



YEARS  
5 and 6

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 1.5 | Body Confidence

## Timing

45 minutes

## Materials

- **Positive Thoughts** handout—one per pupil.
- Paper or card
- Colouring materials
- Optional: stickers, stencils, glitter, and other craft materials
- **3–2–1 Reflection** handout—one half sheet per pupil

**Note:** *There are facilitation options below if the pupils are in a virtual situation. Handouts can be provided electronically to be printed at home or as an editable Microsoft Word template to be submitted via email, learning management systems, or a live/shared document.*

## Tools to Build Body Confidence

### POSITIVE THOUGHTS

## Overview

Content for the *Amazing Me* programme was created in partnership with Dr. Marisol Perez, a clinical psychologist and researcher at Arizona State University and the Institute for Research and Education Advancing

Children’s Health (REACH). Dr. Perez has dedicated her career to assisting future generations to be less focused on appearance and more focused on respecting, liking, and appreciating their bodies.

During this activity, pupils will learn more about body dissatisfaction and positive thoughts before working with peers to create posters or cards featuring each pupil’s positive qualities, skills, and characteristics. They can refer to these cards if they feel dissatisfied with their bodies and need a positive affirmation.

Each activity is part of a five-lesson series that focuses on confronting comparisons and building body confidence. Lessons 1–3 include core content and should be completed in sequence. Lessons 4 and 5 are supplementary and provide pupils with an opportunity to extend their learning of core concepts.

## Background

Body image is defined as the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours towards one’s own body.<sup>1</sup> Research shows that body dissatisfaction contributes to the development of unhealthy behaviours in pupils and adults. People are more likely to do unhealthy things to control their weight and body shape when they focus more on appearance than body functionality.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cash & Prunzinsky, 1990

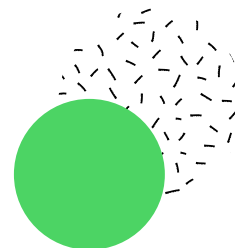
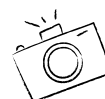
<sup>2</sup> Thompson & Stice, 2001

There are many factors that can cause body dissatisfaction in pupils. These factors include media and celebrity body images, pressures from family and friends to look a certain way, and teasing and bullying from peers. Any talk about body or body type (even positive statements) can result in negative feelings about one's body.<sup>3</sup>

The concept of 'appearance ideals' is the idea that people are influenced by what society tells us is attractive and the use of these ideals to set goals for their own appearance. People from different cultures can have different appearance ideals. For example, in the United States and United Kingdom, the dominant appearance ideal is for girls to be unrealistically thin.<sup>4</sup> Research shows that appearance ideals lead to unhealthy behaviours in pupils and adults. This means that when a girl consumes media (including television, magazines, and social media), she is likely to set unrealistic goals for her own body. This may cause her to dislike her own body, feel shame and guilt, and be more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviours. For boys and men, the appearance ideals are leanness and muscularity. When a boy consumes media, he is likely to set unrealistic goals for his own body. This may cause him to experience shame about his body, and be at risk of unhealthy behaviours to try to meet the ideals from popular culture.

About 40–50% of pupils aged 9 to 12 years, report body dissatisfaction and wanting to be thin. These rates have been shown to remain stable.<sup>5</sup> Body dissatisfaction is associated with depression, lower self-esteem, and unhealthy eating behaviours including dieting, vomiting, and excessive exercise.<sup>6</sup>

Research shows that parents and educators have the ability to increase the body confidence of young people. Adults can help pupils become aware of the factors that negatively affect their self-image. Adults can also encourage healthy behaviours that have been proven to increase body confidence. Pupils can be healthier when they are aware of emotional and physical changes that occur during development. Pupils have more body confidence when they can accept their changing bodies. Adults can help by avoiding making comments about weight, shape and appearance.



<sup>3</sup> DSEP Content Development Framework, University of West England's Center for Appearance Research, 2012

<sup>4</sup> Thompson & Stice, 2001

<sup>5</sup> Clark & Tiggemann, 2008; McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2005

<sup>6</sup> Myers & Crowther, 2009

Research suggests that body confidence increases with more supportive relationships rather than those based on competition or comparison. Regular conversations on these topics will encourage pupils to identify and connect with their peers instead of comparing themselves to each other.

This lesson will focus on addressing body dissatisfaction with positive affirmation.



## Objectives

### Pupils will:

- Define body dissatisfaction.
- Understand that positive self-talk is an effective strategy to improve body confidence.
- Help classmates create cards using positive thoughts.
- Use positive thoughts to boost body confidence.

