

Follow-up

- If you are unsure about whether to refer a student to a school counsellor, talk to the counsellor.
- Provide students with specific instructions for accessing resources and support. For example, contact local health authorities to get current phone numbers and websites for resources, or show students how to get to the closest resources on foot, by bus, and so on.

Topic: Body Image

Considerations

- Body image is the mental picture that people have about their body. This includes both how they perceive their own body and how they think other people view their body.
- Most people have things about their own bodies that they might like to change. Not being completely happy with aspects of your body is perfectly natural and not necessarily unhealthy.
- Unhealthy body image can be caused by pressure to meet perceived societal expectations or pressure related to participation in activities. For example, people involved in sports can feel pressure to stay very thin or muscular.
 - While it may seem unhealthy to others, being involved in competitive sports may require people to commit to a strict diet and training regimen.
- Body image can be unhealthy when there is a large gap between someone's self-perception and reality.
 - For example, students may look thin to others but see themselves as overweight, potentially leading to eating disorders.
- Gender identity can also influence body image. Some people may feel pressure to conform to societal expectations related to masculine or feminine characteristics.
- While it is important to help students feel comfortable in their bodies, they also should not be discouraged from having a healthy diet and exercising.

Instructional strategies

Strategies to support you in covering this topic with your students could include the following:

- Discuss body image and have students brainstorm about what they think body image represents.
- Talk about the role that the media plays in shaping body image.
 - Remind students that many of the photos we see have been airbrushed and photoshopped. You can tie this in with the modelling industry and how new

laws require companies to state that an image has been airbrushed or photoshopped.

- Talk about the unhealthy ways in which people alter their bodies (e.g., steroid use, eating disorders) and the potential consequences associated with them.
- Have students select and analyze an advertisement (e.g., magazine, TV, Internet) and then write a reflection on the advertisement, responding to questions that you have provided. Here are some examples:
 - What catches your eye about this advertisement?
 - What is being advertised?
 - Who is the target audience for this advertisement?
 - Who is being represented in the advertisement?
 - What feelings are you left with after seeing this advertisement? Do you feel that you need to change anything about yourself?
- Discuss healthy and unhealthy ways to change aspects of appearance. For example:
 - Healthy: diet, exercise, changing hair colour
 - Unhealthy: starving yourself, taking diet pills, using steroids

Topic: Stress

Considerations

- It's important for both teachers and students to remember that being in good mental health can include experiencing stress.
- Experiencing momentary stress is a natural response to day-to-day challenges, and overcoming it helps students grow.
 - For example, it is totally normal to experience stress before a job interview or because you forgot to do something you promised your friend you would do.
 - These types of stress can be identified and managed with a variety of coping strategies.
- While day-to-day stress can often be predicted and overcome with a variety of strategies, students may also experience stress from more serious and long-term sources, such as parents going through a divorce or the death of a loved one.
 - When experiencing serious, long-term stress, students may need additional support.
 - Unlike many day-to-day sources of stress, these more serious, long-term stressors are usually out of the student's control.
 - Experiencing stress during a difficult time is natural, and students often just need time (e.g., taking time to grieve a relative who has died).