

FACILITATOR GUIDE

APRIL 2023

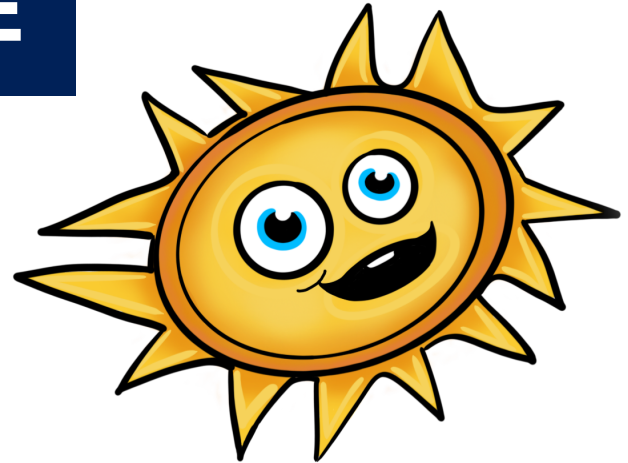
EVERY BODY IS BEAUTIFUL.

Body Positivity Classroom Activity

ELEMENTARY

Facilitator guide designed to be paired with the "Every Body is Beautiful" children's book to help you teach students the importance of body positivity.

BY: REBECCA FITZGERALD





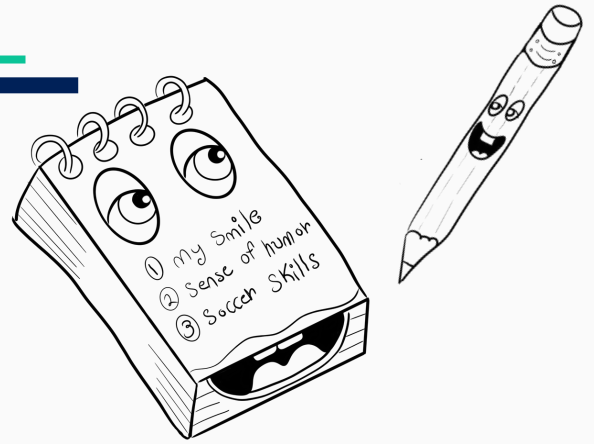
INTRODUCTION

The Every Body Is Beautiful book is about body positivity- learning to love or appreciate your body for what it allows you to do.

When we are able to appreciate our bodies and have a positive sense of self, it helps combat the effects of societal and internal harm. Not every person is ready to embrace this, but it is important for youth to know they have worth no matter their appearance. This book and activity teaches youth simple steps on how to feel good about themselves that does not revolve around looks, in the process helping to prevent disordered eating and bullying.



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Back Story

Learn about the personal experience of the author and how this book came to be.

Data

Data showing the importance of early intervention. As well as backing up the need to teach body positivity, in order to help combat negative societal norms and comparison between peers.

Body Image

Defines what body positivity is and what factors into ones sense of self.

10 Steps To Body Positivity

10 steps one can take to feel better in their own skin.

Key Takeaways & Questions

Explains what you and your students should take way from this as well as answer possible questions you or your students might have.

Items Needed

Itemized list of supplies needed.

Activity Example

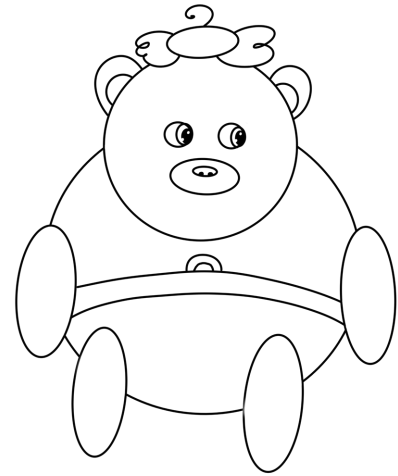
Print out activity example.

