



Women and Gender  
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité  
des genres Canada



Confident Me | Session 4 of 5

# Banish Body Talk



**Workshop  
guide for  
educators**

# Getting started

## Program materials

- Workshop presentation
- This workshop guide
- Worksheets (emailed to students in advance if virtual delivery)
  - > How Do We Use Body Talk?  
(one per student or pair of students)
  - > How Can We Banish Body Talk?  
(one per student or pair of students)
- Links to the stimulus films:
  - > [Body Talk Conversations with Friends](#)
  - > [Body Talk Conversations with the Team](#)
  - > [Body Talk Conversations with the Mirror](#)
  - > [Body Talk Soundtrack to School](#)

### Optional materials:

- Each student could have a sheet of paper and writing utensils to take notes
- [Mentimeter version of the presentation](#)

## Learning outcomes

### In this workshop students will:

- Understand what is meant by body talk, and why people engage in conversations about appearance.
- Recognize the problems body talk can cause and develop strategies to challenge the use of body talk.
- Commit to taking action to build their body confidence.

# Preparing to lead the workshop

## In-person delivery preparation:

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 a video, so you will also 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. Go back to the Appearance Ideals Workshop Guide for Educators to review tips for creating a safe space, fostering an inclusive environment for diverse students, suggestions for creating a welcoming and inclusive space, and information about how to use the educator guides.
4. Print enough copies of the worksheets and handouts for each student.

## Virtual delivery preparation:

1. Ensure that you are familiar with the video conferencing program you are using, including how to play videos with sound and how to assign students and staff members to breakout rooms (if using this option). See note below about the recommended number of staff members for virtual delivery.
2. See the Mentimeter preparation to the left (#2)
3. See reminder of facilitation tips preparation to the left (#3)
4. Email a copy of the worksheets/handouts to students in advance with instructions to print a copy (if they have access to a printer) or to type their responses directly into the PDF. All worksheets are fillable. Alternatively, worksheets can be distributed using a Google Drive link with instructions for students to download the files. If neither is an option for students, invite them to write their responses on a blank sheet of paper.
5. You may wish to print a copy of this Educator's Guide so that you have a hard copy of the curriculum in front of you while you are presenting online. Alternatively, if you have two computer screens, you can present the Student Slides on one screen while simultaneously viewing this guide on the second screen.

# Workshop overview



## 1. 5 mins Introduction

- What have we learned?
- What are we learning today?

## 2. 20 mins Introducing body talk

- What is body talk?
- How do we use body talk?

## 3. 20 mins Challenging body talk

- What is the impact of body talk?
- How can we challenge body talk?

## 4. 5 mins Be a body confidence champion

- What will YOU do to be a body confidence champion?
- What have we learned today?

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 virtual 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 virtual sessions, it is imperative that two staff are present so 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.

# Introduction

5 mins



## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Welcome students to the 'Banish Body Talk' session.
2. Conduct a land acknowledgment.
3. Remind students that the focus of the workshop series is to help them explore more helpful ways to manage appearance pressures and build body confidence.

## Notes & variations

### 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.

### Tip

See the **Preparing to Lead the Workshop** section in Session 1 (Appearance Ideals) for information on how to prepare a land acknowledgment.



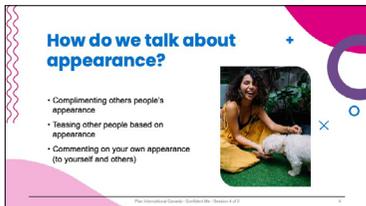
### Do

1. Invite one or two students to recall what they have learned in the previous session.
2. Invite one or two more students to share how they resisted harmful media messages since the last session. Have the class celebrate this action by clapping, cheering, etc.
3. Summarize any key learning outcomes from the previous session students have missed.

### Virtual Delivery

Remind students how they can signal if they have a question or want to share a thought (e.g., raised hand function on video conferencing program)

## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Briefly share with students that these are the main topics that you will be covering today.
2. Remind students of the group agreement (created in the first session) and ask if they would like to add any additional agreements. Ask students to recommit to it today by raising their hands or nodding their heads.

### Do

1. Explain that today's workshop is focused on the way we talk about appearance.
2. **Ask: What different ways do people talk about appearance?** People offer compliments based on appearance, they might tease people based on appearance, individuals might comment on their own appearance – by comparing themselves to others, or the thoughts they have about their own appearance.
3. Explain that when people are talking about appearance, they are all engaging in body talk.

## 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 Preparing to Lead the Workshop content and the Wellness Support page for more information and resources.

### Virtual Delivery

Have students use the “thumbs up” reaction to signal a re-commitment to the space agreement.



# Introducing body talk

15 mins



## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Read the definition of body talk and unpack the details of what this means with your students.  

It may be difficult (at first) for some students to get a clear understanding of what body talk is from just the definition, but the following three videos and discussions should help give them a more concrete idea through examples.
2. Ensure that students understand that body talk is any conversation about appearance, whether positive or negative. Reinforce the point that body talk includes comments about your own or a friend's appearance, or it could be commenting on a celebrity's or another person's looks.

## Notes & variations

### Tip

Body talk refers to any conversation or comment that reinforces and keeps appearance ideals and pressures going. It is frequently used in our society for many different reasons. However, whether a comment is intended as negative (e.g. 'my thighs are too big') or positive (e.g. 'you look good – have you lost weight?'), all body talk has the potential to be harmful. This is because it places emphasis on the importance of appearance and appearance ideals at the expense of focusing on valuing other, more intrinsic qualities in a person or on their actions, interests and activities.



### Do

1. Explain that students are going to watch three short clips about body talk. Provide each student (or pair of students) with a copy of the "How Do We Use Body Talk" worksheet.
2. Instruct students to fill out the accompanying worksheet by themselves or with a partner (depending on what would work best for your group) after each video.
3. **Play 'Body Talk Conversations with Friends'.**
4. **Play 'Body Talk Conversations with the Team'.**
5. **Play 'Body Talk Conversations with the Mirror'.** ▶

### Tip

Depending on what works best for your group, you can play the videos one by one and answer the discussion questions in between, or play all three videos together and discuss them at the end.

### Do it differently

You may choose to have students discuss the answers to the worksheet questions in pairs after each video. This approach may be helpful if you find energy is lagging.

## Presentation

(Slides 6-8 continued)

How do we use body talk? (1/3)

Does this conversation seem well-meaning, or harmful?

How do you think this conversation makes both people feel about their appearance?

How do you think this conversation will affect their feelings or behaviours related to their appearance in the long-term?

How do we use body talk? (2/3)

Does this conversation seem well-meaning, or harmful?

How do you think this conversation makes both people feel about their appearance?

How do you think this conversation will affect their feelings or behaviours related to their appearance in the long-term?

How do we use body talk? (3/3)

Does this conversation seem well-meaning, or harmful?

How do you think this conversation makes both people feel about their appearance?

How do you think this conversation will affect their feelings or behaviours related to their appearance in the long-term?



## Educator prompts

### Discuss

After students have finished filling out the worksheet, ask for a volunteer to share their responses with the class:

**What is being said? Does this conversation seem well-meaning, or harmful?**

- **Friends:** One girl compliments another on her hair. The girl receiving the compliment acts self-consciously and rejects the compliment.
- **Team:** One of the boys starts commenting on another boy's appearance, telling him he might 'blow over'. Another boy joins in with the comments. The boy being teased eventually responds, and the boy initiating the conversation makes out it was all a joke.
- **Mirror:** The girl says, 'Ugh. I look huge in this.' She wishes she had a flat stomach and comments that she looks 'ugly'.

**How do you think this conversation makes both people feel about their appearance?**

- **Friends:** The girl giving the compliment could feel happy for her friend, or might feel a bit jealous about her friend's great hair. The girl receiving the compliment feels pleased because she has been told her hairstyle is nice and suits her.
- **Team:** They look like they've all brushed it off as a joke when they head off to play football, however this is only because the boy who started the conversation decided to stop for now. ►

## Notes & variations



## Presentation

(Slides 8-6 continued)

**How do we use body talk? (1/3)**

- Does this conversation seem well meaning, or harmful?
- How do you think this conversation makes both people feel about their appearance?
- How do you think this conversation will affect their feelings or behaviours related to their appearance in the long-term?

**How do we use body talk? (2/3)**

- Does this conversation seem well meaning, or harmful?
- How do you think this conversation makes both people feel about their appearance?
- How do you think this conversation will affect their feelings or behaviours related to their appearance in the long-term?

**How do we use body talk? (3/3)**

- Does this conversation seem well meaning, or harmful?
- How do you think this conversation makes both people feel about their appearance?
- How do you think this conversation will affect their feelings or behaviours related to their appearance in the long-term?

## Educator prompts

- **Mirror:** She starts to feel worse about herself because she feels nothing looks good on her and that she can't live up to appearance ideals. She keeps comparing her appearance to her friend's rather than focusing on positives about herself or more important things.

**How do you think this conversation will affect their feelings or behaviours related to their appearance in the long-term?**

- **Friends:** The girl giving the compliment might start thinking about hair more, spending more time on it. The girl receiving the compliment may feel she always needs reassurance about her hair, or that she can't change it because this style was the one people said suited her.
- **Team:** This situation is likely to be repeated, and the smaller boy may become more focused on his appearance. He may start to change his behaviour – like going to the gym more often.
- **Mirror:** The girl may feel less confident about her appearance, which may make her self-conscious about taking part in activities.

## Notes & variations

### Virtual Delivery

Instead of pairs, split the class into small groups of 3–4 students and use breakout rooms. If breakout rooms are not available or are not feasible (e.g., not enough staff members for each room) work through each video and corresponding worksheet as a large group.

# Challenging body talk

20 mins



## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Explain that now they have identified different examples of body talk, we are going to consider the impact of body talk.
2. **Play 'Dove: Soundtrack to School'.**

### Discuss

Ask the following questions:

- **How many times a day do you think a person encounters body talk?**
- **What is the total effect of all these appearance-based conversations?**
- **How can it leave people feeling?** *Body talk occurs more frequently than you think. It can lead to us focusing too much on our appearance and not on what matters, and this can be harmful for our self-esteem.*

Help students understand that repeated conversations about appearance might focus on their looks or weight, leading to more and more dissatisfaction. This can have long-term negative consequences for self-esteem.

Emphasize to students that the overall impact is that the person's mood is strongly influenced by what people think about their appearance – day-to-day but also on a long-term scale. They are left feeling that appearance is more important than it really is, and could forget to focus on qualities and activities they actually value and enjoy.

## Notes & variations

### Tip

If students suggest positive reasons for engaging in body talk, use questions to help them see the other point of view and emphasize to the group that, on the whole, both positive and negative body talk is counter-productive.

Some students may not easily understand that positive body talk can still be unhelpful, leading to unhappiness in the long term. Here are some examples to illustrate the point: A friend compliments someone on their weight loss. That person enjoys the compliment when given, but later on, wonders whether they were liked a little less when they weighed more, and whether they might feel unhappy should they put on a little weight in the future. Three friends are together when one compliments another about their appearance, for example their hair or muscles. The other friend is left unhappy because their appearance didn't warrant a compliment, and feels they don't measure up to their friends' looks and expectations.

## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Explain to students that now they understand how widespread and harmful body talk is, it's important to challenge the use of body talk so they can help reduce the pressures faced by themselves and others to meet appearance ideals.
2. Arrange students into pairs. Provide each pair with a copy of the "How Can We Banish Body Talk" worksheet.

#### • Scenario 1:

Your friend posts a selfie at the gym with the caption:

**Person A:** Working hard on my #beachbody. The countdown to summer is on!

**Person B replies...** Let's talk about how much fun we're going to have at the beach this summer instead!

#### • Scenario 5:

Your cousin shares the latest [beauty/skin lightening] hack trending on social media:

**Person A:** This actually works!

**Person B replies...** Attempting to look like everyone else is harmful because we end up spending all of our time, money, and energy on our appearance and it can make us feel bad. I'd rather talk about how kind and generous you are!

3. Instruct students to join with another pair and present their role plays, demonstrating how they would divert attention away from body talk.
4. If time permits, invite one or two pairs to present their role plays to the class. Ask the following questions to the group:
  - How easy or hard did you find avoiding body talk?
  - How did you keep the conversation away from body talk?

## Notes & variations

### Tip

Role play is a really powerful way to help students change their behaviour. Working in pairs lets less confident students role play without exposing themselves to the whole group. Be careful not to reinforce any of the situations or scripts and make sure that students aren't singled out during role plays.

Some students may take this opportunity to point out that it's not easy to challenge body talk and try to exclude it from their group's conversations. Acknowledge that body talk is a conversation piece because it helps people socialize and feel included in a group, so trying to stop this kind of talk might risk being teased or even excluded. Explain that body talk can become a habit that people rely on in social situations. However, if students lead by example by avoiding body talk, they can help change their group's behaviour.

### Virtual Delivery

Instead of pairs, split the class into small groups of 3–4 students and use breakout rooms. Have students take turns practicing responding to the prompts. If breakout rooms are not available or are not feasible (e.g., not enough staff members for each room) work through each video and corresponding worksheet as a large group.

# Be a body confidence champion

 5 mins



## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Say

- What different strategies have we learned to avoid body talk?
- How else can you show your commitment to changing the way you personally talk about appearance?
- How are you going to take action to banish body talk?  
Example responses: try to avoid making comparisons with others, if you notice someone making a comparison, try to encourage them to talk about other thing.

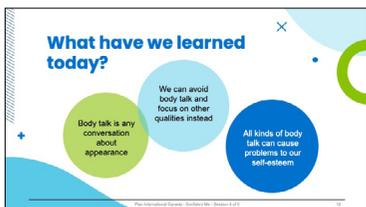
### Do

1. Encourage students to make small, specific actions so that they are easier to commit to.
2. If time permits, invite a few students to share their ideas with the class.

## 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.



### Discuss

Ask students to summarize what they learned today. There can be a wide range of responses. Below are some examples:

- Body talk is any conversation about appearance
- Body talk can cause problems to our self-esteem
- We can avoid body talk and focus on other qualities instead



## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Thank students for their participation in the session. Remind students of the Wellness Supports (provided at the beginning of the session) if they want to talk to someone about how they are feeling.
2. Provide students with the “Going Further” worksheet. Encourage students to explore the ideas raised in today’s session by filling out the worksheet before the next session.

## Notes & variations

