

# BODY IMAGE

Information & Interactive Activities

*Who Defines  
Beauty?*

*Every Body is  
Different!*

*Bodies come in  
different shapes  
& sizes.*

Promote Healthy Body Image

Tool Kit 2012



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## Introduction

This resource aims to provide information and interactive activities to promote the development of a healthy body image.

**Body Image** is the mental picture you have of your body. It includes attitudes and feelings about how you look & how you think other people see you.

### **People with HEALTHY *Body Image*...**

- Accept bodies come in different shapes and sizes.
- Know there are good things about their bodies.
- Are comfortable with their bodies.
- Are critical of the 'ideal' body seen in the media.

### **People with UNHEALTHY *Body Image*...**

- May think a lot about how they see themselves or how they think others see them
- May be uncomfortable with their bodies.

Body image is influenced by many things including: family, friends, society, media and so forth. The **media** shows people in ways that set impossible standards. Tricks like makeup, photoshop, & airbrushing make celebrities seem more flawless than they are!

**Eating Disorders** are often a coping strategy for other problems. Eating disorders are usually characterized by an intense fear of gaining weight as well as emotional, social & physical difficulties.

A special thanks to Nancy Guy for volunteering her time to help develop Body Image resources.



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## Me

- I am the only ME I've got and I am unique. There are two major parts of ME. There is the inside ME and the outside ME.
- The outside ME is what you see: the way I act, the image I portray, the way I look and the things I do.
- The outside ME is very important. It is my messenger to the world and much of my outside ME is what communicates with you. I value what I have done, the way I look, and what I share with you.
- The inside ME knows all my feelings, my secret ideas, and my many hopes and dreams. Sometimes, I let you know a little bit about the inside ME and the more I learn about myself, the more responsibility I am going to take.
- You see my ME is my responsibility. As I know myself more and more, I find out that I am an OK person.
- I have some good things in my life because I am a good person. I have accomplished some things in my life because I am a competent person. I know some special people because I am worth knowing. I celebrate the many things I have done for myself.
- I've also made some mistakes. I can learn from them. I have also known some people who did not appreciate me. They're missing out on knowing a great person. I've wasted some precious time. I can start to make new choices now. As long as I can feel, think, grow, and behave, I have great possibility.
- I'm going to take those risks and those possibilities, and I am going to grow and love and celebrate. I AM WORTH IT!

*Source: "Everybody is a Somebody", The Body Image Project Tool Kit, The Eating Disorders Action Group*

## ACTIVITY 1

### Scavenger Hunt (Icebreaker)

**Find someone who...**

- Has a younger sibling
- Can speak a language other than English
- Has been outside of Canada
- Wants to be a teacher when they grow up
- Enjoys math class
- Is wearing white socks
- Has braces
- tofu
- Wears glasses
- Has a food allergy
- Can play the guitar
- Has a dog
- Wants to have children eventually
- Plays basketball
- Enjoys video games
- Has tried

Has a younger sibling	Can speak a language other than English	Has been outside of Canada
Wants to be a teacher when they grow up	Enjoys math class	Is wearing white socks
Has braces	Wears glasses	Has a food allergy
Can play the guitar	Has a dog	Wants to have children eventually
Plays basketball	Enjoys video games	Has tried tofu

## ACTIVITY 2

### How's Your Body Image?

Yes No

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Do you find yourself obsessing about your body?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Do you ever put off activities or relationships until you are a certain size?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Would losing or gaining weight make you feel like you were a better person?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Do you see certain foods as “good” or “bad”?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Do you feel guilty after you eat?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Do you feel uncomfortable in your body?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Have you used unhealthy ways to gain or lose weight?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Do you feel like you can only be happy if you are a certain size?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Do you find yourself thinking negatively about your body?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Do you think changing part of your body would make parts of your life better?



### How Did You Score?

If you answered “yes” to less than four of these questions – Congratulations! You have a healthy body image. Keep up the good work!

If you answered “yes” to more than four of these questions – You know you don’t totally accept and respect your body already...so how do you change that? Read on!

Source: *The Body Image Project Tool Kit pg.55; by the Eating Disorders Action Group*  
[www.edag.ca](http://www.edag.ca)

## ACTIVITY 3

### Body Expression!

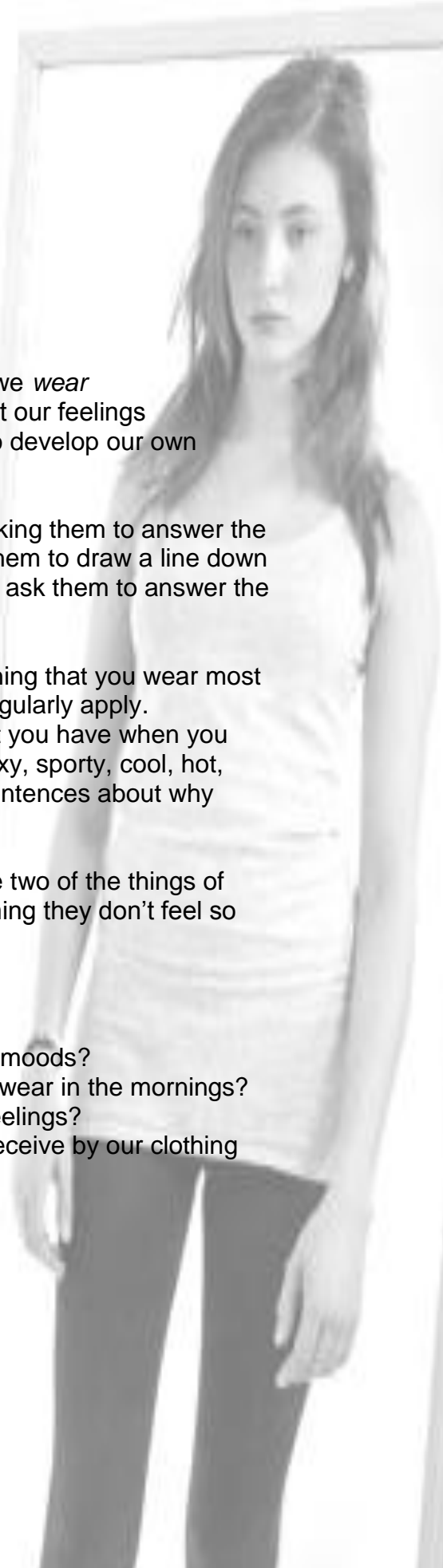
#### Materials:

- Paper
- Pens

#### Instructions:

1. Open up activity by making the following statements:
  - a. what we *wear* can affect how we *feel*
  - b. what we *feel* can affect our decisions about what we *wear*
  - c. other people's opinions to what we wear can affect our feelings
  - d. it is normal to experiment with different fashions to develop our own personal style
2. Pass out paper and pens. Explain that you will be asking them to answer the questions individually followed by a discussion. Ask them to draw a line down the middle of their paper to make two columns. Then, ask them to answer the following questions complete the following tasks:
  - a. In the first column, list five outfits or pieces of clothing that you wear most often. Also list the makeup and jewelry that you regularly apply.
  - b. In the second column, write down the feelings that you have when you wear these outfits (ex. Cute, attractive, preppy, sexy, sporty, cool, hot, ugly, fat, skinny, curvy, comfy, etc). Write a few sentences about why these clothes make you feel that way.
3. Go around the circle and ask the participants to share two of the things of their list; one thing they feel good wearing, and one thing they don't feel so good wearing.
4. Lead a discussion on:
  - a. How can mood affect clothing choice?
  - b. How can certain types of clothing relate to certain moods?
  - c. What makes it easier or harder to choose what to wear in the mornings?
  - d. What affects how we feel? – Our clothing or our feelings?
  - e. Be aware of the messages we wish to send and receive by our clothing choices.

Source: Adapted from © One Circle Foundation,  
Body Image Program (Revised 2009)



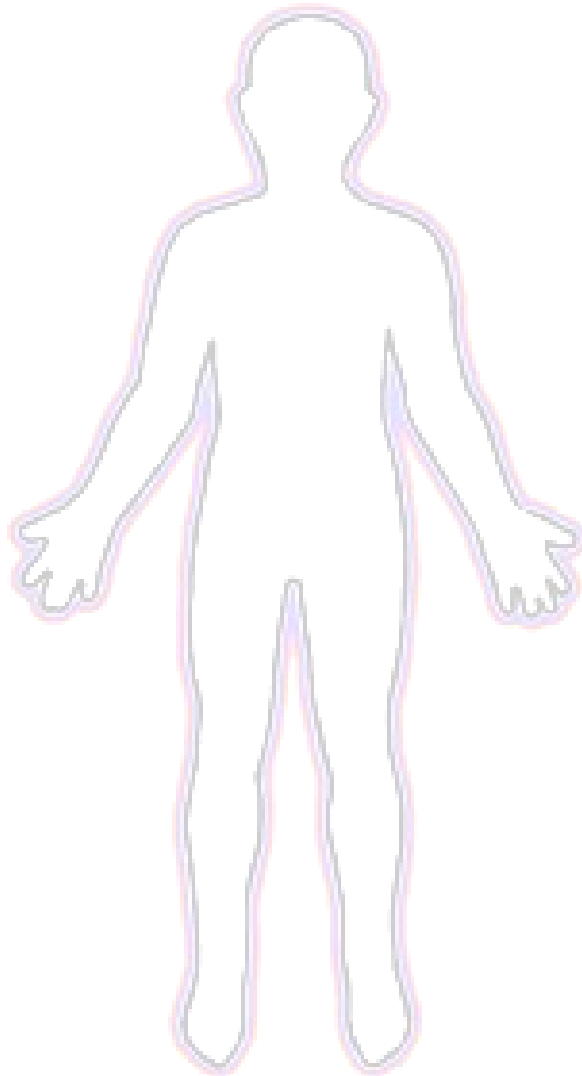


## ACTIVITY 4

### What Makes an Ideal Body?

#### Discussion & Brainstorming Activity

- Ask students to tell you some names of individuals (both male and female) who exemplify the “ideal” (looking) man & woman.
- Using a blank silhouette for both the male and female ideal, fill in some general characteristics as to ideal race, height, hair colour, body shape, etc.
- Background information - between the 1970’s and 1980’s the cultural body ideal reduced by 23% while the average size of women increased by 4%. It’s no wonder we feel so bad about ourselves.



## Activity 5

### Celebrate Your Unique Qualities

#### *Purpose*

This introductory activity is designed to help participants recognize that people are different in many ways, including physically. Some of these differences can be changed by our conscious actions and efforts, while others are outside of our ability to change. Changes in our physical traits during growth and maturation (especially during puberty) are natural, inevitable, and beyond our control. We need to focus on accepting others and ourselves and being the best that we can be, including maintaining our health.

#### *Materials needed*

- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Marker board, easel and pad, or other large writing surface or masking tape to attach papers to the wall

#### *Suggested delivery format*

This activity is meant to be a discussion. A group discussion is suggested, but small groups may be used where applicable. Efforts should be made to engage as many participants as possible in the discussion while being sure to cover the key points.

#### *Objectives*

- List three ways different people are unique from each other.
- Be able to list three differences or similarities between the normal growth and development of boys and girls.
- List three things they can do that will promote acceptance and appreciation of unique qualities in others and within themselves.

#### Discussion Outline

In what ways are people different from each other?

A. List three to five ways that people are different. Write responses on the board or paper. Possibilities are:

1. Different heights.
2. Different weights.
3. Different body builds (slender, muscular, etc.).
4. Different complexions.
5. Different hair colors/types (straight, curly, etc.).
6. Different eye colors.
7. Different preferences.
8. Different likes/dislikes.
9. Different abilities (some of us are good in math, some in writing, some in art, some in sports, some in music, etc.).

10. Different interests.

B. Some things we can change through effort (by studying, practicing, etc.).

C. Some things we can't change, even if we want to (height, eye color, etc.).

D. Some things will change naturally over time whether we want them to or not (height and weight as we grow, preferences, interests, etc.).

List three things that you are good at. Of these, what are you best at?

A. Ask volunteers to list their No. 1 item on the board or pad.

B. Discuss that everyone has his or her strengths (and weaknesses).

C. A person's strengths and weaknesses are part of what defines them as a person (these are among their unique qualities).

D. One thing that makes the world interesting is that everyone has his or her own set of unique qualities.

Just as with other traits, each of us grows, develops, and matures at different rates.

### **Normal physical growth and development:**

1. Involves rapid changes in height, weight, and weight distribution.

In girls:

- Begins earlier than in boys.
- Usually begins between 10.5 and 11.5 years (but may be as early as 8 or 9 and as late as 12 or older).
- Full physical growth/development is usually reached by age 15.5.
- Maturation often accompanies a drop-off in physical activity.

In boys:

- Usually begins between 11 and 13.5 years.
- Full physical development is usually reached by age 16 or 17.
- Is accompanied by a dramatic increase in muscle and strength.
- Early physical maturity gives a great advantage in sports.

Normal physical growth and development is often accompanied by substantial increases in appetite.

Healthy growth and physical development depend on a healthy diet that satisfies your hunger (but not dieting). The word "diet" does not always mean losing weight. It also means the usual food and drink that a person consumes, so a "healthy diet" is just another way of saying good nutrition.

Normal growth and physical development require increased amounts of calories. Restriction of calories or nutrients during growth and maturation may lead to growth problems or even health problems later in life.

Normal physical growth and development requires regular, enjoyable physical activity.

### **We will be most satisfied with our growth and development if we:**

- Recognize that we are all different physically (just as we are different in many other ways).
  - We each naturally have a certain body type, and that is OK.
  - Body type (build) is largely hereditary.
  - Physical fitness is a factor that is within our control.
- Our No. 1 priority should be to stay healthy.
- Recognize that change is unavoidable and is OK.
- Accept others for who they are and not how they look. This is the first step in respect. Showing respect for others will help earn their respect for you.

### Take-home message

All of us are different in many ways, both physically and in terms of ability. Some of these qualities are within our power to influence, while others are out of our control. Each of us should focus on staying healthy, being the best we can be, and showing respect for others and their abilities. With maturity comes the capacity to think about how our actions toward others make them feel. And as we learn to think for ourselves, we are better able to cope with how we perceive that others view us.

### **Selected reference**

Cooper, Kenneth H. (1991). *Kid Fitness: The Complete Shape-Up Program from Birth through High School*. New York: Bantam Books.



Source: Adapted from Purdue Extension. *Healthy Body Image: A lesson plan for high school students*. Accessed online at: [www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/CFS/CFS-737-W.pdf](http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/CFS/CFS-737-W.pdf)

## ACTIVITY 6

### Social Pressure (TV Shows)

(Modified from Girl Time: Grade 7 & 8 Healthy Sexuality Program 2001-2003 by the Ontario Women's Health Council)

#### Materials:

- Paper
- Pens or pencils

1. Distribute paper and pencils.
2. Begin activity by defining social pressure. **Social pressure** is expectations from society to go by their standards and values (ex. obeying laws, going to school). The media delivers messages about our society. They let us keep in touch with events happening in our communities and places around the world. However, sometimes these images and messages are far from reality and can have a negative impact on people.
3. Ask participants to write down examples of their favorite TV shows.
4. Ask/discuss the following questions:
  - a. How are the girls and guys in the TV show portrayed?
  - b. Are the images realistic?
  - c. What are the messages being put across?
  - d. How do these images make you feel?



## ACTIVITY 7

### Magazine Collage!

#### Materials:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue or tape

#### Instructions:

1. Have half the participants create a collage (in groups of 2 or 3) by cutting out magazine photos that portray women/men in a negative way.
2. Have the other half create a 'positive' collage in the same way.
3. Compare and discuss the different messages given by the images.

## **Activity 8**

### **Mixed Messages: Living in a Supersized World**

#### ***Purpose***

This activity is intended to raise teens' awareness about tactics used by advertisers to sell their products and to help teens look critically at the messages these ads convey. In magazines (and other media) frequented by teens, advertising models represent a homogeneous group of body types. Promotion of certain body types in the mass media makes these the ideal that many teens become highly motivated to strive for. By challenging stereotypes presented in popular media advertising, we can help teens recognize that there is no ideal body type. This may help them move in the direction of accepting their own body type and making the best of it.

#### ***Materials needed***

- Pens or pencils
- Copies of Advertising Questionnaire handout
- Flip chart, marker board, or other large writing surface
- Copies of recent magazines that teens are likely to read, One copy of a magazine should be available for each three or four participants.

#### ***Suggested delivery format***

This activity is designed to be a participatory discussion. Goals include raising awareness and deflating the myth of the ideal body type presented in the mass media.

#### ***Objectives***

- Describe the ideal media body image for males and females.
- Describe how media images may be enhanced.
- List three implied messages about body type in advertising.

#### ***Discussion Outline***

Divide into small groups of three or four persons per group. Give each group one copy of a recent issue of a popular magazine for teens and two copies of the ***Advertising Questionnaire handout*** (attached). Ask each group to select two ads in the magazine and to discuss and answer the questions about each ad.

Ask one representative from each group to briefly present their conclusions about one or both of the ads critiqued by their group.

- Advertising models appear either normal weight or thin (rarely overweight or other than tall and lean).
- Often the product and the body type of advertising models are in conflict (i.e.: slim people are eating unhealthy food or healthy-looking people are smoking).
- Advertisers want people to think advertising models look good naturally, however most models rely on heavy makeup and/or computer-enhanced photography to look the way they do in an advertisement.

- Most often advertising models appear to be having fun while using the product.
- Whether the product is healthy or unhealthy, most advertising models appear thin and look as if they are having fun.
- What messages do magazine, TV, and Internet advertisements send to people about body image? Possible responses may include, but are not limited to:
  - It is not OK to be overweight (or even to have a large body frame).
  - It is not OK to be shorter or have a stocky build.
  - Slim people are the norm.
  - There is an ideal body type that is illustrated in advertisements.
  - For women: Like a fashion model.
  - For men: Lean, muscular, athletic.
  - If you want to have fun, achieving the ideal body type should be a goal.
  - Sometimes media messages may be reinforced by peers, friends, parents, family members, teachers, or coaches.

***Challenging the advertising myths. Do you believe there really is an ideal body type? Is it realistic for everyone to try to achieve the look of advertising models?***

Everyone has a specific body type (including models), which is largely inherited. For most people, achieving the appearance of advertising models is not a realistic goal. There is no ideal body type. Ideally, everyone should strive to maintain a healthy weight and strive to be physically fit, whatever their body type.

***Take-home message***

Body images commonly presented in advertising are of lean to normal-weight people who are having fun using products. The ads present stereotypical ideal body images that often cause a person to be dissatisfied with his or her own body and to try to achieve this perceived ideal. In reality, there is no ideal body type. We all need to strive to be physically fit while maintaining our health.

***Selected references***

National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) (2006). *Media Watchdog Program*. [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/p.asp?WebPage\\_ID=300](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/p.asp?WebPage_ID=300)  
 Neumark-Sztainer, D. (2005). *“I’m, Like, So Fat!” Helping Your Teen Make Healthy Choices about Eating and Exercise in a Weight-Obsessed World*. New York: The Guilford Press.





## *Healthy Body Image Advertising Questionnaire*

*Answer each question below for the ad your group is analyzing.*

1. Does the ad include people with a variety of body shapes and sizes?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
  
2. How do the people look in the advertisement? (What is their body type?)
  - A. Normal weight
  - B. Unusually thin
  - C. Overweight
  
3. Do you think people who actually use the product being advertised typically have the body type shown in the advertisement?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
  
4. Do you think the models in the ad naturally look the way they appear or do you think their picture or their appearance has been enhanced in some way?
  - A. This is their natural look.
  - B. The picture (or their appearance) was probably enhanced.
  
