

Dove
self-esteem
project

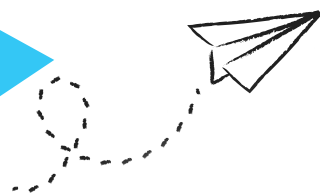


true to me

Youth Group Activities
for Body Confidence



FIVE SESSIONS



Why True to Me?

True to Me creates a supportive space to explore an issue that really matters: low body confidence and what it means for young people and society.

True to Me will help young girls feel more confident about their bodies, enable them to recognize the pressures that can cause anxiety about their appearance and give them a chance to practice dealing with these pressures.

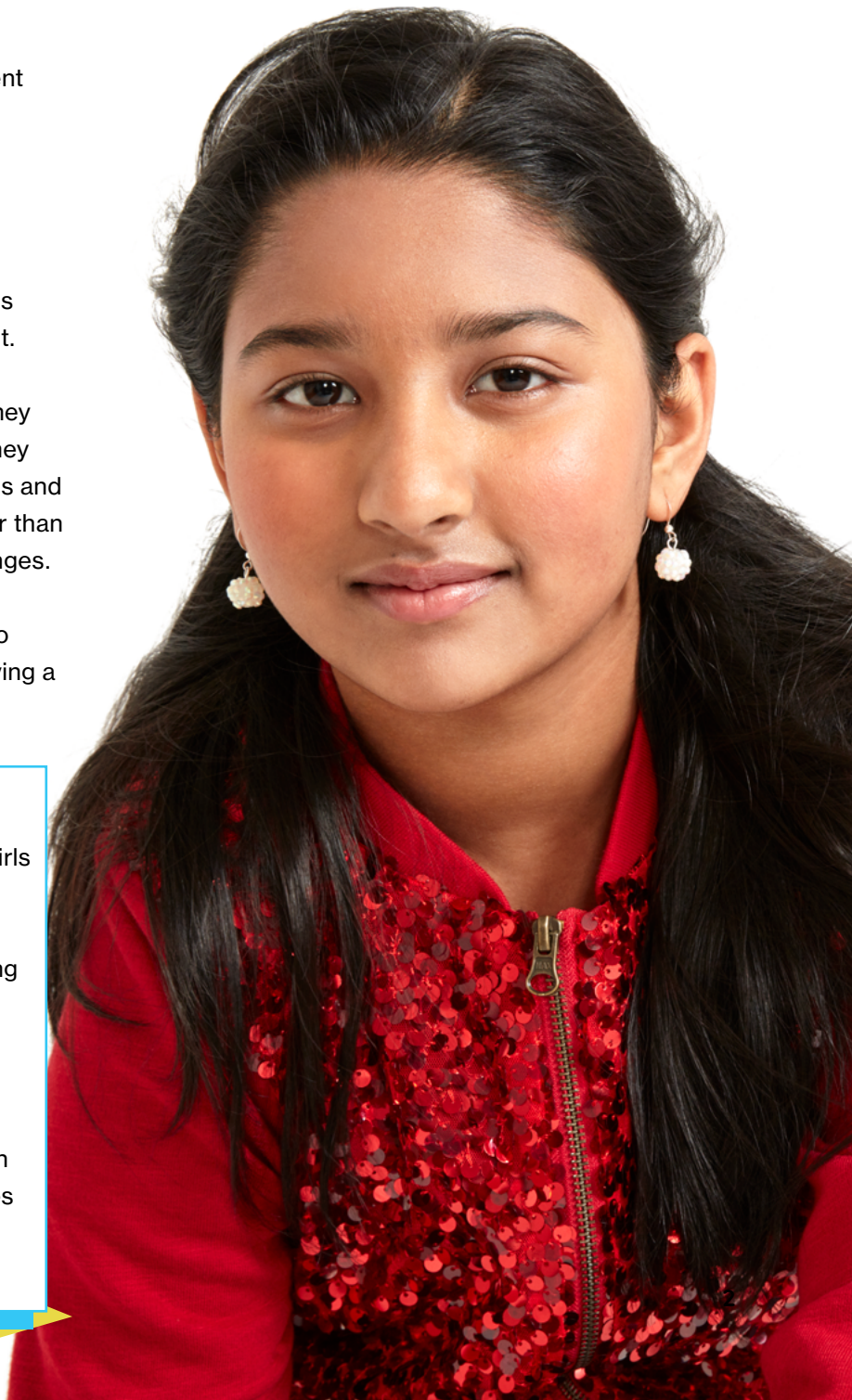
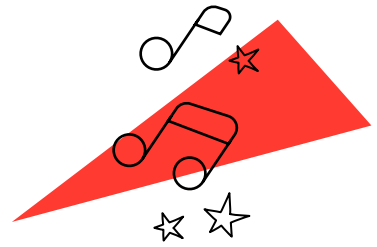
When girls feel confident in their own skin, it helps them value their individuality – both inside and out. They can also have more fun, enjoying what their bodies let them do instead of focusing on what they look like. When girls aren't worrying about how they look, they are more confident in their relationships and life choices. They put themselves out there rather than hold back, and feel up for adventures and challenges. Caring for their bodies and seeing themselves as they really are – and not comparing themselves to unrealistic media images – is a big step toward living a life that's really true to them.

Adapting for use with boys

The activities in this resource can be used with girls or boys. We recommend holding the sessions in single-gender breakout groups. Therefore in mixed-gender youth clubs, we suggest conducting these activities in separate rooms to support the single-gender breakout-group model.

Disclaimer

All the social media activities with an asterisk(*) in this resource are designed for boys and girls ages 13 and up. Remember to get consent from them and their parents before sharing any media.



Getting ready for True to Me

Before starting True to Me, take time to prepare your group (and their parents or caregivers, if appropriate) for the program.

With your team of leaders

Spend at least two hours reading through the True to Me Leader Guide (available for download at dove.com/selfesteem) and all the sessions. Two hours is enough time to explore all the key messages and gain an understanding of how the program works. Together with your group leaders, agree on how each session will run.

You and your group leaders could experience True to Me for yourselves by completing one task out of every session. This would help the leadership team understand how best to deliver the program to your group.

With your group

Start with some fun icebreakers and team-building activities, especially if the girls in the group don't know one another very well. Check that they know each other's name, and take time to create a relaxed, inclusive atmosphere before you begin the program.

Talk through what True to Me is about. Refer to the Leader Guide for help; you can also share this information with parents or caregivers.

Set group guidelines before you start (see page 4) so that everyone will feel comfortable working together and speaking up during True to Me.



Group guidelines

Why this matters

True to Me explores issues that girls may feel strongly about. Although they encounter them in their daily lives, they may not have talked about them in this way before. Setting group guidelines puts girls in the lead to create a supportive space where they can speak out confidently.

You will need

- ❑ Large piece of paper and markers.

Setting

Whole group discussion.

What happens

Guide the group to:

- Discuss how girls can behave to ensure their peers feel supported, comfortable and confident so that everyone can get the most out of True to Me.
- Work together to create a short list of points that everyone agrees to respect.
- Write the guidelines simply and clearly so that they can be checked at a glance.
- Ask for a volunteer to make sure the guidelines are displayed at each session.

Look for

- Listening, respectfulness, everyone contributing.

We agree to...

- Respect everyone's opinions.
- Listen and reflect before we talk.
- Be present – leave phones in pockets.
- Consider one another's feelings.
- Speak up if we're uncomfortable.



TIPS

When girls lead this activity, they feel more ownership of the list. Use questions to raise any issues they don't think of and support them to find the words they want to use.

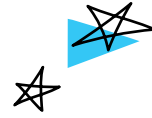
There's no need to spend too long on this. Once you have the key points covered, move on to the next activity.

If you already have group guidelines, check if the group is happy to use them for True to Me or if they want to make any changes.

