amazing me

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 1.5 | Body Confidence

GRADES 4–5

Timing

45 minutes

Materials

- **Positive Thoughts** student handout—one per student
- Construction paper or cardstock
- Coloring materials
- Optional: stickers, stamps, stencils, glitter, and other art supplies
- **3-2-1 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

POSITIVE THOUGHTS

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.

During this activity, students will learn more about body dissatisfaction and positive thoughts before working with peers to create posters or cards featuring each student's positive qualities, skills, and characteristics. They can refer to these cards when they feel unsatisfied with their bodies and need positive affirmation.

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

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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.

About 40 to 50% of kids that are 9 to 12 years old report body dissatisfaction and wanting to be thin. These rates have been shown to remain stable.[5] Body dissatisfaction is associated with depression, lower self-esteem, and unhealthy eating behaviors including dieting, vomiting, and excessive exercise.[6]

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.

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

[4] Thompson & Stice, 2001

[5] Clark & Tiggemann, 2008; McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2005

[6] Myers & Crowther, 2009

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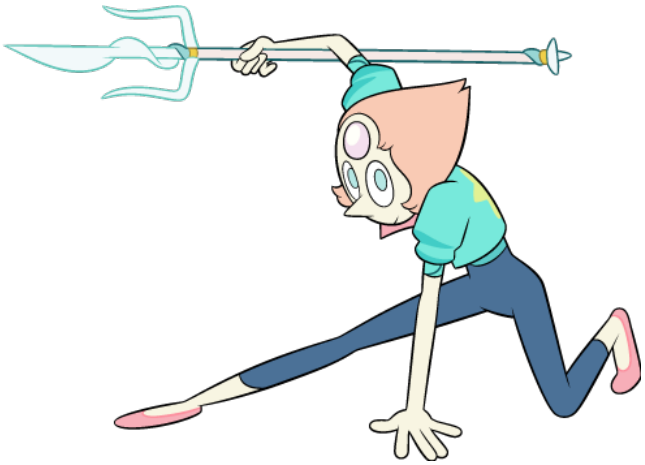

Research suggests that body confidence increases with more supportive relationships rather than those based on competition or comparison. Regular conversations on these topics will encourage students to identify and connect with their peers instead of comparing themselves to each other.

This lesson will focus on battling body dissatisfaction with positive affirmation.

Objectives

Students will:

- Define body dissatisfaction.
- Understand that positive self-talk is an effective strategy to improve body confidence.
- Help classmates create cards using positive thoughts.
- Use positive thoughts to boost body confidence.

Essential Question

What is body dissatisfaction, and how can I use positive self-talk to improve my body confidence?

Teacher Preparation

- If you are teaching virtually, determine how you will assign partners for the Positive Thoughts 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.
- If you are teaching virtually, provide the list of possible decoration materials above to students prior to the session to allow them time to procure items that can help them embellish their affirmation signs.

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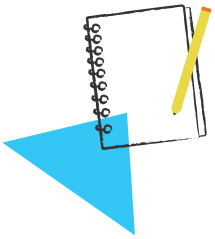
Suggestions for Implementing Virtual Virtual Meetings

- **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

- Display the word "dissatisfaction" on the board. Ask students what they think this word might mean based on the parts they see within the word.
- Engage students in a discussion about the words "body dissatisfaction" by asking questions such as: What does it mean

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.

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to feel satisfied? What does it mean to feel unsatisfied? What might we mean if someone says he/she is unsatisfied with his/her body or appearance?

- After discussing, ensure students understand that body dissatisfaction is negative perceptions and feelings a person has about their body. It can be influenced by factors such as wanting one's body to look a specific way, not being content with the way your body looks, attitudes towards weight gain, cultural norms in relation to an ideal body, and attitudes related to body changes in puberty.[7]
- Discuss how body dissatisfaction can lead to negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
- Explain that today the class will be creating positive thoughts cards that they can reference when they experience feelings of body dissatisfaction. Positive thoughts are positive or encouraging statements that students can read or say when they are having negative thoughts about themselves.

Do

- Assign each student a partner and distribute one **Positive Thoughts** student handout to each student.
- Explain to students that Positive Thoughts: Are positive things you can say to yourself. These things help to stop negative thoughts.
- Instruct students to take approximately five minutes to fill in each column of the chart about their partner. If they are not familiar with their partner, they can take a few minutes to talk to them about their hobbies, their favorite subjects in school, accomplishments, etc.
- When they have finished, direct students to read their positive statements about their partner to that person, starting each point with "You are…" (For example: "Your hands help you create beautiful drawings."; "Your legs allow you to run fast."; etc.).
- After students have completed this process, instruct them to collect their own positive thoughts sheets and take a moment to review the comments from their peers.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Students can choose a family member or friend and complete the handout about that person.
- Partners can communicate on a live/shared document.
- You can organize separate breakout rooms for each pair.

[7] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26795680

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- Explain to students that they will now use their **Positive Thoughts** and decorating materials to create cards for themselves.
- Distribute the supplies you have chosen to use or direct students to their location in the room.
- Guide students through the creation of their Positive Thoughts Cards by modeling the process. Some suggested formats might include:
  - Writing student's name in the center of the paper and surrounding the name with adjectives, qualities, skills, and unique characteristics.
  - Choosing one "You are…" statement read from the **Positive Thoughts** handout to write large and decorate.
- Provide time for students to complete their cards. If time allows, students may complete more than one.
- Invite students to brainstorm some places they can put their card to reference it throughout the day (i.e., inside of locker, tucked in a binder, taped to the mirror at home, etc.).

Reflect

- Distribute one **3-2-1 Exit Slip** handout to each student and allow students to fill in the blanks.
- Collect the slip. Answer questions for the class as time allows or consider setting time aside during the next session to do so.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- This can be facilitated in a live/shared document or submitted electronically.

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Positive Thoughts

My Partner's Name: _____

Unique Skills of My Partner	How My Partner's Body Helps Achieve These Things
Examples: drawing	Example: My partner's hands help him create beautiful drawings.

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3-2-1 Exit Slip

STUDENT HANDOUT

List three things you learned from today's lesson:

1.

2.

3.

List two things you found interesting from today's lesson:

1.

2.

Record one question you still have:

1.

3-2-1 Exit Slip

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List three things you learned from today's lesson:

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2.

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