



# Free Being Me



## Facilitator Guide

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





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# About Free Being Me



Free Being Me (FBM) is an educational programme that promotes body confidence and 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 Dr Eric Stice, Dr Carolyn Becker and Dr Phillippa Diedrichs from the Centre of Appearance Research (CAR). Since then, an incredible six million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 80 countries have taken part in Free Being Me.

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.

**Dr Nicole Paraskeva (DHealth), Ms Georgina Pegram (MSc) and Professor Phillippa Diedrichs (PhD) from the Centre for Appearance Research:**

The Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) is a world-leading centre of excellence dedicated to appearance-related research at the University of the West of England. Our mission is to use research to promote body acceptance and appreciation, cultivate environments that value diversity in appearance, and improve the lives of those affected by appearance concerns. Our research aims to understand the impact and causes of appearance concerns and develop practical, evidence-based strategies to help individuals and communities, like Free Being Me. We are delighted to work with WAGGGS and Dove again on the updated version of Free Being Me, to ensure that it is based on the latest science and evidence for promoting body confidence among young people.



**Good Health and Wellbeing:**

Improved physical and mental health are associated with body confidence.



**Quality Education:**

Increased confidence contributes to better educational attainment.



**Gender Equality:**

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by low body confidence, which prevents active leadership.

# Why body confidence?



All around the world, young people – especially girls and young women – struggle with self-esteem as a result of low body confidence.

Girls often lack body confidence because they are constantly told to achieve an impossibly 'perfect' look: society's **beauty standards**. They are sent the message every day that if they want to be valued, happy and successful, they need to look a certain way. This pressure comes from all forms of media but also from the people around us, including family, friends and our communities.

For example, up to 60% of teenagers experience appearance-related teasing from family members<sup>1</sup>.



The impact of all this pressure from beauty standards has serious consequences on young people's physical and mental health, and **holds them back from achieving their full potential**. Young people are less likely to get involved in classroom debates, try out for a sports club and even attend school or go to the doctors.

Up to 80% of girls avoid important life activities because they feel bad about their looks<sup>2</sup>.





## Gender and beauty standards

Gender plays a huge role in how people relate to their bodies and how society sees them. Both beauty standards and gender-based discrimination are everywhere in our society. These two pressures overlap and can have a disproportionate effect on girls and young women. For example:

- Girls and young women are often taught both explicitly and implicitly from a young age that their value is linked to their appearance<sup>3</sup>.
- More beauty product adverts target women and their appearance, causing women to feel pressure to spend more money, time and energy on how they look<sup>4</sup>.
- When women start working, whilst in the same roles as men, they face additional pressure to maintain an appearance based on beauty standards, adding additional effort to their careers<sup>5</sup>.
- As women get older and start to show visible signs of ageing, they are made to feel that they are valued less<sup>6</sup>.

In order to achieve a world free of appearance-related anxiety, recognising the link between beauty standards and gender inequality can help us to challenge both. This is essential to the FBM learning journey - we want young people to know that their identity and worth is not defined by their gender.



## Global beauty standards



Not only are society's beauty standards impossible to achieve, but this 'perfect' look **keeps changing**. Below are some of the many beauty standards that differ around the world and that have changed throughout history.

You could use these examples to help prompt the group during **Session 1**, but remember to let the young people lead the activity. It's very important that your group names all the beauty standards that are relevant to their world, so that they can then challenge and reject them in subsequent activities







## Beauty standards for girls and women



In Japan, lots of people want bigger eyes so pay for eyelid surgery.

In Thailand, Kayan people start stretching their necks at five years old as long necks are considered more beautiful.

In Kenya, it's popular for women to stretch their earlobes and shave their heads.

In Iran, many women pay for intrusive surgery to straighten or reduce the size of their nose.

In many countries, women drink teas and take supplements as they are told it will help them lose weight because being thin is the 'ideal'.

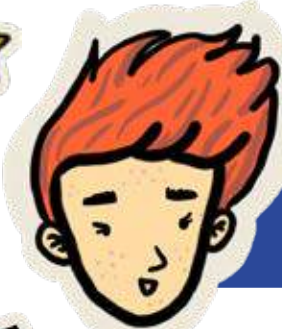
In countries such as the Philippines and Nigeria, people use dangerous creams and take pills to make their skin lighter.