## Essential Question

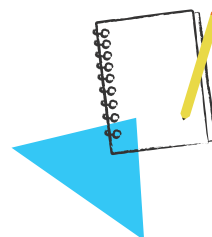
***What is body dissatisfaction, and how can I use positive self-talk to improve my body confidence?***

## Teacher Preparation

- If you are teaching virtually, determine how you will assign partners for the Positive Thoughts activity. If using breakout rooms, prepare prior to your session.
  - Platforms like Zoom allow you to pre-assign participants to breakout rooms. Google Meet will randomly distribute participants.
- If you are teaching virtually, provide the list of possible craft materials above to pupils prior to the session to allow them time to gather items that can help them decorate their affirmation signs.

## Suggestions for Implementing Virtual Meetings

- **Lighting:** Backlighting prevents your audience from seeing you clearly. Make sure that you have lighting in front of you to ensure that you are seen.
- **Camera placement:** Try to make sure that your camera is placed at eye level. This helps to create eye contact and engagement with your audience. You can use books or other items to lift your computer (if using a laptop).
- **Sound:** Make sure that you do a quick sound check before beginning your session. Ensure that you can be heard and that participants will not hear an echo effect. Consider the usage of headphones equipped with a speaker.
- **Make connections:** Remember to try to connect with your audience, which can be challenging, virtually. Connect with them using quick stories or humour.
- **Troubleshooting:** It is okay to make mistakes or have technology issues. If you have a technology issue or things don't go as planned, do your best to reconnect and move forward with your lesson. The best thing you can do is be prepared by testing your internet connection and sound and video settings prior to your session



## Sensitivity Note

Due to the nature of today's discussion, be aware of pupils' feelings and be sensitive to the emotions and reactions of all pupils in the classroom. There can be a diversity of emotions and reactions to these topics. Teachers should feel free to paraphrase/edit the language to suit their class.

## Lesson Plan

### Discuss

- Display the word 'dissatisfaction' on the board. Ask pupils what they think this word might mean based on the parts they see within the word.
- Begin a discussion about the words 'body dissatisfaction' by asking questions such as: What does it mean to feel satisfied?

## VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Allow pupils to share their answers out loud or encourage them to write their answers down to refer to later, add to a live/shared document, or comment in a chat box.

What does it mean to feel dissatisfied? What might we mean if someone says he/she is dissatisfied with his/her body or appearance?

- After discussing, ensure pupils understand that body dissatisfaction refers to the negative perceptions and feelings a person has about their body. It can be influenced by factors such as wanting one's body to look a specific way, not being content with the way your body looks, attitudes towards weight gain, cultural norms in relation to an ideal body, and attitudes related to body changes in puberty.<sup>7</sup>
- Discuss how body dissatisfaction can lead to negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.
- Explain that today the class will be creating positive thoughts cards that they can refer to if they experience feelings of body dissatisfaction. Positive thoughts are good or encouraging statements that pupils can read or say when they are having negative thoughts about themselves.



## Do

- Ask pupils to find a partner (or put them into pairs) and give out one **Positive Thoughts** handout to each pupil.
- Explain to pupils that 'Positive Thoughts' are good things you can say to yourself. These things can help to stop negative thoughts.
- Ask pupils to fill in each column of the chart about their partner, this should take about five minutes. If they are not familiar with their partner, they can take a few minutes to talk to them about their hobbies, their favourite subjects in school, achievements, etc.
- When they have finished ask pupils to read their positive statements to their partner, starting each point with 'You are...' or 'Your' (For example: 'Your hands help you create beautiful drawings.'; 'Your legs allow you to run fast.'; 'You are very kind and always help people.' etc.).
- After pupils have completed this process, ask them to collect their own positive thoughts sheets and take a moment to look at the comments from their peers.

## VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Pupils can choose a family member or friend and complete the handout about that person.
- Partners can communicate on a live/shared document.
- You can organise separate breakout rooms for each pair.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26795680>

- Explain to the pupils that they will now use their **Positive Thoughts** and craft materials to create cards for themselves.
- Give out the art and craft materials you have chosen to use or remind pupils where they are in the room.
- If necessary, model the creation of the Positive Thoughts Cards. Some ideas might include:
  - Writing their name in the centre of the paper and surrounding the name with adjectives, qualities, skills, and unique characteristics.
  - Choosing one 'You are...' or 'Your' statement from the **Positive Thoughts** handout to write in large letters and decorate.
- Give the pupils time to complete their cards. If time allows, they may complete more than one.
- Ask pupils to think about some places they can put their card to refer to throughout the day (i.e., inside of locker, in their reading book/ folder, taped to the mirror at home, etc.).

## Reflect

- Distribute one **3-2-1 Reflection** handout to each pupil and give them time to complete it.
- Collect the reflection sheets. Answer questions for the class as time allows or tell the pupils when you will answer their questions..

## VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- This can be facilitated in a live/shared document or submitted electronically.

## Positive Thoughts

My Partner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Unique Skills of My Partner	How My Partner's Body Helps Them With These Skills
Examples: drawing	Example: My partner's hands help him create beautiful drawings.

