

Tips For Developing a Positive Body Image:

There are a lot of different things you can do to develop a positive body image - without changing your body. Body image is, after all, more about how you FEEL about the way you look rather than simply how you look.

Sometimes opening up to a family member or good friend about how you feel about yourself can help. The Pastoral Support Partners here at school are also available for you to talk to and can support you with your body confidence and self-esteem.

Here are some tips for developing a positive body image:

- Remind yourself that *appearance* and *health* are two different things.
- Treat your body with respect and kindness - it's the only one you're gonna get. Better to love or learn to love it than constantly fight against it.
- Ignore the voices that tell you you're not good enough as you are. Because they are wrong. You ARE good enough.
- Appreciate and celebrate all that your body can do.
- Recognize that you're a whole person, not specific body parts.
- Surround yourself with positive people who love you *just as you are*.
- Wear clothing that makes you feel happy and good about your body.
- Protest and/or ignore the media coverage of "the perfect body."
- Make a list of your positive non-appearance based qualities. They matter!

Learning to accept compliments is a great way of building your confidence about your body. Listen to what that person is actually complimenting you on and believe it. They are saying it because they mean it!

We know it's easier said than done but try to adjust your thinking when it comes to your body. Keep things in perspective and focus on the positives.

If you can't remember a time that you were happy about your image it might be worth talking to our school counsellor - we can help you set this up if it's something you are interested in.

What Is Positive Body Image?

People with positive body image are those who feel good about their bodies and the way they look most of the time. Perhaps they don't look exactly like others, or what society tells us to look like, but they don't care. They're proud of the way they look.

It doesn't matter if you're tall or thin or built like a model; you can still have a positive body image. What you look on the outside doesn't matter. What matters is how you *FEEL* about how you look. Part of having a positive body image comes from how you feel about *what* your body can *do*, too.

Positive body image involves seeing yourself for who you are, not just how you look.

What Is Negative Body Image?

A negative body image develops when someone feels that their body doesn't measure up to some standard - set by family, media, or society. Many people feel they don't measure up when they measure themselves against the standards of beauty the media bombards us with. Those with a negative body image are often very dissatisfied with how they look, even though they may not see themselves as they are. People with a negative body image may look in the mirror and see the flaws - nose is too big, butt is too fat.

Negative body image leads to people feeling self-conscious and awkward, perhaps even shame, about our bodies. Everyone feels that way sometimes. But if it's a persistent problem, it could be serious. Persistent negative body image can lead to serious problems with health and well-being. It may even need to be addressed by a counsellor. We can support and help with such negative body issues and can sign post of outside agencies for extra support where needed.

Body Image Facts and Stats

20 years ago models weighed 8% less than the average woman – today they weigh 23% less.

One in every four college age female students has an eating disorder.

Approximately 91 percent of women are unhappy with their bodies and resort to dieting to achieve their ideal body shape

More than a third of the people who admit to “normal dieting,” will merge into pathological dieting. Roughly a quarter of those will suffer from a partial or full-on eating disorder.

In a recent survey - 30% of women and 20% of men agreed they would consider cosmetic surgery in the future

58 percent of school-aged girls feel pressured to be a certain weight

More than 90% of girls – 15 to 17 years – want to change at least one aspect of their physical appearance, with body weight ranking the highest

7 in 10 girls believe they are not good enough or do not measure up in some way including their looks, performance in school and relationships

The super-slim celeb look is only achievable for about 1% of us

The average UK female is a size 14/16

It is estimated that roughly two thirds of adults suffer from negative body image

42% of girls and young women feel that the most negative part about being a female is the pressure to look attractive

One third of men would sacrifice a year of their life to achieve their ideal body

70% of adult women and 40% of adult men report that they have felt pressure from television and magazines to have a perfect body

Source : <http://www.cswd.org/docs/facts.html>

Source: http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/861233/appg_body_image_final.pdf

Resources For Body Image:

Body Positive - Boosting Body Image at any Weight - body image links, resources and books all about promoting positive body image.

<http://www.webring.org/hub/healthateverysiz?w=1280;rh=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Ebodypositive%2Ecom%2F;rd=1>

Promoting a Positive Body Image in Your Children - resources for promoting positive body image in children and tools parents can use to ensure that their kids develop healthy body images. <http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=6753>

Body Image and Self-Esteem in Teens - information for kids and teenagers struggling with body image. http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/body_image/body_image.html

Loving Your Body Inside and Out - A-Z topics about body image, eating disorders, and tips for loving your body inside and out. <http://www.womenshealth.gov/bodyimage/>

Body Gallery - Search for images of women of all shapes and sizes. <http://www.mybodygallery.com/index.html>

The Body Image Workbook by Thomas Cash, PhD - many links to useful articles including body image questionnaires. http://www.body-images.com/research/books_audio.html

Girls' Attitudes: What girls think about. A report on health and wellbeing - Girlguiding UK is the largest organisation for girls and young women in the United Kingdom. http://girlsattitudes.girlguiding.org.uk/pdf/Girls_Attitudes_health.pdf

This is a fab resource for young people

Gok' s Teens: The Naked Truth - Gok Wan gives troubled teens the advice, confidence and self-belief they need to tackle their issues and anxieties. <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/goks-teens-the-naked-truth/episode-guide>