



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



Confident Me | Session 3 of 5

Confront Comparisons

**Workshop
guide for
educators**

Getting started

Program materials

- Workshop presentation
- This workshop guide
- Worksheets (emailed to students in advance if virtual delivery)
 - > How Will You Change Your Script?
 - > Going Further (one per student)
- Links to the stimulus films:
 - > Dove: [Change One Thing](#)
 - > Dove + Cartoon Network: [I'm Fine](#) (optional)
 - > [Whirlpool animation](#)

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 that comparing looks** to individuals and media images is automatic and part of human nature.
- **Identify the ways in which the process of comparing looks often has negative consequences** for themselves and their friends.
- **Develop new ways to respond to comparison situations** that have positive outcomes for themselves and people around them.

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

- Review group agreement
- What did we learn in the last session?
- What are we learning today?

2. 15 mins Introducing Comparisons

- What ideals are portrayed in the media?
- How do we compare with those around us?
- How do we compare our looks?

3. 25 mins Problems with Comparing

- What is the impact of comparisons?
- The whirlpool of comparisons
- What can we do instead?
- How can we change our script?
- How will you change your script?

4. 5 mins Be a Champion for Change

- 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.

Welcome

10 mins



Presentation



Educator prompts

Do

1. Welcome students to the 'Confront Comparisons' 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.

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.

Tip

See the Preparing to Lead the Workshop section in the Appearance Ideals Educator's Guide for information on how to prepare a land acknowledgment.



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)

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.

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.

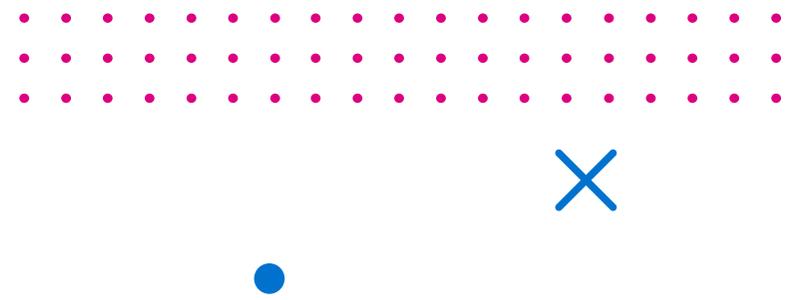


Virtual Delivery

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

Introducing comparisons

15 mins



Presentation

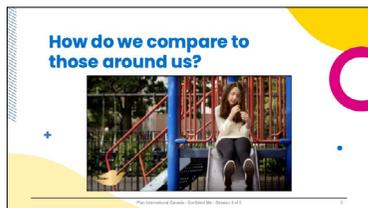


Educator prompts

Do

1. Explain that advertising, entertainment and other media often uses images and messages that promote an ideal lifestyle.
2. Invite one or two responses:
 - **What are we encouraged to aspire to look like through media images?** *Be fit, stay slim, have clear skin, etc.*
 - **What have we learned about comparing ourselves to these images?** *Comparing ourselves to media images is harmful because they are often manipulated, making them unrealistic.*
 - **Do you think we just compare ourselves to images we see in the media? Who else do we compare with?** *Friends, classmates, others around us.*

Notes & variations



Do

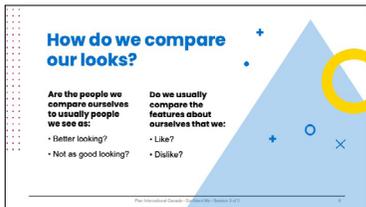
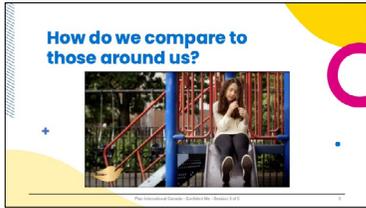
2. Explain that it is common to compare ourselves and our appearance to other people in everyday life, not just celebrities.
1. Tell students that you will now **play the Change One Thing video**. This video should be familiar to them because it is a video that was shown in the first session (Appearance Ideals). This time when they view the video, ask them to focus on the comparisons being made. ▶

Tip

For mixed-gender groups, consider using this alternate video link: youtu.be/q2CfEc-mf9c

