Addressing Bullying on Body Image in the School System

Bullying, body image, the media, and what to do about it in the school environment

Tag words: body image, bullying, media, self esteem, advertisements, anorexia

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Summary

Body image is the perception one has of their own body. The environment people live in often will influence the way they see themselves. The media surrounds us and drills into our head images of what people should look like. Bullying also has a large effect on body image because people are always trying to fit in and want to be judged positively by their peers. Bullying is a big issue today and there are many ways to help put an end to it. Anti-bullying Body Image Booster Program is a program to be implemented in schools to educate students on the negative effects bullying, and also the media, can have on a person’s self perception and how to help put an end to that in hopes of increasing positive body image.

Video link

Words do Hurt: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDmkA00FtfA
The Issue: Bullying

Dangerous Effects of Bullying (SN)
“Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to become a victim. Accept no one’s definition of your life, but define yourself,” an inspirational quote by Harvey S. Firestone. (http://en.thinkexist.com/reference/bullying_quotes/) Although these words are easy to say, it is hard to live by them. People are constantly seeking approval from the ever-judging eyes of society; there will always be someone to disagree or put ideas down. This person is well known, everyone has dealt with this person in the past, but people are not always equipped stand up for themselves. The truth is that these words usually hurt and will have an effect on one’s self-esteem.

Two feelings that are truly affected by bullies are self-esteem and body image. Self-esteem is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “confidence and satisfaction in oneself; self-respect”, (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-esteem); or a feeling of self-worth. Body image is the perception one has of their own body.

People are constantly searching for society’s approval. Many young children’s exposure to social interactions is their time at school. If their friends or classmates bully them, this can cause issues in the future. Children can be very mean, often without realizing the damage they have caused. Just a few words may seem harmless to one, but to the victim, those words may resonate with them for life. According to kidshealth.org, kids becoming teens are more aware of their bodies and how they look. “For many people, especially those in their early teens, body image can be closely linked to self-esteem. That’s because as kids develop into teens, they care more about how others see them.” (http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/body_image/body_image.html)

Bullying may have long term effects for the victim. For example: a girl who is constantly teased because she is overweight may develop an eating disorder. This can be extremely dangerous for a young girl. According to a Pediatric study conducted in 1988, called: “Dieting Behavior and Eating Attitudes in Children”, a group of 318 girls and boys in grades three to six were given an Eating Attitudes Test geared toward children and a demographic and dieting survey to fill out. The results for such a young age group were eye-opening. Of the children in the study, forty-five percent wanted to be thinner, thirty-seven percent tried to lose weight, and almost seven percent fell into an anorexia nervosa range! (http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/84/3/482) These results show that children are highly impressionable by their surroundings. The parents may be dieting and could cause the 8-12 year olds to think that they should be losing weight; or they may be watching TV and flipping through magazines seeing the women who are extremely thin and find them as role models. Although this study is old, the obesity rate in the country has grown since then and the likelihood that the practice of dieting and TV commercials having to do with diet pills and programs is much higher in our society today; giving more opportunity for children to be exposed to what society accepts as “beautiful”.

The two major eating disorders seen most often are anorexia and bulimia. Anorexia is defined as the failure to stay at the recommended body weight for one’s height (below the recommended weight). BMI is the proportion of weight to height; anorexia is defined as a BMI calculation below 18.5. In order to be considered anorexic, the individual must be considered underweight. Anorexia shows a high amount of deaths related to the disorder. Bulimia, on the other hand, is described as eating a normal amount of food, or more than average amount of food and purging
immediately after; therefore the food does not become fully digested and nutrients are not fully absorbed. Because the media portrays “skinny” as normal our society has a skewed view of what body type and size is beautiful. Therefore, girls trying desperately to look like the model on the cover of vogue or their favorite pop-star could be severely damaging their bodies.

This issue does not only have to do with extreme weight loss. Girls in middle school and high school are piling on makeup, some to cover up perfect skin. Many girls that young may not have issues with their skin, and the bronzer is caked on in order to fit in and look “pretty”. Jersey Shore is an example of a show that is not necessarily geared toward teens but most will watch anyway since it airs on MTV. These girls put an extreme amount of make up on, and all of the people on this show go tanning all of the time in the middle of the summer! “GTL” (gym, TAN, laundry) is the phrase coined by this show and may influence younger children that are highly susceptible to these types of shows. A more mature audience will find these people’s lives drama filled and realize that a lot of what goes on is to get good ratings, but young teens can be affected by this and may, unfortunately, want to be like some of these people.

