

Me as I am

A Workshop on Enhancing Body Image and Self-esteem

Created By: Tina Sammadi

Curriculum Objectives

- Enhance self-esteem and feelings of self-acceptance among participants.
- Increase body satisfaction / Decrease body dissatisfaction.
- Increase awareness of the normal body changes that occur during puberty and adolescence.
- Provide participants with basic media literacy skills.
- Empower students to take action in addressing media messages that perpetuate poor body image and bolster against feeding into media, society, cultural, peer and familial pressures, predominantly messages to be thin.
- Enhance student knowledge pertaining to the benefits of healthy eating and an active lifestyle.
- Reduce the risk for the development of eating disorder among participants.
- Participants will come to accept their body in their unique shape and size and not as the masses indicate it should be, ultimately striving to live with a healthy body and a healthy mind.

Session 1

- Group leader will introduce herself, welcome, and thank participants for coming. Participants should include **no more than 10 members**. At this time, it will be explained that this group will meet a total of 8 times and it will benefit those who are interested in gaining a higher understanding of self-esteem and body image, and tackling such prevalent issues affecting today's teens.
- Group Leader clearly provides group norms and ascertains it is understood by all:
 - 1) Members are expected to attend regularly and show up on time.
 - 2) Members are expected to give feedback to one another.
 - 3) Members should focus on both thoughts and feeling and express them rather than talking about problems in a detached and intellectual manner.
 - 4) Members are expected to bring into the group personal problems and concerns that they are willing to discuss.
 - 5) Members are encouraged to provide therapeutic support to one another.
 - 6) Members should be provided with challenges to look at themselves in an non-confronting manner.
 - 7) Members should maintain confidentiality within the group at all times.

Session 1 Cont.

- Ice Breaker: Leader will ask members to go around and introduce themselves stating their name, age, and one thing we like about our body and one thing we like about our self. Do not let members slide by saying they don't know or can't think of one.
- Leader to discuss differences and commonalities of ice breaker.

Session 1 Cont.

- Leader to give introduction to the workshop stating:

Differences exist all around us. There are differences in our hair color, eye color, skin color, religion, ethnicity, political views, and our beliefs and opinions. Another beautiful difference to add on to our list is the various shapes and sizes that the human body comes in. Too often in the mainstream media (television, magazines, music videos, etc.), we only see a very limited sampling of the wide spectrum of body shapes and sizes that exist. It's like trying to look at a rainbow in a world with only a couple colors.

Session 1 Cont.

- In this 8 session workshop, you will be adding the “rest of the colors” to the rainbow by acknowledging the many different sizes, shapes, and styles that exist around you. You will have the opportunity to explore your own personal style (made up of physical and non-physical attributes) that comprises you to be as **beautiful as you are**.
- You will learn about how the body changes shape during puberty and adolescence. Subsequently, you will take a long, hard look at media messages to determine if and how they are honoring the differences that exist amongst humans. Lastly, you will be offered some helpful ideas for how to live healthfully in your own size, as well as to spread the message across your community to enhance awareness on an universal level.

Session 1 Cont.

- Lesson 1: Objectives-
- Students will be introduced to the concepts of body image and self-esteem through a brief introductory discussion.
- Students will gain understanding of the term body image and how a positive body image is an important component to overall self-esteem.

Session 1 Cont.

- Lesson 1: Leader initiates discussion by introducing the term body image. The contribution of positive body image to overall self-esteem is discussed.
- Leader to state the following background information for group discussion prior to completing Worksheet 1:

Lesson 1

- **Regarding Body Image and Self-Esteem...**

Body dissatisfaction among both men, women, girls and boys is increasing at a rapid rate. The relentless pursuit of thinness urged on by body dissatisfaction and resulting in unhealthy dieting behaviors is considered normal behavior in today's society. However, genetically people are intended to have a wide range of body types and sizes. To attempt to become something that we are not genetically intended to become can lead to frustration and ultimately a negative body image and lowered self-esteem.

