

BODY DIVERSITY:

→ ***I have a role to play*** ←

Workshop facilitator document
To be experienced as a group

Theme

The importance of role models in promoting body diversity

Workshop objectives

Make participants aware of how they can:

- Influence how young people perceive their bodies and their well-being,
- Help young people around them develop a positive body image by being open and respectful in terms of body diversity.

Tips on promoting a positive body image among youths

- Be aware that your words, attitude, and actions have an effect on young people (i.e., you are a role model).
- Be aware of your own worries and prejudices regarding weight and physical appearance.
- When you are around young people, promote body diversity and focus on enjoying healthy eating and being active for its own sake rather than weight loss.

Centre intégré
universitaire de santé
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de la Capitale-Nationale

Québec



mobilisation

régionale et locale sur les saines
habitudes de vie, le poids et la santé
de la Capitale-Nationale

Tips

on how to lead the activity

Reminder:

It's important to promote body diversity in what we say and do in our everyday lives.

By being open and respectful to body diversity, we can help the young people we deal with develop a positive body image.

1. This activity should be done in person

A. Take some time before the workshop to read this document, draw parallels with past experiences, arrange the statements and the rating scale on the wall or the floor, and adapt the terms used to suit the participants.

Suggestion: Group the participants together according to their answers or perceptions (e.g., an imaginary line representing the scale between “Agree” and “Disagree”).

B. Allow at least 30 minutes for the workshop.

2. Introduction

Start by explaining why they have been invited to take part in this activity. Use the information provided in this document (e.g., statistics, what it means to be a role model), show how it relates to past training, your organization's values, or personal experiences.

Remember: Ideally, the workshop should be adapted to reflect your reality. It introduces a concept and helps participants think about body diversity.

3. Conducting the activity

For every statement:

A. Read the statement

B. Ask each participant to indicate whether they agree using the scale

C. Read the key message

D. Read “What to remember” (and discuss, if possible)

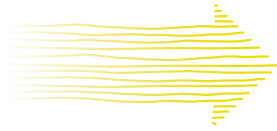
4. Conclusion

Allow time for discussion and see what the participants think. Feedback is essential.

Did you know?

In Quebec:

- 49% of secondary school students are unsatisfied with their appearance¹;
- 70% of adolescents try to lose weight²;
- 35% of 9 year old girls have already tried to lose weight²;
- Approximately a third of boys age 13 to 16 would like to have a bigger frame²;
- 35% of boys age 16 frequently do intensive workouts to get bigger²;
- Over 40% of boys age 13 to 16 have already tried using weight gain supplements²;
- Children start noticing their reflection in a mirror at the age of 2³;
- Children start being concerned about their body image at the age of 3³;
- Between the ages of 0 and 7, children build their self-image through their parents' eyes³;
- Between the ages of 8 and 12, they base their self-image through the eyes of others³.



Concerns over weight and body dissatisfaction can cause anxiety and lead young people to behave in ways that could pose a risk to their physical and mental health (e.g., excessive working out, taking supplements, dieting, fasting).

Young people who are unsatisfied with their appearance or weight may worry about being judged and consequently avoid enjoyable activities or develop unhealthy relationships with food (e.g., restrictions, fasting, dieting). Concerns over weight and body dissatisfaction can affect young people of any weight. A healthy body image means having a realistic and overall positive image of one's body, including appearance, weight, abilities, attractiveness, etc. It is a person's ability to see their body as it is at the moment and appreciate its abilities and distinct features⁴.

1. Québec Health Survey of High School Students, 2010-2011.
2. LEDOUX, Marielle, Lyne MONGEAU and Michèle RIVARD (2002). "Weight and body image" in The Québec Child and Adolescent Health and Social Survey, 1999, Quebec, Institut de la statistique du Québec, chapter 14, p. 311 to 344.
3. CANADIAN OBESITY NETWORK.
4. DAGENAIS, F., A-A. Dufour-Bouchard and J. TRUDEL, (2014). Definition of a healthy body image, Quebec: ÉquiLibre.

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Statement

I Young people aren't affected by what I say about body weight.