Its true that small amounts of sunlight is good for your skin in order for the body to produce Vitamin D and everyone wants to achieve that summer glow; getting that tan from a box is not natural or safe. It is so concentrated that the tan it could take all day to achieve sitting outside in the summer can be attained in 12 minutes. Tanning is extremely detrimental to skin health. Girls as young as 13 years old are heading to the tanning salons to become tan and look better because in their eyes, all the pretty girls on TV and in magazines are tan.

A study conducted in 2002 called “Use of Sunscreen, Sunburning Rates, and Tanning Bed Use Among more that 10,000 US Children and Adolescents”, showed that many older teens use tanning beds as their method of achieving sun-kissed skin. The results were:

“Girls were far more likely than boys to report tanning bed use (14.4 vs 2.4), and older girls (ages 15–18) were far more likely than younger girls (ages 12–14) to report tanning bed use (24.6% vs 4.7). Tanning bed use increased from 7% among 14-year-old girls to 16% by age 15, and more than doubled again by age 17 (35%; N = 244.).”

(http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/109/6/1009)

A large number (about 35% of respondents by age 17) of children, mainly girls, are using tanning beds. Beginning the use of these machines will most likely greatly increase the rate of cancer among the younger generation. This is due to the high concentration of UV rays people are exposed to in the amount of time spent in the bed.

Young girls, especially teenagers, are so impressionable because they try so hard to fit in. They are becoming young women and discovering themselves; probably more confused about their body changing then ever. Everyone goes through their awkward stage usually as an early teenager, feeling uncomfortable in their own skin and the portrayal of women in the media does nothing to help the cause. Our society is so focused on the way someone appears whether it is their face or their body, the truth is that every life is beautiful and a bully has no right to make victim believe anything different. What is not shown on magazine covers or in many commercials is that most of the pictures we see are air brushed to perfection. No one is perfect, but these models are portrayed without one mark or scar on their skin and not a flaw in their body.
DOVE launched a beauty campaign in 2004 “The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty”. The Wikipedia article for the campaign states: “The principle behind the campaign is to celebrate the natural physical variation embodied by all women and inspire them to have the confidence to be comfortable with themselves.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dove_Campaign_for_Real_Beauty) This is so important for young girls to see, the fact that women who do not have the perfect bodies are accepting and love themselves for who they are and what they look like. One part of the campaign that stood out was the beauty evolution commercial: there is a model waiting to be “transformed” into what our society would consider beautiful. For young girls to see all of the changes that are made to this woman’s face before her photo is placed on a billboard is resonating and may help to make a difference in how girls view these images. Children and teens are highly influenced by what they see on TV and helping them to understand that some women truly do look like their pictures, but most are changed to become accepting of our society will most definitely help to boost self esteem and confidence in one’s body.

Ironically, many argue that the root of bullying is that the bully themselves have low self esteem. SECRET has launched a campaign to fight back against bullying: Mean Stinks. They have started commercials with girls who have done horrible things to their classmates and friends; having them come on TV and apologize for what they have done. One common theme within all of the commercials is that the bully always admits fault and blames the fact that they are unhappy or upset with themselves. These commercials are played in the evening during shows that teens would watch especially on CW11. SECRET also created a Facebook group for girls to apologize for what they have done to others. Using Facebook as a tool to get the message out was smart of SECRET to do because it is targeting younger people’s method of social networking. Maybe people seeing these girls own up to what they did and be mature about things will help to keep bullying out of schools. If more people knew about this, saw it and acknowledged this, it may be more effective in fulfilling its purpose.

“Take control of your destiny. Believe in yourself. Ignore those who try to discourage you. Avoid negative sources, people, places, things and habits. Don't give up and don't give in,” strong words from Wanda Carter. (http://www.wingsfortheheart.com/body-image-quotations.htm) There will always be bullies; there is no way to stop everyone in the world from hurting others. People must be strong and try to brush off comments and stand up for themselves in a non-violent way. No one should every make someone else feel bad about themselves. By being strong and showing that comments don’t affect the victim in anyway, the bully becomes powerless.

