

THE ROLE MODELS PROJECT

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT...?

BODY IMAGE

**TEACHER
RESOURCES**

WHAT IS THE ROLE MODELS PROJECT?

What do we wish we'd known when we were younger?

Role Models is a peer-led mentoring project. A team of students who are currently studying or recently completed Higher Education courses in Sussex were asked to consider a series of issues particularly relevant to young adults. Starting with the question 'What do we wish we'd known when we were younger?' the team have written articles and made videos in response to these issues specifically designed for secondary school students in Years 10 to 13. The project aims to offer this age group ideas, tips, advice and encouragement from the authentic voices of those with recent experience of the issues discussed.

WHAT'S IN THE BOOKLET?

The Role Models team were asked to consider their relationship with body image. They discussed issues surrounding body image, the pressures they have experienced and their approaches to some of the challenges they have faced.

Each article in this booklet offers a personal perspective from one of the team on body image, based on their own experiences. They also offer tips, tasks and practical changes your students might explore to better understand their own body image.

By offering a number of different approaches to the issue, we hope your students will recognise a voice with which they connect.

At the end of the booklet the team have also collated further information and support on the topic.

How do I use this booklet with my group?

The booklet has been designed to be used either in a classroom setting or by students working from home.

For students working in school:

The teacher-led lesson activities included here explore the booklet and the themes that arise in the articles. You might choose to use each theme as a lesson plan or select individual activities, depending on time and suitability for your class. The different approaches discussed in each article can be used as a way of stimulating discussion and debate.

Alternatively, students can work through the booklet individually, or in small groups. They might be asked to read each article and then select a few different tasks to complete in school or at home, depending on the time and resources available.

WHAT'S IN THE BOOKLET?

For students working at home:

This booklet is made up of a number of different articles about the topic. Each article is accompanied by a task. The tasks vary in form and in the amount of time required to complete them.

Most tasks can be completed at home without teacher support and only need basic equipment. Some more creative tasks might require other materials, but all have been designed to be accessible.

The basic requirements of each task and the minimum time needed to complete the tasks are clearly labelled. The ideas suggested can be explored in more detail and expanded or used as a starting point for your students to respond in their own way.

Some responses can be recorded in the booklet itself. For some creative tasks, you might ask students to send photographs of their ideas or work to you.

You might ask students to attempt every task in the booklet. Or you could ask them to select a couple of different tasks in different styles that best reflect their own thinking on the topic or require a range of skills and effort.

However you decide to use this resource, please encourage your students to watch the short video that accompanies the booklet first.

The video introduces the team behind the booklet and the style of the project overall, as well as offering some of their initial thoughts and tips about dealing with body image issues. By 'meeting' the young people behind the articles first, we hope your students can get to know the team a little and connect to the ideas and advice they offer in the booklet.

Video Link:

<https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/lisetoolkits/Role-Models-Resource-Books>

This project is funded by



TEACHER-LED LESSON ACTIVITIES

THEME: BODY IDEALS

Teacher notes/ timings

Whole group

Read

The first page of the booklet where the Role Models project is explained.

Key points:

- The Role Models team is made up of a group of HE students from across Sussex.
- They were asked to consider what they wished they'd known when they were younger.
- They discussed issues surrounding body image, the pressures they experienced and their approaches to some of the challenges they have faced.
- In response to these discussions they wrote the articles in the booklet and made videos.

Watch

Role Models Video that accompanies this booklet:

<https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/lisetoolkits/Role-Models-Resource-Books>

Whole group

Discuss

In general terms:

- What does the term 'Body Image' mean to you?
- How important is it to look a certain way in today's society?
- Is this pressure felt equality by all ages, genders etc.?

Whole group

Read

Imogen's article on page 9.

Whole group

Discuss

Imogen says:

'We live in a generation where so many people's lives are broadcasted online for us all to see, and although social media and technology are brilliant things, this makes it very easy for us to compare our lives to the ones we see online. Boys with six packs posting their latest gym selfie, girls posing by the pool with curves in all the 'right' places...'

