



the dove
self-esteem
fund



self-esteem activity guide

FOR YOUTH LEADERS OF GIRLS
AGED 10-14

Help girls build body confidence

“No young person should leave school feeling that they can’t participate fully in life because of the way that they think they look”

Dr. Nancy Etcoff, Director, Program in Aesthetics and Well Being,
Department of Psychiatry, Harvard



Our social mission:

To encourage all women and girls to develop a positive relationship with beauty, helping to raise their self-esteem, and thereby enabling them to realise their full potential.

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Self-esteem activity guide objective

This Self-Esteem Activity Guide has been created to help girls 10-14 develop positive self-esteem. In particular, it encourages girls to look at body confidence and how this influences their attitudes to themselves and others. Each topic is introduced with a practical, engaging activity to make this resource suitable for Youth Groups and After School Clubs.

Why has this resource been produced?

Over 70% of girls avoid certain activities because they feel bad about their looks. For example:

- 20% won't give an opinion
 - 25% won't go to a social event, party or club
 - 15% won't go to the doctor
 - 16% won't go to school
- (‘Beyond stereotypes’, Dove 10 country study, 2005)

- More than half (53%) of girls, aged 12 to 16, feel that their body image either stops them from getting a boyfriend or means that they cannot relax in a relationship
 - More than 50% of women said they would consider having plastic surgery, compared with less than a quarter of men
- (BBC Radio 1 Newsbeat and BBC 1Xtra TXU, February 2007)

What others think about this self-esteem activity guide

“Body image issues affect nearly all girls, undermining confidence and wasting emotional energy. I heartily recommend this resource to help girls, and their adult mentors, become more robust in their quest to reach their full potential.”

Dr. Susie Orbach, Mother, psychoanalyst, body activist and author of numerous books on the body and emotional literacy including 'Bodies' and 'On Eating'



“Today, young people are growing up surrounded by increasingly unattainable beauty standards. Innovative materials like these offer adults the chance to be positive role models, and to make a significant positive impact on the self-image of young people when they need it most. This Activity Guide provides an impressive combination of fun exercises and communication tools that encourage conversation on an exceedingly difficult subject: body confidence and self-esteem.”

Dr. Nancy Etcoff, Harvard University, Director of Program in Aesthetics and Well Being; author of 'Survival of the Prettiest, the Science of Beauty'



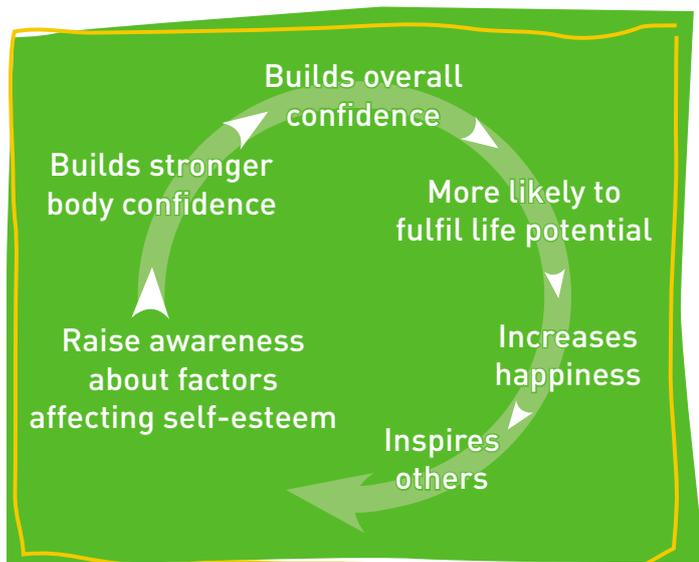
“This resource helps Youth Leaders to cover body confidence topics, but in a nonthreatening way. It breaks down barriers. This gives the girls extra confidence to stand their ground!”

Nadine, Youth Leader

“If you have low self-esteem, this can really help you. You’ll feel more comfortable talking about awkward things with friends.”

Holly, 13

How does this resource work?



What do we mean by happiness?

'Happiness' isn't about going around with false smiles on our faces. It's about gaining a confident sense of self that is outer-directed rather than blocked by negative introspection. Clearly there are many factors that affect our overall happiness. This resource focuses on the powerful affects that come from having body confidence.

What is 'self-esteem'?

We all hear about the value of high self-esteem and that people with poor self-esteem tend to experience problems in life, but what exactly is self-esteem? Here are some definitions:

- How we value ourselves – our self-worth
- Our attitude to ourselves – how happy we are with the type of person we are
- Our ability to manage difficult situations
- Our confidence in our own abilities
- How we see ourselves in our community and society – how we compare ourselves to others, and connect with those around us

High self-esteem

High self-esteem can mean we are comfortable with who we are. People with high self-esteem often have the confidence to influence decisions, to express their individuality and to find success in life.

Low self-esteem

Low self-esteem means that we do not value our true worth. This can lead to feeling helpless and not being in charge of our lives, even feeling resentment or blaming others. Those with low self-esteem are unlikely to reach their full potential in life.

The cost of low self-esteem

- With low self-esteem, we often fail to recognise what we do achieve and feel good about it
- Low self-esteem can make us feel excluded and disconnected from society
- It can make us want to surrender our individuality and conform to stereotypes
- It can make us feel we can't handle life's challenges or feel like a miserable failure
- It can lead to depression, destructive behaviour, self-harming, eating disorders or alcohol/drug abuse

Can we develop our self-esteem?

Self-esteem develops during childhood. However, throughout our lives we each have the opportunity to improve our own self-esteem.

It is core to how we act and react, make decisions and choose our path through life. This makes building self-esteem a fundamental life skill.

Developing a skill for life

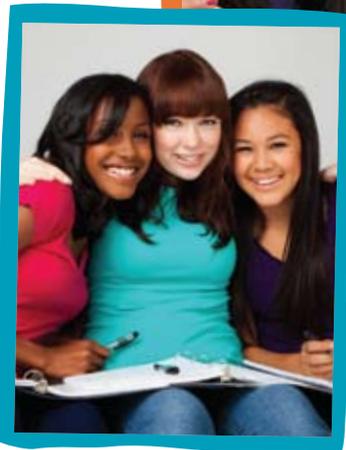
Developing positive self-esteem is about establishing self-confidence, learning how to cope with emotions, looking at how to value ourselves and improving how effective we are at succeeding in the tasks we set ourselves.

The strongest influence on self-esteem is our family, particularly when children are very young. Early years development is crucial, and parents' self-esteem has a significant influence on their children's self-esteem. In particular, a mother's self-esteem is one a girl learns to mirror as a baby and as a child.

Other influences are the communities that children grow up in, including schools and the friendship groups where they live. Youth groups are particularly powerful as they can give girls and young women the chance to try new activities in a nonthreatening single-sex environment. It means it is OK to make mistakes as no one will judge them. Plus there can be lots of time for girls to just chat with their friends or Youth Leaders about issues that may be worrying them.

As girls grow older, they can influence their own self-esteem by recognising when it is being challenged and finding positive ways to improve it. Developing from a girl into a young woman is a time when they experience many changes, including their level of self-esteem. For many, these changes are both frightening and exciting, so understanding what they are going through physically and emotionally can help.

During this time, girls emerge from the security of their families and friends to shoulder responsibility, look after themselves and take their places as citizens in the community and the world. Scary stuff! Not only that, but their bodies are changing, sometimes in ways they don't feel ready for or even understand.



Learning how to maintain or develop positive self-esteem through these pre-teen and teenage years can make a huge difference to a woman's later life.

Although the term 'parent' is used in this resource, users should be aware that what is said may apply to a guardian or other adult with parental responsibility.

Using this resource

The main purpose of this booklet is to give you the information to feel confident using this resource in your capacity as a Youth Leader. The notes are designed to help you support girls to run the activities so that they receive the maximum benefit from this resource.

This pack contains one introductory activity ('Looking at you'), plus 18 activities (which are divided into three sections called 'My Feelings', 'My Shell' and 'My Image') for girls to...

- Talk openly about aspects of body confidence
- Challenge stereotypes
- Look at how their feelings can affect their actions
- Discover how beauty is portrayed by the media
- Look at beauty in other cultures
- Understand their emotions
- Develop techniques to promote positive self-esteem
- Build a positive relationship with beauty
- Achieve their full life potential

All the activities have been tried and tested with thousands of girls and Youth Leaders. We have incorporated feedback to make sure this resource tackles the important issues in a friendly and nonthreatening way.

Now roll up your sleeves and get ready for some action!

Step 1 - Looking At You

This activity is for the whole group to do together and should be lead by the Youth Leader. 'Looking at you' introduces the theme of self-esteem by providing activities that look at the three areas – 'My feelings', 'My shell' and 'My image'. 'Looking at you' will allow your youth group to familiarise itself with these areas and prepare for the journey ahead. It also provides an opportunity to look back at the end to see where the girls' self-esteem has developed.

Step 2 - Using the 18 follow-up activities

Once you have completed 'Looking at you', either you or the girls can select activities from the rest of the resource. There are six activities for each themed area. However any activity can be tackled in any order.

The activities can be carried out by small groups of girls, e.g. working in groups of 3 to 5. Each group can do a different activity. Whatever works best for your young people is fine!

The girls will need your help, as their Youth Leader, to complete these activities and gain the maximum benefit from doing them.

Each activity is challenging, but they have been designed so all girls can enjoy them. How each girl takes part in an activity, and what she takes away from it, is personal to her and will depend on many factors.

For each activity, there is a 'Let's talk' section that gives you prompting questions to ask your girls. These questions aim to stimulate debate and allow girls to understand the reason behind the activity. The questions are simply there to help you facilitate; they are not a script. We hope they help you to get juicy discussions started.

Let's
talk



Warm-up exercises

This selection of games can be used to raise energy levels and mix people up at the beginning of an activity session.

1. Simon says

Choose who will lead this exercise, e.g. by spinning a bottle. The leader carries out an action and instructs the rest to copy. However they only copy her if she says "Simon says" before her instruction.

Let's talk

How does it feel to make mistakes? Is it OK to make mistakes?