5. How would you say the people appear in this ad?
  - A. Happy/having fun
  - B. Unhappy
  - C. Neither happy nor unhappy
  
6. How would you describe the product being advertised?
  - A. Healthy
  - B. Unhealthy
  - C. Neither healthy nor unhealthy

Source: Adapted from Purdue Extension. *Healthy Body Image: A lesson plan for high school students*. Accessed online at: [www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/CFS/CFS-737-W.pdf](http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/CFS/CFS-737-W.pdf)

## ACTIVITY 9

### Who says who is beautiful?

Below are pictures of Titanic actress Kate Winslet. GQ magazine used clever technology to stretch the photograph, thereby giving the illusion of longer legs and a smaller dress size.

List three reasons why you think GQ did this.

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How do you feel about companies doing this?

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Source: Adapted from Dove Real Beauty School Program

## ACTIVITY 10

### Circle of Influence - Body Image Perceptions

1) My (parents, mentor, teacher, etc.) say that overweight people are:

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2) My (parents, mentor, teachers, etc.) say that thin people are:

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3) Boys say overweight girls are:

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4) Boys say thin girls are:

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5) Girls say overweight girls are:

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6) Girls say thin girls are:

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7) I feel \_\_\_\_\_ about my body.

8) If I woke up tomorrow and I was overweight, I would feel:

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9) If I woke up tomorrow and I was thin I would feel:

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## ACTIVITY 11

### Balloon Activity

\*Great for outdoor events, or on a windy day!

#### Materials:

- Package of balloons
- Small pieces of paper
- Pens or pencils

#### Instructions:

1. Have each student write a goal, wish, or dream onto a small piece of paper (about the size of the paper inside of a fortune cookie).
2. Encourage them to write something inspirational for themselves.
3. Roll or fold the paper into small pieces, and insert them into a balloon.
4. Have the students blow up the balloons with the paper inside. Head outside where students can release their balloons into the air, and their dreams into their future!

## ACTIVITY 12

### Warm Fuzzies

#### Materials:

- Colored paper
- Markers or pens
- Tape
- iPod and speakers or CD player

#### Instructions:

1. Tape one piece of paper onto each participant's back and give them a marker (or pen)
2. Turn music on. Have participants mingle and walk around the room until the music stops.
3. When the music stops, have each participant write something positive about other person onto their piece of paper (ex. You have a nice smile; you are in great shape; you are funny).
4. Repeat step 2 until all participants have wrote on every other participant's back
5. Allow them to take off the paper, read, and enjoy!



## ACTIVITY 14

### Ball Toss!

#### **Materials:**

Ball with numbers (or can use the Key messages/Discussion Cards)

This sheet for guidelines

#### **Instructions:**

Have students stand in a wide circle. Have them take turns tossing the ball to one another (or choosing a discussion card). When a student catches the ball, have them identify which number their thumb is closest to. Answer the corresponding question(s):

1. Name a way your family affects your body image.
2. Name a way your friends affect your body image.
3. Say one positive thing about the person to your left.
4. Name one thing about your body that you feel good about and why.
5. What is your favorite TV show? Name one way the actors affect your body image.
6. Who is your role model? Why?
7. Name an accomplishment that you are proud of.
8. Who is your favorite actor? Why?
9. Name a crazy diet that you have heard of.
10. What is your favorite healthy food?
11. What is your favorite way to exercise?

## Key Messages – Discussion Cards

Do you think most real people look like fashion models?	Do “body ideals” change over time?
What makes a healthy body?	What really happens to our bodies when we diet?
What is your favorite way to exercise?	What are fad diets? Do you think they work?
Can healthy bodies come in all shapes & sizes?	What is your favorite healthy food?
Who can make us feel bad about our bodies?	What can make us feel good about our bodies?
What can make us feel bad about our bodies?	Who can make us feel good about our bodies?
Name a way your family affects your body image.	Name a way your friends affects your body image.
Say one positive thing about the person to your left.	Name one thing about your body that you feel good about and why.
What is your favorite TV show? Name one way the actors affect your body image.	Who is your role model? Why?
Name an accomplishment that you are proud of.	Who is your favorite actor? Why?
Enjoy eating well, being active & feeling good about yourself.	Name a crazy diet.

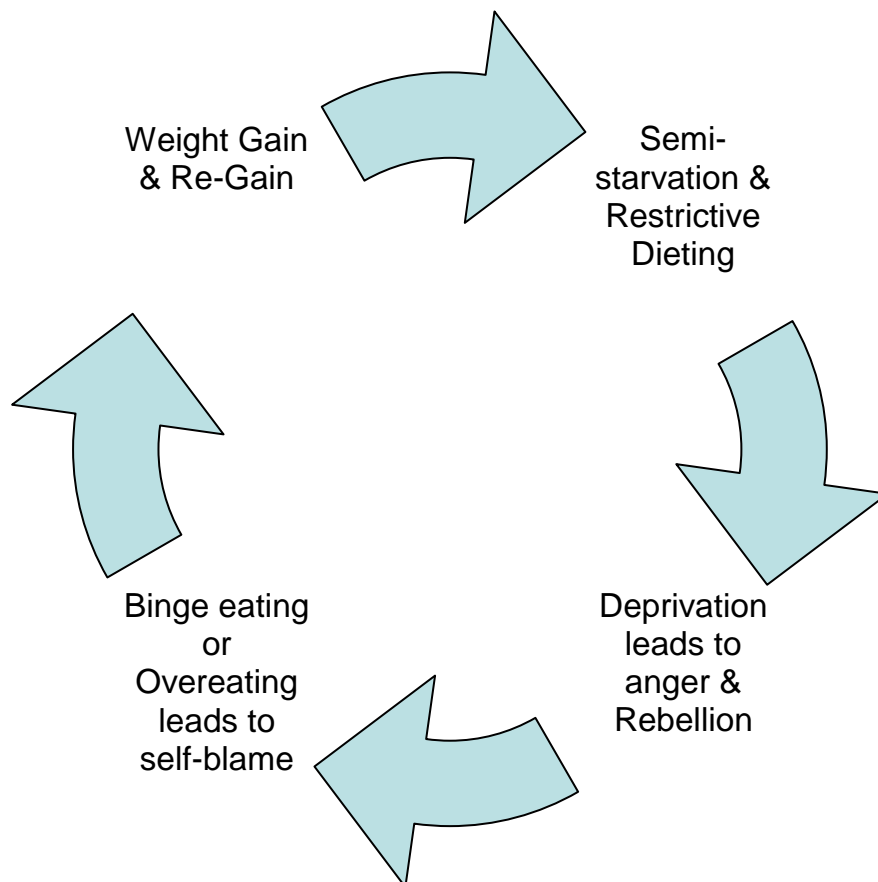


## ACTIVITY 15

### The Diet Tray – Dispelling Myths Discussion

#### Instructions:

1. In a large group or divide participants into smaller groups to discuss the following questions:
  - a. Do diets make us fat?
  - b. Why do we diet?
  - c. Is low fat eating the same as healthy eating?
  - d. What is the Diet Trap?
  - e. What really happens to our bodies when we diet?
2. Use the Why We Diet and What Really Happens When We Diet Handouts to guide discussion.



## Why We Diet

WHY WE DIET?	WHAT REALLY HAPPENS?
<b>To be thin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Thinness is temporary. Over the long run, 95% of dieters regain the weight. Many get fatter, so they diet again, with the same results. This is called diet cycling, and can lead to obesity.</li> </ul>
<b>To be healthier</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Diet cycling increases health risks more than being overweight, even if there is no overall weight gain</li> <li>▶ There is evidence that being plump is healthy and that being too slim is unhealthy.</li> <li>▶ Most dieting decreases our muscle mass.</li> <li>▶ What is health? Is it having a thin body, or is it having the energy to deal with life and reach our goals?</li> </ul>
<b>To be happier</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 95% of all diets fail. Does failure make people happy?</li> <li>▶ Your body and mind don't run well when you restrict calories. Dieting makes you feel moodier, irritable, and makes you obsessed with food. This feels like failure, but in fact it is a physiological response and has nothing to do with will power. So dieting certainly can affect your happiness – it can make you unhappy.</li> </ul>
<b>To fit in</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Many diets oblige you to eat different foods than everyone else.</li> <li>▶ If you are tired from dieting you can't participate in activities with your friends.</li> </ul>
<b>To be more attractive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What attracts you to someone? Do you want your boy/girl friends to like you for your body or for yourself? What are long-term relationships based on? If you are dieting, are you fun to be around?</li> </ul>
<b>To be better at sports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Your body isn't working at its peak, and you are losing muscle mass. Your mental awareness is diminished. How does this improve your sport?</li> </ul>

Source: *The Body Image Project Tool Kit*, pg. 59, *The Eating Disorders Action Group*  
[www.edag.ca](http://www.edag.ca)

## What Really Happens When We Diet?

HOW DO WE DIET?	WHAT REALLY HAPPENS?
<b>Skipping meals or eating less calories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ This lowers our metabolism so we store fat more easily from fewer calories</li> <li>▶ The brain's and muscles' demand for fuel causes "munchies," usually for high fat, high calorie food.</li> <li>▶ Poor attention span, irritability, fatigue</li> <li>▶ Muscle mass may be lost</li> </ul>
<b>Cutting out starchy food</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Your body loses its best source of stable energy and you will be more likely to feel moody and tired</li> </ul>
<b>Cutting out protein</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ May risk iron deficiency which leads to fatigue</li> <li>▶ Energy from meals may not last as long, causing more hunger between meals for high fat, high sugar foods</li> </ul>
<b>Going on commercial diet plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Diets don't work – You have a 95% chance of regaining any weight you lose within 1 to 2 years</li> <li>▶ You give away control to the plan, which lowers you self esteem</li> <li>▶ You lose muscle mass which lowers your metabolism, making it easier to store fat on fewer calories</li> <li>▶ Habits are replaced temporarily, not changed permanently</li> <li>▶ Often expensive</li> </ul>
<b>Fasting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Most of the weight loss is water</li> <li>▶ Muscle mass decreases which lowers metabolism, resulting in subsequent fat gain</li> <li>▶ Can be medically dangerous</li> </ul>

Source: *The Body Image Project Tool Kit. Page 58. By: The Eating Disorders Action Group*  
[www.edag.ca](http://www.edag.ca)

## ACTIVITY 16

### The Body Image Thing...Individual Goal Setting Activity

As a result of today's session

One thing I will try to do is...

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One thing I will try to stop doing is...

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## Activity 17

### Music – Song Lyrics

**Purpose:** To analyze the meaning of song lyrics. Music has a significant influence on teens.

**Materials:** Printed copies of Song Lyrics (some samples provided but need to find other relevant song lyrics)  
Flip chart, marker board, or other large writing surface

**Instructions:**

- Divide participants into small groups and give each group a copy of song lyrics.
- Ask each group to review the song lyrics and discuss the meaning of the lyrics as it relates to body image.
- Get each group to present back on the song they reviewed and discuss as a large group. Exploring the various body image themes found in the lyrics.



## *I am - Hilary Duff*

*I'm an angel, I'm a devil  
I am sometimes in between  
I'm as bad as it can get  
And good as it can be  
Sometimes I'm a million colors  
Sometimes I'm black and white  
I am all extremes  
Try to figure me out you never can  
There's so many things I am*

*I am special, I am beautiful  
I am wonderful and powerful  
Unstoppable  
Sometimes I'm miserable, sometimes I'm pitiful  
But that's so typical of all the things I am*

*I'm someone filled with self-belief  
I'm haunted by self-doubt  
I've got all the answers I've got nothing figured out  
I like to be by myself, I hate to be alone  
I'm up and I am down  
But that's part of the thrill, part of the plan  
Part of all of the things I am*

*I am special, I am beautiful  
I am wonderful and powerful  
Unstoppable  
Sometimes I'm miserable  
Sometimes I'm pitiful  
But that's so typical of all the things I am*

*I'm a million contradictions  
Sometimes I make no sense  
Sometimes I'm perfect, sometimes I'm a mess  
Sometimes I'm not sure who I am*

*But I am special, I am beautiful  
I am wonderful and powerful  
Unstoppable  
Sometimes I'm miserable, sometimes I'm pitiful  
But that's so typical of all the things I am.*

## **Christina Aguilera "Beautiful"**

*Don't look at me*

*Every day is so wonderful  
And suddenly it's hard to breathe  
Now and then I get insecure  
From all the pain, feel so ashamed*

*I am beautiful no matter what they say  
Words can't bring me down  
I am beautiful in every single way  
Yes, words can't bring me down, oh no  
So don't you bring me down today*

*To all your friends you're delirious  
So consumed in all your doom  
Tryin' hard to fill the emptiness, the piece is gone  
Left the puzzle undone, ain't that the way it is?*

*'Cause you are beautiful no matter what they say  
Words can't bring you down, oh no  
You are beautiful in every single way  
Yes, words can't bring you down, oh no  
So don't you bring me down today*

*No matter what we do  
No matter what we do  
No matter what we say)  
No matter what we say  
(We're the song that's outta tune)  
(Full of beautiful mistakes)*

*(And everywhere we go)  
And everywhere we go  
(The sun will always shine)  
The sun will always, always shine!  
(But tomorrow we might awake on the other side)*

*'Cause we are beautiful no matter what they say  
Yes, words won't bring us down, oh no  
We are beautiful in every single way  
Yes, words can't bring us down, oh no  
So don't you bring me down today*

*Don't you bring me down today  
Don't you bring me down today*

## **Lady Gaga “Born This Way”**

*It doesn't matter if you love him or capital H-I-M  
Just put your paws up  
'Cause you were born this way, baby*

*My mama told me when I was young  
We are all born superstars  
She rolled my hair and put my lipstick on  
In the glass of her boudoir*

*There's nothin' wrong with lovin' who you are  
She said, 'cause He made you perfect, babe  
So hold your head up, girl and you you'll go far  
Listen to me when I say*

*I'm beautiful in my way  
'Cause God makes no mistakes  
I'm on the right track, baby  
I was born this way*

*Don't hide yourself in regret  
Just love yourself and you're set  
I'm on the right track, baby  
I was born this way, born this way*

*Ooh, there ain't no other way, baby, I was born this way  
Baby, I was born this way  
Ooh, there ain't no other way, baby, I was born this way  
I'm on the right track, baby, I was born this way*

*Don't be a drag, just be a queen  
Don't be a drag, just be a queen  
Don't be a drag, just be a queen  
Don't be*

*Give yourself prudence and love your friends  
Subway kid, rejoice of truth  
In the religion of the insecure  
I must be myself, respect my youth  
A different lover is not a sin  
Believe capital H-I-M  
I love my life, I love this record and  
Mi amore vole fe yah*

*I'm beautiful in my way,  
'Cause God makes no mistakes  
I'm on the right track, baby  
I was born this way  
Don't hide yourself in regret,  
Just love yourself and you're set*



*I'm on the right track, baby  
I was born this way*

*Ooh, there ain't no other way, baby, I was born this way  
Baby, I was born this way  
Ooh, there ain't no other way, baby, I was born this way  
I'm on the right track, baby, I was born this way*

*Don't be drag, just be a queen  
Whether you're broke or evergreen  
You're black, white, beige, chola descent  
You're Lebanese, you're orient*

*Whether life's disabilities  
Left you outcast, bullied or teased  
Rejoice and love yourself today  
'Cause baby, you were born this way*

*No matter gay, straight or bi  
Lesbian, transgendered life  
I'm on the right track, baby  
I was born to survive*

*No matter black, white or beige  
Chola or orient made  
I'm on the right track, baby  
I was born to be brave*

*I'm beautiful in my way  
'Cause God makes no mistakes  
I'm on the right track, baby  
I was born this way*

*Don't hide yourself in regret,  
Just love yourself and you're set  
I'm on the right track, baby  
I was born this way, yeah*

*Ooh, there ain't no other way, baby, I was born this way  
Baby, I was born this way  
Ooh, there ain't no other way, baby, I was born this way  
I'm on the right track, baby, I was born this way*

*I was born this way, hey  
I was born this way, hey  
I'm on the right track, baby, I was born this way, hey  
I was born this way, hey  
I was born this way, hey  
I'm on the right track, baby, I was born this way, hey*

[www.bornthiswayfoundation.org](http://www.bornthiswayfoundation.org)

## TLC “Unpretty”

*I wish I could tie you up in my shoes make you feel unpretty too  
I was told I was beautiful but what does that mean to you?  
Look into the mirror who's inside there the one with the long hair  
Same old me again today, yeah*

*My outsides look cool, my insides are blue  
Every time I think I'm through it's because of you  
I've tried different ways but it's all the same  
At the end of the day I have myself to blame  
I'm just trippin'*

*You can buy your hair if it won't grow  
You can fix your nose if you say so  
You can buy all the make up that M.A.C. can make  
But if you can look inside you, find out who am I too*

*Be in a position to make me feel so damn unpretty  
Yeah, I'll make you feel unpretty too*

*Never insecure until I met you, now I'm bein' stupid  
I used to be so cute to me, just a little bit skinny  
Why do I look to all these things? To keep you happy  
Maybe get rid of you and then I'll get back to me, hey*

*My outsides look cool, my insides are blue  
Every time I think I'm through it's because of you  
I've tried different ways but it's all the same  
At the end of the day I have myself to blame*

*People trippin'*

*You can buy your hair if it won't grow  
You can fix your nose if you say so  
You can buy all the make up that M.A.C. can make  
But if you can look inside you, find out who am I too  
Be in a position to make me feel so damn unpretty*

*You can buy your hair if it won't grow  
You can fix your nose if you say so  
You can buy all the make up that M.A.C. can make  
But if you can look inside you, find out who am I too  
Be in a position to make me feel so damn unpretty*

*I'll make you feel unpretty too  
I'll make you feel unpretty*

*You can buy your hair if it won't grow  
You can fix your nose if you say so  
You can buy all the make up that M.A.C. can make*

*But if you can look inside you find out who am I too  
Be in a position to make me feel so damn unpretty*

*You can buy your hair if it won't grow  
You can buy all the make up that M.A.C. can make  
But if you can look inside you  
Be in a position to make me feel so*

*You can buy your hair if it won't grow*

## **P!NK “Perfect”**

*Made a wrong turn  
Once or twice  
Dug my way out  
Blood and fire  
Bad decisions  
That's alright  
Welcome to my silly life  
Mistreated, misplaced, misunderstood  
Miss “no way it's all good”  
It didn't slow me down  
Mistaken  
Always second guessing  
Underestimated  
Look, I'm still around...*

*Pretty, pretty please  
Don't you ever, ever feel  
Like your less than  
Less than perfect  
Pretty, pretty please  
If you ever, ever feel  
Like your nothing  
You are perfect to me*

*You're so mean  
When you talk  
About yourself  
You are wrong  
Change the voices  
In your head  
Make them like you  
Instead  
So complicated  
Look how big you'll make it  
Filled with so much hatred  
Such a tired game  
It's enough  
I've done all i can think of  
Chased down all my demons  
see you same*

Source: LYBIO.net

*Pretty, pretty please  
Don't you ever, ever feel  
Like your less than  
Less than perfect  
Pretty, pretty please  
If you ever, ever feel*

*Like your nothing  
You are perfect to me*

*The world stares while i swallow the fear  
The only thing i should be drinking is an ice cold beer  
So cool in lying and I tried tried  
But we try too hard, it's a waste of my time  
Done looking for the critics, cuz they're everywhere  
They don't like my jeans, they don't get my hair  
Stringe ourselves and we do it all the time  
Why do we do that?  
Why do I do that?  
Why do I do that?*

*Yeah,  
Ooh, oh, pretty pretty pretty,  
Pretty pretty please don't you ever ever feel  
Like you're less then, less than perfect  
Pretty pretty please if you ever ever feel  
Like you're nothing you are perfect, to me  
You're perfect  
You're perfect  
Pretty, pretty please don't you ever ever feel like you're less then, less  
than perfect  
Pretty, pretty please if you ever ever feel like you're nothing you are  
perfect to me*

## **Ani Difranco “32 Flavors”**

*Squint your eyes and look closer  
I'm not between you and your ambition  
I am a poster girl with no poster  
I am thirty-two flavors and then some  
and I'm beyond your peripheral vision  
so you might want to turn your head  
cause someday you're going to get hungry  
and eat most of the words you just said*

*both my parents taught me about good will  
and I have done well by their names  
just the kindness I've lavished on strangers  
is more than I can explain  
still there's many who've turned out their porch lights  
just so I would think they were not home  
and hid in the dark of their windows  
til I'd passed and left them alone*

*and god help you if you are an ugly girl  
course too pretty is also your doom  
cause everyone harbors a secret hatred  
for the prettiest girl in the room  
and god help you if you are a phoenix  
and you dare to rise up from the ash  
a thousand eyes will smolder with jealousy  
while you are just flying back*

*I'm not trying to give my life meaning  
by demeaning you  
and I would like to state for the record  
I did everything that I could do  
I'm not saying that I'm a saint  
I just don't want to live that way  
no, I will never be a saint  
but I will always say*

*squint your eyes and look closer  
I'm not between you and your ambition  
I am a poster girl with no poster  
I am thirty-two flavors and then some  
And I'm beyond your peripheral vision  
So you might want to turn your head  
Cause someday you might find you're starving  
and eating all of the words you said*



CANADA'S CENTRE  
FOR DIGITAL AND  
MEDIA LITERACY

## Body Image Lesson Plans

[www.mediasmarts.ca](http://www.mediasmarts.ca)

### [Advertising and Male Violence - Lesson](#)

To make students aware of the ways in which male violence is used and promoted in advertising.

