



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



Confident Me

**Workshop
guide for
educators**

Getting started

Learning outcomes

In this workshop students will:

- **Understand the concept of appearance ideals** and where pressure to achieve them comes from.
- **Build media literacy**, exploring how images and messages, from advertising to movies and social media, are often manipulations of the truth.
- **Develop strategies to resist appearance pressures**, avoid comparing themselves, challenge appearance ideals and build body confidence.

Preparation & materials

- Workshop presentation
- This workshop guide
- Two example ads (see bullet #3 on the right)
- Links to the stimulus films:
- Dove: Reverse Selfie – youtube.com/watch?v=z2T-Rh838GA
- Dove: Change One Thing – youtube.com/watch?v=c96SNJihPjQ

Optional:

- Each student could have a sheet of paper and writing utensils to take notes
- Test your knowledge Kahoot: tinyurl.com/dah4brf2
- Interactive Mentimeter presentation version: tinyurl.com/5n46zcem

Preparing to lead the workshop

1. Ensure that you have a device and projector or some other way to display the presentation slides for students to see. This presentation includes videos, so you will need internet connection to access the videos and speakers for sound.
2. If you are using the optional Kahoot or Mentimeter materials, make sure you are familiar with the platforms and how to use them. You may need to create a free account on the corresponding websites and make a copy of the documents shared above onto your own account.
3. **Slide 9** (“How are appearance ideals used in marketing/advertising?”) requires that you find two examples of advertisements to share. It is important to select ads that will resonate with your class. **You should aim to find two advertisements.** At least one should depict a celebrity promoting a product aimed at the students’ age range. It can be useful to think of a celebrity who is popular with your youth, and then search: [celebrity name] ADVERTISEMENT.

Creating a safe space

Consider the following tips to create a safe space

1. **Run an icebreaker activity** if your group is just getting to know one another, or if you anticipate that one or more participants may feel uncomfortable during the session. (See [Icebreakers](#) list for examples).
2. **Discuss what comments might be appropriate and inappropriate** (e.g., it would be inappropriate to comment on the appearance of other participants, even if that comment is perceived as a compliment). Also remind participants that **it is** appropriate to challenge ideas, but **it is not** appropriate to challenge people.
3. **Incorporate examples and content that will be relevant to your group** (e.g., if your class is really into rap music, are there rap artists you can represent through the ads to demonstrate appearance pressures?)
4. **Have a plan for what to do if one or more youth becomes upset** during or after the session. Communicate this plan to your group at the beginning of the session using the information below:

“During this session we will be talking about the way we look and feel. These discussions can sometimes make us feel uncomfortable, and that is okay. These are important discussions to have. If at any point in this session you feel really uncomfortable, it is okay to take a break, but please let a facilitator know. If you would like someone to talk with, one of the facilitators is available to chat. We also have resources we can connect you with if you want to talk to someone else.”

5. For a list of resources and supports that you can share with your class, see the [Wellness Supports](#) page at the end of this document.





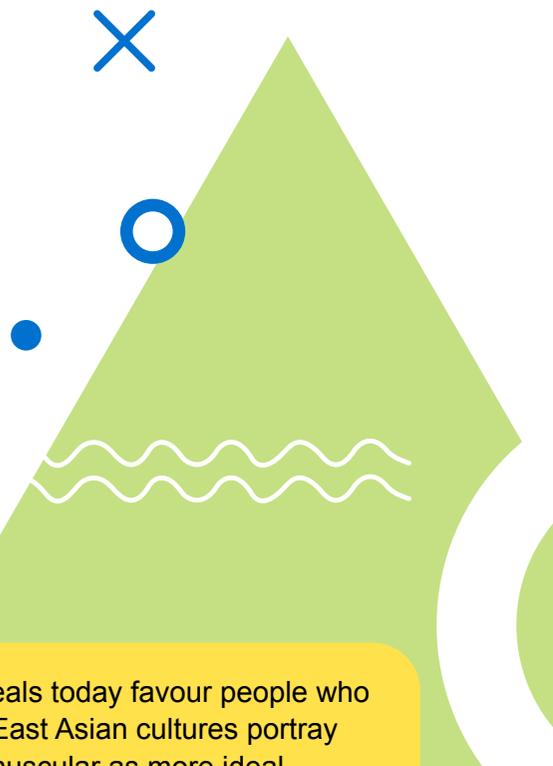
Fostering an inclusive program environment for diverse youth

To ensure the Confident Me single session content is relevant to the youth taking part, there are several places within the session where facilitators are invited to add content and examples that are relevant locally. Adding examples to **demonstrate how appearance ideals differ across cultures and for youth from different backgrounds** is especially important to ensure the program is meaningful for diverse youth. It is also suggested that facilitators **validate diverse experiences and appearance ideals shared by participants** during the program.