In Hollywood in the 1950s, the 'ideal' look was curvy with large hips and breasts.

In the United Kingdom in the 1990s, the 'ideal look' was tall, very thin, no breasts or hips and very pale skin.

In countries such as Australia and Canada, people spend time and money on products and sunbeds to make their skin darker.

Until 1949 in China, women wanted tiny feet so girls' feet were bandaged to stop them from growing.



**Non-binary people** are often expected to achieve an 'androgenous look' which is very tall and thin with short or cropped hair, showing no breasts, a flat bottom, sharp cheekbones and no facial or body hair.







## Beauty standards for boys and men



In Ancient Greece, men were held to much higher beauty standards than women. Women were considered 'disfigured men'.

In Brazil, men spend time and money on removing their body hair to achieve 'perfectly' smooth skin.



In Turkey, lots of men pay for hair transplants because they want a fuller head of hair.



In the United States, men pay for expensive treatments to make their skin look 'perfect' - free from marks and spots.

Facial hair is considered attractive in some countries but not others.



In many countries, men are expected to look 'strong' with broad shoulders and big muscles so they overexercise and take protein drinks.



In many countries, short men are mocked because tall is considered the 'ideal' look.



**Trans people** are usually held to the beauty standards described above. Trans women are held to girls' and women's beauty standards. Trans men are held to those for boys and men.





## Additional information for use only with older age groups:



It's important to recognise the link between beauty standards and other forms of oppression in the world.

Beauty standards reinforce the discrimination experienced by many groups of people, such as girls and women, trans, non-binary, fat, older, disabled people/people with disabilities, people of colour and those from sexual minorities.

The activity packs feature characters who are all under pressure to achieve unrealistic and impossible beauty standards, as well as discrimination.

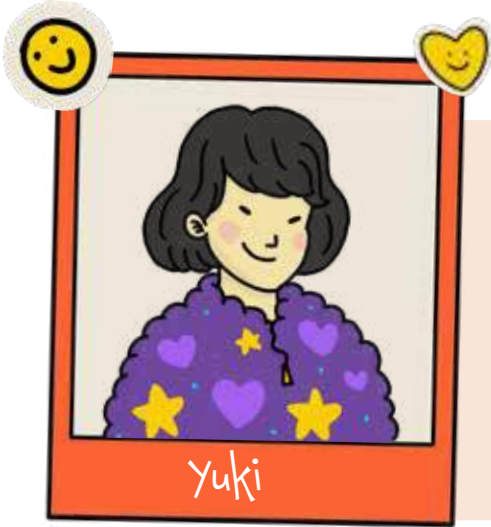
### For example:

Issa is a 42-year-old woman from Kenya who is struggling to find a job because of her dark skin. Issa is under pressure from beauty standards to have lighter skin, and this fuels **colourism** (discrimination which disadvantages people with darker skin while privileging those with lighter skin).



Salma is a girl from Egypt who wishes she weighed less and can't find clothes to fit her in shops. Salma is under pressure from beauty standards to be thin, and this fuels **fatphobia** (irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against fat people).





Yuki is a 16-year-old girl from Japan who sees her friends sharing social media posts encouraging eyelid surgery to make their eyes look bigger. Yuki is under pressure from beauty standards to have bigger eyes, and this fuels **racism** (the belief that one race is superior to another – in this example, that Eurocentric/Western ideals, such as large, round eyes are superior).

Zoe is a 38-year-old woman from Canada who is worried that when she's older, she will struggle to get a new job in the travel industry because she doesn't look young enough. Zoe is under pressure from beauty standards to look young, and this fuels **ageism** (discrimination against an individual on the basis of their age).



**If discussing** discrimination and beauty standards with older age groups, it's important to emphasise that our identities are made up of lots of different parts – (eg gender, religion, culture) – we are not just one thing.

**So when** people experience discrimination because of who they are, each person's experience will be different based on their specific identity. We use the term **intersectionality** to describe how our different identities influence our experiences. Black women like Issa, for example, may face discrimination based on their gender and race, and their experience is different to that of Black men and white women.