### [Gender Stereotypes and Body Image - Lesson](#)

These lessons are an adaptation of Grade 8 lessons from the Curriculum Healthy Relationships, by Men For Change, Halifax, Nova Scotia, a 53-activity, three-year curriculum designed for teens.

### [Image Gap - Lesson](#)

This lesson helps students understand how self-image can influence lifestyle choices.

### [Individuality vs. Conformity - Lesson](#)

Individuality vs. Conformity is part of a three-lesson unit designed to introduce students to the concept of popular culture and the role that it plays in their lives. In this lesson, students examine the pressures that exist to conform to popular culture and its effect on their lives.

### [Kellogg Special K Ads - Lesson](#)

This lesson helps students understand the relationship between body image and marketing by exploring the Kellogg's Special K "look good on your own terms" advertising campaign.

### [Mirror Image - Lesson](#)

In this lesson, students analyze their own body image and consider what they wish they could change.

### [Prejudice and Body Image - Lesson](#)

This lesson lets students take a good look at our society's pressures to conform to standards of beauty - particularly to be thin - and the related prejudice against being "overweight".

### [The Anatomy of Cool - Lesson](#)

This lesson helps students become more aware of the media's role in determining what, and who, are perceived as being cool

### [The Price of Happiness - Lesson](#)

In this lesson students answer a brief questionnaire related to self-image, self-esteem, and advertising, and then work as groups to create and act in mock television commercials that parody advertising techniques.

Source: [www.mediasmarts.ca](http://www.mediasmarts.ca). Information accessed 2012



## Lesson Plan

# Advertising and Male Violence

### Overview

To make students aware of the ways in which male violence is used and promoted in advertising.

### Learning Outcomes

#### Students will demonstrate:

- an awareness of various violent male archetypes that are used in advertising.
- an understanding of the effects of media violence on young men.
- an understanding of the dominance of these violent archetypes in advertising that targets young men.
- an understanding of their own feelings toward these archetypes.

**Level:** Grades 11-12

#### About the Author

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### Preparation and Materials

- Photocopy the handout *Masculinity and Violence in Advertising* for class discussion.
- Ask students to bring male-oriented magazines (such as sports, video game, fitness or skateboard magazines) to class.
- Download or create overhead transparencies from advertisements representing the following themes (or bring similar ads to class)
  - *Attitude is Everything*
  - *The Cave Man Mentality*
  - *Muscles and the Ideal Man*
  - *The New Warriors*
  - *Heroic Masculinity*
- Download or create an overhead transparency of the humorous ad *Get Geared Up*

### The Lesson

#### Guided Discussion:

Perhaps the first question to be asked regarding today's class is "Why should we bother looking at the influence of violence in the media on males?" Obviously, media portrayals of violence affect us all, and female bullies and abusers exist. But statistically, it is males who seem particularly prone to violent action in our society, and because of this, it is worth taking the time to focus on this issue as it specifically relates to men.

Ask students:

- What percentage of violent crime is committed by males? (*Write down a few of their suggestions. The actual figure is close to 90%.*)
- Does this figure surprise you?
- When we look at violence in society, we tend to think of women as victims and men as perpetrators. What percentage of males are victims of violence? (*Nearly 70% of the victims of violent crime are male.*)
- Why isn't more violent crime committed by females? (*Traditionally, society hasn't condoned or reinforced female violent behaviour in the same manner as it has for male violence.*)



The fact is that violent behaviour is typically labelled as "male." This doesn't mean that all men are violent, but it does mean that violent behaviour is associated with masculinity.

Write the saying "Boys will be boys" onto the board. Ask students:

- What does this saying mean to you? (*Traditionally, the process of male socialization has encouraged boys to be aggressive, strong and powerful. When faced with aggressive or violent acts, attitudes such as "Boys will be boys" are one way that male violence is condoned and encouraged by society.*)

One place where this "Boys will be boys" attitude seems to be constantly reinforced is in the media. Although studies have not conclusively proven that media violence is linked to real-life violence, experts agree that constant exposure to violent acts committed by males in the media normalizes male violence, making it appear to be a part of our real-life culture.

- Ask students to brainstorm examples of violence from movies, sports, video games, rock videos and television.

One media influence that is often left out when discussing violence in the media is advertising. Yet many ads use violence to sell products. Just open up any magazine that is geared to teenage boys and you will be bombarded with advertisements that encourage aggression or violence.

- Ask students to list the ways that advertisers use violence to sell products to men. (*Examples might include the use of aggressive athletes or super heroes in threatening poses; ads that encourage physical violence or "attitude" [video game advertisements often use this method]; or ads that prey on men's insecurities in not being big, strong or tough enough.*)

Five advertising themes or archetypes that use and encourage male violence are:

1. Attitude is Everything
  2. The Cave Man Mentality
  3. The New Warriors
  4. Muscles and the "Ideal Man"
  5. Heroic Masculinity
- Ask students what sort of images might be associated with these themes. Distribute and review the handout *Masculinity and Violence in Advertising*. Can students think of other themes to add to this list?
  - Place your advertisement example onto the overhead projector (or distribute your own advertisements). Ask students to identify which archetype or theme these ads represent, and what messages they give to consumers. (Remind them to note how the text of each advertisement also relates to the theme.)

*Attitude is Everything* — These three ads for video games are examples of the ways in which attitude is promoted in advertisements geared towards young men.

- *Attitude Problem?* promotes thumbing your nose at the rules. The message here is that the kids who flaunt the rules are smarter than the adults who make them and therefore, have the right to ignore authority. Attitude is equated with intelligence, and there is a definite "them against us" tone to this ad.
- *Thunder Truck Rally* not only promotes questionable driving habits, but also the concept that "might is right" and that conflict is solved through strong-arm tactics, rather than negotiation.
- *Look Both Ways* is an example of attitude in advertising taken to an extreme level. Playing on the "mean and scary world" syndrome, this advertisement

promotes violent vigilante behaviour as a means of survival.

*The Cave Man Mentality* — These ads feature three masculine icons from popular history. The cowboy, the pirate and the ancient warrior are all examples of violent, rugged manhood that support the premise that man is, historically, an aggressive creature.

- *The Marlboro Man*, that icon of the rugged, solitary male, is meant to suggest that men who smoke Marlboro cigarettes are equally rugged and masculine. With the cowboy icon comes many other (often stereotypical) associations of strength, bravery and 'noble violence' — the lone cowboy using violent behaviour to protect the weak and defenseless (who are usually female).
- Although *The Captain was here* is meant to be a humorous ad, there are disturbing aspects to it. The icon of 'the pirate' is associated with many negative forms of behaviour, and Captain Morgan's leering expression is anything but noble. The words "The Captain was here" written over the model's body, as well as the moustache and beard, support the attitude that women are sexualized objects, to be owned by men.
- *Legacy of Kain* uses the icon of the ancient warrior, with a gothic twist. The text "Revenge" implies that it is right to take justice into your own hands in order to get even with those who have wronged you. This game is based on an "eye-for-an-eye" philosophy, where the protagonist is portrayed as justified and noble in his quest for vengeance. However, the message to young men that "nothing is sweeter than the blood of your enemies," is far from noble.

*The New Warriors* — These ads use sports figures to make consumers associate danger, violence and excitement with the products that are being advertised.

- *Authentic major league fun* uses the rugged image of a baseball player to link masculinity with toughness. Referring to a bruised and cut arm as "major league fun," the ad implies that to play in the major leagues, (even virtual major leagues) you have to be tough enough to take it.
- Nike's *Give Him an Inch and He'll Take Ten Yards* uses a football player to reinforce the importance of aggression in achieving success. On one level, the text: "...increased mobility would come in pretty handy when you find yourself on the field with eleven large, angry men determined to lay waste to your reputation as a clutch performer" does describe the game of football, but it could easily be related to competition in the workplace.
- *Success. It's a Mind Game* uses speed, danger and excitement to promote a product that one might not usually associate with masculinity — a wristwatch.

*Muscles and the Ideal Man* — These ads portray a strong, muscular body with the image of ideal manhood.

- *Work Like Hell. Feel like Heaven* uses the rugged strength associated with construction workers to emphasize the rugged strength of Wolverine boots and shoes.
- *The workout his skin is thirsting for associates* a training regime for the skin with a training regime for the body.
- A *Muscle Mag cover* equates muscles, desirability and sexuality. This cover also reinforces the image of "man as protector" through its positioning of the man and woman.

*Heroic Masculinity* — Is Hollywood's glamorization of male violence. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mel Gibson and Sylvester Stallone are traditional examples of the actors who portray the violent male as an heroic ideal. Much attention has been given recently to a new brand of action hero embodied by actors such as Nicholas Cage or Tom Cruise. These modern heroes are supposed to be smarter and more sensitive

than their predecessors, but they still get their share of mayhem! When deconstructing these advertisements, students should note how facial expressions, text, weaponry and stance are all used to enhance this archetype.

### Activity One

- Divide your class into small groups.
- Using the magazines that have been brought to class, ask students to find examples from each of the five themes that have been discussed.
- In groups, students will deconstruct each advertisement and present their findings to the class.

### Activity Two

Place the transparency of the [Get Geared Up](#) advertisement onto the overhead. (Or select a humorous ad of your own.)

Ask your students to explain how satire is used in this ad. *(This advertisement uses humour to show exaggerated stereotypes of "real men" and "wimps." It's an interesting ad, because it satirizes the traditional concepts of masculinity — note the hats hanging on the antlers, the remotes on the coffee table, etc. — yet the product being sold is worn by the men who are being parodied! The question remains, would you want to get "geared up" to join this world? Perhaps even a satirized version of manhood is better than not being perceived as masculine at all!)*

- Divide your class into five groups and assign each group one of the themes that has been discussed in class.
- Each group is to create a parody advertisement, satirizing their assigned theme.
- Ads can be presented in print format, or they can be acted out.
- Students will present their satirical ads to the rest of the class.

### Activity Three

- Each student will look for an advertisement that promotes a more positive or realistic image of masculinity.
- Students will submit their ads, with a written explanation of why they selected that particular advertisement, to the teacher for evaluation or
- Students can present their ads and explanations orally to the class.

### Activity Four

- Boys can write journal entries regarding the effect that violent masculinity in advertising (or the media in general) has had on their own perceptions of what it takes to be a "real" man.
- Girls can explore this issue in the context of how their expectations of men have been affected by these images.

### Evaluation

- Group ad deconstruction assignment
- Group parody ads
- Individual assignment or presentation
- Journal entries

### Related Lessons

- Exposing Gender Stereotypes
- Learning Gender Stereotypes
- The Impact of Gender Stereotypes

## **Masculinity and Violence in Advertising**

**Violent behaviour for men, including its rewards, is encoded into mainstream advertising in numerous ways. Some common themes are:**

### **Attitude is Everything**

- This theme appears most often in advertising geared towards young men.
- The message of these "attitude" ads links the flaunting of authority to being a rebel — with "attitude" packaged as a cool, desirable male trait.
- Although these advertisements don't necessarily promote violent activities, they encourage "in-your-face" behaviour in teenagers which can easily escalate into real-life violence.
- Taken to its extreme, attitude can also include advertisements that depict a mean and nasty world, where vigilante violence is touted as a means of survival.

### **The Cave Man Mentality**

- The "Cave Man Mentality" is the use of violent male icons or heroes from popular history to demonstrate masculinity in advertisements. Roman centurions, pirates, ancient warriors and even cowboys are used in this context.
- The message of these ads is that men have always been brutal and aggressive, that this is a part of their nature that they cannot change.
- In these ads, advertisers seek to associate the product with manly needs and pursuits that have presumably existed throughout time.
- Another negative aspect of these ads is that they often include dominance of women as a biological fact.

### **The New Warriors**

- "The New Warriors" represent an advertiser's use of military or sports figures to enhance the "manliness" of their products.
- These ads depict uniformed soldiers and players, complete with weapons and gear, to target young boys and adolescent males.
- The message here is that violence is cool, suave and acceptable, as consumers are presented with an adventurous, aggressive and violent image of manhood.
- Usually these figures appear in ads for traditional male products, such as beer, running shoes or deodorant, but they are also used to enhance the masculine appeal of more feminine products such as "lite" beer.

### **Muscles and the "Ideal" Man**

- Throughout this century, a rippling, muscular body has been associated with an image of ideal manhood. Size and strength are traits that are valued by men across class and racial boundaries.
- A muscular man in an advertisement associates dominance and control with the product being sold. Women who appear in such ads are usually depicted in a fawning manner.
- Sports and other magazines with a large male readership are filled with ads for muscle-enhancing products — often equating muscles with violent power.
- Often, images of physically rugged or muscular male bodies are used to sell more abstract forms of power, such as financial institutions or cars.
- A more insidious form of violence that this archetype promotes is self-violence, with men using drugs and extreme exercise in order to attain this "ideal."

### **Heroic Masculinity**

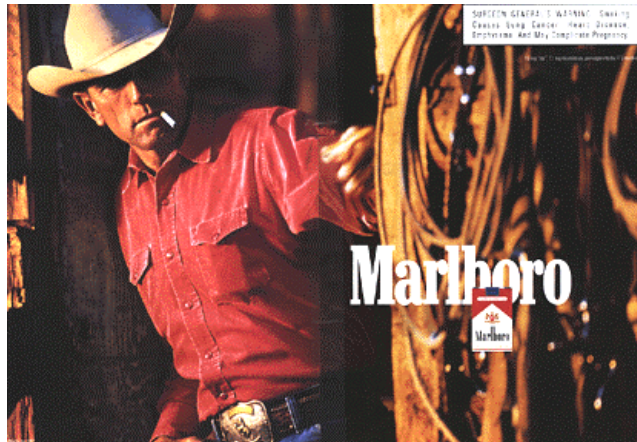
- The equation of heroic masculinity with violent masculinity is a by-product of Hollywood action movie promoters. Often, more people see the advertising for a given film than the film itself, and the highlights used to sell the film often include the movie's most violent and sexually titillating scenes.
- Condensed footage of actors like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone offer viewers, is a glamorized form of violent masculinity.
- Often, in advertisements for these films, guns and other (often futuristic) weapons are used to signify the virility and power of the male characters.

*Source: Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity, by Jackson Katz.*

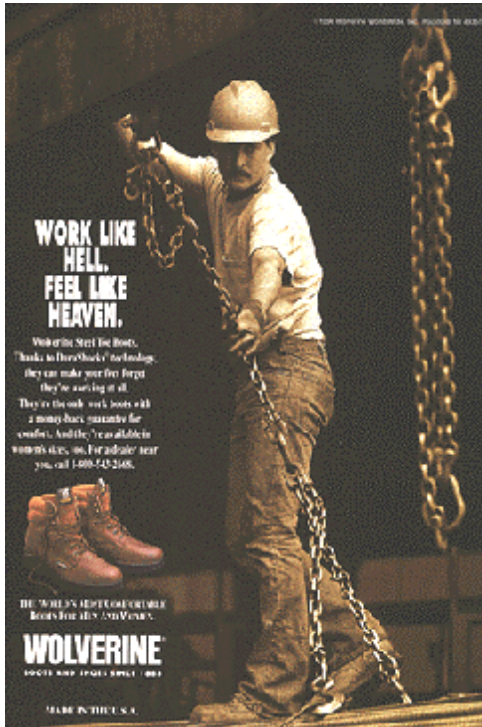


Student Handout #3

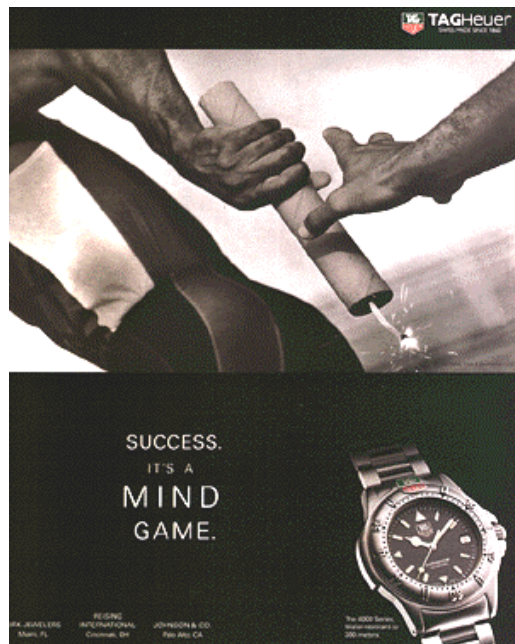
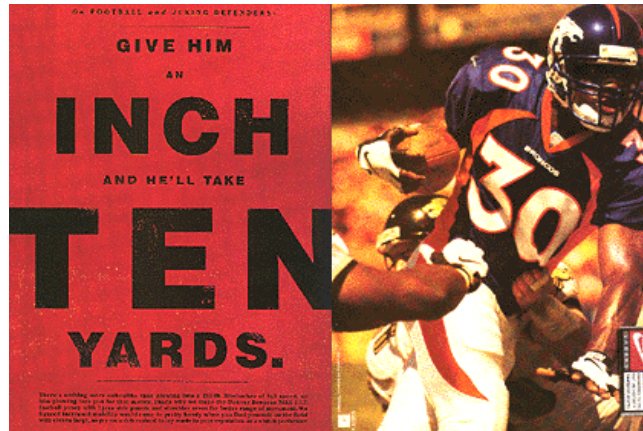
## The Cave Man Mentality



