

GRADES
4-5

Timing

45 minutes

Materials

- Chart paper or poster board—one per group
- **Role Play Script** student handout, cut into strips—one per student
- **Exit Slip** 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

LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE!

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 will investigate what percentage of their peer's conversations revolve around appearances before brainstorming conversation topics in which they can engage that are about topics other than body talk. Students will end by practicing and presenting ways to redirect a conversation through role playing.

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

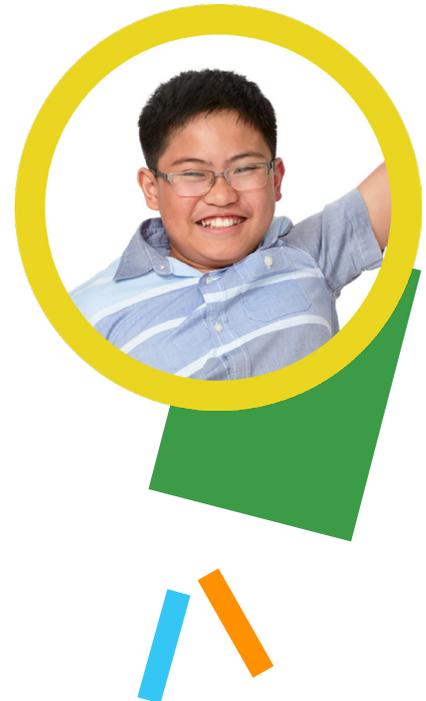
There are many factors that can cause body dissatisfaction in kids. Some of these factors are media and celebrity body images, pressures from family and friends to look a certain way, and teasing and bullying from peers. Any talk about body or body type (even positive statements) can result in negative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

This lesson will focus on teaching students strategies for redirecting conversations to positive topics.



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

⁴ Thompson & Stice, 2001

Objectives

Students will:

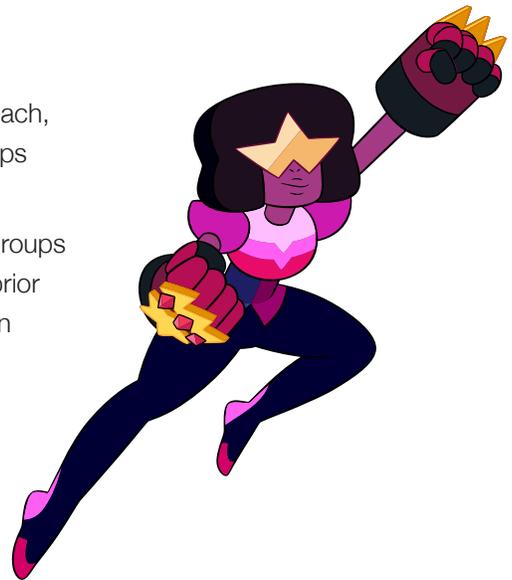
- Discuss how often body talk is present during everyday conversations.
- Brainstorm interesting topics of conversation that do not relate to physical appearance.
- Engage in role play to practice changing the course of a conversation centered around body talk.

Essential Question

How can I navigate conversations centered around physical appearance?

Teacher Preparation

- Before students arrive, assign students groups of four students each, arrange desks into groups of four, and assign scripts 1–4 to groups evenly, printing the correct number of each script.
 - If you are teaching virtually, determine how you will assign groups for the Role Play activity. If using breakout rooms, prepare prior to your session. Platforms like Zoom allow you to pre-assign participants to breakout rooms. Google Meet will randomly distribute participants.



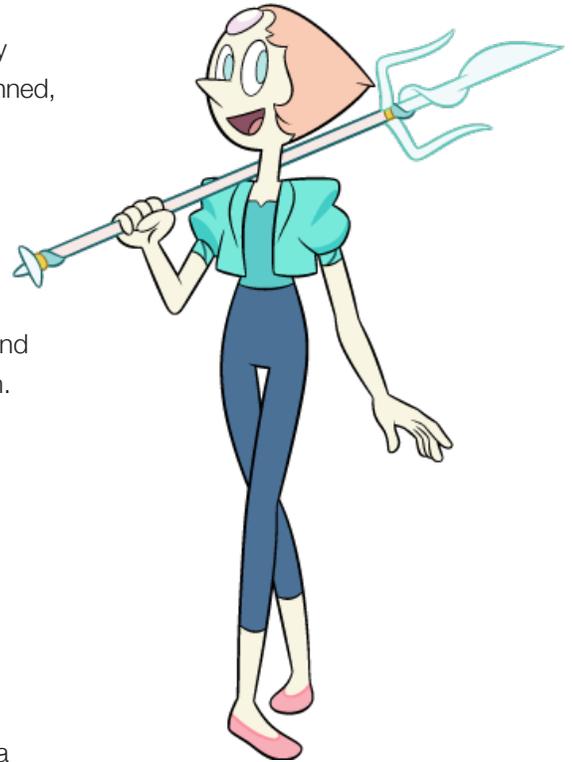
Suggestions for Implementing Virtual Meetings:

- **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!

