

Image Overload

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

SH.8.CC.12 – Explain the impact that media, including sexually explicit media, can have on one's body image and self-esteem

TARGET GRADE: Grade 6

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Laptop
- Projector
- Screen
- Tape
- Image Overload Handout (copy for each student)
- Image Overload Influences Cards (a set for each group of 4-5 students)
- Image Overload Influences Educator Card Set

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe what body image is and its connection to self esteem
2. Identify at least two influences on body image
3. Explain the impact that sexually explicit media can have on one's body image and self esteem

LESSON RATIONALE

The digital age in which we live means that there is a higher probability of exposure to sexually explicit images and media. This media can influence a person's perceptions of body image and subsequently impact a person's self esteem. Reviewing the impact that this media can have on a person's body image and self esteem offers an opportunity to identify the positive and negative impacts and mitigate any harmful messaging that could result.

ADVANCE PREPARATION:

Please print copies of the image overload handout, influence cards (one set per 5 students), and influences educator card set for yourself.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1:

"Hi everyone. We are going to start today's class by completing a visualization exercise. No one will be touching anyone during this time and your eyes will be closed for only a few seconds if you are comfortable. Let's take a couple of minutes and if you are comfortable close your eyes and take deep breaths. Please breathe in for three seconds and then out for five seconds to clear your mind. Great, now open your eyes. Now that we have clear minds. I want you to take an image overload handout that shows a human body. It is important to know that this paper is private and only for you. Take the next two minutes to write words that describe how you see your own body."

After the two minutes say, **"Now I'm going to ask you to write at the top of your handout in the thought bubble how you feel about the way that you look."**

After approximately two minutes say, **"Now on the right side of your handout you will see a box and here I would like you to write any beliefs you feel about your body by completing the sentence, 'I believe my body...'"**

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After approximately two more minutes say, **“Now please fill in the box on the bottom of the handout what things you do because of the way your body looks. For example, you might wear certain clothes, or choose to engage in activities, or participate in physical activities.”**

Provide approximately two additional minutes for the students to complete and then say, **“Now look at your completed handout and then please write the words Body Image at the top of the handout. All of these thoughts and ideas come together to create our body image or how a person sees themselves. Finally, please take your paper and shred or crumple the paper and place it into this trash bag as this exercise was just for you.”**

Project the slide with the following questions on your screen. **“Now please turn to an elbow partner and discuss the following, how does a person’s body image impact their self-esteem? Self-esteem can be defined as a person’s confidence in their own self. How would positive body image impact a person’s self-esteem? How would negative body image impact a person’s self-esteem? I will give you some time to discuss with your partner.”**

(10 minutes)

STEP 2:

After allowing about four minutes for partners to discuss how body image is connected with self-esteem ask for volunteers to share their thoughts on the connection. Push students to discuss how a positive body image can enhance a person’s health self-esteem and therefore make decisions that keep them healthier and happier by saying something like, **“If a person feels good about their body, what kind of things might they do?”** (Answers might include: take good care of their body, eat healthy, exercise, be around people who make them happy, wear clothes they like on their body, etc.)

Then push students to connect that a negative body image can amplify a person’s unhealthy self-esteem and therefore engage in behaviors that could have a bad impact on their health by saying something like, **“If a person does not feel good about their body, what kind of things might they do?”** (Answers might include: ignore their body when in pain, allow others to treat them with disrespect, self harm, avoid clothes they may want to wear, avoid self care, not take care of their body like taking baths or showering, brushing teeth, etc.)

Ask questions such as:

“What would you say is the most important thought you discussed?”

“Why is it important to be able to understand the relationship between body image and self-esteem?”

“So how will this information impact you moving forward?”

(14 minutes)

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STEP 3:

Following the discussion, place the students in small groups of about 4-5 students and distribute an image overload card deck and a positivity spectrum to each group.

Once each group has received an image overload card deck say the following, **“each group has a deck of influences and a positivity spectrum. Each card will showcase something that influences a person’s body image. As a group you all will need to determine if the card could be a positive, negative, or neutral influence on a person’s body image. A card can be placed anywhere on the spectrum. You will have about 7 minutes to complete the activity and once you are done we will review as a class.”**

***NOTE TO EDUCATOR:** The activity is created to be implemented as a values clarification activity and therefore there might be influences that you or other students might classify as negative while others might see them as a positive. It is important to clearly explain that this is a spectrum and that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Your job in this activity is to provide the facts to the students and then allow them the safe space to navigate how the facts influence their personal beliefs. If you find that a group is struggling to come to agreement, you can help facilitate the process of communication by utilizing the SOY (some, others, you) method. Some people think....; Other people think....; You have to decide what is best for you. Also, if necessary reference the ground rules to ensure that there is a safe space for all students to participate fully.*

As the groups complete the activity circulate around the room and offer support as needed to students without telling them where to place the influences. As groups are completing the activity please draw a long arrow across the board and write positive on one end and negative on the opposite end. Have an extra deck of the influences cards with tape on the back ready to go.

After seven minutes review the card deck as a class using positivity spectrum and card deck in front of the class. Call out each influence using your own deck of influences cards (*make sure to save the card labeled Porn for last*) and then ask a volunteer to come place the card on the spectrum where they feel it best fits. It is important to clearly explain that students are sharing their opinions and not facts related to whether an influence is positive, neutral, or negative and what could be positive for one person could be negative for another. The important thing to understand is that each individual needs to be able to decide for themselves whether the influences in their lives are positive or negative in order to reduce the negative and increase the positive. When you review the influence of sexually explicitly images, also known as porn, say something like, **“porn does not provide a realistic view of what sex can look like or even how people respond before, during, or after sex. Porn can negatively influence people’s expectations around what sex should or could be like and even how a person’s body should look that is not realistic.”** After completing the porn influence card, pull out the extra card that was not included in the student’s deck of influences. The card is labeled Scenario. Using the power point presentation project the scenario about an older sibling showing a student porn. Ask for a student volunteer to read the scenario on the screen and then ask for a volunteer to place the Scenario card on the positivity spectrum.

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To close out the activity ask the students, **“How important would you say influences are on a person’s body image and self-esteem? How could we control the influences we have in our lives?”**

(14 minutes)

STEP 4

Say something like; **today we did a lot of work to analyze how influences impact our body image and self-esteem and then how a person’s body image and self-esteem influence our decisions. So much of how we think and what we do is impacted by influences in our lives whether they be internal and how we think or external and what we see and learn from others outside of ourselves. While we cannot control these influences we can be aware of how they can impact how we feel about ourselves and then subsequently our health and well-being so we can respond as needed. It is very important to love and appreciate ourselves as we are all amazing individuals who are perfectly who we need to be. Thank you for your hard work.**

(2 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON

Objective 1 is completed in Steps 1 and 2, Objectives 2 and 3 are completed in Steps 3, 4 and the homework.

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK:

Create art to illustrate how you feel about your body. The image should provide a visual representation of your own body image. Include 3 – 5 sentences to verbalize how the image connects with your body image. Examples of art media include: a photograph, a drawing, a song, a poem, etc.

Image Overload Card Deck Educator Set

*print and cut prior to the class

MEDIA	FAMILY
SEXUALLY EXPLICIT IMAGES (PORN)	CULTURE
FRIENDS	ROMANTIC PARTNERS
SCENARIO	

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MEDIA	FAMILY
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FRIENDS	ROMANTIC PARTNERS
SCENARIO	

POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE

Image Overload Handout