Activity Guide

Step by step guide on how to best use this activity in your classroom, home or other setting.

BACK STORY

Meaning behind the message



About the Author:

I am recovering from an eating disorder that has consumed well over a decade of my life. The seeds of it were sown at an early age. I was a heavier child and as I grew up and stretched into myself I was already in too deep. I had such poor self image that I had no idea that I looked "normal". I quickly realized the positive attention I got from losing weight, as a shy awkward person it was the only way I knew how to get people to like or even talk to me. My confidence was only built on appearance, which can be a slippery slope. It is so important to remind children that they are so much more than a body mass index or a number on a scale. We all have positive traits and we all deserve respect and love no matter our appearance.

My disordered eating started at 12 but I was already sucking in my stomach in elementary school, and comparing my body to my peers. The idea that my body was "wrong " and I needed to fix it, became more concrete as I grew older. I am 27 now and I still battle with these thoughts, but I have more successful days than not. It is so important to not dismiss this as being vain or silly, but as a real issue. Eating disorders are among the deadliest mental illnesses, second only to opioid overdose.

BULLYING/WEIGHT SHAMING

-Compiled by National Eating Disorder Association

The best-known environmental contributor to the development of eating disorders is the sociocultural idealization of thinness.

Culbert, K. M., Racine, S. E., & Klump, K. L. (2015). Research Review: What we have learned about the causes of eating disorders - a synthesis of sociocultural, psychological, and biological research. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry*, 56(11), 1141-1164.

By age 6, girls especially start to express concerns about their own weight or shape. 40-60% of elementary school girls (ages 6-12) are concerned about their weight or about becoming too fat. This concern endures through life.

Smolak, L. (2011). Body image development in childhood. In T. Cash & L. Smolak (Eds.), *Body Image: A Handbook of Science, Practice, and Prevention* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford.

79% of weight-loss program participants reported coping with weight stigma by eating more food.

Andreyeva, T., Puhl, R. M. and Brownell, K. D. (2008). Changes in Perceived Weight Discrimination Among Americans, 1995-1996 Through 2004-2006. *Obesity*, 16: 1129-1134. doi:10.1038/oby.2008.35

Of American elementary school girls who read magazines, 69% say that the pictures influence their concept of the ideal body shape. 47% say the pictures make them want to lose weight.

Martin, J. B. (2010). The Development of Ideal Body Image Perceptions in the United States. *Nutrition Today*, 45(3), 98-100. Retrieved from nursingcenter.com/pdf.asp?AID=1023485

Up to 40% of overweight girls and 37% of overweight boys are teased about their weight by peers or family members. Weight teasing predicts weight gain, binge eating, and extreme weight control measures.

Golden, N. H., Schneider, M., & Wood, C. (2016). Preventing Obesity and Eating Disorders in Adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 138(3). doi:10.1542/peds.2016-1649

Weight-based victimization among overweight youths has been linked to lower levels of physical activity, negative attitudes about sports, and lower participation in physical activity among overweight students. Among overweight and obese adults, those who experience weight-based stigmatization engage in more frequent binge eating, are at increased risk for eating disorder symptoms, and are more likely to have a diagnosis of binge eating disorder.

Andreyeva, T., Puhl, R. M. and Brownell, K. D. (2008), Changes in Perceived Weight Discrimination Among Americans, 1995–1996 Through 2004–2006. *Obesity*, 16: 1129–1134. doi:10.1038/oby.2008.35

Children of mothers who are overly concerned about their weight are at increased risk for modeling their unhealthy attitudes and behaviors.

Andreyeva, T., Puhl, R. M. and Brownell, K. D. (2008), Changes in Perceived Weight Discrimination Among Americans, 1995–1996 Through 2004–2006. *Obesity*, 16: 1129–1134. doi:10.1038/oby.2008.35

Weight stigma poses a significant threat to psychological and physical health. It has been documented as a significant risk factor for depression, low self-esteem, and body dissatisfaction.