## Muscles and the Ideal Man

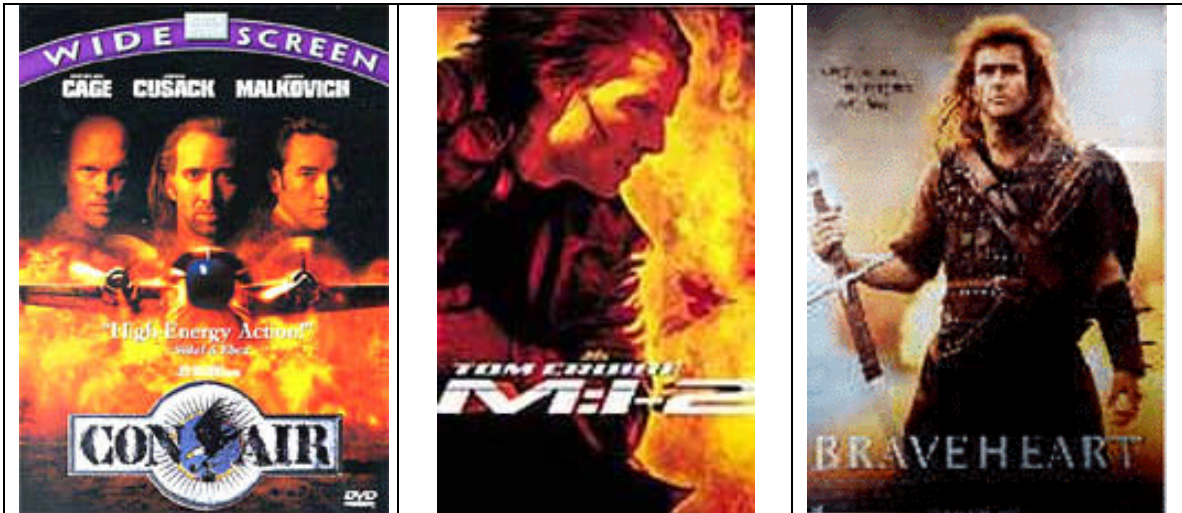


# The New Warriors

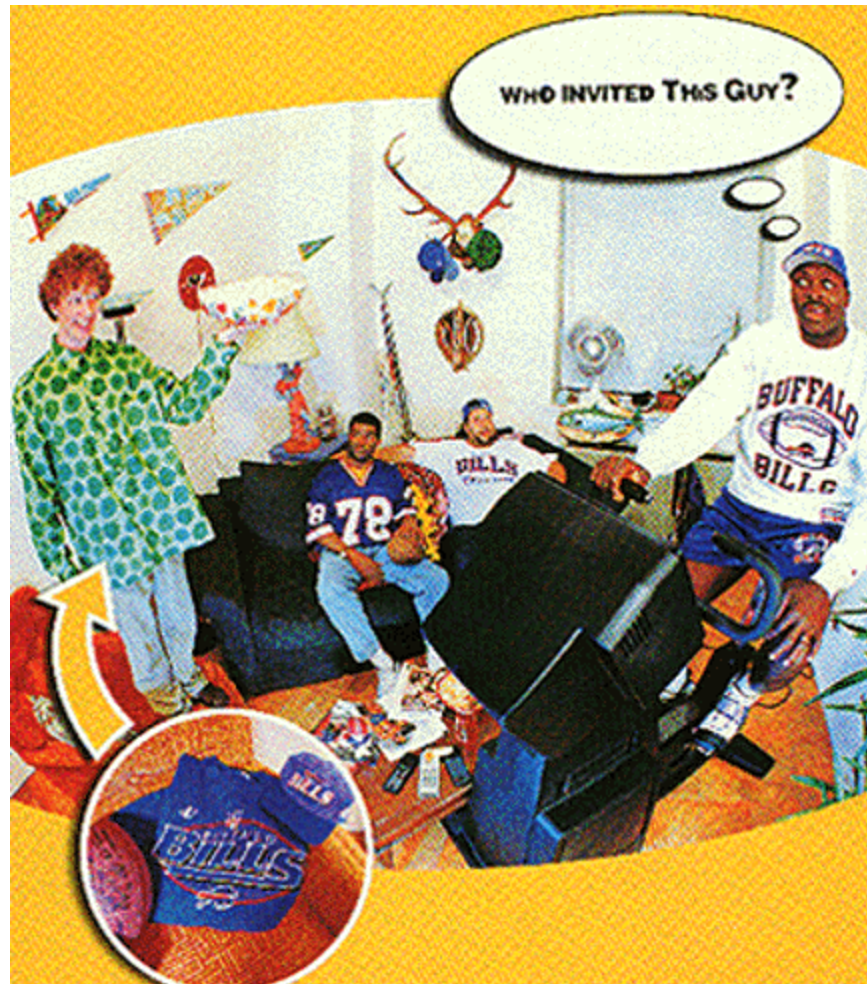




## Heroic Masculinity




## Geared Up For What?



WHO INVITED THIS GUY?

**GET GEARED UP.**

DON'T BE THE ONLY FAN OUT. GET YOUR HANDS ON AUTHENTIC NFL PRO LINE JERSEYS, JACKETS, AND CAPS BEFORE THE SEASON KICKS OFF. AND REMEMBER - IF IT DOESN'T SAY PRO LINE, IT DOESN'T GET ON THE FIELD.

 **FEEL THE POWER**



## LESSON PLAN

<b>Level:</b>	Grades 6 to 7
<b>About the Author:</b>	These lessons are an adaptation of Grade 8 lessons from the Curriculum <i>Healthy Relationships</i> by Men For Change, Halifax, Nova Scotia, a 53-activity, three-year curriculum designed for teens. The Act Like a Man/Be Ladylike exercises were originated by Paul Kivel, in association with the Oakland Men's project, Oakland, California © Oakland Men's Project.

# Gender Stereotypes and Body Image

## Overview

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To make students aware of the dangers of gender stereotyping and the media's role in perpetuating gender stereotypes.

## Learning Outcomes

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Students will demonstrate:

- an understanding of the potentially damaging effects of living up to stereotypes, and how they can lead to abuse and violence against ourselves and others.
- an understanding of the media's role in perpetuating these stereotypes.
- an understanding that "going along with the crowd" can involve sacrificing one's own principles, as well as infringing on the rights of others

## Preparation and Materials

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- for Day 1, a flip-chart and markers
- for Day 2, magazine photos of a thin woman and a muscular man for distribution or overhead projection.

## The Lesson: Day 1

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### Guided Discussion

Write **Act Like a Man** at the top of the flip chart paper and record student responses. (Note: Begin by directing the question to the boys. The girls can then be encouraged to respond. Attempt to record students' own choice of words. If their responses are too wordy, ask them to simplify for display purposes. If the offers are slow to come, ask them to discuss the topic in pairs, then share with the class, or make specific prompts by asking what does it mean to "Act Like a Man" in sports, business, on a date, etc.)

Ask students:

- What does it mean to act like a man? What words or expectations come to mind? (e.g., men don't cry, men are tough, men are strong)
- Draw a box around the entire list.

We're going to call this the **Act Like a Man** box. Inside the box is a list of attitudes and behaviors that boys are pressured to adopt in the process of becoming men in our society. Men and boys are not born this way; these roles are learned.

Next, write **Be Ladylike** at the top of another sheet of flip chart paper and record student responses. (As with the boys, begin by directing questions to the girls, then encourage boys to respond.) Ask your students:

What does it mean to be ladylike? What words or expectations do you think of? (e.g., girls are polite, girls are neat, girls are passive)

Draw a box around this list.

This is the **Be Ladylike** box. It's full of stereotypes, just like the Act Like a Man box. Its walls of conformity are just as restrictive. Women also learn to conform to very specific role expectations as they grow up being female in our society.

### Learning Gender Roles

Ask students:

- Where do we learn these gender roles? (Discussion prompts: What people teach us these stereotypes? People in entertainment? Sports? Media? When the students respond "TV" or "movies," ask for specific examples to list.)
- Where do women learn these messages? (Discussion prompts: You may put "moms" on the paper and ask for discussion. What other people influence our learning of gender roles? Where else in society do we find these messages? Ask for specific examples if the comments are too general.)
- Write these responses down the left side, outside the box. You may draw arrows to illustrate how these influences reinforce the wall of the stereotype box.

### How Stereotypes Are Reinforced

Ask students:

- What names or put-downs are directed at boys when they don't fit the box?
- What names are women called if they step out of the stereotype box?  
**Note:** Allow students to be blunt with their slang in this educational context.
- Write the names along the bottom of the appropriate box. You may draw arrows to illustrate how they reinforce the wall of the stereotype box.



**Ask students:**

- How do these labels and names reinforce the stereotype box?
- How does it feel when we are called these names?
- What do you think the person who is using these put-downs is feeling?

(These names are used in order to hurt people emotionally, and we react by retreating to the "safety" of the stereotype box.)

**Evaluating the Gender Stereotypes****Ask students:**

- How many boys in the class have never cried, hands up? (Note: Choose "don't cry" from their list. If it was not offered during the brainstorming, select another reference.)
- Does this mean that those of you who didn't put up your hands are wimps, nerds, etc.?
- What about the girls; how many want to be passive, etc.?

We're all real people and we can experience the full range of emotions, including happiness and sadness, love and anger. The bottom line is that stereotypes are destructive because they limit our potential. Yet how many guys do we know who try hard to act like the stereotype, without even a second thought? What damage do we do to ourselves and others? Boys are not born to be violent, or to have unhealthy attitudes towards girls. We learn these attitudes and behaviors through the stereotypes of what society thinks it means to "Act Like a Man," and we can free ourselves from the restrictions of these boxes once we see them as unrealistic ideals. Then we can start the process of change.

This is not to say that it's wrong for guys to like sports or fix cars or for girls to enjoy cooking (cite other examples from student generated list). (Note: it is important to make this point in order to be sensitive to boys or girls who may feel defensive.) The problem is that we are told that we must perform these roles in order to fit in. It is important for all of us to make our own decisions about what we do.

A stereotype rigidly confirms the belief that if you are a girl or a boy, or a woman or a man, you must perform these specific roles, and do them well. This belief takes away our personal choices in determining our own interests and skills. It also discourages men from participating in "women's work" (such as flower arranging and child care) and it restricts women from choosing roles that are traditionally "male" (such as engineering and science).

**Ask students:**

- What are some situations where you may be pressured to "Act Like A Man" or "Be a Lady?" (e.g., for boys, friends may tell you to try a cigarette or participate in a risky activity, to prove that you're 'tough', or for girls, you might be prevented from playing a certain sport or you might let someone bully you into doing something that you don't want to do, because it isn't "ladylike" to argue or be assertive.)
- How might these stereotypes lead to violence? (e.g., boys might be expected to 'fight it out,' rather than 'talk it out,' and girls might be expected to put up with bullying, rather than be assertive.)



**Activity****Journal Entry**

Have you ever experienced a situation where you were expected to act a certain way because you were a girl or a boy, even though it may not have been the way you felt like acting?

**Day 2: Gender Stereotyping and Body Image**

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**Background for Teachers**

The concepts of acting like a man or being ladylike do not only relate to attitude. There are also physical expectations which are connected with these stereotypes, many of which are unrealistic. When we unconsciously try to live up to the standards of these stereotypes, we can do physical and emotional harm to ourselves. Often, we don't notice this because we tend to mold ourselves to fit these stereotypes as a matter of course. This can be damaging. A boy with a very slight build who wants to be musclebound is fighting against himself if he tries to change his physique to match that of the stereotypical male. A girl who has an angular nose can fall into the same trap if she listens to her friends and/or relatives who are trying to convince her she needs a nose job.

It takes conviction and self assurance to accept oneself despite of the judgements of others. The first step is seeing that aspirations towards stereotypical ideals stem from a weak sense of self. Being accepted by others, as desirable as it may be, is not as important as self acceptance. The activities in this lesson are designed to help students see the harmful effects of accepting gender stereotypes.

**Guided Discussion**

Yesterday we discussed stereotyping and how it can make you act a certain way, even if you don't really want to. We also looked at how these stereotypes might lead to violence, because boys and girls feel that they have to live up to certain expectations. Today we are going to talk about how these stereotypes can lead to another kind of violence.

Have you ever noticed similarities in the images of males and females in magazines, in movies and on TV? Like the attitudes of being a man or acting like a lady, these images also affect how we see ourselves. Male and female stereotypes portray the perfect face, the perfect body, the ideal build ? images that are totally cool. We tend to want to be like them. We want to look like the woman on the cover of Seventeen or high-fashion models or the men that we see in commercials, in the movies, and on TV. If we are not careful, we can begin to lose self-esteem, because we want to be like someone else - our media heroes.

What does this have to do with violence? It means not liking who we are. This is a subtle form of violence towards ourself. The next step is that we begin to expect and want others to fit these stereotypes too - we begin to like the stereotypes more than the real people, and so we try to fit our friends into these boxes. This causes lots of problems in relationships.

**Note:** Students may need help with this point because there is a big difference between thinking somebody else looks good, and wanting to be like them. It's important for us to fundamentally like the way we are.

Show photos of "fashionably" thin women from any women's magazine on an overhead projector or on a handout.

## Ask students:

- How does this person live up to the "ideal" standards found in the stereotype box from last class?
- How is she successful at being a woman according to these norms?
- What is the connection between ads like this and eating disorders?
- Do you think women would want to be thin if they were not bombarded with thin images of women, like this, in the media?
- How do these standards for body image differ from standards for cultural groups such as: African, Canadian, Inuit or various Asian cultural groups? (Consider that the vast majority of models have white skin.) Note: In some cultures, heavy body weight is considered to be a sign of healthiness!
- What about at different times in history? Has the thin woman always been the ideal? Note: Paintings that pre-date this century often depict full-bodied women. The women Matisse painted were anything but thin!

Women's preoccupation with the current beauty myth is evident in most cultures that consume television and other media influences. Sadly, more and more women aspire to the stereotypical ideal. They are preoccupied with either getting thin or staying thin. For many young girls, this starts as early as elementary school.

This is a form of violence that women do to themselves. Excessive dieting can not only lead to starvation by robbing the body of essential nutrients, thereby damaging the organs, it can cause death. The "dying to be thin" mindset also fosters a very unhealthy set of attitudes, which affects relationships, both now and in the future.

Two eating disorders that result from women trying to live up to these images are called anorexia nervosa and bulimia. Anorexics pursue thinness through extreme dieting and excessive exercise, while bulimics eat out of control and then purge themselves by vomiting, fasting, taking laxatives, and exercising.

Show photos of men from magazine ads on an overhead projector or as a handout.

## Ask students:

- How does this person live up to the "ideal" standards found in the stereotype box from last class?
- What messages are being given to men through these images? How are they different from the messages that we get from the images of women that we have seen?
- Do you think that men are also pressured to look a certain way?

There is pressure for men or boys to look like these images, but mostly, they face pressure to do or act in certain ways, rather than look a certain way. Physical ability is very important in becoming a man, and it is often used to prove one's manhood. From movies, sports activities (like the World Wrestling Federation), and certain initiation rituals, men get the message that to be a real man, you must be the toughest.

- Name some media role models who send this type of message.
- What do men physically have to do to prove that they are "real men?"
- Let's look at our **Act Like A Man** stereotype box. If you are a victim of bullying, or sexual abuse, how do the attitudes in this box make it difficult for you to talk about your problems? What names will you be called if you talk?

These stereotypes push an unhealthy message on men: When we get hurt, we take it in, keep it in, don't ever tell anyone. When we raise a child to take the pain, keep it to himself, and to not show any feelings, we're training an emotional time bomb. What is going to happen when this person finds himself getting mad or upset about something at the age of 17 or 18 or 20? When we hear "men's violence against other men," we typically think of blatant acts of aggression, like hitting, stabbing, or gunning down. But there are a lot of other forms of violence we don't normally think of. Take initiations, for instance.

- What do we mean by initiation?

Define "initiation," and call students' attention to initiations in sports. Give two examples:

**Heat Liniment:** Heat liniment is poured down the front of the new team member's shorts in the locker room. One student in Brookfield, N.S. was reportedly sent to hospital with second degree burns.

**Peanut Butter Jog:** The new team member goes jogging with peanut butter smeared on his under arm. When he returns from the jog, he has to eat the peanut butter with crackers while his team members watch.

- Have you heard about other initiations in sports?
- Why is it important in this type of initiation for the person to be uncomfortable?
- What does discomfort have to do with being a "real man?" (According to the male stereotype, men have to prove that they're tough; that they can take it; that they're not sissies, so the best way to know if someone is a "real man" (i.e., one of the guys) is to put him to the test, which involves making him suffer.)

**Closure:** The violence we can do to ourselves if we unknowingly accept these stereotypes can be very subtle. Girls need to understand that they don't have to look like a Hollywood model or a soap opera star. These people put a huge amount of effort into maintaining a certain look, and they get paid lots of money for their trouble. What does that have to do with us? We're leading ordinary lives in the real world, yet for some reason we have a hankering to be like them. It's important for us to understand why there are so many women who are suffering with eating disorders. First, it can help us avoid falling into the same pitfalls, and it can also help us to feel empathy for those who have.

Boys need to understand that they don't need to accept these stereotypes either. In Hollywood, the toughest person isn't the actor you see on the screen, it's the stuntman who literally risks his life to make the actor look brave. You don't have to be pressured into proving to anyone that you are tough, either by participating in a risky activity, or by physically hurting another person.

## Activity

### Journal Entry

- Have students reflect on what has been discussed in these lessons. How do they feel about these issues?
- Let students share their feelings with the class or in groups.







## Lesson Plan

# Image Gap

### Overview

This lesson helps students understand how self-image can influence lifestyle choices. Students begin by identifying those qualities they admire most in peers, and by comparing their self-image with these qualities. They learn to identify self-image “problems” and develop positive strategies for dealing with these problems.

### Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate:
- an awareness of the role that self-esteem plays in guiding lifestyle choices
- an ability to implement positive strategies to counter poor self-image

**Level:** Grades 5-8

### About the Author

Adapted from *Smoke-Free for Life*, from the Nova Scotia Department of Health, Drug Dependency and Tobacco Control Unit

### Preparation and Materials

Photocopy the following student handouts:

- *Image Gap* (educational handout)
- *Image Gap: Problems and Strategies* (educational handout)

If you choose to do the extension activities, photocopy:

- *Smoking, Self Image and Self Esteem* (educational handout)
- *Be Your Own Best Friend* (educational handout)

### Procedure

Guided Activity: 10 min

Distribute the *Image Gap* questionnaire and lead students through each step. In Part A, students check the five qualities they admire most in others. Then they copy those five qualities onto the lines in Part B. Ask students to think about how these qualities apply to them and then circle a number between one and ten to indicate how much each quality applies.

Class Discussion: 10 min

- What do we mean by “self-image”? (how we see ourselves)
- What is our “ideal self-image”? (how we’d like to be; the qualities we admire in others)
- The difference between self-image and ideal self-image can be called our “image gap.”
- Is there a big gap between how you’d like to be and how you see yourself?
- How does this gap feel? When does it become a “problem”? How do you try to solve the problem?

There are two basic approaches to solving an image gap problem: we try to change the way we are, or we try to change our self-image by becoming more accepting of ourselves. Example:

**Problem:** I wish I looked more attractive.

**Strategy 1:** I could change the way I look by dressing better, using babysitting money to buy new clothes, losing some weight. But I can't really change most of the way I look.

**Strategy 2:** I could change the way I see myself by being less critical, not comparing myself to others so much, and by focusing more on my strong points – such as my nice hair, or my great sense of humour.

- How does each strategy make us feel about ourselves?
- When is one type of strategy more appropriate than the other?

