

# Confident Me

School Lesson for  
Body Confidence

Lesson Guide  
for Educators

Extension Lesson

# Learning outcomes



## In this lesson students will:

- + **Describe** how appearance ideals contribute to discrimination;
- + **Define** forms of discrimination that exist in society and describe the impact of them on mental health, primarily body confidence;
- + As upstanders, **explore** ways to address discrimination based on physical characteristics; and
- + **Advocate** for solutions that create a more inclusive community where everyone feels belongingness, supported, celebrated, and encouraged to contribute.



## United States National Health Education Standards alignment

- + Students will **comprehend concepts** related to health promotion and disease prevention
- + Students will **analyze the influence** of family, peers, culture, media, technology and other factors on health behaviors
- + Students will **demonstrate** the ability to use **goal-setting** skills to enhance health



# Educator Preparation

## From Your School



- A/V Equipment**
- Internet Access**

## Lesson Materials



- Slides**
  - +** Case Studies with questions
  - +** Types of “Isms” / Discrimination student handout
- ### Room Set Up
- +** Space for whole group instruction as well as small group work.



**Case Study #1: Veronica** + 01

1. What “ism” or form of discrimination is present in the case study? Circle one. Use the handout for help if you need it!

2. How could this type of discrimination (the “ism”) affect the person’s body confidence and/or make them feel different?

3. How can a middle schooler support a person experiencing this discrimination?

4. What’s wrong with the system that’s creating this problem?

WORDS MATTER APPROPRIATE FREQUENTLY

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# Lesson Overview



 50 mins

## Page 7 **Introducing Appearance Bias** | 3 mins

- + Introduction and group agreements
- + What are we learning today?
- + What are appearance ideals?

## Page 9 **Exploring Appearance Bias** | 25 mins

- + What is appearance discrimination?
- + What forms of discrimination (isms) do you know of?

## Page 11 **Combatting Appearance Bias** | 15 mins

- + What can our school do to combat appearance discrimination?
- + How can a more inclusive community be created in our school?
- + What can YOU do if you witness appearance discrimination?
- + How SHOULD middle schoolers respond when they see appearance discrimination?
- + If you're experiencing discrimination, what can you do?

## Page 12 **Closure** | 7 mins

- + What have we learned today?
- + Congratulations!

**Cautionary Time Warning:**  
Some teachers are able to implement the learning activities within the timeframe suggested, while others discuss that due to high student engagement the lesson can span longer (i.e. 90 minutes, extra class period).

# Notes to Educator



## **Partnering with School Support Staff:**

Considering the topic and nature of this workshop, it is recommended that before this lesson, Educators connect with school counseling staff (counselors, social workers, psychologists) to inform them of the upcoming lesson so that they can be prepared for any student support that may be necessary. Educators might consider inviting counseling staff members to be present for and/or co-facilitate the workshop to ensure that students are explicitly aware of supportive staff members.

Additionally, it is strongly suggested that teachers/facilitators discuss the content of the lesson with administration prior to implementation to ensure support and to develop a plan for handling any students who may demonstrate disrespect during the lesson / learning activities.

## **Trauma-Informed Health Education:**

The content of this session may cause discomfort and may trigger strong feelings for students and Educators/facilitators. Educators and workshop leaders are reminded that emotional reactions to sensitive topics may manifest behaviorally during the workshop. Facilitators are encouraged to be prepared to effectively handle emotional responses by students, through de-escalation strategies and/or support from appropriate personnel. Additionally, trauma-informed means antiracist and against all types of oppression. Facilitators must be sure that their behaviors in leading this workshop are all-inclusive (meaning all children in the same classroom; it means providing learning opportunities for groups who have traditionally been excluded, including ELLs, students with differing abilities, and students of all races/ethnicities. Inclusive education values the unique contributions that students from all backgrounds bring to the classroom and allow diverse groups to grow side by side, to the benefit of all. UNICEF) and that students are held to this standard as well.