**So let's imagine the world we're aiming for.  
A world...**



**Free** of appearance-related anxiety ✓



Where everyone has **body confidence** and self-esteem ✓



Where everyone can **express their identity** freely ✓



And where everyone **can say** ✓



**Free Being Me** is expertly designed to support young people to recognise and challenge these global beauty pressures and grow their body confidence.



**#FREEBEINGME**





**"I don't feel** under pressure to spend money on beauty products or cosmetic procedures."

**"I can** take the lead and achieve my full potential."

**"I appreciate** my body and am grateful for the amazing things it can do."

**"I have time** to spend with my friends and family."

**"I speak up** in class and voice my opinions."

**"I have energy** to do the things I love."

**"I now wear** clothes I didn't dare to before."

**"I feel confident** to try new things and join new environments."

**"I don't** spend time worrying about how my body looks or checking myself in a mirror"



**By running Free Being Me** with your group, you are making a real difference to the lives of your young people!



# How Free Being Me works



WAGGGS has worked closely with the Centre of Appearance Research (CAR) to develop **five fun, interactive sessions** that boost body confidence through the principle of **cognitive dissonance** and **media literacy**.

**Cognitive dissonance** is the uncomfortable psychological state we experience when our actions and words do not match our beliefs and feelings. To reduce this discomfort, we try to change our beliefs to match what we are saying and doing. For example, many people believe in society's beauty standards (even subconsciously). When we speak out against them, our belief in these standards will change over time to match what we're saying.

**Media literacy** is the ability to identify different types of media and critically analyse the messages they send.

**Free Being Me** encourages young people:

- **To speak out** against society's beauty standards through a range of verbal, behavioural and written activities that induce cognitive dissonance. As a result, young people start believing less in beauty standards, which in turn increases their body confidence.
- **To think critically** about how beauty standards are spread and advocate for a body-confident alternative.



"I'm an expert in helping people improve their body confidence. Look out for my tips in the session plans"



To ensure the programme has the biggest impact on body confidence, your group should complete **all five sessions in order**.

**Middle and Older age FBM** activities originate from The Body Project – an evidence-based cognitive dissonance body image programme originally developed by Dr Stice, Dr Becker and colleagues. Studies have shown that participation in the Body Project has a lasting impact on girls' body image. In fact, one study found that girls have improved body image up to two years later!<sup>7</sup>

**The Younger age FBM** activities are inspired by Happy Being Me – a body image acceptance programme developed by Dr Susan Paxton, Dr Shanel Richardson, Dr Sarah Durkin, Dr Sian McLean and colleagues.





# #FREEBEINGME

## In the sessions your group will...

Define beauty standards and their negative consequences

1

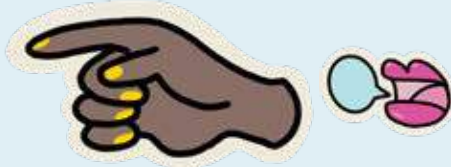


2

Practise media literacy and challenge the media

Recognise how others may affect our body confidence

3



4

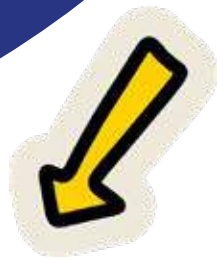
Challenge appearance-based comments

Take action!

5



# How to adapt Free Being Me



A high-quality Guide and Scout experience should be **REAL: Relevant, Exciting, Accessible and Learner-led.**



The FBM sessions have been carefully written to include references from across all five WAGGGS regions, but we encourage you to **adapt certain aspects of FBM** to further suit your group. Below is some guidance on how to do this while ensuring the Key Messages are conveyed:

## Relevant



Every Guide and Scout should be able to see themselves in the activities. Before delivering an FBM session, consider:

How well do the characters, scenarios, images or videos reflect your group's cultural references and identities?

- **Are the characters or scenarios relatable? For example:**
  - In the Younger story, you could change the characters' names.
  - In the Middle and Older scenarios, you could include a disability, gender or sexual orientation that represents your group.
  - If the term 'activists' isn't right for your group, replace this with a more relevant term.
- **Is your group familiar with the beauty standards or types of media mentioned? For example:**
  - If your group doesn't know about social media, replace this with an alternative form of media.
  - If your group doesn't remove their body hair, replace this scenario with a more relevant beauty standard.