Presentation

(Slide 5 continued)



Educator prompts

Say

What does this video show us about how people compare themselves to others? *Everyone compares themselves to others and wishes that they had a feature that someone else has.*

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.*

Do

1. Explain that it is important to understand the process of making comparisons. This will help students see whether it is helpful or not, and whether they want to change it.
2. Ask students to close their eyes* and take a moment to think about a time when they may have compared their appearance to someone. (If they can't think of an example for themselves, it is okay to think about a comparison that someone else made. You can also remind them about the comparisons from the Change One Thing video). Who did they compare themselves to? What was the comparison about?
3. After a moment, ask students to raise their hand to vote:
 - **Raise your hand if you compared yourself to someone who you felt was better looking, or had something that you felt you lacked? We most often compare our appearance with those we think have better features than ourselves.** ►

Notes & variations

Tip

*By conducting this activity with their eyes closed, students will be able to focus on their thoughts without being distracted by others, and the vote can also be done anonymously. However, it is okay if a student prefers to keep their eyes open and stare at an empty space.

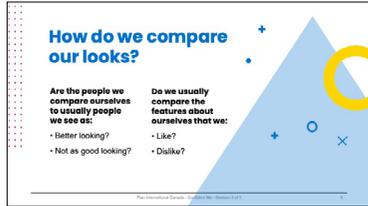
If you conduct the vote with students' eyes open, you may need to warn the class to be respectful of each other's views--especially those who appear in a minority at any point.

Virtual Delivery

Have students use the 'raise hand' reaction to vote.

Presentation

(Slide 6 continued)



Educator prompts

- **Raise your hand if the focus of the comparison was about a feature that you like about yourself? (as opposed to dislike)** People most often choose to compare the parts of their appearance that they don't like.

To summarize the result of the vote, point out that many people tend to make comparisons with people who are better looking, especially when it comes to features that they dislike about themselves.

Even if the class did not vote as expected, invite them to think about how sometimes people compare their looks with people who they think don't look as good as them, which boosts their confidence. Is this kind of comparison any better?

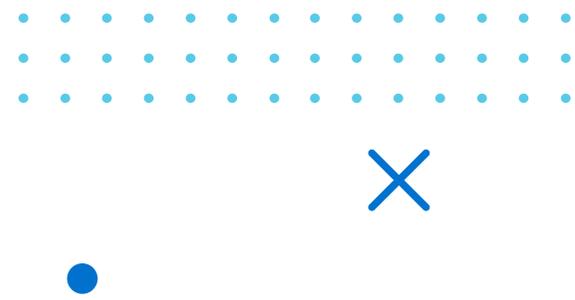
It is important for students to understand that all forms of comparisons (comparing to someone better/worse looking, about features that they like/dislike about themselves) can be unhelpful, so students can benefit from learning how to avoid comparisons.

Notes & variations



Problems with comparing

25 mins



Presentation



Educator prompts

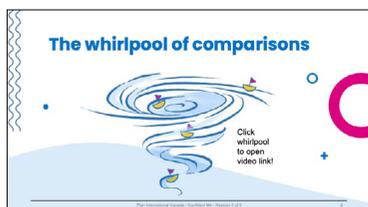
Do

1. Explain to students that they are now going to consider the problems comparing their looks can cause.
2. Invite the class to work together to think of as many answers as they can to the following questions. Students can call out an answer whenever they think of one, and answers can build off of what the previous person said. The only rule is that students should avoid calling out if someone is already speaking.
 - **How do you think making comparisons makes a person feel?** Sad, dissatisfied, worried, guilty, etc.
 - **What sort of things might people think?** 'I'm not good enough', 'I need to change', 'I wish I looked like that person too', etc.
 - **What might people do as a result?** Spend lots of money/ time on appearance, extreme dieting, extreme exercise, avoid taking pictures, try to cover their insecurities, etc.

Notes & variations

Virtual Delivery

You may choose to have students use the "raise hand" reaction to signal that they want to call out an answer.



Do

1. Explain that making comparisons can be a bit like getting trapped in a whirlpool.
2. **Play the whirlpool animation.** ▶

Presentation

(Slide 8 continued)



Educator prompts

3. Ask for a few volunteers to talk about what was happening in the animation and/or how making comparisons might be like the object trapped in a whirlpool.