In an effort to reduce occurrences of “otherness” (the quality or state of being other or different), Educators/facilitators should be mindful of the makeup of the student population. If lesson is facilitated in a predetermined class/group of students, making adjustments for commonality may not be feasible; however if lesson is not facilitated in a predetermined group of students, Educators should aim to ensure that at least 2 students of each marginalized group are included in the creation of groups so that one student does not feel targeted.

## **Personal Biases & Lived Experiences:**

Educators/facilitators should explore and be aware of their own personal bias and lived experiences of privilege or oppression before implementing this workshop. Note that everyone can relate to low self-esteem, but not every Educator/facilitator can relate to the experiences of oppression or discrimination. While answer keys with suggested responses for learning activities are provided in this toolkit, Educators are encouraged to personally work through and complete the student assignments before implementation to understand the experience that students will be having as they participate in the workshop.

## **Potential Adaptations**

While the intention is for this lesson to be facilitated as designed, educators know their students and school communities best and are empowered to make adaptations/modifications as they see fit. Consider the following possible modifications:

- Working through case studies entirely as a large group
- Adding in opportunities for students and staff/trusted adults to share lived experiences
- Involving other trusted adults to facilitate small group conversations while working through case studies
- Integrating children’s stories regarding appearance bias
- Gamifying concepts and/or utilizing educational technology tools
- Adaptations for virtual learners (i.e. digitize case studies & questions, utilize breakout rooms)

# How To Use This Guide

## Suggested Time Allocation

This is the amount of time generally recommended for students, to achieve learning outcomes and improve body confidence. This may be adapted to suit the needs of your class.

 15 mins

## Lesson Learning Objectives

Students should achieve these objectives by the end of each section.

## Presentation

These are visual cues and learning objectives to help you facilitate the lesson effectively.

## Handouts

## Introducing Appearance Ideals

By the end of this activity, students will understand the concepts of body confidence and appearance ideals.

### Presentation



### Educator Actions

Welcome students to the program.

#### Say:

We are going to discuss a variety of topics related to body confidence.

Explain the lesson agreements will help create a supportive, nonjudgmental environment.

It is worth taking time to ensure these agreements feel collaborative and, if necessary, to adjust them to suit the needs of your class.

#### Ask:

Does anyone have any other agreements to add?

### Ask students

(verbally or using technology, like clicker devices):



### Educator Actions

Bullet points highlight important questions to ask students to ensure key concepts are addressed with optimum impact on body confidence.

Text in **BOLD** indicates instructions to help structure planned activities, e.g., when you should play films or use handouts.

### Educator Notes

Students will understand the lesson agreements and feel comfortable being active participants. If you have already established lesson or classroom agreements, you may skip this piece.

### Educator Notes

This quick informal assessment will give you a good idea of how many students are already familiar with the term and whether they have methods to improve their body confidence.

### Desired Responses

Body confidence is feeling comfortable with your appearance and accepting your body for how it looks.

### Notes/Desired Responses

Possible answers to look for from students, but also offers ideas for guiding their responses as they develop their understanding of key concepts and improve their body confidence.

# Introducing Appearance Bias

 3 mins

By the end of this activity, students will understand appearance discrimination.

## Presentation



## Educator Actions

### Introduce the lesson:

Explain that today's lesson will help students think about appearance ideals and appearance diversity and inclusion in our society. The workshop will assist them as they explore discrimination that occurs as a result of appearance ideals and brainstorm ways to create a more appearance-inclusive society.



Lesson group agreements (as in Confident Me lesson 1, if not being taught as an extension).

Reinforce that this learning community and this workshop are intended to empower students. However, discrimination is a sensitive topic that many people, even middle schoolers, have personally experienced. If at any time during this lesson you feel harmed and not empowered, please tell me and we will make a plan to ensure your emotional safety.