## 3-2-1 Reflection

HANDOUT

List three things you learned from today's lesson:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List two things you found interesting from today's lesson:

- 1.
- 2.

Write down one question you still have:

- 1.



## 3-2-1 Reflection

HANDOUT

List three things you learned from today's lesson:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List two things you found interesting from today's lesson:

- 1.
- 2.

Write down one question you still have:

- 1.



## Curriculum Links

England
<p><b>PSHE</b></p> <p><b>Health and Wellbeing</b> <i>Ourselves, growing and changing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>H27.</b> To recognise their individuality and personal qualities</li> <li>• <b>H28.</b> To identify personal strengths, skills, achievements and interests and how these contribute to a sense of self-worth</li> <li>• <b>H29.</b> To know about how to manage setbacks/perceived failures, including how to re-frame unhelpful thinking</li> </ul> <p><b>Relationships</b> <i>Respecting self and others</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>R30.</b> To know that personal behaviour can affect other people; to recognise and model respectful behaviour online</li> <li>• <b>R31.</b> To recognise the importance of self-respect and how this can affect their thoughts and feelings about themselves; that everyone, including them, should expect to be treated politely and with respect by others (including when online and/or anonymous) in school and in wider society; strategies to improve or support courteous, respectful relationships</li> <li>• <b>R32.</b> To know about respecting the differences and similarities between people and recognising what they have in common with others e.g. physically, in personality or background</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education</b></p> <p><b>Relationships Education</b> <i>Respectful Relationships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To know the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs</li> <li>• To know the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness</li> </ul> <p><i>Being Safe</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To know how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings</li> </ul> <p><b>Physical health and mental wellbeing</b> <i>Mental Wellbeing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To know that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing</li> </ul> <p><i>Internet Safety and Harms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To know that the internet can also be a negative place where online abuse, trolling, bullying and harassment can take place, which can have a negative impact on mental health.</li> </ul>

## Curriculum Links

<p><b>English</b></p> <p><b>Spoken language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments</li> <li>To use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas</li> <li>To participate in discussions and debates</li> </ul>
<p><b>Citizenship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1.a</b> To talk and write about their opinions, and explain their views, on issues that affect themselves and society</li> <li><b>1.b</b> To recognise their worth as individuals by identifying positive things about themselves and their achievements, seeing their mistakes, making amends and setting personal goals</li> <li><b>1.d</b> To recognise, as they approach puberty, how people’s emotions change at that time and how to deal with their feelings towards themselves, their family and others in a positive way</li> <li><b>3.a</b> To know what affects mental health, and how to make informed choices</li> <li><b>4.a</b> To know that their actions affect themselves and others, to care about other people’s feelings and to try to see things from their points of view</li> </ul>

<p><b>Scotland</b></p> <p><b>Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2-01a</b> I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them</li> <li><b>2-02a</b> I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them</li> </ul> <p><b>Literacy Across Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2-08a</b> To help me develop an informed view, I can distinguish fact from opinion, and I am learning to recognise when my sources try to influence me and how useful these are</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Wales</b></p> <p><b>Health and Well-being (Progression Step 3)</b></p> <p><b>Developing physical health and well-being has lifelong benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can explain the way in which physical and emotional changes are connected in different contexts, and I can monitor, review and adapt my behaviour to support my physical and emotional health, setting myself relevant targets</li> </ul>
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## Curriculum Links

### How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being

- I can recognise the benefits of being able to focus attention on my perceptions and thoughts and know that I am developing my self-awareness
- I can see the benefits of communicating about feelings as one of a range of strategies which can help promote positive mental health and emotional well-being

### Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others

- I can reflect on the way that past events and experiences have affected my thoughts, feelings and actions
- I can anticipate how future events may make me and others feel
- I can make considered decisions, taking into account available information, including past experiences

### How we engage with social influences shapes who we are and affects our health and well-being

- I have developed an understanding that my values, attitudes and identity are shaped by different groups and influences

## Languages, Literacy and Communication

### Expressing ourselves through languages is key to communication

- I can respond to others' points of view, seeking clarity, structuring arguments, summarising and explaining what I have heard, read or seen
- I can interact with others, talking and writing about my thoughts, feelings and opinions showing empathy and respect

## Northern Ireland

### Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

#### Self-Awareness

- To develop self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem
- To explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour

#### Feelings and emotions

- To examine and explore their own and others' feelings and emotions
- To know how to recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way

#### Relationships

- To explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour

### Language and Literacy

#### Talking and Listening

- To participate in group and class discussions for a variety of curricular purposes
- To share, respond to and evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view and use evidence or reason to justify opinions, actions or proposals
- To describe and talk about real experiences and imaginary situations and about people, places, events and artefacts