Discuss the "Serenity Prayer"

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.  
Individual Activity: 20 min

Ask students to complete *Image Gap: Problems and Strategies*

### Extension Activity

Give students a few minutes to read *Smoking, Self Image and Self Esteem*. Before asking the following questions, remind students that there is no right or wrong answer here. The purpose of this exercise is to get them to think about their own feelings on this topic, so they should feel free to answer these questions honestly.

- Do you agree or disagree with the idea that teens with low self-esteem and negative self-image are more likely to smoke than teens with positive self-image? Why or why not?
- How many of you have friends or relatives who smoke to deal with "stress" or worries? Does it seem to work?
- Think of teens you know who smoke. Would you describe them as attractive, popular or mature?
- Think of your five best friends. Do any of them smoke? Do most of you share similar attitudes about smoking?
- If you don't smoke and a few of your close friends started smoking, how would you react?
- This article talks about how the advertising industry preys on teens with poor self-image and low self-esteem. Do you agree or disagree with this view?
- What do you consider to be the biggest influence in how you feel about yourself?

Sometimes it's easier to be positive about our friends than with ourselves. Distribute *Be Your Own Best Friend*. Discuss each point. Ask students to try to remind themselves of these points over the following week, perhaps by posting the sheet in their room. They could keep a journal for the week, in which they make a note of any times they are able to "be their own best friend."

### Related MNet Teaching Lesson

- *Mirror Image*

## Image Gap - Handout

Answer the following questions honestly. There are no right or wrong answers. This is a chance to learn something about yourself.

A. Read the list below. Check the five qualities you most admire in someone your age:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good grades at school            | <input type="checkbox"/> Has money/things                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good at art, music, and/or dance | <input type="checkbox"/> Attractive to the opposite sex          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cool clothes                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Popular/lots of friends                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smart                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Liked by teachers                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mature                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring/sensitive                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good at sports                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy/strong                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not afraid of parents/teachers   | <input type="checkbox"/> Funny/sense of Humour                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good-looking                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Not influenced by what others say/think |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tough                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:<br>_____                         |

B. Fill in the qualities chosen in A in the spaces provided. Circle a rating from 1 to 10 to indicate how much you think that it applies to you.

- |         |                      |
|---------|----------------------|
| 1 _____ | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 2 _____ | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 3 _____ | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 4 _____ | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| 5 _____ | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

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Reprinted, with permission, from Smoke-Free for Life, a smoking prevention curriculum supplement produced by the Nova Scotia Department of Health, Drug Dependency and Tobacco Control Unit, 1996.

## Image Gap: Problems and Strategies

### Part A

Choose three qualities that represent an "image gap problem" for you. Think of all the ways you could try to solve each "problem", then decide which is the best strategy.

Problem	Possible Strategies	Best Strategy
I wish...		
I wish...		
I wish...		

### Part B

Answer these questions truthfully. The first question requires a little more care and thought, so try to spend more time on it.

1. What do you like best about yourself?

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2. What did you learn from this exercise?

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Reprinted, with permission, from Smoke-Free for Life, a smoking prevention curriculum supplement produced by the Nova Scotia Department of Health, Drug Dependency and Tobacco Control Unit, 1996.

## Smoking, Self Image and Self Esteem

According to the World Health Organization, self-esteem, self-image and tobacco use are directly linked. Adolescents who smoke tend to have low self-esteem, and low expectations for future achievement. Often they see smoking as a way to cope with the feelings of stress, anxiety and depression that stem from a lack of self-confidence.

Adolescent girls are more likely to cope with stress by “worrying,” and then turn to cigarettes to cope with worry. Adolescents who see cigarettes as a way to handle negative feelings are more likely to ignore the long-term health consequences of smoking. Young non-smokers, on the other hand, tend to have higher self-esteem than teens that smoke.

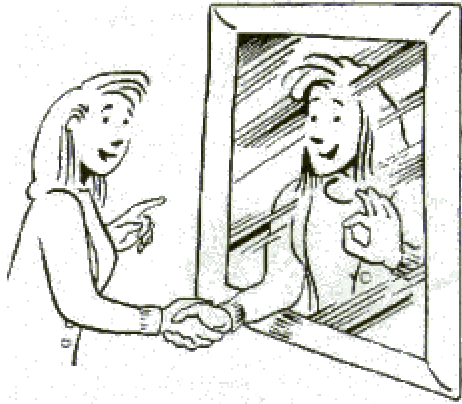
Teen’s attitudes towards their friends, classmates, boyfriends and girlfriends who smoke can make a difference to their own likelihood of smoking. Studies have shown that the single most direct influence on smoking among young teens is the smoking habits of their five best friends. Girls with a best friend who smokes are nine times likelier to become smokers themselves than those with non-smoking best friends. Some teens believe that smoking cigarettes will improve their image, by making them appear more mature or “cool.” Role models who smoke are frequently seen as tough, sociable and sexually attractive. For these teens, smoking is an attempt to improve the way they’re perceived by friends and peers. Studies have shown that if peers do react positively to this strategy, then the new smoker is likely to continue smoking.

This attitude is not lost on tobacco advertisers, who portray smoking as a proof of adulthood, maturity, sophistication, popularity and sexual attractiveness. In the case of young girls, smoking is also equated with thinness – feeding on adolescent insecurities about body image. Being slim gives these girls self-confidence, and makes them feel fashionable. Surrounded by a culture that supports such beliefs, some teenage girls may see cigarettes as a way to attain these goals.

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**Sources: Johnathan Samet and Soon-Young Yoon (eds.), “Women and the Tobacco Epidemic: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” The World Health Organization, 2001. Pages 55, 57.**

## Be Your Own Best Friend



Be Your Own  
Best Friend

### **Know Yourself**

Accept your strengths and your weaknesses. Everyone has both!

### **Accept Help**

Some problems are too big to solve alone.  
Confide in someone you trust, and lighten the load.

### **Go Gently**

Don't be hard on yourself.  
Be careful not to expect too much, or to over-react to your mistakes.

### **Be True to You**

Don't try to be someone else. Be proud of who you are.  
Pay attention to your own thoughts and feelings, and do what seems right for you.

### **Control Self-Talk**

Listen to the voice inside your head. If you hear put-downs – "I'm so stupid."  
"I'm not worth it." "I should be more like him/her." –  
then STOP!

Take a deep breath, and change the tune to – "Everybody makes mistakes." "I  
deserve it." "How I am is good enough for me."

### **Take Time Out**

Spend some time alone and enjoy your favourite music, reading a book or magazine;  
or write in your journal.

### **Stay Active**

When you walk, run, dance and play hard, your body gets rid of nervous energy and  
tension. And when you feel fit and strong, you're ready to meet life's challenges.



## LESSON PLAN

<b>Level:</b>	Grades 9 to 12
<b>About the Author:</b>	Individuality vs. Conformity is part of a three-lesson unit created by Robert Peregoodoff.

# Individuality vs. Conformity

## Overview

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Individuality vs. Conformity is part of a three-lesson unit designed to introduce students to the concept of popular culture and the role that it plays in their lives. In this lesson, students examine the pressures that exist to conform to popular culture and its effect on their lives.

## Learning Outcomes

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Students demonstrate:

- an understanding of the prevalence of popular culture in their daily lives
- an awareness of the pressures within popular culture to conform to its ideals
- an appreciation of the argumentative essay as a means of expressing an opinion

## Preparation and Materials

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In a class discussion, have the students identify fads or trends that are popular within their own school. Topics should ideally be those that are somewhat controversial within the school and may include:

- body piercing
  - skateboarding
  - tattooing
  - smoking
  - clothing (i.e. skimpy clothing for girls, bandana's for boys that may be prohibited because of gang-related connotations.)
- Once several topics have been suggested, divide your students into small groups.
  - Assign each group one of the topics for discussion.
  - Explain to your students that they have twenty minutes to discuss answers to the following questions. Remind students that each group member is responsible for recording the group's discussion.

Students are to respond as follows:

- With respect to your assigned topic, why do (or don't) you conform or participate in this activity?
  1. Are you pressured to participate in this activity? If your answer is yes, how are you pressured? Where does the pressure come from?
  2. Do you feel that popular culture emphasizes individuality, or does it ask you to conform?
  3. Does popular culture lead trends or follow them?
- Using their assigned topics and group discussion notes, students are to write a brief argumentative essay on individuality and conformity in popular culture.

## Activities

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### Class Activity

In this activity students discuss how they would launch an online campaign for a group that is promoting tolerance.

- As a class, have students brainstorm and record the various strategies and tools they would use to get their message out and attract members and supporters.
- Have a student record this initial plan on paper while you discuss it as a class. Once you've developed something students feel confident with, move on to the jigsaw activity.

### Activity One

Have students trace the origins of current fads or trends in popular culture.

### Activity Two

- Debate a controversial fad or trend in popular culture. (Note: the chosen topic should be relevant to the lives of your students.)

### Activity Three

- Have students decide which current trend is the most controversial.
- Through a show of hands, see how many of your students are in favor of this activity and how many are opposed.
- Divide your class in half on the basis of those who support and those who oppose this trend (if these groups are lop-sided, ask some students to play 'devil's advocate' and join the other side).
- give each side ten minutes to form their debate
- Remind students to select an individual to present the opening statement, and a second student to present the closing statement

### Evaluation

- Group or individual student projects from selected activities.







**MEDIA  
AWARENESS  
NETWORK**

[www.media-awareness.ca](http://www.media-awareness.ca)

**Level:** Grades 9-12

**About the Author**

Jane Tallim is an education specialist with the Media Awareness Network

**Lesson Plan**

**Kellogg Special K Ads**

**Overview:**

This lesson helps students understand the relationship between body image and marketing by exploring the Kellogg's Special K "look good on your own terms" advertising campaign. Students begin by reading about this award-winning, controversial campaign which uses humour to skewer traditional advertising stereotypes about thinness. Students will deconstruct a series of Special K ads and discuss how marketers target "ideal beauty" messages to both men and women. Students will also look at the differences between the different marketing campaigns for Special K that have been used with Canadian and American women.

**Learning Outcomes**

**Students will demonstrate:**

- awareness of the media's role in promoting unattainable standards of attractiveness
- understanding of the role played by target audiences in the creation of advertising campaigns
- awareness of body image as an issue that affects both men and women

**Preparation and Materials**

Photocopy or make overheads of the following Special K advertisements:

- *Special K\* Ad 1*
- *Special K\* Ad 2*
- *Special K\* Ad 3*
- *Special K\* Ad 4*
- *Special K\* Ad 5*
- *Special K\* Ad 6*

Photocopy the following articles:

- *Food for Thought*
- *The Two Faces of Kellogg (educational handout)*
- *"Ideal-beauty" Message Now Also Aimed at Men*

**Procedure**

Background Kellogg of Canada launched an unusual ad campaign in the fall of 1996 to promote Special K cereal. A series of three ads, attacking the fashion industry's ideal of beauty, were placed in English-speaking women's magazines. The ads lampoon society's obsession with extreme thinness, while stressing fitness and health as the key to a positive body image.

A spokesperson for Kellogg said the company decided to run the hard-hitting campaign after holding focus group sessions with young women between the ages of 18 and 26. The test groups expressed dissatisfaction with the media making women feel that they were never thin enough. They wanted to see a more well-rounded approach to health with an emphasis on feeling good about one's weight.

The company took a low-key approach to the campaign, tracking consumer response to the first two humorous ads before running a third, more serious, one. Because of the extremely positive public response, in 1997 Kellogg released another set of Special K ads in the same ironic vein, this time featuring television commercials as well as magazine advertisements.

As part of the "look good on your own terms" campaign, full-figured Canadian recording artist Jann Arden has appeared on Special K boxes. Another 1999 television spot featured Jacqueline Izzard, a six-foot tall, 200 pound firefighter from Toronto.

Since its launch, the campaign has collected numerous industry awards.

### **Guided Discussion**

Give students a bit of background about the advertising campaign and then hand out copies of the ads (or show overhead transparencies) along with the article *Food for Thought*.

Let students read the article, and then discuss the ads:

- Are they effective?
- Is the message clear?
- This was considered a "risky" campaign. Initially, Kellogg ran "look good on your own terms" in English Canada only. Once the campaign appeared to be successful it was expanded to include Quebec and the United States. In what way is this campaign a risk for Kellogg?
- By appealing to the intelligence and sense of humor of consumers, will these ads sell more cereal than traditional Special K\* ads which exploit insecurities consumers may have about their bodies?
- Who is this campaign targeted to? (Discuss how the "audience" for a marketing campaign influences content.)
- How much do viewers' values and knowledge influence the interpretation of this ad?

Distribute "Ideal-beauty" Message Now Also Aimed at Men" (Teachers should check the articles first to see if they are appropriate for their grade.)

One of the humorous television spots for this campaign features men in a bar obsessing about their bodies as if they are women: "I will not freak out if I gain two pounds" and "I will not let my dress size determine my worth." It's very funny, but researchers have found that body image obsession is no longer a women's issue.

Ask students:

- Do you think that body image is an important issue for men?
- When men worry about their bodies, what are they most likely to worry about?
- It's no secret that advertisers promote standards of attractiveness and

- thinness that are almost impossible for the average woman to attain – would you say that this is true for men as well?
- Where is pressure for men to look a certain way most likely to come from?

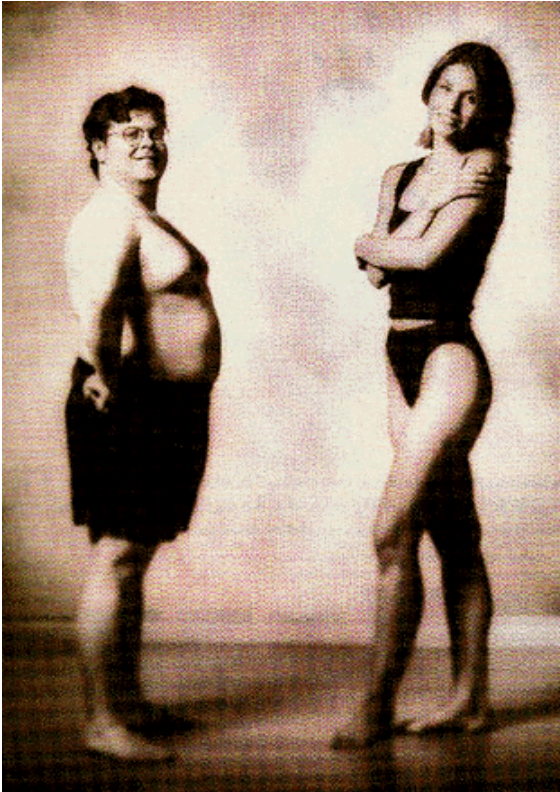
Distribute *The Two Faces of Kellogg*.

- Why do you think Kellogg decided to use a more traditional campaign featuring Cindy Crawford in the United States?
- Cindy Crawford is considered to be statuesque for a super model, and she also has two children. Do you think that she is an appropriate role-model for the average woman?
- In this article, an American ad executive is quoted saying: “the key component missing [in the look good campaign] was the “aspirational” aspect of wanting to look better, feel better than you actually are.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?
- Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “[Americans] truly do seem to buy into the “American dream” in all its forms, whereas we Canadians are just more willing to accept who we are and get on with it.”

Debate the question: “Is this apparent double-standard hypocrisy, or good business?”  
Activities

- Have students find cereal advertisements that use marketing messages that promote a thin body image. Compare the two approaches. Which ads do they like best? Which do they think are more effective?
- Using the “look good on your own terms” campaign as a model, have students create their own marketing campaign for a product, which challenges the traditional images of beauty used in advertising.
- If students would like to tell Kellogg what they think of the ads, have them send a letter, with their comments, to the company. Use this as an opportunity to find out how successful the marketing campaign has been for sales of Special K. Will they continue with this type of campaign in Canada?
- Research and write a report about issues relating to male or female body image.

## Special K Advertisement #1



### **IRONICALLY, SHE'S THE ONE WORRIED ABOUT HER WEIGHT**

We're always the ones more likely to be concerned. Even when we have nothing to be concerned about. But looking your best is about being strong and healthy – not obsessive. Look good on your own terms. Exercise. Refuse to skip meals. Start with a balanced breakfast every morning and go from there. Kellogg's\* Special K\* cereal is low in fat and a source of essential nutrients so it's a light, sensible way to start your day. After all, there's no reason to let your weight control you. Especially if you're like her and have nothing to lose.

*Kellogg's*  
**Special K**

A healthy body weight looks good on everyone

## Special K Advertisement #2



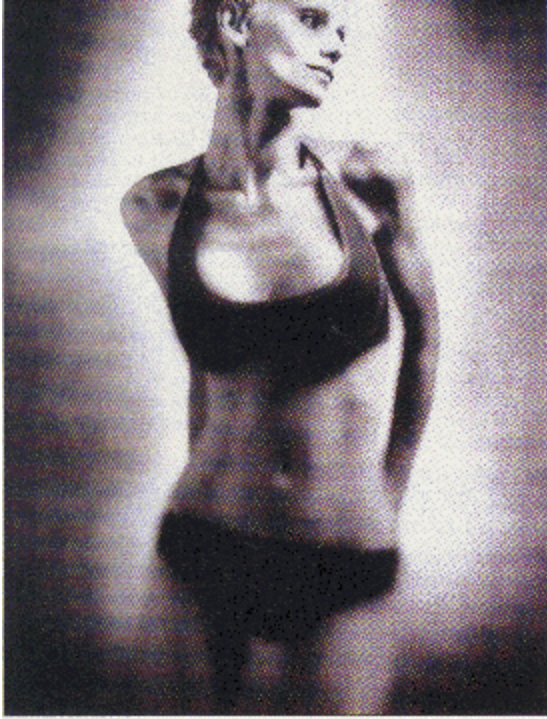
### **IF ONLY DESIGNERS HAD TO LIVE UP TO THE SAME STANDARDS THEY'VE SET FOR US**

It's time the people who set appearance standards realized that looking your best is about being strong and healthy – not underweight. Look good on your own terms. Exercise. Refuse to skip meals. Start with a balanced breakfast every morning and go from there. Kellogg's\* Special K\* cereal is low in fat and a source of essentials so it's a light, sensible way to start your day. After all, if the standards you judge yourself by aren't your own, they shouldn't carry any weight.



A healthy body weight looks good on everyone

## Special K Advertisement #3



### **IF THIS IS BEAUTY, THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER**

We see models like this all the time. But that doesn't mean we should equate being beautiful with being underweight. Look good on your own terms. Exercise. Refuse to skip meals. Start with a balanced breakfast every morning and go from there. Kellogg's\* Special K\* cereal is low in fat and a source of essential nutrients so it's a light, sensible way to start your day. After all, a healthy body weight should be beautiful in everyone's eyes. And there isn't one of us who should aspire to anything less.



A healthy body weight looks good on everyone

## Special K Advertisement #4



### **DON'T LET IT MEASURE YOUR SELF ESTEEM**

It's unfortunate that something as insignificant as a tape measure can have such an impact on how we feel about ourselves. Don't let it. It can't measure who you are. Exercise. Refuse to skip meals. Start with a balanced breakfast every morning and go from there. Kellogg's\* Special K\* cereal is fat free and a source of nine essential nutrients so it's a light, sensible way to start your day. After all, looking your best is about being strong and healthy. And the standards you measure yourself by should be your own.



