

# Confident Me

School Lesson for Body Confidence

Lesson Guide for Teachers



4

Lesson Four:  
Banish Body Talk

# Learning outcomes



## In this lesson students will:

- + Understand what is meant by body talk and why people engage in conversations about appearance
- + Recognise the problems body talk can cause
- + Develop strategies for addressing negative body talk
- + Identify what is unique about yourself and how you feel about it
- + Set a goal to increase positive body talk and decrease the negative body talk with yourself or friends

## End-of-lesson Assessment:

Students will identify a SMART goal to reduce or eliminate body talk.



# Preparation

## Lesson Four: Resources and Materials Needed

### From Your School



### Lesson 4 Materials



- A way to show/stream a video
- Three Column Chart from Lesson 2 & 3

### What is Body Talk?



Body talk is any conversation or comment that reinforces and perpetuates appearance ideals. Whether a comment or conversation is intended as negative (e.g., 'my thighs are too big') or positive (e.g., 'you look good – have you lost weight?'), all body talk has the potential to be harmful. This is because it places emphasis on appearance and appearance ideals at the expense of valuing our intrinsic qualities, actions, interests, and activities.

- Online access to or printed copy (one per student) of PDF containing:
  - + How Do We Use Body Talk? (Conversations with Friends & Conversation with the Mirror)
  - + How Can We Challenge Body Talk?
  - + What Makes Us Unique?
  - + Extension Activity-Setting My Body Talk SMART Goal

The image shows four preview cards for lesson materials. Each card has a title, a 'Name' field, and a 'Date' field. The first card, 'How Do We Use Body Talk?', includes two columns of questions for 'Conversations with Friends' and 'Conversations with the Mirror'. The second card, 'How Can We Challenge Body Talk?', lists six activities for challenging body talk. The third card, 'What Makes Us Unique?', has sections for 'The best thing about me as a friend is', 'A quality I admire about myself is', 'Something I enjoy doing is', and 'In the future, I would like to spend more time'. The fourth card, 'Setting My Body Talk SMART Goal', includes a 'SMART checker' table with columns for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.

# Lesson Overview



 50 mins



## Page 6 **Introducing Body Talk** | 20 mins

- + What have we learned?
- + What are we learning today?
- + How do we talk about appearance?
- + What is body talk?
- + How do we use body talk?

## Page 13 **Challenging Body Talk** | 20 mins

- + What is the impact of body talk?
- + How can we challenge body talk?

## Page 15 **Plenary and Assessment** | 10 mins

- + What have we learned today?
- + Congratulations
- + Extension Activity- Setting My Body Talk SMART Goal



# How To Use This Guide

## Suggested Time Allocation

This is the amount of time generally recommended for students, to achieve learning outcomes and improve body confidence. This may be adapted to suit the needs of your class.

 15 mins

## Introducing Appearance Ideals

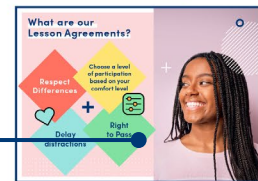
### Lesson Learning Objectives

Students should achieve these objectives by the end of each section.

### Presentation

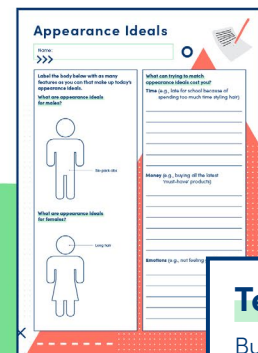
These are visual cues and learning objectives to help you facilitate the lesson effectively.

### Presentation



### Educator Actions

### Handout



APPEARANCE IDEALS

### Teacher Actions

Bullet points highlight important questions to ask students to ensure key concepts are addressed with optimum impact on body confidence.

Text in *ITALICS* indicates directions for the teacher.

Underlined text is what the teacher should say.

### Educator Notes

### Educator Notes

### Desired Responses

### Notes/Desired Responses

Possible answers to look for from students, but also offers ideas for guiding their responses as they develop their understanding of key concepts and improve their body confidence.

