

Learning outcomes and resources

IN THIS WORKSHOP STUDENTS WILL:

- **Understand that comparing looks** to individuals and media images is automatic and part of human nature.
- **Identify the ways in which the process of comparing looks often has negative consequences** for themselves and their friends.
- **Develop new ways to respond to comparison situations** that have positive outcomes for themselves and people around them.

RESOURCES YOU WILL NEED:

Workshop materials

Workshop guide

Workshop presentation

Three activity sheets (one set per student)

Going further sheet (one per student)

Stimulus film:

- 'Dove: Change One Thing'

This film reveals to students that the desire to change something about the way we look is normal and is experienced by most people. It encourages students to question why so many people want to change something about their physical appearance. This film demonstrates how futile this dissatisfaction is considering the physical feature you want to change is exactly the physical feature someone else wants to have.

From your school

Projector and whiteboard

Students will each need a pen

OPTIONAL:

Spare paper
Flipchart and markers



Overview

Total time: 45 minutes



INTRODUCING COMPARISONS

13 MINUTES page 5

- What have we learned?
- What are we learning today?
- What ideals are portrayed in the media?
- How do we compare with those around us?
- How do we compare our looks?
- What happens when people compare looks?

PROBLEMS WITH COMPARING

27 MINUTES page 9

- What is the impact of these comparisons?
- The 'whirlpool of comparisons'
- What can we do instead?
- How can we change our script?
- How will you change your script?

BE A CHAMPION FOR CHANGE

5 MINUTES page 13

- What have we learned today?
- How will you be a champion for change?
- Congratulations!
- Going further

How to use this guide

Workshop 3 of 5
Confront Comparisons

Problems with comparing

27 minutes

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Suggested time allocation.

Reflects the relative importance of each section for achieving learning outcomes and improving students' body confidence, but may be adapted to suit the length of your lesson.

Learning outcome. Students should achieve this by the end of the section.

- 1 By the end of this section, students will identify ways in which the process of comparing looks often has negative consequences for themselves and their friends.

Visual cues and learning objectives. To help you steer the workshop and deliver it effectively.

2 PRESENTATION



Students generate examples of the potential impact making appearance-based comparisons can have on people's feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

Teacher actions. Non-italic bullet points highlight important questions to ask students to ensure key workshop concepts are addressed with optimum impact on body confidence. Text in italics indicates instructions to help structure workshop activities, e.g where you should play films or use activity sheets. These can be adapted by you to suit the specific needs of your class.

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TEACHER ACTIONS



- > Explain to students that they are now going to consider the problems comparing their looks can cause.
- > Small group discussions.

- What do you think is the impact of comparing what we don't like about the way we look with people we think look better than us?
- How does this affect our feelings, thoughts and behaviour?

> Invite one or two groups to feed back, using the following questions as further prompts.

- How would these comparisons make people **feel**?
- What sort of things might people **think**?
- What might people **do** as a result?

> Record students' ideas on the whiteboard.

DESIRED RESPONSES



Answers such as sad, dissatisfied, worried, guilty.

Answers could include 'I'm not good enough', 'I need to change', 'I wish I looked like him/her', 'I need to lose weight/build muscles'.

The behaviour it could cause includes extreme dieting, not going out with friends, spending a lot of time/money on appearance.

Desired responses from students. To help you guide students' answers in a way that develops their understanding throughout the workshop and has greatest impact on their body confidence.

Try to guide students to give answers about their feelings, thoughts and behaviour. However, if breaking down ideas into the different categories is too complex for your class, simply compile an overall list of the different negative impacts comparisons might have.

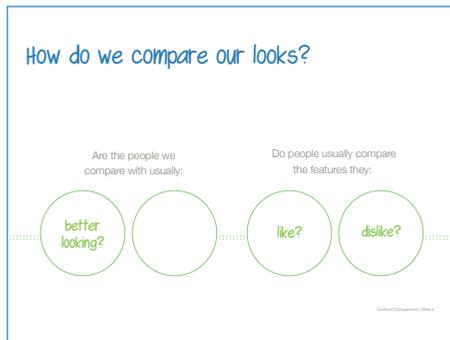
Having negative feelings when you compare doesn't mean there's actually something wrong or that you're really 'worse' than the other person; people can still have strong feelings even if the basis for these feelings isn't true.

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Notes. Ideas and guidance for optimising the effectiveness of the workshop for students.

Key activities. The key activities are those that are most effective for improving body confidence. These are shown in blue and should be prioritised if you are short of time.

PRESENTATION



Students discuss the process of making comparisons.

TEACHER ACTIONS



> Explain that it is important to understand the process of making comparisons. This will help students see whether it is helpful or not, and whether they want to change it.

> Ask students to stand in a line or a circle.