2. Feel the pulse

Everyone stands in a circle holding hands. One person starts the pulse by squeezing the hand of one of their neighbours. This gets passed on around the circle. Then the direction can be changed with a fast double squeeze.

An alternative is for one person to start off by saying "vrrrooom" and then the direction can be turned by making a squealing tire "screeeeech" sound. Everyone is allowed to go "screeeeech" twice in the game.

3. Alien attack

Someone has an imaginary alien that they throw at someone else. When it lands on their face, they can be as crazy as they want to act getting it off and throwing it at someone else. Sound effects are encouraged!

4. Pass the picture

Everyone stands in a circle then turns to face the back of the person to their left. The first person 'draws' a simple image with their finger on the back of the person in front of them. Keep quiet! The recipient draws what they have felt onto the next person, until everyone has had a go. Ask the last person what they thought they were drawing.



Let's talk

What did it feel like if you weren't sure what you were meant to be drawing?
How would you normally react in similar situations?

5. Pass the present

Everyone stands in a circle. Explain that you are going to mime passing something to the first person, but you won't tell them what it is. They then pass it on to the next person and continue around the circle. After a few passes, introduce the next 'object' so that there are several things being passed round at the same time. At the end, ask people what they thought they were passing. Examples of 'things' to pass round are:

- A really smelly bin bag
- A heavy suitcase
- A cute puppy
- A sticky bun
- A hot cup of tea

Let's talk

What does it feel like when we can't communicate by talking?
When is it important to be able to communicate clearly without talking?



Warm-up exercises

6. Girls v boys

This can be carried out all together or by breaking into small groups. Take a flipchart and divide it vertically. Ask the girls to write out all the things that they believe girls are better at than boys, and vice versa.

Do girls/boys really have greater abilities in these areas?
Should girls and boys have equal opportunities in all aspects of life?

Let's talk

7. Celebrity dreams

Each girl chooses a celebrity they would like to be like. In private, write the name on a slip of paper along with what they have in common with this star and why they would like to be like them. The Youth Leader then collects the slips and reads out a celebrity name. The rest have to guess who chose this.

Ensure that there are no put-downs. At the end, ask the girls to think how being a celebrity might have drawbacks.

Let's talk

8. Truth or dare

Encourage girls to speak out with confidence and build trust with this old favourite game. Before your group meets, write out a selection of 'truths' and 'dares' on slips of paper and put them in separate labelled containers. Each girl then chooses one piece of paper and does what it says! Here are some suggestions:

Truth:

- Tell three things you like about yourself
- Tell us what your dream job would be
- Give a true compliment to each girl here
- Would you ever get a tattoo – where and what?
- If a genie gave you one wish what would it be?
- If you could decorate your bedroom any way you wanted, what would you do?
- What qualities make a good friend?
- Who is your greatest hero?
- What makes a good role-model?
- If you were a superhero what would your power be?

Dares: I dare you to...

- Do a crazy dance for two full minutes
- Make up a speech after being given an award
- Crawl around like a crab
- Pretend you are taking a fabulous shower – and singing!
- Make up a commercial for a funny product
- Act like an alien who just landed on earth and react to what you see
- Tell us what you are most proud of
- Snore like someone in a very deep sleep – with a bad cold
- Sing your favourite song – like an opera singer

What does it feel like when it's 'your moment' to say or do something?
How can we get over our self-conscious more easily?

Let's talk

Looking at you

What's it all about?

This activity will introduce your youth group to the theme of self-esteem before they dive into the rest of the activities. It is a chance to explore the three themed areas in the resource:

- My feelings
- My shell
- My image

Tip

You may find it helpful to read the information about these three areas before you do the 'Looking at you' activity. Please see pages 10-21 (My feelings), pages 22-33 (My shell) and pages 34-47 (My image).

Running time: 40 minutes –
split into two activities each taking 20 minutes

Here's how

Activity 1: Thought Capsules

Create four self-esteem Thought Capsules.

Tell the girls that this is an introductory exercise so that they can become familiar with this body confidence and self-esteem resource. Today you will be leading them then, over the next few weeks, they will be able to choose which activities they want to do, and in which order.

Let's begin. The girls need to divide into three groups called 'My feelings', 'My shell' and 'My image'. Give each group a large plastic drinks bottle.

Each group then decorates the outside of their Thought Capsules bottle with pictures and words from the magazines to represent their area.

You need

- 4 large plastic drinks bottles or cardboard shoe boxes (you'll need to put slips of paper inside and get them out again)
- Lots of magazines
- Sticky tape
- Pens
- Scissors
- Paper
- Soft ball
- Whistle



- 'My feelings' could have images of faces, tears and smiles, with words like 'love', 'fear' and 'guilt'
- 'My shell' could show images of lips, feet, noses, hair, skin, teeth and eyes beside words like 'smooth', 'hairy' and 'healthy'
- 'My image' could use pictures of famous people, models and words like 'perfect', 'beauty' or 'cosmetic surgery'
- The fourth bottle (or cardboard shoe box) just needs a simple label saying 'Hopes and Fears' stuck to it

Looking at you

Once all the bottles (or boxes) are decorated, join together again as one group. Ask each person to write her thoughts about all or any of the three areas on slips of paper. The girls can write anything to do with either self-esteem or taking part in the activities: what they hope to find out about themselves, the worries they have about what the activities may be like, the fears they have about growing up or what they are looking forward to. The slips will be gathered up and then looked at, by the girls, at the end of this programme. The written thoughts can be anonymous or the girls can sign them. Put the slips of paper into the 'Hopes and Fears' bottle (or box) – make sure you can get them out again.

Explain that these bottles (or boxes) represent self-esteem as a combination of what goes on both inside and outside ourselves. Now use your Thought Capsules to play rounders.

Activity 2: Capsule rounders

Tell the girls that developing self-esteem is about building on their hopes and finding ways of batting away their fears.

Form two teams. Set out the four labelled Thought Capsules as bases, using the 'Hopes and Fears' bottle (or box) as the last base. Play rounders using a soft ball and batting with your hand.

When a girls lands on a base, she must shout out a word that she thinks relates to the self-esteem area marked on the base capsule. If she doesn't come up with a word, she returns to the batting line.



Developing self-esteem

When you have finished at least nine activities from this Self-Esteem Activity Guide, get the capsules out. Together, look at the messages inside the 'Hopes and Fears' capsule. Read out the comments and chat about how the hope or fear has been addressed. Ask the girls to think about which of the three areas their comments relate to, then post the slip into the most appropriate of the three Thought Capsules.

At the end of the game, store your group's four Thought Capsules somewhere safe. You could hide them like a time capsule or one of the Youth Leaders can look after them.

Let's
talk

What have you discovered about self-esteem and body confidence?
Now you or your girls are ready to choose which of the 18 activities to do next...

My feelings: Introduction

As girls develop into young women, they experience a new range of moods and emotions. Some stem from the hormonal changes in their bodies. Other emotions come from the fact that they are growing up:

- They are able and willing to take on new responsibilities, but may want to hold on to some aspects of their childhoods
- Their relationships with friends and family change as they strive to be independent, but they want the security offered by caring adults

It is a time when many young people feel that no one understands them or has experienced what they are going through. Low self-esteem can result from not knowing how to recognise and cope with different moods and emotions.

1. Guess who? - Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity gives girls the chance to see how they have developed since they were young. It helps them understand that becoming an adult is a process they are already part-way through. It also gives them the opportunity to celebrate their individuality, voice their opinions and be praised by their peers.

What's it all about?

Teenage girls and young women are still discovering who they are and creating their own identity. They often feel that no one understands them, particularly their parents. This can be because they don't understand themselves. Knowing who they are is central to their self-esteem and helps them make the right choices in life. It is also very important to girls to have approval from friends and peers, as well as the sense that others value their opinions.



Let's talk

- Do people understand who you are?
- What makes you an individual?
- Is learning to understand each other a good idea?
- Do you listen to other people's views?
- How have you changed already?
- Tell me something positive about you and your friends
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

1. Guess who? – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

Each of us is an individual. We like to think that we all share the same experiences and emotions. In some ways we do, but they are never exactly the same for two people, however close they may be.

Learning to celebrate your uniqueness can help you understand that we are all individuals. As well as learning some really positive things about yourselves, this activity is a chance to see just how grown-up you've already become.



You need

- A copy of a photograph each that shows you when you were younger
- An envelope for each person
- Slips of paper and pens

Running time: 20 minutes

Here's how

Everyone brings along a photo of when they were younger. Keep your photos hidden to start with and give them to your Youth Leader. Ask them to mix them up and lay them out in front of you. Can you guess who each one is?

Once you have all worked out who is in each photo, think about how much you have already grown up. Each of you needs to say something positive about what you were like around the time your photo was taken.

Next, each write your name on an envelope. On different slips of paper, write at least one positive comment about every other girl. Fold them up and put them in the relevant person's envelope.

When you take your photos home, take your envelope and read the comments about yourself. Keep them for a rainy day.

2. Letting off steam – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity is about looking at how physical activity can be used to release emotional energy. It isn't about taking up a new sport or becoming an athlete. It's about understanding that every woman experiences emotions, and there are lots of positive ways to let off steam.

What's it all about?

Experiencing strong emotions is part of growing up. Becoming an adult means learning how to release them in a positive way. Not knowing how to manage emotions could mean they emerge in destructive ways, like truancy, self-harming, vandalism or drug-taking.

Everyone needs to find a positive way to let off steam. Physical activity can be a great way for girls to start feeling better about themselves. Indeed it's helpful for girls to find physical activities that allow them to express strong emotions.

Emotions

All emotions are valid and so it is important that girls experience what these all feel like. Some aren't so nice, while others are great. Most of us know how to deal with emotions like joy, happiness, success and elation. But what about the ones like anger, jealousy, frustration or sorrow?

At times throughout their lives, girls are going to experience these not-so-nice ones. Finding positive outlets for negative emotions is part of growing up and taking responsibility.



Rules

As girls mature, it can feel like the rules that applied when they were children don't work any more. It's true that when they were younger, adults made rules for them. As people get older they want to test the boundaries and see if these rules still apply. That's great, because it's time to start exploring the world more. But there will still be times when they want the old rules, and the security they offer.