## Exciting



Each FBM activity has been designed to be active and challenging. To further energize your group, you could:

- Choose a body confidence energizer, or song from the playlist (see page 10 of any age activity pack).
- Inspire your group with stories of how others have taken action across the world and remind them of their global guiding and scouting family!  
<https://free-being-me.com/your-stories/>
- If possible, use technology to engage your group. Please note that if showing a video, ensure that it is age appropriate and portrays the exact FBM Key Message.





## Accessible

FBM should be delivered in an inclusive learning environment where all members feel welcome, valued and safe to express their identity and participate, regardless of their background. Consider:

- **How will you deliver FBM?**
  - The activity packs contain sessions designed for in-person delivery.
  - Sessions adapted for online delivery are available on the Free Being Me website.
- **Are the activities suitable for everyone?**
  - Can everyone move around easily?
  - Can everyone do the activity at a similar pace?
  - Can everyone read the size of the text on resources?
- **Is your group girl-only or co-educational?**
  - Free Being Me is designed for both girl-only and co-educational settings.
  - Research studies state that while boys are affected by exposure to beauty standards, the impact on girls tends to be larger<sup>8</sup>.
  - In co-ed settings, you could split into gendered groups for certain activities (for example, in Session 1 when naming beauty standards). If you do this, it's important to prioritize leaving time for both groups to hear each other's ideas and opinions.
- **What size is your group?**
  - Free Being Me is designed for 20-30 young people.
  - If your group is smaller than this, consider spending longer on discussions where groups are challenging beauty standards.
  - If your group is larger than this, split into smaller groups and try to have more facilitators available to ensure you can complete the activities effectively in the suggested time.



## Learner-led

Free Being Me empowers participants to take the lead by coming up with their own words, actions and ideas to challenge beauty standards. Remember that:

- When young people speak out and take action against beauty standards they are taking back control of their ideas about appearance. This is one of the first steps towards becoming body confident!
- It's essential to create a brave space where young people feel comfortable, especially when discussing the sensitive topic of body confidence. For example, young people may prefer to remain in friendship groups during the activities and no one should be pressured into speaking.





# What to do if...



Free Being Me is a positive programme but body confidence can be an emotive topic. Members of your group may make comments that you struggle to respond to, so we have put together some examples to help you support your group on their body confidence journey.

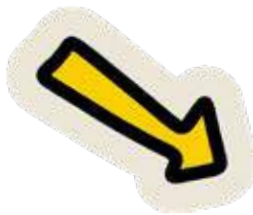


Most importantly, keep the group focused on the session's Key Message. Encourage young people to think about the impact of their problematic comments and to consider an alternative point of view. Avoid getting drawn into a debate as this increases the risk of the harmful comment being repeated for others to hear.

If a young person shares something that you might consider a disclosure, follow your organisation's **Safeguarding Policy**. If your MO doesn't have one, use WAGGGS' guidance:

<https://www.waggggs.org/en/resources/waggggs-safeguarding-child-protection-policy/>

If anyone says...	..ask them...	...and you could also say...
"Celebrities, influencers, models do look 'perfect' though!"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does anyone really have all of these things on the beauty standards list?</li><li>• Do you think they achieved this look on their own?</li><li>• Do you think [celebrities] are as happy as they seem?</li></ul>	<p>No one has every single attribute on the beauty standards list – it's impossible.</p> <p>These pictures have been heavily edited, and the people have spent time and money on changing their looks. We are therefore comparing ourselves to images that aren't real.</p>





If anyone says...

...ask them...

...and you could also say...

“They look better in the edited (or ‘after’) image.”

- What do you mean by better?
- Is it realistic for most people to look like this edited image?
- What are the consequences of people spending their time and money trying to achieve something impossible?

Beauty standards are very harmful. For example, they make us feel like we’re never good enough and stop us from reaching our full potential.

It’s understandable you think this because we’re constantly shown this kind of image, but we need to challenge these harmful and impossible standards!

“But being thin looks better than fat – and it’s healthier!”

- Who defines the size you should be?
- What are the consequences of trying to achieve the ‘thin’ beauty standard?
- Who says fat is bad or that thin is good and deserves more respect? Where did this come from?
- Have beauty standards always been the same?
- What would you say to a younger sibling or good friend who is trying to achieve beauty standards?

**Note:** Avoid discussing diets. All bodies are good bodies – our weight does not define our beauty or importance as a person. What’s most important is taking care of our body, appreciating what it does and accepting how it looks.


There is a difference between society’s beauty standards and a healthy body. We’re healthy when we take care of ourselves, eat a balanced diet, move our bodies in ways that feel good and look after our mental wellbeing. Someone who tries to achieve beauty standards may be less healthy than someone who doesn’t. Healthy bodies come in different shapes and sizes, and we should reject beauty standards that tell us to do whatever it takes to achieve one specific look. Every body deserves respect.

Did you know that women’s body confidence lowers after only three to five minutes of body talk<sup>9</sup>. For example, comments such as, “I feel fat today” are reinforcing beauty standards. Fat is not a feeling – we’re often feeling other emotions that we should explore instead.



# What to do if...



If anyone says...	 ..ask them	...and you could also say...
<p>“People with [certain features, eg scars or moles] do look weird.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often do you see [this feature] on television etc? Why is it important that we see different looks in the media?</li> <li>• Does [this feature] make someone a good or bad person?</li> <li>• What do you notice about the characters you see in books and films who have [this feature]?</li> </ul>	<p>We are so much more than how we look. Think about all the different things that make us ‘us’.</p> <p>Beauty standards tell us we should all look the same. The reality is that we all look different – and the world would be boring if we didn’t!</p> <p>Often, ‘bad’ characters in stories and on television tend to have [this feature] which makes us think people with [this feature] are bad! Do you think this is fair?</p>
<p>“But it’s nice to compliment how people look!”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you tend to compliment people on their personality, or mainly on their looks?</li> <li>• Is there <b>another meaning</b> behind the compliment?</li> </ul>	<p>We should think carefully about how we compliment people. When we only compliment people’s looks, they might think their looks are the only thing that matters!</p> <p>If someone says: “Your hair looks good – it makes your face look thin,” the message is that that thin is ‘better’ and this is unhelpful.</p>
<p>“I can’t find anything I like about my body.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it sometimes hard to say good things about how we look?</li> <li>• What do you love doing? How does your body help you do this?</li> <li>• When have you felt comfortable in your body? What were you doing and where were you?</li> <li>• What outfit do you feel good in? What is your favourite memory in that outfit?</li> </ul>	<p>It is sometimes really hard to think of, and name, what we like about our bodies. We’re so used to being critical because beauty standards tell us that we’re not good enough. It is therefore really important to practise talking positively about our looks so we fight this message!</p> <p>Try focusing on what your body can do for you – it’s actually super amazing!</p>







**If anyone says...**



**..ask them...**

**...and you could also say...**



**“People who try to achieve beauty standards are stupid.”**

- How often do you see and hear beauty standards every day? Try counting them one day!

Every day we all see and hear messages in society telling us we should change the way we look. Lots of people believe in them, often without realizing.

The first step is helping people realize that they’re trying to live up to impossible beauty standards. Then, help people question what impact they’re having on them and what they could do to challenge them!



**“Are you saying people who are [thin/wear makeup/dress up nicely] are bad or silly?”**

- Why do people feel the need to [be thin/wear makeup/dress up]?
- Why do women rather than men feel the need [to wear makeup]?

Everyone has the right to express themselves as they wish – wearing makeup can be fun! The important question is why we feel the need to change our looks – do we feel under pressure to look a certain way or hide something?

Think about the time, effort and money women spend on buying things and ‘getting ready’ – what could women spend this time and money on instead?



**“I would only date slim girls with big breasts.”  
or  
“I would only date strong guys with big muscles.”**

- Why do you think this? Maybe it’s because you only see these images in the media?
- How do comments like this make other people feel?

It’s unlikely that you’ll find someone who fits these impossible beauty standards. Plus, anyone who is trying to achieve beauty standards will be unhappy.

It’s important to consider why you have these expectations of others and if you also hold them for yourself.



# Facilitator reflection



Many of us struggle with our own body confidence, having grown up surrounded by beauty standards.

Below is some guidance and optional activities to help you, the facilitator, feel comfortable and confident delivering Free Being Me while ensuring a positive impact on young people.



