

Banish Body Talk

Workshop Guide for Teachers

workshop
4 of 5

Dove
self-esteem
project



Learning outcomes and resources

IN THIS WORKSHOP STUDENTS WILL HAVE:

- **Understood what is meant by body talk**, and why people engage in conversations about appearance.
- **Recognised the problems body talk can cause** and developed strategies to challenge the use of body talk.
- **Committed to taking action** to build their body confidence.

RESOURCES YOU WILL NEED:

Workshop materials

Workshop guide

Workshop presentation

Two activity sheets (one set per student)

Going further sheet (one per student)

Stimulus films:

- 'Dove: Conversations with Friends'
- 'Dove: Conversations with the Team'
- 'Dove: Conversations with the Mirror'
- 'Dove: Soundtrack to School'

These films reveal to students just how common body talk is in all of our lives. We might give someone a compliment, engage in internal dialogue about our appearance, or participate in appearance-based teasing. However, regardless of whether it is well-intentioned or not, these films reveal all these conversations about appearance can be harmful for our body confidence. Such conversations cause us to place too much emphasis on the way we look and reinforce appearance ideals.

From your school

Projector and whiteboard

Students will each need a pen

OPTIONAL:

Spare paper
Flipchart and markers

What is body talk?

Body talk refers to any conversation or comment that reinforces and keeps appearance ideals and pressures going. It is frequently used in our society for many different reasons. However, 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 focusing on valuing other, more intrinsic qualities in a person or on their actions, interests and activities.



Overview

Total time: 45 minutes



INTRODUCING BODY TALK 20 MINUTES page 5

- What have we learned?
- What are we learning today?
- How do we talk about appearance?
- What is body talk?
- How do we use body talk?

CHALLENGING BODY TALK 20 MINUTES page 11

- What is the impact of body talk?
- How can we challenge body talk?

BE A CHAMPION FOR CHANGE 5 MINUTES page 13

- What have we learned today?
- How will you be a champion for change?
- Congratulations!
- Going further

How to use this guide

Learning outcome. Students should achieve this by the end of the section.

Visual cues and learning objectives. To help you steer the workshop and deliver it effectively.

Teacher actions. Non-italic bullet points highlight important questions to ask students to ensure key workshop concepts are addressed with optimum impact on body confidence. Text in italics indicates instructions to help structure workshop activities, e.g. where you should play films or use activity sheets. These can be adapted by you to suit the specific needs of your class.

Desired responses from students. To help you guide students' answers in a way that develops their understanding throughout the workshop and has greatest impact on their body confidence.

Suggested time allocation. Reflects the relative importance of each section for achieving learning outcomes and improving students' body confidence, but may be adapted to suit the length of your lesson.

Notes. Ideas and guidance for optimising the effectiveness of the workshop for students.

Key activities. The key activities are those that are most effective for improving body confidence. These are shown in blue and should be prioritised if you are short of time.

Workshop 1 of 5
Banish Body Talk

Challenging body talk

By the end of this section, students will have recognised the problems body talk can cause and developed strategies to challenge the use of body talk.

2 PRESENTATION

What is the impact of body talk?

Students will understand how the frequency of body talk, both positive and negative occurrences, can shape our mood and make appearance seem more important than it really is, having a harmful overall impact on our self-esteem.

TEACHER ACTIONS

- > Explain that now they have identified different examples of body talk, we are going to consider the impact body talk can have.
- > **Play 'Dove: Soundtrack to School'.**
- > Initiate a class discussion.

4 DESIRED RESPONSES

How many times a day do you estimate body talk occurs?

What is the total effect of all these appearance-based conversations?

How can it leave people feeling?

Body talk occurs more frequently than you think. It can lead to us focusing too much on our appearance and not on what matters, and this can be harmful for our self-esteem.

3

What is the impact of body talk?

The overall impact is that the person's mood is strongly influenced by what people think about their appearance – day-to-day but also on a long-term scale. They are left feeling that appearance is more important than it really is, and could forget to focus on qualities and activities they actually value and enjoy.

5 20 minutes

If students suggest positive reasons for engaging in body talk, use questions to help them see the other point of view and emphasise to the group that, on the whole, both positive and negative body talk is counter-productive.