Andreyeva, T., Puhl, R. M. and Brownell, K. D. (2008), Changes in Perceived Weight Discrimination Among Americans, 1995–1996 Through 2004–2006. *Obesity*, 16: 1129–1134. doi:10.1038/oby.2008.35

Low self-esteem is a common characteristic of individuals who have eating disorders.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. *Food for Thought: Substance Abuse and Eating Disorders*. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) Columbia University; New York: 2003.

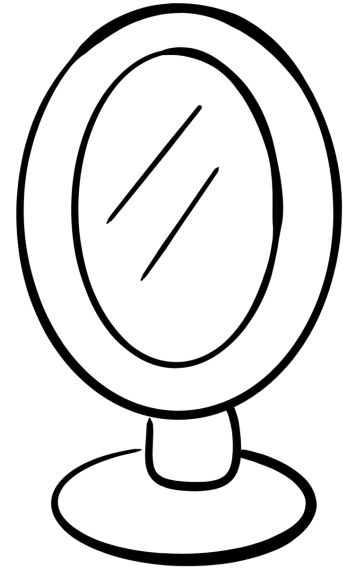
Perceived weight discrimination is significantly associated with a current diagnosis of mood and anxiety disorders and mental health services use.

Hatzenbuehler ML, Keyes KM, Hasin DS. Associations between perceived weight discrimination and the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in the general population. *Obesity* 2009;17(11):2033–2039

BODY IMAGE

What does it mean?

Body image is how you see yourself when you look in the mirror or when you picture yourself in your mind. It encompasses:

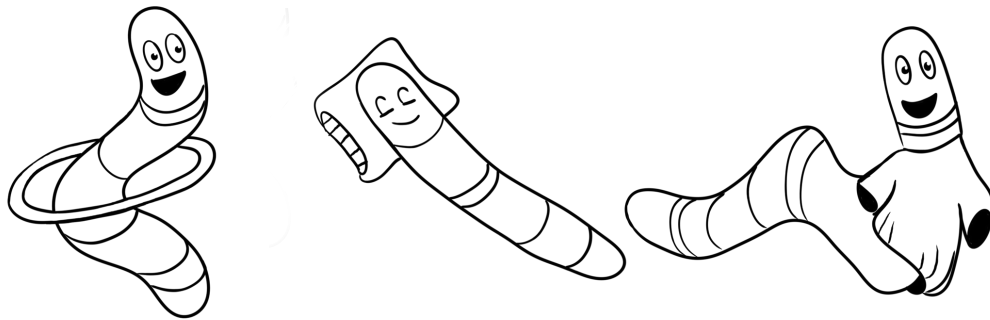


- What you believe about your own appearance (including your memories, assumptions, and generalizations).
- How you feel about your body, including your height, shape, and weight.
- How you sense and control your body as you move. How you physically experience or feel in your body.

Many of us internalize messages starting at a young age that can lead to either positive or negative body image. Having a healthy body image is an important part of mental wellbeing and eating disorders prevention.

BODY IMAGE

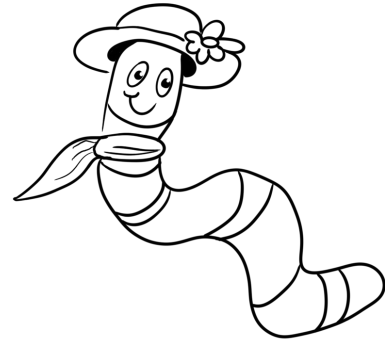
What does it mean?



It's important that students know that they are still loved and appreciated even when they aren't "being pretty, or being smart". It's not just about avoiding harmful comments, such as bullying someone for their weight. It's also important to know only complimenting weight loss, thinness or appearance will put an emphasis on that being the most important thing.

