Body Confident
Athletes' Workbook

GIRLS WHO RESPECT ACCEPT & CONNECT WITH THEIR BODIES ARE UNSTOPPABLE

HI THERE

Welcome to Body Confident Athletes

Since you're here, there's a good chance you enjoy playing sports. Whether it's archery, dance, soccer, lacrosse or rock climbing, sport is a place where you can be yourself, connect with friends and maybe forget about your worries. But, sometimes this isn't the case. Sometimes, you might find yourself worrying about what you look like and what others think about you. For example, have you ever thought or said something like this?

"I look gross. I'm sweating and all my make-up has rubbed off"

"My legs look fat in these shorts. I should've worn leggings"

"I don't want to play outside today, it's too hot and I don't want my skin to get too dark"

"I've eaten way too much today. I'll stay behind and run a few extra laps"

Over time these thoughts can snowball and before you know it, you're distracted and disconnected from the sport that you love. This is very common among girls, but it doesn't have to be the norm.

This program has been designed by girls for girls. It's a unique program that helps girls to feel more confident about their bodies when playing sports. In here you'll find some common body image concerns that girls often face when playing sport and tips for how to overcome them.

This is your personal workbook. It is a private space for you to record your responses as you go through the sessions and to capture your own questions and ideas. No one will have access to this content unless you give them permission. We recommend that you don't treat it as a journal. Try to keep the content in it focused on body image and playing sport.

It's normal for girls to become frustrated with certain features of their bodies, how they look overall and the pressure to look a certain way. The girls who helped design this program shared that at one point or another they all experienced body image concerns. If you're struggling with your body image, we encourage you to speak with a trusted friend, parent, coach or adult. If this isn't a possibility for you, you can also use the resources section, where you'll find links to helpful information and organizations.

GROUND RULES

In order for everyone to get the most out of this program, it's important that each person feels safe and included when participating. This starts by creating a set of ground rules for everyone to follow while participating in the sessions.

Take a moment to think about what you and your teammates can do to create this type of environment. For example:

01 *Don't speak while another person is sharing their thoughts and ideas*

02

03

04

BODY CONFIDENT ATHLETES' SESSIONS

In the next section of this workbook, you're going to work through different topics and questions that relate to body image and playing sport.

Each section maps onto a session within the program. For example, session one is about Body Talk, and how certain conversations with friends or family members can impact girls body image and sport experience. You will be encouraged by your coach to respond to these questions during the session. You can also use this workbook outside of the program, and return to it whenever you need.

SESSION 01

BODY TALK IN SPORT

LET'S GO!

BODY TALK IN SPORT

In today's session, you will learn about body talk and how these types of comments can negatively impact your body image and sporting experience.We will also give you some skills to challenge this behavior.

BE UNSTOPPABLE

THE KNOWLEDGE

What is body talk?

Positive and/or negative comments that reinforce appearance and athletic ideals. Whether a comment or conversation 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 these comments place greater importance on appearance, at the expense of valuing more intrinsic qualities such as someone's values (e.g., they are kind), interests (e.g., they enjoy kayaking) or actions (e.g., they support their friends).

Who engages in body talk and where?

How do we speak about ours and other people's bodies when playing sports?

How might body talk (positive or negative) impact girls when they play sports?

THE SKILLS

Research shows that girls frequently engage in body talk, including hearing it and speaking it.

It's been shown that these conversations, positive and negative, can negatively impact girls' body image, self-esteem and overall mental health and well-being.

Body talk can be very subtle and normalized within many environments. It can also catch us off-guard.

Together, we are going to create a **Body Talk Free Zone**, as well as hold each other accountable for upholding this culture.

In doing this, we need to be able to challenge body talk when we hear it.

Use the space to write down the body talk statements and come-backs that you and your pair practiced.

GAME TIME

Body talk statement:

Come-back:

Body talk statement:

Come-back:

THE FINAL SCORE...

Questions and/or ideas I have about today's session

SESSION 02

WHAT OUR BODIES EXPERIENCE IN SPORT

LET'S GO!