# Introducing Body Talk

 20 mins

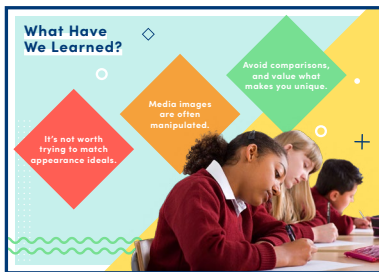
By the end of this activity, students will understand what is meant by body talk and why people engage in conversations about appearance.

## Presentation



## Teacher Actions

Welcome students to the 'Banish Body Talk' lesson. Briefly remind students that the series of lessons aims to help them to explore more helpful ways to manage appearance pressures and build body confidence.



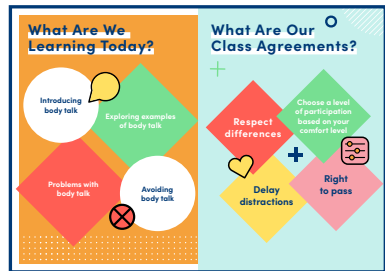
## What Have we Learned?

Invite students to share what they learned in the previous lesson. Summarise any key learning outcomes students might have missed.

## Teacher Notes

Students will quickly review what they have learned in the previous lessons, Appearance Ideals, Media Messages and Confront Comparisons.

## Presentation



## Teacher Actions

### What are We Learning Today?

*Briefly explain the areas of focus for today's lesson.*

### Share:

- + Introducing body talk
- + Exploring examples of body talk
- + Problems with body talk
- + Avoiding body talk

### Review Classroom Agreements:

- + Respect differences
- + Choose level of participation based on comfort level
- + Delay distractions
- + Right to pass

*Add any other agreements your classes added.*

## Teacher Notes

Remind students of the class agreements to help create a supportive, non-judgmental environment throughout the five-lesson programme.

## Presentation



## Teacher Actions

*Initiate a class discussion.*

**Ask:**

**What different ways do we talk about appearance about ourselves or others?**

*Explain that when we are talking about appearance, we are engaging in body talk.*



## Desired Responses

We offer compliments based on appearance; we might tease people based on appearance; we might comment on our own appearance by sharing what we think about our appearance or by comparing ourselves to others.



*Invite a student to read aloud the definition of body talk.*

**Share:**

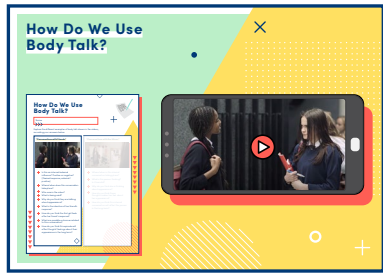
Body talk includes comments about the appearance of anyone: you, your friends, celebrities, and even strangers.

## Teacher Notes

Ensure students understand that body talk is any conversation (spoken or written) about appearance, whether the intention is positive or negative.



## Presentation



## Teacher Actions

*Explain that we are going to watch a couple of short films about body talk. Give out the Handout called How Do We Use Body Talk?*

*Play the “Body Talk Conversations with Friends” video. Initiate a class discussion.*

### Ask:

- 01 **Where/when is this conversation taking place?**
- 02 **What is being said? Does it seem well-meaning or harmful?**
- 03 **Why do you think they are talking about appearance?**
- 04 **How do you think this makes them feel about their appearance?**
- 05 **How do you think this conversation will affect their feelings about their appearance in the long term?**

*Instruct students to discuss briefly the details of the conversation in pairs.*

## Teacher Notes

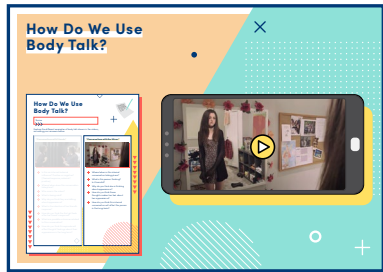
In this instance, encourage students to consider the overall sentiment of the students engaged in appearance teasing rather than the long-term or unintended consequences. You may want to touch on some of the other reasons people engage in body talk:

- + it's a common form of greeting
- + to make small talk
- + the desire to fit in
- + to receive reassurance about our appearance
- + to reassure others about their appearance
- + to express worry or anxiety about appearance
- + to seem modest
- + to prevent teasing
- + to praise someone who you think matches appearance ideals

## Desired Responses

- 01 The conversation is taking place as students arrive at the school gate to start their day. Two students greet each other.
- 02 One student compliments the other on their hair. The student receiving the compliment acts self-consciously and rejects the compliment. The comment seems well-meaning.
- 03 They could be talking about appearance because they want to say something nice, to make their friend feel good, or out of habit.
- 04 The student giving the compliment could like the other student's new haircut or might feel a bit jealous. The student receiving the compliment probably feels pleased.
- 05 In the long-term, this conversation could cause both students to increase their focus on their appearance.

## Presentation



## Teacher Actions

Play the “Body Talk Conversations with the Mirror” video.

Instruct students to briefly discuss the details of the conversation in pairs and answer the following questions on their handout.

- 01 **Where/when is this internal conversation taking place?**
- 02 **What is she thinking? Is it harmful?**
- 03 **Why do you think she is thinking about appearance?**
- 04 **How do you think these thoughts makes her feel about her appearance?**
- 05 **How do you think this internal conversation will affect her in the long-term?**

After students have some time to work on this, go over their answers as a class.

## Desired Responses

- 01 It is taking place in a bedroom. She is looking in the mirror, probably at the end of the school day.
- 02 She says, ‘Urgh. I look huge in this’. She wishes she had a flat stomach and comments that she looks ‘ugly’.
- 03 She is trying on clothes, hoping she looks good in them. She is comparing her appearance with her friends, wishing she looked more like them.
- 04 She will start to feel worse because she can’t live up to appearance ideals. She will keep comparing her appearance to that of her friends rather than focusing on her positive qualities or more important things.
- 05 She may feel less confident about her appearance, which may make her feel self-conscious about taking part in activities.

## Teacher Notes

Highlight that our inner conversations or our internal thought processes can be just as problematic and harmful as body talk conversations we have with others.

## Presentation

External Influences		
Influences of Social Media	Impact of Media Messages	Impact of Body Talk

## Teacher Actions

### Say:

The overall impact is that a person's mood is strongly influenced by what people think about his or her appearance on a day-to-day basis but also in the long term. People end up feeling that appearance is more important than it really is and could forget to focus on qualities or activities they actually value or enjoy.

## Teacher Notes

If students suggest positive reasons for engaging in body talk, use questions to help them see the other point of view and emphasise that both positive and negative body talk is counterproductive. Here are two examples to illustrate the point:

- + A person compliments a friend on their weight loss. That person enjoys the compliment when given, but later on, wonders whether they were liked a little less when they weighed more, and whether they might feel unhappy should they put on weight in the future.
- + Three friends are together when one compliments another about their appearance, such as on their hair or muscles. The other friend is left unhappy because their appearance didn't warrant a compliment and feels they don't measure up to their friends' looks and expectations.



Continued >

## Presentation

Influences of Social Media	Impact of Media Messages <small>(appearance, thoughts, anxiety)</small>	Impact of Body Talk

## Teacher Actions

*Initiate a class discussion.*

**Ask:**

- 01** How many times a day do you estimate body talk occurs?
- 02** What is the total effect of all these appearance-based conversations?

Three-Column Chart

*Refer back to Lesson 2 and 3 to your three-column chart in which students brainstormed influences from social media and impact of media messages. Revisit what was placed in the two columns.*

*Introduce the right-hand column on impact of body talk.*

**Ask:**

**What do you think is the overall impact of all this body talk?**

*Complete the third column, Impact of Body Talk.*

## Desired Responses

**01** Body talk occurs more frequently than people think. It can lead to focusing too much on appearance and not on what matters, and this can be harmful for self-esteem.

