

Chapter 1

Body image and self-esteem

A significant element in building self-esteem among young people is to encourage them to feel positive about the way they look. This chapter focuses on self-esteem and feeling good about ourselves. The activities may stand alone, or be used at the beginning or end of a lesson or series of lessons.

Activity 1: Feeling Good about Myself

Learning Objective:

To build self-esteem.

Age Range:

Ages 7–16 (ensure the sentence stems are appropriate for the age group you are working with)

Notes for the Educator:

The activity requires some trust to have built and respects what is said. You will need to have appropriate qualifications, like:

‘Oh, I can’t do anything, you know me.’

‘My ugly mouth.’

‘I can’t think of anything.’

Repeat the instruction, feed the student with a sentence without the ‘sometimes’, ‘quite’

Method:

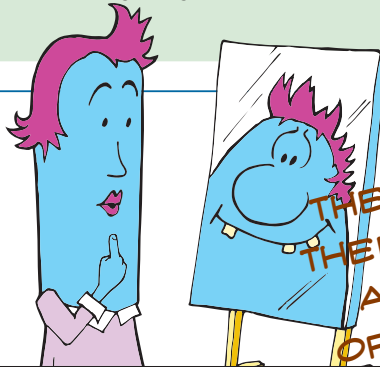
At the start of a lesson, have the group sit in a circle and read the sentence stems:

- One thing I really like about me is . . .
- My favourite way to spend a Saturday is . . .
- One good thing that happened to me since I last met was . . .

Or at the end of a session, have the group sit in a circle and read the sentence stems:

- One thing I really enjoyed about this session was . . .
- Something I am looking forward to this week is . . .

You can probably think of many other sentence stems.



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Activity 8: What is Normal?

Lesson Objective:

To explore body image as projected by celebrities and the potential impact of this on young people.

Age Range:

Ages 11–16

Materials Needed:

- Large sheets of paper.
- Felt-tip pens.
- Post-it notes or cards.

Method:

Have students work in groups of four or five. Assign each group a different type of celebrity, eg:

- actors or actresses
- sports personalities
- pop stars
- fashion models
- television presenters

Give each group several Post-it notes or cards and ask them to write on each the name of a different well-known person from their category of celebrity. When they have had time to do this, ask each group to pass their notes or cards on to the next group.

Distribute a large sheet of paper and a felt-tip pen to each group and ask students to divide the sheet into three columns, labelled ‘thin’, ‘normal’ and ‘overweight’. Ask students to look at the names on the notes received from another group and decide in which column they would place each person named.

When groups have completed this task, have them discuss:

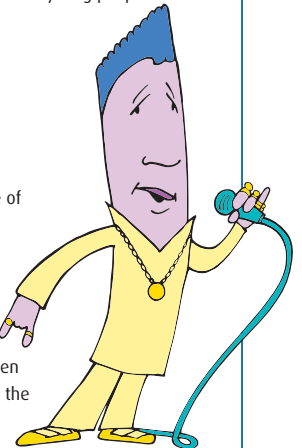
- which columns have most names
- whether they can think of any people in that category who could be put in the other columns
- why this might be

Bring the class back together and ask for feedback from each group on what they have found and whether it was easy to agree. Raise some of the following questions:

- are there any ‘normal’ celebrities? what is normal?
- are there overweight or disabled celebrities? what are they valued for?
- are celebrities role models for the rest of us?
- what is the impact of celebrity images on young people?

Review:

Finish with a round of ‘The celebrity I’d like to be like is . . . because . . .’



Students aged 12–13 who were overweight were more likely than other students to say they were afraid to go to school because of bullying.

(Schools Health Education Unit Newsletter, February 2006)²