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Session 1



Outcome

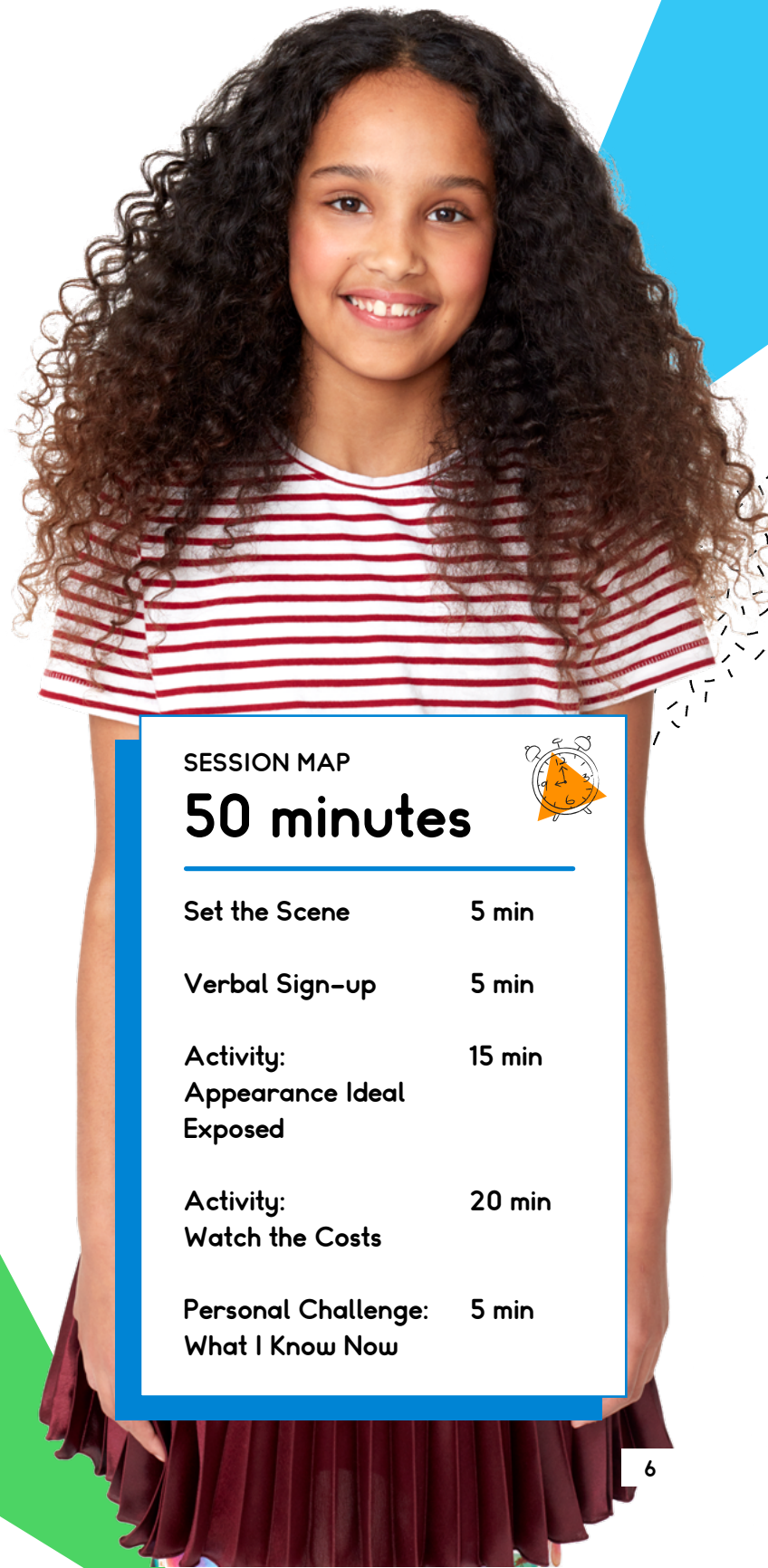
Girls define the appearance ideal and explore how...

- Focusing too much on how they look can hold them back and make them unhappy.
- The appearance ideal is society's current definition of how people should look. It has very specific characteristics and is impossible to achieve naturally. It doesn't reflect the amazing diversity of looks we see in everyday life.
- Even if girls do chase the appearance ideal, this won't make them happy, healthy or successful. It also doesn't mean they automatically have great relationships.
- Chasing the ideal costs a lot of time, effort and money. It doesn't do girls, or society as a whole, any good.

You will need

- ☐ Felt-tip pens and large pieces of paper.
- ☐ **Worksheet 1** What I Know Now
Distribute one for each girl.

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.



SESSION MAP

50 minutes



Set the Scene	5 min
Verbal Sign-up	5 min
Activity: Appearance Ideal Exposed	15 min
Activity: Watch the Costs	20 min
Personal Challenge: What I Know Now	5 min



Set the scene

Why this matters

Help girls understand what True to Me is all about and what they will be doing. This should help them relax and feel more like a team.

You will need

- ❑ The True to Me Leader Guide. A familiarity with the program and its aims is a must; use the Leader Guide for support.

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

Setting

Whole group briefing.

What happens

Welcome everyone and explain that for the next 50 minutes, the group is going to have fun trying a new program called True to Me.

Start with an icebreaker; go around the group, asking everyone to say their name and then announce something great about themselves that begins with the first letter of their name, along with a matching action. For example, “I am Ashley and I’m amazing!” (with a star jump) or “I am Erin and I’m energetic!” (mimes running).

Once everyone has introduced themselves, explain what True to Me is about:

We’re going to explore some of the reasons we worry about our bodies and appearance, understand where those worries come from and take action to change them.

Body confidence is a topic that can stir up strong opinions and lead to awkward or even difficult discussions; yet most girls who participated in True to Me say they really enjoyed the program. Remind everyone about your group guidelines and how they can support each other.

Point out a safe space where girls can go to if they need time out, and name a leader who can support them if this happens.

Look for

- > A willingness to try new things.

TIPS

If you haven’t already set up your group guidelines, there is advice on how to lead a short activity to create these on page 4.

You might want to talk to parents or caregivers about True to Me in advance. Use the Leader Guide to help you.

Use your own icebreaker to start the session if you have a good one in mind. The important thing is to get the energy up and help everyone feel comfortable. We like the icebreaker we suggested because it prompts girls to think about how they view themselves.

Reassure participants who have concerns, but explain that most of their questions will be answered later in the session.

If serious personal concerns are raised, offer support as your organization would for other well-being issues.

Verbal Sign-up

Why this matters

Our research shows that when girls recognize they are taking part in True to Me voluntarily and commit to this in front of the group, the program has a stronger positive impact on their body confidence.

Setting

Whole group in a circle.

TIP

Verbal sign-ups happen at the beginning of every session. Keep it quick, but don't forget to do it!

What happens

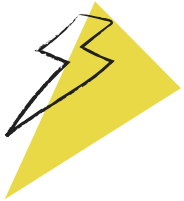
Welcome everyone and introduce the session:

We'll get the most out of True to Me if we speak up during activities, support one another and respect our group guidelines. Are you ready to keep an open mind and take part in the activities?

Invite each girl to tell the group that she is ready to contribute.

Look for

- > A sense of teamwork among the group, with each girl making a personal commitment.



Appearance ideal exposed

Why this matters

Before girls can start to challenge an appearance ideal, they will need to understand what it is and where it comes from. Girls have been unconsciously affected by its damaging messages for years but might not have been aware of it. It's time to look at the appearance ideal consciously and critically.

You will need

- ❑ Internet access for each small group or magazine pictures showing girls and women.
- ❑ Large piece of paper and felt-tip pens, per group.

Setting

Divide into groups by number of leaders (four to eight girls per leader works well).

Either create small groups, each with internet access (so all the girls can see a screen), or scatter images from magazines around your meeting place.

What happens

2 MINUTES

Girls either:

- a) Look up media images of "the perfect-looking girl" online as small groups.
- b) Each girl finds a magazine image that appeals to her and shows it to the group.