** Note: it is only recommended that facilitators provide examples that they have personally experienced and which they believe will be relevant to the youth taking part. Topics that facilitators have heard about, but have little direct experience with should be avoided.*

The box to the right lists some ways that appearance pressures may differ across cultures, or for youth from different backgrounds.



- 
- Many Western appearance ideals today favour people who are muscular, whereas some East Asian cultures portray bodies that are thin and less muscular as more ideal.
 - Among cultural groups where people are fair-skinned, there is often a desire for people to tan to darken their skin, or a perception that having skin that is too light is unhealthy. Meanwhile in most cultures where people have darker skin, “whiteness” is idealized and people go to many lengths to make their skin as light as possible.
 - Whereas many cultures have appearance pressures which focus on thinness, people in many Latin American cultures do not prefer skinnier bodies. Instead, they place emphasis on women who have curvier bodies and men who have sturdy and masculine features.

Suggestions for creating a welcoming and inclusive space:

- To begin, welcome participants into the space and invite them to introduce themselves and their pronouns. You may also play music in the background or open with an icebreaker activity* to help participants feel comfortable.
- Try to understand the background and perspectives that you bring to the facilitation of this workshop, and be mindful and respectful of the different perspectives that each youth brings.
- Ensure that you use respectful language which does not unintentionally diminish any group or individual's language, culture, beliefs, or way of life.
- Encourage youth to take ownership of their own learning by inviting them to engage with the workshop material as much as possible. This might include asking questions, sharing

thoughts and ideas, or bringing in examples based on their lived experiences.

- For online sessions, find ways to make the workshop interactive and engaging. Consider asking students to join with their video on, asking them to vote by raising their hands, do thumbs up/thumbs down check-ins, and present using the interactive Mentimeter slides.

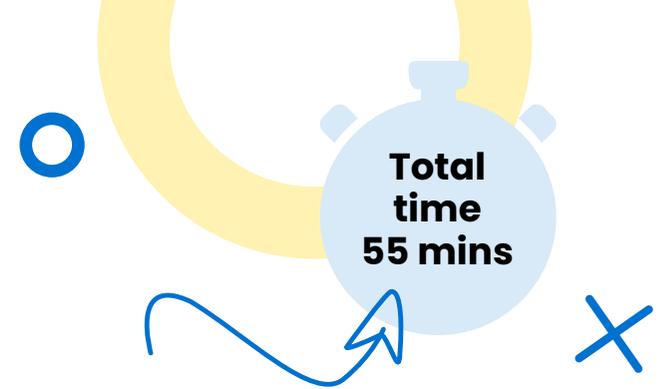
**If you choose to run an icebreaker activity, allow for an additional 10–15 minutes to complete the workshop.*

Final note

Inclusive programming goes beyond offering relevant examples. It is important that facilitators delivering the program to youth from diverse backgrounds seek additional education and resources to ensure their approach is welcoming and inclusive.



Workshop overview



1. 10 mins Introduction

- How can images be manipulated?
- How are appearance ideals used in marketing & advertising?

2. 20 mins Appearance ideals and image manipulations

- What are body confidence and appearance ideals?
- Where do appearance pressures come from?

3. 15 mins Responding to appearance pressures

- What problems can comparing with those around us cause?
- How can we respond to appearance pressures?

4. 10 mins Be a champion for change

- What have we learned today?
- What will YOU do to be a champion for change?

This workshop is designed to be suitable for all group sizes, however, groups of 5–30 students and 2–3 staff members are recommended for maximum engagement. For online delivery, we recommend working with an even smaller group of students (up to a maximum of 20 students) with at least two staff members.

It may be helpful to assign each staff member a role for the workshop.