- **Step forward** if you think people most often choose to compare features of their appearance with someone who they think is better looking, or **step back** if you think they compare with people they think are worse looking.

> Explain that when students make comparisons their minds often play tricks on them in the way they go about making these comparisons – by breaking their bodies into pieces rather than considering their whole selves.

- **Step forward** if you think people most often choose to compare the parts of their body they like, or **step back** if you think they compare parts of their body they don't like.

> Instruct students to complete Activity sheet 1, Task 1.1 with the result of their vote.

DESIRED RESPONSES



> We most often compare our appearance with those we think have better features than ourselves.

> People most often choose to compare the parts of their appearance they don't like.

You may want to remind students to keep the comparisons they saw in 'Dove: Change One Thing' in mind.

You can ask students to raise their hands if more appropriate.

Take a moment to allow the students to reflect on the result – is the room evenly split?

You may need to warn the class to be respectful of each other's views, especially those who appear in a minority at any point.

You may need to acknowledge that people sometimes also compare their looks with people they think don't look as good as them, which boosts their confidence. This may be more often true for boys. The problem is that we mostly compare in the other direction. It's important to note that both forms of comparisons can be unhelpful so all students can benefit from learning how to avoid this behaviour.



Students complete the activity sheet with the results of their class vote.

Problems with comparing

27 minutes



By the end of this section, students will identify ways in which the process of comparing looks often has negative consequences for themselves and their friends.

PRESENTATION



What is the impact of these comparisons?

Feelings Thoughts Behaviour

Students generate examples of the potential impact making appearance-based comparisons can have on people's feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

TEACHER ACTIONS



- > Explain to students that they are now going to consider the problems comparing their looks can cause.
- > Small group discussions.

- What do you think is the impact of comparing what we don't like about the way we look with people we think look better than us?
- How does this affect our feelings, thoughts and behaviour?
- > Invite one or two groups to feed back, using the following questions as further prompts.
 - How would these comparisons make people **feel**?
 - What sort of things might people **think**?
 - What might people **do** as a result?

DESIRED RESPONSES



- > Answers such as sad, dissatisfied, worried, guilty.
- > Answers could include 'I'm not good enough', 'I need to change', 'I wish I looked like him/her', 'I need to lose weight/build muscles'.
- > The behaviour it could cause includes extreme dieting, not going out with friends, spending a lot of time/money on appearance.

Try to guide students to give answers about their feelings, thoughts and behaviour. However, if breaking down ideas into the different categories is too complex for your class, simply compile an overall list of the different negative impacts comparisons might have.

Having negative feelings when you compare doesn't mean there's actually something wrong or that you're really 'worse' than the other person; people can still have strong feelings even if the basis for these feelings isn't true.

PRESENTATION



Students understand how the process of making comparisons can leave people trapped in a 'downward spiral' of comparisons, with negative consequences for them and others around them.



Students identify ways they can break free from the 'whirlpool of comparisons'.

TEACHER ACTIONS



> Explain how the process of comparisons can be like a whirlpool as you click through the four slides of the presentation, sharing the narrative below. Click before reading each statement.

- You compare yourself to someone else. How does this make you feel?
- Then you compare yourself again. How do you feel now? Can you think of any reason why this might be worse than before?
- So the more you compare, the worse you feel about yourself.
- So when we get stuck in a comparison 'whirlpool', what impact do you think this has on friends?

- Initiate a class vote.
- **Raise your hand** if you think it would be a good idea to free ourselves from getting caught in a 'downward spiral' of comparisons.
- Invite one or two students to suggest actions they could take instead, before asking students to read aloud the ideas listed in the presentation.

DESIRED RESPONSES



Dissatisfied, critical of your appearance and wanting to change.

You already felt bad; you wish even more that you were different; you are even more aware of others that you feel are better-looking than you; you feel further away from achieving appearance ideals.

Talking and focusing on comparisons can draw our friends in as well. They might start comparing too and feel pressure to match appearance ideals. So then everyone becomes stuck in the 'downward spiral'.

Complimenting others and ourselves on things other than appearance; and focusing on enjoying each other's company rather than being critical of ourselves.

Emphasise the distance from where the figure in the illustration is now from where they started at the top of the whirlpool.

Emphasise the point that when we compare ourselves to others all the time this creates a culture of everyone wanting to look different and feeling bad about themselves, and our words and actions can have a huge impact on those around us.

Help students identify that breaking free from the 'whirlpool of comparisons' means not comparing with people they think look better than them, and not comparing features they don't like about themselves.

PRESENTATION



Students discuss how they can respond differently to conversations about appearance.



Students use role play to practise how they can respond differently to conversations about appearance.



Students note the methods they will personally use to challenge the process of making appearance comparisons.