5 MINUTES

Arrange the group so that everyone can see the large piece of paper. Write "The Perfect-Looking Girl" at the top.

What catches your eye about these pictures? What are the features and characteristics that society tells us the perfect girl should have? Be as detailed as you can!

As girls call out features, write them down under "The Perfect-Looking Girl" heading. This list will show how detailed and limiting the appearance ideal can be.

- Encourage the group to come up with as many physical features as possible to create a long list. Try to fill the page with appearance features.
- Prompt the group to make each feature as specific as possible. For example, if a girl says "perfect skin," ask her to describe what that looks like (e.g., no blemishes, no wrinkles, a glowing quality). This shows that perfect is just another opinion, not a fact.

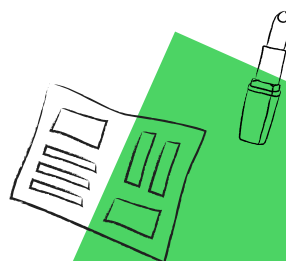
3 MINUTES

When you've filled the page and the group is out of ideas, step back.

So, society tells us that the perfect-looking girl has...

- Cross out "The Perfect-Looking Girl" title on the paper and write "Appearance Ideal" instead.
- Make sure that everyone understands what the word "ideal" means.

An ideal is an idea of something that's perfect, but it normally only exists in the imagination. The appearance ideal is an idea of the perfect way to look, even if it doesn't exist naturally.



Reflect

5 MINUTES

Sit down with the group. Facilitate a brief discussion around these questions:

Q *Where does the appearance ideal come from? How do we learn about it?*

A Media, family, friends, fashion industry, diet industry, etc.

Q *How does pressure to match the appearance ideal make you feel?*

A Anxious, depressed, not good enough, shy, negative about self in general, etc.

Q *What are we told will happen if we look like the ideal? Is it true?*

A Be more popular, happier, more successful, in a relationship, etc. But no, it's not true.

Q *Is the appearance ideal the same for girls from different cultures and backgrounds?*

A No, it varies but still makes us feel the same way. And with the spread of Western media, it is becoming more similar around the world.

Look for

- High energy, with everyone calling out lots of specific ideas.
- Girls getting outraged and recognizing how ridiculous and impossible the appearance ideal really is.

Do it differently

If your group enjoys scenarios and role-play activities, get creative when you set up this activity. For example, challenge the group to create an ad for a “beautiful woman” to appear in a film or TV show. What does she need to look like? Then create a “Perfect-Looking Girl” list from these ideas.

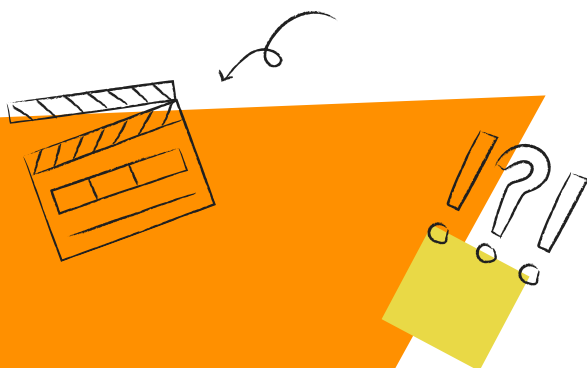
TIPS

Aim for a long list with very specific physical points and plenty of details to show how narrow the appearance ideal is.

If working with older girls, substitute “woman” for “girl.” If working with younger girls, you can use images of fairy-tale princesses, and they can draw their perfect-looking girl and write the features around her.

Consult the Leader Guide's Dealing With Difficult Moments section (page 15) for how to handle any challenges that come up during this activity.

If your group is mixed gender, split boys and girls into separate groups to do this activity. (For the boys' group, call the list “The Perfect-Looking Boy.”)



Watch the costs



Why this matters

It's not enough to know that the appearance ideal exists. To help girls build their body confidence, we need to encourage them to speak up about the costs of chasing the ideal and how being free from it can make them happier and healthier.

You will need

- ☐ Paper and pens.

Setting

Large space, outdoors if possible.

What happens

When girls try to match the appearance ideal, a negative impact for them and for society results. How much does it cost us to chase the appearance ideal?

In this activity, girls come up with a long list of costs (downsides or major negative impacts) associated with chasing the appearance ideal. They think about what it costs an individual in terms of personal health, relationships, finance and achievements, and what it costs society in general.



Play the Frozen Pairs game:

- > Divide the group so that half are catchers and half are runners.
- > The catchers represent the appearance ideal. When a catcher manages to catch a runner, the pair shouts "Freeze!" and everyone stops on the spot.
- > To free themselves, the frozen pair comes up with a cost associated with the appearance ideal.

Ask:

Trying to look like the appearance ideal costs a lot for people and society as a whole. Name one cost, or negative impact, it has for an individual or for society.

- > When the pair calls out a cost, write it down. Each of the frozen pair now become a runner. Start the game again, and repeat until all of the catchers have turned into runners.

Individual costs

Low confidence, avoiding sports, not contributing at school, spending too much money on beauty products or diet pills, over-exercising, eating disorders, not enjoying food, not having fun with friends, being unhappy, not putting self out there, avoiding physical challenges and adventures, health complications from surgery...

Costs to society

Missed days from work and school, people not achieving potential, health service costs...

Reflect

Bring the group together and remind them of the list of costs they created during the game. Ask them:

Q *Given this long list of costs, who benefits from the ideal?*

A Fashion and beauty industries, the media industry, etc.

Q *Are we part of the group that benefits?*

A No!

Q *Given all of the costs, is chasing the ideal worth it?*

A No!

The best way to beat the appearance ideal is to speak out against it. Have each girl grab a partner and take turns saying why she thinks trying to achieve the appearance ideal is not worth it, given the costs.

Look for

- > A wide range of costs that consider physical, emotional and mental impact to individuals and to society. Girls often have a real wake-up call by this point and can start getting angry about the ideal. Be supportive if the activity stirs up strong feelings.

TIPS

If a pair struggles to think of a cost, invite the group to help.

If your group is small, repeat the game until you have a long list of costs.

Do it differently

If your group doesn't enjoy active games like this one, explore the costs in a different way. For example, girls can work in small groups to come up with a list of costs, then choose to:

- > Create a two-minute performance using any creative medium (e.g., a song, dance, rap or drama) that communicates as many of the costs as possible. Perform it to another group, which has to spot as many costs in the performance as they can.
- > Work in pairs to take photographs that represent each cost, and share them with the wider group.
- > Use the internet to explore news stories and other media that expose the costs of chasing the appearance ideal.

If your group wants to and everyone feels comfortable about it, why not record their performance? Remember to get consent from the girls and their parents before sharing any media.*

Remember

There is no perfect look and no perfect body type.

Having a body that enables you to do the things you want to do is important, so we need to appreciate and take care of our bodies. Speaking out against the appearance ideal isn't about criticizing anyone's natural body or features, or the choices people make about their appearance. It's about challenging the idea in society that there's one perfect way to look, and the pressure this idea puts on people. Also, bear in mind that it's impossible to naturally achieve the ideal; even models and celebrities need surgery and Photoshop to match it. Chasing the ideal, and what this does to you, is the problem.

What I know now

Why this matters

When girls take time to reflect on the appearance ideal, the learning sinks in and they find it easier to challenge the ideal and be more body confident.

You will need

- ❑ **Worksheet 1** What I Know Now

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

Setting

On group members' own time after the session.

What happens

Give each girl a copy of the worksheet to complete at home. Tell them:

If you had known when you were younger that the appearance ideal was impossible to achieve and came with a lot of downsides if you tried to follow it, would it have made a difference in your life? Imagine if you could turn back time two or three years: What would you say to yourself to show the costs of chasing the appearance ideal, and the great ways that being true to yourself and free from its pressure, can affect your life? How would you persuade yourself not to pursue the ideal?