Coping with change

When people find that they aren't coping with changes, they can start to bottle stuff up. This is a common way to behave, but the outcomes can be damaging. Some people will actually harm themselves as a result. This could be by damaging their skin, hitting themselves or disrupting their body's natural changes through excessive dieting.

- How do you feel when things are getting on top of you?
- What physical activities will help release your emotions?
- Which activities work best?
- Which activities will you use next time you feel frustrated?
- What can happen to people who do not let off steam?
- Do you feel more able to deal positively with your emotions?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's
talk

2. Letting off steam – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

When was the last time you felt really wound up? Had someone upset you? Or was it a case of everything going wrong?

The important question is, did all that emotion and energy get released in a positive way?

There are times when we all feel like screaming, or thumping something. Sometimes physical activity is a great way of letting off steam. Rather than bottling it up, find a way of using all that energy your emotions have created.

Roll up your sleeves and get ready for some action!

Running time: 10-15 minutes

You need

- Open space
- Sports equipment (optional)

Here's how

Think about some different activities that may help you get rid of strong emotions. Here are a few ideas.

- Hitting a cricket ball
- Jumping high – or onto something soft
- Punching the air
- Running
- Kicking a cushion
- Shouting or screaming
- Skipping
- Stretching
- Meditating
- Scoring a goal



Together, select your three favourite ideas. Gather any equipment you may need. One at a time, each of you has one minute to think really hard about a time when you've needed to let off steam. Can you remember how you felt? Immediately pick one of the activities and give it a go.

Keep going until you have all had a go at each activity. Don't worry if you can't think about three stressful moments – keep using the same one if you want. Which was the best stress-buster for you?

Safety

Check with your Youth Leader that the activity ideas are safe before doing them.

3. Tummy twists – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity should help girls understand the relationships between foods and moods.

What's it all about?

Food, it seems, has never been so plentiful or accessible. Yet never before have there been so many health issues associated with food. The media churns out stories about childhood obesity, eating disorders and poor diets. An underlying factor can be emotions.

Building food relationships

During teenage years, girls start to take more responsibility for what and when they eat, so it is important they learn about why they eat. Of course, we all know about the importance of a balanced, healthy diet (find out more from your local nurse). For many girls, the teenage years are when their relationships with food are cemented into habits they carry for the rest of their lives.

Many women become a 'victim of food' one way or another during their lives. For some, it's being on the latest diet, moving from one food fad to the next, having a 'naughty' chocolate then skipping a meal or counting calories. They flit from one set of food rules to the next without questioning why they 'broke' the last ones – or what food really means to them. A healthy relationship with food does not involve rigidly restricting a diet, purging or bingeing, but listening to what your body wants. Feelings don't live in the fridge!

Emotional needs

Which of these emotions have girls experienced at some point?

excitement, joy, rage, delight, disappointment, helplessness, loneliness, guilt, anger, sadness, frustration, homesickness, elation, fear, calmness

Some of these emotions seem easy to cope with, while others are harder. Sometimes it is when girls feel they can't cope with an emotion that they might turn to food. At this point they aren't eating because they are physically hungry, but because they are emotionally hungry. With guidance, young people can find other ways to deal with the emotion. The more we allow ourselves to experience our emotions, then the more confident we become with the range of feelings we have. In other words, we get to know ourselves better and learn to love who we are – warts and all!

Eating disorders

Some people develop a dangerously unhealthy relationship with food, which can lead to an eating disorder. An eating disorder is a serious mental illness, and young women aged 12-20 are most at risk. Eating disorders, which include anorexia and bulimia, are not 'caught' and don't start by copying other people. Youth Leaders need to be aware that during any discussion about eating and feelings about food, some girls may disclose that they have a serious problem with eating, or are worried about a friend or family member.

- Is what you eat influenced by your feelings?
- Do you think it is important to understand the difference between listening to your body and listening to your mind when it comes to food?
- What do you know about a balanced, healthy diet?
- Tell me how being sad or unhappy could change how or what you eat
- Did you know that food and mood influenced each other before doing this activity?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's talk

3. Tummy twists – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

Sometimes how we feel makes us eat certain foods.

Sometimes eating certain foods makes us feel a certain way. Think about when someone feels a bit down and eats chocolate to 'feel better', but ends up feeling guilty about eating so much chocolate. Or when we feel tired – does eating high energy foods, like pasta or a baked potato, make us feel lively and active?

You need

- Twister™ mat
- Pens
- Slips of paper
- Scissors
- Small bag

Running time: 30 minutes

Recognising there is a relationship between foods and our moods helps us understand what we eat and why.

However, sometimes we do feel very high or very low no matter what we have eaten.

feeling → food → feeling

Here's how

On one side of each slip of paper write the name of a food, such as chocolate, pizza, bread, salad, chunky soup or pasta. On the other side, write 'right hand', 'left hand', 'right foot' or 'left foot'. Place all the slips in the bag.

Now pick four feelings and decide which of the four colours on the Twister™ mat each feeling will be, for example red could be angry, yellow happy, green confident and blue sad.

Choose one of you to be the Picker while two (or more!) get ready to twist your tummies on the mat.

The Picker takes the bag and pulls out a slip of paper, and reads aloud both the food and the body part. The girls on the mat need to place their appropriate hand or foot on the colour that shows the emotion they associate most with that food.

For example, if the Picker says, "Pizza, left hand" the girls on the mat each need to think how pizza makes them feel – either before, as or after they've eaten it.

They put their left hand on the colour that shows that emotion. It could be different for each girl.



Safety

Make sure the mat is not too crowded and be careful not to slip up. Take turns at being the Picker and being on the mat so everyone has a go.

4. Mind over matter – Notes for Youth Leaders

One way to build self-confidence and self-esteem is by setting realistic goals. This activity encourages girls to look at things they want to achieve and provides them with a technique to help them reach their goals.

What's it all about?

As they mature, girls have goals and aspirations, sometimes small and sometimes large. Part of becoming adult is recognising that they have these hopes for the future and putting their minds to achieving them.

Using energy positively

At the same time as hormone levels are changing, life itself is becoming more serious for girls. There is more focus on 'doing well' at school, their friendships may be changing, peer pressure is growing, they start having opinions and their roles in the family and community may be in states of flux. It's all too easy to blame teenage hormones, so it is important that girls recognise that feelings and emotions come from different sources – some easier to deal with than others.



Setting goals

Working out what it is that girls want to achieve can be difficult. Sometimes there are many things they want to accomplish. How do they know which ones to do first? Or which ones are most important? What is important to one person may not be to another. Similarly what one person sees as a real test of her skills may be easy for someone else. This is why each of us has different hopes, aspirations and goals.

Sometimes there are things that we have wanted to try but have been too scared to attempt. Sometimes we simply can't see how to reach the goal. Our role as adults is to teach girls the valuable lesson of learning to think through what they hope to achieve, why they want to achieve and how they will reach their goals.

Mantras

These are used by many Eastern religions. Repeating a mantra is called chanting. Their aim is to clear the mind of material desires so it can focus on achieving spiritual goals. The Sanskrit word 'mantra' comes from 'man' meaning to think and 'tra' meaning tool – literally 'instrument of thought'. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantra>

- Do you think emotions play a part in reaching your goals? How?
- Why do you think everybody has different aspirations and goals?
- How can making an action plan help your self-esteem?
- Are you more confident about how you will achieve your goals now? Why?
- How important is it to learn from failure and celebrate success?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's
talk

4. Mind over matter – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

Throughout life each of us has goals and aspirations, sometimes small and sometimes large. Part of becoming an adult is recognising that you have these hopes for the future and putting your mind to achieving them

Running time: 30 minutes

Here's how

As a group, decorate the shoe box – call it your 'I will' box. Carefully cut a slot in the top. Next, each of you should think of one thing you would like to achieve.

You need

- Craft materials
- A shoe box
- Scissors
- Paint and brushes (optional)
- Pens
- Paper

Here are some ideas to get you thinking:

- Organise a sponsored event
- Learn to swim
- Be more tolerant of your little sister
- Try ballroom dancing



In small groups or pairs, consider how you could achieve your goal. Write a short poem, prayer or mantra to help you focus on what it is you want to achieve. This poem, prayer or mantra is something you can say to yourself (or out loud) whenever you need to. If words aren't your thing, then why not draw a storyboard? Once you have reached your goal, look back at your achievement. Do you feel proud? Did your message inspire you?

Write a short poem, prayer or mantra to help you focus on what it is you want to achieve.

This poem, prayer or mantra is something you can say to yourself (or out loud) whenever you need to. If words aren't your thing, then why not draw a storyboard?

Use your 'I will' box whenever you want to achieve something special.

Keep your inspiring messages – they may help you again in the future!

Now, what's your next goal...?

Post your messages into your 'I will' box. Over the next few weeks, look at the messages you have created and chat about if and how you're reaching your goals.

Safety

Be careful using the scissors to make the slot in the card.

Use this activity to set yourself one realistic goal and to think through how you need to achieve it.

5. What's that sound? – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity uses sound to show how girls' feelings are affected by many external factors. It also uncovers how we can all respond differently to the same things.

What's it all about?

Feelings are triggered by things that go on both inside and outside. Some of this we can control, some we can't. Being able to identify feelings and what causes them is something we learn as we become adults – some are better at doing this than others. Developing the ability to recognise emotions (and what triggers them) helps girls to know what are positive and negative influences on them. This is particularly important for young people who are still learning how to judge who or what has a negative influence on them, such as drugs, alcohol, people or certain behaviour.



Let's
talk

- What sort of sounds will you try to find?
- How easy was it to find noises that affect how we feel?
- What everyday sounds affect how we feel?
- Does everyone feel the same for each sound?
- How affected are you by...? (Use examples likely to be part of the girls' lives, such as school bell, mobile phone ringtones, doors slamming, police sirens or the fridge door)
- Self-esteem affects how we feel on the inside. How is it influenced by what we experience on the outside?
- What if, rather than thinking about sounds, we focus on what people say about us and to us – how do you feel now?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

5. What's that sound? – Activity handout for girls



What's it all about?

Part of understanding our self-esteem is knowing which things make us feel good and which things make us feel bad.

