



Free Being Me



Older Activity Pack (15+ years-old)

An educational programme that promotes a world free from appearance-related anxiety.





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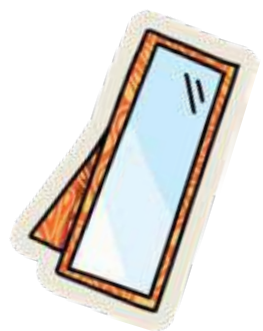
Welcome



Free Being Me (FBM) is an educational programme that promotes a world free from appearance-related anxiety. FBM first began in 2013, developed in partnership with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), the Dove Self-Esteem Project (DSEP) and the Centre of Appearance Research (CAR). Since then, an incredible six million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 80 countries have improved their body confidence and helped other people do the same.

This updated, more representative and interactive version of Free Being Me will support four million other Guides and Scouts to lead a movement towards a world free from body insecurities.

We can't wait to see what your group will do!





Izabel, a Girl Guide from Brazil, describes her Free Being Me experience:

“I had really bad self-esteem issues when I was a teenager, and when the Free Being Me programme came out in Brazil I was at our Girl Guide National Assembly. During the introduction video, I could see that I wasn’t alone in my body confidence issues and all the women and girls I admired were crying by my side. But why? Why couldn’t they see themselves beyond their appearance? Why couldn’t I see myself beyond my appearance? The Free Being Me programme helped improve this. I was really excited because I know with my heart how it feels to stop doing things because you have self-esteem issues, from not feeling confident to swim or even leading to toxic relationships because you don’t know you’re worth better. We need to spread this body positivity around the globe, we need to empower our girls and young women to exist in their bodies. Girls need to be confident to speak out, to be themselves and to support each other.”

Stacie June Shelton, Head of Education and Global Advocacy, The Dove Self-Esteem Project:

The **Dove Self-Esteem Project** started in 2004 and since then has reached over 79 million young people in 150 countries. We started this journey with Girl Scouts USA and it later blossomed into Guiding as one of our key partners. We are very pleased to have guides and scouts worldwide building up body confidence within our ongoing partnership with WAGGGS. Together, with your guiding and scouting groups, leaders, parents and partners, we can make sure young people have access to important evidence-based tools and body confidence and self-esteem education.

Our tools cover the key topics proven to impact a person’s body confidence. The tools we have include games, stories, cartoons and activities like those in Free Being Me. We know that low body confidence is not only a public health issue, but also a social justice and gender equality issue. We want to help young people feel good about the way they look to reach their full potential. This includes empowering girls across all parts of their life. Building up a girl’s body confidence aids in building leadership skills, improves their academic attainment and physical and mental health, and empowers them to use their voice to stand up to societal pressures around appearance and the appearance-related biases and discrimination people face. We hope you will join us to achieve this by building up body confidence in many more young people around the world.

Heidi Jokinen, Chair of the WAGGGS World Board:

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts has been working for more than eight years to bring about a real, positive and lasting change in how all young people see themselves. The Free Being Me curriculum aims to empower girls to reach their full potential in life through activities that strengthen body confidence and self-esteem, so that the way they think they look never holds them back. Young people learn to stand up to social pressures, value their bodies, challenge beauty stereotypes promoted in the media and advocate for a healthy body image to their friends and community.

By improving the body confidence of a generation, WAGGGS can make a meaningful impact in girls’ lives and empower them to always be unstoppable.



How Free Being Me works



This Free Being Me activity pack is suitable for girl-only and co-educational groups of 20-30 young people aged 11-14. It can easily be adapted for different sized groups.

Your group should complete **all five FBM sessions** to earn the FBM badge and improve their body confidence. It's only by completing these five sessions, in the order below, that the impact of the programme is guaranteed.

Each session lasts approximately **one hour** and conveys an important **Key Message** for young people to learn about and challenge society's beauty standards. Session 1 lasts slightly longer as it includes an introduction and optional evaluation.

FBM should take between five and six hours to complete, plus time afterwards for your group to take action in their community.

The session outlines below are for use with in-person delivery. For groups delivering Free Being Me **online**, download adapted session plans and resources here: <https://free-being-me.com/downloads/>

Session	Key Messages	Activities
1	<p>Beauty standards are everywhere, telling us we're not good enough unless we look one specific way. They're impossible to achieve, exclude people and change constantly throughout history and cultures. They harm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• My world: hurt our confidence and friendships, affect our school/work life, stop us from doing the things we love and reaching our full potential.• The wider world: make the world less diverse, cost our governments and health services, and damage the environment.• Everyone, especially girls and women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome to FBM• Activity 1: Stressful Standards Define (and destroy) the 'ideal look' that society puts pressure on us to achieve.• Activity 2: Ripple Effect Understand the ways that beauty standards harm people – personally, in school/work and the wider world (government, health service, environment).• Reflection Reflect on how to challenge beauty standards as a global citizen. Give each other compliments (not about looks!).• Home Challenge: Media Detectives Find three examples of beauty standards and write down two harmful consequences of each.



You will find **facilitator guidance** in the session plans reminding you what it's important to do and what to look/listen out for from your group.



Session

Key Messages



Activities

2

We **should challenge and reject** beauty standards in **all forms of advertising and other media** (e.g. TV, film, radio, newspapers, toys, songs and books) that put pressure on us to change how we look.



- **Warm-up**
Share the consequences of beauty standards in different media using the Home Challenge
- **Activity 1: Who Wins?**
Discover who is benefiting from beauty standards we see in the media.
- **Activity 2: Who Loses?**
Challenge the media that spreads harmful beauty standards.
- **Reflection**
Draw a body confident advert.

Home Challenge: Dear friend

Write a note to a younger person explaining why it's not worth trying to achieve beauty standards.

3

Sometimes **family and friends** put pressure on us to change how we look - without even realising. Let's challenge these comments and actions that are spreading beauty standards!



- **Warm-up**
Share how beauty standards harm people using their Home Challenge.
- **Activity 1: People Under Pressure** Stand up to beauty standards by practicing challenging family and friends.
- **Activity 2: Mirror Messages**
Write a body confident message.
- **Reflection**
Name parts of your body you like and what they can do.

Home Challenge: My Mirror

Stand in front of a mirror and appreciate their body out loud.



Session

Key Messages

Activities

4

We may make comments comparing people's looks to beauty standards - without even realising. This '**body talk**' actually spreads the impossible 'ideal'. Instead, we should celebrate what makes us all unique and what our bodies can do!



- **Warm-up**
Say what we love about our bodies using the Home Challenge.
- **Activity 1: Body Talk**
Identify body talk and learn ways to respond.
- **Activity 2: Beating Body Talk**
Practise challenging body talk so we feel comfortable doing it in our everyday lives.
- **Reflection**
Write or draw a day of confidence-boosting activities.

Home Challenge - My Challenges:

Make two promises to help build your body confidence.

5

We have the power to build a world where everyone feels free to be themselves!

Every action, no matter how big or small, will improve other people's body confidence and our own.

- **Warm-up**
Share how the Home Challenge promises went.
- **Activity 1: See the Change**
Imagine if every young person they know understood how harmful beauty standards are and felt body confident every day.
- **Activity 2: Plan the Change**
Get inspired by other people's projects, then complete a **Take Action Project Plan** to carry out in their community.

Home Challenge - Take Action:

Set a deadline for one or two week's time to gather for a celebration and badge ceremony!

A **FBM Journal** is also provided alongside the session plans. It contains activities, inspiration and reflections that groups will complete during and after sessions - such as when completing their Home Challenges.



Important information

Hello!
Keep an eye out for
my body confidence
tips in the
session plans.

Free Being Me has been written closely with academics who specialise in appearance research. All the activities and resources have been **carefully written based on evidence of how to improve young people's body confidence successfully.**

It's therefore important to trust and follow the session plans to maximise their impact. For more information, see p. 13 of the Facilitator Guide and look for our **Body Confidence Expert** who appears in the session plans with tips and advice.



When delivering Free Being Me:

Facilitators should ...

- Write a **Brave Space Agreement** with the group at the beginning and display it during every session. This will enable young people to share their thoughts and challenge their opinions safely, free from judgement.
- Trust the materials.** Everything in the packs - from the questions and activities, to timings and order - is based on evidence to improve young peoples' body confidence. It's therefore important to deliver them as they are written - don't pick or change activities and do use the prompts provided.
- Keep the group focussed on the session's **Key Message**. Talking about body confidence can provoke strong reactions and deep conversations, but try to refocus the group.
- Allow periods of **silence** during discussions - it can often be vital thinking time. If waiting doesn't prompt a response, try rephrasing the question or dividing into pairs to re-start the conversation.

Make sure young people...

- Start every session by taking the **Free Being Me pledge**. This verbal agreement increases the likelihood of young peoples' participation and motivation.
- Have every opportunity to **challenge and reject society's beauty standards** - verbally, written and by taking action. Research studies suggest that the more we say why beauty standards are harmful, the more we are likely to believe it. It's important to avoid young people talking about beauty standards positively.
- Avoid looking at, saying or describing examples of beauty standards**, even during role plays. To prevent young people being further exposed to, or believing in, harmful beauty standards, only the facilitators should read out these examples.
- Emphasise the importance of applying their learning outside the meeting space by completing every session's **Home Challenge**. By reinforcing what we've learnt in different environments, we're more likely to use the knowledge beyond the Guiding/unit meetings.





Body confidence energisers & songs



Body Confidence Orchestra

Ask the group to say out loud: "My body is an instrument not an ornament". Then, the group moves around the room. When you shout a number and a musical instrument, they form groups of that number and act out the instrument eg guitar, drums, harp, violin, horn.



I love my... because it can...

Standing in a circle, each member of the group completes the phrase,

"I love my... because it can...".

They share a part of their body they love, do an action to show why they love it, and ask everyone else to copy their action, e.g.

"I love my arms because they can hug people"
[they hug themselves].





Body Confidence Poses

Play tag: three people are 'it' and run to catch the others. When they are caught, they hold a body confident pose until another person frees them!



Songs:

My Way by Ava Max

Girl on Fire by Alicia Keys

Don't Touch My Hair by Solange Knowles

Everyday People by Sly and the Family Stone

Bio by Denise

Confident by Demi Lovato

Who You Are by MNEK and Craig David

Try by Colbie Caillat

Woman by Nao and Lianne La Havas

Video by India Arie

Brown Skin Girl by Beyoncé, Blue Ivy and SAInt JHN



Evaluation Guidance for facilitators



Use the **FBM Badge Survey** (see page 14-15) to better understand the impact of Free Being Me on your group.

By completing the survey **twice** (before and after), you can evaluate your group's change in body confidence and self-esteem.