**02** These kinds of conversations can negatively influence our mood on a day-to-day basis and also in the long-term. We are left feeling that appearance is more important than it really is, and we could forget to focus on qualities and activities that we value and enjoy.

If you teach multiple classes in a day, feel free to develop a three-column chart on chart paper, the board or using a document online for each class, or build off the list from the class prior.

Help students understand that repeated conversations about appearance might focus on looks or weight, leading to more and more dissatisfaction. This can have long-term negative consequences for self-esteem.

## Desired Responses

Can perpetuate unrealistic appearance ideals; reinforce a culture of appearance pressures; have a negative impact on our mood; lead to frequent body checking, spending excessive money on appearance-related products, and unhealthy or harmful behaviours, such as skipping meals or excessive exercise.

# Challenging Body Talk

 20 mins

By the end of this activity, students will recognise the problems body talk can cause and develop strategies to challenge the use of it.

## Presentation



## Teacher Actions

*Explain that now that we understand how widespread and harmful body talk is, we must challenge it so that we can help reduce the pressures to match appearance ideals.*

*Arrange students in pairs and instruct each pair to complete the role plays on Handout 2.*

**Ask:**

**How long can you continue a conversation without resorting to body talk?**

*Instruct each pair to join with another pair to present their role plays, demonstrating how they would divert attention away from body talk.*

*Invite one or two pairs to present their role plays to the class. Facilitate a short class discussion.*

**Ask:**

- 01** How easy or hard did you find avoiding body talk?
- 02** Who managed to keep the conversation going the longest, and how did you achieve this?

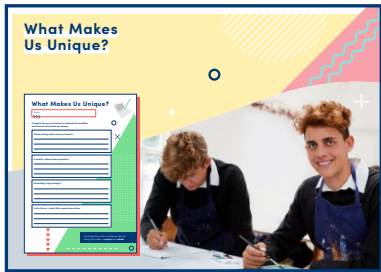
## Teacher Notes

Role play is a really powerful way to help students change their behaviour. Working in pairs allows less confident students to role play without exposing themselves to the whole group.

Be careful not to reinforce any of the situations or scripts and make sure that students aren't singled out during role plays.

Some students may take this opportunity to point out that it's not easy to challenge body talk and might try to exclude it from their group's conversations. Acknowledge that body talk is a conversation piece because it helps people socialise and feel included in a group. Therefore, trying to stop this kind of talk might risk that individual being teased or even excluded. Explain that body talk can become a habit that people rely on in social situations. However, if students lead by example by avoiding body talk, they can help change their group's behaviour.

## Presentation



## Teacher Actions

*Explain now that students understand that body talk – about others or ourselves – can be harmful for their self-esteem, they are going to consider ways they can feel good about themselves in ways that have nothing to do with their appearance.*

*Refer to Handout What Makes Us Unique? Instruct students to complete the handout independently.*

### **Say:**

Think about the qualities and interests that make you unique.

*Invite one or two people to share their ideas, if they are comfortable.*

## Teacher Notes

If students still select appearance-based qualities, highlight that they are of minor importance when compared to all the other qualities identified – and that there are elements of themselves that matter more than appearance.

# Plenary & Assessment

 10 mins

By the end of this section, students will have reflected on why people engage in body talk and practice minimising it.

## Students have...

- + Understood what is meant by body talk and why people engage in conversations about appearance;
- + Recognised the problems body talk can cause and develop strategies to challenge the use of body talk; and
- + Set a one-day goal and identified actions to decrease or eliminate body talk for themselves or others (extension activity).

## Presentation



## Teacher Actions

### Ask:

#### What have we learned in today's lesson?

*Invite volunteers to read aloud key learning points from the slide, as well as summarise any points students may have missed.*

### >>> **Desired Response**

Students articulate the key messages in their own words.