Learning how to identify and understand our own feelings is very important. Try using sounds to discover how sensitive your feelings really are!

Running time: 30 minutes

Here's how

Take a look around your meeting place and record some sounds from the things you find. This could be a coat zip opening, water coming out of a tap, a balloon popping or a phone ringing.

You can also make sounds yourselves, like kissing noises, clapping or shouting.

Particular words affect our feelings too, so record some phrases, such as 'I love you' or 'I hate you.'

Capture at least ten sounds

Make sure each one is really clear. Separate each recording with a few seconds of silence.

Name four areas of your meeting place with a different emotion, like:

- Happy and excited
- Sad and upset
- Shocked and scared
- Relaxed and peaceful

Now play your recordings, one at a time, for everyone in your group to hear. Each girl runs to the area that shows what emotion she associates with each sound. Make sure everyone knows there are no right or wrong answers – it's just about how a sound makes you feel.

You need

- Something to record and to play back your sounds
- Card
- Pens



6. Express yourself – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity looks at how girls express themselves. It's about understanding that everyone needs to find ways of making themselves understood, as well as learning to listen to what others say to them.

Communication isn't just about words, it is about body language as well. What better way to practise communication than with a bit of acting?

What's it all about?

The reasons we express ourselves are often linked with our emotions – we want to express how we feel about something. Finding the right words can be a struggle for many people.

Expressing ourselves isn't just about what we say, it is about how and when we say it, as well as who we say it to. It is an important skill to master. And what is the point of having all the right words if no one will listen?

Actions and words

If something goes really well, then most of us know how to express this. We've all jumped up and down, hugged a friend or punched the air. Did we need to tell people how we felt?

Similarly we've all stomped off, or turned our back on someone who was upsetting us.

Actions, as well as words, speak volumes.

Thinking it through

Giving a bit of thought to how we express ourselves can pay off. For instance, before an interview that may have some difficult questions, thinking through the answers and even saying them out loud can help.

By rehearsing, girls become more comfortable with how their voices sound saying difficult things, and can hear if the words really work together.

Off the cuff

Sometimes there simply isn't time to rehearse what we say or do. When we have to respond on the spot, taking a deep breath or making time to think for a moment can help. If something has stirred a lot of emotion, girls should try not to rush in feet first – they should be encouraged to respond in a calm and measured way.

All ears

Expressing ourselves is just as much about listening as it is about talking. It is no use saying what we feel, if no one is listening. That might be why we have two ears but only one mouth. There are times when girls may feel very emotional and talking it over with a friend can help to put things in perspective and work out what to do. Being a good listener is quite an accomplishment.

- In what kind of situations do you find it particularly easy or hard to express yourself?
- Do you find some people easier or harder to talk with? Why do you think this is?
- How important is it to be able to express yourself effectively?
- Is it all right that everyone communicates differently?
- Give an example of when someone needs to have thought more about what they said
- Does expressing your emotions make you feel better?

Let's
talk

6. Express yourself – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

Do you sometimes feel your emotions welling up? Are there times you just can't stop yourself from saying something? Do you have an opinion you want to get across to others?

There are times when we all feel strongly about something.

Knowing how to express your feelings can help you understand others, or help them understand you. Sometimes it can help to change things, like what you do in your youth group.

Finding out how to communicate well will help you do all these things – and more.

Running time: 30 minutes

Here's how

Pretend to be on a TV chat show and discuss some hot topics.

First agree what type of chat show you are on. Will it be like *The One Show* or more like *Jeremy Kyle*? Or make up your own chat show, and whoever is the host just acts as herself.



Next, you need to decide who will be the host and the guests. Remember, you can take turns at being this.

Don't forget you need an audience, so the rest of the group can watch and listen.

Now come up with points to discuss. You may want to look at some newspapers or magazines for the latest hot topics or you could make up some ideas.

Still stuck? Use these ideas to start the debate:

- The government is banning youth groups
- There should always be the choice of chips at school dinner
- Cooking is only for girls
- What you look like isn't the only important thing
- Sunbeds should be made illegal



Get talking! Pretend you really are live on TV. After five minutes, swap roles. Keep going until everyone has had a go.

My shell: Introduction

Each of us has a different body that we have to live in all our lives. Learning how to look after it is a key to good health.

As their body changes through puberty, girls need time and space to get used to the new shell they find themselves in, as well as to learn how to look after it. For many girls, knowing that 'normal' is actually different for every woman can be a relief, especially at a time when they are heavily influenced by unrealistic media stereotypes. What size bra do I need? How long does a period last? Should I have hair here? My nose is a funny shape! These – and more – are all questions girls and young women want to ask. Becoming more confident about their bodies and how they will change can help promote positive self-image and improve self-esteem.

7. Take a look at me – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity is about helping girls to talk openly and confidently about their bodies. Although it is about each girl looking at herself, it isn't about embarrassing anyone or trying to make them feel uncomfortable.

What's it all about?

All through our lives, our bodies change. For 10-14 year old girls, the changes they are going through can be difficult. It is the first time they have experienced their bodies changing to this extent. Getting to know your body, and loving the way it is, is part of becoming a woman. It also has potential health benefits. The better we know our bodies and what is normal for us, the more likely we are to notice any changes, especially ones that may need medical help.

Ongoing change

Throughout a woman's life her body shape will change continually. At the age when this resource is most useful, the most noticeable changes are to do with puberty. Girls will see their waists develop and their hips get a little larger. They will grow breasts, start their periods and generally become more curvy. It's great! They may also have a bit of a spot issue, and feel that their skin is rebelling. Or their hair may get greasy for a while. Not quite so great, but not a disaster. Plus hormones are whizzing around in confusing ways, particularly when it comes to who they have a crush on.

When will it happen?

All girls and young women experience the same body changes when they are growing up. The only thing that is different is that we're all on our own personal schedule that is set by our body. This can concern some young women as, compared to their friends, they all grow up at slightly different paces. So let's support girls to take a look at their bodies so they can learn to be proud of them.

- How do you feel about the fact that every girl and young woman experiences body changes?
- Did you know exactly when and how these changes happen is different for each individual?
- Tell me how getting to know your body can have health benefits
- Describe how your body will change
- Which bits won't change?
- How confident do you feel about your body?
- Did you enjoy making the poster?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's
talk

7. Take a look at me – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

Does your body seem to be changing every day? Or do you wonder why your body hasn't started changing yet? Whatever the case, your body changes can be really exciting – and just a bit scary! Take this chance to look at how your body is changing – and see how much just stays the same. Find ways to love the skin you're in!

Learning to love your body can be quite a challenge. Are you up to it?

Running time: 30 minutes

Here's how

This activity may need to be run over two meetings if you need to print out photographs.

Make a poster showing just how lovely all of you are. Start off by thinking about how your body is changing as you become women – which bits are changing and which aren't. You can do this silently or chat in pairs or as a group.

You each need to pick one of the parts that isn't changing, like your thumb, left knee, elbow, teeth, nose, lips or the sole of your foot.

Get the camera out and each take one picture of the bits you have chosen.

Now take one picture of a part of your body that does change at different times in your life, like a spot, your hair or your hips. When you have all the photos in front of you, as a group or in pairs, come up with some words to describe how beautiful these parts of you are.

Together, make a poster from the photos. Cut out the photos to about the same size, then stick them to a large sheet of paper. Write all the positive messages on the strips of paper and stick these round the edge.

You need

- A camera (any type)
- Scissors
- Water-soluble glue
- A3 piece of paper or card
- Strips of paper
- Pens



Try it this way

Use a mirror instead of a camera to look at bits of you that are tucked away, like your shoulders or the back of your knee. Don't take photos, just come up with some positive statements. Use a digital camera and computer to make the poster.

- I love my little toes because they are small and cute
- I love my earlobes because they are soft, curved and great for fancy earrings
- I love my spots because they are great to squeeze
- I love my hair. It may be a bit greasy but that means I can spend more time washing and styling it!

8. Boobs and bras – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity helps girls learn to talk openly and confidently about their bodies. It isn't about looking at individuals or measuring them. It is about making the idea of boobs and bras something that's OK to talk about.



What's it all about?

One of the most noticeable body changes that girls experience is growing breasts. For many it's an exciting step towards womanhood. Learning to be comfortable with having a bust can be a challenge as girls discover what is 'normal' is different for every woman. Understanding that the shape of their breasts will change with time, not only over the next few years but throughout their lives, can be a revelation. So, it is also important that they learn how to recognise healthy and unhealthy changes as they learn to love their boobs.

Bras

With so many bra styles available to choose from, knowing where to start can be daunting.

It's not just the styles, but the sizes that girls can find hard to understand. An ill-fitting bra may lead to health problems, so it is worth taking the time to find one that fits well. Many specialist shops and department stores offer a bra-fitting service, and there is lots of information on the internet about how to measure for a bra.

Why wear a bra?

The bra was only invented about 100 years ago. Before that women wore corsets to conform to the fashionable notion that a small waist was beautiful. The first bra was just two hankies with ribbon straps. From that modest start, the range of bras on the market today has evolved. However it is interesting to note that wearing a bra is only considered 'essential' in Western culture.

Think about this

- Before the activity begins, make sure that the girls can carry it out in a private space where they cannot be overlooked
- A range of bras in different sizes, colours and styles works best. They should be sourced in a way that does not cause anyone embarrassment.



- Are you more confident about talking about boobs now?
- What do you think about the idea that every woman is different, and this includes her boobs?
- How many types of bra can you name?
- Did you think trying on the bras was fun?
- Did anyone's bra ping off?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's talk

Further help

For information on breast health, visit a local cancer research site.

8. Boobs and bras – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

One of the most noticeable body changes that all girls experience as they become women is growing breasts. For many it is an exciting step towards womanhood. Learning to be comfortable with having boobs can be a challenge for some of us.

Have a real laugh discovering that, when it comes to your boobs, what is 'normal' is different for every woman.

You need

- Old clean bras, large enough to be worn over your clothes – ask your Youth Leader about this



Running time: 15 minutes

Here's how

Hold a bra race for your unit.

Each team decides who will go first. On 'Go', the first girl picks up a bra and puts it on over her clothes.

She must do up at least one of the hooks.