You can use the results from these surveys in many ways. You may simply wish to understand how effective the FBM activities were and decide to share this with your MO. You might use the results to promote the benefits of body confidence to other groups!



Instructions:



The FBM Badge Survey is entirely **optional**. It's important to ask your group if they consent to taking part. You should:

1. Explain to your group the **purpose** of the survey and **how** you will use or share their results.
2. Make sure every member of your group completes the survey **twice**: once before starting FBM and once after finishing all FBM sessions, eg at the celebration. The Badge Survey is the same both times, with some extra activity feedback questions in the Post-Survey.
3. Choose how to fill out the survey:
 - a) **Online** (if your group has access to smartphones): Scan the relevant **QR code** below with your browser or app and follow the steps. Leaders write down each participant's two total scores, their age and initials, and keep safe.
 - i. Start Survey (before any FBM activities)
 - ii. Finish Survey (after finishing all FBM activities)
 - b) **Paper**: Make copies in advance: one per participant for the start of FBM, and one per participant at the end (see page 14 and 80).



Start Survey



Finish Survey





Analysing the survey:

When your group has completed the survey twice, collate each participant's start and finish surveys by matching their initials and age. To analyse the survey, score the responses of questions 1-6 as follows:

Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neither Agree nor Disagree=3, Agree=4, and Strongly Agree=5. *Note that scoring for question 3 is reversed, eg Strongly Disagree=5 and Strongly Agree=1.*

Then, calculate the average of the response items for each of the following groups of questions:

- 1 & 2 (measuring if young people let body confidence hold them back from participating)
- 3 & 4 (measuring how positive young people feel about their own appearance)
- 5 & 6 (measuring young people's ability to take action on beauty standards)



Interpreting the results:

Compare the before and after results per person and/or as a group.

- For questions **1 to 6**, higher post-survey averages indicate that young people:
 - a) 1 & 2: Feel more that body confidence does not hold them back from participating.
 - b) 3 & 4: Feel more positive about their own appearance.
 - c) 5 & 6: Have a higher ability to take action on beauty standards.
- For **question 7**, observe whether the young peoples' actions to improve their body confidence have changed before and after doing FBM, particularly if they have applied the things they learned from the activity pack.
- For **question 8**, higher post-survey ratings indicate improved self-reported body confidence.

Please note that these surveys only capture one day in their life and may therefore not be representative.



FBM Badge Start Survey








Join groups around the world who are sharing their understanding, feelings and actions on the topic of body confidence!

Taking part is **optional**. If you choose to complete the survey, this means you agree for your leader to use and share this information (they won't share your name) and help WAGGS understand if FBM is working.

Complete the FBM Badge Survey on your own and then give it to your leader.

Age:

Initials:

Rate how much you generally agree or disagree with the following statements (please select <u>only one</u> response per statement):	1 Strongly disagree 	2 Disagree 	3 Neither agree nor disagree 	4 Agree 	5 Strongly agree 
1. I often speak up at home, in class and at Guiding without worrying about how I look.					
2. I often try new things and activities without worrying about how I look.					
3. I wish I could change my looks to be like people I see on the TV, in advertising or on social media.					
4. I like what I see when I look in the mirror.					
5. I feel confident standing up to negative comments about people's looks.					
6. I know how to help other people improve their body confidence.					





7. When you don't feel good about your looks, what do you do to help yourself feel better?

.....

.....

.....

.....



8. Draw or colour in this scale to show how much you agree with this statement:



In general, I'm happy about the way I look.

0 10



Not happy at all



Moderately happy



Very happy



Session 1

🕒 Time: 1 hour 15 mins



Key Message

Beauty standards are everywhere, telling us we're not good enough unless we look **one specific way**. They're **impossible** to achieve, exclude people and **change** constantly throughout history and cultures. They harm:

- **My world:** hurt our confidence and friendships, affect our school/work life, stop us from doing the things we love and reaching our full potential.
- **The wider world:** make the world less diverse, cost our governments and health services, and damage the environment.
- **Everyone, especially girls and women.**

Preparation

- Make a copy of the **Journal** for every participant.
- **Optional welcome:** Prepare to deliver the pre-evaluation activity (see page 14 - 15).
- **Activity 1:** Stick two **flipcharts** next to each other on the wall. One titled: 'Girls' and the other: 'Boys'.
Optional: Bring in examples of subtle beauty standards found in your country to help groups understand how pervasive they are.
- **Activity 2:** Make copies of the **Pressure cards**.
Optional: Add extra examples relevant to your context.

This session is key to Free Being Me because it sets the scene for all the following sessions. It is very important for the group to see how ridiculous and impossible beauty standards are, and say how they harm us.



Resources provided:

- Journals
- FBM video
- Pressure cards and guidance
- Ripple Effect example

Resources needed:

- Flipchart
- A4 paper and a pen (per person)
- Sticky taper
- Timer
- Sticky notes



Welcome

🕒 25mins

1. Sitting in a circle, welcome everyone to the first of five sessions of Free Being Me (FBM) where they'll find out about feeling good in their bodies, and help others too.

2. *Optional: Conduct the pre-evaluation activity.*

3. Ask: **What does body confidence mean?**

Accepting and feeling happy with how I look and what my body can do for me.

If possible, show the FBM video.

4. Work together to write a **Brave Space Agreement** on flipchart. This is a set of guidelines that will be displayed throughout the FBM to ensure everyone feels safe, confident speaking up and comfortable sharing their ideas.

5. The group takes the **FBM pledge** by saying "Yes!", nodding or waving when you ask:

Are you ready to take part in FBM, speak up and help us to protect the Brave Space?



It's important that:

Your group discovers things for themselves during FBM, so avoid adding any more information about body confidence at this stage.

Every person takes the FBM pledge as the start of their journey to helping themselves and others build confidence.



Brave Space example

We take part and speak up
We're curious and ask questions
We include everyone
We listen to each other
We don't laugh at others
We encourage each other
We tell an adult if we're uncomfortable or worried



Session 1

1. Stressful Standards

🕒 15mins

- 1. Objective:** To define (and destroy) the 'ideal look' that society puts pressure on us to achieve.
- The group stands behind each other in a line (a queue), facing the **two prepared flipcharts**. The facilitator stands with a **pen**, facing the first person in the line.
- Explain the race:
 - The aim is to describe **society's 'ideal look'** for boys or girls, being as specific as possible.
 - The person at the front shouts **one example for girls or boys** to the facilitator who writes it on the relevant flipchart, *eg girls = long flowing hair with no kinks; girls = smooth skin with no spots, scars, marks or wrinkles; boys = broad shoulders with big muscles*. The player then runs to the back of the line.
 - The idea is to **make the facilitator write as fast as possible** in five minutes, creating a long list of examples! Depending on the size of the group, each person should have three turns – the facilitator should only accept new ideas (no repetition!).
- After five minutes, sit together while the **facilitator reads out** the long list.



It's important that:

If you're in a co-ed setting, split into gendered groups for this activity. After, make time for both groups to hear each other's ideas and opinions.

The list is:

- Very long
- Specific – if someone says, "Perfect teeth", ask: What does 'perfect' look like? Eg the gum to teeth ratio?
- Only related to appearance, eg don't accept examples about personality.

You emphasise how **ridiculous** the list is – point out any **contradictions**, *eg big bum and flat stomach and large breasts; long legs and small feet*.

5. Ask: *Is it really possible to look like this? No!*

6. Scribble the words "Beauty Standards" all over the list. Emphasise that, in reality, this look is impossible for anyone to achieve.





Look for

Surprise at the long list of beauty standards, and that people could be under so much pressure to look like an impossible 'ideal'.



It's important that:

You challenge anyone who says...

"[Celebrities, influencers, models] do look 'perfect' though!"

- By asking: Does anyone really have all of the things on the list?
- Then explaining: All the pictures we see have been heavily edited, therefore we're comparing ourselves to images that **aren't real**.



7. Briefly discuss (for five minutes):

a) In another country or 100 years ago, would this 'ideal look' be the same?

Beauty standards are always changing - think about the 'ideal look' at different times in our country's history. Also, beauty standards contradict each other from country to country, eg some people feel pressure to lighten their skin while others try to darken theirs.

b) Where do we see and hear these beauty standards?

On TV, radio, social media, adverts, songs, friends and family, diet industry, fashion world, beauty industry etc.

c) If the girls' list is longer than the boys', ask the group why they think this is.

Society puts more pressure on girls than boys to achieve impossible beauty standards. Often, girls are mostly valued for how they look.

8. If time remains, use the group's energy to **destroy** all the beauty standards on **flipchart!**



Session 1



2. Ripple Effect

🕒 25mins

- 1. Objective:** To understand the ways that the beauty standards we've identified can harm people – personally, in school/work and the wider world (government, health service, environment).
- Help everyone to stick a **piece of paper** on their backs and give each person a **pen**.
- Split into groups of **three** and form a **triangle shape**. Write a **title** on each other's backs:
 - Person 1: **Individual**
 - Person 2: **School/work**
 - Person 3: **Wider world**
- Explain that everyone will write on each other's backs answers that relate to the title on the paper. Ask: **When someone feels under pressure to look like beauty standards, what are the negative consequences on the different areas of their life?** For example, if the paper's title is 'School/work', they could write: low grades, peer pressure, damages friendships.
- Now introduce the **scenarios**:
 - Each group takes a **Pressure card** and reads it quietly.
 - Write down the negative consequences for the character on each other's papers, as before.
 - When finished, groups swap **Pressure cards**. Repeat until everyone has seen at least three scenarios.

It's important that:

- The group tries this activity on their own – even if they struggle. If necessary, prompt the groups by asking:
 - What might people miss out on?
 - How might people feel?
 - What **relationships** might be affected and how?
 - What do we mean by **wider world**? Government, healthcare services, the environment, cultures etc.
- If needed, prompt groups using **Pressure cards** guidance.





6. After 10 minutes, come together to place their papers in three concentric circles to form a ripple effect:

- a. The papers titled 'Wider World' are placed in a big circle (group 3)
- b. 'School/work' papers are placed in a slightly smaller circle inside the first one (group 2)
- c. 'Individual' papers are placed in a circle on the inside (group 1)

7. Standing around the Ripple Effect, discuss:

- a. How do the impacts of beauty standards build from the inner to outer circles?
- b. In our society, people experience different forms of **discrimination** (when they are treated differently based on part(s) of their identity, eg their skin colour, size, gender, ability etc). **Which people are especially harmed by beauty standards?**

Beauty standards harm everyone, but especially people who already experience discrimination such as girls and women, trans, non-binary, fat, older, disabled people/people with disabilities, people of colour and people from sexual minorities. For example, in societies that consider light skin the beauty standard, people who don't have white skin will experience more harm.