A healthy body weight looks good on everyone

## Special K Advertisement #5



### **A WOMAN'S VALUE SHOULD NOT BE DETERMINED BY THE POUND**

Unfortunately, the more a woman weighs, the less she perceived to be worth. Our value as human beings, however, should have nothing to do with the numbers on a scale. The fact is, we should aspire to a healthy body weight and nothing less. So exercise. Establish a healthy routine. Start with a balanced breakfast every morning and go from there. Kellogg's\* Special K\* cereal is fat free and a source of nine essential nutrients so it's a light, sensible way to start your day. After all, looking your best is about being strong and healthy. And in the end, every one of us is priceless.

*Kellogg's*  
**Special K**

A healthy body weight looks good on everyone



## Special K Advertisement #6



**THE ASHANTIS OF GHANA THINK A WOMAN'S BODY GET MORE ATTRACTIVE AS SHE AGES.**

**Please contact your travel agent for the next available flight.**

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A 50 year old's body looks more attractive than a 20 years old's? Why not? Its only perception after all. In every culture, our bodies change as we age. Wouldn't it be nice if ours were to celebrate the process? Exercise. Establish a healthy routine. Start with a balanced breakfast every morning and go from there. Kellogg's\* Special K\* cereal is a fat free and a source of nine essential nutrients so it's a light, sensible way to start your day. At any age, looking your best is about being strong and healthy. Which is important if you expect to be travelling in the near future.

*Kellogg's*  
**Special K**

A healthy body weight looks good on everyone

## Food for Thought

***This editorial is reproduced with permission from Marketing Magazine, Oct. 21, 1996.***

The proliferation over the past decade of malnourished-looking women flogging everything from jeans and T-shirts to designer perfumes in advertising would seem to have a desensitizing effect on consumers. How ironic it is, then, that a new print campaign by Kellogg Canada Ltd. for its Special K cereal that shows an almost skeletal, bikini-clad model, is so disturbing. The startling image, one of three executions in the campaign, is the last thing one would expect from the breakfast-cereal manufacturer that at one time chastised consumers for pinching an inch.

While many have paid lip service to the principal of portraying women more realistically in advertising, Kellogg scores a direct hit at society's destructive ultrathin-is-beautiful myth. Although Kellogg is itself guilty of spinning the body-beautiful fantasy in prior Special K ads – the TV spot featuring a middle-aged woman, with a knock-out figure, flirting with her husband comes to mind – the latest Special K message at least promotes a healthy body weight through exercise and sensible diet.

What makes the new Special K campaign so effective is that it respects the intelligence of its mostly female audience, and uses humor to effect: "Ironically, she's the one worried about her weight" reads the copy alongside a photo of a woman and a smug looking man so bloated his breast size rivals hers. Another execution shows a middle-aged man looking ridiculous in leopard-print pants and a tummy hugging lace blouse. "If only fashion designers had to live up to the same standards they've set for us," reads the copy.

This type of "we care about you" ad is responsible and gets people talking: not only about the role that advertising, the media and the fashion industry play in the development of the self-images of young women; but it also about the dearth of ads that so deftly engages the intelligence and sensibilities of the customer. A cereal ad about body weight and self-image speaks to women of any age and has more to do with the food product Kellogg is selling than, for instance, John Lennon's butt has to do with wrist watches.

Yet Kellogg is clearly reticent to talk about details of the campaign. The company says it doesn't want to reveal the strategy because it's based on proprietary consumer research. Kellogg appears to be taking a wait-and-see approach: if the campaign's a hit they may extend it. If it evokes more outrage than kudos, Kellogg will likely take it off the shelf.

Kellogg's silence is perhaps understandable. After all, most marketers are uncomfortable being seen as leading the way on social issues. Realistically, the ads probably won't convince women to resign contentedly from the diet game. And time will tell whether Kellogg sells more boxes of Special K because of it. Closer to the truth, however, is that the highly competitive adult breakfast-cereal market is still rather conservative and Kellogg is testing uncharted waters. They deserve praise for it.

Student Handout

## The Two Faces of Kellogg

By Lara Mills

*This editorial is reproduced with permission from Marketing Magazine, January 17, 2000.*

Hands up all of you who rolled your eyes in disbelief at the news that Kellogg USA had decided to ring in the year 2000 by ditching the Canadian-grown "Look Good on Your Own Terms" positioning for Special K cereal and falling back on that tried-and-true marketing tool: When in doubt, hire a supermodel. Talk about a complete 180.

Granted, Kellogg USA's new Special K spokesperson, Cindy Crawford, is one of the least waif-like of all the supermodels. And now, having recently delivered her son Presley into the world, Crawford projects the image of a gorgeous, modern all-American mom—minus, perhaps, the apple pie.

Nonetheless, Kellogg's decision to replace the groundbreaking "Look Good" strategy in the U.S. with Crawford represents a huge step backward for the brand, the company and, it can be argued, for society as a whole. True, the former campaign – which, thankfully, continues here in Canada – was a risky step for Kellogg. When "Look Good" launched here in 1996, the company was reluctant to admit how thoroughly the ads bashed the beauty myth. But with a year's worth of positive response from its female target market, Kellogg Canada went whole hog, saying it wanted Special K to be the brand that "inspires all women." Now Special K is involved in a slew of body-image-related initiatives in Canada, including partnering with Chatelaine magazine in 1999 for a survey on the subject.

Kellogg USA's take on the campaign could not have been more different. An executive at Leo Burnett USA in Chicago told the New York Times that women loved the "Look Good" campaign, but that it may have been "a little too far ahead of the curve." Kellogg USA also said it had done research that found "the key component missing was the aspirational aspect of wanting to look better, feel better than you actually are." Cindy Crawford, the company said, embodies the brand and puts back this "aspirational" element.

This is a common argument among women's magazine editors, who say they don't use more "real"-sized models in their pages because women don't want to look at themselves: they want to look at beautiful women they dream of being. But the fact remains that Crawford – in all her health and glory – still represents an industry that has inspired millions of young girls and women to starve themselves, or at the very least feel dissatisfied with their own appearance because they don't quite measure up to that ideal. This sort of "aspiration" doesn't strike us as ultimately that healthy.

The jarring reversal of tactics at Kellogg headquarters in Battle Creek, Mich. may speak more to the desperate market situation the company faces in the U.S. than anything else. But it also underscores what may be one of those subtle but true, tangible differences between Canada and the U.S. Our southern brethren truly do seem to buy into the "American dream" in all its forms, whereas we Canadians are just more willing to accept who we are and get on with it. So Kellogg Canada gives us a life-sized talking turkey harassing a jogger to illustrate how we needn't let our holiday eating haunt us, with the message "Resolve to Look Good on Your Own Terms." In the U.S., they get the unattainable image of Cindy Crawford.

The bright side in all this is that Kellogg recognizes these differences. The company here, at least, can continue to look good on its own terms.

# "Ideal-beauty" Message Now Also Aimed at Men

By Antonia Zerbislas

Reproduced with permission courtesy *The Toronto Star Syndicate*

There's a Kellogg's Special K ad in many women's magazines this month.

Nothing new in that.

But, instead of the usual frisky model scarfing down flakes while pumping iron and the baby, this particular ad shows a bony, bikinied body.

"If this is beauty, there's something wrong with the eye of the beholder." reads the copy, which goes on to make the pitch that "a healthy body weight, should be beautiful inn anyone's eyes" and that the cereal will help you healthfully lose weight.

"Talk about mixed messages, especially considering the much-more-powerful signals sent out on the surrounding pages. In too many magazines, women read that they can never be young enough, busty enough, and most important, thin enough.

Perhaps it's the pose, the lighting, the makeup, but the Special K model looks, aside her incongruously ample breasts (ain't it always so?), hideous. Not that she's skinnier than the current crop of dress hangers in the February File, to take just one example.

But because the picture isn't flattering and she isn't draped in \$1 million worth of Mizrahu, she looks like, well, let's just say "prisoner of war" comes to mind.

Feminists have long complained about waif models, but their protests are usually ignored, both by the fashion industry and the general media.

The female stars of *Friends* all wear Size 4. The only chubby chicks you see on TV, except for Rosie O'Donnell, are losers on *Riki Lake* and *Jerry Springer*.

Men are just starting to feel the same pressure. With men's health and fashion magazines proliferating, Calvin Klein producing more buff male ads, male movie stars pumping and liposucking and good looks becoming career requirements in the toughened-up job market, men are being subjected to more and more impossible physical ideas.

So it's no wonder the January/February issue of *Psychology Today* reports some people at war with their bodies are willing to die younger, if they can leave a thinner corpse.

The "1997 Body Surgery" indicates that "15 per cent of women and 11 per cent of men say they would sacrifice more than five years if their lives for the weight they want".

"Twenty-four per cent of women and 7 per cent of men say they would give up more than three years."

Staying slim had become such a issue for women that some of them are passing up on parenting so as not to ruin their figures.

"Pregnancy," writes David M. Garner in the 16-page article: "is increasingly being seen not as a normal body function but as an encumbrance to body image."

And from where do these ideas come?

It's no longer possible to deny the fact that images of models in the media have a terrible effect on how women see themselves." Writes Garner. "Women who have eating disorders are most influenced by fashion models."

Tracing the survey results over the years, *Psychology Today* conducted similar surveys in 1972 and 1985, it quickly becomes clear that contradictions between the culture's thinning body ideals and the fattening of fast-food menus are making us very unhappy, indeed.

For example, "only" 49 per cent of women responded in 1972 hated their thighs. Today the percentage has shot to 61.

Twenty five years ago, 36 per cent of men were dissatisfied with their abdomens. Today, 63 percent think their pots have gone to pot.

The good news? Satisfying sex helps improve body image, no matter how much bounce you have to the ounce. Notes Garner, "Good sexual experiences breed high levels of body satisfaction.

Only trouble is, if fat is considered so freaky, how do you go about getting those "good sexual experiences"?

The magazines, while offering some solutions to the body image problem, doesn't say.



Level: Grades 5-8

#### About the Author

Adapted from *Smoke-Free for Life*, from the Nova Scotia Department of Health, Drug Dependency and Tobacco Control Unit

## Lesson Plan

### Mirror Image

#### Overview

In this lesson, students analyze their own body image and consider what they wish they could change. They discuss how smoking relates to body image, particularly for young women, and learn about the link between beauty and smoking.

#### Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate:
- an awareness of how they feel about their bodies
- an understanding of how the media can pressure young people to be thin
- an awareness of how the tobacco industry plays on smoking and thinness to market cigarettes

Procedure Note to Teacher: Although this lesson focuses on the relationship between smoking and thinness in young women, it's important to note that more and more boys are also turning to smoking to reduce weight. Studies have found that boys aged 9-14 who thought they were overweight were 65 per cent more likely to think about smoking, or to try it, than their peers; and boys who worked out every day in order to lose weight were twice as likely to experiment with tobacco. (Source: Marcus, A. (1999). "Body Image Tied to Smoking in Kids.")

#### Materials

##### Preparation and Materials

Photocopy the following student handouts:

- *Mirror Image* (educational handout)
- *Smoking and body image Q & As* (educational handout)

#### Individual Activity

Students complete the *Mirror Image* handout. Assure them that their answers will remain confidential, and that these sheets will not be collected.

#### Class Discussion

- Why do we think we should look a certain way?
- Where does our notion of an "ideal" body come from?
- Why is there so much focus in our society on body image?
- Who controls what images we see?
- How does the ideal image of a woman's body differ in other cultures? In other historic times?
- How does smoking relate to body image for men? For women?
- Why are teenage girls especially vulnerable to these ideas?
- Do teenage boys feel similar pressures?
- Why isn't smoking a good way to lose weight?
- Ask some of the questions on *Smoking and body image Q & As*. Distribute copies of this sheet for the students' own reference.

#### Extension Activity

Have students collect magazine images that reinforce the North American "ideal" body image for women and for men. In small groups, they should make collages of these images and superimpose the words "Love Your Body, Not Theirs."

Note: *Image Gap* is a related MNet teaching lesson

Student Handout #1

## Mirror Image

Use this worksheet to think about your body image. You don't need to write your name on this sheet. Your answers will remain confidential.

1. Write as many words as you can to describe your body and its parts (think of height, weight, hair colour & type, skin, hands, feet...)

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2. Draw a red circle around the things you like about your body.

3. Think about the things you don't like about your body. What can you do about them? Check the boxes that apply:

Remember that "there's a lot more to you than meets the eye". Appearance is just one part of the picture. Who you are also includes your personality, talents, and strengths.

Face your fears. Instead of shying away from mirrors, take a really good look. Stand in front of a mirror and look – really look, as if you were looking at yourself through someone else's eyes. Don't think about what you would like to look like (forget the magazine and TV images). Take some time and just appreciate what you see. The human body, in all its shapes and sizes, is beautiful!

Be patient. Your body is gradually changing into an adult's body. It may feel awkward or uncomfortable for a while... even foreign. But that's all just part of the growing process.

Focus on the things you do like. Don't just zero in on the "problems" and the things you'd like to change.

Change your eating and/or exercise habits. Healthy food and regular exercise help you look and feel your best.

Have a sense of humour. If you can be light-hearted about your own shortcomings, you'll never have to be afraid of what other people think.

4. Why do you think so many people wish they looked differently than they do?

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5. What would you tell a best friend who was unhappy about the way he or she looked?

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*Reprinted with permission from Smoke-Free for Life, a smoking prevention curriculum supplement from the Nova Scotia Department of Health, Drug Dependency and Tobacco Control Unit, 1996.*

## Smoking and Body Image Q & A

Does smoking help you lose weight?

- Smokers do tend to weigh less than nonsmokers – probably because smoking changes the way the body metabolizes (“burns”) food. However, this small weight loss comes at a high price: your health, appearance, and feeling of self-control. There are other less costly ways of losing weight.
- Ironically, smoking leaves you out of breath and makes it harder to exercise. Cigarettes may make you a few pounds lighter, but they don’t make you fitter.

When smokers quit, do they gain weight?

- Often they do, an average of 2-4 kilograms (4-9 pounds). That’s one reason why people who quit should get regular exercise, such as bicycling, swimming, skating or working out. Another reason is that exercise helps them make it through the withdrawal period. It doesn’t usually take much effort to lose the few kilos they’ve put on during the quitting process.

Does quitting smoking make you want to eat more sweets?

- Nicotine affects levels of blood sugar (glucose) in the body, so that nicotine withdrawal can trigger a craving for sweets. Sometimes, smokers who are quitting also snack more often to fill the “gap” that cigarettes used to fill. These withdrawal symptoms pass, however.

How do cigarette advertisements take advantage of women’s insecurities about body image?

- Tobacco companies know that many women in our society think they should be thin, so the models in the ads are skinny, and the cigarettes are called slims, lights or longs. These ads feed the idea that all women should look like models. One group in the United States became angry at billboard cigarette ads directed at women, and pasted their own slogan on top. It read:

Love Your Body – Not Hers

- Associating thinness with smoking can start early. Researchers have found a direct relation between early smoking (before grade 6) – in both girls and boys – and low body satisfaction and fears about being overweight.

How does smoking affect your appearance?

- Nicotine constricts the blood vessels that bring oxygen to the skin. Without enough oxygen, skin ages faster – smokers end up with gray complexions and wrinkles.
- Smoking stains the teeth and fingers, turning them yellow. The smell of cigarette smoke clings to the hair and clothes, making them smell stale.
- Smoking also causes bad breath, which the smoker often isn’t even aware of, except perhaps in the morning. “Smoker’s breath” can’t be entirely washed away with mouthwash or chewing gum, because it comes from the old smoke and tars that have accumulated in the lungs.

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Sources:

Stop Smoking, Stay Trim (The Lung Association).

“Smoking, Weight and Appearance: Some Common Questions and Answers” from Facilitator’s Guide: Diary of a Teenage Smoker (Health Canada).





**Level:** Grades 3-7

#### About the Author

Adapted from the  
*Teacher's Resource Kit: A  
Teacher's Lesson Plan Kit  
for the Prevention of  
Eating Disorders.*  
National Eating Disorder  
Information Centre, ©  
1989. Adapted and  
updated 2002

## Lesson Plan

# Prejudice and Body Image

### Overview

This lesson lets students take a good look at our society's pressures to conform to standards of beauty – particularly to be thin – and the related prejudice against being “overweight.” Through class discussion and activities, students begin to recognize how the media pressure us to achieve a certain looks and how media images may lead to prejudice against those who don't conform to their standards of attractiveness.

### Outcomes

Students demonstrate:

- an awareness of the media's role in dictating standards of attractiveness to society.
- an understanding of how media images can affect their own feelings towards their own bodies and towards others.
- an understanding of how unattainable these standards can be for much of the population.

### Materials & Preparation

- Review the teaching backgrounders *Body Size Introduction* and *Some Myths About Obesity*
- Prior to class, have students bring in magazines
- Photocopy *Story Starter*

## The Lesson

### Discussion

Begin the class by explaining that there are billions of people living on the earth, each one unique in their colour, size, features and personality. Each one of us has traits that make us unique. Some of us are small, some of us are big; some are fair, some are dark; some are girls, some are boys. Tell students to look around the room at their classmates – look at all the differences between just the people in this one room!

The people that we see in the media represent only a small percentage of the different types of people that live in the real world, and this is a problem. When we see the same type of people each time we turn on our TVs or open a magazine or when we are told in advertisements that it is better to look like one type of person than another, it can make us dissatisfied with the way that we look – with our **body image**.

- What makes a body healthy? (*Balanced diet, exercise, lots of sleep etc.*)
- Do you have to be thin to be healthy?
- How might wanting to look like the people we see on television and in

magazines be a negative thing? (*People who desperately want to be thin may develop eating disorders, exercise obsessively, or turn to smoking or drugs as a way to control appetite. They may develop low self esteem and become depressed if they can't change the way they look.*)

Think about the people that you see on TV and in advertisements in North America.

- What are some words that you would use to describe the women?
- What are some words that you would use to describe the men?
- What is the message that these images tell us about how people should look?
- Think of your own family and friends – do they look like the people you see in the media?

The truth is that very few of us look like the people you see in the media. In fact, if you met a celebrity in real life, he or she probably wouldn't look anything like their media image. This is because the images of people that we see in ads or on TV are carefully constructed – photographs are touched up to make them look more attractive, or they are filmed using lots of make-up and special lighting. They even have special software that can alter a picture of someone and give them longer legs, or make even make them thinner. But despite this, many of us are influenced by these images, both in our feelings towards others and in our feelings about ourselves.

## Activities

### Activity One

Pretend that you are an alien travelling through space. One day you come across a deserted space station from earth. In the space station you find all sorts of magazines (those astronauts got pretty bored just floating through space!). As you've never seen a human before, this is very exciting – so you put together a report on humans based on the magazines that you've found.

In small groups, go through the magazines that you've brought to class. From the images that you see in those magazines, create a description of what a "typical" earthling looks like based on what you've found. (Students might like to create a composite man and a composite woman using bits and pieces of the people they've found in various ads and photos.) As well as physically describing earthlings, what would our aliens say about people based on these magazines (*i.e. humans are always smiling and happy, humans live on beaches, humans wear cool clothes, etc.*). Present your reports to the class.

### Activity Two

- Review the [Story Starter](#) with students. (Teachers can distribute this directly to students or provide verbal prompts and work through the story section by section.)
- After students have finished their stories, discuss how they felt in their "alien worlds." Try to transfer their alien experience to the pressures within our own world to conform to a certain look.

## Evaluation

- Alien reports
- Completed stories

## **Body Size Introduction**

### **Introduction**

This lesson lets students take a good look at pressures to conform to standards of beauty – particularly current pressures to be thin – and the related prejudice against being "over" weight. Through class discussion and activities, students begin to recognize how the media pressures us to achieve a certain look and how media images may lead to prejudice against those who don't conform to their standards of attractiveness.