TIP

If completing this Personal Challenge at home will be a struggle for some group members, can you create a quiet space at your meeting place where they can work on it?

Share

Please try to talk about your experience with a friend or adult you trust.

Girls can simply write a letter to their younger selves, or you could encourage them to use a more creative way of expressing themselves: a blog or vlog, video, stop-motion animation, comic strip, podcast, art piece, song or images with captions.

Whatever they create should:

- > Explain what the appearance ideal is.
- > Show the costs attached to its pursuit.
- > Help to convince their younger self that it's not worth chasing.

Look for

- > Girls being clear about the task and feeling enthusiastic and confident they can complete it.

Do it differently

If some group members find it difficult to write down their thoughts, suggest they express themselves visually or tell their message directly to you.

If group members are younger and find this kind of reflection hard to do, why not prompt them to think of a young girl in their life, such as a baby sister, cousin or friend, and write to her or him instead?

Wrap up

Take a minute to close the session. Thank everyone for participating and give girls a chance to share their favorite moment of the session. Make sure everyone is clear on when and where the next session will take place and is comfortable with the Personal Challenge.

Session 2

Outcome

Girls practice how to spot and challenge the appearance ideal in everyday life.

You will need

- ☐ **Handout 1** In Her/His Shoes Scenario Cards
Distribute one per small group.
- ☐ **Worksheet 2** Mirror Time

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

SESSION MAP

50 minutes



Verbal Sign-up	5 min
Feedback: What I Know Now	15 min
Activity: In Her/His Shoes	25 min
Personal Challenge: Mirror Time	5 min



Verbal sign-up

Remember to start the session by giving each girl a chance to pledge her willingness to speak up and take part in True to Me with the group:

We'll get the most out of True to Me if we speak up during activities and support one another. Are you ready to keep an open mind, uphold our group guidelines and get involved in all the activities?

Invite each girl to tell the group that she is ready to contribute.



What I know now

Why this matters

By sharing messages to their younger selves, girls practice speaking out against the appearance ideal in front of their peers. This helps to challenge their own belief in the ideal and builds their body confidence.

Setting

Whole group sharing.

What happens

Group members take turns sharing the message they created to their younger selves (e.g., reading their letter or blog post out loud, presenting their vlog or artwork, playing aloud their podcast, etc.).

Use questions to encourage girls to be specific about the costs they are describing.

Congratulate each member for completing the task and sharing the work.

Did anyone think of new costs attached to chasing the appearance ideal?

If girls are happy to share their messages through social media* or by displaying their work in the meeting place, support them to do so if you feel what they created is appropriate (and complies with your internet safety guidelines). Making their messages public makes them more powerful.

Look for

- > The group feeling like a team, with each girl making a personal commitment.

TIP

It's important that each girl gets the chance to say why it's not worth chasing the ideal when presenting back to the group. Use questions to help if this isn't coming naturally, or split into smaller groups.

Do it differently

Why not ask the girls if they would like to put on a community exhibition of these messages, and anything else they create during True to Me, to celebrate their completion of the program?

TEAM



In her/his shoes

Why this matters

Practicing how to challenge the appearance ideal in everyday conversation gives girls a way to do it in real life. By giving them the tools to counter the appearance ideal, they become less engaged in trying to chase it and their body confidence improves.

You will need

- ❑ **Handout 1** In Her/His Shoes Scenario Cards
Distribute one per small group.

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

- ❑ A shoe, or other container, for each set of scenario cards.

Setting

Divide into small groups, with each group supported by a leader.

What happens

Each leader takes a shoe and the set of scenarios in **Handout 1**, and finds a quiet space with the group.

The appearance ideal comes up all the time in daily life, not just in the media. We see our friends and family facing the appearance ideal a lot, too. If you have the confidence to speak up against it, you'll help the people you care about feel more body confident and start to break free from the ideal. This is a chance for each of you to practice how to challenge the appearance ideal in real life.

Girls practice coming up with arguments to convince someone it's not worth chasing the appearance ideal:

- The leader, using the scenario cards, pretends to be a girl who is struggling to match the appearance ideal.
- Group members use positive challenges to persuade the girl in the scenario to think differently and recognize the costs of chasing the appearance ideal.



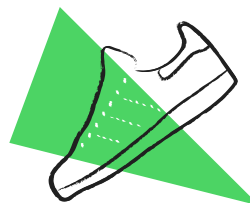
For example:

LEADER:

"No way I'm going swimming tonight. I'll say I'm not well. The idea of everyone seeing me in my swimsuit makes me feel sick."

GROUP MEMBER:

"But swimming is so much fun, and it makes you feel good. Everyone has a different shape and size – that's normal! There's no such thing as one way to look good."

**Reflect**

Can you think of a time in your life when you could have challenged the appearance ideal?

- 1** Invite girls to pick a scenario from the shoe and hand it to you without looking at it.
- 2** Read the card, then act it out with the group, pretending you feel like the character in the scenario.
- 3** Read the card, then act it out in front of the group, pretending you feel the way the character would in the scenario. For example:
 - > "What's so wrong with trying to look like a model?"
 - > "You agree I need to diet, right?"
 - > "Only thin people are popular, don't you think?"
 - > "What do you mean by 'costs'?"

- 4** If girls are struggling to think of challenges, support them with examples such as:
 - > "Looking like the appearance ideal doesn't make you happy."
 - > "Taking care of your body is important; chasing the ideal might actually hurt you."
 - > "Worrying about your body means you're missing out on having fun."
 - > "Being confident in yourself is a much better way to make friends."
- 5** When the group has run out of things to say, ask another girl to pick a new scenario card.
- 6** Complete as many scenarios as you have time for, and try to encourage each girl to contribute at least twice.

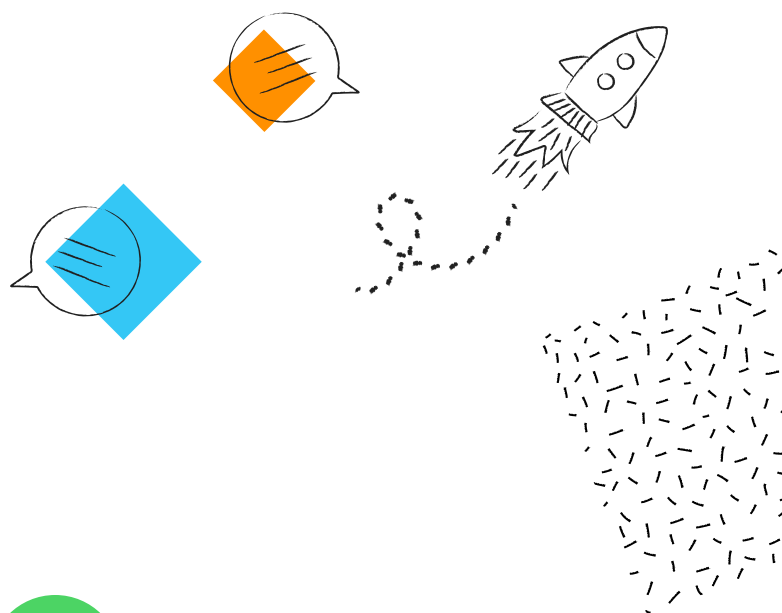
Look for

- Every group member verbally challenging the appearance ideal.
- Energetic conversations, with girls eager to contribute.
- A range of arguments that shows the girls considering the costs of the appearance ideal.

Do it differently

If it is helpful to your group, use a structure that allows each girl to contribute in turn. You could put a pair of shoes in front of each leader, and each girl takes a turn stepping up to the shoes to join the conversation.