What the media does (RY)
People are influenced a great deal by their environment. Being exposed to a variety of stimuli in the environment can shape peoples’ perception and how they view the world. Adolescents are exposed to a lot of advertisements and the media has a great impact on their lives. They shape their minds to think what they want them to think. Billboards, movies, magazines, and TV are just a few of the places that expose this demographic to what the media wants them to see. Adolescents are influenced by the media, but the media portrays both men and women in ways that are unnatural. They are airbrushed and enhanced to form a new level of perfection. Men are made to look more muscular and fit, idealizing what a man should look like. Similarly, women are made to look skinny with perfectly clear and tan skin and perfectly symmetrical features. In
this way, they set up an unrealistic ideal of what people should look like. They want people to look to these photos and want to look that ‘perfect’.

According to a study by Hayley Dohnt and Marika Tiggemann, called The Contribution of Peer and Media Influences to the Development of Body Satisfaction and Self-Esteem in Young Girls: A Prospective Study, both the media and peers play a large role in determining the norm for appearance in adolescents. In this study, they found “perception of peers’ desire for thinness was temporally antecedent to girls’ desire for thinness, appearance satisfaction, and self-esteem 1 year later. In addition, the watching of appearance focused television programs was temporally antecedent to appearance satisfaction. Finally, girls’ desire for thinness was found to temporally precede low self-esteem. Thus, as early as school entry, girls appear to already live in a culture in which peers and the media transmit the thin ideal in a way that negatively influences the development of body image and self-esteem” (http://www.willettsurvey.org/TMSTN/Gender/PeerAndMediaInfluencesOnYoungGirls.pdf).

This means that if a girl’s peers want to be thin, she will also want to be thin, and that watching television further promotes this desire. The desire to be thin then leads to poor body image and low self esteem.

Celebrities and movie stars further this problem. Celebrities are all over the media and in films and TV shows, and they also contribute to adolescents’ unreachable goal of perfection. Many adolescents look to them as role models and take their perceptions of how they should be from looking at the celebrities. Many celebrities, however, are unhealthily thin and undergo surgeries to make them look how they do. They enhance their features and have had procedures to make them look younger, they go under tanning beds and wear a lot of makeup. They do all this to mask their real appearances, and risk their health in order to look more like the media says they should look (http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/book/excerpt.asp?id=2).

For a young women or man living in this world, it is a challenge to learn to love their bodies. Constantly seeing these pictures of enhanced men and women influences them to think that is what they should look like. They gain an unhealthy perception of what their bodies need to be. When they compare themselves to these pictures and do not match up, they can develop a poor body image and low self-esteem. The way these celebrities are portrayed in the media contributes greatly to how young men and women want their bodies to look like and can lead them to have poor body image.

Certain advertisements even hone in on specific flaws that young women might already be self conscious of. The media uses the advertisements to make them think there is something wrong with them so that they will buy their product. The advertisements that are directed to women for things such as diet, cosmetics, beauty and fashion use their already present self doubts and make them think that their flaws are really as bad as they think and that buying the product will solve their problem. For a young woman who is already self-conscious and thinks everyone notices her flaws, these advertisements can be especially harmful. They perpetuate the poor body image and low self-esteem that can lead to eating disorders.

Because the media is everywhere, people are overloaded with these images of what they should look like. They become obsessed with the unrealistic ideal because all the pictures they ever see are of these ‘perfect’ people. Also, these ‘perfect’ images become the norm. When a person deviates from the norm because they do not look how the media says they should, whether in facial appearance, body weight, or even disabilities, they feel different. This can lead to bullying
because the person who deviates from what is decided to be normal is deemed ‘weird’ and that makes it okay for other people to make fun of them. Kids will often bully other kids who are different from them because they do not understand why they are different. The bullying can then lower the child’s self esteem and lead them to think that there really is something wrong with their body.

A study by Phillip T. Sleea, and Ken Rigby called The relationship of Eysenck's personality factors and self-esteem to bully-victim behaviour in Australian schoolboys found that low self-esteem lead to being bullied because there is an association between low self-esteem and being the victim of bullying (http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V9F-4608T1J-B5&_user=10&_coverDate=02/28/1993&_rdoc=1&_fmt=high&_orig=gateway&_origin=gateway&d_d另行anchor=&view=c&_searchStrId=1660502347&_rerunOrigin=scholar.google&acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=15be3742ed080550a088941dab93ef8&searchtype=a).

