



## Banishing Body Talk

### Lesson Summary

In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to define the term “body talk”, and discuss why people engage in conversations about appearance. Students will also begin to recognize the problems body talk can cause and develop strategies to challenge the use of body talk. Students will begin to develop strategies to build their own body confidence.

### Teacher Message

It is essential for students to understand the term “body talk” and the potential implications of negative body talk. Body talk refers to any conversation or comment that reinforces appearance ideals and the pressures to maintain appearance ideals. Body talk is used frequently in our society for many different reasons. 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 a person’s other, more intrinsic qualities such as actions, interests, and activities.

### Materials

LCD projector and/or whiteboard  
Pens  
Spare paper  
Flipchart and markers

### Dove® Confident Me: School Workshops for Body Confidence

Session 4: “Banish Body Talk” (available at <https://beyondimagesca.files.wordpress.com/2022/06/confident-me-04-banish-body-talk.zip>)

- Workshop guide for teachers
- Workshop interactive
- Student activity sheets

### Media Clips

*Body Talk Conversations with Friends*, Dove Self-Esteem Project. (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVD--CVZaU>)

*Body Talk Conversations with the Team*, Dove Self-Esteem Project. (available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GC4FY3uiB\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GC4FY3uiB_s))

*Body Talk Conversations with the Mirror*, Dove Self-Esteem Project. (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZws4w6foEU>)

*Soundtrack to School*, Dove Self-Esteem Project. (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bM7PfzSt2-Y>)

### Learning Organizers

Learning Organizer 1-1 How Do We Use Body Talk?  
Learning Organizer 1-2 How Can We Challenge Body Talk?

### Assessment Tools

Assessment Tool Lesson 1 Tweet Rubric

## Supporting Curriculum Outcomes

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## Lesson Outline

### Inspiration: How will I engage the students?

1. **Introduce students to the Dove Confident Me: “Banish Body Talk” workshop.** Share slide 3, “What Are We Learning Today?” This slide presents the key learning goals for the “Banish Body Talk” workshop: understanding what body talk is, understanding the problems it can cause, and developing strategies for challenging the use of body talk in students’ lives.
2. **Share slide 4, “How Do We Talk About Appearance?”** (Note: Ensure students understand the word “appearance” before discussing this question.) As a whole class, brainstorm different ways that people might talk about appearance. List students’ ideas on chart paper or on a whiteboard.

### Facilitation: How will students learn the concepts?

3. **Share slide 5, “What Is Body Talk?”** Invite a student to read aloud the definition of body talk. Encourage students to share their thinking about the definition — what does body talk mean to them? Ensure students understand that body talk includes any conversation about appearance, whether positive or negative. Reinforce the idea that body talk includes comments about your own or a friend’s appearance, and can also be commenting on a celebrity’s or another person’s looks.
4. **Show the video *Body Talk Conversations with Friends* to the whole class.** (Consider playing the video a couple of times to ensure that the students have had an opportunity to listen to and think about the dialogue).
5. **As a whole class, discuss the video. Pose questions such as the following:** Where and when is the conversation in the video taking place? What is being said? Does it seem well-meaning or harmful? Why do you think these people are talking about appearance? How do you think both young people feel about their appearance? As students share their thinking, guide students to identify some of the key issues in this clip: one girl compliments another on her hair, and the girl receiving the compliment acts self-consciously and rejects the compliment. The compliment-giver might start thinking about hair more, spending more time on it, and the compliment-receiver may feel she always needs reassurance about her hair, or that she can’t change the style now because it’s the one that people said suits her.
6. Ask students to record their answers to the questions for the first video *Body Talk Conversations with Friends* on **Learning Organizer 1-1 How Do We Use Body Talk?**

### Application: How will students demonstrate their learning?

7. **Have students view two more Body Talk videos, *Conversations with the Team* and *Conversations with the Mirror*,** and record their answers to the questions about these videos on Learning Organizer 1-1 to identify the key aspects of the conversations taking place in each video. Once students have answered the questions on their own, invite them to share their responses in small groups.

8. **Debrief the videos by discussing some key points with students**, including the fact that people engage in body talk for many reasons: as a common form of greeting, to fit in, to be reassured about their own appearance and to reassure others, to seem modest, to prevent teasing, to praise someone they think meets appearance ideals, and to express worry or anxiety about appearance.
9. **Explain that now that students have now identified different examples of body talk, they are going to consider the impact body talk can have.** Play the video *Soundtrack to School*. (Consider playing the video a couple of times if time permits, to allow the students to view and consider the information shared in it.) Ask students to consider the following questions: *How many times a day do you think a person encounters body talk? What is the total effect of all of these appearance-based conversations? How might all it leave people feeling?*
10. **Initiate a class discussion about the slide 9, “We Hear Body Talk all the Time”.** As part of the discussion, reinforce the idea that a person’s mood is strongly influenced by what people think about their appearance, both day-to-day and also in the long term. A person who hears a lot of body talk can be left thinking that appearance is more important than it really is, and could forget to focus on qualities and activities they actually value and enjoy. Encourage students to share their thoughts and examples that may help other students understand that both positive and negative body talk can have negative consequences for a person who engages in body talk and for those around them. 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 counterproductive.  
  