WHAT OUR BODIES EXPERIENCE IN SPORT

In today's session, you will learn how to focus on and accept what your body can do and experience during sport, rather than on what it looks like.

THE SKILLS...

What is body functionality?

Body functionality is when we focus on and appreciate what our bodies can do and experience, rather than focusing on what it looks like. Sometimes this might mean focusing on what our bodies do differently to others.

What is your body able to do and experience?

What body functions might be important to us when playing sport?

Why is focusing on what our body does more helpful than focusing on its appearance?

THE SKILLS

Individual writing task

Now, you're going to practice this helpful way of thinking about your body with a journal activity.

Over the next ten minutes, you're going to describe in detail what your body can do when playing sports and why this is important to you.

For example, ask yourself, "What do you enjoy most about lacrosse?" or "Why is running important to me for playing lacrosse?".

Example journal entry

The muscles in my legs help me to sprint for ground balls and run after opponents. There's no better feeling than chasing an opponent and stripping them of the ball. When my body feels tired, it reminds me that I've been working hard for the team. My arms are also strong. I can feel this strength when I'm cradling the ball and shooting on goal. Without this strength in my arms I couldn't throw long passes down the field. My arms also help to hug my teammates after a goal or win.

Once you've finished writing, read what you have written.

THE FINAL SCORE...

Questions and/or ideas I have about today's session

SESSION 03

LISTENING TO OUR BODIES IN SPORT

LET'S GO!

LISTENING TO OUR BODIES IN SPORT

To finish the program, you will learn the importance of listening to your body and its needs. You will participate in a practical task, where you practice listening to your body and its sensations, while responding to its needs.

YOU'VE GOT THIS!

THE SKILLS...

What sensations do our bodies experience during sport?

Who can stop us from listening to these important sensations and why?

What do these sensations tell us about our bodies?

What happens if we do/ don't listen to our bodies?

GAME TIME

Individual movement task

In last week's session you learned about focusing on what the body can do and experience, rather than on what it looks like. In that session you wrote about your own body functionality when playing sport.

Take a moment to reflect on what you wrote in your workbook – you can look back on it if you need.

In today's skill session, you're going to build on this idea by focusing on and listening to your body while playing sport.

You will have 10 minutes of free-play by yourself. You can choose any movement or skill that you like. For example, you might choose to shoot for goal or practice tricks.

While you're playing, you are going to focus on what your body is doing, the sensations it's experiencing and what you might need. Specifically:

- Focus on what your body is doing
- Focus on what your body is feeling
- Focus on what your body needs

What did you think and feel about this activity?

THE FINAL SCORE...

Questions and/or ideas I have about today's session

RESOURCES

If you're struggling with your body image, first we encourage you to speak with a trusted friend, parent, coach or adult. If this isn't a possibility for you or you would like to learn more about body image, you can use the below resources, where you'll find links to helpful information and organizations.

The National Eating Disorder Association

- Body Image
- Body Image & Eating Disorders
- 10 Steps to Positive Body Image
- Every Body is Different

Teens' Health

- Body Image and Self-Esteem
- Female Athlete Triad

Body Image Books for Young People

- *The Ultimate Puberty Book for Girls: Celebrate Your Body (and its changes too!)* by Sonya Renee Taylor (girls 8+)
- *The Body Image Book for Girls: Love Yourself and Grow Up Fearless* by Charlotte Markey (12-17 years old)
- *The Other F Word: A Celebration of the Fat & Fierce* by Angie Manfredi (13+ years old)

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations! You have finished the Body Confident Athletes program. While this chapter has ended, you are at the beginning of your body image journey.

Remember, you can always come back to this journal and reflect on your insights or remind yourself of the knowledge and skills you've learned.

Until then, use this knowledge and these skills to help others challenge unhelpful body image attitudes and behaviors, and create safe and inclusive sporting environments.

AFTER ALL, GIRLS WHO ACCEPT, RESPECT AND CONNECT WITH THEIR BODIES ARE UNSTOPPABLE.