Girls might argue that they follow the appearance ideal because being slim is healthier. Taking care of yourself is important, but what you look like and how healthy you are aren't as closely connected as you might think. We all have a healthy ideal, which is how we look when we're doing the right things to take care of our bodies physically, mentally and emotionally, as well as our overall quality of life. Eating nutritious foods in an amount that's appropriate for us, staying active and exercising, paying attention to our friendships and getting involved in our communities are all things that make us feel good and keep us healthy. What's important to recognize is that "healthy" looks different for different people, and keeping our bodies moving makes more of a difference to our health levels than being at a certain weight.



TIPS

The leader should be the only one verbally agreeing with the appearance ideal as part of this activity. If girls start supporting the appearance ideal at any point in the session, redirect them. Challenging the appearance ideal by speaking out against it improves body confidence; saying things that support the ideal won't.

Try to build a character around your scenario. How old do you think the girl is? Where is she from? What is her family like? Making it feel real will help girls connect with the scenarios.

Mirror time

Why this matters

Thinking positively about their bodies is something girls don't do enough and, even if it's hard at first, it often brings a feel-good body confidence boost.

You will need

❑ **Worksheet 2** Mirror Time

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

Setting

Whole group briefing, with the activity to be completed on girls' own time after the session.

What happens

Distribute **Worksheet 2** to each girl and take time to talk the group through it:

We spent a lot of time thinking about encouraging others to be more body confident today. So how about you? When you get home, I want you to try something: Spend a few minutes concentrating on the things you like about your body. It might sound silly, but try it and see how it makes you feel. Even realizing you like little things about yourself, such as the way your hair curls or how strong your hands are, is a way of showing that the appearance ideal isn't in charge of who you are.

Explain the activity

- 1 Put on close-fitting clothes, so you can see your body shape.
- 2 Find a quiet space with a mirror in it.
We often use mirrors to criticize ourselves. Let's try to see things differently and use the mirror to reflect all the amazing things about us!
- 3 Using the mirror, think about:
 - > Five things you like about yourself that aren't physical, such as personality traits, attitudes and values.
 - > Five physical features that you like about your body.

Write these down on the handout and bring it to the next session. Are you all willing to give this a try?



Look for

- A willingness to try, with each girl taking the activity seriously.

TIPS

If some girls are worried they can't find a quiet space at home to do this activity, is it possible to offer this at your meeting place? It's important that this be a quiet and private space for girls to complete the activity, preferably on their own.

Mirror time makes the most impact when girls can identify body image characteristics that are very personal or meaningful to them. But if they aren't comfortable doing this alone or you're worried they won't be able to identify things they like about themselves, suggest:

- Trying it with a friend they trust. They can encourage each other to identify positive traits and give examples of things they like about each other.
- Beginning with the personality traits.
- Starting small with the physical traits. Encourage them to build up to more prominent features when they're ready.
- Thinking about things their bodies enable them to do, not just what they look like.

Wrap up

Take a minute to close the session. Thank everyone for participating and give the girls a chance to share their favorite moment of the session. Make sure everyone is clear on when and where the next session will take place, and is comfortable with the Personal Challenge.



Session 3

Outcome

Girls have the skills and confidence to avoid talking about, or reinforcing, the appearance ideal in conversations, and can make quick comebacks to challenge comments that support the ideal.

You will need

- ☐ Dice and pens.
- ☐ **Handout 2** Body Talk Bingo Cards
Distribute one per small group.
- ☐ **Handout 3** Quick Comeback Statement Grid
Distribute one per small group.

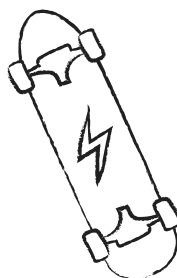
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SESSION MAP

50 minutes



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Feedback: Mirror Time	5 min
Activity: Body Talk Bingo	10 min
Activity: Ideas Worth Sharing	30 min



Verbal sign-up

Remember to start the session by giving each girl a chance to share her willingness to speak up and take part in True to Me with the group:

Before we begin, let's remind ourselves of how to have the best time during True to Me: by speaking up during activities, respecting our group guidelines and supporting each other. Are you ready to fully take part?

Invite each girl to tell the group that she is ready to contribute.



**I'm ready
to contribute!**

Mirror time

Why this matters

Girls get a body confidence boost when they focus on what they like about themselves. Being brave enough to share these things with others is even more empowering.

Setting

Whole group sharing (or small groups with one leader in each group).

What happens

Imagine if all the time we spent putting ourselves down was spent appreciating ourselves and being proud of who we are. Talking positively about ourselves isn't boasting – it's a healthy thing to do because you're doing it for you, not to show off to others. If you model this for younger girls, they are more likely to be positive about themselves.

Invite each girl to share:

- > At least one physical thing she likes about their body and appearance.
- > At least one other nonphysical thing she likes about herself.

Look for

- > Everyone sharing.
- > A supportive and caring atmosphere.

Reflect

Why do you think it's hard for us to see the positive things about ourselves and share them with others?

How does it make you feel to focus on the positive things about yourself?



TIP

If the girls are particularly nervous, shy or vulnerable, break into smaller groups for them to share their likes, depending on the leader-participant ratio.

Body talk bingo

Why this matters

Body talk is one of the most important ways an appearance ideal is maintained. It's also one of the least obvious, though girls experience it regularly in the media and from family and friends. By understanding how to spot and respond to body talk, girls can protect themselves from it and build their body confidence.

You will need

- ☐ Dice, one per group.
- ☐ Pens, one per girl.
- ☐ **Handout 2** Body Talk Bingo Cards
Distribute one per small group.

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

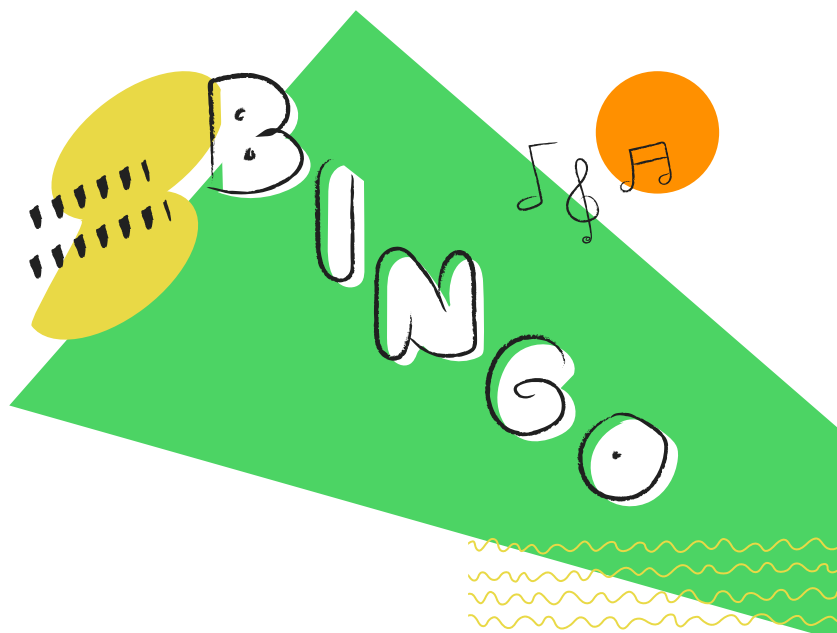
Setting

Small groups of four to six.

What happens

Explain the concept of body talk to the group:

When people are supportive of the appearance ideal in conversation, sometimes without even knowing it they are engaging in body talk. When we compliment others on losing weight, join in when friends complain about their bodies or talk about dramatic weight-loss diets, we're supporting the idea that we should all chase the appearance ideal and there's only one way to look good. Body talk may sound like a harmless, positive compliment, but under the surface, it still compares us to the appearance ideal and can make us feel bad about ourselves.



