

#9911

THE MIRROR IN MY MIND: BODY IMAGE & SELF-ESTEEM

AIMS MULTIMEDIA, 2002

Grade Level: 7-12

29 mins.

1 Instructional Graphic Enclosed

DESCRIPTION

Personal body image develops during the teen years and greatly affects people for the rest of their lives. False visual information about body shape distorts teens' self-perception. This frequently leads to anorexia, steroid use, or drug abuse. Several teens share personal experiences about their perceived flaws. Discusses warning signs of body dysmorphic disorder. Encourages changing negative self-talk, and promotes the understanding that there is more to a person than just his or her physical appearance

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) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1.)
- Standard: Knows how to maintain mental and emotional health
 - ◆ Benchmark: Knows characteristics and conditions associated with positive self-esteem (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3 and 6.)
- Standard: Understands essential concepts about nutrition and diet
 - ◆ Benchmark: Knows appropriate methods to maintain, lose, or gain weight according to individual needs and scientific research (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 4, 5 and 6.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Knows eating disorders that affect health adversely (e.g., anorexia, overeating, bulimia) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 4 and 5.)
- Standard: Understands aspects of substance use and abuse
 - ◆ Benchmark: Knows the short- and long-term consequences of the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (e.g., physical consequences such as shortness of breath, cirrhosis, lung cancer, emphysema; psychological consequences such as low self-esteem, paranoia, depression, apathy; social

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consequences such as crime, domestic violence, loss of friends) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 5.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To understand that the media's digitally altered images of "beautiful" are not only false images, but also represent an ideal to which real teens can never measure up.
2. To realize that physical flaws over which many teens obsess are often things that no one but themselves even notice.
3. To discuss how anxiety over physical appearance can lead teens to lowered self-esteem.
4. To define, and examine the effects of, BDD—body dysmorphic disorder, and other eating disorders.
5. To examine the relationship between distorted body image and the incidence of eating disorders and drug use by teens.
6. To illustrate steps to building a healthy self-image.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For many people, especially teens, self-image is inextricably linked to body image—how an individual perceives his or her physical appearance. Poor body image can lead to low self-esteem, which, in turn, can be a factor in eating disorders, drug abuse, and in extreme cases, BDD—body dysmorphic disorder.

VOCABULARY

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. anorexia nervosa | 7. cognitive behavior therapy | 13. narcotics |
| 2. anxiety | 8. compulsion | 14. obsession |
| 3. appearance | 9. cosmetic surgery | 15. perceived defect |
| 4. BDD | 10. eating disorder | 16. puberty |
| 5. body image | 11. ideal | 17. self-esteem |
| 6. bulimia | 12. inferior | 18. self-perception |
| | | 19. steroids |

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Discuss the media's influence on people.
 - a. What effect, if any, do you think the media has on how people feel about their appearance?
 - b. Have you ever felt personally affected by how the media portrays men, women, or teens? Explain.
2. Define *body image*. Discuss positive and negative body images. Give examples from personal experiences.

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Consider pausing the video after different scenes to discuss the information presented.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Describe some of the physical changes that occur during puberty. What effect does puberty have on an individual's perception of their body image?
2. How are self-perception and self-esteem related?
3. How does the media influence our general concept of beauty? How can the media alter an individual's perception of his or her own body?
4. When a person becomes obsessed with imagined personal physical flaws, what can happen to his or her self-esteem?
5. Which unhealthy behaviors does the program discuss in relation to obsessions about weight?
6. Why do some teens use steroids? What does one male former student say happened eventually as a result of using steroids?
7. What are some factors that contribute to our sense of self-worth?
8. What behaviors might be displayed by a teen who feels abnormal, inadequate, or embarrassed by an imagined physical flaw, such as being over- or underweight?
9. How may a person try to escape the psychological pain of chronic low self-esteem?
10. What is *BDD*? List some common warning signs of BDD. Describe ways a person can help someone with BDD.
11. Is there one perfect body type for males or females?
12. Where do people get their concepts of physical beauty? Are they the same everywhere?
13. The program narrator states that there is something very attractive about a person "who is comfortable in their own skin." What does this mean?
14. What can people do to develop a healthy self-image? What effect does negative self-talk have on a person's self-concept and self-esteem?
15. How would you suggest someone change from a habit of negative self-talk to one of positive self-talk?

Applications and Activities

1. Work in small groups to research and report on health and nutrition topics. Share the findings with the class. Topics might include:
 - a. The food pyramid: What are the different food groups, and what foods are in each?
 - b. Meals and snacks: How many servings from each food group should the average person consume each day? How many meals and snack per day? Why?
 - c. Nutritional needs: Are there different nutritional needs for different age groups? For males and females? If so, what are they?
 - d. Physical fitness: What is *physical fitness*? What are its components? What amount of activity is necessary for the average person to maintain overall fitness?