### **Background**

It is important for students to realize that over time, different societies have had diverse notions about beauty. Prior to the 20th century, Europeans and North Americans admired larger women because they seemed stronger and healthier. Being larger, smaller, taller, shorter, darker, lighter, older or younger has been admired in various societies, for reasons particular to that culture.

Today, we live in a society where thinness is among the more admired traits, where most of us want to be thin (including 80 per cent of 11 year olds) and where fat and fat people are often stigmatized. It has been noted by some that obesity is one of the last socially condoned prejudices in North American culture. In fact, by the age of six, most children have already learned to regard the obese as ugly, lazy, stupid, unworthy, etc.

Pictures portraying images of beauty in other cultures and in other historical periods are useful in demonstrating how ideals are socially constructed. For example, pictures of Victorian women can be used to demonstrate the popularity of the curved figure, achieved through wearing a corset. Pictures of Chinese foot binding can also be used to show how small feet, a sign of beauty in Imperial China, were achieved. (If computer access is available, teachers may want to let students explore the Media Awareness Network's online module "The Way We Look" – an exploration of fads and fashion from prehistoric times to the present – as part of this unit.)

### **Pressures to Be Thin**

A study of women who were Playboy centrefolds and Miss America pageant contestants has shown their body weights and shapes progressively diminished between 1959 and 1979. Over these same twenty years, however, there has been an increase in the average weight for women in the general population, particularly those in young adulthood. Thus, there is a growing disparity between the ideal and reality. One good way of demonstrating this is by collecting and discussing images of women in fashion magazines.

Women respond to pressures to be thin by dieting. A 1978 Neilson survey reported that 56 per cent of females aged 24 to 54 dieted periodically, 76 per cent of whom dieted for appearance, rather than health reasons. The Canadian Weight Gallop Poll conducted in 1984 showed only 17 per cent of women in Canada "eat what they want." More than 80 per cent of women dislike their bodies, and dieting is becoming a concern of women of all ages, from nine year-olds to the very old.

This is not surprising, given that women are constantly told to diet and are made to feel guilty for eating. A survey of women's magazines during the period from 1970 to 1978 found the number of diet articles had doubled from the previous decade. And it's important to note that health is not the primary goal of diet and exercise in our culture: beauty is, health only legitimates it.

Men are not immune to these messages. The result of years of being bombarded by images of buff young men with "six pack" stomachs in magazines, film, music videos and television is a generation of teenage boys who are flocking to gyms in record numbers in an attempt to achieve that "ideal look." *Body image disturbance* is the term used to describe the condition where young boys and men go to any lengths, from over exercising to abusing steroids, in order to reach their goal of a perfect body.

Advertisers, movies and television programs use deeper societal pressures to be thin to sell their products. Having thin, attractive women and men model expensive products and play glamorous characters works to link thinness with wealth, success and happiness. Hip, muscular, young men and thin, scantily clad women in music videos link attractiveness and sexuality with being cool. Using fat women or men to demonstrate "before" pictures in diet ads and to play poor or unhealthy characters reinforces the myth that fat people are poor, unsuccessful, lazy, unhappy and unhealthy.

Ironically, at the same time marketers are spreading the gospel of thinness, they have been identified by health practitioners as a significant contributor to what has been termed an "epidemic" in childhood obesity, through their relentless promotion of junk food, soft drinks and fast food. Children need to become aware of these conflicting messages in order to use their own judgement in determining what a healthy body looks like, and to feel more comfortable with their own self image.

***Adapted with permission from, Teacher's Resource Kit: A Teacher's Lesson Plan Kit for the Prevention of Eating Disorders. National Eating Disorder Information Centre, © 1989.***

## Some Myths About Obesity

Obesity is one of the few remaining socially sanctioned prejudices. There are four widely shared, inaccurate stereotypes about obesity which perpetuate the prejudice against fat people.

### **The obese eat more than the non-obese.**

In 19 out of the 20 studies conducted before 1979, obese people were shown to eat the same or less than the non-obese, disproving the view that obese people are heavy because they eat more.

### **The obese are more emotionally disturbed than the non-obese.**

Several studies have shown obese people have no more or fewer emotional problems than the non-obese. Personality and level of adjustment also appear to be similar for both groups, despite the fact that the obese must deal with tremendous social pressure against them.

### **Moderate obesity is associated with increased sickness and death.**

Some studies have extrapolated the health risks associated with extreme obesity affecting those who are moderately obese as well. But the Framingham study showed that "over" weight women had a lower mortality risk than "under" weight women. The highest mortality (death) rate for women was for those who were "under" weight. The lowest mortality rates were for women 10 per cent and 20 per cent over average weight. While it may be true that increased blood pressure and deaths due to heart disease may be associated with being "over" weight, there is some speculation that it may be the yo-yo effect of dieting and then regaining the weight that accounts for the increase in blood pressure.

### **Long term treatment through dieting is successful**

Several long term follow up studies have shown that the success rate of diets, over time, is dismal at best. In fact, it is estimated that approximately 95 per cent of diets simply do not work over the long term. Dr. Susan Wooley believes the diagnosis of obesity should be eliminated. She believes that you can't treat something you can't diagnose and that obese individuals should instead be helped to improve their sense of self-esteem.

In any given class, there are probably heavier children who are discriminated against because of body size. In light of this, the challenge for educators is to present information on overweight in a highly sensitive and supportive manner.

**Adapted with permission from *Teacher's Resource Kit: A Teacher's Lesson Plan Kit for the Prevention of Eating Disorders*. National Eating Disorder Information Centre, © 1989.**

Student Handout #1

## Story Starter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

This is a story about a strange vacation you took to another planet in a distant solar system. It tells of the day you were discovered by a spacecraft of aliens and taken away to a strange world. These aliens were *really huge*, they weighed about 400 pounds and were seven feet tall. At first you thought they were ugly. Yet when you arrived at their planet you found that all the aliens were huge, and the largest were considered the most beautiful by this society. When you opened a magazine or turned on a television all you saw were enormous aliens. You also saw advertisements and commercials promising to help the aliens become even bigger!!!! Please write an account of this vacation.

\_\_\_\_\_ **(Story Title)**

1. Describe exactly where and how the aliens found you. Did you apply for an ad in the newspaper to go to a strange world? Were you at an amusement park and picked up by aliens who thought you were their friends in disguise?

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2. What did they look like? What was your reaction to them? What was their reaction to you?

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3. What was the inside of their spaceship like? Were you afraid? How long did the trip take you? How far away was their planet from the earth?

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4. Did you meet any creatures your own age when you arrived? How big were they? What was your reaction to them? Did they view you as a strange creature? Did they ask you questions?

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5. Imagine that the aliens had television, magazines and films like we do, and in their commercials and advertisements, the male and female aliens were all huge. Write about a commercial that you saw featuring a product that promises to make its customers larger. What is the product that they are selling? A green slime bath that will make their bodies expand? A reverse exercise machine that will add on pounds instead of taking them off? And what does the commercial promise will happen when they become bigger? Will they be more popular and get invited to the Galaxy Space Dance? Will they be more successful and become presidents of their own spaceship companies? Will their lives suddenly become more exciting than the lives that they have now?

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6. Why were the most famous and admired creatures also the largest? How did the smaller aliens who were short or thin feel about their bodies?

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7. Describe the feelings you had after being on this planet for a few months. Did you start liking the way the aliens looked? Did it make you feel worse or better about your own body size?

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8. When and how did you leave? What did your experience tell you about social pressures to be a certain size or shape? If you could give one important message to the people on earth about body size and shape, what would it be?

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9. **Final Instructions**

When you have finished, reread your paragraphs. Add details where you think they are missing. Rewrite the paragraphs with connecting sentences so that they make a continuous story. Read what you have written. Change anything that needs changing. Read and change until you are pleased with your story.

**Now try drawing a picture to illustrate your story!**



## Lesson Plan

# The Anatomy of Cool

## Overview

This lesson helps students become more aware of the media's role in determining what, and who, are perceived as being *cool*. Through class discussion and activities, students explore the differences between superficial and real "coolness," how marketers use cool to sell products, and how their own attitudes and perceptions are affected by media messages that reinforce specific messages about what coolness is.

**Level:** Grades 4-7

### About the Author

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## Outcomes

Students will:

- understand the influences of the media in defining society's standards regarding who is successful and what is desirable
- understand the transience and superficiality of media images and messages regarding who and what is *cool*
- understand how they themselves are influenced by these media images and messages

## Preparation and Materials

- a large roll of paper, markers, paints.
- 2 boxes of Smarties
- photocopy *Anatomy of Cool Questionnaire* and *Kids World Survey Results*.
- students collect pictures of their favorite celebrities – rock stars, movie stars, athletes, models, etc.
- students bring in photographs of themselves.

## The Lesson

### Introduction

Both boys and girls need to recognize that popular concepts of what is *cool* can be artificial – that in many cases they are determined by advertisers, who use 'coolness' as a way of marketing goods. They also need to understand that not everyone can, or needs to, look or act like people in the media. In this lesson, students will explore the relationship between coolness, marketing, and the media and how they respond to media messages about what is – and isn't – cool. They will be encouraged to discuss how these images have influenced their lives, from their perception of what defines *cool*, to their feelings about their own bodies.

Marketers are well aware of a child's need to be cool. Gene Del Vecchio, in his book *Creating Ever-Cool: A Marketer's Guide to a Kid's Heart*, identifies a child's reference group as a major influence on his or her perceptions of what is cool. This group includes:

- friends, who are a child's closest point of reference (but who may come and go)
- kids who are slightly older (age reference)
- and those kids who are considered to be more popular (popularity reference)



Del Vecchio notes that one thing each of these reference groups share, is the desire to be cool. He states the simple fact that "cool is whatever a kid likes and wants. If he does not like or want something, it is not cool." Yet, despite its elusiveness, Del Vecchio sees coolness as sharing common elements: it's what the psyche wants (i.e. beauty, strength, fame, popularity); it's what you aspire towards (to be older, more independent, etc.); it's exclusive (you have it, while others don't); it's "forbidden" (this is especially significant to teens); and it's to-the-minute. In other words, in order for marketers to create "cool" products, they must "brilliantly address the child's psyche" – which they often do. By helping young people understand how marketers play on these desires, we can better help them think critically about the manufactured nature of *cool*.

### **Guided Discussion**

It is impossible to ignore the media's influence on how we view ourselves. Though big-name athletes, musicians, film stars, models and celebrities represent only a small percentage of the population, their images are so consistent and pervasive that they define the standards by which the rest of us measure ourselves and others. Children, who are just beginning to form their own identities, are particularly susceptible to the often unrealistic standards of *cool* as dictated by the media. Ask students to brainstorm definitions of the word 'cool' as it might apply to things such as clothing or toys. Write their suggestions on the board. Next, ask students to identify what makes a person 'cool.'

- Is it external – the way they look, or the way they dress; or is it internal – the way they act?
- As a class, come up with a list of traits that define 'cool,' making sure to include personality traits like independence, strength of character, being a good friend, along with the more obvious external traits such as 'wears the latest fashions' or 'looks good.'

**Reinforce** the idea that we tend to think of cool as an external thing, but the best kind of cool comes from inside.

- Ask students to think of their friends
- Without naming their friend, have students write a description of their coolest friend, explaining what makes them cool.
- Remind students that they are looking for 'internal' cool, not just how a person looks.
- Have students share what they have written with the rest of the class.
- Collect descriptions.

**Explain** to your students that there can be two different types of cool people – those who are cool because they are famous or fashionable, and those who are cool because of how they act.

The truth is that very few people look like those you see in the media. In fact, some of the people we see in the media don't look anything like their media images in real life, because their photographs are touched up to make them look more attractive, or they are filmed using lots of make-up and special lighting. There are even software programs that can take a picture of someone and give them longer legs, or make them thinner! Yet despite knowing this, many of us are still influenced by images we see in magazines and on television.

Statistically, the people that we see in the media represent only 5 per cent of the

population. That means that 95 per cent of us are being told that we should look the same way as a very small percentage of people.

To make your point, get two boxes of Smarties and take out all of the blue Smarties.

- Count out 95 regular Smarties and toss in 5 blue ones.
- Explain that the 95 regular Smarties are regular people, and the 5 blue Smarties are the types of people who the media say we should be.
- Ask students: What is wrong with this picture?
- Is it possible for the other colours to turn blue? (You might point out that the colours that are closer to blue, like purple, might be able to pass for blue, but what about the yellows, and reds? It is just as impossible for them to become blue as it is for many of us to conform to the standards of beauty and cool that we see in the media.)
- How will the Smarties feel, not being able to live up to the image dictated by the media?
- (Share the Smarties with your class and remind them that statistics can be fun!)

### **Cool Hunters**

How important is "coolness" to marketers? Marketing companies who want to attract kids and teens will hire people to act as "cool hunters." These cool hunters go to places where young people hang out (school yards, basketball courts, skateboard parks, clubs etc.) in order to identify and interview "trend setters" – those really cool kids and teens who are more avant-garde than their peers, but whose tastes might eventually be adopted by the general population. Other versions of cool hunting include:

- Online communities that have been created by marketers for kids and teens on the Internet, where they can determine the hottest trends by asking kids who visit the site to fill out online questionnaires and surveys.
- Reverse cool hunting, where instead of looking for kids who are setting trends, marketers target popular kids and give them free merchandise in order to influence their peers.

Ask students:

- If you were a cool hunter, what personality traits would you look for in a trend setter?
- Just because you are "ordinary" and not a trend setter, does that make you any less cool as an individual?

### **Activity 1**

To help students understand how their perceptions about coolness are affected by the media, have them complete their *Anatomy of Cool Questionnaire*. Once they have completed the questionnaires, review their answers and tally class results.

- Who do students consider to have the greatest influence on their perceptions of coolness?
- Compare the brands they chose to the actual *Kids World Survey Results*. This survey was conducted in 1996. Which brands are still considered to be cool? Which brands are no longer cool? What new brands emerged in the class results?
- Review Gene Del Vecchio's comments about what makes a product cool (it's what the psyche wants; it's what you aspire to; it's exclusive; it's "forbidden;" it's to-the-minute) and ask students how these elements apply to the products or brands that they consider to be cool.

## Activity 2

- Ask students to brainstorm media images of cool. Most of these images will be connected to having something: the right sneakers, the right look, the right music.
- Who are the most influential people in determining what is cool? (E.g., television/movie celebrities, hip hop artists, models in magazines, athletes.)
- Do we make any assumptions about the lives of people who are cool? What assumptions do we make?
- Ask students how many of them think that they are influenced by media images of what's cool.
- Tell them to look at what they are wearing and the way that they look. (Did they buy those sneakers because they are considered cool? Are they wearing their hair a certain way because they saw the style on someone they consider to be cool?)
- What do advertisers say we must have in order to be cool?

## Divide students into groups.

- Have each group elect one member to lie on the floor and let himself/herself be traced onto paper.
- Tell groups that they are going to create a "Media Kid," a kid who is totally influenced by what the media says you have to have in order to be cool.
- Have students "dress" their media kid in the latest fashions with hand drawn clothing and accessories, or with real items pinned on. Have them create a cartoon character's "sound bubble" or make a tape demonstrating how this cool person would talk.
- When students have finished, they can present their "cool kids" to the rest of the class and display them around the classroom.

## Activity 3

- Have students look at the celebrity pictures that they have brought in.
- How are these people different from themselves, their friends, and their families?
- Stage real life freezes, in which students imitate the poses of these celebrities (especially facial expressions). Do they feel cool, or silly? Are these poses natural, or contrived?
- Remind students of the two definitions of cool. Which of these celebrities are cool because of their looks or what they own, and which are cool because of what they do?

Tell students to take out their photos and, on a bulletin board, post the categories:

### ***Real Cool*** and ***Media Cool***.

- On the ***Real Cool*** side of the board, have students create a collage out of the photos of themselves and their 'Cool Friend' descriptions. This section can also include celebrity images if students have agreed that they are more than just externally cool.
- On the ***Media Cool*** side of the board, have students create a collage of media images.

## Evaluation

- Class participation
- Written work
- Media Kids

## The Anatomy of Cool: Questionnaire

How do your attitudes about what is cool measure up against those of other kids? Answer the following questions and find out! (And be honest – this quiz is intended to help you learn about yourself.)

**1. Do you think that it is important to have cool clothes and accessories? Circle one answer.**

Very Important      Somewhat Important      Not Important

**2. Think carefully. Which of these groups has the most influence on what you consider to be cool? Why?**

- your friends
- kids you know who are a little older than you
- kids who are really popular
- celebrities

**3. Name the first five brand names that come to mind for stuff like clothing, food, sports items and games. (Don't think about it, just write down the first five brand names that come to mind!)**

## Kids World Survey Results

*Kids World* magazine asked its readers about the importance of wearing 'cool' clothes and accessories. While two thirds of kids thought that it was important to have cool clothes and accessories (34% thought it was very important, while 39% thought it was at least somewhat important) there were a quarter of kids who did not think having cool clothes and accessories was important.

When respondents were asked to name the first five brand names that come to mind for stuff like clothing, food, sports items and games, the brands that had the strongest brand identification were those that related to sports clothing and blue jeans. The top twenty brand names are in the table below.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Nike	32%	11. No Fear	6%
2. Adidas	25%	12. Kraft	5%
3. Levi's	15%	13. Sega Genesis	5%
4. Reebok	15%	14. Calvin Klein	4%
5. Umbro	9%	15. Gasoline	4%
6. Guess	8%	16. Bauer	4%
7. Nintendo	7%	17. Hostess	3%
8. Brooks	7%	18. Parker Brothers	3%
9. Gap	7%	19. Bugle Boy	3%
10. Starters	7%	20. Kellogg's	3%

Source: *Kids World National Elementary School Kid's Survey, 1996-1997*



MEDIA  
AWARENESS  
NETWORK

www.media-awareness.ca

Level: Grades 8-12

**About the Author**  
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perspective on  
commercialism and  
consumerism in today's  
society.

## Lesson Plan

# The Price of Happiness: On Advertising, Image, and Self Esteem

## Overview

In this lesson students answer a brief questionnaire related to self-image, self-esteem, and advertising, and then work as groups to create and act in mock television commercials that parody advertising techniques.

## Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- understanding of the ways in which advertising presents images of men and women which are limited in their scope;
- understanding of the ways in which advertising presents images of appearance, personality traits and societal roles of men and women that are sometimes neither appropriate or desirable.
- awareness of how their own feelings of happiness and esteem may be affected by advertising.

## Preparation and Materials

- Create an overhead for *Definition of Advertising*

Photocopy student handouts:

- *Advertising and Image*
- *Student Questionnaire*
- *What Do Advertisements Tell Us?*

## Procedure

Inform students that you are asking them to complete a brief, anonymous questionnaire. Distribute the *Student Questionnaires* and allow a few minutes for students to complete them.

*Optional: Ask for a team of volunteers to tally the responses. Present the results to the class. Are the results what students would have expected?*

Present the *Definition of Advertising*, as provided on your overhead. Briefly discuss:

- Are ads more likely to make people feel satisfied or dissatisfied with themselves?

- Why would it be to an advertiser's advantage to make people feel satisfied or dissatisfied with themselves?
- In what ways do ads benefit us?
- Are ads created primarily for the consumer's benefit or the advertiser's benefit?
- Introduce the concepts of self-image and self-esteem:
  - *Self-image* is a person's image or conception of himself or herself
  - *Self-esteem* is a person's conception of her or his own worth; belief in oneself; self-respect
- Distribute the background readings *Advertising and Image and What Do Advertisements Tell Us?* Allow time for students to read them.
- Discuss key points.