- c. Given all the harmful, negative consequences, **does it make sense to try to look like beauty standards? No!**

8. Ask the group to imagine they're standing in front of the CEO of the company selling the skin-lightening cream Issa uses. **What would you say to stop them spreading beauty standards?**



It's important that:

You highlight the links between the circles. For example, when people worry about how they look, they might get distracted in school, and if they don't get a good education, this could stop them fulfilling their potential.



Listen for



"Your advertising makes people feel excluded and not good enough. Stop encouraging people to compare themselves to an impossible 'ideal!'"



Session 1



Reflection

🕒 15mins

1. Sitting together in a circle, introduce the **FBM Journals** as a place to write or draw their thoughts and feelings at the **end of every session and at home**.
2. In their **Journals**, everyone draws or writes:
 - a) **How did the session make you feel?**
 - b) We've seen how beauty standards especially stop girls and young women from reaching their full potential.
As a global citizen, what could you do to challenge beauty standards?
3. To finish, everyone walks around the room with a sticky note on their back. The group writes compliments **not related to their looks** on each other's notes.
4. At the end, everyone looks at their **sticky note** and sticks it in their Journal.



It's important that:

- You walk around to make sure **everyone** has something written on their sticky note during the activity.
- You emphasise that beauty standards are **unacceptable** and that Free Being Me is about working together to do something about it!

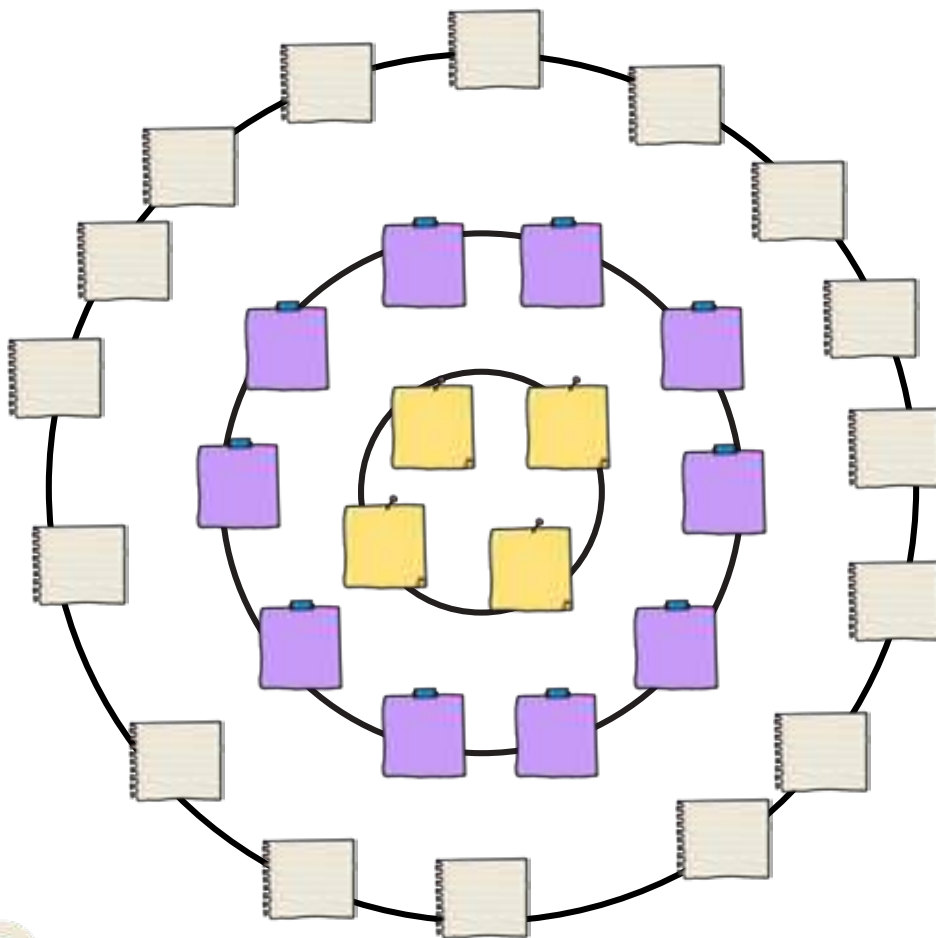




Home Challenge: Media Detectives

1. Find three examples of beauty standards in **different forms of media**, eg TV, roadside advertising, transport, online videos, social media, film.
2. For each beauty standard, write down two harmful consequences it could have on people.

Ripple Effect Example



Pressure Cards



Abena is a 21-year-old woman from **Ghana**. She has afro hair and worries about the impression it gives to other people. When she watches American films, everyone has soft flowing hair, so she uses lots of oil (that blocks the drain). She might start using an expensive chemical formula.

Four **Turkish** girls are part of a youth group in **Germany**. They're about to attend their first event where they will be mixing with boys (away from their parents). In their group chat, they're sharing the best hair removal products – and advice from their older sisters.

Farrah is a young woman from **Kuwait**. People often comment on her pimples so she is desperate to have flawlessly smooth, clear and light skin. She is trying a new cleanser despite it burning her skin and containing microbeads (that harm the environment).

Fernando is a 17-year-old man from **Mexico**. He often secretly compares his physique to his friends'. He has started taking supplements to build his muscles (that he ordered online) but is struggling to concentrate in school and often feels sick.



Habibah is a 15-year-old girl from **Egypt**. She's started following makeup tutorials by her favourite influencer. Now she doesn't leave the house without all her makeup on – she wakes up at 6am and spends two hours getting ready. Whenever Habibah gets money, she spends it on makeup and nothing else.



Zoe is a 38-year-old woman from **Canada**. She recently gave birth to her first child. Ever since, she's felt uncomfortable looking in the mirror. She doesn't like the stretch marks on her stomach or her large breasts and worries her wife will notice. When Zoe takes her baby for a walk, she always covers up in a big coat.

Issa is a 42-year-old woman from **Kenya**. She recently finished her diploma but is struggling to find a job. She is worried it is because of her dark skin. She spoke to a friend who recommended a skin lightening cream that is known for its harsh chemicals – but she said it's worth it because it works.

Yuki is a 16-year-old girl from **Japan**. She's a huge fan of K-pop! Her dream is to be a K-pop star but her family always laughs and tells her she doesn't have the right body shape. Yuki never finishes meals because she's constantly dieting to try to lose weight. Last month she fainted at school and had to see the nurse.

Arek is a 27-year-old man from **Poland**. He uses a dating app but hasn't been on many dates. When he joined, he had to write his height on his profile, and he is worried he is too short. He is not getting many matches and is wondering if he should start lying about his height.

Alex is a 24-year-old non-binary person from **New Zealand** who wants to have more pronounced cheekbones. They always pose in a very specific way in photos, use filters and exercise twice a day to be as thin as possible.





Pressure Cards Guidance

Some examples of harmful consequences for the people themselves (individuals), their school or work life and the wider world:

Individual

- Worried, anxious, ashamed, unhappy
- Low confidence
- Unable to reach full potential
- Feels less valued and respected by the world around them
- Feels under pressure to change appearance
- Uncomfortable around other people
- Avoids some activities and misses out on fun because of worrying
- Spends money regularly on products or techniques
- Spends time comparing themselves, monitoring body, researching procedures and/or posing for/editing photos rather than enjoying life
- Damages health (eg skin or nutrition) by using products or techniques that can cause infections, or over-exercising

School/work life

- Distracted and becomes distant from friends and family
- Family and friends worry about them
- Struggles to build new relationships (friends, colleagues, partners)
- Influences others (peers or family) to follow and therefore spread beauty standards
- Difficulty concentrating in school/work could lead to lower performance
- Compares themselves to each other causing unhappiness, jealousy and arguments





Wider world

- Spreads the idea that women should change their appearance to please men, and men should be visibly “strong”
- If they need medical care, it costs the health service
- Environmental impact, eg oil in drains and waterways or products’ plastic packaging
- Further spreads prejudices, eg racism (that ‘Western’ style hair or light skin is superior), fatphobia (that thin is superior) and ageism (that being young is superior)
- Society misses out on their skills (if they don’t succeed at school or work)
- Lack of diverse leaders that don’t represent people
- Loss of diversity in society if everyone looks the same
- Women less involved in decision making



Session 2

🕒 Time: 1 hour



Key Message

We should **challenge and reject** beauty standards in all forms of advertising and other media (eg TV, film, radio, newspapers, toys, songs and books) that put pressure on us to change how we look.

You can help young people's body confidence journey by tidying away any visual examples of beauty standards, eg Media Madness cards as soon as you've finished using them. Research studies have shown that women's body confidence is negatively impacted by exposure to idealised images of models, celebrities and people on TV, social media or in magazines.



Preparation

- Remind everyone to bring in their **Journal** with their completed **Home Challenge**.
- **Activity 1:** (minimum of two facilitators needed)
 - a. At the top of a flipchart, write the three questions (see instructions). Below the questions divide the page into two columns: Media and People. Display somewhere accessible.
 - b. Copy and cut out the **Places of Pressure cards**.
 - c. Optional: Add further examples of beauty standards from your country's media.



Resources provided:

- Places of Pressure cards and guidance

Resources needed:

- Flipchart
- Pens and paper
- Timer





- 1) Who wins (the media or people)?
- 2) Why is this a problem?
- 3) What tricks do they use to spread beauty standards?

Media

People



Session 2

Warm-up

🕒 10mins

1. Ask the group to take the **FBM pledge**. Explain that by saying this out loud, they are helping themselves and others build their confidence.
Are you ready to take part in FBM, speak up to challenge beauty standards and help us to protect the Brave Space?
2. **Objective:** To recap the different places beauty standards come from and the harm they cause.
3. Stand in a circle with their **Journals**, ready to share their **Home Challenge** (consequences of beauty standards found in different media).



It's important that:

Every person takes the FBM pledge as a commitment to helping themselves and others build confidence.

You keep up the pace – this should be done quickly and with lots of energy!

Everyone shares **different** examples of beauty standards and their consequences.





4. Split into groups of between **six to eight** and explain:
 - a. Groups sit in circles to build a **chain of media**. They take it in turns to share **somewhere** they saw or heard beauty standards and a harmful consequence, eg *"I saw a beauty standard [on the television] and it could [make people start dangerous diets]"*.
 - b. The next person adds to the chain by **repeating** the previous person's then **adding their own**, eg *"[Anna] saw a beauty standard [on the television] and it could [make people start dangerous diets]. I saw a beauty standard [on my phone] that could [pressure someone into plastic surgery]"*.
 - c. **Continue** around the circle, adding a **consequence** until everyone has shared.
5. At the end, ask: **How many more beauty standards that we've heard were aimed at women than men? Why is this a problem?**



Listen for



A wide range of **places** we see/hear beauty standards.