We recommend:

- **Staff 1:** Lead facilitator
- **Staff 2:** Support facilitator for discussions and group work
- **Staff 3:** Wellness support and technical support (for virtual programming)

**Note: If only 2 staff are available, roles 2 & 3 can be combined.*

For online sessions, it is imperative that two staff are present so that there is a back-up facilitator in case there are connection issues. We also recommend having one staff member in each breakout room to ensure safety within discussions.

How to use this guide



Read and become familiar with the session activities and their accompanying handouts. Look for these symbols to guide the activity and let you know what to do:

- Say
- Do
- Tip
- Virtual Delivery
- Do it differently
- Definition

Sample page:



Responding to appearance pressures

🕒 15 mins

Presentation	Educator prompts	Notes & variations
	<p>Do</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain that next, you will explore how people not only compare themselves to images in professional media, but also to other people in their everyday lives. 2. <i>Play the video "Change One Thing"</i> <p>Say</p> <p>What does the film show us about how we compare ourselves to others? <i>Example responses: Everyone has something that they want to change about themselves. Sometimes the thing you want to change is the opposite from what another person would want.</i></p> <p>What do you think the impact is of comparing our appearance in this way? <i>Example responses: It might make people feel bad. It is pointless because... to want something that we don't h...</i></p>	<p>Tip</p> <p>Towards the end of this discussion, invite students to think about the ways that diversity is portrayed in the video.</p> <p>Say</p> <p>"This video illustrates how young people from different backgrounds experience appearance pressures in different ways. The video has a fairly straightforward message; that we all have something about ourselves we would change, however, the video does not fully describe that youth are often pressured to all look the same. For example, a lot of youth feel pressure to have silky hair, be skinny, white or have lighter skin, be able-bodied, and identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. It's important to recognize that some of these pressures are harder for some people to achieve than others—but this doesn't make the pressure any less..."</p>

SINGLE SESSION

Suggested Time Allocation: Reflects the relative importance of each section for achieving learning outcomes and improving students' body confidence. Timing may be adjusted to suit the length of your lesson.

Learning Outcome: Students should achieve this by the end of the section.

Visual cues: Previews of the main slides to help you stay caught up.

Notes & Variations: Notes in this section offer additional information or suggestions that may be helpful for some groups.

Educator Prompts: Regular text contains instructions and suggestions for how the presentation will flow. Feel free to talk about these points in your own words. **Bolded text** highlights important questions or text to read out to students.

Anticipated Responses: Blue text lists some suggested responses that students may give. If there are responses that are not mentioned, you can follow-up with them as examples.

Introduction

 10 mins

Learning outcome:

By the end of this section, students will understand the concept of appearance ideals and where pressure to achieve them comes from.

Presentation



Educator prompts

Do

1. Welcome students to the workshop.
2. Tell them that the focus of the workshop will be to talk about how we look, feel, and act with respect to our appearance.
3. Begin the session by making a land acknowledgement. See the note box for an example of a land acknowledgement from the City of Toronto.

Notes & variations

Say

“We wish to begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional and unceded territories of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississauga’s of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.”



Do

1. Before diving into the content, go through the workshop guidelines to help create a supportive, non-judgmental environment.
2. Read each guideline and talk about what it means or what it might look like in practice. Ensure that these guidelines feel collaborative by asking the group to suggest additional guidelines that would create a non-judgmental and supportive environment. If necessary, adjust the guidelines to suit your group.

Virtual Delivery

It may be helpful to establish ground rules about how students can signal if they have a question or want to share a thought. For example, you can get them to use the ‘raise hand’ feature on their video conferencing program.

Presentation



Educator prompts

Do

1. Briefly share with students that these are the main topics that you will be covering today.

Notes & variations

Tip

Certain content may be sensitive to some students. Remind students that if they feel uncomfortable at any point, they are free to take a step back (or turn their video off) and return when they are ready.

See the **Creating a Safe Space** tips on page 3 and the **Wellness Support** appendix for more information and resources.



Do

1. Tell students that the session will begin with a few questions to test what they already know. Read out the question, followed by each answer and get students to raise their hand to vote for the correct answer.