- What is the current, ideal body image?
- Why is it important to look a certain way?

In pairs	Research The 'ideal' body shape has changed throughout history. In pairs, choose a time period to research. • This could be a decade in the past century or a longer time period in history, UK or Worldwide. Research what the 'ideal'/most fashionable body shape was during your chosen time period. • Consider why this might have been – health, wealth, status? • Find images to support your research to share with the class. • Also consider if these body fashions were shared across society or whether it only applied to certain ages, classes, genders or races. Useful article: https://greatist.com/grow/100-years-womens-body-image#1	Teacher notes/ timings Internet/ library access
Whole group	Discuss/Reflect Share images and discuss research. • Where do current body shape trends fit in relation to the research discussed? • What role does social media play in creating these trends? • How can we have a healthy relationship with social media and our own body images? Useful article: https://www.insider.com/how-social-media-affects-body-image	
Whole group	Read Amber's article on page 3.	
In pairs	Amber says: <i>'If I can have the confidence to tell myself that my body does not define me, and that I don't need to change anything, then I am less likely to seek this reassurance from others.'</i> Discuss and make notes • On average, how much of your day do you spend focussing on the way you look? • How much of your own body image is shaped by what other people think? • How much do you think your opinion of someone else is formed by the way they look? Try to be honest! We may say we don't care, but our behaviour would suggest otherwise... Feed back ideas to the class.	

Individually	Consider One of Amber's strategies is to take the focus away from body image and find worth in other qualities: <i>'When negative thoughts about my body creep in, I ask myself what I look for in a friend or family member. When I think about what makes me love the people that are important to me it never involves their looks.'</i> Write Choose a person from your life you really value: • This could be a friend or family member or anyone who you feel has a positive impact on your life. Make a list of all things you like about them. • Think of the qualities you admire in them and what makes them important to you. Consider and/or discuss What sort of qualities would this person write in a list about you? How important are these qualities in comparison to the way you look?	Teacher notes/timings
Extension activity	Complete Amber's 'Realising Your Worth' task on page 4.	
Extension activity	Complete Imogen's 'Top 5' task on page 10.	

THEME: FUTURE YOU

Whole group	Read Nick's article on page 7.	Teacher notes/ timings
Whole group	Discuss Nick says: 'We need to stop looking at others to decide what we should look like or who we should be. Instead go on an adventure, see the world, see other cultures, talk to as many people as you can and learn and embrace as much as you can.' Nick found confidence by challenging himself to try new experiences outside his comfort zone. This helped him to focus more on what he could achieve, rather than what others thought of him. • What activities or experiences have you tried that were outside your comfort zone? • How did you feel after the experience? • Why do you think experiences like this can improve our confidence?	
In pairs	Discuss Nick says: 'It's not so much about how my body looks, but how it serves me, and I serve it.' Discuss activities or experiences you would like to try that might help build your confidence further. • Consider challenges that will give you a sense of pride in yourself, especially things you know you won't find easy to accomplish.	
Individually	Write Write down a challenge you'd like to try for each of the following timescales: • A challenge to try this week: • A challenge to try this month: • A challenge to try this year: • A challenge to try in five years: The challenges might get bigger the more time you have to meet them. • You could write each challenge on a post-it note and place it on a class chart to be revisited throughout the year. • It's up to you whether you complete the challenges or not. But you could experiment by trying the first challenge and then seeing how you feel afterwards. • The focus is on trying something new and surprising yourself, rather than completing it or winning! Focus on the experience itself. Feed back ideas to the group.	Post it notes
Whole group	Read Ally's article on page 5.	

