

Facts about Body Image and Self-Esteem

- In elementary school, 60% of girls agree with the statement: "I am happy the way I am." By the time they reach high school only 29% feel that way.
- The average North American female model is 5'11" tall and 117 pounds.
- The average North American female is 5'4" and 140 pounds and a size 14.
- The average North American male model is 5'11"- 6'2" and 140-165 pounds.
- The average North American male is 5'9" and 175 pounds.
- The men and women seen in advertisements are rarely depicted naturally; their physical characteristics are digitally modified to make them seem more attractive.
- 15 % of women and 11% of men would sacrifice five years of their life to be the ideal weight.

NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre

360 Topsail Road Suite 101

St. John's, NL A1E 2B6

Tel: 709-747-7757

Fax: 709-747-7758

www.EndSexualViolence.com

24-hour, Crisis Support and
Information Line:

Toll Free: 1-800-726-2743

St. John's: 726-1411

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Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault
Crisis and Prevention Centre



Body Image and Self-Esteem

Body Image

Body image is your perception of your physical appearance. It is how you see yourself when you look in the mirror or when you picture yourself in your mind.

Body image is how you feel 'in' your body and about your body. Body image can be positive or negative.

Positive Body Image: is a clear, true perception of your body.

- You see the various parts of your body as they really are
- You accept and feel good about your unique, natural body shape and size
- You know that a person's physical appearance says very little about their character and value as a person
- You feel comfortable and confident in your body and who you are

Negative Body Image: is a distorted perception of your shape and size.

- You see the various parts of your body unlike they really are
- You feel ashamed, self-conscious and anxious about your body and avoid people, activities or special situations because of it
- You feel uncomfortable and awkward in your body

Things You Can Do To Improve Your Body Image:

- Appreciate all that your body can do.
- Keep a top 10 list of things you like most about yourself.
- Remind yourself that "true beauty" is not simply skin deep.
- Look at yourself as a whole person.
- Surround yourself with positive people.
- Shut down that voice in your head that tells you your body is not "right" or that you are a "bad" person.
- Wear clothes that are comfortable and make you feel good about your body.
- Become a critical viewer of social and media messages.
- Do something nice for yourself.
- Use the time and energy that you might have spent worrying about your physical appearance to do something to help others.

Remember, all bodies come in different shapes and sizes and it is normal for your own weight to fluctuate on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis. Never let your body shape define who you are!

Self Esteem

Self esteem is the way you feel about yourself and how much you value and appreciate your worth and importance. It is a reflection of how valuable, capable, lovable and worthy you think you are.

Self-esteem develops and evolves throughout our lives as we build images of ourselves through our experiences with different people, situations and activities.

The Media's Role on Body Image and Self Esteem

Media messages are all around us and have a great impact on how we think about things such as our physical appearance. The average person is bombarded with over 3000 ads a day. Comparing yourself to 'perfect' people seen on television, in movies or magazines can negatively influence your body image and self esteem. The media tells us:

- That ideal women handle their jobs, homes, and kids with ease and continue to be thin, well dressed, and beautiful
- That ideal men are big, strong, and successful in life

We have to examine these expectations and look at how our own actions, beliefs and attitudes may support these narrow ideals, and decide if we are going to challenge them. It is important to recognize that the role of the media is largely to market products. It does not exist to make you feel good about yourself.