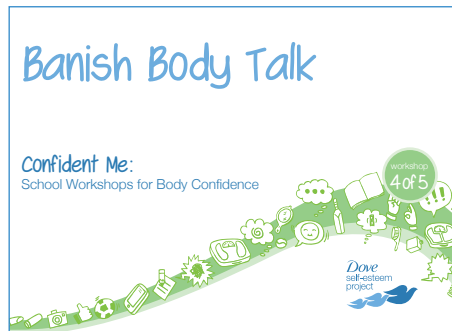
Some students may not easily understand that positive body talk can still be unhelpful, leading to unhappiness in the long term. Here are some examples to illustrate the point: A friend compliments someone on their weight loss. That person enjoys the compliment when given, but later on, wonders whether they might feel unhappy should they put on a little weight in the future. Three friends are together when one compliments another about their appearance, for example their hair or muscles. 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.

Help students understand that repeated conversations about appearance might focus on their looks or weight, leading to more and more dissatisfaction. This can have long-term negative consequences for self-esteem.

20 minutes



By the end of this section, students will understand what is meant by body talk, and why people engage in conversations about appearance.



Students are welcomed to the workshop.

- > Welcome students to the 'Banish Body Talk' workshop. Briefly remind students that the workshop series aims to help them to explore more helpful ways to manage appearance pressures and build body confidence.



Students briefly recall what they have learned in the previous workshops.

- > *Invite one or two students to recall what they have learned in the previous workshops.*
- > *Summarise any points students have missed.*

PRESENTATION



What are we learning today?

- Introducing body talk
- Exploring examples of body talk
- Problems with body talk
- Avoiding body talk

What are our workshop ground rules?

- Respect diversity
- Ask questions
- Keep it confidential
- Please contribute

Students understand that the workshop will focus on understanding what body talk is, the problems it can cause and strategies for challenging the use of body talk in their future lives.

TEACHER ACTIONS



> Briefly explain the areas of focus for today's workshop. Also briefly remind students of the ground rules below to help create a supportive, non-judgemental environment throughout the five-session programme

DESIRED RESPONSES



How do we talk about appearance?

Students will discuss the different ways people talk about appearance.

> Explain that today's workshop is focused on the way we talk about appearance.

> Initiate a class discussion.

- What different ways do people talk about appearance?

> Explain that when people are talking about appearance, they are all engaging in body talk.



People offer compliments based on appearance, they might tease people based on appearance, individuals might comment on their own appearance – by comparing themselves to others, or the thoughts they have about their own appearance.

What is body talk?

Body talk refers to any conversation or comment that reinforces and keeps appearance ideals and pressures going.

> Invite a student to read aloud the definition of **body talk**.

Ensure that students understand that body talk is any conversation about appearance, whether positive or negative. Reinforce the point that body talk includes comments about your own or a friend's appearance, or it could be commenting on a celebrity's or another person's looks.

PRESENTATION



How do we use body talk?



ADVERTISING

Source: Dove, 2015, 2016

Students watch a film featuring an example of body talk.

TEACHER ACTIONS



> Explain that students are going to watch a few short films about body talk.

> **Play 'Dove: Conversations with Friends'.**

> *Initiate a class discussion.*

- Where/when is this conversation taking place?
- What is being said? Does it seem well-meaning, or harmful?
- Why do you think they are talking about appearance?
- How do you think this episode makes both young people feel about their appearance?

DESIRED RESPONSES



If students struggle to capture the conversation word-for-word, suggest they pick out the key words they recall from the conversation.

The conversation is taking place as students arrive at the school gate to start their school day. They are greeting each other.

One girl compliments another on her hair. The girl receiving the compliment acts self-consciously and rejects the compliment.

They could be talking about appearance because they want to say something nice, to make their friend feel good about herself or out of habit, because it is a nice way to greet someone.

The girl giving the compliment could feel happy for her friend, or might feel a bit jealous about her friend's great hair. The girl receiving the compliment feels pleased because she has been told her hairstyle is nice and suits her.

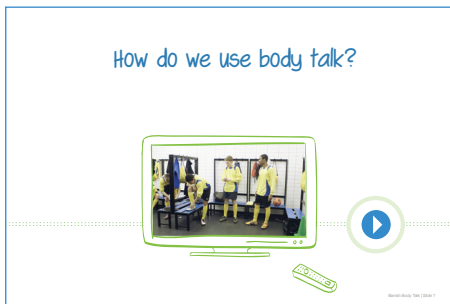
In this instance, encourage students to consider the overall sentiment of the speaker rather than long-term or unintended consequences.

You may want to touch on some of the other reasons people engage in body talk. These include: it's a common form of greeting; people want to fit in; people want to be reassured about their appearance, and to reassure others; to seem modest; to prevent teasing; to praise someone who you think meets appearance ideals; to express worry or anxiety about appearance.

PRESENTATION



Students capture their ideas on Activity sheet 1.



Students watch a film featuring an example of body talk.



Students capture their ideas on Activity sheet 1.

