comparing Looks** video (<https://youtu.be/3GPkw0hZPE8>)
- **Competing and Comparing Looks Agree/Disagree Statements**—one copy for teacher
- **Nine Things I Love About ME!** student handout—one half sheet per student

Note: *There are facilitation options below if the students are in a virtual situation. Handouts can be provided electronically to be printed at home or as an editable Microsoft Word template to be submitted via email, learning management systems, or a live/shared document.*

Tools to Build Body Confidence

COMPETING AND COMPARING LOOKS

Overview

Content for the *Amazing Me* program was created in partnership with Dr. Marisol Perez, a clinical psychologist and researcher at Arizona State University and The Institute for Research and Education Advancing Children’s Health (REACH). Dr. Perez has dedicated her career to assisting future generations be less focused on appearance and more focused on respecting, liking, and appreciating their bodies.

In this activity, students respond to statements regarding competing and comparing looks in a “four corners” format. They will then view the video **Competing and Comparing Looks** (<https://youtu.be/3GPkw0hZPE8>) and write a summary of their takeaways. Finally, students will brainstorm nine things they love about themselves with a focus on what makes them unique.

Each activity is part of a five-lesson series that focuses on confronting comparisons and building body confidence. Lessons 1-3 include core content and should be completed in sequence. Lessons 4-5 are supplementary and provide students with an opportunity to extend their learning of core concepts.

Background

Body image is defined as the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards one’s own body.¹ Research shows that body dissatisfaction contributes to the development of unhealthy behaviors in kids and adults. People are more likely to do unhealthy things to control their weight and body shape when they focus more on appearance than body functionality.²

¹ Cash & Prunzinsky, 1990

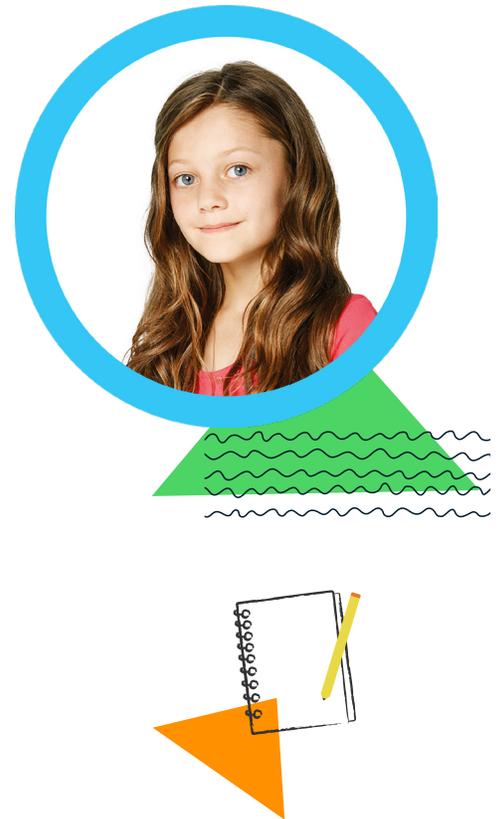
² Thompson & Stice, 2001

There are many factors that can cause body dissatisfaction in kids. Some of these factors are media and celebrity body images, pressures from family and friends to look a certain way, and teasing and bullying from peers. Any talk about body or body type (even positive statements) can result in negative feelings about one's body.³

The concept of "appearance ideals" is the idea that people are influenced by what society tells us is attractive and use these ideals to set goals for their own appearance. People from different cultures can have different appearance ideals. For example, in the United States, the dominant appearance ideal is for girls to be unrealistically thin.⁴ Research shows that appearance ideals lead to unhealthy behaviors in kids and adults. This means that when a girl consumes media (including television, magazines, and social media), she is likely to set unrealistic goals for her own body. This will make her dislike her body, feel shame and guilt, and is more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors. For boys and men, the appearance ideals are leanness and muscularity. When a boy consumes media, he is likely to set unrealistic goals for his own body. This will make him experience shame about his body, and at risk for unhealthy behaviors to try to meet the ideals from popular culture.

Research shows that parents and educators have the ability to increase the body confidence of young people. Adults can help kids become aware of the factors that negatively affect their self-image. Adults can also encourage healthy behaviors that have been proven to increase body confidence. Kids can be healthier when they are aware of emotional and physical changes that occur during development. They have more body confidence when kids can accept their changing bodies. Adults can help by avoiding making comments about weight and shape, and appearance.

Research suggests that body confidence increases with more supportive relationships rather than those based on competition or comparison. Regular conversations on these topics will encourage students to identify and connect with their peers instead of comparing themselves to each other. Comparing how we look to others and measuring ourselves against others can be very common and can damage self-image. Comparing oneself to others is related to body dissatisfaction with both kids and adults.⁵

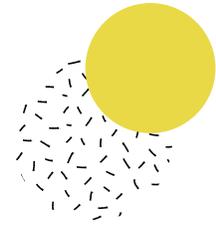


³ DSEP Content Development Framework, University of West England's Center for Appearance Research, 2012

⁴ Thompson & Stice, 2001

⁵ Myers & Crowther, 2009

This lesson will focus on competing and comparing looks how it affects body image; the aim of this activity is to help students celebrate what makes them unique and that includes both the physical and non-physical.