Some students may not easily understand that positive body talk can still be unhelpful, leading to unhappiness in the long term. Here is an example to illustrate the point: Three friends are together when one compliments another about their appearance. 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.
11. **As a whole class, read the role play scenarios on Learning Organizer 1-2 “How Can We Challenge Body Talk?”** out loud. Arrange students in pairs, and instruct students to complete at least two of the role plays on Learning Organizer 1-2. Allow about 10 minutes for students to discuss the scenarios and to practise changing the conversation away from appearance. 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 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.
12. **Invite a few pairs to present or discuss their role plays.** Encourage follow-up discussion by asking questions such as *How long could you continue the conversation without resorting to body talk? How easy or hard did you find avoiding body talk? Who managed to keep the conversation going the longest, and how did you achieve this?*
13. **Ask students to create a tweet that summarizes their key learning in this lesson about the use of body talk.** Encourage students to identify some key characteristics of a strong tweet. If an online Twitter account is available for the class, students could post their tweets. Alternatively, a bulletin board could be created and tweets could be written on paper strips and displayed on the board for students to read and reflect upon.

**Reflection: How will students reflect on their learning?**

**Show slide 12, “What Have We Learned Today?”** Ask volunteers to read out the key learning points on the slide, and invite students to share any other key ideas they have come to understand in the lesson.

**Ask students to consider how effective their tweets were,** and identify any challenges they encountered when trying to summarize key learning points.

**Assessment**

Assessment Tool Lesson 1 Tweet Rubric can be used to assess students’ body talk tweets.

**Related resources to extend learning**

**Best Bets for Teachers:**

Hartley-Brewer, E., 2001. *Raising Confident Boys – 100 Tips for Parents and Teachers*. Da Capo Press Learn to take advantage of everyday situations to bolster boys’ self-image and self-esteem.

Hartley-Brewer, E., 2001. *Raising Confident Girls – 100 Tips for Parents and Teachers*. Da Capo Press Learn to take advantage of everyday situations to bolster girls’ self-image and self-esteem.

Kater, K., 2004. *Real Kids Come in All Sizes; Ten Essential Lessons to Build Your Child’s Body Esteem*. Broadway Provides background information and strategies to encourage normal eating and physical activity and acceptance of size diversity.

**Best Bets for Students:**

Danielsdottir, Sigrun, 2014. *Your Body is Awesome: Body Respect for Children*. Singing Dragon.

Moss, Wendy, 2010. *Being Me: A Kid’s Guide to Boosting Confidence and Self-esteem*. Magination Press.

## Learning Organizer 1-1 How Do We Use Body Talk?\*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Explore the different examples of body talk shown in the films, recording your answers below.

### Part A: Conversations with Friends

1. Where/when is this conversation taking place?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the conversation seem well-meaning, or harmful?

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How do you think this conversation will affect their feelings about their appearance in the long-term?

\_\_\_\_\_

### Part B: Conversations with the Team

5. Where/when is this conversation taking place?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Does the conversation seem well-meaning, or harmful?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. How do you think this conversation makes all the young people feel about their appearance?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How do you think this conversation will affect their feelings about their appearance in the long-term?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Learning Organizer 1-1 How Do We Use Body Talk?\* *(continued)*

### Part C: Conversations with the Mirror

9. Where/when is this conversation taking place?

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10. Does the conversation seem well-meaning, or harmful?

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11. How do you think this conversation makes the person feel about their appearance?

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12. How do you think this conversation will affect the person's feelings about their appearance in the long-term?

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\* From Dove Confident Me Session 4: "Banish Body Talk." Used with permission.

## Learning Organizer 1-2 How Can We Challenge Body Talk?\*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Work in pairs to prepare a role play. Label yourselves Person A and Person B.

Read the situations below and practise changing the conversation away from appearance.

Person A Read the text in <i>italics</i> out loud to <b>Person B</b> .	Person B Reply to <b>Person A</b> , changing the conversation away from appearance.
1. Your friend posts a selfie at the gym with the caption <b>Person A:</b> <i>"Working hard on my #beachbody. The countdown to summer is on!"</i> <b>Person B</b> replies: ...	2. Your sibling is looking through the photos on your phone <b>Person A:</b> <i>"Those jeans make your legs look really good in that picture!"</i> <b>Person B</b> replies: ...
3. You're with friends and see a girl from school walking down the street: <b>Person A:</b> <i>"Wow, her skin is so bad. Hasn't she heard of makeup?"</i> <b>Person B</b> replies: ...	4. Your cousin shares the latest [beauty/skin lightening] hack trending on social media <b>Person A:</b> <i>"This actually works!"</i> <b>Person B</b> replies: ...
5. You're getting changed for gym class: <b>Person A:</b> <i>"Wow, you look so [skinny/toned/fit] now!"</i> <b>Person B</b> replies: ...	