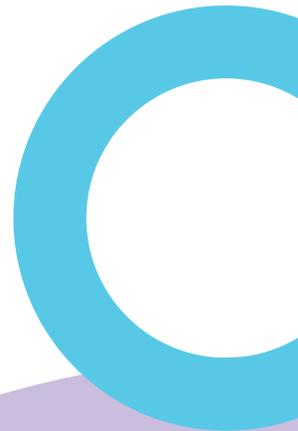
Say

Correct Answer: D. Feeling comfortable with your appearance and accepting your body for how it looks and what it can do.

Optional: Ask students about why it is important to have body confidence and whether they know how to improve it.

Virtual Delivery

Depending on your resources and technological capabilities, you can also use the Kahoot version of these quiz questions, which can be found here: tinyurl.com/dah4brf2



Presentation



Educator prompts

Say

Correct Answer: B. What our society or culture tells us is the ideal way to look.

Talk briefly about how appearance ideals differ from culture to culture as well as over time. For example, the ideal way to look and dress in Korean culture is different from Filipino culture. Similarly, appearance ideals in Canada in the 1970s were very different from what they are in Canada today.

Notes & variations

Tip

You can draw from other examples that you know about or ask students to suggest contrasting appearance ideals to demonstrate the point.



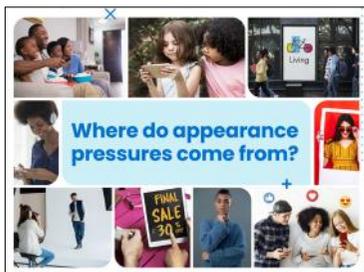
Say

Correct Answer: D. All of the above.

Mention that today's workshop will look at how appearance pressures are created and why they may be detrimental for maintaining body confidence.



Presentation



Educator prompts

Do

1. Ask students to call out ideas for where they think appearance pressures come from. **Example responses:** [society](#), [social media](#), [family](#), [friends](#), [influencers](#)
2. Mention that there are some differences between sources of appearance pressures, and describe the types listed below. Ask students to provide examples of each kind of media.
 - **Professional Media:** Advertisements that are paid for by businesses and communicated through channels such as TV shows, magazines, advertisements, films, and music videos.
 - **Personal and Social Media:** Images, messages and videos produced by you and other people you interact with in person or online.
 - **Influencers:** Influencers and emerging trends on social media create a gray area between personal and professional media, where ordinary people and public figures may take part in paid or unpaid advertisements and campaigns that influence viewers. 'Followers' might not recognize that they are being influenced as easily as if the ad was created professionally.

Regardless of the kind of media, it is important to ensure that your group understands that media influences the appearance ideals that people feel they should follow.

Notes & variations

Virtual Delivery

If you are using the Mentimeter slides, students can type in and send their responses to be added to the wall on the screen.

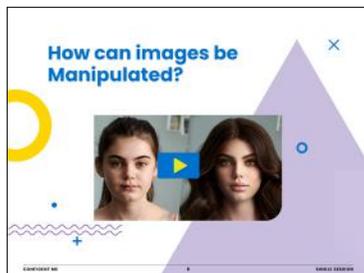
Appearance ideals & image manipulations

 20 mins

Learning outcome:

By the end of this section, students will **build media literacy** and explore how images and messages are often manipulations of the truth.

Presentation



Educator prompts

Do

1. Explain that you will now explore how interacting with images we see can be a source of appearance pressures.

Say

What do you think the word 'manipulation' means?

Example responses: To edit or change something, such as a person's appearance in the media.

How are images of people in media manipulated or changed? Example responses: Through airbrushing, filters/editing apps, lighting, makeup, angles, choosing one photo out of hundreds taken, etc.