People with a negative body image are more likely to develop a life-threatening eating disorder. They are also more likely to feel depressed, isolated, have low self-esteem and to obsess about weight loss.

The key to developing a positive body image is to recognize and respect your natural shape along with all of the other attributes that combine to make you a special, beautiful unique individual.

Lesson 1

- **What is Body Image?**
- ***Body image is...***
 - How you see yourself – both in the mirror and in your mind
 - How you feel about your body
 - How you feel in your body...how do you sense and control your body as you move...are you comfortable in your body?
 - What you believe about your appearance...do you have fond memories related to your appearance, do you make generalizations or assumptions related to your appearance?
- ***When you have a Positive Body Image, you...***
 - Appreciate and celebrate your natural body shape
 - Understand that a person's physical appearance is only a part of who they are and that physical appearance says little about their character or value as a person.
 - Have a clear perception of your shape – you see your body as it really is and feel comfortable in it.
- ***When you have a Negative Body Image, you may...***
 - Have a distorted perception of your shape – you see your body differently than it actually is.
 - Think other people find you unattractive
 - See your size or shape as a sign of personal failure
 - Feel uncomfortable in your own body
 - Feel ashamed, self-conscious and anxious about your body

Lesson 1

- ***The following are some facts related to body image:***
- 45% of healthy weight women and 23% of healthy weight men describe themselves as overweight
- 50% of 3rd-6th graders indicate that they want to be thinner
- The average woman's height is 5'4" and she weighs 144 pounds ...the average model is 5' 11" and weighs 117 pounds.
- Eating disorders are dangerous and can lead to death.
- Most models are thinner than 98% of American women
- 4 out of 5 children at age 10 are afraid of being fat
- Less than 10% of the female population are genetically destined to fit the ideal body of today's media.
- Popular magazines use make-up, lighting and air-brushing to slim down the images of their already very thin models.

Lesson 1

- At this point leader will have stated background information and discussed with participants their feelings and thoughts on the definition, information, and statistics/facts presented.
- Once the discussion is over, leader will hand out Worksheet 1 and have members complete it.
- After completion, ask for participants to voluntarily read aloud their answers. Have participants to pay close attention to their similarities.

Session 1 Cont.

- Lesson 2: Objectives-
- Students will explore their own positive, personal attributes.
- Students will identify at least five (ten is recommended) of the most important things about themselves that contribute to their own personal style and honor their own personal style so as not to fall victim to societal pressures.

Lesson 2

- Leader to discuss the following:
- **Helping Students Identify Their Own Healthy Style:**

The primary recommendation here is that students are encouraged to identify both physical and non-physical attributes that contribute to their own healthy style. Keep in mind, the high school years are a time of great physical and social change. Thus, students in this age-group are likely to be even more unsure about what to consider positive body attributes.

Try to give them examples to begin with that do not relate to body size or shape. Examples:

 - A great smile
 - Pretty eyes
 - A great leader
 - Athletic
 - Motivated
 - A compassionate good friend
 - Hard-working student
 - Confident
 - A great musician
 - Good advice-giver and good listener
- Students can choose to complete Worksheet 2 independently or may work with a partner.
- Once students complete Worksheet 2 they should share with the group. Encourage them to use some positive attributes that don't necessarily have to do with the exterior of a person. Again, point out and ask participants to pay close attention to their similarities.

Session 2

- Lesson 3 and Lesson 4 Objectives-
- Students will analyze media messages focusing on how these messages may impact their perception of themselves.
- Students will examine stereotypes in our society and decide for themselves if they “buy in” to these messages for themselves.
- Students will recognize that media messages are constructed for specific purposes.
- Students will evaluate how media messages are constructed to target a specific audience.
- Students will evaluate the influence of the media on behaviors and values.
- Students will analyze the social consequences of media messages.
- Students will acknowledge their individual power in accepting or rejecting media messages.