#### **Activities**

- Divide the class into small groups of three to four students. Explain that students will be creating mock TV commercials. Allow each group to choose a particular type of product, such as soft drinks, tennis shoes, makeup, etc., avoiding duplication of product type.
- Clarify that the assignment is for each group to plan and act out a commercial for the class. The goal is to reflect or parody how real commercials often rely on manipulation of viewers' self-image or self-esteem in an attempt to influence them to purchase a product. (If you wish, discuss the concepts of caricature and parody.) Remind students that real commercials are typically no more than 60 seconds in length. You may want to help them get started by brainstorming a list of image-related ad themes, such as hair, skin, weight, and looking cool, sexy, athletic, tough, etc.
- Explain that groups need to develop a logically consistent framework for their product and ad. As they plan, students should write on paper and/or on the board:
  - their names
  - the product type they have chosen
  - names for their company and product
  - what segment of the public they are targeting or marketing their product to.

*Note: Minimizing planning time will allow for more in-depth discussion later.*

- Have students present their commercials.
- Review major points from *Advertising and Image and What Do Advertisements Tell Us?* To provide closure, discuss:

- Ads tend to present a limited view of the personality traits and societal roles that are appropriate or desirable for boys and girls, men and women.
- Ads can foster an unnatural level of preoccupation with appearance.
- Ads can present unreal, unattainable images of physical attractiveness.
- Ads can injure our self image and self esteem... if we let them.
- In what ways does advertising benefit us as consumers?
- Are you likely to look at ads any differently now? In what way?

### **Variations/Extensions**

- Request that students draft a complete, written script for their commercial prior to performing it. Or, if equipment is available, videotape the commercials.
- To assist students in gathering their thoughts, incorporate short writing assignments after each main segment of the activity: the questionnaire, reading, commercials, and discussion.
- Analyze and discuss racial stereotypes in advertising: Do ads tend to present a limited view of the appearances, personality traits, or societal roles that are appropriate or common for people of various racial or ethnic backgrounds? (African Americans as athletes and musicians, etc.)
- Discuss ads directed at men or women in terms of the ads' effect on the opposite sex. What kinds of images or expectations of appearance, personality traits, and societal roles may be fostered by advertising?
- Discuss the ethical implications for advertisers of some of the concerns raised in this activity. (Should all advertisers be painted with the same brush because of the actions of a few individual advertisers? What are the rights and responsibilities of advertisers, as individual companies and as an industry?)
- Discuss the use of uniforms in schools in light of considerations raised in this activity.

### **Evaluation**

- Framework for commercials and group presentations.



Overhead

## **Definition of Advertising**

### Definition of Advertising

#### advertise:

- 1. to tell about or praise ( a product, service, etc.) publicly, as through newspapers, handbills, radio, etc., so as to make people want to buy it;**
- 2. to make known; give notice of;**
- 3. to call the public's attention to.**

#### advertisement:

- 1. the act of advertising;**
- 2. a public notice or announcement, usually paid for, as of things for sale, needs, etc.**

(New World Dictionary, Second College Edition)

## **Advertising and Image**

### **Do advertisements influence our self image and our self esteem?**

Some critics accuse marketers of systematically creating anxiety, promoting envy, and fostering feelings of inadequacy and insecurity to sell us their products. Marketers respond that advertising does nothing more than mirror society's values, alert people to new products and bargains, or motivate people to switch brands. At the very worst, they say, it bores or annoys.

Of course, some ads provide information useful to consumers. And advertising clearly plays a valid role in an economy based on a system of free enterprise. The question is not whether advertising is valid; clearly, it is.

The concern discussed here is the relationship between the images presented in ads and our sense of self. Can ads influence what we perceive as valid roles for ourselves in our society? And can our self-image and self-esteem be influenced by advertising?

What are the images that ads present? Everywhere we turn, advertisements tell us what it means to be a desirable man or woman. Ads paint limited images of what men and women can be. Because ads are everywhere in our society, these limited images sink into our conscious and unconscious minds. In this way, ads help limit our understanding of our worth and our full potential.

Ads tend to present women in limited roles. Girls and women in ads show concern about their bodies, their clothes, their homes, and the need to attract a boy or man. Seldom are women shown in work settings, business roles, or positions of responsibility and authority. Our society recognizes many valid roles for women, but this isn't always reflected in ads.

Also, the girls and women in ads are presented as "beautiful." But ads offer a very limited, narrow image of beauty. The advertising industry favors models with facial features that look Anglo, even if the model is Black or Hispanic.

Ads also present a very thin body type as though it were the most common or most desirable body type. Researchers have found that girls and women who work as models weigh 23% less than the average female their age. And the hips of an average department store mannequin measure six inches less than that of the average young woman.

Girls, women, boys, and men seeing these commercial images may be influenced to think of an ultra-thin female body as more normal or desirable than one of average weight. The extreme preoccupation with weight fostered by advertising images is reflected in the fact that 80% of 10-year-old girls report having dieted and that eight million American women suffer from anorexia or bulimia, two potentially life-threatening eating disorders.

In reality, many different kinds of facial features and body types are beautiful. Besides, the flawless appearance of women in ads isn't even real. It's an illusion created by makeup artists, photographers, and photo retouchers. Each image is carefully worked over. Blemishes, wrinkles, and stray hairs are airbrushed away.

Teeth and eyeballs are bleached white. In some cases, the picture you see is actually made of several photos. The face of one model may be combined with the body of a second model and the legs of a third.

So many of the pictures we see are artificial, manufactured images. What happens when a girl or woman compares her *real* self with this narrow, unreal image of "perfection"? She may feel unattractive. When her self-image suffers, often her self-esteem is damaged too. She then looks for ways to improve her image and self-esteem.

Ads also present an image of the "ideal" male. Although ads targeting boys and men do not present as narrow an imaginary physical ideal as do ads targeting girls and women, they still present a very limited view of masculinity. For girls and women, body image is emphasized in most ads. For boys and men, the image emphasized is an image of attitude. Boys and young men in ads typically play the part of someone who is cool and confident, independent, even a rebel. Men in ads tend to have an aura of power, physical strength, confidence, dominance, and detachment. The implied message for the viewer is that this is the way to be cool, this is the way a young man should act.

The male image shown in ads almost never includes such traits as sensitivity, vulnerability, or compassion. This may discourage boys and men from displaying these natural and desirable human traits. Ads may thus limit a boy or man's sense of what he can or should be.

The actors in ads tend to be handsome, with clear complexions and hair that is perfectly combed or perfectly windblown. They are also almost always athletic. Physical or even sexual prowess is suggested in scenes of physically challenging, dangerous, or aggressive sports. The self-image of boys and men who do not exhibit these traits for example, who have normal complexions, are not athletic, and don't feel cool and confident may suffer when they watch these ads. Negative feelings about oneself, whether related to appearance or anything else, can be followed by lower self-esteem.

#### **Ads offer to sell a new self-image.**

Of course, the ads that injure our self-image and self-esteem don't stop there. They conveniently offer to sell a product that will solve our newly imagined "problem."

Consider this quote from Nancy Shalek, president of an advertising agency: "Advertising at its best is making people feel that without their product, you're a loser. Kids are very sensitive to that. If you tell them to buy something, they are resistant. But if you tell them they'll be a dork if they don't, you've got their attention. You open up emotional vulnerabilities and it's very easy to do with kids because they're the most emotionally vulnerable." Another person involved in marketing, Charles Kettering, said that selling new products is about "the organized creation of dissatisfaction."

Many commonly accepted ideas about appearance — for example, that skin should be blemish free and teeth bright white — are not absolute truths. These expectations were artificially created over a period of years by those who wanted to sell certain kinds of products and promoted the idea that we needed those products if our physical appearance was to be acceptable.

**Let's take a closer look at this emphasis on appearance.**

Ads tend to convey the idea that appearance is all-important. They teach us to be self-conscious about how we look. When we grow up surrounded by ads, intense self-scrutiny may seem normal.

Of course, all cultures have their own ideas about the traits that make a boy or man and a girl or woman attractive. Often these ideas are very, very different than our own. Rather, it is the level of concern with physical appearance that makes modern Americans unique. The intense concern with appearance that is so common in our culture has not been the norm in most cultures. It is an artificial concern that we have acquired from living immersed in a society dominated by commercialism.

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Student Handout #2

## The Price of Happiness: Student Questionnaire

Circle "yes" if something has been true once or many times and "no" if it has never been true. Your answers will remain anonymous.

- I have sometimes felt bad about myself for not having something. Yes No
- I have felt that others might like me more if I owned a certain item. Yes No
- An ad has made me feel that I would like myself more, or that others would like me more, if I owned the product that the ad was selling. Yes No
- I sometimes worry about my appearance, about whether I look attractive. Yes No
- I have felt that others might like me more if I looked different — if my face, body, skin, or hair were different. Yes No
- An ad has made me feel that I would like myself more, or that others would like me more, if I could change my appearance with the product that the ad was selling. Yes No
- I would like others to form their opinion of me based on:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ what I look like and what I own
  - \_\_\_\_\_ my personality and character traits

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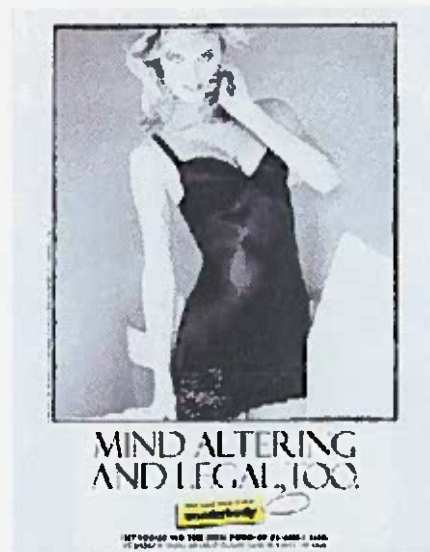
Student Handout #3

## What Do Advertisements Tell Us About Being a Man or Being a Woman?



Attitude is everything - advertisements directed toward men often suggest that the male ideal is embodied by such traits as brawn and brutishness.

J.CREW

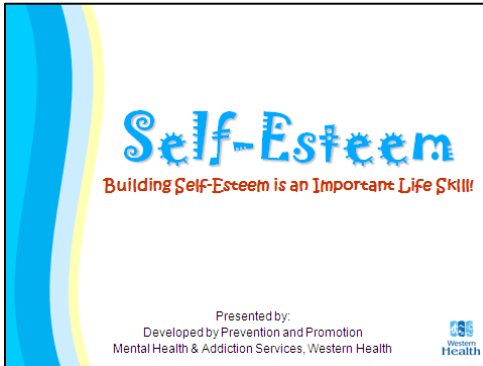
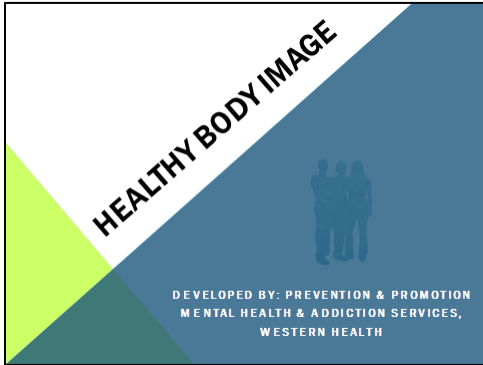


Advertising often projects a very narrow image of youth and beauty, as though this image were an ideal toward which all girls and women should aspire. What explicit and implicit messages are absorbed by young girls after years of exposure to such advertising?

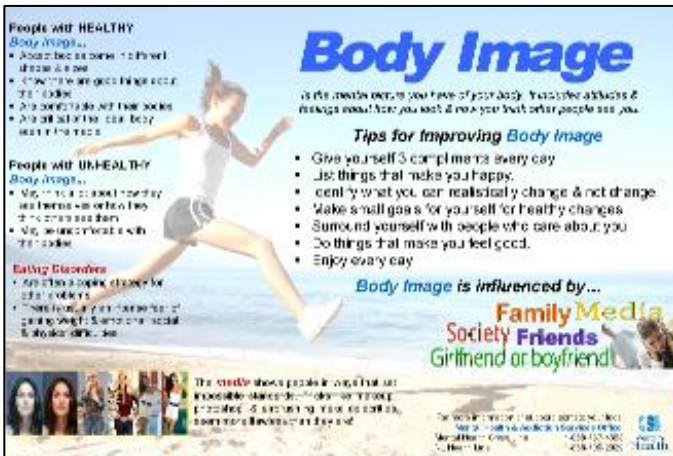
## Other Available Resources

Please contact the Regional Mental Health Promotion Consultant for more information or to borrow these resources.

### Power Point Presentations



### 24" x 36" Poster Displays



# Body Image

Is this media making you feel a poor body? You should know it's not you about how you look & how you look after 250,000,000 you.

## Tips for Improving Body Image

- Give yourself 5 compliments every day
- List things that make you happy.
- Identify what you can realistically change & not change
- Make small goals for yourself for healthy changes
- Surround yourself with people who care about you.
- Do things that make you feel good.
- Enjoy every day

**Peepie with HEALTHY Body Image...**

- Accept bodies of all different shapes & sizes.
- Don't blame a good or right about themselves.
- Accept yourself with the body as an image of the ideal body next to the media.

**Peepie with UNHEALTHY Body Image...**

- May think a lot about how they are or how they are not. They think others are trying to control them or their looks.

**Eat Up Disadvantages**

- Are they eating a diet for diet problems?
- Are they eating a diet for diet problems?

The media shows people things that are impossible to reach. They are unrealistic. They are unrealistic. They are unrealistic.

Body Image is influenced by...

Family Media  
Society Friends  
Girlfriend or boyfriend

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# SELF-ESTEEM

## Good Self-Esteem Means:

- Feeling good about yourself most of the time.
- Having a good opinion of yourself.
- Having a positive attitude.
- Setting the right goals for you.

## Self-Esteem is Important

- Feeling good about yourself helps you try new things.
- When you like yourself, you are more likely to feel that things people will like you.
- If you believe you can learn a new sport or skill, you are more likely to try it.

## Self-Esteem is Shaped By:

- Body Image - the pressure to be the "perfect" or "ideal" body shape & size or to look a certain way.
- Knowing your good qualities & not dwelling on faults or failures.
- Experiences with peers, media images & self-criticism, family & friends.

## 10 Tips for Building Self-Esteem

Develop your self-esteem. Take time & practice!

1. Set small, realistic goals & stick with it!
2. Deciding to change must come from you, not others.
3. Use what you are proud of yourself & build on it.
4. Celebrate things you are proud of & look back on it!
5. Accept compliments & ignore insults.
6. Replace negative with positive thoughts.
7. Be generous - go out there to make a difference.
8. Build a support system of family & friends.
9. Accept yourself - don't compare yourself to others.
10. Change how you think about yourself. How you look or feel. You are more than your looks.

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# SEXTING: Not a reason to LOL.

*Did You Know?*

Teens sext to be fun or flirty, or feel sexy, as a joke, because of peer pressure or in return for another photo.

*Did You Know?*

Sexting is dangerous - individuals could be charged with the making of, possession & distribution of child pornography (if under 18 years).

**Sexting** is sending & receiving sexually suggestive, nude or semi-nude photos & sexually suggestive content in a text message.

## Tips for Teens

- If you receive a sexual image of someone under 18, DO NOT forward or share it with anyone else as it could be considered **distributing pornography**.
- DO NOT delete - contact the police immediately!
- Remember... what you post online **stays online**.
- Don't take an image you don't want your parents, the police, your principal or a predator to see.
- What you store on your phone is not always private. How careful are you with your phone? Do others use it?
- If you care about someone, tell them, don't send a sext & don't ask for one.

Teens who pay their own phone bill & have an unlimited text plan are more likely to sext.

Teens aged 13-17 send/receive nearly 4000 texts/month.

75% of teens believe sexting is dangerous, however 39% admit they've done it.

70% sext a boyfriend or girlfriend.

39% sexted the wrong recipient.

52% of females sexted as a 'present' for their significant other.

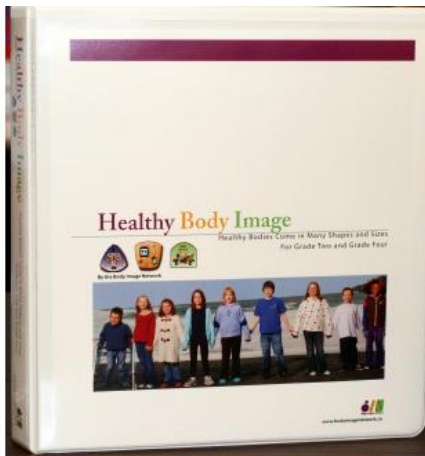
**OMG!**

For support, contact your local Mental Health & Addiction Services Office.

Mental Health Crisis Line: 1-888-737-4668  
KOB Help Phone: 1-800-666-6868  
NL Health Line: 1-888-709-2929 #EHealth



## Healthy Body Image Tool Kit (Gr. 2 & 4)



Healthy Bodies Come in Many Shapes and Sizes  
For Grade Two and Grade Four  
By the Body Image Network

## Girls Circle - Body Image Program (8 weeks for Girls Ages 12 to 18)



## G.I.R.L.'s Run Program (learn-to-run program)

- To encourage girls to take up running as a fun physical activity.
- To foster a non-competitive and social running group.
- To provide girls with positive healthy messages about wellness.
- To encourage girls to learn about their physical strengths, develop positive body image and self-confidence



## Spin Quest Board – Body Image & Self-Esteem Question Set



## Sources & Web Links

- Body Image Network  
[www.bodyimagenetwork.ca](http://www.bodyimagenetwork.ca)
- Dove Self-Esteem Resources [www.dove.ca](http://www.dove.ca)
- National Eating Disorder Information Centre  
[www.nedic.ca](http://www.nedic.ca)
- Eating Disorders Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador [www.edfnl.ca/](http://www.edfnl.ca/)
- Kids Help Phone [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)
- Teens Health [www.teenshealth.org](http://www.teenshealth.org)
- Media Smarts - Body Image Resources  
[www.mediasmarts.ca](http://www.mediasmarts.ca)
- © One Circle Foundation, Body Image Program (2009). [www.girlscircle.com](http://www.girlscircle.com)
- The Body Image Project Tool Kit, Eating Disorders Action Group [www.edaq.ca](http://www.edaq.ca)
- Purdue Extension. *Healthy Body Image: A lesson plan for high school students.*  
[www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/CFS/CFS-737-W.pdf](http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/CFS/CFS-737-W.pdf)
- Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines  
[www.csep.ca/guidelines](http://www.csep.ca/guidelines)
- Healthy Canada Eat Well & Be Active Educational Toolkit  
[www.health.gc.ca/eatwell-beactive](http://www.health.gc.ca/eatwell-beactive)
- A Quest for Health Program – A Toolkit for Speakers on the prevention of eating disorders. [www.sheenasplace.org](http://www.sheenasplace.org)
- Born This Way Foundation  
<http://bornthiswayfoundation.org/>
- Girl Time: Grade 7 & 8 Healthy Sexuality Program. Ontario Women's Health Council. Session 3: Body Awareness (2001-2003).
- Girls Talk Anti-Stigma Program, sessions 6 and 7. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2009). [www.camh.ca](http://www.camh.ca)

### Videos

- Cover Girl Culture & Seeing Through the Media Matrix DVD & Study Guide  
[www.covergirlculture.com](http://www.covergirlculture.com)
- Sexy Inc. Our Children Under Influence - Documentary and Facilitation Guide  
[www.nfb.ca](http://www.nfb.ca)
- Media Education Foundation – Documentary Films Challenging Media  
[www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org)





**2012**