According to a study by M. O’Moore, and C. Kirkham called Self-esteem and its relationship to bullying behaviour found that children who were involved in bullying as either victims or bullies had significantly lower self-esteem than children who had neither bullied nor been bullied. Also, the more often they were bullied, the lower self-esteem they had and the more often they were the bully, the lower self-esteem they had (http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ab.1010/). This means that low self esteem leads children to being both a bully and the victim of bullying. Bullying may make the child who has low self-esteem feel better about his or her flaws, but being bullied can lead to a further lowering of self esteem because adolescents care so much about what their peers think. These constant blows to their self-esteem and reminders of their flaws and differences will further create a poor body image in these children who are victims of bullying. Children with high self-esteem have a much better chance of avoiding being involved in bullying, whether as the victim or the perpetrator and it is therefore of utmost importance to help facilitate high self-esteem and a healthy body image in children and adolescents.

What happens to people as a result of it... (DN)

The effects of the media on children can lead to depression, obesity/anorexia, or a child with a severe case of low self-esteem. By consistently seeing women with these perfect bodies, children will begin to at a very young age perceive these bodies to be the normal and that anything else is wrong. In a study cited in the Journal of American Psychiatry, authors found that “Throughout history, the ideal of beauty has been difficult to achieve and has been shaped by social context. Current mass media is ubiquitous and powerful, leading to increased body dissatisfaction among both men and women(http://ap.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/30/3/257).”

“According to the American Obesity Association, 65% of adults and 30% of children are overweight, and 30% of adults and 15% of children meet the criteria for obesity(http://ap.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/30/3/257).” Because of the increase of children using technology such as watching television and surfing the Internet, fewer children are playing outside. This increase exposure to the media forces them to want to become like the people they see. “A recent study has shown that children children exposed to excessive TV viewing, magazines, and movies are at higher risk of obesity.” A 1994 survey found that 40% of 9-year-olds have been on a diet.” Recently, it was found that in a large sample of Dutch, early adolescents (25%) watched TV more than 3 h a day (Snoek, Van Strien, Janssens, & Engels,
Specific types of TV programmes provide beauty and thinness messages to young children. Herbozo et al. (2004) showed that children’s cartoons (e.g. Cinderella, The Little Mermaid) contained many body image-related messages and that children associated beauty with goodness, whereas ugliness was often associated with badness and vice. Therefore, they concluded that young children might develop ideas about beauty while watching cartoons (http://ehis.ebscohost.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=109&sid=2d7ef0a9-4c591-492c-8ddc-fd3887ed83f%40sessionmgr113&vid=8).

Beginning from grammar school, children are becoming more aware of the environment around them. The only way to affect them and prevent these statistics from growing is educating them starting at the earliest age possible of the truth about the media, and about having a healthy body and loving your body no matter what. In this article the author even states that “Perhaps if children got consistent healthy messages from "cool" media sources at school, online, on TV, and at home, the messages would be more effective.”

Another article found that Unhealthy body image attitudes and eating practices are difficult to reverse once established. As a result, researchers recommend that primary prevention programs be introduced to upper elementary school children.

"Healthy Body Image: Teaching Kids to Eat and Love Their Bodies Too!" (HBI), an 11-lesson curriculum for grades four through six, was developed by the first author. The curriculum includes age-appropriate activities incorporating prevention principles. An initial evaluation of the lessons reported pilot outcomes that were promising.

The HBI curriculum is based on the Model for Healthy Body Image. Four lessons teach the intrinsic nature of body size, shape, and composition: 1) appearance changes during puberty; 2) genetic diversity; 3) internal weight regulation; and 4) biology of hunger deprivation (hazards of dieting). These lessons teach children the limits to healthy weight and shape control, and to accept size diversity as natural, rather than a basis for prejudicial judgments.

Four additional lessons emphasize factors that positively influence weight, body image, and well being: 5) satisfaction of hunger with wholesome food; 6) limiting sedentary entertainment and increasing physical activity; 7) balanced attention to diverse aspects of identity; and 8) choosing realistic role models. These lessons motivate children to embrace healthy choices that influence health and weight. Together, the eight lessons present a paradigm within which children learn to discover and accept diverse weights that result from healthy behavior choices, rather than striving for a preferred weight through efforts that defy control.

Finally, three lessons teach sociocultural life skills: 9) tools for coping with changes in appearance at any stage of life; 10) cultural perspective on changes in body image attitudes over time; and 11) interpretation and critical thinking regarding media messages influencing body image attitudes. The underlying concepts of the curriculum, conveyed through games, experiential activities, stories, and discussions, are framed as "antidotes" to the culturally based thinness schema described, reflecting an approach not found in traditional health and nutrition curriculum.