Session 2

- Lesson 3: Students are to view the following videos:
- Dove's self-esteem and body image movement: Evolution, "The Making of a Model" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkAqk80O6D8>
- "The Photoshop Effect" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YP31r70_QNM and "The Photoshop Effect: Part 2 Controversy" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ovpd5O6M8tQ>
- "Celebrity Photoshop" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0yNATKSQ_I
- "Teen-truth: Body Image" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpFBKeuKf7M>
- Two Fed-Up Inc. videos: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbrdNe_RKAo and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fop1JTNhXNo>
- Note: The total time of the combined videos is approximately 35 minutes.
- Explore, discuss, and process feelings, thoughts, and reactions to videos as a group.
- Students complete Worksheet 3: The Making of Model

Session 3

- Materials Needed: Enough teen/women fashion magazines to be distributed to individuals or pairs.
- Group Leader provides examples of magazine advertisements considered to contribute to negative body image and advertisements considered to convey positive body image messages.
- Students will then search through popular women/teen magazines and identify a couple ads that support positive body image and a couple that may contribute to negative body image.
- Students answer questions on Worksheet 4: Truth in Advertising?... You tell me!!

Session 3

- The following is background information the leader is to mention to the group to get a higher understand of the relations between the media, body image, and eating disorders:
- Eating disorders are complex conditions that arise from a variety of factors, including psychological, interpersonal, and social issues. Media images that help to create cultural definitions of beauty and attractiveness are often acknowledged as being among those factors contributing to the rise of eating disorders.
- Media messages screaming "thin is in" may not directly cause eating disorders, but they help to create the context within which people learn to place a value on the size and shape of their body. To the extent that media messages like advertising and celebrity spotlights help our culture define what is beautiful and what is "good," the media's power over our development of self-esteem and body image can be incredibly strong.

Background Information Cont.

- **Some Basic Facts About the Media's Influence in Our Lives:**
 - ◆ According to a recent survey of adolescent girls, the media is their main source of information about women's health issues (Commonwealth Fund, 1997).
 - ◆ Researchers estimate that 60% of Caucasian middle school girls read at least one fashion magazine regularly (Levine, 1997).
 - ◆ Another study of mass media magazines discovered that women's magazines had 10.5 times more advertisements and articles promoting weight loss than men's magazines did (as cited in Guillen & Barr, 1994).
 - ◆ A study of one teen adolescent magazine over the course of 20 years found that:
 - All of the articles contained in these magazines included statements highlighting that weight loss would improve appearance.
 - In articles about fitness or exercise plans, 74% cited "to become more attractive" as a reason to start exercising and 51% noted the need to lose weight or burn calories. (Guillen & Barr, 1994)
 - ◆ The average young adolescent watches 3-4 hours of TV per day (Levine, 1997).
 - ◆ A study of 4,294 network television commercials revealed that 1 out of every 3.8 commercials send some sort of "attractiveness message," telling viewers what is or is not attractive (as cited in Myers et al., 1992). These researchers estimate that the average adolescent sees over 5,260 "attractiveness messages" per year.

Session 3 Cont.

- **Fervently state- *Public Service Announcement for Group:***
- **Encouraging the media to present more diverse and real images of people with positive messages about health and self-esteem may not eliminate eating disorders entirely, but it will help reduce the pressures many people feel to make their bodies conform to one ideal, and in the process, reduce feelings of body dissatisfaction and ultimately decrease the potential for eating disorders.**
- **Discuss PSA**

Session 3 Cont.

- **Group Leader to continue providing the following vital information to members and discuss its significance:**
- **Tips for Becoming a Critical Viewer of the Media**

Media messages about body shape and size will affect the way we feel about ourselves and our bodies only if we let them. One of the ways we can protect our self-esteem and body image from the medias often narrow definitions of beauty and acceptability is to become a critical viewer of the media messages we are bombarded with each day. When we effectively recognize and analyze the media messages that influence us, we remember that the media's definitions of beauty and success do not have to define our self-image or potential.

