

What Makes Me, Me?

CANFIT Body Image Activity
Excerpt from [CANFIT Super Manual](#)

Purpose

_ To develop an appreciation for different body types.
_ To recognize that physical characteristics account for only a portion of who we are as individuals.

Time Needed

45 minutes

Getting Ready

Read:

Background information

Collect:

Copies of popular teen magazines (e.g. Teen People, Latina, Vibe, Teen)

Duplicate:

What Makes Me,, Me,

Activity :

Establish discussion ground rules. Emphasize that they will be discussing topics that can be difficult for people to talk about. Stress the importance of respect and discourage disparaging remarks by participants during the discussion.

1. Divide youth into smaller groups. Have them look through magazines to find one picture of someone who looks like them and one picture of someone who they would like to look like. As a large group have volunteers share their pictures. Find out whether or not it was easy to find someone who looks like them and what qualities they looked for when searching for someone they would like to look like. Note the diversity in the pictures they choose and any emphasis on external vs internal characteristics. Encourage youth to think about the inner qualities that may be a part of developing external qualities. Example: a athletic body is often developed through discipline and determination.

Other discussion questions:

Do you think society puts a lot of emphasis on physical appearance?

Does someone's outer appearance determine their worth as a person?

Are there different ideas of beauty/body standards between different ethnic groups? What about between sexes?

What can young people do to promote positive messages about all forms of diversity.

2. \$100 Best Friend

Ask youths to brain storm qualities of a good friend. Write their responses on a board or large piece of paper for the entire group to view. (Make sure that both external and internal qualities are noted i.e. trustworthy, likes to have a good time, dresses nice, good listener, funny, etc.) Tell the youths that they have \$100 to "buy" a best friend using

the list of qualities. If each quality “costs” \$25, which qualities would they choose and why? Ask volunteers to share their “\$100 Best Friend”. Note the different responses including both internal and external qualities.

3. Ask youth to discuss whether they see diversity as a positive or negative thing. Discuss the pros and cons of diversity some examples include: racism, increased variety, the ability to learn different things from different people. Discuss the role that genetics plays in determining our physical appearance.

Pass out copies of *What Makes Me, Me,*. handout. Have students brainstorm and record their responses to each of the 5 questions.

In a large group, have the students discuss some of the differences they noted between themselves and their parents. Find out why they think the differences exist. Discuss the characteristics the students found that they admired about themselves and why. Make note of both physical and external characteristics and the diversity of the responses.

Other Activities:

Who are our role Models?

1. Ask youths to name someone they admire or someone who is their role model.
2. Divide youths into small groups to discuss what person they chose and why.
3. As a group list the qualities mentioned.

Make sure to note internal and external qualities listed. Encourage youths to focus on internal qualities that may be a part of developing certain external qualities. Find out what qualities they think other people might admire about them. Find out whether or not physical appearance matters when determining if someone is a role model.

My Talents

1. Give each student an index card. Have them list a special skill or talent they have on the card.
2. Collect and read the cards aloud. Have the students guess who each talent or skill belongs to.

Discussion questions:

- Were there any surprises?
- Did you learn anything new about each other?
- Are there any of these talents that you have in common?
- Are the any talents that you would like to develop?

Class Survey

1. Make 5 paper signs that say “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neutral”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree” and put them up on the walls around the room.

2. Develop a survey using all or some of the questions provided on the Body Image Survey Questions handout. Distribute a copy to everyone and instruct them to fill them out without putting their names on them.
3. Collect and shuffle the surveys. Provide each student with a completed survey.
4. Read off the questions from the survey. After each question, ask the students to stand by the sign that represents the answer on their survey, not their own answer. After each question make observations and ask volunteers to say what they think. Are they surprised by the answers? What do they mean?

Factors that influence how we see ourselves

Discuss as a group what key factors influence body image (culture, mass media, advertising, family, peers, self-esteem) and where we get our ideas about appearance from.

Messages we see

1. Have youths look through popular magazines and cut out all of the different images they see-i.e. people of color, different shapes and sizes, handicapped. **AND/OR** Have students determine what are the top most popular watched television shows amongst teen audiences. Assign each youth to watch a different show and document how many different types of people (i.e. people of color, different shapes, handicapped) they see.
2. Discuss findings and what they mean in terms of the messages that are being sent.

Take Action

Return subscriptions found in popular teen magazines with written comments on how the images they use have a negative influence on young people and how they should use more realistic models. (Each time a post-card is returned the magazine has to pay the postage.)

WHAT MAKES ME, ME?

1.) What are some of the external (physical) characteristics you see in your parents? *(Examples include tall or short, curly hair or straight hair, eye color, athletic build or non athletic build)*

_____	_____
_____	_____

2.) What are some of the internal (personality) characteristics you see in your parents? *(Examples include: funny, shy, outgoing, honest, intelligent, hard working, good athlete, musically talented)*

_____	_____
_____	_____

3.) What are some of the characteristics you have in common with your parents?

_____	_____
_____	_____

4.) Name 4 characteristics you possess that make you different from your parents.

_____	_____
_____	_____

5.) Name 4 characteristics that you admire about yourself.

_____	_____
_____	_____