As hypothesized, knowledge about the biology of body size and shape, and the counterproductive nature of dieting, improved dramatically for students receiving the HBI lessons."

(Evaluation of an Upper Elementary School Program to Prevent Body Image, Eating,
Just by searching celebrity body images, hundreds of examples come up of the stars who have starved themselves to be famous or the models who have been told they were too fat and constantly reminded to lose weight. From athletes to singers to actresses, like Nicole Richie, Paris Hilton, Ashlee Simpson the list goes on and on. The problem with eating disorders stems in the media and with the people that an average teen might view as being someone they wish to become. So why can’t we just stop the way these celebrities are looked at? Why can’t we embrace a model with curves or someone who is not going to be thought of as having a stick figure.

Runway models have to have a certain look, says Kelly Cutrone, owner of People's Revolution, a company that produces fashion shows around the world. Her company produced 16 fashion shows in New York, including one for designer Marc Bouwer.

The runway models this year were no thinner than years before, she says. "I didn't see any difference in the girls at all. When they bend over, are you going to see the rib cage? Yes, they are thin naturally."

Women shouldn't be comparing themselves with these girls, she says. "These girls are anomalies of nature. They are freaks of nature. They are not average. They are naturally thin and have incredibly long legs compared to the rest of their body. Their eyes are wide set apart. Their cheekbones are high.”

Most runway models are 14 to 19, with an average age of 16 or 17, she says. Some are older. Many are 5-foot-10 or 5-foot-11. They average 120 to 124 pounds. They wear a size 2 or 4. "If we get a girl who is bigger than a 4, she is not going to fit the clothes," Cutrone says. "Clothes look better on thin people. The fabric hangs better."


For several years, Brashich worked for Sassy and YM magazines and read thousands of letters from girls and teens who wanted to become a famous model, actress or singer.

And no wonder, she says. "As a culture, we are on a first-name basis with women like Paris Hilton or Nicole Richie," she says. "The most celebrated, recognizable women today are famous primarily for being thin and pretty, while women who are actually changing the world remain comparatively invisible. Most of us have a harder time naming women of other accomplishments." The idolizing of models, stars and other celebrities is not going to change "until pop culture changes the women it celebrates and focuses on."

A most recent example of a death from anorxia is the story of the French model Isabelle Caro. She died at age 28 from acute respiratory disease, due to anorexia. Her worst weight was she weighed only 25 kilograms (55 lb; 3 st 13 lb) at a height of 1.65 metres (5 ft 5 in);

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabelle_Caro
Unfortunately anorexia isn’t the only growing concern among children. Obesity rate has risen substantially over the years. One reason could be that these children have been constantly reminded of their body image, the fact that being skinny and having the perfect body is the right way and the best way to be. Below is a graph showing the growth rate of obesity among children broken up in different age groups as well as ethnicity.


http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6002a2.htm?s_cid=mm6002a2_w

The increasing demands that the media puts out to children on the importance of looking good and being the skinniest person has resulted in children eating as a comfort to cope with the fact that they don’t look that way.

The CDC (center for disease control) website, they stated that:

“A large number of high school students use unhealthy methods to lose or maintain weight. A nationwide survey found that during the 30 days before the survey, 10.6% of students went without eating for 24 hours or more to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight; 4.0% had vomited or taken laxatives to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight; and 5.0% had taken diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor's advice to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight.”

They feel that there is an opportunity for change and that starts in schools. It is the perfect and safest place to educate children on healthy eating behaviors.
Lesson 1
Goal: Students will be introduced to what bullying is and how it relates to body image

Ice breaker: Have everyone sit in a circle and come up with 3 things about themselves, 2 of which are true and one that is a lie. Have each person tell the class the 3 things and have the class vote on which is the lie. Go around the circle until everyone has had a turn.

Lesson:
- Ask about a time the students were bullied and how it made them feel. Also ask if they were ever a bully and how they felt about that.
- Talk about how bullying could be physical or verbal. Physical includes injuring or harming someone else’s body and verbal includes name calling, saying mean things, spreading rumors, talking about people behind their backs. Even peer pressure could be bullying by making someone do something they don’t want to do.
- Ask the class what they think would make someone want to bully someone else. Say that a reason could be that the person wants to feel superior to the other person. Another reason could be that the bully is insecure about something and bullying someone else makes them feel better about themselves.