Session 3

- **To be a critical viewer, remember:**
 - ◆ All media images and messages are constructions. They are NOT reflections of reality.
 - ◆ Advertisements and other media messages have been carefully crafted with an intent to send a very specific message.
 - ◆ Advertisements are created to do one thing: convince you to buy or support a specific product or service.
 - ◆ To convince you to buy a specific product or service, advertisers will often construct an emotional experience that looks like reality. Remember, you are only seeing what the advertisers want you to see.
 - ◆ Advertisers create their message based on what they *think* you will want to see and what they *think* will affect you and compel you to buy their product. Just because they *think* their approach will work with people like you doesn't mean it has to work with you as an *individual*.
 - ◆ As individuals, we decide how to experience the media messages we encounter. We can choose to use a filter that helps us understand what the advertiser wants us to think or believe and then choose whether we want to think or believe that message. We can choose a filter that protects our self-esteem and body image.

Session 3

- **Tips for Becoming a Critical Viewer of the Media (*continued*)**

To help promote healthier body image messages in the media, you can:

- ◆ Talk back to the TV when you see an ad or hear a message that makes you feel bad about yourself or your body by promoting only thin body ideals.
- ◆ Write a letter to an advertiser you think is sending positive, inspiring messages that recognize and celebrate the natural diversity of human body shapes and sizes. Compliment their courage to send positive, affirming messages.
- ◆ Tear out the pages of your magazines that contain advertisements or articles that glorify thinness or degrade people of larger sizes. Enjoy your magazine without negative media messages about your body.
- ◆ Talk to your friends about media messages and the way they make you feel.
- ◆ Make a list of companies who consistently send negative body image messages and make a conscious effort to avoid buying their products. Write them a letter [or email] explaining why you are using your "buying power" to protest their messages.

Session 3

- Lesson 4: *Worksheet 4: Truth in Advertising... Yeah, right!*
- **Overview of the Activity:**

While search through a popular magazine participants will observe the frequency of advertisements or articles that convey the attractiveness messages, (messages telling readers what is or is not attractive).

Participants will discuss the impact of this type of advertising on how people feel about themselves.

The activity will conclude with the students' redesigning of one of the advertisements to reflect a more healthy way of marketing the product.

Lesson 4

- Procedure:
 1. Divide into groups of 2-3 and distribute magazine, one per group.
 2. Distribute *Discussion Question Worksheet 4* (It is suggested that each participant fill out their own worksheet as there are some questions which require a personal perspective.)
 3. Have groups examine through magazines for 15 minutes, book marking advertisements that convey "attractiveness messages".
 4. Have students complete *Discussion Question Worksheet 4*. Questions 1-3 may be discussed and answered as a group. It is suggested that the students address Questions 4-5 independently.
 5. Take 10 minutes to share discussion question answers and thoughts.
 6. Students then move on to Worksheet 5- *Redesign an Advertisement* activity. As a pair, each group identifies an ad that may contribute to poor body image feelings among the readers and then redesigns the ad to reflect a more meaningful, healthy message.
 7. Share and discuss new ads with everyone and the importance of their new creations.

Session 4

- Main Message: “No matter what your shape or size, you can reap the benefits and feel great through healthy eating and regular physical activity.”
- Lesson 5 Objectives-
- Increase member’s knowledge and awareness of the naturally occurring changes in body shape and size that accompany puberty and adolescence.
- Enhance member awareness of the negative impacts that dieting can have on the health and functioning of the growing adolescent.

Session 4

- Lesson 5- Leader to hand out the “Perfect Body Myth” information sheet and lead participants through the information on the handout.
- Using Worksheet 6 “Body Changes Discussion Guide Questions” as a guide, a facilitated group discussion will follow on the topic of changes to expect in body shape and size during puberty and adolescence.