Examples

- That guy's just skin and bones. He should work out.
- I need to lose a few pounds, so I'm watching what I need right now.
- Have you seen (celebrity) lately? She's put on some weight.

A. Agree

C. Somewhat disagree

B. Somewhat agree

D. Disagree

Key message

Kids watch you, listen to you, imitate you.

What to remember

Around young people, avoid talking about dieting or making comments (even positive comments) on weight and physical appearance.

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Statement

2

**I work with young people,
so I have to be a perfect role model.**


- 
- A.** Agree
 - B.** Somewhat agree
 - C.** Somewhat disagree
 - D.** Disagree

Key message



You don't have to be perfect to be a good role model!

What to remember



Your life away from work is personal, but when you're around young people, remember that you're a role model and speak and act accordingly. It's not about being perfect. It's about being aware that your words, actions, and attitude can influence young people.

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Statement

3 TV, magazines, and social media represent a wide variety of body shapes.

- A.** Agree
- B.** Somewhat agree
- C.** Somewhat disagree
- D.** Disagree

Key message

The beauty standards presented in the media and advertising are narrow and unrealistic. The image industry uses many different techniques to create the concept of a perfect body, and these techniques can also be used on social media.

What to remember


Encourage young people to use critical thinking by taking every opportunity to discuss body diversity in the media (e.g., while talking about a photo or post on social media, a video, a magazine, shopped photos, reality TV, someone's comment on weight).

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Statement

1 What you see and hear around you influences how you feel about your body.


- 
- A.** Agree
 - B.** Somewhat agree
 - C.** Somewhat disagree
 - D.** Disagree

Key message



There is social pressure around weight and appearance.

What to remember

- 
- Recognize and focus on the strong points of the people around you.
 - Social pressure is real, but you can filter those messages and promote more positive ones.

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Statement

5

Everyone has prejudices when it comes to weight and appearance.

- A. Agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Somewhat disagree
- D. Disagree

Key message

Become aware of your own prejudices about weight and appearance because they influence your words and action.

What to remember

- Don't say things that promote prejudice.
- Speak up when you hear a negative comment about weight or appearance. Refer to your organization's code of conduct if it applies.

Example: "We don't use that kind of language here" or "We don't tolerate those types of comments here."

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Conclusion

By being open and respectful in terms of body diversity you can help the young people around you develop a positive body image.

Questions for further discussion

Has this workshop convinced you that you are a role model and you can help promote body diversity among young people?

How do you think you'll use your position as a role model in regards to body diversity?

Tools for further exploration

- ÉquiLibre
 - In the “Approche et problématique” section (open all subsection in the dropdown menu on the left) (in French only): www.equilibre.ca/approche-et-problematique/une-nouvelle-facon-d-aborder-la-situation
 - “Nos campagnes” section: www.equilibre.ca/nos-campagnes
- Video for professionals working with kids age 0 to 5: *Miroir, miroir dis-moi* (in French only): www.nospetitsmangeurs.org/video/miroir-miroir-dis-moi

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Sources

These key messages are inspired by concepts taken from the training session entitled “Encourage a healthy body image among teenagers” developed and offered by ÉquiLibre*.

This training session is available to anyone working with young people. To find out more, go to www.equilibre.ca/formations-continues. (French only)

ÉquiLibre also offers a workshop for camp counselors: “Bullying based on appearance: the summer camp counselor’s role”. To find out more, go to www.equilibre.ca/ate-liers-et-conferences. (French only)

* ÉquiLibre is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to prevent and address problems related to weight and body image by encouraging and helping people develop a positive body image and adopt healthy habits. To carry out this mission, ÉquiLibre uses intervention programs and awareness campaigns in school, the healthcare system, workplaces, and communities. www.equilibre.ca.

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Acknowledgements

Mobilisation régionale et locale sur les saines habitudes de vie, le poids et la santé de la Capitale-Nationale wishes to thank its partners for helping to create environments that encourage residents of the Capitale-Nationale region to adopt a healthy lifestyle and reduce social health inequality. La Mobilisation is especially grateful to those who contributed to creating this workshop.

For a complete list of our partners, go to www.mobilisationshv.com.