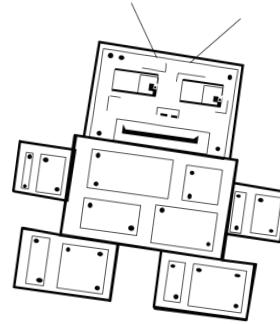
One way to help combat poor body image is practicing body positivity. There are 10 easy steps that are useful in a preventive manor but also for those who are already struggling with body image.

10 STEPS TO BODY POSITIVITY



1. **Appreciate all that your body can do.** Every day your body carries you closer to your dreams. Celebrate all of the amazing things your body does for you like running, dancing, breathing, laughing, dreaming, etc.
2. **Keep a top-ten list of things you like about yourself**—things that aren't related to how much you weigh or what you look like. Read your list often. Add to it as you become aware of more things to like about yourself.
3. **Remind yourself that “true beauty” is not simply skin-deep.** When you feel good about yourself and who you are, you carry yourself with a sense of confidence, self-acceptance, and openness that makes you beautiful. Beauty is a state of mind, not a state of your body.
4. **Look at yourself as a whole person.** When you see yourself in a mirror or in your mind, choose not to focus on specific body parts. See yourself as you want others to see you – as a whole person.
5. **Surround yourself with positive people.** It is easier to feel good about yourself and your body when you are around others who are supportive and who recognize the importance of liking yourself just as you naturally are.

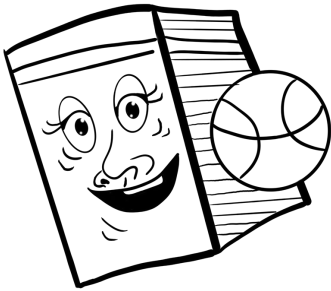
10 STEPS TO BODY POSITIVITY



6. **Shut down those voices in your head that tell you your body is not “right” or that you are a “bad” person.** You can overpower those negative thoughts with positive ones. The next time you start to tear yourself down, build yourself back up with a few quick affirmations that work for you.
7. **Wear clothes that are comfortable** and that make you feel good about your body. Work with your body, not against it.
8. **Become a critical viewer of social media messages.** Pay attention to images, slogans, or attitudes that make you feel bad about yourself or your body. Protest these messages: write a letter to the advertiser or talk back to the image or message.
9. **Do something nice for yourself,** something that lets your body know you appreciate it. Take a bubble bath, make time for a nap, or find a peaceful place outside to relax.
10. **Making the effort to do positive things such as helping people** will make you feel good about yourself and can give you a break from internal negativity. Sometimes reaching out to other people can help you feel better about yourself and can make a positive change in our world.

10 Steps To Body Positivity made in collaboration with The National Eating Disorder Association.

KEY-TAKEAWAYS



- Having positive self talk
- Identify skills, hobbies or positive appearance based compliments about self.
- Be able to draw themselves or aspect of themselves in a positive way

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Appropriateness of the topic with age group
 - Refer to "Data" section
- How to help student who is having trouble thinking of something positive
 - Encourage them to think about what things they like to do or what they are proud of
 - Try to shut down negative thoughts. No one is perfect we all have positive traits
 - Suggest examples that apply to that student from below
- Examples at the ready to help struggling students
 - Kindness to others
 - Skills in sports, arts or other hobby
 - Ability to have fun
 - Great smile, pretty eyes, nice hair style
 - Cool style
 - Being smart or good listener

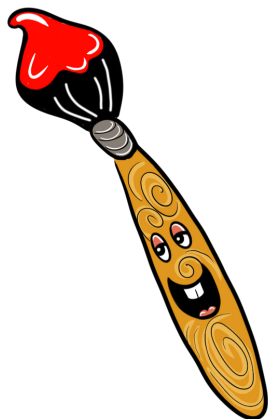
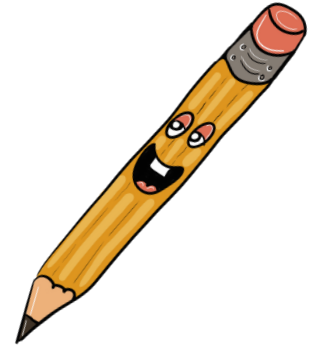
ITEMS NEEDED:

Activity



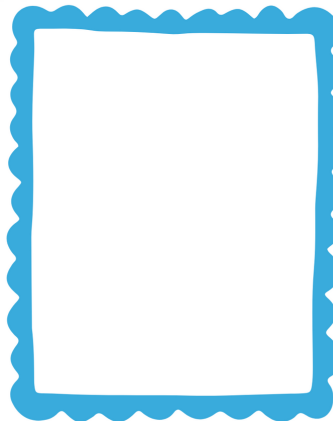
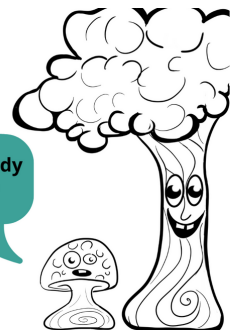
Items needed:

- Book
- Print out activity
- Writing utensils
- Coloring utensils



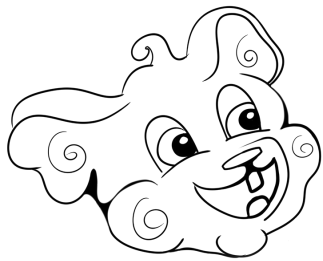
I love my body
because it allows me
to have fun!

What does your body
allow you to do?

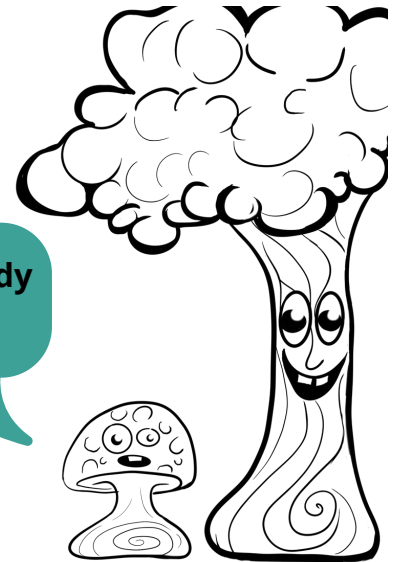




ACTIVITY EXAMPLE



I love my body because it allows me to have fun!



What does your body allow you to do?



I love my body because I can
draw

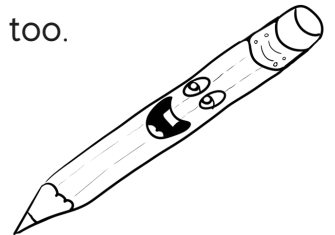


I LOVE MY BODY BECAUSE _____
AFTER WRITING, STUDENTS DRAW A PICTURE TO GO WITH THEIR WORDS. THEN,
STUDENTS ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THEIR WRITING AND DRAWING.

HOW TO USE:

Steps:

- Facilitator reads through the guide book ahead of time
- Make your own example for the activity ahead of time
- Read the book to the class
 - Make sure everyone is seated so that they can see and hear, or the students each get a copy.
- Age appropriate discussion about the book and any body positivity.
- Discuss the book and brainstorm all the positive things our bodies can do for us.
- Hand out printed activity and utensils.
 - Wait till after the book reading so that students aren't distracted or fill it out before the lesson.
- Explain activity
 - "Now that we have learned the steps to body positivity, let's put it into practice."
 - "Each of you is going to write down what you like about yourself, then draw a picture of yourself."
 - Alternative to the drawing, could have a printed photo of each of the students to glue into the frame.
 - Each book also has a section to do this activity, if all students have a copy they can do the activity in the book.
- Address questions
- Give students time but walk around and check in on students
- Ask for students to share - share your own example about yourself too.
- Have the finished activities where students can see often.



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