



Title: Body image
Part 1: The influence of popular culture

Level: THIRD/FOURTH

Links to Curriculum for Excellence

Experiences and outcomes	Benchmarks
I understand my own body’s uniqueness, my developing sexuality, and that of others. HWB 3-47a I know that popular culture, the media and peer pressure can influence how I feel about myself and the impact this may have on my actions. HWB3-46b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes how positive and negative feelings about body image can affect health, self-worth and behaviour, for example, confidence, self-harm, eating disorders. • Recognises the impact of puberty and developing sexuality. • Identifies and explains influence/impact of media, including social media and pornography on self-esteem and decision making. • Demonstrates the skills needed to challenge stereotypical images in the media, including social media, for example, confidence, judgement.

Learning Intentions

- Young people learn about the influence and impact of media on body/self-image.
- Young people understand this comes at a unique time in their lives, with puberty and developing sexuality.
- Young people become critical of what they see and hear.
- Young people view themselves as unique individuals

Success Criteria

- I can describe how popular culture and social media promote stereotypes and unrealistic representations of both women and men and can reflect on how these impact on groups and individuals.
- I describe myself positively and can talk about my unique attributes and interests.
- I understand and accept diversity amongst my peers.

Resources to support this activity

- PowerPoint Slides
- Selfie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQS9pymkLiU> (duration 1 minute 12)
- Being Me: A Newsround Special (14 minutes 36 seconds) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/32131619>
- Bodies: Different shapes and sizes All Beautiful: https://youtu.be/Fcy_VQZG5Dg (1 minute 53) published by amaze.org
- Jameela Jamil on Channel Four news (from start to 4 minutes 10 seconds) <https://youtu.be/BXz0Qz6fmhI>
- I Weigh campaign. More here: https://www.instagram.com/i_weigh/

Whenever you use content on a platform like YouTube please cue the film you intend to play in advance, check it is the film you want to view, and skip adverts.

The material in this activity draws on the **Dove self-esteem project**. Teachers/educators can register online and access resources and activity plans that would support further work on the issues addressed in this and the next activity. <https://www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project.html>

Activity

1. Introduce the topic as being about body image and how we develop our own sense of how we look. As you do, remind everyone that RSHP lessons are times to be respectful of others, and to always be kind about each other. With that in mind, the session today is also about the kinds of pressures young people face when they are on social media when it comes to how they look. To start the conversation, check in around the room about what social media young people use.
2. **Body image:** Ask the young people what they think *body image* means? Then share the slide for some discussion and clarification.

Body image describes our idea of how our body looks and how we think it is viewed by others. This can include our thoughts and feelings about our height, weight, shape, skin, colour, and our appearance and attractiveness more broadly. We can have positive or negative body image. We might think positively or negative because of things like what we see around us in our family and friends and what we see and hear online.

3. **What is the ideal way to look?** Read the slide together and then ask: If we were to go ask young people what the ideal way to look is, what might they say?

An ideal is an idea of something that's perfect, but it normally only exists in the imagination. So the appearance ideal is the idea of the perfect way to look, even if it doesn't naturally exist.

4. Use the next slide to explain why this matters at this age for the young people. Check understanding and discuss this new statement.

In your early teenage years your body is changing. Your emotions can also feel very strong. These two things together mean that a young person can worry about how they look. You sometimes here people say 'I wish I looked like....' and naming someone else. Someone they think is ideal. Why do you think so many of us feel or say such things?

5. **How real is what we see?** Acknowledge that young people look around them to see how other people look, what they wear, how they behave. So, this means that what a young person sees online will influence them. Pose the question on the slide, give pairs some time to discuss and then talk as a group, exploring in feedback what people look like but also what these images on the slide also tell us about the person, or their lifestyle or 'success'. Perhaps have young people use their tablets/phones to find some images online now/on their social media feed as example of image manipulation/presentation of an ideal.

How real is what we see in social media or magazines?

6. **The truth about the (celebrity) selfie. Pose a question:** What is the most popular type of photo taken by people including celebrities? – a selfie. Look at the next 3 slides and chat about the images using the questions: When you look at a celebrity image online how real do you think it is? What do you think might have been done to change how this person looks? Image 3 shows what photoshop can actually do, chat about that.



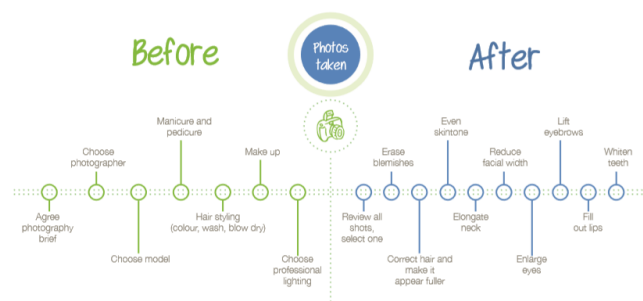
Show the short video: <https://youtu.be/sQS9pymkLiU> (duration 1 minute 12)

Prompt with questions about the video: Was the selfie honest? How was it enhanced? Do you think the woman who sees the image in the street knows what's been done to the image? Has she been tricked? The film ends with this statement – what do you think it means? **No wonder our perception of beauty is distorted.**

The young people might also talk about how they change or enhance their own images/selfies. If they haven't, raise the issue. If they do, why so? What are they trying to achieve and why?

7. **So how is an image manipulated?** Having considered the earlier images and talked about what is done to alter images share the slide and check that young people have identified all the things that are done to images often before they see them.

How can images be manipulated?



8. **Does this matter?** Pose the question on the slide:

When it comes to the faces and bodies we see on social media: Does it matter if they aren't real?

Have some initial discussion. Then share the subsequent slides, as you encourage discussion ask whether any of these facts have anything to do with what we see in the media:

- **One in four girls (26%) and one in seven boys (14%) have restricted their food intake by fasting, skipping meals or throwing away food, during the last three months.**
- **Plastic surgeons are worried about the number of young people who are wanting cosmetic procedures to change the way they look.**

At this point in the class there are options as to what might work best with young people, allow time for either choice.

Whole class: suggested S1 content choices

- **Being Me: A Newsround Special** (14 minutes 36 seconds)
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/32131619> Newsround explores body image with 8 to 14 year olds.
- **Bodies: Different shapes and sizes All Beautiful:** https://youtu.be/Fcy_VQZG5Dg (1 minute 53)
- **Why don't I like the way I look?** <https://youtu.be/v7zUHOEYIN8> (4 minutes 32) a film by Rachel Gitlevich

Whole class: suggested S2/S3 content

- **Jameela Jamil thinks what we see on social media does matter** <https://youtu.be/BXzO0z6fmhI> The young people may know Jameela Jamil from TV or Instagram. She feels strongly that social media's manipulation of images is damaging. Watch the start of this interview –**play from the beginning to 4 minutes 10 seconds** and pause for discussion. If necessary, a prompt question: *Jameela wants young women and young men to be positive about how they look and what they achieve. Do you think she's right to worry about what young people see online, with constant attention being paid to what someone's weighs or what they look like?*
- Jameela talks about the **I Weigh** campaign. More here: https://www.instagram.com/i_weigh/

Connecting with home

The text below could be used to communicate with home about the activities in this short block of learning.

Over two sessions the young people will be considering Body Image and Self-Esteem. In particular we will be thinking about how social media and the representations of men and women online can put pressure on young people to look a certain way. The young people will think about how they can manage negative influences and also how they can support each other to be smart and kind online.

Further learning activities are available that connect to this RSHP curriculum content

- Body image: My real body/Body confidence

Practitioner Notes