**WAGGGS defines a facilitator** as a leader who focuses their practice on supporting others to learn and develop.

**To provide** the best guiding and scouting experience for all, our leaders should feel empowered in their roles. Therefore, when delivering WAGGGS programmes such as Free Being Me, we want to support your growth as a facilitator, and as a person.






## Experts say...

Your role as a facilitator is to **encourage young people to take the lead as much as possible**, and avoid participating in the activities yourself.

You don't need to be fully body confident to run FBM but it is important to remember that you are a **role model to your group**. Try not to talk negatively about your looks, eg by discussing diets or sharing your own personal stories. Focus on speaking positively about all shapes, sizes and appearances, so that young people have a brave space free from society's pressure.



Take some time before or after delivering FBM sessions to do one or more of the following activities which are categorized according to the WAGGGS Leadership Mindsets:

[www.waggs.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-development/waggs-leadership-offer/](http://www.waggs.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-development/waggs-leadership-offer/)





# Facilitator reflection



## Reflective

Write a postcard to your **body**. Think of your favourite memory and thank your body for helping you get there.



## Gender Equality

Consider how beauty standards perpetuate gender stereotypes:

- Taking different female (and male) beauty standards, what gender stereotypes are linked to each one? *Eg women should look petite and thin so they seem delicate and don't take up space. Men should show muscles so they seem strong.*
- Why is this so unhelpful and dangerous? *Gender stereotypes restrict both girls and boys but they create inequalities where boys and men are seen as superior to and more valuable than girls and women.*



## Worldly

Use your senses to consider how your body interacts with your surroundings:

- Walk barefoot to feel the ground beneath your feet.
- Massage your hands when you're studying or at work.
- Close your eyes when travelling somewhere and listen to the sounds around you.
- Take longer to eat a mouthful of food and notice all of the tastes and textures.
- When you smell something nice, stay for a moment longer to enjoy it.



## Collaborative

- **Think about the individuals in your group.** Consider their experiences of beauty standards and how you can help support them during FBM.
- **Connect with other FBM facilitators** in your local area or other MOs to share your experiences and learn from each other.





## Creative and critical thinking

Notice what affects your body confidence, and commit to at least one of the following:

- Appreciate your body.  
*Eg while lying or sitting, scan your body in your mind to recognise all the different things your body does for you.*
- Talk positively about your body.  
*Eg stand in front of a mirror and compliment at least three things about your looks.*
- Challenge body talk.  
*Tell the person that you don't want to discuss appearance because it can spread beauty standards.*
- Give compliments that aren't about looks.  
*Collate a list of alternatives so you have lots ready to use!*
- Report harmful beauty standards you see in the media.



## Responsible action

**Why does Free Being Me matter to you?** Think back to when you signed up for or attended your first training. Why did you want to facilitate FBM?



### Facilitator guidance

Please don't do or share these activities with young people.



**In your own time, you may also choose to do some of the Home Challenges in the Middle or Older age activity packs. For example:**

- **Dear Friend:** Write or record a note to a younger person you know (or yourself!). Tell them why it's wrong to try to achieve beauty standards and why they're harmful.
- **My Mirror:** Stand in front of a full mirror in a comfortable, quiet place. Look at yourself in the mirror and say out loud:
  1. Three parts of your body you like the look of because of what they can do.
  2. Three parts of your body you like the look of.

For further information and additional programs on the topic of body confidence, visit:

1. **Mental Health Foundation:**
  - Mind Over Mirror programme <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/mind-over-mirror>
  - Parenting For A Healthy Body tips <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/mind-over-mirror-parenting-healthy-body-image>
2. **Dove Self-Esteem Project:**
  - Confident Me – workshops for schools <https://www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project/school-workshops-on-body-image-confident-me.html>
  - Proud To Be Me – for LGBTQ+ youth <https://www.dove.com/ca/en/dove-self-esteem-project/self-esteem-resources-for-youth-groups/proud-to-be-me.html>

# Wider Contexts



## Working with parents and carers

To involve parents and carers in their children's Free Being Me journey, you could:

- Let them know what you'll be doing in the sessions and why it's important (see sample letter below).
- Suggest they help their children with the **Home Challenges**. Parents can really contribute to the success of FBM by keeping the conversations going at home.
- Signpost parents to online resources such as Dove's Confidence Kit which helps them have conversations about body confidence with their children, and learn to appreciate their own bodies:

[www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project/help-for-parents/confidence-kit-a-tool-to-help-build-positive-body-confidence.html#](http://www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project/help-for-parents/confidence-kit-a-tool-to-help-build-positive-body-confidence.html#)



### Sample letter (adapt to your context):

Research shows that parents, caregivers and family members who demonstrate body confidence are more likely to have children who also experience body confidence<sup>10</sup>.