Discuss

The main parallels to note are:

1. By comparing yourself to another person, you become dissatisfied/critical about yourself and feel the need to change.
2. Once you feel this dissatisfaction, you become even more aware of others that you feel are better-looking for you and wish even more that you were different. You feel further away from achieving appearance ideals.
3. The more you compare, the worse you feel about yourself. You become stuck in this 'downward spiral' that is difficult to break out of.

Emphasize the point that when we compare ourselves to others all the time this creates a culture of everyone wanting to look different and feeling bad about themselves, and our words and actions can have a huge impact on those around us.

Do

1. Ask students to identify ways that people can avoid getting sucked into a whirlpool of comparisons. Go over the examples on the slides with students.
2. Help students identify that breaking free from the 'whirlpool of comparisons' means not comparing with people they think look better than them, and not comparing features they don't like about themselves.

Notes & variations

Tip

Depending on your class, you may need to take a couple of minutes to make sure that everyone is familiar with what a whirlpool is and how it works.

Do it differently

Optional extension: If time permits, you can introduce the "I'm Fine" video which illustrates a person who gets sucked into the whirlpool of comparisons, and how it can influence a person's mental health and their ability to break out of the whirlpool and seek help.

Presentation



Educator prompts

Do

1. Explain that even though it's natural to make comparisons, students can learn to 'catch themselves' when they are about to compare their appearance and, instead, respond in a more positive way to help themselves and others. This takes practice.
2. Ask several students for ideas, before sharing the suggestions provided in the presentation.

Do

1. Break participants into **small groups*** and assign each group one of the following scenarios to discuss.
 2. Ask each group to talk about the following questions:
 - **What comparison is being made?**
 - **How would you respond to the situation?**
- **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.
 - **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. ►

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 scenario. Keeping the group size small is important for meaningful engagement.

Virtual Delivery

Use breakout rooms for the small group discussion. If breakout rooms are not available or are not feasible (e.g., not enough staff members for each room), work through each scenario as a large group.

Do it differently

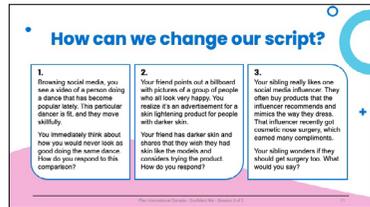
If time is running out in the session the facilitator can choose one scenario to discuss as a large group, rather than breaking into small groups.

Say

Share the following remarks to close scenarios 2 and 3: For scenario 2, close by saying: "Social media often portrays 'whiteness' as an appearance 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." ►

Presentation

(Slide 11 continued)



Educator prompts

3. Once groups have had a chance to discuss, bring the class back together and share the responses that each group came up with.
4. Provide each student with the “How Will You Change Your Script” worksheet. Instruct students to complete the worksheet independently.

Discuss

What are the different ways that you can challenge the process of making appearance comparisons in both yourself and others?

Invite one or two students to explain why these responses will have positive outcomes for themselves and their friends.

Notes & variations

Say

For scenario 3 it can be useful to remind students: “Some people may need to get plastic surgery for health-related reasons. Other people want to get surgery because they are unhappy with their body image or want to look different. No one should be made to feel ashamed for wanting to get plastic surgery—after all, appearance pressures are very strong in our society, so it makes sense that many of us want to look different.

But it's important to think about why someone wants to make a change. Is it because they are inspired and think it would be good for them, or is it because they are feeling appearance pressures? This goes for plastic surgery, fillers, or even common things like eyelash extensions, clothing, makeup, or hairstyles. Some of these changes can be expensive, painful, and time-consuming, or can hurt our bodies. Even common beauty practices have downsides.”

Be a champion for change

5 mins



Presentation



Educator prompts

Say

How are you going to take action to confront comparisons?
Example responses: try to avoid making comparisons with others, if you notice someone making a comparison, try to encourage them to think about other things, etc.

Encourage students to make their pledge a small, specific action, making it easier for them to keep their commitment.

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:

- Comparing yourself to others is common and natural.
- Making appearance-based comparisons can have negative consequences.
- We can challenge the process of making appearance based comparisons.



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.