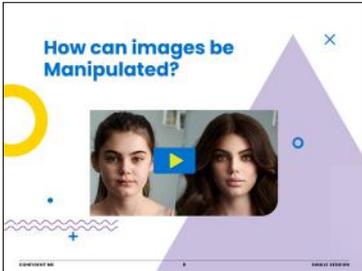
Do

1. **Play the video "Reverse Selfie"**
2. Ask students to pay attention to the way the image is manipulated and what kind of messages it creates. ▶

Notes & variations

Presentation

(Page 8 continued)



Educator prompts

3. After viewing the video, ask for volunteers to describe in their own words: **What is the video about?**
4. Ask participants to raise their hands if they can think of a time when they--or someone that they know--have felt pressured to manipulate selfies that they post in a way that is similar to what was shown in the video.
5. Split the class into small groups*. Assign each group their question, then replay the video. Give each group time to discuss their question before rejoining for a class discussion.
 - A. How did this person in this video change their appearance BEFORE and AFTER taking the photo? What techniques did they use?
 - B. Think about how the posted selfie has been changed from reality. How do you think going through this editing process might make the person in this video feel?
 - C. What do you think someone who sees the final posted selfie would think or feel?
 - D. Who benefits from the appearance ideal that is created when people make these kinds of selfie posts? (if they need a hint, you can suggest that they consider those that would benefit from the sale of beauty products that achieve appearance ideals. E.g., makeup industry, photo enhancing apps, smartphone companies, social media apps, etc.) ▶

Notes & variations

Tip

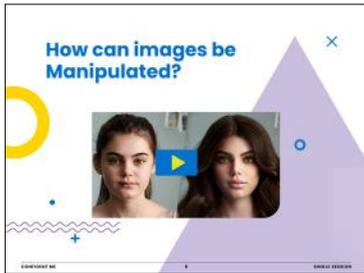
* **Making small groups:** Split students into groups of around 3-4 people. If you have a large group, you can assign more than one group the same question. Keeping the group size small is important for meaningful engagement.

Do it differently

If you are working with youth who may struggle with smaller group activities, you can also go through the discussion questions together as a class.

Presentation

(Page 8 continued)



Educator prompts

6. After the small group discussion, ask for volunteers from one or more groups to share what they discussed.

7. Next, pose the following questions to the whole class:

Say

Why do you think it is unrealistic or unfair to compare the way you look to manipulated images of people you see on social media and in mass media (e.g. movies, TV shows, etc.)?

This video is only an example of one person's experience with posting a selfie on social media. **How might the experiences of other youth (e.g., a non-binary youth, Black youth, Indigenous youth, a youth in a different country/culture) be similar or different from this example?** (Optional follow-up prompts: Do all youth feel the desire to edit parts of themselves? Would all youth edit photos in the same way? What might they do differently?)

Closing script: This video is an example of the "appearance ideals" that are promoted through the media we consume. It is important to remember that this video portrays a single perspective, one that is often portrayed in advertisements/professional media that are depicting a beauty standard (e.g., the beauty standard of 'thinness,' or 'blondness').

Notes & variations

Say

Alternate closing script for younger groups: This video is an example of the "appearance ideals" that we see in the media. It is important to remember that this video only shows one person, but this is the kind of person who is often shown in advertisements/professional media. Ads often show people who all fit the same standard of beauty (e.g., the beauty standard of 'thinness,' or 'blondness').



Presentation



Educator prompts

Do

1. Show the class your first advertisement.
2. Guide the group through a discussion which answers the three questions that are on the slide.
3. Repeat with the second advertisement.

Say

Closing question: What effect do you think marketed images like the ones we just saw have on the viewer's body confidence? *Example responses:* It makes them feel like their body is not good enough. They may feel like they also need to buy the products that are recommended.

Notes & variations

Tip

This activity is focused on ads that you find and share with your class. See the **Preparing to Lead the Workshop section on Page 2** for instructions on how to find them.

Do it differently

You may choose to skip going through questions for the second advertisement and move to the closing question.



Responding to appearance pressures

 15 mins

Learning outcome:

By the end of this section, students will develop strategies to resist appearance pressures, avoid comparing themselves, challenge appearance ideals and build body confidence.

Presentation



Educator prompts

Do

1. Explain that next, you will explore how people not only compare themselves to images in professional media, but also to other people in their everyday lives.

2. *Play the video “Change One Thing”*

Say

What does the film show us about how we compare ourselves to others? *Example responses: Everyone has something that they want to change about themselves. Sometimes the thing you want to change is the opposite from what another person would want.*

What do you think the impact is of comparing our appearance in this way? *Example responses: It might make people feel bad. It is pointless because it makes us unhappy to want something that we don't have. ►*

Notes & variations

Tip

Towards the end of this discussion, invite students to think about the ways that diversity is portrayed in the video.

