



#8649

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## BODY TALK: TEENS TALK ABOUT THEIR BODIES, EATING DISORDERS & ACTIVISM

Grade Levels: 6-13+  
28 minutes

FILM IDEAS, INC. 1999

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### DESCRIPTION

Accepting one's body is a serious issue for teens. A diverse group of teenagers discuss how mass media, family, friends, and their own expectations influence how they perceive their body shapes. All agree that a healthy self-esteem and self-perception are the keys to coping with the false messages of what constitutes an ideal body.

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### ACADEMIC STANDARDS

#### Subject Area: Health

- ◆ Standard: Knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health
  - Benchmark: Understands how various messages from the media, technology, and other sources impact health practices (e.g., health fads, advertising, misconceptions about treatment and prevention options)
- ◆ Standard: Knows how to maintain mental and emotional health
  - Benchmark: Knows characteristics and conditions associated with positive self-esteem

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### INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To define *body image*.
2. To study critical thinking about messages from family, friends, and media that contribute to body shame, an obsession with dieting, and eating disorders.
3. To identify and explore stereotypes directed at obese people.
4. To depict the importance of resisting negative and confusing messages about one's body while encouraging to develop a positive and accepting body image, including changing the way one talks about oneself.
5. To assist people to decode "I feel fat" and identify solutions to the real concerns in their lives.
6. To encourage eating in response to hunger.
7. To encourage youth-led activism projects on body acceptance.

8. To provide opportunity to discuss common body-related concerns so that one will not feel abnormal or isolated with their struggles.
9. To raise awareness about the link between dieting, compulsive overeating, and eating disorders.

## AFTER SHOWING

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### Discussion Items and Questions

1. Share comments and questions about "The Message" section of *BodyTalk*.
2. What is *body image*?
3. Who defines what is beautiful in this culture?
4. Share comments and questions about the "What We Do With the Message" section of *BodyTalk*.
5. How have you used food or eating to cope with bad feelings?
6. What situations led you to begin a diet?
7. How do you feel emotionally and physically when you are dieting?
8. What factors might contribute to the fact that 9 out of 10 people with eating disorders are female?
9. Share comments and questions about "Resistance and Change" section of *BodyTalk*.
10. How is discrimination against people because of their size similar to racism or sexism?
11. How would you feel if you really loved your body, even with all its "imperfections"?
12. What would you be free to do if you accepted your body?



### Applications and Activities

1. Observe the types of messages that contribute to your body dissatisfaction and eating problems. Fight back by developing strategies to resist those messages. Is there a difference in how you feel about your body?
2. Observe discrimination directed at people because of their size and shape. Fight back by defending someone who is getting teased or harassed about their size or appearance.
3. Observe media and advertising messages that make you feel badly about your body. Fight back by creating an activism project to communicate your feelings to the companies that sponsor unhealthy and hateful images about your body.
4. Make a list of the comments you have made about your body, both in your head and out loud since waking this morning. What is the tone of your internal dialogue? Identify the sources of any negative internal commentary.
5. Observe how many times in one day you criticize other people's appearances or bodies. How does this practice make you feel? How does it affect the people around you?
6. Explore some of the side effects of dieting discussed in the video.
7. Write an essay about the messages you receive about your body and the food you eat from media, family, friends, and at school. How do those messages affect your body image?
8. Watch 30 minutes of television with a critical eye. Observe how obese people are portrayed. What stereotypes are promoted? Share your findings with your classmates.

9. Calculate the amount of money and time you've spent in the past week on fashion or fitness magazines, beauty products, and weight-loss or weight-gain products. Figure out the total you'd spend in one year to attempt to improve your body. If everyone accepted themselves as they are and not buy such products, how much would have been saved and what else could have been done with the money?

## RELATED RESOURCES



### Captioned Media Program

- A Century of Women's Image #8051
- I Like Being Me: Self-Esteem #2616



### World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid-safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **GIRL POWER! BODY WISE**

<http://www.health.org/gpower/girlarea/bodywise/>

For girls, learn to love and take care of your body. Topics covered include "Body Image & You!" "Facts About Eating Disorders," and other topics.

- **NAAFA**

<http://www.naafa.org/>

The National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance aims to improve the quality of life for fat people, to eliminate discrimination based on size and to provide tools for self-empowerment.

- **BODY POSITIVE**

<http://www.bodypositive.com/>

Looks at ways people can feel good in their bodies. Topics include "How to Make the Argument for Size Acceptance," "200 Ways to Love the Body You Have," "Large Women," and more.