TEACHER ACTIONS



> Explain that even though it is natural to make comparisons, students can learn to 'catch themselves' when they are about to compare their appearance and, instead, respond in a more positive way to help themselves and others. This takes practice.

> Ask several students for ideas, before sharing the suggestions provided in the presentation.

> Arrange the class in pairs.

> Instruct students to complete Activity sheet 2, rehearsing ways to think and respond differently in comparison situations.

> Invite one or two groups to present their role plays to the class.

> Instruct students to complete Activity sheet 3 independently.

- What are the different ways that you can challenge the process of making appearance comparisons in both yourself and others?

> Invite one or two students to explain why these responses will have positive outcomes for themselves and their friends.

DESIRED RESPONSES



Students can refer to the slide for examples of ways they can 'change their script' to avoid making appearance-based comparisons.

Using role play is an invaluable way to get students into the habit of changing their script when confronted with a variety of different scenarios. Each example is a starting point from which students can identify their own internal scripts. The examples offer students the chance to model more positive responses, which they can then apply to their own lives, while avoiding the need for students to share personal examples.

Encourage students to draw on the 'scripts' they created during the previous role-play activity.

Ask students to write down at least three ideas for when they compare and when their friends compare.

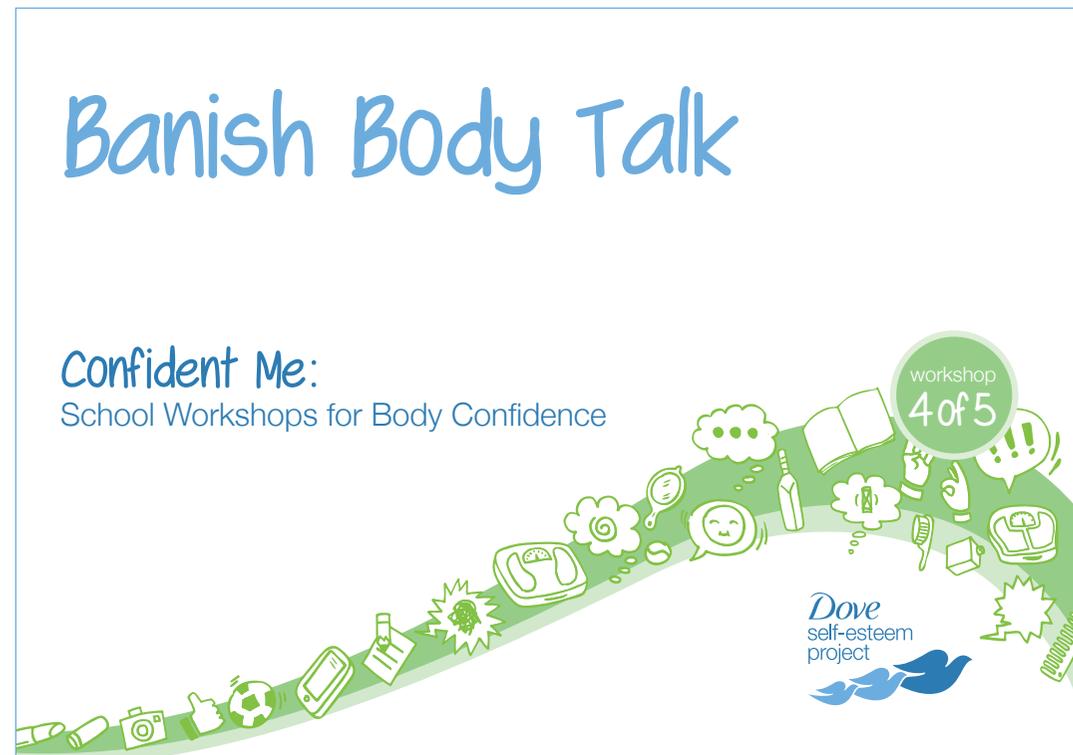
Next steps

You have now completed **Workshop 3: Confront Comparisons** from the **Confident Me: School Workshops for Body Confidence**. The next workshop in the series is: **Banish Body Talk**.

ABOUT THIS WORKSHOP:

In this workshop, students identify ways in which they engage in both positive and negative conversations about appearance, also known as 'body talk'. They will understand that body talk is common and people use it for lots of reasons, but the outcome is almost always unhelpful. They identify problems that body talk can cause and how it can contribute to appearance becoming an unhelpful focus of our identity, shaping how we value ourselves and damaging self-esteem. Finally, students develop techniques to break the habit of reinforcing appearance ideals by practising ways to redirect or reframe conversations about appearance. This will have a positive impact on body confidence for students and their friends.

Access the materials for this workshop and others in the Confident Me: Five-Session Programme at:
selfesteem.dove.com



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