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- e. Daily vitamin requirements: What are *vitamins*? What is the recommended dietary allowance for major vitamins? How do vitamins work?
2. Investigate the standards of beauty in different countries. Research the correlation between a culture's standard of beauty and the incidences of eating disorders in that culture.
3. In small groups, find three advertisements that claim quick weight loss, or an easy way to gain a perfect body.
 - a. Investigate the scientific basis of the remedy, if any.
 - b. Identify the "hot button" words that are used to sell the product, such as "secret," "special," "ancient," "quick," and "painless."
 - c. Discuss why consumers should be skeptical of what the ad claims.
4. Investigate self-talk.
 - a. Complete the "Healthy Self-Talk" worksheet. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC.)
 - b. Note personal self-talk in a journal over several days. Identify the negative and positive self-talk. Note the possible origins of each message. Convert the negative messages to positive messages.
5. Create personal collages to express inner beauty.
 - a. On a large piece of paper, draw an outline of your head and shoulders.
 - b. Cut out pictures from magazines to represent your interests, talents, accomplishments, and other qualities.
 - c. Paste the selected pictures inside the drawing of your head and shoulders.
 - d. Display the finished collages.
6. Research and report on the consequences of anabolic steroids use by both adolescent and adult males, and adolescent and adult females. Share the reports in presentations to the class.
7. Investigate how the standard of beauty has changed over time from the 15th through the early 20th centuries.
 - a. Note the idealized beauty of men and women as depicted in art and sculpture.
 - b. Write a brief report to present to the class.
 - c. Use visuals to support the findings.
8. Reflect on the information learned from the video and related class activities. Write or share what, if any, change has taken place in your attitudes or beliefs about body image.
 - a. What do you think of as a healthy body image?
 - b. Does this differ in any way from what you think of as an "ideal" body image? If so, how? If not, is your "healthy" body image in fact a truly healthy one?

SUMMARY

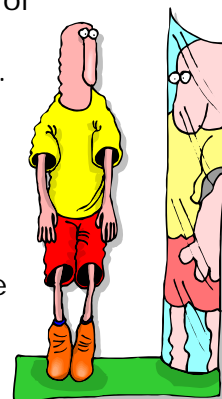
Body image anxiety is a problem for many teens, who exaggerate perceived flaws and depress themselves with negative self-talk. This lively program takes students on a carnival ride of self-discovery, where they find that the funhouse mirrors show distorted reflections that are no "fun" at all. Students learn that constantly comparing their appearance with that of their peers and idealized media images can result in a distorted image of their own bodies and a loss of self-esteem. Obsession and despair over physical appearance leads some teens into the

trap of eating disorders—such as anorexia and bulimia—and the use of steroids and other drugs. Young people who have endured experiences with eating disorders and substance abuse share their stories of coping and survival.

Some individuals become so disaffected through their obsession with physical appearance that they spiral down into BDD—body dysmorphic disorder—a dangerously depressed state in which teens may even attempt suicide. A psychiatrist who treats BDD patients explains the effects of the disorder, its warning signs, and ways to assist the BDD-affected individual.

Viewers learn the many factors that contribute to a person's sense of self-worth, such as an individual's talents, intelligence, success in relationships, and the love and support of family members and friends. They also learn steps to take in eliminating the toxic habit of negative self-talk and replacing it with the uplifting power of positive self-talk.

Innovative special effects show students the images created by that distorting funhouse mirror in our minds. Candid self-analysis from a varied group of teens shows: how they have coped with their own image issues, how to tame that funhouse mirror, how to eliminate distorted body images—and gain self acceptance.



CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- *Body Talk: Teens Talk About Their Bodies, Eating Disorders & Activism* #8649
- *A Century of Women: Image* #8051
- *Eating Disorders* #9102
- *Straight Talk About Mental Health: Image and Identity* #10041
- *What's Up with Middle School Guys?* #10160

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.

• TEENS HEALTH

<http://www.kidshealth.org/teen>

This site, written for teenagers, is loaded with information about teen health issues. Use the search engine to locate information on body image, eating disorders, dietary and sports supplements, and more.



- **THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANOREXIA NERVOSA AND ASSOCIATED DISORDERS–ANAD**

<http://www.anad.org/site/anadweb/>

The ANAD provides support for those struggling with eating disorders. The site has eating disorder information and resources along with support groups, treatment information, and services and programs.

- **THE NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS ASSOCIATION**

http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/p.asp?WebPage_ID=337

Find information about various eating disorders, treatment options, various program operated by the NEDA, research, support groups, and more.

- **ADOLESCENCE - DEVELOPING A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE**

http://www.dairycouncilofca.org/edu/edu_prog_adolbody.htm

Sponsored by the Dairy Council of California, this Web site is for educators and health professionals. For teachers, it includes programs and lesson plans, achievement, learning, and health with a focus on healthy nutrition. Downloads and links too.

- **SELF-ESTEEM IN ADOLESCENCE**

<http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/dept/d46/psy/dev/Fall99/esteem/teens.html>

This Web site is introduced with a poem called “The Looking Glass.” Geared mostly toward girls, this page has a definition of self-esteem, factors that affect it, and the media’s role. Then it shares the results of one study called “Ethnic-Minority Girls and Self-Esteem.”

INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC

- **HEALTHY SELF-TALK**

HEALTHY SELF-TALK

Directions—Part A: Below are some common silent criticisms. They are very general and can apply to many different situations. How many have you said to yourself? What positive thoughts can you substitute for the negative when your “internal critic” pops up?

1. I'm not very good at this. _____

2. He/she would never go out with someone like me. _____

3. I'll never be good enough. _____

4. I hate my (fill in the blank: hair, nose, eyes, skin, body, etc.). _____

5. Everyone must think I'm an idiot. _____

6. Nobody likes me. _____

7. I feel/look so stupid! _____

8. I could never look that good. _____

9. Why try? I'll just mess it up. _____

10. What if someone laughs? _____

HEALTHY SELF-TALK (CONTINUED)

Directions—Part B: Think about your personal experience and write a short answer to the questions below.

11. How many “perfect” or “flawless” people do you know? _____

12. How do you feel about friends, family, or classmates who are less than “perfect”? _____

13. If you can accept the people in your life who are less than “perfect,” is there any reason that those people cannot or would not accept you as you are, perfect or not? Explain your answer.

14. What kind of person judges others solely on their physical appearance? _____

15. In your opinion, does anything positive come from “beating yourself up” with negative self-talk? Explain your answer. _____