Then:

- 1** Give each small group a dice and set of Body Talk Bingo Cards (**Handout 2**).
- 2** Girls each take a bingo card and alternate rolling the dice.
- 3** Each girl shows the group which speech box on her page matches the dice roll, and the group reads the speech box in silence (or a leader reads it aloud).
- 4** The group decides what they would say to show they don't agree with the appearance ideal and to challenge the statement in a positive way.
- 5** They say this statement out loud, and girls with that speech box on their bingo cards can cross it out.
- 6** If the dice roll matches a box that has already been answered, pass the dice on.
- 7** When a girl has crossed out all six statements on her page, she calls bingo. Keep going until time is up or everyone has crossed out all their speech boxes.



Reflect

Stay in your small groups or come back together to have a conversation around these three questions:

Q *How do statements like the ones on the bingo cards keep the appearance ideal going?*

A They imply that the appearance ideal brings success and happiness, and makes us better people, and that there's only one way to look...

Q *What can you do differently?*

A Change the topic of conversation, talk positively about your body, celebrate diversity, tell others about the appearance ideal and discuss how chasing one doesn't make life better...

Q *How do you think changing the way you talk about your body might have an impact on how you feel and how others respond to you?*

A You'd feel more body confident and others would notice your confidence; you'd believe being comfortable in your own skin is an attractive quality.

TIP

Encourage girls to help each other if they are struggling to think of verbal challenges.

Look for

- > Confident responses that would stop body talk in real life.
- > Girls eager to contribute.

Do it differently

- > Want it to be more active? Create a recycled bowling alley using plastic bottles with different numbers representing points written on each of them. Each girl picks a statement from her bingo card and comes up with a challenge to the statement, saying it out loud and then rolling a ball to see how many bottles she can knock down.
- > If your group doesn't want to play a game, use a bingo card to facilitate a discussion in which girls practice responding to the speech boxes out loud. Use the questions from the Reflect section of the activity to keep the discussion on track.
- > You could also have the leader reads aloud a speech box, then closes her eyes. A girl steps up to the leader and responds to the speech box, showing why she doesn't agree with the appearance ideal. Before opening her eyes, the leader tries to guess the speaker by the sound of her voice. Each girl takes at least one turn to respond to a speech box.



Ideas worth sharing

Why this matters

Girls gain confidence from challenging the appearance ideal, practicing it in different contexts and reflecting on how it shows up in different parts of their lives.

You will need

- ❑ Zone 1: **Handout 3** Quick Comeback Statement Grid from the True to Me program materials (available for download at dove.com/selfesteem). Also needed is a beanbag, pebble or something similar to throw.
- ❑ Zone 2: Paper and pens. If older girls have cameras on their phones, they can use them here (optional).
- ❑ Zone 3: Paper and pens. Colored paper or cardboard star shapes.
- ❑ Zone 4: Large pieces of paper, ideally placed on the wall. Paints, colored pens and other creative materials. Media images, body-confident quotes, etc., as available.

Setting

Four activity zones with one leader at each. Divide your group into four and rotate around the zones, spending about five minutes at each one.

What happens

In this activity, you'll explore four different ways to challenge the appearance ideal and four different environments where you can share what you've learned. Take advantage of each zone to really push yourself and come up with strong, clear messages that may persuade your friends, family and girls in your community or even around the world to break away from trying to look like the appearance ideal.

Zone 1: Quick comebacks

Challenging the appearance ideal when talking to friends and family is really hard to do, but once you get the hang of it, you can make a big difference. If you respond confidently, clearly and in a positive way on the spot against the appearance ideal, you'll open some eyes and make a difference with the people you care about.

- 1 Lay out the Quick Comeback Statement Grid face up on the ground.
- 2 Girls take turns throwing the beanbag, and the leader reads out the statement it lands on.
- 3 The thrower tries to make a quick reply to the statement.
- 4 Once she has, the rest of the group can pitch extra ideas for quick comebacks.

For example:

- > "Doesn't she look too fat to wear a swimsuit?"
- > "It sounds really judgmental when you say things like that."
- > "I don't agree with putting others down."
- > "Swimming is about having fun and taking care of your body, not the way you look."
- > "I think she's great the way she is."
- > Carry on until everyone has made a quick comeback statement.



Ideas worth sharing

Zone 2: Social media activist

If you had the chance to tell girls around the world why chasing the appearance ideal is a bad idea, what would you say? What could you share to show them how to be more body confident?

- 1 Come up with a powerful message to convince girls around the world that the appearance ideal isn't worth chasing and costs too much.
- 2 Think of your favorite social media platform. How could you use this to share your message?
(Note: This activity is designed for girls ages 13 and up. For girls ages 12 and under, follow the Do It Differently Zone 2 alternative on page 29.)
- 3 Write down what you'd say, or capture your message through photos or video clips. If you want to, put your message out there!



Zone 3: Home challenge

How could you make your home a more body-confident place? What would you change or create to remind yourself and your family not to fall for the appearance ideal?

Girls come up with a list of ideas. For example:

- > Creating body-confident messages to stick on mirrors, fridges and walls.
- > Putting messages into magazines that challenge the appearance ideal.
- > Changing the magazines and media that you have in the house to things that boost your body confidence.

Start your transformation by creating a positive message to stick on your mirror, so every day you are reminded that you've got another chance to stand up against the appearance ideal.

Girls can write their messages on cardboard stars or on colored paper that they've cut into inspiring shapes. Encourage girls to take their messages home and stick them on their mirror or bedroom door.



Zone 4: Diversity wall

Speak up for appearance diversity and the amazing things our bodies can do, whatever they look like.
Show your community what we'd be missing out on if everyone looked like the appearance ideal!

As a group, create a mural or graffiti wall to share images and messages that challenge the appearance ideal and celebrate uniqueness, diversity and what we can do with our bodies. Build on one another's work to create a colorful mural that has something important to say. "Sign" your work with a statement about the downsides of the appearance ideal and why it shouldn't be pursued.



Reflect

**How could you make your home
a more body-confident place?
What would you change or create
to remind yourself?**

Do it differently

- Zone 1 is the most important zone in this activity. If you have a small group, or not enough leaders to run all the zones, make sure this one doesn't get skipped.
- Take Zone 2 further and encourage the group to think of actions they could take in their school or community, as well as at home.
(Note: This is an appropriate alternative if the group is too young for social media.)
- Why not exhibit the diversity wall in a public space? Or share it on social media if everyone in the group is comfortable with the idea.

TIPS

Keep the time balanced among the four zones.

Leaders can use questions to encourage girls to reflect on the messages they want to communicate at each zone.

Look for

- Girls using the framework of these activities to form challenges to the appearance ideal.
- Motivation to share the ideas from Zones 1 and 2 beyond the meeting.

Wrap up

Take a minute to close the session. Thank everyone for participating and give girls a chance to share their favorite moment of the session. Why not challenge them to try to use quick comebacks on social media* before the next session? Make sure everyone is clear on when and where the next session will take place.

Session 4

Outcome

Girls explore and expose how media can perpetuate the appearance ideal, and reflect on how media could change to support more positive body-confident messages.

You will need

- ☐ **Handout 4** “Eyes Don’t Lie?” Photos
Distribute one per small group.
- ☐ **Video** “Dove: Selfie”
- ☐ **Worksheet 3** Media Detectives (Optional)

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

SESSION MAP

50 minutes



Verbal Sign-up	5 min
Activity: Eyes Don't Lie?	10 min
Activity: Media Takeover	30 min
Personal Challenge (Optional): Media Detectives	5 min

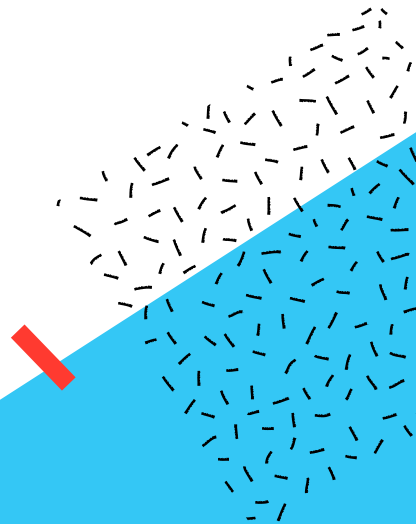


Verbal sign-up

Remember to start the session by giving each girl a chance to share her willingness to speak up and take part in True to Me with the group:

Getting the most out of True to Me requires an open mind, support and respect for one another, and participation in all the activities. Are you ready?