TEACHER ACTIONS



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

> *Instruct students to complete **Activity sheet 1, Task 1.1** with their responses.*

> *Play 'Dove: Conversations with the Team'.*

> *Instruct students to briefly discuss the details of the conversation in pairs.*

> *Instruct students to capture their ideas on **Activity sheet 1, Task 1.2**.*

> *Invite one or two students to share their responses with the class.*

- Where/when is this episode taking place?
- What is being said? Does it seem well-meaning, or harmful?

DESIRED RESPONSES



The girl giving the compliment might start thinking about hair more, spending more time on it.

The girl receiving the compliment may feel she always needs reassurance about her hair, or that she can't change it because this style was the one people said suited her.

Reinforce the idea that, in the long-term, this compliment causes both girls to start focusing on their appearance too much.

The conversation is taking place in the boys' changing room at school, before they go off to play football.

One of the boys starts commenting on another boy's appearance, telling him he might 'blow over'. Another boy joins in with the comments. The boy being teased eventually responds, and the boy initiating the conversation makes out it was all a joke.

PRESENTATION



TEACHER ACTIONS



- Why do you think they are talking about appearance?
- How do you think this episode makes all the young people feel about their appearance?
- How do you think this episode will affect their feelings about their appearance in the long-term?

DESIRED RESPONSES



They seem to be joking around with each other. The boy making the comments is larger, and seems to have more control. Another boy seems to want to please him, and join him. The boy receiving the comments, wants to defend himself – and stand up to the others.

They look like they've all brushed it off as a joke when they head off to play football, however this is only because the boy who started the conversation decided to stop for now.

This situation is likely to be repeated, and the smaller boy may become more focused on his appearance. He may start to change his behaviour – like going to the gym more often.

How do we use body talk?



Students watch a film featuring an example of body talk.

- > **Play 'Dove: Conversations with the Mirror'.**
- > *Instruct students to briefly discuss the details of the conversation in pairs.*

PRESENTATION



Students capture their ideas on Activity sheet 1.

TEACHER ACTIONS



> *Instruct students to capture their ideas on **Activity sheet 1, Task 1.3.***

> *Invite one or two students to share their responses with the class.*

- Where/when is this conversation taking place?

- What is being said? Does it seem well-meaning, or harmful?

- Why do you think she is talking about appearance?

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

- How do you think this episode will affect the person in the long-term?

DESIRED RESPONSES



It is taking place in a girl's bedroom, she is looking in the mirror, probably at the end of the school day.

The girl says, 'Urgh. I look huge in this.' She wishes she has a flat stomach and comments that she looks 'ugly'.

She is trying on clothes, and is hoping she looks good in them. She is comparing her appearance to her friend's and wishing she looked more like them.

She starts to feel worse about herself because she feels nothing looks good on her and that she can't live up to appearance ideals. She keeps comparing her appearance to her friend's rather than focusing on positives about herself or more important things.

The girl may feel less confident about her appearance, which may make her self-conscious about taking part in activities.

Reinforce the idea that, in the long-term, episodes like this may make the girl start to focus on her appearance too much, at the expense of other things.

Challenging body talk

By the end of this section, students will have recognised the problems body talk can cause and developed strategies to challenge the use of body talk.

20 minutes



PRESENTATION



Students will understand how the frequency of body talk, both positive and negative occurrences, can shape our mood and make appearance seem more important than it really is.

TEACHER ACTIONS



- > Explain that now they have identified different examples of body talk, we are going to consider the impact body talk can have.
- > **Play 'Dove: Soundtrack to School'.**
- > Initiate a class discussion.

DESIRED RESPONSES

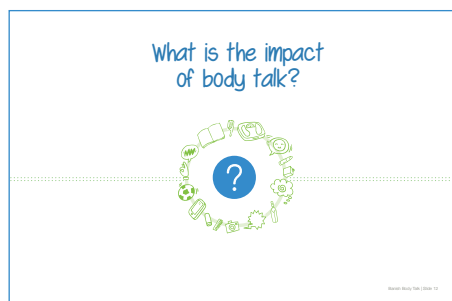


- How many times a day do you estimate body talk occurs?
- What is the total effect of all these appearance-based conversations?
- How can it leave people feeling?

Body talk occurs more frequently than you think. It can lead to us focusing too much on our appearance and not on what matters, and this can be harmful for our self-esteem.

- What do you think is the overall impact of all this body talk?

The overall impact is that the person's mood is strongly influenced by what people think about their appearance – day-to-day but also on a long-term scale. They are left feeling that appearance is more important than it really is, and could forget to focus on qualities and activities they actually value and enjoy.