Dear parent/carer,

Our [Guides or Scouts] group is starting an exciting new educational programme called **Free Being Me**. It uses fun activities to empower your children to be more **body confident**, stand up to social pressures, **connect** with Guides and Scouts around the world and **make a difference** in their local communities.

**Low body confidence holds young people back from reaching their full potential. More than 80% of girls avoid activities they love because they don't feel good about the way they look.** They're also less likely to get involved in classroom debates, try out for a sports club and, sometimes, even attend school or go to the doctors.

Free Being Me 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!

Free Being Me (FBM) is a five-session journey. The first four sessions give participants the knowledge and skills they need to be more body confident. Between each session, your child will be asked to complete a **Home Challenge**. This will have been explained during the session, and all the instructions are also on their sheet. The fifth FBM session applies this learning by helping them plan a **Take Action project** which they will do at the end. Our **Take Action project** needs to reach as many young people as possible with these important body confident messages!

We really appreciate your support in making sure Free Being Me has the best impact on our group. If you are interested in finding out more about the project, please visit: [www.free-being-me.com](http://www.free-being-me.com)

Thank you for your support,

Leaders of [Guides or Scouts] group







## Action on Body Confidence (ABC)

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](http://www.waggs.org/en/what-we-do/action-body-confidence)

## Linking to wider WAGGGS programmes:



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/>

# Acknowledgements

## Co-Creation Team:

The Free Being Me activity packs were co-created with valuable contributions from around the world:

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*The Girl Guides Association of Dominica*
- **Blessmore Chikwakwa**  
*Girl Guides Association of Zimbabwe*
- **Bolouere Abigail Ikpeteboa**  
*The Nigerian Girl Guides Association*
- **Camila Takalli**  
*Boy Scouts & Girl Guides of Libya*
- **Carmen Gonzalez**  
*Guías de México*
- **Chun-Wei Fang**  
*Girl Scouts Taiwan*
- **Diana Puente**  
*Guías de México*
- **Elizabeth Gerard**  
*Girl Guides Association of Malaysia*
- **Erick Bonilla**  
*Asociación de Guías y Scouts de Costa Rica*
- **Evelyn Njeri Kinyanjui**  
*Kenya Girl Guides Association*
- **Hayley Wards**  
*GirlGuiding New Zealand*
- **Hueyyi Lee**  
*Girl Guides Association of Malaysia*
- **Jess Shire**  
*Girlguiding UK*
- **Jimena Paternoster**  
*Asociación Guías Argentinas*
- **Liantsoa Ratsimbazafy**  
*Skotisma Zazavavy eto Madagasikara*
- **Lise Bos**  
*Scouting Nederland*
- **Madhu Shree K S**  
*Bharat Scouts and Guides*
- **Miriam Nyoni**  
*The Malawi Girl Guides Association*
- **Mitchell Akinyi**  
*Kenya Girl Guides Association*
- **Priyanthi Rajapaska**  
*Girl Guides Sri Lanka*
- **Riju Manandhar**  
*Nepal Scouts*
- **Sebastian Guerra Silva**  
*Asociación de Guías y Scouts de Chile*
- **Shauna Smith**  
*The Girl Guides Association of Grenada*
- **Shubham Singh**  
*Bharat Scouts and Guides*
- **Tionge Msukwa**  
*The Malawi Girl Guides Association*
- **Warida Mussa Mtanda**  
*Tanzania Girl Guides Association*

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With special thanks to: The Body Project – an evidence-based cognitive dissonance body image programme originally developed by Dr Stice, Dr Becker and colleagues.

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## Notes:



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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](http://www.waggs.org)

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