

FEELING GOOD ABOUT OUR BODIES AND OUR SELVES

TIP SHEET FOR STUDENTS

What is Body Image?

Body image is what you believe, think, and feel about your body. Body image includes how you feel about all of your physical features (e.g., weight, height, facial features, colour, physical maturation), and abilities. Our body image is influenced by what we learn from others (e.g., parents, doctors, media and friends) about how bodies are seen. When we talk about body image, we are talking about:

- What we believe about our bodies (e.g., bodies are strong; bodies need nurturing).
- How we feel about the way that we look (e.g., "Sometimes I wish that I was taller, but I love my big smile.")
- How we feel about what we can do with our bodies (e.g., "I can be adventurous because my body is strong.")
- How we think others see us (e.g., "My friends think that I am attractive.")

How Will a Positive Body Image Help Me?

It's hard to feel good about yourself if you don't like your body, right? That's why it is so important to have a positive body image. When you feel good about your body, you will feel better about yourself. Here are some of the good things that can happen when you accept your body:

- You feel like you are important and worthy, even when you make mistakes.
- You have more confidence to try new things.
- You will feel comfortable with who you are.
- You know that you can take good care of your body and your self, (e.g., eating well and being active; brushing your teeth; taking soothing baths or listening to music to relax).

How Can I Develop a More Positive Body Image?

The list below provides some tips on how to improve your body confidence, which you can also use to help your friends feel better about themselves.

- Think about all of the things that you like about your body (e.g., eyes, hands, strong legs, soft skin).
- Think about and remind yourself of all the things that you do well (e.g., being a good friend, making people laugh, being creative).

- Think about all of the great ways that your body works for you: your legs get you from one place to another; your lungs give you the breath you need to laugh, etc.
- Take care of yourself – eat well, sleep well, participate in activities that you enjoy, spend time with people who care about you.
- Dress in clothes that you like and that you feel comfortable in.
- When you are upset or angry, try to find a positive way to cope with those feelings (e.g., writing in a journal, painting, going for a walk, sharing feelings with a close friend or a trusted adult).
- Talk with friends about the all the things that you like about them.
- Read stories – fiction or fact – about how other people your age cope with their difficulties. This can give you ideas to try on your own. Ask your teacher for suggested books or websites.