Session 5

- Lesson 6 Objectives-
- Provide members with healthy eating and physical activity guidelines that will support their growth, current health and adoption of long-term healthy behaviors.
- Members will conduct a personal dietary assessment in order to gain an awareness of what they eat, when they eat and why they eat. They will compare their dietary behavior to healthy ideals and consider small behavior change goals for themselves.

Session 5

- Lesson 6- Group Leader will hand out the background information sheets “**Just Say No to Dieting**” and the “**Just for You**” handouts and go over this information with members, fielding questions from the members. There is likely to be lots of comments about fad diets from the students. The main message should be “maintain healthy eating (following the recommendations of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines and My Pyramid Plan) through this important growth phase of your life.”
- For teachers wanting to review the 2010 Dietary Guidelines and MyPyramid plan, please see the following websites for information and resources:
 - USDA Team Nutrition <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/>
 - 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans <http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/>
 - MyPyramid Plan and Resources <http://www.mypyramid.gov/>

Session 5

- Lesson 6 Continued- Participants will complete section one of Worksheet 7: The Healthy Eating Behavior Check. Encourage discussion regarding strategies for making positive, healthy behavior changes.
- Participants will complete section two of Worksheet 7 over a period of 3 days (this may be a good weekend activity). Participants should try to record three days worth of food intake although this may be made shorter if time is limited. The longer the time period of recording food intake, the more meaningful the data.

Session 5

- Lesson 6 Continued-
- Note to Group Leaders:
- By keeping a 3 day food diary, members will gain an overview of what their daily food intake and behaviors look like. It would be good to have members compare the results of their diaries to the recommendations of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines and MyPyramid plan. In order to do this, you can take this activity one step further and have your members complete the meal tracking worksheet found at the MyPyramid.gov website.
- <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/downloads/ArchivedMyPyramid>
- <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/results>

Session 5

- Lesson 6 Continued-
- Group Leader will lead a follow-up discussion on member impressions of the information and activity. Members should be encouraged to set realistic goals for themselves. One or two small changes such as, “remember to eat fruit at breakfast” or “have milk instead of soda at lunch” should be encouraged.
- Group leader should conclude this section with leading a discussion on how it is possible to be healthy at any shape or size. The role of healthy eating and regular physical activity in maintaining a healthy body should be the emphasis of the discussion.

Session 6

- Lesson 7-
- Members review a sample “Activity Pyramid”.
- Members assess their own personal activity habits by keeping an activity diary (Worksheet 9).
- A discussion of daily activity recommendations follows and members gain awareness of where their activity habits fit into these recommendations.
- As they did with healthy eating habits, members will set small, achievable goals related to changes they can make in their daily habits to incorporate more physical activity. Examples to share with members may include, “Take my dog for a walk”, “Limit TV/computer time to 1 hour and exercise instead”, “Walk to school or local shops/restaurants/stores”, “Use stairs instead of elevator whenever possible.”

Session 7

- In order to enhance the lessons of this psychoeducational workshop it is beneficial to allow this session for a guest speaker, ideally, one who is recovered from an Eating Disorder to come and share their “story” to the group in which members can get a real feel for what it is like to have an Eating Disorder and learn the many dangers of it from a person who has actually struggled with one.
- The objective here is for the members to hear a live anecdote of someone who has suffered raw and poignant self-esteem and body image issues, lived through the ordeal of an eating disorder, and is now in recovery.
- Some great speakers, from personal experience of listening to them share in Los Angeles, California include: Kirsten Haglund, Miss America 2008, Christine Avanti, celebrity nutritionist, noted expert, and bestselling author of “Skinny Chicks Don’t Salads”, Bridget Loves, founder and executive director of Fed Up Inc., a grassroots organization educating young people to shift cultural focus from diets and negative body image to healthy living at every size, Carolyn Costin, founder and executive director of Monte Nido Eating Disorder Treatment Center, and Nadia Siswanto, LMFT who specializes with the Eating Disordered population.
- All individuals mentioned above are generous enough to donate their time guest speaking on the prevalent issues of self-esteem, body image, and healthy living per request. Their information is available via the internet.