In pairs	Discuss Ally says: Reflect on the past, how much have you changed in the last five years alone? We never stop growing.' Discuss the main differences between 'you' now and 'you' five years ago in relation to: • Your appearance • Your body image • Your confidence Which version of 'you' do you prefer and why?	Teacher notes/ timings
Individually	Write Imagine yourself in five years' time. • Where would you like to be living and what would you be doing? • How would you like to look? • What would you like others to think about you? Reflect Read back what you have written. • Are your answers based on realistic expectations? • How much are your answers based on the expectations of others? • Are you treating yourself with the same empathy with which you would like to be treated by others?	
Individually	Write Complete Ally's 'Words Of The Future' task on page 6. (This letter might be private and so it may not be appropriate to share, depending on the group).	
Whole Group	Discuss What piece of advice would you give to younger students dealing with body image and self -confidence issues?	
Extension activity	Complete Nick's 'Plan Your Own Adventure' task on page 8.	

THEME: CHALLENGING EXPECTATIONS

Two teams	Discuss/Research There are a number of movements that focus on improving body image. Each take a different approach. Create two research teams: Team 1: Research the Body Positivity movement. Team 2: Research the Body Neutrality movement. Consider What is the main message of each movement? • How do they encourage us to feel about our bodies? • What key messages do they repeat? • Find examples of people who promote this way of thinking – Instagram/ youtube/celebrities etc. • Is this approach accepting of all genders/races/body types? As a group, select and organise the key information you would like to share with the other team.	Teacher notes/ timings Internet access
Whole group	Discuss Present your findings to the other team. Discuss the pros and cons of each approach. What approach do you favour and why?	
Whole group	Read Vic's article on page 11.	
Individually	Write Vic felt pressure to be someone they were not. Only by challenging the expectations of their family, community and themselves could they feel more confident in their body image and identity. Make a list of the expectations you feel are placed upon you by each of the following: A) School B) Family C) Friends D) Yourself Consider Which of these do you feel comfortable with and which would you like to challenge? Feed back to the class.	
Whole group	Read Ani's article on page 13.	

Whole group	Watch/Discuss Ani says: <i>I found one of the best ways for me to gain confidence was talking more about it (vitiligo) and realising that it made me ‘me’ and that everyone is different and have their own views of what the perfection is.</i> Ani sees answering questions and educating others about vitiligo as a positive way of dealing with those that may judge or misunderstand her condition. Watch this short video taken from BBC Three’s 2018 series called ‘MisFITS Like Us’: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sEF5vQ7gB0 After watching the video, consider: • Do you agree with how Aisha dealt with this situation? • Have you ever been in a similar situation to Aisha and how did you deal with it? • Have you even found yourself looking at someone who looked different and wanting to know why? • Is it ok to ask questions in this circumstance? If so, what’s the best way to do it?	Teacher notes/ timings Internet access
Individually	Research/Write For Ani, the key to feeling more confident with her body image was to find other people with a similar journey with which she could identify. Complete Ani’s ‘Find Your Own Role Model’ task on page 14. Gather information and research so that you can give a short presentation about this person to the others in your group. Consider: • Why have you chosen this person as your Body Image role model? • What qualities do they have that you admire? • What approach do they take to their own body image? • What challenges have they faced and how have they overcome them? • What will you try to take from their approach and apply to your own body image?	Internet access
Small groups	Present and discuss Present your role model in small groups. Discuss any approaches or advice you can take forwards for yourself from each role model. Feed back to the class.	
Extension activity	Complete Vic’s ‘Top Advice’ task on page 12. • Consider whether you are taking a ‘Body Positive’ or ‘Body Neutral’ approach – or an approach of your own!	
Extension activity	Film Making Watch the Role Models video that accompanies this booklet. https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/lisetoolkits/Role-Models-Resource-Books Make your own video clip offering practical advice about dealing with issues around Body Image.	

This resource was created in 2021.

For more information about the Role Models projects including links to our Role Models films and other topic booklets visit

<https://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/lisetoolkits/Role-Models-Resource-Books>

Thanks for supporting the Role Models Project.