Objectives

Students will:

- Discuss how comparing themselves to others can be harmful.
- Create a list of unique attributes that they love about themselves.

Essential Question

What can happen to our self-image when we compare ourselves to others? How can we turn the focus to appreciate our own unique bodies and abilities?

Teacher Preparation

Before students arrive:

- Hang each **Agree/Disagree Signs** in a different corner of the room. Classroom and virtual facilitation options are presented below.

Sensitivity Note

Due to the nature of today's discussion, be aware of student feelings, and sensitive to the emotions and reactions of all students in the classroom. There can be a diversity of emotions and reactions to these topics. Teachers should feel free to paraphrase/edit the language to suit their classes learning abilities.



Suggestions for Implementing

Virtual Meetings

- **Lighting:** Backlighting prevents your audience from seeing you clearly. Make sure that you have lighting in front of you to ensure that you are seen.
- **Camera Placement:** Try to make sure that your camera is placed at eye level. This helps to create eye contact and engagement with your

audience. You can use books or other items to lift your computer (if using a laptop).

- **Sound:** Make sure that you do a quick sound check before beginning your session. Ensure that you can be heard and that participants will not hear an echo effect. Consider the usage of headphones equipped with a speaker.
- **Make Connections:** Remember to try to connect with your audience, which can be challenging, virtually. Connect with them using quick stories or humor. Some suggestions have been included.
- **Troubleshooting:** It is okay to make mistakes or have technology issues. If you have a technology hiccup or things don't go as planned, do your best to reconnect and move forward with your lesson. The best thing you can do is be prepared by testing your internet connection and sound and video settings prior to your session!



Procedure

Discuss

- Ask students to think about the times that they have compared themselves to others (e.g., celebrities, influencers, athletes, parents, family members, or peers). What sorts of things did they compare? How did it make them feel?
- Invite volunteers to share their responses. If students seem reluctant to share, consider sharing a personal experience.
- Explain that today the class will be discussing the effects of body comparison and brainstorming some ways to prevent it.

Do

- Show the video **Competing and Comparing Looks** (<https://youtu.be/3GPkw0hZPE8>).
- Invite students to stand. Point out the **Agree/Disagree Signs** posted in each area of the room.
- Read the **Agree/Disagree Statements** one at a time and allow each student to move to the area of the room that best expresses his/her opinion on the statement.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Allow them to share their answers out loud or encourage students to write their answers down to reference later, add to a live/shared document, or comment in a chat box.

- Take time after each statement to call on volunteers to share their thoughts and reactions or read some of the additional information and ask follow-up questions.
- Ask students to return to their seats.

CLASSROOM FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Students can stay seated and point to the corner of the room that best expresses his/her opinion.
- Students can sit and stand to represent agree and disagree, respectively.
- Students can write agree or disagree on small white boards and hold in the air.
- Students can show a thumbs up or down to represent agree and disagree, respectively.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Students can utilize “raise hand” feature in online meeting.
- Students can record responses on a sheet of paper or live/shared document.
- Students can leave video on for “agree” and turn video off for “disagree.”

Reflect

- Reinforce what students have learned about how comparing themselves to others can be harmful to their self-image and cause too much focus on other people.
- Distribute one **Nine Things I Love About ME!** student handout to each student. Explain that they can refocus their thoughts on their own unique bodies and abilities by creating a list of things they love about themselves.
- Allow the remainder of the session for students to brainstorm nine things they love about themselves, including three things they like about their personality, three things they like about their body because of what it can do, and three things they like about their appearance.

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me

TEACHER HANDOUT

Agree/Disagree Signs

I AGREE



Agree/Disagree Signs

I DISAGREE

Competing and Comparing Looks Agree/Disagree Statements

1. Smoky Quartz was upset after she compared herself to Sardonyx.
 - Possible follow up questions: Why do you think she was upset? How did her feelings about her own body change as she compared herself to Sardonyx? What types of things did she say after she engaged in this comparison?
2. I can relate to how Smoky Quartz felt in the video.
3. People compare how they look to others.
4. I compare myself to others.
 - Possible follow up question: How does it make you feel when you compare yourself to someone else?
5. Comparing myself to others is bad for me.
6. Comparing to others is bad for your health.
7. I have ideas on how to stop comparing myself to others.
8. I can think of some things I love about my body.
9. I can help my friends to like themselves more.
 - Possible follow up question: What can you do if you hear your friend comparing him/herself to someone else?
10. All bodies are great bodies.



Nine Things I love about ME!

STUDENT HANDOUT

Three things I like about my personality	Three parts of my body I like because of what they can do	Three parts of my body I like the look of
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.



Nine Things I love about ME!

STUDENT HANDOUT

Three things I like about my personality	Three parts of my body I like because of what they can do	Three parts of my body I like the look of
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.