

# Lesson one: My feelings



## Lesson aim:

Pupils can recognise how images in the media, including online, do not always reflect reality and can affect how people feel about themselves.



## Learning outcomes:

- I can recognise that images in the media, including online do not always reflect reality
- I understand that the unrealistic media images of the body can have a negative impact on how people feel about themselves
- I have considered ways to feel positive about myself and celebrate my body



## Resources required:

- Barbie doll and Ken doll, or pictures of them
- Flip chart paper
- Pens
- Mirror

## Key words: **body image**

### Teacher notes:

When discussing body image, it is useful to use the terminology of 'natural' as opposed to 'normal' and to discuss body shapes and sizes in terms of health. Body fat can be discussed in terms of the functions fat serves including insulation, energy and protecting vital organs. Throughout the lesson be mindful to role model a positive self of body image, and not normalise any negative views or comments linked to how you or another person looks. For example, 'It's when you get to my age/size you have to worry about...'

### Begin the lesson by...

Explaining that in this lesson we will be learning about body image. Body image is a term used to describe how you feel about the way you look. Reassure pupils that we are all physically different from one another and that ideas about what is 'perfect' or 'attractive' vary depending on personal likes and dislikes. Emphasise that attraction is not just based on someone's physical appearance. Tell pupils that the media often manipulates images to create a 'perfect' body, but this is not representative of how anyone actually looks and can be used as a marketing technique to trick us into buying something on the belief that it will help us to look and feel more attractive. Remind pupils of the working agreement.



## Activity one: Barbie is not real!

Display pictures of a Barbie doll or hand a naked Barbie Doll around the class and ask pupils to tell the class what they notice about it. Repeat for the Ken doll.

Tell pupils that a Barbie doll has some unrealistic body proportions:



**Can you look at the Barbie doll and guess what the unrealistic body proportions are?**

- **A neck that is twice as long and thinner than an average woman.** Barbie's head would not be held upright as her neck would not be able to support the weight of her own head, therefore her head would roll around!
- **Her wrists are very thin.** Barbie would be physically incapable of lifting anything heavy!
- **She has a child's size 3 foot.** Barbie would have to walk around on all fours because her ankles would snap if she tried to stand up!
- **A waist circumference that is smaller than her head circumference.** Barbie would not be able to function as her body would not have enough space for all of her vital organs.

Tell pupils that many toys, film characters etc. have unrealistic body shapes and sizes. Ask pupils to suggest examples.



**What do you think young children learn about their bodies from playing with toys like a Barbie? What impact do you think these unrealistic toys and characters can have on how someone feels about their own body?**

Highlight key points and feedback. Reassure pupils that we are all very physically different and this is completely natural.



## Activity two: Media messages

Take five large sheets of paper and draw two overlapping circles onto each sheet to fill the paper. In one circle write 'men' in the other write 'women' and in the middle write 'both'. Next, write one of the following titles onto each:

- Music videos
- Magazines
- Fashion adverts
- Computer games
- Social media

Lay each sheet onto a different table with some pens. Tell pupils to circulate around the room writing the ways the different types of media suggest that men and women should ideally look.

Tell pupils to form two equal sized lines facing each other, leaving a gap big enough for you to walk between them. Explain that you are going to hold up the media sheets that they have written on. As you walk between the two lines, ask pupils to say the ways in which the media may make someone feel about themselves. At the end feedback to pupils some of the comments that were made. Repeat this for each sheet.

Discuss with pupils how unrealistic many media messages are and how the media manipulate images to make them look as 'perfect' as possible. Young people also manipulate images of themselves before posting pictures.

Ask pupils to pair, square and share: Why do some young people manipulate images of themselves to make them look 'perfect' before uploading them? What impact does this have on them? What impact does this have on the people who look at them?

Highlight and feedback key points and reflections.



## Activity three: Feeling good about your body

Tell pupils that appearance ideals are present in everyday life beyond the media. For example, family and friends may make negative comments about their own appearance or the appearance of others. Tell pupils that having the confidence to speak up when they overhear this will enable them to help themselves, and the people they care about to feel good about themselves. Encourage pupils to be positive about themselves so they can be good role models!

Ask pupils to pair, square and share: What can make someone feel good about themselves?

**Answers may include:** *laughing; doing the things they enjoy; exercising; being given a compliment; achieving well at school, eating healthily etc.*

Tell pupils that they are going to play a game. Give pupils alternating names of 'reality runner' and 'compliment catcher'. Explain that it is the role of the reality runners to run around the room until they are caught. When they are caught they must freeze and say something that they think a person might say about themselves. Explain that it is the role of the compliment catchers to catch the reality runners by tapping their arm, shoulder or back to make them freeze. Once the reality runner has said what they think someone might say about themselves, the compliment catcher must make a compliment to the reality runner. Once the pair have finished they can unfreeze and continue the game. Halfway through the game, ask pupils to swap their roles, so a reality runner becomes a compliment catcher and vice versa.



**What types of comments did reality runners suggest a person may make about themselves? Were the comments mainly positive or negative? How does it feel to give someone a compliment? How does it feel to receive a compliment?**

Feedback and reflect on key points. Remind pupils that it is natural to care about how you look. It is important to be positive about the body and how everyone is naturally different.

Finish this activity by passing a mirror around the class. Ask pupils to think of a positive statement about themselves which they can say in their head as they look at their reflection. Encourage any pupils that feel confident enough to share their positive statement out loud with the class.



**Why is it important to feel positive about how you look?**

Feedback and reflect on key points.



## Extension:

Divide the class into small groups. Tell each group that they are a 'self-esteem team' and the teams are going to compete in a friendly class competition. Task each self-esteem team to create a media campaign that will help other people of their age to feel good about themselves. They can create a vlog, blog, poem, advert, song, dance or poster etc. Ask each team to present their campaign to the rest of the class. The winning team is the one that receives the most class votes. Where appropriate these could be displayed within the school or shared during an assembly to promote healthy body image to younger pupils.

### Finish the lesson by:

Providing pupils with an opportunity to ask questions. Ask pupils to tell you some positive statements that a person could think when they are reflecting on their image. Ask pupils to share examples of compliments that someone could give another person. Reassure pupils that images in the media do not always reflect reality and remind pupils that whilst this can cause people to worry about how they look it is important to feel positive about your body and image. Signpost pupils to who they can talk to in school if they have any concerns or questions about what has been taught in the lesson.



## Assessment:

**Activity one:** Pupils recognised the ways in which body image messages can be unrealistic.

**Activity two:** Pupils explored and discussed how a range of media manipulate images to create unrealistic body proportions, identifying the impact that this can have on a person.

**Activity three:** Pupils suggested ways that a person can have positive self-talk, paying themselves and others compliments.

**Evidence of assessment:** Media sheets; self-esteem campaign, if extension activity completed.