*Thank students for their participation in today's lesson.*

*Encourage them to think about and apply their knowledge and understanding every day from now on.*

*If possible, offer to stay behind or speak to students at another time about anything covered in the lesson.*

## Presentation



## Teacher Actions

Optional Extension Activity

*Distribute Handout 4, Setting My Body Talk SMART Goal*

*Review the criteria for setting a SMART goal. Review and write the acronym on the board and ask students to name what each letter stands for.*

**S** – specific

**M** – measurable

**A** – achievable

**R** – realistic

**T** – time

*Instruct students to write a one-day SMART goal to reduce or eliminate body talk.*

*Have them come up with three action steps they could take to help them reach their goal.*

*Remind students to be sure that each part of the SMART goal is reflected in the statement they write.*





## Curriculum Links

### England

#### PSHE

##### Health & Wellbeing

###### Self-concept

- » **H1.** To know how we are all unique; that recognising and demonstrating personal strengths build self-confidence, self-esteem and good health and wellbeing
- » **H4.** To know simple strategies to help build resilience to negative opinions, judgements and comments

##### Relationships

###### Social Influences

- » **R42.** To recognise peer influence and to develop strategies for managing it, including online
- » **R43.** To know the role peers can play in supporting one another to resist pressure and influence, challenge harmful social norms and access appropriate support

#### Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

##### Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

###### Respectful relationships including friendships

- » To know the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships (in all contexts, including online) including: trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent and the management of conflict, reconciliation and ending relationships
- » To know the practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships

##### Physical health and mental wellbeing

###### Mental Health

- » To know how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary.

###### Internet Safety and Harms

- » To know the similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world, including: the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparison with others online (including through setting unrealistic expectations for body image)
- » To know how people may curate a specific image of their life online, over-reliance on online relationships including social media, the risks related to online gambling including the accumulation of debt, how advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online

## English

### Spoken English

- » To give short speeches and presentations, expressing their own ideas and keeping to the point

## Scotland

### Health and Wellbeing

- » **3-01a** I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them
- » **3-02a** 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
- » **3-15a** I am developing my understanding of the human body and can use this knowledge to maintain and improve my wellbeing and health
- » **3-47a** I understand my own body's uniqueness, my developing sexuality, and that of others

### Literacy Across Learning

- » **3-10a** I am developing confidence when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning. I can communicate in a clear, expressive way and I am learning to select and organise resources independently
- » **4-10a** I can communicate in a clear, expressive manner when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning, and can independently select and organise appropriate resources as required

## Wales

### Health and Well-being (PSE framework)

#### Developing thinking skills

- » To use a range of techniques for personal reflection
- » To identify and assess bias and reliability, e.g. evaluate messages from the media

#### Developing communication

- » To communicate confidently personal feelings and views through a range of appropriate methods
- » To express opinions clearly and justify a personal standpoint

#### Active citizenship

- » To develop respect for themselves and others
- » To value and celebrate diversity and equality of opportunity locally, nationally and globally

#### Health and emotional wellbeing

- » To develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others
- » To understand the range of emotions they experience and how to develop strategies for coping with negative feelings

### Literacy

#### Oracy

- » To defend a point of view with information and reasons, e.g. in role or debate
- » To respond positively and thoughtfully to new ideas and alternative points of view
- » To consider the relevance and significance of information and ideas presented to them

## Northern Ireland

### Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

#### Self-Awareness

- » To explore the different ways to develop self esteem

#### Relationships

- » 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

### Communication

#### Talking & Listening

- » To listen to and take part in discussions, explanations, role-plays and presentations
- » To contribute comments, ask questions and respond to others' points of view



## Acknowledgements

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**It was adapted** from 'Happy Being Me' with permission and under licence from Susan T. Paxton, Sian A. McLean, Shanel M. Few and Sarah J. Durkin, 2013.

**Confident Me, US version, was revised and updated** for a US student audience by Jessica Lawrence, Director of Cairn Guidance.