Invite each girl to tell the group that she is ready to contribute. Follow up by asking the group if they succeeded in using quick comebacks on social media* and invite them to share their experiences.



Eyes don't lie?

Why this matters

By understanding digital editing techniques such as airbrushing, the group becomes aware of the lengths the media will go to in order to present the appearance ideal, and that models and celebrities can't naturally match it.

You will need

- ❑ **Handout 4** "Eyes Don't Lie?" Photos
Distribute one per small group.

- ❑ **Video** "Dove: Selfie"

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

Setting

Whole group for the video, then small groups for looking at the photos. The leader will facilitate feedback and conversation at the end.

What happens

Show the "Dove: Selfie" video clip to the group.

Airbrushing can dramatically change a photo or video, but if you don't know it's been done, it can be hard to spot. We are tricked into believing what we see: that the models and celebrities in photographs and videos "naturally" match the appearance ideal, when, in fact, they've been digitally altered.

Distribute **Handout 4**, one for each small group. In each group, have the members examine the photos and identify how many differences they can find between the two. Let them share the results with the whole group.



Reflect

Start a group discussion using the following questions as prompts:

- How does it make you feel when you realize that even models and celebrities have to be airbrushed, because even they aren't considered beautiful enough to match the appearance ideal?
- How do you think it makes the model feel to be airbrushed?
- Why did this social media star want it to look like she was taking a selfie?
- If you digitally alter your own photos on social media, do you think this supports the appearance ideal? How does it feel different from posting unedited photos?*

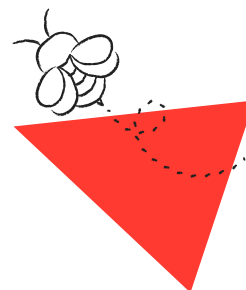
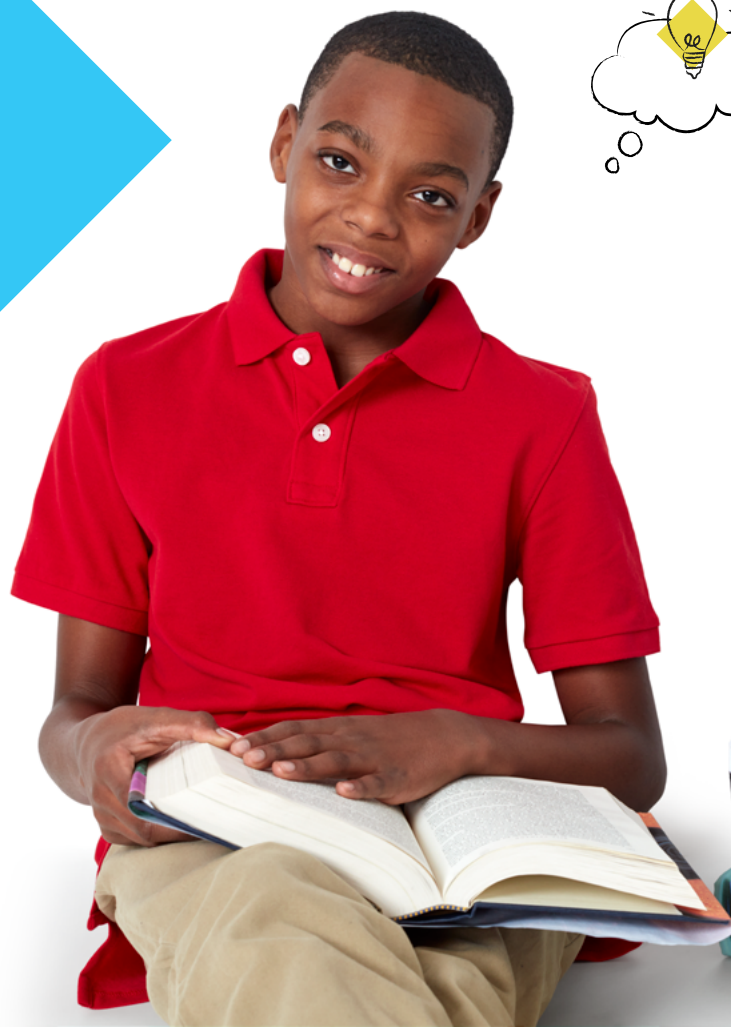
Look for

- Group members making connections with their own experiences and recognizing how digitally altered media feeds the appearance ideal.

Do it differently

If you can't show the video clip, why not share articles about the impact of digitally altered media that make people look like the appearance ideal? There are plenty of these online; choose a couple that are suitable for your group and that complement the messaging of True to Me.

Remind the group that while digital-editing techniques like airbrushing are regularly used in media such as ads, TV, movies and music videos, the "Dove: Selfie" short film shows that they're also used for social media. What might look like a simple selfie required a lot of time and resources to make the social media star look like the appearance ideal.



Media takeover

Why this matters

It's hard to imagine a world in which the media doesn't keep the appearance ideal going. By conceiving an alternative, girls understand that there is a choice: Media need not be dominated by the appearance ideal.

You will need

- ☐ Pens and paper.
- ☐ Art and design materials, as available.

Setting

Small groups of three to five.

What happens

Girls get to create a positive body-confident media landscape.

Apparently, we are exposed to at least 250 pieces of media each day. What would life be like if these media challenged the appearance ideal, instead of supporting it and getting us to compare ourselves to it? What if they celebrated diversity and spread a positive body-confident messages? Let's find out.

Imagine your youth group has been given funding to transform local media with body-confident messages that empower girls to reject the appearance ideal and celebrate what makes them unique. In small groups, design your media takeover!

You can create any type of media you like so long as what you create shares positive body-confident messages and spreads the word that the appearance ideal is not worth pursuing because it is impossible to achieve and costs too much to maintain.

Working in small groups, support girls to create a body-confident media piece of their choice.

Some ideas could be:

- > A new magazine cover.
- > A podcast or video post.
- > A billboard.
- > A news or magazine article.
- > An advertising campaign for a body-confident clothing line. This should include how they'll recruit their models, where they'll advertise and what they'll use as a slogan.
- > An Instagram campaign.*
- > A music video.
- > A song or a rap.
- > A script for a short play. (They could even act it out for the group!)
- > A stop-motion animation.
- > A TV news segment. (They could act this out.)
- > A video game or app.



Give everyone 20 minutes to create their media and then share the results among groups.



Reflect

Get your group to think about the media piece it has created and why it's effective. Ask them:

What is it about your media piece that offers the greatest challenge to the appearance ideal?

What would it feel like to see a message like this everywhere in the media?

TIPS

This is a great activity that girls really love. If you can, allow them more time to put together their media piece and get creative.

Encourage older girls to share their media more widely if they are comfortable doing so.

You can adapt the list of ideas for media pieces to a local context.

Create your message



Media detectives

Why this matters

The group will make connections between examples of media and the key messages about the appearance ideal.

You will need

- ☐ Pens.
- ☐ **Worksheet 3** Media Detectives

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

What happens

Challenge group members to find an example of the appearance ideal in the media.

- > Choose an image that shows the appearance ideal from any type of media you see during the week.
- > Capture the image (photograph it, cut it out or draw it), and bring it to the next True to Me session.
- > Write two sentences, inspired by the image, on **Worksheet 3**:
“The appearance ideal is fake because...”
“It’s not worth chasing the appearance ideal because...”



Session 5

Outcome

This final session gives girls a chance to think ahead and see if they've got the tools and ideas they need to challenge the appearance ideal once True to Me has ended.