She then runs round the course and back to her team before taking off the bra. It's the next girl's turn to put on a bra and do the same. Keep going until everyone has had a go.

Set up a small course round your meeting area.

Think about this

Check with your Youth Leader where is the best place to do this activity, and when you should do it.

Take it further

Arrange for a bra specialist to visit, or for a small group to go on a shopping expedition to look at bras.



Try it this way

Sit in a circle with a fairly straightforward jigsaw puzzle in the centre. The first girl throws a dice. The aim is to get a six. If she doesn't, then she simply passes the dice to the next girl to have a turn.

If she does, then she still passes the dice, but she must also put on a bra over her clothes, before starting to make the puzzle. She makes as much of the puzzle as she can before another girl rolls a six. When another six is rolled, she must stop immediately and take off the bra for that girl to put on. Keep going until the puzzle is completed.

Safety

Check with your Youth Leader that the course is safe before holding the race.

If you want to go bra shopping, you must be accompanied by an adult and your Youth Leader will need parental permission in advance.

9. Hair... and where? – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity is about finding out more about hair, in particular body hair. It doesn't involve looking at individuals or their body hair. It's about understanding that hair grows in a number of places on young people's bodies – and being comfortable talking about it and questioning whether hair removal is the right thing to do.

What's it all about?

Whatever our hair is like, and wherever it grows, the fact is that body hair is a big part of growing up. It can be a source of worry and distress for girls, and learning what is normal is the first step in coming to terms with this change. During puberty, boys and girls both grow hair around their bodies. The amount, colour and texture of this depends on several factors. Men tend to be hairier than women, but both will grow some hair around their pubic area, under their arms and on their legs and forearms.

Men will also probably grow hair on their face, chest, abdomen, back and all over their legs. Many women grow hair in these places, too – it's down to our hormones. The colour and texture is driven by our genes. Fairer people tend to grow finer, lighter hair, while darker people tend to grow darker, coarser hair. Hair growth is normal and all part of growing up.

There is some hair we like, and there is some we don't. Knowing why we like, or dislike, some hair and not others can help in understanding our bodies. Is the Western ideal of the smooth, hairless body right? With so many products claiming to remove 'unwanted' hair it can be hard to know where to start. So, knowing whether girls would even want to use them is an important point for debate.

There is pressure for women to produce an unnatural body image by removing all visible body hair. Some women actually stop taking part in normal, everyday activities because they feel ashamed of their bodies not meeting this unnatural standard.

Since ancient Egyptian times, people have removed all or some of their body hair often for health and hygiene reasons. For some religions and cultures, hair removal or growth is part of their traditional lifestyle. For instance, monks in many religions shave all or part of their heads. Some Orthodox Jewish women do not show the hair on their head in public, and may wear a wig instead. Some Sikhs don't like any form of hair removal, and keeping their hair long is a sign of devotion to their religion – for men it is carefully encased in a turban.

- How do you feel talking about body hair?
- Do you feel that hair removal should be a personal choice?
- Did you think making the hairy men and women was fun?
- What are the differences in hair growth for men and women?
- Are you comfortable with the idea that every woman grows body hair?
- Did you know that the amount of hair each woman grows (and where) is individual to her?
- Do you know more about why women feel they need to remove hair?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's
talk



9. Hair... and where? – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

Getting to grips with hair is just part of becoming a woman. It isn't just about the latest hair style. It's all about the other hair we all start sprouting – suddenly it's growing in places we've never had it before.

So what are you meant to do? Is everyone telling you to get rid of it? Have you ever wondered why? Have you heard about ways of removing 'unwanted' hair?

Are you a bit scared of the whole subject?

This activity won't get rid of any hair, but it'll make you stop and think about some of the pressures you are facing. Go on, have some hairy fun!

Running time: 45 minutes

You need

- Two huge sheets of paper, like old wallpaper
- Felt-tip pens and crayons
- String, fake fur, wool and other 'hairy' fabrics
- Scissors
- Water-soluble glue



Here's how

Pick two girls to each lie down on a sheet of paper. The rest of you should draw round their outline. Label one outline as a man and the other as a woman.

Use string, wool, fake fur and other furry fabrics as 'hair' and place it on the female body shape where you think that hair grows naturally. Don't stick it yet.

Have a chat about where it is 'acceptable' for hair to be growing, then use the glue to stick the 'hair' to these places.

What places have you chosen? And why? Does this look better? Or does it matter?

Now do the same for the man. Do you think men and women have the same pressures on them to remove hair? Talk about why it is OK for men to have hairy legs and armpits, but it's not for women.



10. Hollywood hands – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity helps girls see themselves as individuals, and celebrates their uniqueness.

What's it all about?

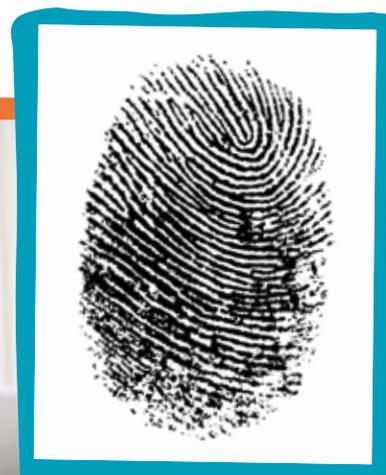
Two aspects affecting girls' self-esteem are:

- The changes that occur to their bodies and minds during puberty
- The development of their identities as they become adults

Sometimes these changes clash. In order for teenagers to work through this confusing time it is important that they establish positive self-esteem messages.

Staying the same

Some parts of us are inherited from our parents. Feeling physically part of a family helps to give us a sense of belonging. This can be difficult for girls who are not in contact with their biological family. However, nothing is more individual to us, and changes less, than our fingerprints. We are all physically unique in many ways and appreciating our uniqueness, while understanding our bodies' changes, is crucial to positive self-esteem.



- Did you know your fingerprints are unique?
- How do you feel about being an individual – different to everyone else?
- How do you feel about the changes your body will go through, or is already going through?
- How does it help thinking about the parts of your body that won't change?
- Is it difficult to know who you are when you feel you are changing?
- Have you inherited certain looks from your parents? What do you think you have inherited?
- Do you feel proud of your handprints?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's
talk

10. Hollywood hands – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

Our bodies change throughout our lives.

Sometimes the changes are small, other times they seem quite dramatic. Even though we get some of our features from our parents, many features are unique to us when we are born. No two people have the same fingerprints – even identical twins have different fingerprints!

Knowing that you are unique, and appreciating just how special it is to be unique, is part of building positive self-esteem.

Running time: 30 minutes

Here's how

Make your own glamorous Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Draw around both of your hands on a piece of paper.

Write your name above your hands. Then decorate your paper to look as glamorous and glitzy as possible, leaving the tips of the thumbs and fingers clear.

Line up your hand print pictures in your meeting place to make your own Hollywood Walk of Fame.

One at a time, press each of your fingertips on the inkpad. Make a fingerprint in the right place on the outlines of your hands.

Don't press too hard, or smudge your prints.

Don't forget your thumbs!

You need

- Paper
- Pencils
- Ink pad (or some water-soluble ink, old saucers and small sponges)
- Gold and silver pens (optional)
- Glitter and water-soluble glue (optional)
- Tissue or cloth

Take it further

You could look at your toe prints by doing your feet as well.



11. Spots and skin – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity is about learning to talk about spots and skin. It isn't about looking at each girl to see how good her complexion is. It's about understanding that skin changes throughout our lives and how to recognise healthy and unhealthy changes. It is also about looking at skincare products and considering if they work.

What's it all about?

Spots are the curse of all teenagers – or so it seems at the time. For some, it can be a constant battle to control spots at a time when personal appearance is becoming more important. So it should be no surprise that skin and spots can be a source of great anxiety to many girls. Understanding that spots are a passing phase, often caused by hormones, goes part of the way to helping, as does knowing they aren't the only ones with spots.



Blitzing zits

With many products on the market targeting 'spotty teenagers', often using emotive terms like 'anti-blemish', it is hard to know what may or may not work. Helping girls understand that sometimes simply taking time to relax, and to stop thinking about spots, can make a positive difference.

- How do you feel about the idea that almost everyone has spots at some point?
- How do you feel talking about spots and skin?
- What do you know about spots?
- What ways can you look after your skin?
- Do you know what causes skin cancer?
- Did you enjoy making the face-masks?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's
talk

11. Spots and skin – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

As you grow up, your body goes through many changes and, at times, can seem to be rebelling against you. There are differences you can see on the outside, and other ones on the inside that will take place as your hormones change. One of the things you may have to cope with for a while is spots. They are simply a sign that your skin is reacting to your changing hormones.

Running time: 30 minutes

Here's how:

Create a face mask to treat and pamper your skin

Oily skin face-mask – ingredients (for one)

- 1 egg white (or whole egg if separating it is too hard)
- 2-3 drops lemon juice

Oily skin face-mask recipe

- Whisk the egg white until it forms stiff white peaks
- Then add the lemon juice and whisk some more

You need

- A bowl and fork or whisk, or a blender
- Cushions or rugs (optional)
- Calming music (optional)
- An old, clean towel each
- Bowls of warm water

Dry skin face-mask – ingredients (for two)

- Half a ripe avocado
- 1 dessertspoon orange or lime juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 teaspoon syrup

Dry skin face-mask recipe

- Mash everything in a bowl or zap it in a blender
- Add more juice if the mixture is very thick

These soothing face-masks won't get rid of your spots, but they'll give you a chance to relax and forget about them for a while.

Safety

Before you start, make sure everyone is happy about trying one of these mask recipes. If anyone has sensitive skin, has an allergy, or is not sure if they have an allergy, then instead of using a face mask she may simply want to chill out listening to the music. If anyone feels that the mask is irritating her skin during the activity, rinse it off immediately with warm water. Keep the masks away from your clothes as they may stain fabric. Use only old towels for this activity.

Apply the mask to each other's faces as evenly as you can, making sure you don't get any in your eyes. Lie down and close your eyes for at least 10 minutes – listen to some relaxing music if you want. Don't worry if the mask starts to dry out a bit. Then gently rinse off the mask, dabbing your face dry with the towel.



12. Pack it – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity is designed to help girls think about food in a different way. It looks at how food is created and sold to us to appeal to our emotions as much as our taste buds. Girls will have great fun not just creating their own new food, but also creating packaging that will make it sell.

What's it all about?

Just as we shouldn't judge each other on appearances, we shouldn't judge the food we eat by the packaging it comes in.

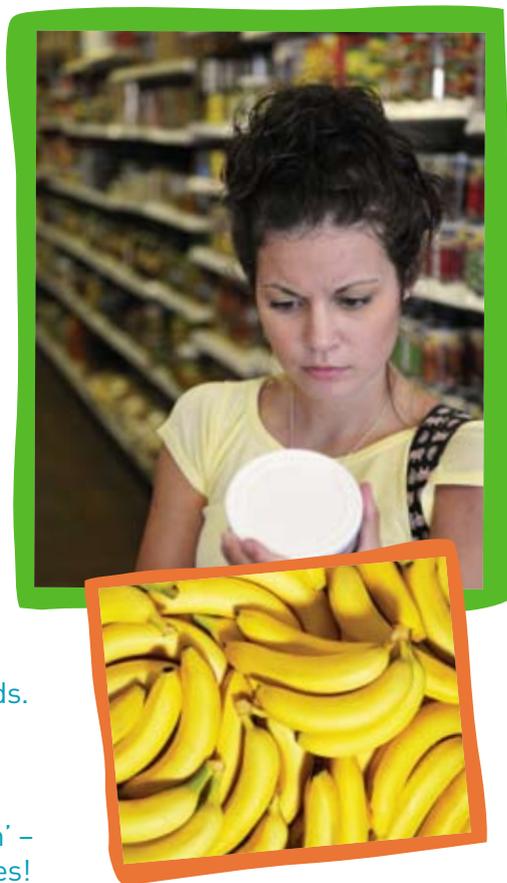
We think that we choose to buy certain foods because we enjoy the taste and think they are good for us. But how much do we base this decision on the packaging rather than the nutritional facts? Packaging can often make us feel a certain way about the food inside and it can be the emotion that we are buying, not the product. If we understand how things are sold to us we can make better choices about what we eat and the feelings that we link to foods.

Look at the message

- Fruit or vegetables almost always come with no packaging to emphasis the idea that they are 'fresh' – even the ones that have travelled thousands of miles!
- Chocolate, cakes and other 'yummies' (that should only be eaten in small quantities) are often labelled as 'luxury' and presented in enticing packaging with rich, sumptuous colours – even gold embossing
- The nutritional and ingredient information can be tucked away on foods that are the types we need to eat less of
- The packaging isn't always about the food inside, but can be an emotional message

Understanding what it means

Make no mistake, food packaging is big business and not just thrown together. If girls understand how things are sold to them, then they can make better choices about what they eat and the feelings that they link to foods. Most importantly, knowing that girls buy foods depending on how they make them feel helps to identify the relationship between mood and diet.



- How does different food packaging make you feel?
- What kind of food have you chosen to make? Why?
- Who is your food aimed at? Who would buy it?
- Is there a connection between what foods we buy and how we feel about certain foods?
- What is the difference in the way chocolates and sweets are packaged compared to fruit and vegetables? Why do you think this is?
- What do you think is the important information to look for on food packaging in order to make an informed decision?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's
talk

12. Pack it – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

The food industry is big business. We may think we buy food just because of the way it tastes, or because we think it is good for us. But often it's the packaging that persuades us to buy one food instead of another. The packaging makes us feel a certain way about the food inside and it is this feeling we are often buying.

If we understand how things are sold to us, we can make better choices about what we eat and the feelings that we link to foods.

Remember, it's not just you who has a shell, the foods you eat do, too!

Running time: 45 minutes

You need

- Selection of foods
- Selection of packaging
- Cardboard
- Craft
- Materials



Here's how

Everyone needs to bring along one item of food that she likes. The food must start with a letter in the phrase 'pack it', so your group could bring peppermints, apples, chocolate, kiwi fruit, iced tea or toast.

Your challenge is to make a new food product from these foods. You can make it as unusual as you want, but it's got to be edible! Is your product for children, men or women? Is it healthy or unhealthy? Is it a meal or a snack?

You also have to make packaging for your new food. Think what you will call it. Do you need to have a slogan for it?

Will you use certain colours to make it look appealing? What shape will your packaging be?

Look at other food packaging. What information will you need to include?

How do you want your packaging to make people feel so they want to buy it?

Take it further

Visit a supermarket to look at food packaging. Pick one product, like sausages, and find all the different types on sale, such as organic sausages, healthy sausages, 'value' sausages, 'luxury' sausages and veggie sausages. Compare the different packaging styles used.



Safety

If you want to go to a supermarket, you must be accompanied by an adult and your Youth Leader will need parental permission in advance.

My image: Introduction

For pre-teen and teenage girls, their changing body shapes can be both exciting and frightening. It's important to understand that beauty defined by the media doesn't always reflect what real women look like – or what real beauty is all about. Girls need to know that their self-worth, and how others value them, does not rely on their looks.



Media imagery

Every time we turn on the TV, open a magazine or walk down the high street, we see dozens of images of 'perfect' women and expectations of what our lives should be like. As girls and young women look around for help in understanding what they could become, they can be heavily influenced by these media images.

But how many of these images portray real life and real women? And how do girls define beauty? Indeed, who defines beauty?

Magazine photographs rarely show the true likeness of any woman. They go way beyond airbrushing out 'imperfections'. Physical proportions are often adjusted, making waists smaller, busts larger and legs longer before images are published.

In each pair of photographs of Kate Winslet and America Ferrera, one has been altered. Can young people see all the differences?



© Getty Images, Jason Bell/GQ © The Condé Nast Publications Ltd.



© Glamour Magazine/Condé Nast Publications

Even when images have not been retouched, the media carefully selects who it portrays. There's no doubt looks are important, but stories about women can have a different focus to similar stories about men. Learning to make objective judgements and seeing how the media can manipulate us, are part of understanding how we value ourselves and others.

13. Dream Dolls – Notes for Youth Leaders

From a very young age we are influenced by stereotypes, and this includes the toys we play with. The way toys look can impact on how girls want to see themselves, as they role-play and create imaginary worlds with them. This activity looks at how toys can affect how they think.

What's it all about?

How much do we think anyone looks like the dolls we play with? Are dolls' body shapes realistic? If not, why do they look like they do? Are the dolls that children play with today shaped differently to the dolls of 10, 20, 30 or more years ago? A quick look at some images of Victorian dolls shows how much change there has been. Why have doll shapes changed?

How are children influenced by the type of toy they play with? Gender-stereotyping happens at an early age with toys like cars, guns, vacuum cleaners, dressing-up clothes and tea sets.



- What do you think about the dolls and toys that children play with?
- Do you think toys influence us? How?
- How did you get on re-designing a classic toy? Did you all enjoy it?
- How did you decide which bits to change?
- Was it hard to avoid stereotypes?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's
talk

13. Dream Dolls – Activity handouts for girls

What's it all about?

Have you ever thought about what makes many people think tall, slim, blonde women are attractive? Do you think that if the dolls which young girls play with, or the pictures in their story books, showed shorter, curvier women, then those shapes would be considered more attractive?

See the impact toys can have on our views of ourselves and those around us. They can influence how we think and also encourage certain types of play. Are girls usually given building toys? Or do boys like toy vacuum cleaners to play with?

Running time: 45 minutes

Here's how

Start with a chat about the fashion dolls you have. Here are some ideas to think about:

Why do children like these dolls?

Why are they shaped the way they are?

Do their shapes influence what we think? How?

Do you think children should be encouraged to play with toys like these?

Decide how to change the dolls so that they reflect reality. Do this individually, in pairs or as a group.

You need

- Fashion dolls
- Scissors
- Water-soluble glue
- Fabric
- Paints, pens or crayons
- Art clay, salt dough or other modelling dough

- Do you want to cut or colour their hair?
- What about giving them a few spots?
- Do any of them wear glasses?
- Do their clothes need a change? Blue is for boys, and pink for girls – right?
- What about making them curvier?
- Are you going to make any accessories that imply a certain job or profession?
- Do they look like a real person you'd see in the street?



That's just a few things you may want to think about. Now, get creative and make those changes!

When you have finished, get together and look at your creations. Can anyone see any stereotypes? Which one is voted most imaginative? Which ones have made best use of the materials available?

Take it further

Think about how your doll could be packaged and advertised.

14. Mould me pretty – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity is about understanding who defines beauty and how that impacts our body image. It isn't about who's had cosmetic surgery. It's about understanding that we're all exposed to unrealistic body images that are used to define beauty – and this can have an effect on us.

What's it all about?

Who says what makes us beautiful? To a certain extent, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. But the eye only beholds the images it is fed. Feeding these images are the media, fashion world, beauty industry, cosmetic surgery clinics and slimming companies. They need 'beauty' to sell their products, so it is hardly surprising that it is worth their while to influence what we think of as beautiful.

As cosmetic surgery has become cheaper, it has become more common. Once it was only an option for the rich and famous. Now almost anyone can afford it – and the range of procedures on offer is staggering. So let's help girls and young women to think carefully about what plastic surgery is really about, and challenge why some people feel they need it.



**“Everything has its beauty
but not everyone sees it”**

Source: Confucius (551 BC - 479 BC)

- How did you feel when creating something beautiful?
- How did you feel when someone changed your beautiful object?
- How did you feel when someone imposed their idea of beauty on you?
- How did you feel about using knives to change the objects?
- Did you think there was any improvement at the end? Or was it worse?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's
talk

14. Mould me pretty – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

Some people have cosmetic surgery to 'improve' how they look or to make themselves more 'beautiful'. But how do we decide what makes someone 'beautiful'?

Should we try to physically change our bodies or learn to love the reality of what we look like?

Running time: 30 minutes

You need

- Art clay, salt dough or other modelling dough
- Craft knives



Here's how

Each take a ball of clay and create something beautiful.

It can be anything you like, such as a flower, a house, a face or a vase.

When you have finished put all the items on show so you can all see each other's creations.

What do you think? Are they all beautiful? Or do you think you can improve someone else's work?

Now swap your creations. Use the craft knives to 'improve' the object – to make it more beautiful.

Together, take a look at the results.

How did you all feel about the changes that were made?

Safety

Craft knives are sharp, so make sure you know how to use them safely and that there is an adult present.



15. Catwalk of culture – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity is about looking at what is considered beautiful around the world. It can have a very positive effect on girls' self-esteem to realise that the standards of beauty that they live with are not the standards of beauty that someone else lives with. Looking at how beauty is 'defined' globally can also help them to celebrate diversity.

What's it all about?

Our ideas about what are beautiful or attractive are formed by what we are told and the things that we see around us. This can be different depending on who we are and where we are from – we are usually judged by the standards of those around us.

We only have to flick through women's magazines to see that we are encouraged to feel that thin is better than fat, long hair is 'prettier' than short, young is better than old and hairless nicer than hairy. We make judgments on people based on things like hair colour, bust size or clothing choice. The conclusions we reach depend on our values, culture and lifestyle – as well as our time in history. This activity should help girls to appreciate a wider view of beauty by looking at the wonderful reality of the world around them.

“Centuries ago, ladies kept out of the sun to ensure they had a pale complexion, as having a tan implied you had a working-class job outdoors”

Portrait of a woman, Jean-Baptiste Perronneau
© The National Gallery 2007



- Which culture or country have you selected and why?
- How do our thoughts on 'beauty' differ around the world?
- What is 'beautiful' in the UK now? Is there just one idea of beauty, or many?
- Should we all think the same things are beautiful?
- Is fashion a good or bad thing? Does it really give us choice in deciding what is beautiful?
- Can you see how beauty is different everywhere?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's talk

15. Catwalk of culture – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

Our idea of what is beautiful or attractive is formed by the things that we are told and what we see around us. This can be different depending on who we are and where we are from. It is important for everyone to remember that we are judged by what is considered 'normal' by the culture around us.

Running time: 30 minutes

Here's how

You need

- Clothes
- Music
- Make-up (optional)

Week one

Each select one country or culture. This can be somewhere you know nothing about, or it could be where you were born or have family links.

Spend time finding out what people think is beautiful in this country or culture. Look at the clothes worn, the shape and size of the people and their way of life. Gather together clothes you can use to show what you have discovered.



Week two

Tell the other girls what you have found out – show them any pictures you have.

After the show decide which culture you think has the best idea of beauty. Do you all agree?

How did you come to this decision? Can you see that what is considered 'beautiful' differs around the world?

Then, put on a fashion show to display the different ideas of beauty and fashion you've found out about. Invite your friends and family to see your creations. Why not share this at school too?

16. People watching – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity is about looking at how the media portrays women, and the influence this has on us. It's not about looking at individuals or talking about what we look like. It's about helping girls understand that most women do not look like models, and that we can all feel the pressure to conform to a certain image.

What's it all about?

Have you ever stopped to think just how many media images of women you see every day?

And not just how many, but what they portray and the messages they send out? Whether we are walking down the street or putting our feet up in front of the TV, the chances are we'll see dozens. The news-stands are full of magazine covers, posters are everywhere and ads pop up on our TVs and computers.

As girls develop into women, they look round for models of what to become. Media and advertising images can have a lot of influence, but so too can the real women in their lives.

Exploring the differences between real and unrealistic images allows girls to see how they are influenced.

Reinforcing stereotypes

Often people will ask children "What do you want to be when you grow up?" focusing solely on the way they may earn a living. To help girls and young women mature without worrying that they should conform to a stereotype, perhaps the question should be "What do you want to be like when you grow up?". That way it is possible to open a discussion about body confidence, aspirations and values.

Round the world

The pictures we see of women in this country depict beauty as defined by Western culture. In other parts of the world what makes a woman beautiful (or a man handsome) can be quite different. Get the girls to look out for examples of this if they are abroad on holiday.

- 63% of girls would rather be a men's magazine model than a doctor, teacher or nurse (TheLab, 1000 girls aged 15-19)

Let's
talk

- Do you think all magazines, newspapers, advertisers and TV programmes manipulate images to change the way we feel?
- Do you think airbrushing photos is just a bit of fun or do you think it can have a negative impact?
- Why do you think pictures are altered?
- How did you get on writing your ad or article?
- What did you decide was important to include or not include in your piece?
- Are you using a picture? Why?
- How hard was it to avoid altering things to make them sound more interesting or glamorous?
- Who are your role models?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

16. People watching – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

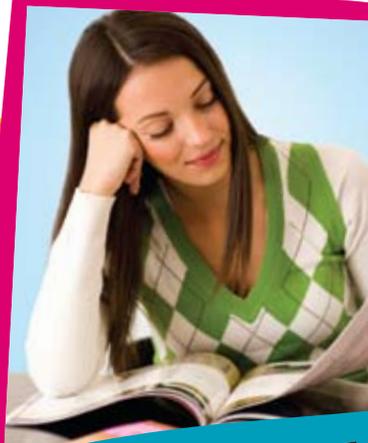
Every day we see ads, read magazines and watch TV. The media feed us images, words and dreams of what we should be like – or what they would like us to think we should be like! How much of what we see and read is real though?

By taking a look at magazines, newspapers and ads you can start to look at how women are portrayed. As you are growing up and deciding what you want to be, have you got real role models to inspire you?

Running time: 45 minutes

You need

- Some newspapers and magazines (recordings of TV ads would be good, too)
- Pens and paper
- Scissors



Here's how

Take a careful look at the magazines, newspapers and ads to see how pictures are used to sell products.

What is it about the ads that makes you want to buy the product?

Read some of the feature stories, and look at how women are shown. Name someone you know who is really like this.

Take a walk outside and look about. What women can you see? Do you notice any that look like models? What do real women look like?

Back inside, talk about the way real women compare with the images in the media.

Do you like what you see in the magazines now?

Devise your own ad or write your own feature article using both pictures and words to describe real women.



Safety

If you want to leave the meeting place to observe 'real' women, you must be accompanied by an adult and your Youth Leader will need parental permission in advance.

17. Media manipulation – Notes for Youth Leaders

Girls and young women who strive to express their individuality can also feel the need to conform. They can be afraid of not fitting in, and use media images to guide their views of what is 'normal'. Of course, these images may be far from normal.

What's it all about?

So often, girls look at pictures in the media and don't really examine why they affect what they think or how they feel. The overall impression created by the designer, photographer, model or advertising agency has so much impact that we don't look at the detail or explore how certain images make us feel.



Isn't it just a picture?

If we look at lots of pictures of models and celebrities in magazines they may all look different, but in fact there are many things that they have in common. Do they all have long, shiny hair? Are they all slim or thin? Do they have clear skin? Do they have small waists and a flat tummy?

Sometimes a paper or magazine wants to take a negative slant on a personality or celebrity. At these times, they use a picture of the person going about their everyday business, perhaps without any make-up on. But when they are being positive about a celebrity they use sleek studio photography, a great stylist and images that have been painstakingly reworked on a computer. What does this tell us?

Six out of ten teenage girls think they'd 'be happier if they were thinner'. While only 19% of teenage girls are 'overweight', 67% think they 'need to lose weight'. (Bliss magazine, 2004)

The body fat of models and actresses portrayed in the media is at least 50% less than that of healthy women. (Eating disorders, body image and the media, British Medical Association, 2000)

- How do you feel while you are looking at the magazine images?
- What do you think about the way the women look? Are they real?
- Do you think they look like that when they get out of bed?
- How did you get on with making your own 'beautiful' women? Did you enjoy it?
- What did you decide makes a person beautiful?
- Was it easy to find the right images to reflect this?
- Does seeing people in magazines or films make us think they are beautiful?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's talk

17. Media manipulation – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

What is it that makes someone beautiful? Is it the way they look, or what they are like as a person? And have you ever looked closely at pictures of models? Why are they meant to be beautiful?

Sometimes we don't question what makes someone beautiful – we just accept it because they are in an ad or because they are a celebrity. Many images in magazines have been altered to get rid of 'flaws' or even to change the shape of models. Find out how to look past a person's appearance!

Let's take a close-up look at beauty.

Running time: 40 minutes

You need

- Teen, gossip and women's magazines
- Two sheets of large card or paper
- Scissors
- Water-soluble glue
- Pens (optional)

Here's how

First, have a think about what beauty means to you. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Why is one person beautiful, and another not?
- Are there certain looks that all models have in common?
- Do we all think the same looks are beautiful – or even important?
- Are some people desirable because of the way they are, rather than the way they look?
- How would you describe a person?
- Do you only describe the way they look?



Make your own magazine images. Flick through the mags and look at the pictures of women. What do you notice? Do they all have long hair, a small waist and long legs?

Are they all slim? Maybe they have a flat tummy? Is there a spot in sight?

Cut out parts of pictures that show what you're being told is beautiful. On one piece of card, use all these images to create the media's idea of the perfect woman.

Now have a chat about what you think makes a person beautiful. Don't just concentrate on looks. Would they be clever? Healthy? Happy? Wealthy? What job would they have? Would they have a family? Would they be funny?

Take it further

Go to www.dove.co.uk/cfrb/videos.html and watch 'Evolution', a one-minute film that shows how a normal woman is transformed into an advertising poster.

Discuss how you feel.

On the second piece of card, make a collage showing what your beautiful person is really like. Use pictures to show her characteristics and lifestyle.

18. Window shopping – Notes for Youth Leaders

This activity should help the girls celebrate each other's ideas and views as well as celebrate their individual identities. It will also make them aware of how advertising sells an image or lifestyle, not just a product.



What's it all about?

Developing girls are still forming their identities, which is why they are targeted by companies trying to sell products – particularly the fashion industry. Clothes are one of the ways that we demonstrate our identities to the world.

Young people often experiment with clothes to express themselves. However, being accepted by their peers is also important, so trying to buy someone else's image or dressing in a certain style can seem an easy way to fit in.



A reflection of self-esteem

Everyone dresses differently and we do not always share each other's taste – often far from it. Criticising other people's choices can be a sign of low self-esteem in the person who is doing the criticising. Young people may do this because they fear being different, usually because they don't understand the reason for these differences.

Understanding that clothing is a positive and healthy way to celebrate our individuality, as well as show the world our identities, is important. Plus we also need to encourage young people to think for themselves and be aware of the complex nature of advertising.

- How do you feel about swapping your clothes? What about when you wore someone else's clothes?
- Is it important to have the same look as your friends, or someone else?
- Why is it important to appreciate other people's tastes?
- How do you feel when someone criticises your clothes?
- Describe your image?
- Do ads make you buy certain clothes?
- Which ads or brands try to sell an image?
- Did being a mannequin with a new image make you feel any differently about what you would buy or wear?
- How much do someone's clothes tell us about them as a person?
- What one thing would you like to remember from this activity?

Let's talk

18. Window shopping – Activity handout for girls

What's it all about?

Each of us creates our own image – clothes are a major part of that image. The clothes we like often depend on how they are advertised and what image is being sold. Clothing ads sometimes show us lifestyles that make us think we wouldn't just look a certain way, but also feel a certain way. That can make us choose one clothing brand instead of another.

Your image may be very different to your friends' or it may be exactly the same. Your image will also change throughout your life and can also depend on the fashion at the time. Understanding how you create your image is very important to knowing who you are.

Running time: 30 minutes

You need

- A selection of your own favourite clothes
- Parcel tags or similar
- Marker pens

Here's how

Each of you brings a selection of your favourite clothes and accessories to the meeting. Spend some time together going through the clothes and telling each other why you like them. How do your clothes help you create your image?

Dressed in your outfits, pretend you are mannequins in a shop window. Ask the rest of your group to be window shoppers. Make sure your poses represent the image you are selling. Can your window shoppers guess the images you are selling and who might buy your clothes? Ask them to stand by the mannequin whose image is their favourite. Were you surprised by their choices?

Now celebrate everyone's unique image by dressing in each other's clothes. Create a new look from your friends' images. You can't wear any of your own clothes, and must try to pick at least one item from each of the others' selections.

What images have you managed to produce?

How does this make you feel? What does each outfit or image say to you? Who would want to buy it? How would you go about selling it?

What sort of price would someone be prepared to pay for the image? Write prices for each part of your outfit on parcel tags.



Think about this

Why don't sports clothing companies use images of people watching TV or eating crisps in their ads?

Why don't some fashion chains advertise using older women?

Safety

Only use clean clothes for this activity.

Dove Self-Esteem Fund Global Advisory Board

The DSEF Advisory Board is a collection of people who feel passionate about strengthening body confidence. They guide the development of DSEF resources to benefit millions of young people. To demonstrate their passion for this important work, members have kindly given some of their time for free. We are grateful that so many wonderful people are happy to work in this way.

DSEF Global Advisory Board members include:



Dr. Ann Kearney-Cooke
USA, psychologist, workshop leader, author of 'Change Your Mind, Change Your Body'.



Dr. Carla Rice
Canada, Professor of women's studies and consulting clinician at the Women's College Health Sciences Centre in Toronto.



Catherine Barry
Ireland, short story writer and novelist including 'Skin Deep', a novel on breast enlargement.



Chiho Kusaka
Japan, TV presenter and self-esteem trainer and career counsellor, particularly for young girls.



Jessica Weiner
USA, international self-esteem trainer and author. Appears regularly on TV and is a contributing editor for Seventeen Magazine.



Kaisu Fagan
UK, Policy & Public Affairs Manager, Girlguiding UK.



Karishma Chugani
Morocco, fashion designer working on a range of garments that embrace diversity in size and beauty.



Dr. Lucrecia Ramirez
Colombia, psychiatrist and challenging fashion show organiser.



Mirjam Bekker-Stoop
Netherlands, cause-related photographic exhibition producer.



Dr. Nancy Etcoff
USA, psychologist, Harvard faculty member, author of 'Survival Of The Prettiest – The Science Of Beauty'.



Rankin
UK, 'A'-list fashion photographer, joint creator of Dazed & Confused magazine, film director and broadcaster.



Sarah Lang
USA, World Championship medallist speed skater, school workshop leader.



Dr. Susie Orbach
UK, psychoanalyst, author of 'Fat is a Feminist Issue' and 'Bodies', convenor www.any-body.org.



Wiam Al-Ashgar
Saudi Arabia, Clinical Dietician, works in education on healthy diets.



Zara Hyde-Peters
UK, former international athlete and UK Sport Board Member, CEO of British Triathlon.

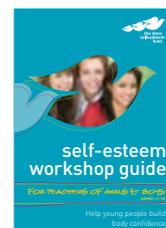
Meet the family – further resources

The Dove Self-Esteem Fund campaign aims to help the next generation develop body confidence, so that they can achieve their full potential in life.

As part of this, we have created this workshop guide within a range of body confidence and self-esteem educational tools. You can find other resources at www.dove.co.uk/cfrb/mums-mentors.html or by contacting the Dove Careline on 0800 085 1548.

Dove Self-Esteem Workshop Guide for TEACHERS of girls and boys 11-14

A comprehensive set of materials to lead a 90 minute in-class PSHE session on body confidence and self-esteem, plus follow-up exercises. This resource includes a poster, a stimulus DVD and a PowerPoint presentation.



Dove Self-Esteem Activity Guide for YOUTH LEADERS of girls aged 10-14

A printed toolkit with sufficient material for up to 18 fun sessions on body confidence and self-esteem. Suitable for Girlguiding/Girl Scouts, After School Clubs and other youth groups for girls.



Dove Self-Esteem Discussion Guide for MOTHERS of girls aged 11-16

A useful question and answer booklet to support mothers in tackling sensitive body confidence issues with their daughters



Dove Self-Esteem Activity Guide for MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS aged 8-11

An activity booklet for use in the home to help mentors and daughters in their conversations about body confidence and self-esteem



Dove Self-Esteem Activities online for GIRLS aged 11-16

A fun range of online activities that girls can complete at their own pace to strengthen their body confidence. Find them at www.dove.co.uk/cfrb/mums-mentors.html.

Other resources and inspiration

There are many sources of useful stimulus and support materials to help you in your body confidence interventions. Here is a selection that you might choose to use.

Films

Freaky Friday (2003) (USA:PG) An overworked mother and her daughter find it hard to get along. When they switch bodies, each is forced to adapt to the other's life for one freaky Friday. Stars Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan.

The Sisterhood Of The Travelling Pants (2005) (USA:PG) Follows four teenage girls during a summer in which each goes through a crucial life experience that affects their self-esteem. They succeed due to their loyal support of each other, symbolised by a pair of jeans (the 'Travelling Pants') that they take turns to wear. Stars America Ferrera.

Bend It Like Beckham (2002) (USA:PG-13) A comedy exploring cultural differences and bending the rules to reach your goal. The daughter of orthodox Sikhs rebels against her parents' traditionalism by running off to Germany with a soccer team. Stars a young Keira Knightley.

Shrek (2001) (USA:PG) A great family film. A green ogre sets out to rehome the fairytale creatures that have been placed in his swamp by the scheming Lord Farquaad. On his journey, he has to rescue Princess Fiona who has surprising issues with her appearance... Features the voices of Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy and Cameron Diaz.

Documentaries

America The Beautiful (2007) (Edited version USA:PG-13) Tackles America's obsession with beauty. It mainly chronicles a 12 year old model becoming a grown-up in the fashion industry, but also touches on plastic surgery, celebrity worship, airbrushed advertising and human insecurities.

Beauty Mark (2008) Presents an alarming, infuriating and at times humorous look at the forces that shape our perceptions of beauty, as seen through the eyes of psychotherapist and former world-class triathlete Diane Israel. She tells her own story while interviewing other champion athletes, body builders, fashion models and inner-city teens about their experiences relating to self-image.

Songs/music videos

Ugly (2005) by the Sugababes

Beautiful (2004) by Christina Aguilera

Stupid Girl (2006) by Pink (warning: you may find some content inappropriate for younger people)

The Fear (2008) by Lily Allen (warning: on unedited versions you may find some language inappropriate for younger people)

Other resources and inspiration

Books

Survival Of The Prettiest, The Science Of Beauty (1999) by Dr. Nancy Etcoff, Director, Program in Aesthetics and Well Being, Department of Psychiatry, Harvard. Why do gentlemen prefer blondes? Why do women paint their lips red? Why do men strive for V-shaped torsos? What is beauty?

Bodies (2009) by Dr. Susie Orbach, UK. Some 30 years after the publication of 'Fat Is A Feminist Issue', this book argues that the way we view our bodies has become the mirror of how we view ourselves, raising fundamental questions about how we arrived here.

Skin Deep (2004) by Catherine Barry, Ireland. A novel about a young woman who believes that, if only she was beautiful and sexy, she would find the happiness she desperately craves. Can you really achieve happiness by going under the knife?

Life Doesn't Begin 5 Pounds From Now (2006) by Jessica Weiner, USA. A step by step guide to decoding the Language of Fat and loving your body today. By changing your thoughts, language and actions, you can appreciate your body more.

Real Gorgeous (1996) by Kaz Cooke, Australia. Full of cartoons and no-nonsense information about cosmetics, health and self-esteem for women aged 11 to 111. It includes 'the truth about press ups, push-ups bras and the great cellulite scam'.

Organisations that actively promote body confidence

Girl Scouts/Girlguiding The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts is a worldwide movement providing informal education where girls and young women develop leadership, self-esteem and other life skills through self-development, challenge and adventure. The World Association brings together organisations in 145 countries across the globe and you can find yours at www.wagggsworld.org/en/world.

Eating Disorders Charities Low body confidence can increase the risk of developing eating disorders. Eating disorders charities believe that prevention is better than cure and so campaign to improve people's feelings about body image. **beat**, the leading UK charity for people with eating disorders and their families, have an excellent directory of support websites from around the world at www.b-eat.co.uk/Links/Overseasorganisations.

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Image of Nancy Etcoff courtesy of Al Carlay.

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This resource would not be possible without the help and energy of a large team including Alice Proctor, Susan Cole, Martin Staniforth, Dr. Susie Orbach, **beat** and all the girls and their Youth Leaders who helped test the original activities in this resource.

