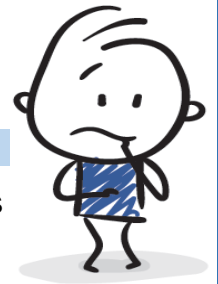


Young Person's Guide to Positive Body Image

Body image is how we think about our body and how we think others perceive it. Positive body image is when we feel happy and relaxed about our body, whereas negative body image is when we think our body isn't good enough.



Statistics:

Most of us can identify something we would like to change about our body. This is true for both boys and girls. The Be Real Campaign reports that 52% of students aged 11 to 16 years old often worry about the way they look.

10 TOP TIPS for positive body image:

- 1 Be yourself.** If you always try to copy or change for others it can be really difficult to feel confident being yourself. Try to accept yourself. We are all unique.
- 2 Explore ideas of body image.** Remind yourself that there is no such thing as perfect. Ideal body image differs across culture and time.
- 3 Be aware of the media.** Images in the media are often edited and unrealistic, and are more likely to include the good things in life. Try not to compare yourself with others and block and ignore any negative comments.
- 4 Talk to someone you trust.** Someone listening to how you feel really helps. They don't need to know the answers, you can explore what might help together.
- 5 Challenge automatic thoughts.** Try to consider negative and self-critical thoughts in more helpful ways. It might help think about what you would say to a friend.
- 6 We are more than our looks.** Identify your strengths and value yourself by more than your looks. Our bodies help us to do amazing things, celebrate this.
- 7 Practise positive thinking.** Each day try to identify things that have went well and things that you are grateful for. This will help reduce negative thinking.
- 8 Consider general wellbeing.** A healthy diet, sleeping well, exercising and spending time with others benefits our mental health. Can you improve on any of these?
- 9 Lead by example.** Focus on behaviour and personality as well as appearance when interacting with others. Being kind to others benefits your mental health too.
- 10 Ask for help when needed.** If you are concerned seek additional help, talk to your family, GP and/or school.

Self-help links:

- www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/body-image/
- www.themix.org.uk/mental-health/body-image-and-self-esteem
- www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/my-body/how-you-look/