You will need

- ☐ Paper and pens
- ☐ **True to Me Certificates** (optional)

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

SESSION MAP

50 minutes



Verbal Sign-up	5 min
Activity: Future Pressures	20 min
Activity: Body Activism	20 min
Reflect and Celebrate	5 min



Verbal sign-up

Remember to start the session by giving each girl a chance to share her willingness to speak up and take part in True to Me with the group:

It's time for the last True to Me session, and to make the most of the time we have left, let's speak up during activities, support one another and respect our group guidelines. Are you ready to take part?

Invite each girl to tell the group that she is ready to contribute.





Future pressures

Why this matters

Once True to Me has ended, girls need strategies to support themselves to resist the appearance ideal. This activity helps them prepare how to take what they've learned and apply it to their lives.

You will need

- ☐ Small notecards, colored if possible – approximately 10 per girl.
- ☐ Envelope or small box or bag, one per girl.
- ☐ Colored pens, paper and other art materials, if available.

Setting

Small groups.

What happens

You're all pretty clear now that the appearance ideal isn't worth chasing. But what happens once True to Me has ended? What challenges might you face in the future that will make the appearance ideal seem more attractive? We're going to come up with a list of useful tips and actions that will help you resist future pressures to look like the appearance ideal.

- 1 Encourage each group to brainstorm challenges they might face in the future that will put pressure on them to pursue the appearance ideal.
- 2 Each group then writes a list of actions they could take to overcome those challenges by reminding themselves the ideal isn't worth chasing and, in effect, boosting their body confidence.

- 3 Once each group has a good list, give each girl approximately 10 notecards.
- 4 Each girl creates a set of cards that offer suggestions for how to challenge the appearance ideal by writing one of her favorite ideas for doing so on each card. She can draw from the list the group came up with, add new ideas of her own or both.
- 5 Give each girl an envelope or small box or bag to collect her set of cards in.

At home, put the envelope, box or bag somewhere you'll see it every day. Whenever you're feeling under pressure because of the appearance ideal or just want a confidence boost, pull out a card and do what it tells you. If you think of other good ideas in the future, make new cards for your box. If you see your friends struggling in the future, why not lend them one of your cards to remind them how they can reject the appearance ideal?



Do it differently

If your group wants to do something more active, try role-playing the same idea. Get the group to brainstorm the challenges they might face, then in pairs they can pull a challenge out of a hat and act out what they would do to overcome it if it happened in the future.

If the group would prefer a more individual-reflective activity, they could also write a postcard to their future selves telling them what they could do to help them handle appearance pressures.

TIP

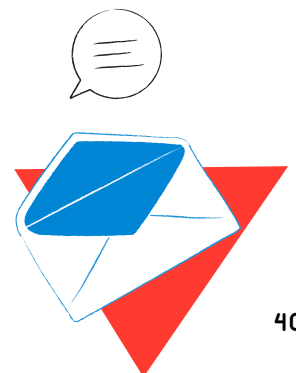
If anyone is struggling to come up with actions, share some examples to get them started.

Listen to your favorite empowering song, etc.

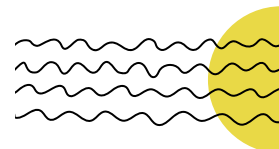
Share a social media* post that exposes the appearance ideal

Write body-confident messages on sticky notes and display them in your room

Repeat the Mirror Time activity



Body activism



Why this matters

Body confidence is a social issue. By becoming body confidence activists, girls get to practice voicing their own rejection of the appearance ideal and help others feel less pressured to chase it, creating more body-confident communities.

You will need

- Paper and colored pens for each small group.

Setting

Small discussion groups (approximately four to six), with leaders moving between groups.

What happens

Working in small groups, girls choose a simple action that will allow them to share what they've learned in True to Me with more people.

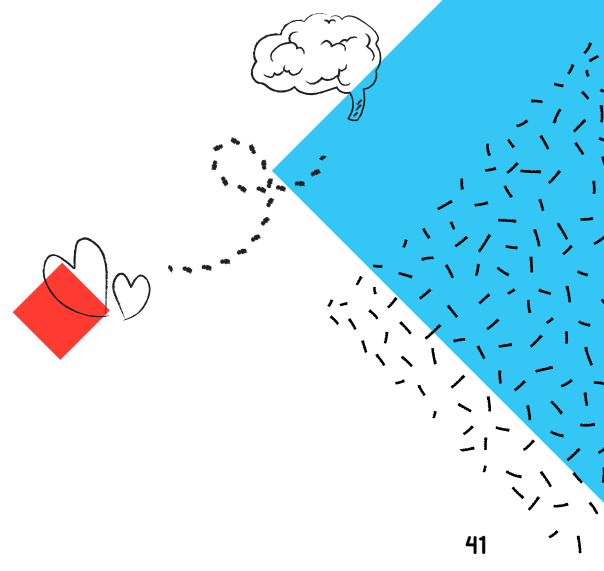
What could you do to open the eyes of your friends and family, even your wider community, to the appearance ideal and the importance of body confidence? To complete True to Me, share what you've discovered with others and expose the truth behind the appearance ideal.

1 Create two quick group brainstorm:

- > With whom would you most want to share the True to Me messages?
- > Where in your community do you think these people are most exposed to the appearance ideal?

2 Thinking about what you've learned from True to Me, what would you like to say to those people? Come up with some simple messages that would challenge the appearance ideal and help others feel more body confident. Create a speech bubble for each one.

- 3 How else could you share your messages with those people or challenge the appearance ideal in those places it appears most in your community? Think of one simple action, such as:
 - > Putting body-confident notes on the bathroom mirrors at your school
 - > Sending body-confident postcards to your friends
 - > Putting up posters challenging the appearance ideal
 - > Writing a blog article
 - > Conducting a social media campaign*
 - > Creating a photo exhibition or pop-up art gallery
- 4 Agree as a group to take action in the near future, and start your body activism by taking a group selfie with your speech bubbles. If you're comfortable doing so, post the photo on social media and share it with your friends using the hashtag #TruetoMe.
- 5 Make sure everyone gets a speech bubble to take home.



Look for

- Teamwork, enthusiasm and motivation to take action.
- High energy and lots of discussion.

Do it differently

This activity might need extra time outside the session to take action. If finding time is hard, have the girls concentrate on creating their speech bubbles and seeing how far they can share their selfies – both online* and off.

TIP

If you have time and the group is enthusiastic, taking action in the community is a great way for girls to feel empowered and practice life skills, as well as reinforce body-confident messages. Try to keep the project girl-led for maximum impact.

Your body-
confident message

Your body-
confident
message



Reflect and celebrate



Why this matters

Reflecting on the session helps the learning to sink in. This is also a chance for you to get feedback and recognize everyone's contributions.

You will need

- ❑ **True to Me Certificates** (optional)

All True to Me program materials are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem.

Setting

Whole group for feedback session.

Look for

- > Sense of achievement in group members.
- > Clarity about the program.
- > Motivation to share it widely.

Do it differently

Fill out and award the True to Me certificates that are available for download at dove.com/selfesteem. Or turn the end of the session into a community party if you have the time and resources.

Wrap up

Take a minute to close the session. Thank everyone for participating in True to Me and encourage them to spread the body confidence message far and wide!

What happens

Get some feedback. Discuss – or use Post-it Note Wall Pads or other quick evaluation and reflection techniques – for these four questions:

What did you most enjoy about the workshop?

Is there anything you didn't enjoy?

What one thing will you take forward from the workshop into your own life?

What is one thing you've learned from True to Me you'd like to tell your friends?

Thank each group member for participating and recognize her contribution in a fun and creative way. If you have time, a great way to end the workshop is with a simple activity to celebrate everyone's individuality and good qualities. For example, every girl makes and decorates a unique paper flower, writing on it five things they love about herself. Invite girls to display their flowers together as a diverse and beautiful garden.

TIPS

As your group won't meet again, be very clear about the benefits of completing the Personal Challenge activities and encourage them to spread the body confidence message far and wide!