## Educator Notes

If allowable by school culture, consider inviting students to step out of the room and/or to visit the counseling center if they need to at any point during the workshop.

## Presentation



## Educator Actions

### Ask:

What are we learning today?

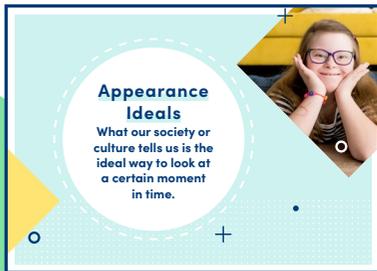
Share the slide and the learning outcomes:

What is appearance discrimination?

How does appearance discrimination affect someone's body confidence?

How can middle schoolers respond when they see appearance discrimination?

What are the benefits of having a more inclusive community?



Review Appearance Ideals by reviewing the slide and the definition listed.

## Educator Notes

This will be a review if this lesson is being taught as an extension to the single lesson or five-lesson program.

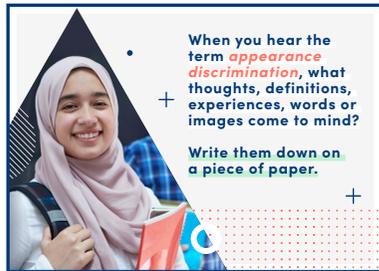
\*If time permits, consider showing (or re-showing) "Change One Thing" video. Please note that if this lesson is being taught in sequence (meaning after the other five Dove Self-Esteem Project lessons), this video will be a repeat from a previous lesson. It is not required to teach this lesson in sequence however.

# Exploring Appearance Discrimination

 30 mins

By the end of this activity, students will learn to identify situations of appearance discrimination and explore opportunities for supporting people who experience it.

## Presentation



## Educator Actions

### Ask:

What do you think appearance discrimination means?

Have students take 2-3 minutes to write or draw a response. Invite them to share out.

Tell them this lesson will address appearance discrimination, how it affects people, and how we can be upstanders and support those who experience appearance discrimination.

Introduce the definition of discrimination:

What is discrimination?

The practice of unfairly treating a person or group differently from other people or groups of people.

If applicable, refer to the chart paper or virtual white board you created as a class. Discuss the connection between their brainstormed ideas and the definition you just shared.

## Educator Notes

**Tech Opportunity:** Students use a platform like Jamboard or MURAL to add an image, word, thought or definition to a virtual white board.

**Creative Opportunity:** Students draw or write their thoughts on large post-it notes and place on a white board or chart paper in the room.

Continued >

## Presentation



## Educator Actions

Explain that there are many “isms” (or forms of discrimination) in our society, which means practicing something. For example, you have probably heard of racism. Racism is when people practice unfair treatment of others based on the opinion of that one race.

Refer to the slide.

### Ask:

What other “isms” (forms of discrimination) can you think of? Have students brainstorm a few.

Share that some of them or people they know have possibly experienced discrimination and that can have a negative impact on a person’s well-being. Before we can dive into combating appearance discrimination, we need to make sure we understand forms of it and how appearance discrimination relates to mental well-being.

### Gradual Release of Responsibility Activity

#### “I Do”

In this first step, the Educator will present a completed example of the work that students will be doing.

#### “We Do”

In this second step, the Educator and students will work together to complete a different case study than what the Educator just presented.

#### “You Do”

Tell students they will be placed into groups to complete this task collaboratively and explore some these forms of discrimination a little more. Remind students of the group agreements. Hand out “Types of Discrimination” page and a Case Study with questions to each group. Have them read it and discuss while answering the questions, referring to the definitions of types of discrimination handout. Ask them to prepare a 1 minute share out with the rest of the class. Each group should select a reporter to share out.

Have each group share. Send students back to their seats.

## Educator Notes

The Educator can refer to the handout to help prompt students, as needed. The students will not yet have this handout.