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.



Procedure

Discuss

- Ask students to raise their hands, either physically or using the “raise hand” feature in the online meeting, if they’ve been part of a conversation about someone’s physical appearance in the past week.
- Count how many students raise their hands and calculate the percentage of the class this represents on the board ($\#$ of hands raised / total $\#$ of students \times 100). Explain that body talk, talking about how someone looks, can be common.
- Explain that any form of body talk or body comparison can be harmful to one’s self-image. Explain that any form of body talk can be harmful. Today, they will learn how to “reroute a conversation” on body talk.
- Ask 1–2 volunteers to share examples of what it might mean to “reroute” a conversation. Anticipated responses might include: talk about something else, say you would rather talk about something else, or walk away.
- If it was not offered by a volunteer, explain that one way to reroute a conversation is to “change the subject” or talk about something else. The goal is NOT to talk about how people look. Today the class will think of things to say that are not related to body talk and practice changing the subject.
 - Example conversation topics might include: What is your favorite sport? Who do you think is the best artist in the class? What TV show do you like playing? I am worried about my math test—who should I study with?

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

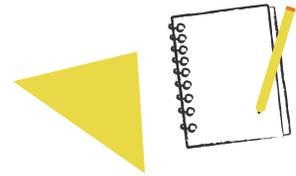
- Allow them to share their answers out loud or encourage students to write their answers down to reference later, add to a live/shared document, or comment in a chat box.

Do

- Divide students into groups of four and distribute a piece of chart paper or poster board to each group.
- Provide students with approximately five minutes to brainstorm topics of conversation that do not revolve around bodies or appearances. Some examples include sports, school, music, family, pets, etc. Students should brainstorm as many ideas as they can and record them in large writing on their chart paper or poster board.
- Display each group's list on the classroom wall.
- Distribute one **Role Play Script** student handout to each student, evenly distributing scripts 1–4 between the groups.
- Instruct students to choose one of the brainstormed conversation topics and act out the script, using the topic to pivot the conversation away from physical appearances at the end.
- Allow ten minutes for students to practice their scripts before each group performs for the class.

Reflect

- Distribute one **Exit Slip** student handout to each student.
- Provide approximately five minutes for students to complete the **Exit Slip**.
- If time allows, ask volunteers to share the conversation topic they feel most comfortable engaging in with their peers.



VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Students can brainstorm independently and record on a sheet of paper or in a live/shared document.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Use breakout rooms to put students into groups so they can role play.
- Assign students a script and challenge them to independently write narratives detailing the scenario as well as a conversational pivot.

Student Role Play Scripts



Scenario One

During lunch, four friends sit at a table talking.

STUDENT 1: Hey, why aren't you eating lunch?

STUDENT 2: I don't want to eat. I'm too fat.

STUDENT 3: My mom skips meals but she doesn't lose weight.

STUDENT 1: You can't survive without food. You have to eat.

STUDENT 4: (Choose a way to change the conversation!)

Scenario Two

A group of friends are talking before school.

STUDENT 1: I hate my legs! I can't run fast.

STUDENT 2: Well, I hate my arms, they are super weak.

STUDENT 3: I like my elbows; they are double jointed. Watch!

STUDENT 4: (Choose a way to change the conversation!)

Student Role Play Scripts



Scenario Three

STUDENT 1 (talking to STUDENT 2): Cool shoes!

STUDENT 2: Thanks, they are comfy too.

STUDENT 3: Maybe now you'll run faster.

STUDENT 2: Nope, my legs are just too slow.

STUDENT 4: (Choose a way to change the conversation!)

Scenario Four

STUDENT 1: Did you cut your hair?

STUDENT 2: Yeah, I hate my hair.

STUDENT 3: Wow, its short.

STUDENT 4: (Choose a way to change the conversation!)

Scenario Five

STUDENT 1: There's Student X. They are so weird.

STUDENT 2: Student X just looks weird. It's their clothes.

STUDENT 3: That's Student X just being Student X.

STUDENT 4: (Choose a way to change the conversation!)

Exit Slip

STUDENT HANDOUT

Write what you learned today:

How will you practice what you learned today? Which strategy will you choose to practice? Why? Was it awkward to try to change the conversation? Why can it be awkward? How can you deal with it when it feels awkward, but you need to change it?



Exit Slip

STUDENT HANDOUT

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How will you practice what you learned today? Which strategy will you choose to practice? Why? Was it awkward to try to change the conversation? Why can it be awkward? How can you deal with it when it feels awkward, but you need to change it?