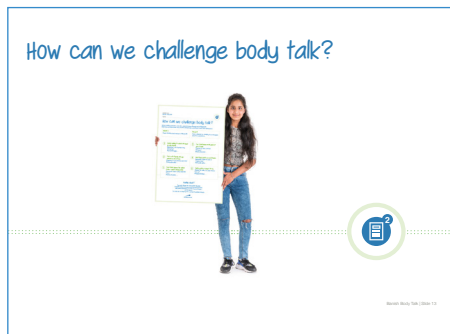
Students will understand that body talk can have a harmful overall impact on self-esteem.

If students suggest positive reasons for engaging in body talk, use questions to help them see the other point of view and emphasise to the group that, on the whole, both positive and negative body talk is counter-productive.

Some students may not easily understand that positive body talk can still be unhelpful, leading to unhappiness in the long term. Here are some examples to illustrate the point: A friend compliments someone on their weight loss. That person enjoys the compliment when given, but later on, wonders whether they were liked a little less when they weighed more, and whether they might feel unhappy should they put on a little weight in the future. Three friends are together when one compliments another about their appearance, for example their hair or muscles. 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.

Help students understand that repeated conversations about appearance might focus on their looks or weight, leading to more and more dissatisfaction. This can have long-term negative consequences for self-esteem.

PRESENTATION



Students will use role play to learn to avoid body talk by changing conversations away from appearance.

TEACHER ACTIONS



- > Explain to students that now they understand how widespread and harmful body talk is, it's important to challenge the use of body talk so they can help reduce the pressures faced by themselves and others to meet appearance ideals.
- > Arrange students in pairs.

> Instruct students to complete the role plays on **Activity sheet 2**.

- How long can you continue a conversation without resorting to body talk?
- > Instruct students to join with another pair and present their role plays, demonstrating how they would divert attention away from body talk.
- > Invite one or two pairs to present their role plays to the class.
- > Facilitate a short class discussion.
- 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?

DESIRED RESPONSES



Role play is a really powerful way to help students change their behaviour. Working in small groups lets less confident students role play without exposing themselves to the whole group. 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 take this opportunity to 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 socialise 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.

Be a champion for change

5 minutes



By the end of this section, students will have reflected on their learning throughout the workshop, committing to one action to champion body confidence.

Across the workshop, students will have:

- **Understood what is meant by body talk**, and why people engage in conversations about appearance.
- **Recognised the problems body talk can cause** and developed strategies to challenge the use of body talk.
- **Committed to taking action to build their body confidence.**

PRESENTATION



What have we learned today?



Students will share the key messages from today's workshop.

TEACHER ACTIONS



- > *Ask for volunteers to recall, briefly, what they have learned in today's workshop.*
- What have we learned in today's workshop?
- > *Invite volunteers to read out the key learning points from the slide, and summarise any points students have missed.*



DESIRED RESPONSES



Students articulate the key messages in their own words.

PRESENTATION



Students will use what they have learned in today's workshop to make a commitment to avoid body talk.



TEACHER ACTIONS



- > Ask one or two students to share:
 - What different strategies have we learned to avoid body talk?
 - How else can you show your commitment to changing the way you personally talk about appearance?
- > Invite one or two students to share their ideas with the class.

- > Thank students for their participation in today's workshop, and draw the workshop to a close.
- > Ask students to bring their notes with them to the next and final workshop, 'Be the Change'.

- > Encourage your students to explore the ideas raised in today's workshop by completing the **'Going further' sheet** before the next workshop.

DESIRED RESPONSES



For example, students could challenge body talk online or in face-to-face conversations, share what they have learned with other friends and family members or focus on starting conversations with others without using body talk.

Help students to choose a small and specific action, which will make it easier for them to keep to their commitment.

If possible, offer to stay behind or speak to students at another time about anything you have covered in the workshop.

Next steps

You have now completed **Workshop 4: Banish Body Talk** from **Confident Me: School Workshops for Body Confidence**.

The next workshop in the series is: **Be the Change**.

ABOUT THIS WORKSHOP:

The workshop brings together everything students have explored and learned during the course of the five-session programme.

Each workshop has already helped students identify when and why they should challenge the desire to match appearance ideals. Here, students are able to review and reflect on the ideas and their progress so far. They will prepare to lead by example, planning how they will improve the body confidence of themselves and others by creating a more positive culture around body image. The school's culture and community are important influences that can help or hinder students' progress towards improving body confidence. You may want to invite senior leaders and governors to this workshop to ensure teachers and leaders are working collaboratively to achieve a school-wide change.

Access the materials for this workshop session programme and others in the Confident Me: Five-Session Programme at: **selfesteem.dove.com**