For the exemplar/model, the Educator should use one case study from the work that they (the Educator) did as preparatory work for this workshop. (see “Personal Biases & Lived Experiences”)

There are many case studies available for student exploration. The Educator should choose an appropriate number of case studies for the class population. There will be opportunities later to explore any unused case studies.

If time does not permit for small group work, it is appropriate to skip this section and focus on the previous activity.

The Educator can/should utilize suggested responses for each case study to prompt students as needed.

# Combatting Appearance Bias

 14 mins

By the end of this activity, students will be empowered to stand up against appearance discrimination.

## Presentation



## Educator Actions

### Say:

We've spent much of this workshop exploring different types of discrimination and the negative impact that appearance discrimination has on a person's well-being. While knowledge IS power, we also have the power to combat discrimination by being an upstander. One person's action can make a difference -- you can make a difference in the life of a person experiencing appearance discrimination.

### Let's start by thinking big:

- What can our school do to combat appearance discrimination?
- How can a more inclusive community be created in our school?

### Now let's narrow of focus:

- What can YOU do if you witness appearance discrimination?
- how SHOULD middle schoolers respond when they see appearance discrimination?

Finally, if you're experiencing discrimination, what can you do?

## Educator Notes

The term "upstander" is commonly used in bullying prevention education. An upstander is a person who stands up for other people.

If students have previous experience with activism and/or advocacy, make that connection here.

Student responses will vary based on the culture, policies, and infrastructure in the school. Educators should brainstorm ideas prior to the workshop.

## Desired Responses

- Question the discriminatory behavior (why are you doing/saying that? why is that happening?)
- Reach out to the person experiencing discrimination - check in on them and let them know that you see the discrimination and that you don't agree. Be inclusive.
- If it's not dangerous to do so in the moment, use your voice to stop the behavior (i.e. "That's out of line" "Cut it out" "I can't believe you're acting this way")
- Tell a trusted adult what you see and how it makes you feel.
- The things that fit what society has determined as the norm are part of the problem. Students can begin to change the norm by asking for changes through letter writing, emails to companies, and using social media to speak up about issues of discrimination.
- Widen doorways
- Train school staff on the correct and incorrect way to treat students who may have additional and/or diverse needs and experiences.

Recognize that it is not YOUR fault, think about your strengths and contributions to the community/school/your friendships and families. Tell students to take no ownership for the actions of others.

The Educator should provide students with information about connecting with appropriate school personnel. Educators should also create a list of local/ regional anti-discrimination and youth empowerment resources / agencies.

# Closure

 3 mins

By the end of this activity, students will be empowered to stand up against appearance discrimination.

## Presentation



## Educator Actions

### Share:

Learning about these forms of discrimination and recognizing their impact on humans is the first step in making our world more inclusive. We don't always have the power to change society/the system right now and in this moment, but we can play a role in our behavior to address discrimination.

### Ask:

What have we learned today?

– Students respond.

Remind students that the workshops in this series are all about learning to challenge or resist the pressures we face to match appearance ideals, and how we can focus on other qualities that help us all make the most of life. Remind students that our appearance has little to do with who we are because our qualities have nothing to do with our appearance.



**Thank students for their participation and draw the workshop to a close.**

# Closure

## **Suggested Revisit of Concepts:**

In an effort to solidify and extend student learning, consider revisiting a case study that was not discussed during today's workshop in 2-3 weeks and then again in 5-6 more weeks.

## **Additional Suggested Resources**

### **Childrens' Books:**

A Kids Book About Racism

Sulwe by Lupita Nyong'o (video)

Hair Love by Matthew A. Cherry (video)

I Am Enough by Grace Byers (video)

A Kids Book About Belonging

Eyes That Kiss in the Corners by Joanna Ho

What If We Were All The Same by CM Harris

### **Middle Grades/YA Book**

We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices Edited by Hudson & Hudson

This Book is Anti-Racist by Tiffany Jewell

Stamped By Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi

