

Confident Me | Session 2 of 5

# Media Messages

**Workshop  
guide for  
educators**

# Getting started

## Program materials

### In-person delivery:

- Workshop presentation
- This workshop guide
- Two example ads (see the preparation notes below)
- Worksheets (emailed to students in advance if virtual delivery)
  - > Decoding Media Messages (one per student or pair)
  - > Going Further (one per student)
- Links to the stimulus films:
  - > Dove: [Selfie](#)
  - > Dove: [Reverse Selfie](#)

### 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:

- Build media literacy, exploring how images and messages, from advertising to cinema and social media, are often manipulations of the truth.
- Understand that it can be harmful to compare ourselves to images in the media because images often promote unrealistic appearance ideals in order to sell us products and services.
- Generate ways they can challenge and reject media images and messages that promote appearance ideals.

# Preparing to lead the workshop

## In-person delivery preparation:

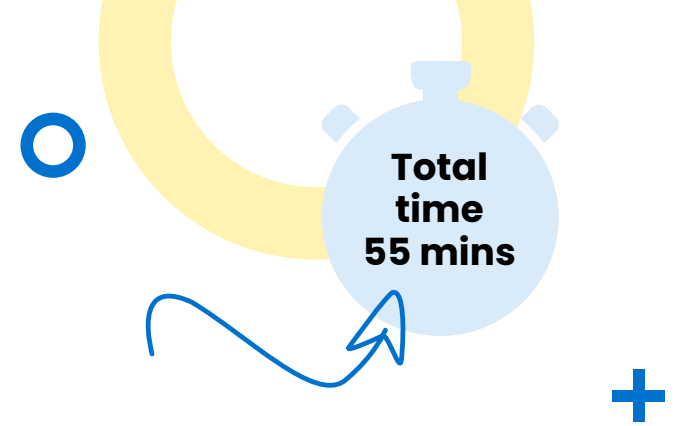
1. Ensure that you have a device and projector or some other way to display the presentation slides for students to see. This presentation includes a video, so you will also need internet connection to access the videos and speakers for sound.
2. If you are using the optional Kahoot or Mentimeter materials, 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.
5. Slide 8 “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.

## 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.
6. See “How are appearance ideals used in marketing/advertising” activity preparation to the left (#5).



# Workshop overview



## 1. ⌚ 10 mins Introduction

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

## 2. ⌚ 25 mins Appearance ideals and image manipulation

- What do we mean by media?
- How can images be manipulated?
- How are appearance ideals used in marketing/advertising?

## 3. ⌚ 10 mins Impact of media messages

- What is the impact of media messages?

## 4. ⌚ 5 mins Be a body confidence champion

- How will you 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.

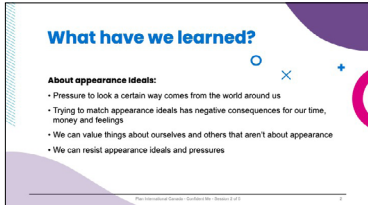


# Welcome

10 mins



## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Welcome students to the 'Media Messages' session. 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.
2. Conduct a land acknowledgment.

### Do

1. Invite one or two students to recall what they learned in the previous session. Invite another one or two students to share how they challenged appearance ideals since the last session.
2. Summarize any key learning outcomes from the previous session students have missed.

### 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.

## Notes & variations

### Virtual Delivery

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

### 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 handout for more information and resources.

### Virtual Delivery

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

# Appearance ideals & image manipulation



25 mins

## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Discuss

Ask students to call out different types of media.

TV, magazines, social media, film, the news

Explain that these types of media fall into broad categories.

Explain the types of media using the definitions below.

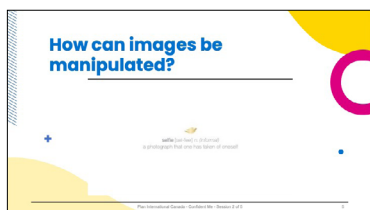
Ask students to provide examples of each kind of media.

- **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.

## Notes & variations



## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Explain that you will now explore how interacting with images we see can be a source of appearance pressures.
2. **Ask: Can you think of a time when you--or someone that you know--have compared themselves and their life to someone else, such as their friends or influencers, on social media?**
3. **Play the video “Selfie”**
4. Ask students to pay attention to the different ways that the image was created or manipulated (changed from real life).

### Discuss

After viewing the video, ask for volunteers to describe in their own words: **What is the video about?** *How much work goes into editing photos on social media. It is made to look casual/natural, but there is a lot of editing to make it look that way. Showing how social media isn't real life. The model/influencer took a selfie in a coffee shop--but it's not actually a selfie.*

**Is it always obvious if and how an image or video posted to social media has been manipulated?** *No, because people invest a lot of time, money, and effort into making social media images look natural.*

Explain to students that influencers (and other people) often invest a considerable amount of time and money into creating images and other content for social media. For example, they may purchase expensive lighting equipment to bounce the light or ring lights to create an even and soft lighting effect. They may have paid for an expensive photo editing app or have hired a professional to edit their photos, as we saw in the video. Mention that this is another way that the line between professional and personal media is blurred. ►

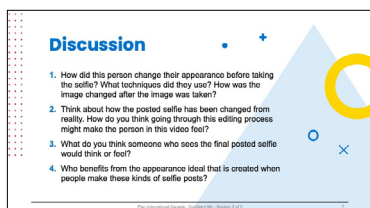
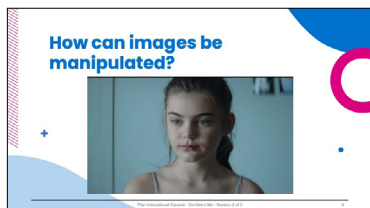
## Notes & variations

### Definition

**Influencer:** A social media influencer is someone who has built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic. They often create trends and encourage their followers to buy or use products and services.



## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Tell students that now they are going to view a second video, and to pay attention to the different ways that the image was created or manipulated (changed from real life).

### 1. *Play the video “Reverse Selfie”*

### Do

1. Split the class into **small groups**\*. Assign each group one of the questions, then replay the video.
2. Give each group time to discuss their question before rejoining for a class discussion.

1. **How did the person change their appearance before taking the selfie? What techniques did they use? How was the image changed after the photo was taken?**

2. **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?**

3. **What do you think someone who sees the final posted selfie would think or feel?**

4. **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.

### Virtual Delivery

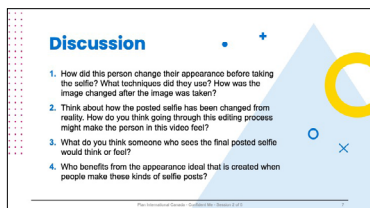
Use breakout rooms for the small group discussion. If breakout rooms are not available or are not feasible (e.g., not enough staff members for each room), ask the discussion questions to the large group.

### 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

(Slide 7 continued)



## Educator prompts

### Discuss

After the small group discussion, ask for volunteers from one or more groups to share what they discussed with the large group. Ask students to consider any similarities or differences between the Selfie and Reverse Selfie videos (e.g., types of manipulation techniques used, impacts of the image to viewers)

Next, pose the following questions to the whole class:

- **Why do you think it is unrealistic, unfair, and even harmful to ourselves and others 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.)?**
- These videos are only two examples of one person's experience with posting a selfie on social media.  
**How might the experiences of youth who are non-binary, Black, Indigenous, or from a different country/ culture be similar to or different from these examples?**

**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?)

### Say

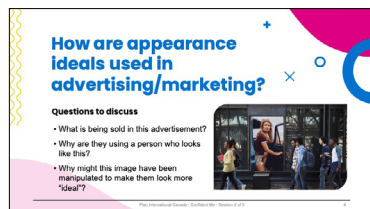
**Closing script:** These videos are an example of the “appearance ideals” that are promoted through the social media we consume. It is important to remember that these videos portray a single perspective, one that is often portrayed in advertisements/ professional media that are depicting a beauty standard (e.g., the beauty standard of ‘thinness,’ or ‘blondness’).

## Notes & variations

### Do it differently

**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 these videos only show two people, but these are the kind of people who are often portrayed in advertisements/ professional media that are depicting a beauty standard (e.g., the beauty standard of ‘thinness,’ or ‘blondness’).

## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Introduce this activity by telling students that now that they've seen how images on social media can be manipulated, they are going to now look at professional advertising media.
2. Show the class your first advertisement.

### Discuss

Guide the group through a discussion which answers the three questions (listed on the slide). Ask:

- **What is being sold in this advertisement?**
- **Why are they using a person who looks like this?**
- **Why would they manipulate a picture of this person to make them look more "ideal"?**

*Repeat with the second advertisement.*

- **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/use the services that are being sold.*

Wrap up this section by summarizing that both images on social media and images used in advertising and marketing are often manipulated and can negatively impact viewers' body confidence in similar ways. Make the point that these images tend to represent one type of appearance (white, thin/muscular, feminine/masculine, etc) and the impacts from viewing these images impact people differently based on things like skin colour, gender identity, and body size.

## 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 above 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.

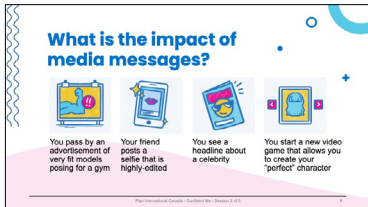




# Impact of media messages

10 mins

## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Do

1. Introduce this activity by telling students that they are now going to explore messages behind different media and the reasons why it is harmful to compare themselves to such images.
2. Provide students with the Decoding Media Messages worksheet and instruct them to respond to each scenario independently, or if the group is large, in pairs.
3. Ask for one or two volunteers to share their answers for each scenario.

### Discuss

Ask the class the following questions:

- **How many times a day are you confronted with these messages?** *Many.*
- **The next time you are confronted with one of these messages, how will you think differently about it?**  
*Example responses: Recognize that the image has likely been manipulated, be aware that the advertisement uses models that meet appearance ideals (often through image manipulation) as a strategy to get you to buy the product/service, be aware that these messages negatively impact body confidence, it is unfair and harmful to compare myself and others to these images/messages.*

## Notes & variations

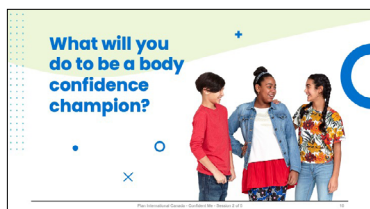
### Tip

If students are having trouble with this question, ask them to consider how many times a day they look at social media apps, watch TV, see advertisements in magazines, on the side of a bus, or when they are walking down the street. They don't need to provide a specific number of times, rather the purpose is to get them to recognize that they are exposed to media messages regularly throughout the day.

# Be a body confidence champion



## Presentation



## Educator prompts

### Say

**What action could you take to challenge appearance ideals in the media?** Example responses: start a petition or write to your local politicians to change advertising laws, start a #hashtag to ask your favourite clothing store to stop retouching their models, avoid sharing edited images and videos on social media, talk to your friends and families about the impacts of image manipulation to body confidence.

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.

### Do it differently

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



### Discuss

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

- It's important to remember images of people that we see in all types of media are not always real (they may be manipulated).
- It is harmful to compare real people to manipulated images
- It's unfair to compare ourselves to the media.
- We can think critically about these messages and take action in our communities to change these messages and their impacts.



## 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