Different examples of **harm caused by** beauty standards.

Surprise at how many more beauty standards are **aimed at women** compared to men. Recognition that this puts women under more pressure, and further spreads **gender inequality**.



Session 2



1. Who Wins?

🕒 20 mins

- 1. Objective:** To discover who is really winning in a world full of beauty standards we see in the media.
- 2. Ask:** **What does the media tell us will happen if we can make ourselves look like the beauty standards?**
Happier, more successful, rich etc.
- 3.** Emphasise that beauty standards want us to believe that we'll 'win' if we achieve them but we know that this isn't true! This game will help to uncover who the real winners are.
- 4.** Split into small groups, each with one **Places of Pressure card**. Keep the remaining cards next to the **flipchart**. Explain:
 - Groups have **10 minutes** to answer the following questions about as many **Places of Pressure cards** as possible:
 - i. Who wins (the media or people)?**
 - ii. Why is this a problem?**
 - iii. What tricks do they use to spread beauty standards?**
 - Each time a group has finished with their card, one person runs to **draw a tick** in the relevant column on the **flipchart** to show who wins. They then swap their **Places of Pressure card** and run back to the group.



It's important that:

You have **two facilitators**: one stays by the flipchart to make sure all the ticks are in the '**Media**' column; one monitors groups to make sure every person **challenges** beauty standards during the activity.





It's important that:

- You emphasise the 'winners' are all forms of media, companies (ie beauty brands, toy companies), the diet industry.
- You challenge anyone who says...
"But the edited photo looks better"
 - By asking: "Is it realistic for most people to look like this edited image?"
 - Then explaining: it's understandable because we're constantly shown images like this, but we need to challenge these harmful and impossible standards!



5. At the end, groups have two minutes to summarise what they have discovered by finishing the sentence: **Trying to achieve beauty standards you see in the media is harmful and not worth it because ..."**

a. *The images aren't real, they have been heavily edited - which takes hours of work!*

b. *The images **don't represent most people** and lack diversity.*

c. *They make false promises (that we can achieve a more successful or happier lifestyle), when they're actually just trying to make money.*

6. Come together and ask the groups to share their sentences.

7. Referring to the **flipchart**, ask:

Who loses out with beauty standards and how?

We all lose: you, me, friends and family, the natural environment. In fact, even models and celebrities - we're all made to feel that we're never good enough!



Session 2



2. Who Loses?

🕒 20mins

- 1. Objective:** To challenge the ‘winners’ of beauty standards.
- 2. Briefly discuss:** **How do you feel about what we learned in activity 1?**
- 3. Explain** that after uncovering how the media spreads beauty standards, it’s time to raise awareness of the issue (that will be continued in later Free Being Me sessions):
 - In small groups with **pens and paper**, start planning a **campaign for change**.
 - Each group chooses **one form of media or advertising** to campaign against (from the Home Challenge or **Pressure cards**), *eg social media advert to follow a diet plan.*
 - Groups have 10 minutes to write a short message that **educates the audience** about the tricks the media uses and the harm beauty standards cause.
 - The messages can be in any form they wish, *eg radio broadcast, newspaper front cover, poem, TV news report, social media post, reel or video...*
 - Their messages should speak **directly to the audience**, be **50 words** max and help people to spot beauty standards in the future!
- 4. Come together** and invite everyone to share their **powerful messages!**



It’s important that:

You move around the room to support groups and keep conversations on track.

If groups are stuck, you prompt them by asking:

- Why is this message **harmful**?
- What **impact** does it have on the person/world?
- What can people do to **challenge** the pressure?



Listen for



“STOP – that picture isn’t real! They edit photos to make us feel we need to change the way we look so we waste money on their products. When we see adverts we need to think, “What are they really trying to tell us?” and remember that we ARE good enough!”





Reflection

🕒 15mins

1. Sitting together with their **Journals**, ask the group to reflect quietly on the most important thing they learned, and write it down.
2. Then, everyone draws a **body confident advert or image** that includes all shapes and sizes, and includes positive messages.

Home Challenge: Dear Friend

Write a letter or record a voice note to a **younger person you know**. Tell them why it's not worth trying to achieve beauty standards and why it's harmful if they do. Remember to use what you've discussed in the sessions.



It's important that:



The group understands that despite how **unacceptable** beauty standards are, they can **stand up** to them by working together!



Places of pressure cards and guidance



1.



2.



3.

Before



After



4.



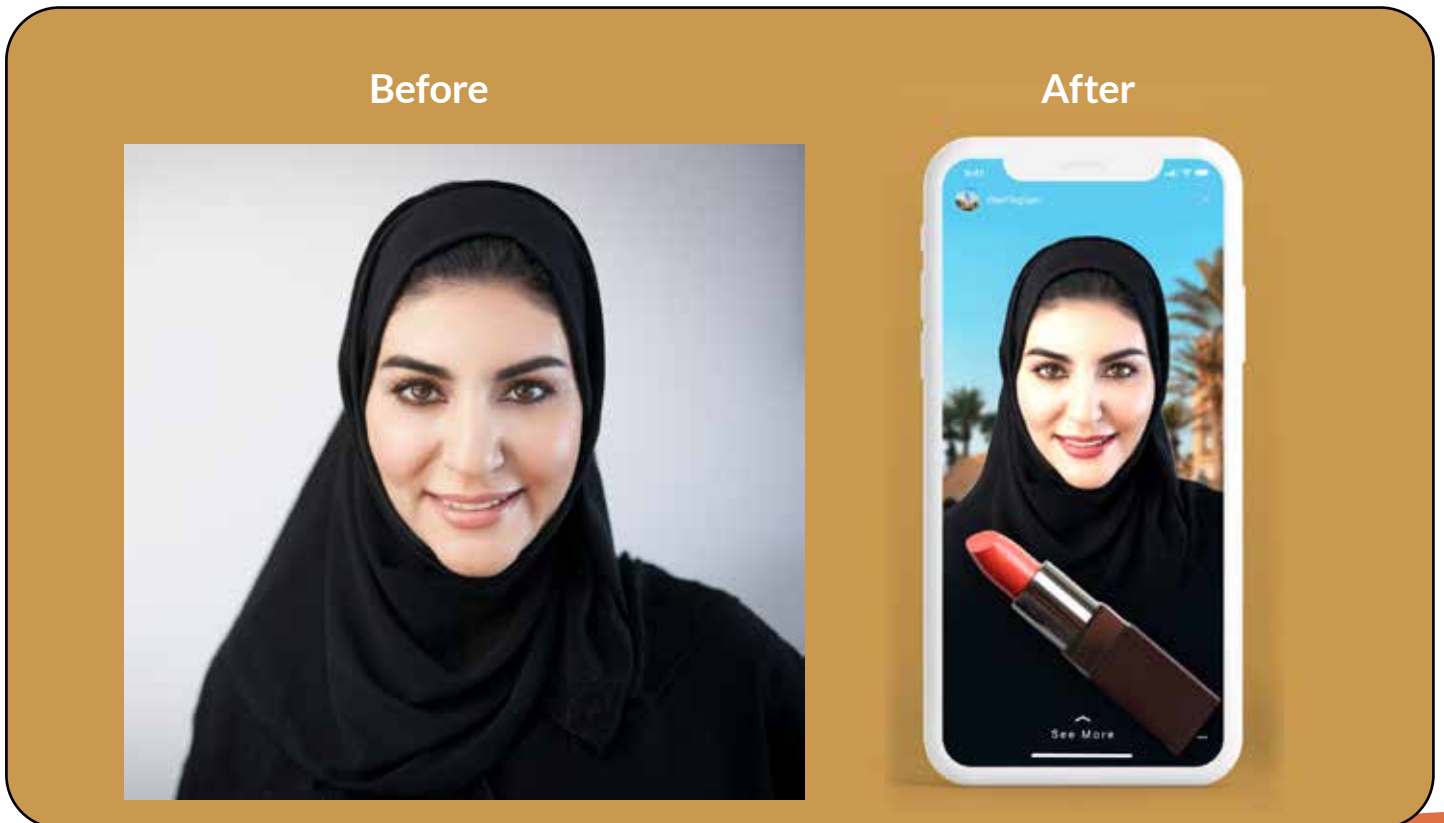
5.



6.



7.



8.



www.maternitywear.com

Maternity wear for a slimmer shape

SHOP NOW

This advertisement features a photograph of three pregnant women sitting on large, colorful exercise balls (purple, green, and pink) in a studio setting. The women are dressed in blue and grey maternity wear. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text is overlaid on the image, with the website URL at the top, the headline in the middle, and a call-to-action button at the bottom.

9.



ONE NEW YORK SUMMER

STARRING JOHN SMITH & JANE DOE

IN CINEMAS MARCH 2022

The image shows a movie poster for 'One New York Summer' displayed on a large screen in a public space. The poster features a man and a woman standing in front of a cityscape. The man is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and has his arms crossed. The woman is wearing a light-colored top and is smiling. The background of the poster shows a city street with buildings and trees. The text on the poster includes the title 'ONE NEW YORK SUMMER', the names of the stars 'STARRING JOHN SMITH & JANE DOE', and the release date 'IN CINEMAS MARCH 2022'. The screen is mounted on a wall next to a set of stairs with a metal handrail.

10.



Guidance



1.

Wins: The media

Problems:

- It's dishonest – changing your looks won't actually make you a better person.
- Aims to make money from your worries and lack of self-esteem. It puts pressure on women to buy such products to follow beauty standards.

Tricks:

- Persuasive language is used to make us think we need to change how we look, and that these pills are the answer.
- Heavily edited image shows an unrealistic shape.
- Promises that pills will work but this isn't proven.

2.

Wins: The media

Problems:

- Tells men they should follow the ultra 'masculine' beauty standards of large muscles, and they should show strength in this way to be respected and considered attractive.

Tricks:

- The image isn't real - it has been through hours of editing.
- The model is likely to have been on extreme diets, spent hours/days/months working out in the gym to try to look like this.

3.

Wins: The media

Problems:

- Selling weight loss products using an 'aspirational' but impossible image further spreads fatphobia by showing ultra thin bodies as 'superior'.

Tricks:

- The model's image has been heavily edited to an impossible 'ideal' (that makes even the model feel they're not good enough).
- Use of hashtags (subtle) that promote beauty standards to sell products.





4.

Wins: The media

Problems:

- Tells women that they need to remove their hair to make people feel better about themselves and more attractive (to men).

Tricks:

- The model is hairless in the advert, and has been heavily edited.

5.

Wins: The media

Problems:

- Tells the audience that women need to follow beauty standards in order to be attractive (to men), otherwise we aren't good enough.

Tricks:

- Heavily edited images of women with impossible proportions.



6.

Wins: The media

Problems:

- Telling people they shouldn't look older (or show their age) - by losing hair. This promotes ageism.
- Company makes money by telling people they're not good enough.

Tricks:

- Heavily edited image of a man with lots of hair to persuade us that the product works.



Guidance

7.

Wins: The media

Problems:

- Skin has been made lighter. This promotes colourism.

Tricks:

- The model's image has been edited to change her face shape, add cheekbones, change her eye shape etc.

8.

Wins: The media

Problems:

- Telling women that even when carrying a baby, they should follow beauty standards.
- Implies a 'perfect body' exists and it is thin and light-skinned. This is untrue, impossible and unhealthy.

Tricks:

- Only shows light-skinned women who are all the same age, size and height.



9.

Wins: The media

Problems:

- By editing the images, it tells us that not even movie stars (who are carefully selected for their roles based upon how they look) are good enough.

Tricks:

- Images of light-skinned, tanned, thin models that are heavily edited and lack diversity.

10.

Wins: The media

Problems:

- White, blond, thin women are the most attractive to men (of all skin colours), and attracting men should be women's aim in life.
- Girls grow up thinking there is only one, narrow way to look and that their value is based on their appearance.

Tricks:

- Heavily edited photo.
- Woman is shown caring for the man who is dressed to look more powerful.



Session 3

🕒 Time: 1 hour

Key Message

Sometimes **family and friends** put pressure on us to change how we look – without even realising. Let's challenge these comments and actions that are spreading beauty standards!



Preparation

- Remind everyone to bring in their **Journal** with their completed **Home Challenge**.
- **Warm-up:** Set up a 'podium' – borrow one or find a solid box that can be stood on.
- **Activity 1:** Place one **chair** per small group around the space. Copy the **Situation cards** (enough for one per group).

It's important that the **Situation cards** are kept **face down** until the groups begin discussions (and turn them back over before they move), and that people don't read out what is on the cards. This is to reduce the time young people are exposed to these harmful messages.



Resources provided:

- Situation cards and guidance

Resources needed:

- Podium (or box)
- Chairs
- Sticky notes and pens



Warm-up

🕒 15mins

1. Ask the group to take the **FBM pledge**. Explain that by saying this out loud, they are helping themselves and others build their confidence.

Are you ready to take part in FBM, speak up to challenge beauty standards and help us to protect the Brave Space?

2. **Objective:** To recap how beauty standards harm people by sharing their **Home Challenge**.
3. Standing with their **Journals** at the prepared 'podium', ask everyone to take it in turn to read out (or play their recordings of) their **Home Challenge** note.



It's important that:

Every person takes the FBM pledge as a commitment to helping themselves and others build confidence.



Session 3

People Under Pressure

🕒 25mins

1. Quickly ask everyone to recap the **different places** they saw and heard beauty standards in Session 2. Explain that this session focuses on how to respond to comments and actions from people we know.
2. **Objective:** To stand up to beauty standards by practising challenging family and friends.
3. **Explain their task:**
 - a) Split into small groups, sitting around one of the **chairs**.
 - b) Each group takes a **Situation card** and keeps it face down until they begin. One person sits on the chair.
 - c) Groups have five minutes to help the person in the scenario by answering:
 - **Why is this a problem?**
 - **How would you challenge the beauty standard if you were them?** Use the **Situation guidance** to give an example of what they could say or do.
 - d) Only the person on the chair can speak, but everyone must speak **at least once!** To take a turn on the **chair**, tap the person on the shoulder and they then take your place on the floor.

e) After five minutes, groups choose a **different scenario**.

f) Repeat until groups have discussed **at least four scenarios**.

4. At the end, ask a couple of people to **share the best advice** they heard in their group.



It's important that:

You move around the room to support groups and keep conversations on track.

Congratulate the group on all the great advice! Encourage them to use these ideas in their real lives.

You challenge anyone who says...

"But thin does look better than fat - and it's healthier!"

- By asking: What are the consequences of trying to achieve the thin beauty standard?
- Then explaining: our weight does not define our beauty or our importance as a person. The world tells us that putting on weight is negative but in fact, some people are healthy and fat, some people are unhealthy and thin.



2. Mirror Messages

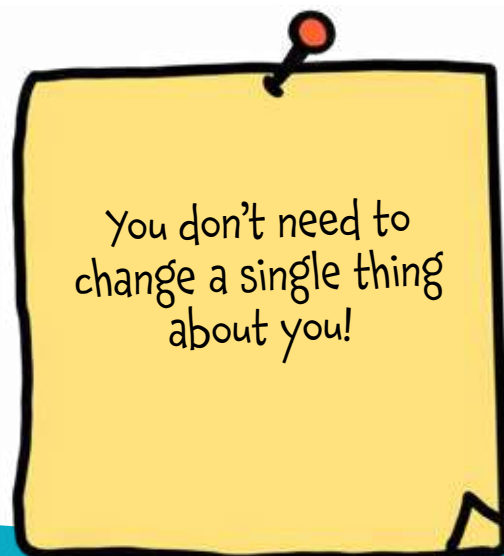
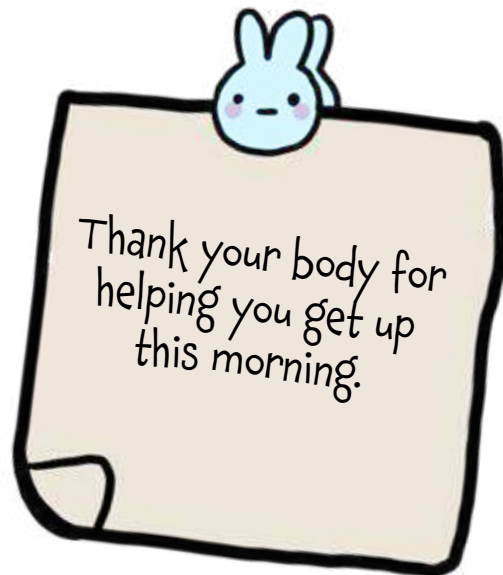
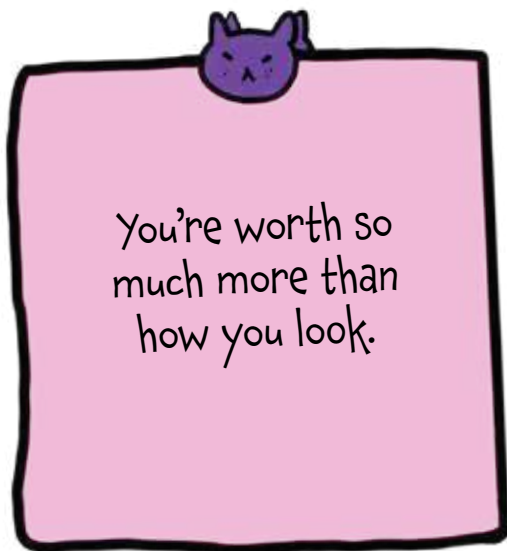
 10mins

- 1. Objective:** To write a body confident message.
- 2.** Sit together, each with a **sticky note and pen**. Ask everyone to **choose one** of the 'people under pressure' in the scenarios.
- 3.** Ask everyone to write a **meaningful message** to help their character feel more body confident. It needs to be short enough to fit on a sticky note that they'll stick on their mirror and read every morning.



It's important that:

The group avoids 'surface level' messages, eg *everyone's perfect*, by thinking more deeply about what could make their character feel differently.



Session 3



Reflection

🕒 10mins

1. Stand in a circle, facing **outwards**.
On the count of three, everyone turns around and strikes a 'powerful pose'!
2. Sitting down with their **Journals**, ask everyone to reflect quietly on:
 - a) Three parts of their body they like because of **what they can do**.
 - b) Three things they can **say** to their body when they think negatively about how they look.
 - c) Three parts of their body they **like the look of**.



It's important that:

You encourage people to be brave when naming body parts they like. We tend to choose 'safer' body parts (such as eyes or hands) but it's best to try and **choose body parts that society makes it difficult for us to love**, eg *stomach, breasts, skin*.

You emphasise that because society doesn't encourage us to be positive about our looks, this exercise can really improve our confidence.





Home Challenge: My Mirror

Stand in front of a **full mirror** in a comfortable place. **Look at yourself** in the mirror and say out loud ...

- Three parts of your body you like the look of because of **what they can do**.
- Three parts of your body you like the look of.



It's important that:

You encourage your group to find the time and (quiet) space to do this activity – it's one of **the most impactful ways** to improve body confidence!





Situation cards

At a wedding, **Abena's** Auntie keeps comparing the size of women's breasts and saying that men prefer women with large breasts.

Fernando is playing sports with his friends. As he throws the ball, one of his friends complains, "I've never noticed how small and skinny your arms are – that explains why you always throw like a girl."

At school, **Habibah** is having lunch with her group of friends. One of them isn't eating anything because she's dieting.

When **Arek** comes home proudly with his school photo, his father comments on how tall the other boys are compared to him.

Zoe's other pregnant friends often talk about how 'fat' they look and are sharing ideas for their 'post-pregnancy diet plans'.





Farrah overhears her mother talking to her friends in the house: “Well obviously Farrah can’t go to university – she is the prettiest so has to focus on getting married.”

When **Yuki** wakes up, she looks at her phone. She sees her friends sharing social media posts about the benefits of eyelid surgery to make her eyes look bigger.

Alex is watching an influencer’s tutorial on how to pose to look thin with sharp cheekbones. Someone has commented that they could try surgery.

One of the girls from the **youth group** shares in their instant messenger chat that they’re going to get laser hair surgery next weekend and asks, “Anyone want to join?”

Issa’s family believe that to be beautiful you need large hips and bottom. At lunch, they keep pushing the bowls towards her to encourage her to eat more.





Situation guidance



Abena

Problem = her Auntie is spreading the beauty standard in this country that large breasts are more beautiful. This isn't true and is unrealistic! It also spreads the idea that our looks (and having a man) are the most important things in life. It makes Abena think she should change and makes her feel bad, rather than enjoying the wedding!

If I were her, I would speak to my Auntie sensitively. I would say that these comments make me, and other people, worry about our looks and feel bad. I'd say that comments like this make it seem like everyone should look the same and make the world less diverse. I'm learning to love my body as it is, and know I'm worth more than how I look. I would then encourage her to dance and spend quality time enjoying ourselves!

Fernando

Problem = his friends are spreading the beauty standard in this country that boys should not be skinny as big muscles are more attractive. They are also saying that girls are weak, which also isn't true! He might spend more time and money on trying techniques to get bigger muscles rather than enjoying sport for how it makes him feel.

If I were him, I would have a conversation about how it hurts my feelings when they point out how certain parts of my body look. I'd explain that playing sport together is meant to be fun! When we make comments like this – that imply girls are 'weaker' than boys – it promotes sexism. In fact, girls can play just as well as boys!





Yuki

Problem = people and companies on social media are spreading the beauty standard in this country that eyes should be large and wide with a creased eyelid (like some white people from countries in Europe or the US) to be beautiful. This is not true! Also, considering a white 'racial' characteristic as better than another promotes racism. Yuki spends time watching videos and reading reviews about eyelid surgery which might be dangerous, expensive and isn't necessary. She

feels bad about her looks and doesn't try new things because she lacks confidence.

If I were them, I would take a break from social media. I would think carefully about who I follow, how I feel after looking at their posts and then remove some people (and maybe add some more positive ones). I would smile in my next photo to remind myself of the fun I had (rather than how I look) and to be proud of my heritage!

Habibah

Problem = this is spreading the beauty standard in this country that thin is beautiful. Her friend is restricting her eating which might damage her health; food gives us the nutrition our bodies need to be happy and healthy (especially for teenagers who are growing really fast!) It might also encourage other friends to join in and start thinking they should diet too.

If I were them, I would explain that her body needs energy and nutrients from food. I would also explain that being thin doesn't make you a better, or more valuable, person. I would help them to think of all the things they like about their body and what their body does for them every day.

Arek

Problem = Arek's father is saying that Arek isn't good enough because he's shorter than others. This spreads the common beauty standard for men that tall is more attractive, and that's not true. He spends time worrying about his height – at work, with family and friends – and feels bad about himself.

If I were him, I would say, "Well I like that I look like my family. I'm proud of that. How tall I am doesn't make me a better or worse person. Can we put the photo up together?"



Situation guidance

Alex

Problem = influencers are spreading the beauty standard that thin is superior which is untrue and promotes fatphobia! Alex risks spending more time reading more comments that judge people for their looks, and money on potentially dangerous surgery. They feel bad about their appearance, are more likely to hide themselves away rather than enjoying life.

If I were them, I would stop following this influencer (and maybe even take a break from social media!). I would choose to follow a much more diverse range of people who make me feel good. I would also tell myself every morning that I'm enough just as I am.

Farrah

Problem = Farrah's mother is saying that how you look is the most important thing in life, and that we should make decisions based on our looks, and that's not right. If she wants to go to university but isn't allowed to, this means she isn't able to fulfil her potential. She will miss out on education (eg leadership roles, qualifications needed for jobs), social experiences (eg meeting new people, trying new things) and other adventures, which means she has fewer opportunities in life.

If I were her, I would find the time to speak to my mother sensitively about this. I would explain how much I want to go to university and why it's important for my future, especially as a woman! I would say that I understand how important marriage is to her, but that education is the most important thing to me. I can get married when I'm older. The right partner will love me for who I am, not how I look!





Zoe

Problem = Zoe's friends are comparing being fat with the natural changes that come from growing a baby inside you. First, being fat isn't bad - what matters is being happy and healthy. Second, it's normal for our bodies to change and grow as they create new life. This spreads so many harmful beauty standards in this country - being very thin with no stomach or loose skin, no stretch marks, pert breasts, smooth nipples etc.

If I were her, I would challenge each 'fat' comment by repeating, "There's a baby inside you, it's not fat. And fat isn't bad anyway." I would also encourage my friends to think about all the ways they can look after their wellbeing when they've had their babies, rather than worrying about their looks.

Youth Group

Problem = by sharing how they are living up to society's beauty standards in this country, this person is encouraging the other young people to do this as well. It is spreading the beauty standard that women, girls and non-binary people should be hairless which is unnatural. It will influence the friends to spend more time and money worrying, researching and paying for regular hair removal.

If I were them, I would explain that it is boring and depressing to focus on our looks all the time - it makes people think that's what matters the most about us. I would also make them aware of how all the companies selling hair removal are making money from us feeling bad about ourselves and trying to change.

Issa

Problem = by pushing the bowls towards Issa, her family is spreading the beauty standard in this country that being very thin isn't beautiful. If she's eaten enough balanced food and feels full, she can decide to finish eating. This kind of 'hint' makes her feel that she isn't good enough as she is and she will worry about her looks.

If I were them, I would smile at my family and explain that she is listening to her body which is telling her that she is full and doesn't need to eat any more. I would explain that my body is naturally thinner than the 'ideal' they see in society, but that doesn't make me less valuable. I am beautiful as I am.



Session 4

 Time: 1 hour

Key Message

We may make comments comparing people's looks to beauty standards – without even realising. This 'body talk' actually spreads the impossible 'ideal'. Instead, we should celebrate what makes us all unique and what our bodies can do!

It's important that young people don't use body talk themselves, even during an activity or role play. Only the Facilitators should say these types of comments. This is to prevent young people from reinforcing beauty standards further.



Preparation

- Remind everyone to bring in their **Journal** with their completed **Home Challenge**.
- **Activity 1:** Practise one of the role plays with another facilitator (it's very important that you do the **role play**, not the young people). *Alternatively, set up **the girls' body talk video** and/or **boys' video**.*
- **Activity 2:** Copy and cut out the **Body Talk comments**, and stick them around the meeting place. Ideally, prepare to play some music to inspire body confidence during this activity (see page 10).
- *Optional: prepare to display the **Body Talk definition** and **Top Tips**.*



Resources provided:

- Role plays (alternatively, **girls' body talk** and/or **boys' video**)
- Body Talk comments and guidance.

Resources needed:

- Pens
- Timer
- If possible, a device and speakers to show videos and play songs.

Warm-up

🕒 10mins

1. Ask the group to take the **FBM pledge**. Explain that by saying this out loud, they are helping themselves and others build their confidence.

Are you ready to take part in FBM, speak up to challenge beauty standards and help us to protect the Brave Space?

2. **Objective:** To say what we love about our bodies from the **Home Challenge**.
3. Split into pairs facing each other. One person makes **shapes** with their body and their partner copies, as if they're looking into a **mirror**.
4. After a few minutes, ask pairs to share one thing from their **Home Challenge** that they like about their body.
5. Pairs then **swap roles** in the 'mirror' and repeat.
6. Ask: **How did it feel to think positively about your looks?**



It's important that:

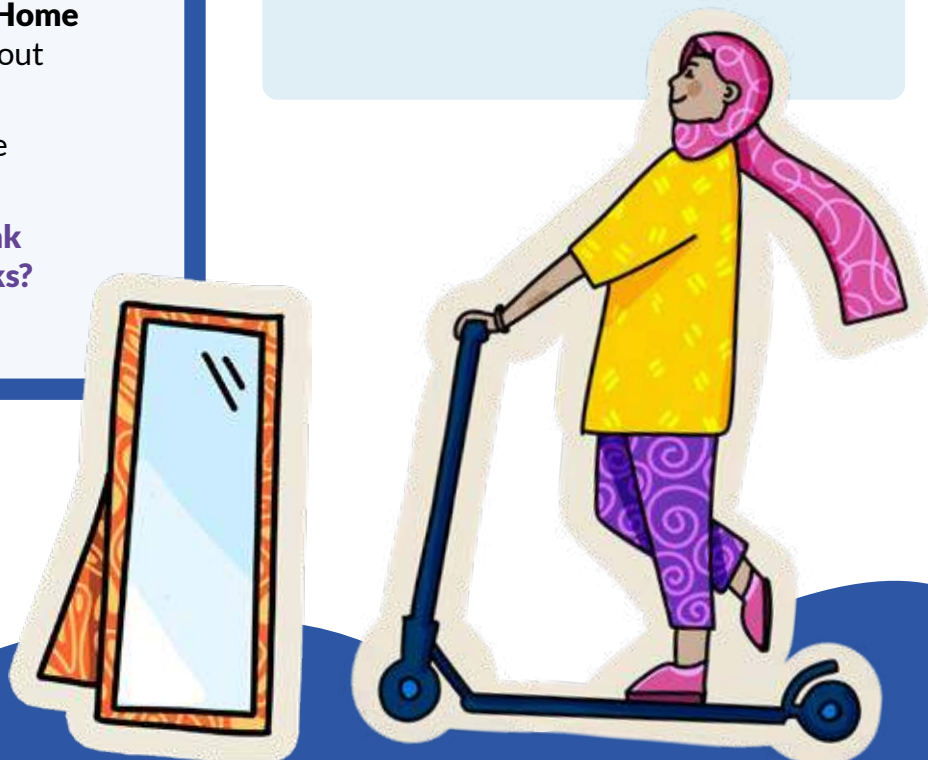
Every person takes the FBM pledge as a commitment to helping themselves and others build confidence.

You point out that we are often made to feel like the mirror is our enemy, but this activity helps them fight this!

If someone found the Home Challenge hard, you could:

- Ask: "Why is it sometimes hard to say good things about how we look?"
- Explain that it's important to practise talking positively about our looks so we fight the message from beauty standards that we're not good enough. It's not arrogant or vain to be body confident!

Everyone has the opportunity to say out loud what they love about their bodies. If we are kind to ourselves, eg by saying positive things, we are more likely to feel happier and be less self-critical.



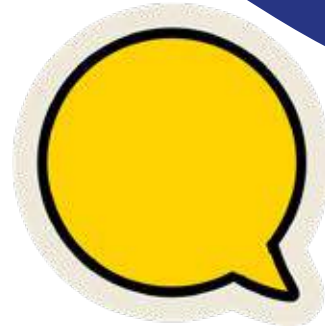
Session 4



1. Body Talk

🕒 15mins

- 1. Objective:** To identify body talk and learn ways to respond.
- 2. Define** body talk for the group:
*When we make comments that compare ourselves or others to beauty standards, this is called **body talk**. Each time we use body talk, it gives beauty standards power, and makes people feel they need to 'live up' to these impossible standards. In our everyday conversations, we might think we're complimenting someone, but actually we're comparing them to beauty standards, eg "You look great - have you lost weight?"*
- 3. Act out** one body talk **role play**, speaking slowly. Ask the group to **shout, "Body talk!"** each time they hear an example.
- 4.** Read out the **Body Talk comments**, one by one. Ask the group to **raise their hand** if they have heard this before.



It's important that:

You emphasise that compliments can make us **feel good when they don't mention beauty standards** (when they aren't related to appearance).

You challenge anyone who says ...
"But it's nice to compliment how people look!"

- By asking: "Is there **another meaning** behind the compliment?"
- Then explaining: if someone says, "Your hair looks good - it makes your face look thin", the message behind the compliment is that that thin is better.



5. Briefly discuss:

- **Why is body talk a problem?**
- **How does body talk make people feel?**

6. Emphasise that we shouldn't take part in body talk and can challenge it to stop beauty standards spreading. Share these **Top Tips**:

- **Highlight the “body talk” and say that you won't take part in it.**
Eg “What you just said is actually body talk and this kind of conversation spreads unfair beauty standards. It's boring and I'm not getting involved.”
- **Explain why the body talk comment is unhelpful and how it spreads the ‘ideal’ image.**
Eg “Comparing ourselves to beauty standards makes us feel bad.”
- **Change the focus from talking about people's looks to celebrating what their bodies can do and all the things that make them who they are.**
Eg “Remember how much [that body part] helps you every day. You're so much more than how you look – you're funny, kind and that's why we're friends.”



Listen for

It **spreads** beauty standards by continuing to talk about how we look and **comparing** us to an 'ideal'.

It makes people feel **judged**, **not good enough** and need to **change** how they look.

It makes us think that our looks are the most **important** thing about us – we're so much more than that!



Ignoring body talk completely doesn't challenge beauty standards and can make people feel worse.



Session 4

1. Beating Body Talk

🕒 20mins

- 1. Objective:** To practise challenging body talk so we feel comfortable doing it in our everyday lives.
- Point out all the **Body Talk** comments around the space. Split into **small groups**, each standing at a different comment.
- 3. Explain their task:**
 - Move **clockwise (right)** around the space, spending one minute at each comment.
 - Decide** what you would say to the person to **challenge** the body talk in **one or two sentences**.
 - Use the **Top Tips** to help you.
 - Optional: play music after each minute so groups know when to move.*
- After **10 minutes**, come together. Ask each group to share the last response they decided on. Invite other groups to give **feedback** on how well they used one or more of the three top tips.
- Ask:
 - How obvious is the body talk in these comments?** (Do some seem positive at first?)
 - How would stopping body talk improve the way you feel about your body?**
 - How would stopping body talk help other people feel better?**



It's important that:

You monitor groups to ensure they are responding using the **Top Tips** (displayed) and that **everyone says something out loud** that challenges body talk.

You encourage groups to give positive and constructive feedback, eg complimenting positives before adding any suggestions for improvement.



Listen for

“Even if it might sound like a compliment, it actually spreads beauty standards by making us compare ourselves to an impossible ‘ideal.’”

“It would make me more confident, under less pressure to change how I look, and show others they can be body confident too!”





Reflection

🕒 15mins

1. Gather together with the Journals.
2. Introduce that Salma spends at least 20 minutes per day worrying about her looks – this adds up to **10 days worrying per year!**
3. Their task is to **write or draw a day of confidence-boosting activities** for her to do instead of worrying.

For example, hold a photoshoot with friends posing naturally (with no filters!), wear her favourite clothes, think about kind things her friends have said about her (not about her looks), use her body in a fun way (eg dancing, swimming, making art).

4. After 10 minutes, anyone who wishes to can share their activity ideas.



It's important that:

You emphasise that a great way to boost body confidence is by trying new things that challenge what we believe.



Home Challenge: My Challenges

Choose two things from the **My Challenges** list in your **Journal** that you could do. Make a **promise** to do both in the next week.



Body Talk Role Play

Setting 1: Girls' beauty standards:

Two girls meet outside school.

One smiles and says: *"Your hair looks good!"*

The other replies, *"No it doesn't, it makes my face look round."* [BODY TALK!]

The first one responds, *"Oh you're not serious? It makes your face look thinner and your cheekbones really stand out."* [BODY TALK!]

Note: The group may think this is a compliment but it actually spreads the beauty standard 'ideal' of a thin person with defined cheekbones.

Setting 2: Boys' beauty standards:

Two boys meet in the sports changing rooms.

One says, *"You're as light as a feather! Be careful out there today – it's windy and you might get blown away."* [BODY TALK!]

The other responds, *"Well, at least I'm not fat."* [BODY TALK!]

The first replies, *"This? This is called a six-pack."* [BODY TALK!]

Note: These are all comparisons to male beauty standards of being tall, broad but toned (not fat), strong and muscly.

Body Talk comments



To Abena

"Her afro looks so messy!
Cornrows would be so much more professional."



David

Fernando

"I'll never get a girlfriend
looking like this."



Himself

To Yuki

"You look so good – have
you lost weight?"



Uncle

Youth Group

"Can you delete that photo please?
I don't want to show my braces."



Group

To Habibah

"Your Auntie is getting fillers
in her lips next week. Make sure you
tell her how great she looks!"



Voice note

To Arek

"You'd look even more
handsome with a beard!"



Social media

To Farrah

"Your pimples have really cleared up
recently ... just in time for the party!"



Family

Zoe

"I can't buy this outfit.
My breasts look enormous."



Group chat

Alex

"I wish I looked as good as __
[androgenous models, eg Christine
and the Queens, Agyness Deyn]."



Himself

To Issa

"Look at how light her skin looks
in the 'After' photo – so beautiful!"



Social media

Body Talk Guidance



To male colleague:

“Why is that any of your business? Everyone’s hair is different and that’s good because otherwise the world would be boring!”



To uncle:

“I know you mean that as a compliment but what you’re actually saying is that I am only beautiful when I’m thin. All bodies are good bodies – whatever size they are.”



To family:

“You might think this is a compliment but you’re actually making me think I wasn’t beautiful before, and that hurts. My skin is amazing – it protects me, renews itself every 28 days and keeps me at the right temperature!”



To friend:

“It makes me sad that you’re worrying about that when that photo reminds me of the day we spent laughing together! Your smile is more important.”



To them:

“You’re so much more than how you look: your friends, your sense of humour, your cool job! We love you for who you are.”





To him:

“You’re wasting precious time comparing how you look to other people, instead of just enjoying yourself.”



To friend:

“This kind of body talk just makes people think dark skin isn’t beautiful – who says?! We don’t need to change our skin colour – it’d be boring if we all looked the same!”



To friend:

“Hey, this is body talk and we have no right to comment on others’ looks. You might think you’re complimenting him but you’re not.”



To group:

“All breasts are different, and it’s normal they change after carrying a baby (our bodies change all the time and that’s OK!). It’s more important how you feel in the outfit – and whether you can dance in it of course!”



To family:

“Isn’t it sad that she feels under pressure to pay money and go through the risk of surgery to change her looks? I think she’s beautiful the way she is.”



Session 5

🕒 Time: 1 hour



Key Message

We have the power to build a world where everyone feels free to be themselves! Every action, no matter how big or small, will improve other people's body confidence and our own.

Preparation

- Remind everyone to bring in their [Journal](#) with their completed **Home Challenge**.
- **Warm-up:** Select a [body confidence song to play](#) (see page 10).
- **Activity 1:** Write Session 1, Session 2, Session 3, Session 4 at the top of [four flipcharts](#). Stick up around the space.
- **Activity 2:** Copy and cut out the [Inspirational Action cards](#), then hide around the space. Ensure everyone has a copy of the [Take Action Project Plan](#) in their [Journals](#).



Resources provided:

- Inspirational Action cards
- Take Action Project Plan example

Resources needed:

- Flipchart and pens
- Sticky tack
- A device and speakers to play music.

Warm-up

🕒 10mins

1. Ask the group to take the **FBM pledge**. Explain that by saying this out loud, they are helping themselves and others build their confidence.
Are you ready to take part in FBM, speak up to challenge beauty standards and help us to protect the Brave Space?
2. **Objective:** To share how we felt completing the **Home Challenge**.
3. Play your chosen **body confidence song**. Encourage everyone to dance around the room.
4. When you pause the music, everyone finds a partner and shares one thing that they did for their **Home Challenge** and how they felt doing it. Repeat twice.
5. **Explain** that in this session they will plan a **Take Action Project** that they will then carry out in their community. Their project should:
 - a) Last at least **one hour**
 - b) Target **people their own age**
 - c) Promote the **Free Being Me messages**.



It's important that:

Every person takes the FBM pledge as a commitment to helping themselves and others build confidence.

If needed, support the group during the Home Challenge sharing by ...

- Asking: How did it make you think or act differently? How did others react to you completing the challenge?
- Helping anyone who had a difficult experience by emphasising how brave they were for trying and helping them to think of different actions they could do instead, *eg leading by example and not talking about peoples' looks.*



Session 5



1. See the Change

🕒 15mins

- 1. Objective:** To imagine how different the world would look if we all felt body confident.
- To begin, recap the FBM sessions. Standing by the Session 1 **flipchart**, spend **one minute** writing what they've **learned** and how they **challenged beauty standards**, before moving to the next **flipchart**.
- Come together in **two concentric circles**. Ask everyone to **imagine** if every **young person** they know, or even in **the world**, understood how impossible beauty standards are to achieve, and felt body confident every day! With the partner in front of them, discuss:
 - What would it mean to each person if they had more body confidence?**
 - What would our community look and feel like if everyone had more body confidence?**
See Pressure guidance.



Listen for

“Everyone would have the confidence to reach their full potential. The community would have more diverse leaders.”

“People would spend less time worrying about their looks and more time having fun.”

“The community would be less environmentally harmed by plastic packaging.”



2. Plan the Change

🕒 20mins

- 1. Objective:** To use all their confidence rejecting beauty standards to help other people do the same!
- Split into small groups. Discuss for three minutes:
 - a) Which people (my own age) would I most like to help?**
 - b) How are my chosen people most affected by beauty standards?**
 - c) How could you help your chosen people to challenge these problems and stop trying to achieve them?**
- Ask groups to share their challenge ideas. Start an **action list** on **flipchart**.
- Give everyone **30 seconds** to find all the **Inspirational Action cards** hidden around the space. When they find one, they stick it to the **flipchart action list**. Point out the real examples from **Guides and Scouts around the world!**
- Everyone then completes their **Take Action Project Plan** in their **Journals**, deciding upon:
 - a) One action they will take for themselves,**
eg start wearing certain clothes or doing an activity without worrying about my looks, stop following social media accounts (or watching videos) that encourage beauty standards, practise the Mirror challenge, practise receiving compliments, tell myself "All bodies are good bodies" instead of comparing myself to others.
 - b) One action for your chosen people.**
Groups can take action individually or in groups.

- Encourage them to think carefully about the **FBM message** they want to tell their people. Prompt them to think about the issue **they're most affected by.**

It's important that:



You challenge anyone who says ...

"The world is so full of beauty standards, we can't possibly make a difference!"

- By asking: What bothers you most about beauty standards?
- Then explaining: what could you do to tell people about them? Remember that every action – no matter how big or small – helps us build a more body confident world! If every Guide and Scout who takes part in Free Being Me does one thing, that adds up to over six million actions!

You use the **Inspirational action cards** and **Key Messages** to help prompt ideas if needed.

Listen for



"I want people to know that they deserve to feel free to be themselves!"

"People are harmed when they compare themselves to beauty standards, share edited photos, don't see themselves in adverts or on TV, and/or spend lots of money on cosmetics. I want to make the world a happier place!"

"I want to tell people that beauty standards exist, and share tips for how to challenge them."

Session 5



Reflection

🕒 15mins

1. **Congratulate** everyone on committing to take action and joining the global movement to make the world more body confident!
2. Decide on a deadline (one or two weeks) for everyone to complete their action, and write it in their **Journals**. On this date, they will come together to **celebrate** their achievements and **share** how their projects went. Encourage everyone to tag **#freebeingme** if they post on social media.
3. Introduce the **Action on Body Confidence programme**, for anyone who has completed FBM and wants to take even bigger action to challenge beauty standards in their community or the wider world!

Home Challenge: Take Action

Carry out your Take Action project and get ready to share how it went.



Inspirational Action cards



Organise an inclusive fashion show!

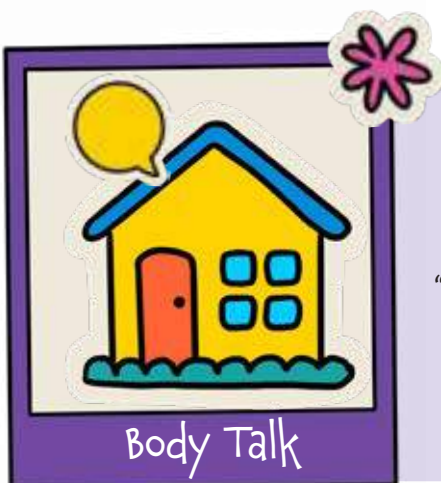
Jessica Shire, a UK Girl Guide, set up a [Positively Me! fashion show](#) where the models, many with visible and invisible differences, all wear something they wouldn't normally feel confident wearing.

Give people compliments (not about their looks)

"I love how your face lights up when you talk about or do ..."

"When you told me about ... it really opened my eyes to other perspectives."

"I'm so proud of how resilient you are."

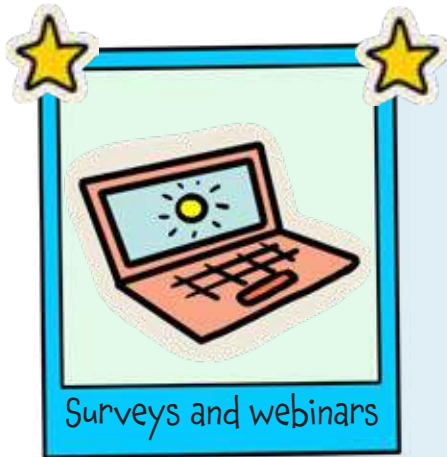
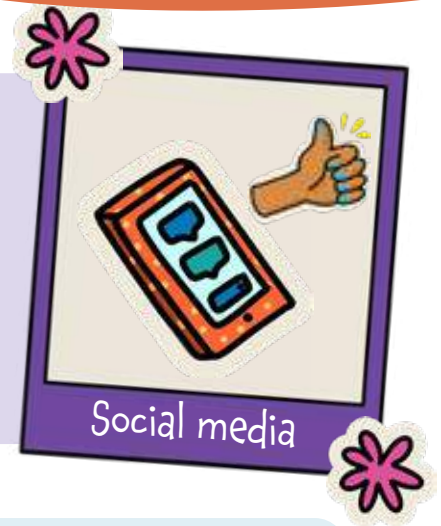


Tell your family about body talk

"Say no to body talk - who says we should all look a certain way?!"

Post on social media

[The Real People Project](#) (UK) was created by Girl Guides Victoria and Sophie to tackle lack of diversity in all forms of media.



Share surveys or host webinars

[Brown & Beautiful](#), created by two Girl Guides: Shauna from Grenada and Lucia from Zimbabwe, aims to tackle skin-bleaching across the globe.

Speak on the radio

In [Pakistan](#), Girl Guides convinced a radio presenter to broadcast their own show encouraging people to focus on their skills and abilities rather than their looks.



Organise a film night or photoshoot

In [South Africa](#), Girl Guides invited the community to a swimsuit photoshoot to celebrate body diversity: “[Don’t] judge people based on their appearance. Everyone is unique and has their own body type.”





Write and share a petition

The government in Norway has amended their Marketing Act so that everyone must now label their photos if they have used filters or other editing software.

Wear T-shirts or put up posters to raise awareness

Newcastle Brownies designed these:



Display body confident messages on mirrors

Message a friend to raise awareness

Send some of your friends a direct message or text about beauty standards:
"Remember, you are worthy and you are loved, no matter how you look. Try not to compare yourself to impossible images you see around you - you deserve to feel free to be you!"

Write and publish poems

My body is on time
She works hard
She shows up even when spiritually I am empty
She is strong
Heart beating, baby pushing strong
Wound her, she heals
Nourish her, she grows
No scar or roll has diminished her beauty
I love and trust her
She has not failed me yet
By Vean Ima

Take Action Project Plan example

I pledge to take action for myself by:

Practising the mirror challenge every day for two weeks.

The people I want to help are:

- 1) Justine
- 2) Nathaniel

My message to them about beauty standards is:

There is no such thing as 'good' or 'bad' bodies – all bodies are good bodies! We need to stop comparing ourselves to impossible standards and embrace that difference is beautiful!

The action I will take is:

Organise a party where everyone wears something they wouldn't usually wear. At the end, everyone writes body confident messages for each other to take home as a surprise.

Date and location of my action:

In one month's time, at the weekend.

Things or people I will need:

Invites, decorations and music
Large room or hall (ask parents and my cousin)
Paper, bags and pens for the messages

[After taking action]

Three things that went well ...
Next time I would ...
I will share my Take Action Project by ...



Celebrate, Evaluate & Share



Celebrate

After everyone has taken action, organise a group celebration and badge ceremony.



To Prepare...

1. Order your FBM badges on the [WAGGGS website](#) (or ask your MO).
2. Invite an audience to join you if possible – family, friends, community members, other Guides and Scouts groups.
3. Ask your group to prepare a celebratory song or dance.
4. Choose a body confidence theme, for example:
 - a) **Fashion Show!** Everyone wears something they wouldn't normally wear because of beauty standards.
 - b) **Gallery!** Ask everyone to write body confident messages and display them over the walls.
 - c) **Music!** Compile a soundtrack together of positive songs that make people feel good and want to dance.
5. Set up the space with chairs for the audience (the rest of the group can be the audience if there aren't family and friends.)



Evaluate

At the **celebration event**, find out how much your group has grown in body confidence now that they have finished Free Being Me.

Each participant should complete the FBM Survey individually, as in Session 1 (see page 64-65).

Your group can either:

1. [If they have a smartphone] Scan the QR code with their browser or app and follow the steps. Leaders write down each participant's two total scores, their age and initials
2. Complete a printed version of the survey by hand. See page 12 to interpret the results. As before, taking part is completely optional.



Finish Survey



Share

Your group is powerful. They should shout loud and proud about what they have achieved:

- Tell WAGGGS (and the world!) how many of your group earned their FBM badge. Visit our interactive map to see your final number of participants: www.waggs.org/en/what-we-do/initiatives-map/
- Support the group to share their actions online using **#freebeingme** and **#waggs**.
- Encourage them to tell friends, family and other Guide and Scout groups about FBM.



FBM Badge Finish Survey






Join groups around the world who are sharing their understanding, feelings and actions on the topic of body confidence!

Taking part is **optional**. If you choose to complete the survey, this means you agree for your leader to use and share this information (they won't share your name) and help WAGGGS understand if FBM is working.

Complete the FBM Badge Survey on your own and then give it to your leader.

Age:

Initials:

Rate how much you generally agree or disagree with the following statements (please select <u>only one</u> response per statement):	1 Strongly disagree 	2 Disagree 	3 Neither agree nor disagree 	4 Agree 	5 Strongly agree 
1. I often speak up at home, in class and at Guiding without worrying about how I look.					
2. I often try new things and activities without worrying about how I look.					
3. I wish I could change my looks to be like people I see on the TV, in advertising or on social media.					
4. I like what I see when I look in the mirror.					
5. I feel confident standing up to negative comments about people's looks.					
6. I know how to help other people improve their body confidence.					

7. When you don't feel good about your looks, what do you do to help yourself feel better?

.....

.....

8. Draw or colour in this scale to show how much you agree with this statement:

In general, I'm happy about the way I look.



0 10



Not happy at all



Moderately happy



Very happy

9. What did you enjoy the most in Free Being Me?

.....

10. What did you enjoy the least in Free Being Me?

.....

11. What type of action(s) did you or your group take in Session 5? Select all that apply.

- Displayed posters/made T-shirts
- Talked to a friend or family member
- Spoke or performed at school
- Organised an event in the community
- Created social media campaign (videos etc)
- Wrote and delivered a petition
- Contacted decision-makers (brands, politicians etc)
- Other:

.....

12. Overall, what do you think of Free Being Me? Please circle your answer:



Very bad



Slightly bad



Don't know



Good



Very good

Other WAGGGS programmes

Action on Body Confidence



Action on Body Confidence (ABC) is a separate activity pack that supports young people to plan and run their own advocacy projects to improve people's body confidence. We recommend ABC to groups who have completed Free Being Me and are ready to take action to inspire even more people!

Groups begin by identifying the biggest body confidence issues in their community and then plan a project that demands change from decision makers.

To find out more, visit:
www.waggs.org/en/what-we-do/action-body-confidence

Your group may also wish to take part in other WAGGGS programmes to explore further some of the topics raised in Free Being Me:



Girl Powered Nutrition – Having learned about all the things your body can do, find out about how to keep yourself happy and healthy with good nutrition.

<https://www.waggs.org/en/what-we-do/girl-powered-nutrition/gpn-online-training/>



Surf Smart – If you use technology and the internet, find out more about media literacy and staying safe online.

<https://www.waggs.org/en/what-we-do/surf-smart-20/>



Voices Against Violence – By improving body confidence, we're working towards a more gender-equal world. Learn about how violence also disproportionately harms girls and young women.

<https://www.waggs.org/en/what-we-do/stop-the-violence/get-involved/learn/deliver-voices-against-violence-curriculum/>



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Free Being Me (FBM) is an educational programme that promotes a world free from appearance-related anxiety.

FBM first began in 2013, developed in partnership with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), the Dove Self-Esteem Project (DSEP) and the Centre of Appearance Research (CAR). Since then, an incredible six million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 80 countries have improved their body confidence and helped other people do the same. This updated, more representative and interactive version of Free Being Me will support four million other Guides and Scouts to lead a movement towards a world free from body insecurities. We can't wait to see what your group will do!

www.waggs.org

   @waggsworld

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Dove & the World Association
of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