Session 7

- If the group facilitator is unable to bring in a guest speaker to discuss their personal struggle with body image and self-esteem, the following is an alternate activity for Session 7 (or any other session if you wish).
- Lesson 8: Objective- to encourage group members to identify and affirm their personal strengths and to use affirmations and visualizations to achieve desired change.

Session 7

- Procedure- the group facilitator explains to members that affirmations are positive statements people make to and for themselves or others. The group discusses real-life examples of how negative “self-talk” bring negative results such as harming one’s self-esteem, and how affirming oneself has positive results and ultimately have the potential of enhancing one’s self-esteem.
- Group members are asked to make lists of five to ten (ten is recommended) **realistic** goal statements. Some examples include:
 1. I will get more things accomplished.
 2. I will be friendly to myself.
 3. I will value and love myself.
 4. I will take care of my body.

Session 7

- Group leader should post the following equation up on a board while members are working on this activity:
POSTIVE SELF-TALK + IMAGINING + REAL PRACTICE = PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF DESIRED GOAL
- Following this, on pieces of small cut paper (the size of index cards or smaller is fine), members are to write affirmations using their goal statements. Group Leader is to inform members, affirmations are **positive, first-person, present tense, action** statements, such as:
 1. I am a motivated person, and I finish what I start and I do it well!
 2. It is like me to be warm and friendly to myself, and I know others respect me for me!
 3. I am a valuable, loveable person, and I succeed in what I do!
 4. I am a person who values my body, and I am going to treat it well by eating healthy and exercising because I deserve it!

Session 7

- Group members are instructed to read their affirmations to the group.
- Group Leader is to encourage members to state affirmations with much emotion and passion.
- Members will decide whether or not they have the real skills required to achieve the desired end result of the affirmations. If not, the group brainstorms ways to obtain and practice the needed real skills. When members are certain they have the necessary real skills and plan to actually practice, the facilitator explores with the group on the significance of practicing in the imagination.
- Group facilitator is to instruct group members to take the affirmation pieces/cards home and to say it to themselves at least twenty times daily.
- Group members are to be reminded to practice the real skills needed to achieve the desired end and to visualize themselves successfully doing the selected behavior.
- Members should be encouraged to keep affirmations posted in near-sight around their room as a reminder, such as on walls, desktops, closet doors, and mirrors.

Session 8

- Group Leader to show Christina Aguilera's music video for hit track "Beautiful" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAfyFTzZDMM&ob=av2e>
- Spend a few minutes to explore and discuss with members their feelings, thoughts, and reactions to the video and what they believe the significant "message" is.

Session 8

- While playing the song in the background, participants are to write “Love Letters” to themselves. Mention letters are to come from a place of self-love, non-judgment, acceptance, and utter appreciation of one’s self, character, personality traits, and physical body.
- The purpose behind this activity is to allow each person to see her body and her whole self from the perspective of a profoundly honoring and attentive lover.
- Direct the participants that the letters should be written from a place of confidence and truth, not arrogance or conceit.
- Ask those who are comfortable with sharing, to read aloud to the group.
- Encourage participants to keep letters in a safe place and read it from time to time.

Session 8

- As a recap and final activity of this psychoeducational workshop group, Group Leader is to hand out worksheet 10: “10 Steps to Improving Body Image”.
- As the group is seated in a circle, ask each participant to read one step. When they have finished reading a step, ask members to reflect back on the previous sessions and state **in their own words** one meaningful thing they have learned from this workshop and can carry with them where ever they go and pass on to others in the community.
- Go around the circle until everyone has expressed something important to them that they have gained from group.