### Feeling stuck?

You could change the conversation like this:

#### Person B:

Talking about appearance is unhelpful because ...

Talking about appearance is a waste of energy because ...

Let's talk about ...

You could also try swapping roles, or acting out a different situation.

\* From Dove Confident Me Session 4: "Banish Body Talk." Used with permission.

## Tweet Rubric

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four
CONTENT				
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet demonstrates limited understanding of key ideas about “body talk” and little or no supporting evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet demonstrates some understanding of key ideas about “body talk” and some supporting evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet demonstrates understanding of key ideas about “body talk” and supporting evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet demonstrates clear understanding of key ideas about “body talk” and strong supporting evidence.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization of Ideas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet has fewer than 100 or more than 140 characters.</li> <li>• Tweet is not organized to create a clear summary of main idea.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet has fewer than 100 or more than 140 characters.</li> <li>• Tweet uses simple ideas and may not include hashtags, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet has 100–140 characters.</li> <li>• Tweet catches readers’ attention and includes use of hashtags, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet has 100–140 characters.</li> <li>• Tweet is original and uses interesting phrases and/or ideas. Includes use of hashtags, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Use of conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet includes several spelling and punctuation errors that detract from message.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet uses some spelling and punctuation conventions effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet uses spelling and punctuation conventions effectively to convey meaning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tweet uses spelling and punctuation conventions effectively to convey meaning creatively.</li> </ul>



## Supporting Curriculum Outcomes

### Alberta

#### Language Arts

- Explain understanding of new concepts in own words.
- Explore ideas and feelings by asking questions, talking to others and referring to oral, print and other media texts.
- Choose appropriate forms of oral, print and other media texts for communicating and sharing ideas with others.
- Comprehend new ideas and information by responding personally and discussing ideas with others.
- Select from the ideas and observations of others to expand personal understanding.
- Produce narratives that describe experiences and reflect personal responses.

#### Health

- Recognize that individuals can have a positive and negative influence on the feelings of others.
- Demonstrate respectful communication skills.

### Atlantic Provinces

#### Language Arts

- Explore and discuss their thoughts, ideas, and experiences and consider those of their peers.
- Explain personal opinions and respond to the questions and opinions of others.
- Contribute to conversations, small-group and whole-group discussion, showing an awareness of when to speak and when to listen.
- Show basic courtesies of conversation in group interactions.
- Identify examples of prejudice and stereotyping in oral language, and use language that shows respect for all people.
- Demonstrate an awareness of purpose and audience.

### British Columbia

#### Language Arts

- Use speaking and listening to interact with others.
- Use speaking to explore, express, and present a range of ideas, information, and feelings.
- Listen purposefully to understand ideas and information.
- Use speaking and listening to improve and extend thinking.
- Respond to selections they read or view.
- Read and view to improve and extend thinking.
- Use writing and representing to express personal responses and relevant opinions in response to experiences and texts.
- Reflect on and assess their writing and representing.

#### Health

- Describe interpersonal skills necessary to build positive relationships.

### Manitoba

#### Language Arts

- Explore connections between a variety of insights, ideas, and responses.
- Explore a variety of forms of expression for particular personal purposes.
- Express new concepts and understanding in own words and explain their importance.
- Reflect on ideas and experiences and ask questions to clarify and extend understanding.
- Demonstrate appropriate audience behaviours.
- Describe relationships between own and others' ideas and experiences.
- Encourage, support, and work with others.

#### Health

- Demonstrate an awareness of factors that influence self-esteem and self-confidence.

## **Newfoundland and Labrador**

### **Health**

Identify and demonstrate communication skills during group activities.

## **Nova Scotia**

### **Health**

Demonstrate respect and caring in relating to classmates.

## **Ontario**

### **Language Arts**

Explain why different audiences might respond differently to specific media texts.

Use overt and implied messages to draw inferences and construct meaning in media texts.

Extend understanding of oral texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights; to other texts, including print and visual texts; and to the world around them.

Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate speaking behaviour in a variety of situations, including paired sharing and small- and large-group discussions.

Identify and order main ideas and supporting details and group them into units that could be used to develop a summary, using a variety of graphic organizers.

## **Prince Edward Island**

### **Health**

Recognize that individuals can have a positive and negative influence on the feelings of others.

Demonstrate respectful communication skills.

## **Québec**

### **Language Arts**

Produce self-expressive, narrative and information-based texts for a familiar audience.

Communicate meaning through writing that shows an early awareness of appropriate language register and basic syntactic structures in a known, relevant context.

Use language/talk as a means of exploring, expressing and developing thoughts, feelings and imagination.

Self-evaluate her/his language development, with guidance.

## **Saskatchewan**

### **Language Arts**

Compose and create a range of visual, multimedia, oral, and written texts that explore identity, community, and social responsibility.