Say

“This video illustrates how young people from different backgrounds experience appearance pressures in different ways. The video has a fairly straightforward message: that we all have something about ourselves we would change, however, the video does not fully describe that youth are often pressured to all look the same. For example, a lot of youth feel pressure to have silky hair, be skinny, white or have lighter skin, be able-bodied, and identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. It is important to recognize that some of these pressures are harder for some people to achieve than others—but this does not make the pressure any less real.”

Presentation

(Page 10 continued)

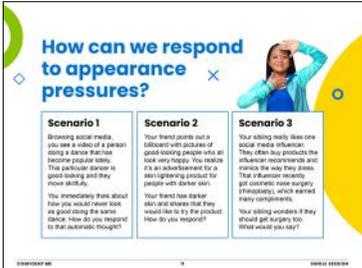


Educator prompts

Notes & variations

Do it differently

Optional extension for mature groups:
To follow up, you can quickly mention how wealth and privilege factor into appearance pressures. For example, wealthy people are able to afford expensive surgeries, special diets, or personal trainers who can help them acquire bodies that fit appearance ideals. These options are not available to everyone, which is why it is harder for some people to reach these appearance ideals.



Do

1. Break participants into small groups and assign each group one of the following scenarios to discuss. Ask each group to talk about the following questions:
 - **How would you respond to the situation?**
 - **In this scenario, what video or image manipulations contributed to creating a beauty ideal?**

Scenario 1:

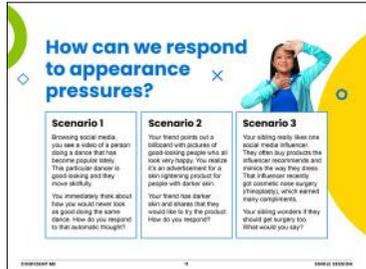
Example responses: The person in the video might be a professional dancer, or have practiced for many days, or recorded multiple shots of the video to get it to look perfect. They may also be wearing a lot of makeup, have found a better location/background, figured out the best angle to shoot from, or bought clothes just to shoot the video. ▶

Do it differently

If time is running out in the session the facilitator can choose one scenario to discuss as a large group, rather than breaking into small groups.

Presentation

(Page 11 continued)



Educator prompts

Scenario 2:

Example responses: The people in the image may be hired models, the image may be edited with filters, the photos could be staged so that the people look extra happy, etc.

Scenario 3:

Example responses: Your sibling might not be thinking about the price or risks of getting plastic surgery, or whether it is really something that they want for themselves.

2. Once groups have had a chance to discuss, bring the class back together and share the responses that each group came up with.

Notes & variations

Say

Share the following remarks to close scenarios 2 and 3:

Scenario 2: “Remember the beauty ideals we talked about earlier in the session? Social media often portrays ‘whiteness’ as a beauty ideal. There are many other ideals as well, that may differ depending on the context (e.g., being able bodied in a sports context). It’s important to note that there is no one body type, skin colour, or hair type that makes us more beautiful than others, and the idea that any one way of looking is more ideal than others is an issue because it can make us think poorly about the way we look.”

Scenario 3: “Just to be clear, it is okay to want to get plastic surgery--and some people may need to get plastic surgery for health-related reasons. What is not okay is feeling pressured to get surgery because you are unhappy with your body image and want to look like someone else. This goes for plastic surgery, but also for other more common things such as experimenting with new clothes or a new hairstyle. It is great if you are inspired and want to try it because you think it would be good for you.”

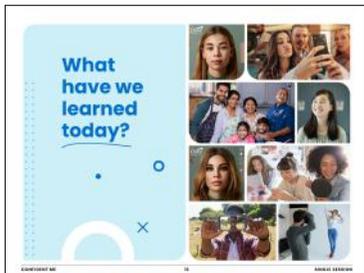


Conclusion

🕒 10 mins



Presentation



Educator prompts

Do

1. Ask students to summarize what they learned today. There can be a wide range of responses. Below are some examples:
 - Pressure to look a certain way comes from the world around us.
 - It's unfair to compare ourselves to the media.
 - It's important to remember images of people that we see in all types of media are not always real (they may be manipulated)

Notes & variations



Do

1. Briefly mention how sometimes people make negative comments about themselves--this is called negative talk. The Change One Thing video and the scenarios just discussed are examples of what it looks like when people engage in negative self-talk.
2. Explain that we are going to create a positive self-talk **motto!** (If there are members who might not know what a motto is, ask for a volunteer to define it). ▶

Definition

Motto: a short sentence or phrase that describes a person's beliefs or intentions.

Presentation

(Page 13 continued)



Educator prompts

3. Get participants to **create a list of at least 5 things that they like about themselves or things that they are good at** (this is called positive self-talk). If some participants seem stuck, ask if there are any volunteers to share one or more of their mottos.

Do it differently

Facilitators might also encourage participants to think of one positive thing about themselves each day and write it down so they can refer to it when they are feeling down.

Say

How are you going to take action to address the pressures that you and your friends feel to look a certain way? *Example responses: Changing how they consume and media, being more aware of appearance pressures that they face in their everyday lives, sharing what they learned today with others, etc.*

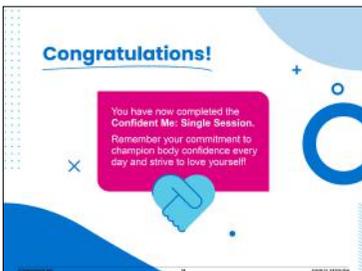
Notes & variations

Tip

It may be helpful to have participants take out a paper and pencil to write down their response to this discussion. You can also have them write in their agendas/day planners.

Do it differently

Optional extension: Challenge students to share one thing that they love about themselves to the person sitting beside them.



Do

1. Thank students for their participation in the session. Encourage them to think about and apply their knowledge and understanding from now on.



Wellness supports

Sometimes it helps to talk to someone about what you're going through. If you would like to chat with someone, here are a few national support lines you can call toll-free.

Kids Help Phone

Free, anonymous and confidential counseling and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being for children and youth between the ages of 5 and 20. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call **1-800-668-6868**

Chat kidshelpphone.ca/live-chat

Good2Talk

Provides professional counselling and information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being, ages 17–25. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to youth in Ontario and Nova Scotia.

Call **1-866-925-5454** (Ontario)

1-833-292-3698 (Nova Scotia)

Text **GOOD2TALKON to 686868** (Ontario)

GOOD2TALKNS to 686868 (Nova Scotia)

Caring for Kids New to Canada

The community resource page lists a number of local services and organizations across Canada who can provide support to immigrant and refugee youth.

Website kidsnewtocanada.ca/health-promotion/youth-resources

Chrysalis Network

National counselling crisis line focused on support for sex trade workers and those affected by sexual assault.

Call **1-866-528-7109**

LGBT Youthline

Confidential and non-judgmental peer support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, queer and questioning people. Contact for support or to access an extensive database of referral resources.

Call **1-800-268-9688**

Text **647-694-4275**

Live Chat youthline.ca

National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC)

NEDIC focuses on awareness and prevention of eating disorders, food and weight preoccupation, and disordered eating by promoting critical thinking skills and a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

Call **1-866-633-4220**

Live Chat nedic.ca

Women Against Violence Rape Crisis Centre

Free, confidential and immediate emotional support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days.

Call **604-255-6344**

Toll free **1-877-392-7583**

For more resources

canada.ca type: “mental health” in the search field
thelifelinecanada.ca (Includes phone, text or chat options across Canada)

Distress centres

Alberta

edmonton.cmha.ca

1-800-232-7288

British Columbia

crisiscentre.bc.ca

1-866-661-3311

Manitoba

gov.mb.ca/health/mh/crisis.html

1-888-322-3019

New Brunswick

chimohelpline.ca

1-800-667-5005

Newfoundland & Labrador

cmhanl.ca

1-888-737-4668

Northwest Territories

hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/nwt-help-line

1-800-661-0844

Nova Scotia

mha.nshealth.ca

1-888-429-8167

Nunavut

nunavuthelpline.ca

1-800-265-3333

Ontario

dcontario.org/locations/

1-866-531-2600

Prince Edward Island

theislandhelpline.com

1-800-218-2885

Quebec

suicideprevention.ca/need-help

1-866-277-3553

Saskatchewan

fhr.ca/MentalHealth.htm

1-877-564-0543

Yukon

yukon.cmha.ca

1-844-533-3030