Video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RSVwTJ52uI&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RSVwTJ52uI&feature=related)
- Discuss each individual in the video asking how they were bullied and how they must have felt. Discuss why the bullies may have decided to do what they did. Use examples from the video to reinforce what the different kinds of bullying are.
- Discuss how bullying can have severe consequences. Talk about some of the effects bullying can have on people, for both the bully and the victim. Discuss how it made the students feel when they were a victim or the bully and talk about how it can have a negative effect on self-esteem and body image. Mention that everyone has their own qualities and characteristics that are beautiful and bullying people can lower self-esteem for both the person doing the bullying and for the victim. It can lead to poor body image and even more harmful consequences such as eating disorders.

Conclude with some facts about bullying:
- Students who are bullied are more likely to suffer from colds, coughs, sore throats, night waking, and poor appetite (Journal of the American Medical Association, 2003).
- Bullying is the most common form of violence and about 30 percent of students have been bullies or victims or both (Cohn & Cantor, 2003).
- Verbal abuse and harassment is the most common form of bullying. Social isolation and verbal bullying about physical appearance is second most common (Shellard, 2002).

Lesson 2
Goal: Students will be able to all become neutral in a vulnerable situation to show that bullying can be harmful.

Activity:
- Note cards will be written out with a describing characteristic.
Students will be given a note card have them tape it to their forehead or hold it out so they cannot see it. (The describing characteristic should not reflect something that is true about the student, and should not be anything derogatory. Can be as simple as “wearing a blue sweater.”)

Students then must go around saying things to each other describing what is on the note card.

Go around the room and have the students guess what their note card says.

NOTE: instructor must be very careful in what he or she chooses as characteristics not to hurt any student’s feelings.

*This exercise will make the children feel vulnerable by not knowing what is written on the note card.

Lesson:
- After the students guess what their note card says ask them how it felt not knowing what their note card said.
- Show how the activity relates to how a victim may feel while being bullied. Make sure the students understand that this game should not encourage bullying but is done to show how a victim may feel in a bullying situation.

Lesson 3
Goal: To educate students on the importance of a person’s inner beauty rather than outer.

Activity:
- Have the students sit in a circle and say something nice about the person sitting to their right
- Tally up the number of inner compliments vs. the number of physical compliments

Lesson:
- Share these results with the students and explain to them the importance of their inner qualities and their treatment toward others.
- Discuss embracing their good qualities and not to dwelling on their insecurities.
- Show this video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ytjTNX9cg0&NR=1
- Ask children how they feel, if they have ever felt this way.

Lesson 4
Goal: To teach the students about the effects the media can have on a person’s body image.

Lesson:
- Ask the students what the definition of beauty is. Ask the students when they feel beautiful.
- Discuss how the media dictates what beauty should be but that they distort natural beauty and make it into something people cannot attain. The media manipulates people’s views of how their body should look by surrounding people with pictures of airbrushed models and celebrities. The problem is that these celebrities and models undergo plastic surgery and tanning and the media takes it one step further by airbrushing their pictures and
making them look skinnier, more muscular, improving their skin, enhancing their features
to make them look like something else.

- Show dove commercial: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hibyAJOSW8U
- Show before and after pictures of airbrushing and ask the students to spot the differences
  in the pictures: http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://images.huffingtonpost.com/gen/52490/original.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/12/08/jessica-alba-airbrushed-t_n_149182.html&usg=__hlqsZWQc_G8OqVh6mmeb8UbTcY8=&h=548&w=487&sz=159&hl=en&start=0&sig2=Tt5ltFb9qqdF3GZzonqq-w&zoom=1&tbnid=pE9zzjA13H06yM:&tbnh=126&tbnw=110&ei=2JWOTfbzBMq30QH12Jy3Cw&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dairbrushed%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26biw%3D1366%26bih%3D653%26tbnv%3D1&ved=1t:429,r:0,s:0&tx=39&ty=17
- Show this picture: http://dudelol.com/real-vs-airbrushed/
- Show this picture: http://www.smh.com.au/news/business/that-figures-women-buy-when-ads-get-real/2005/10/02/1128191605206.html and ask to discuss how this advertisement is different from most others. Make sure to mention how there are women of all different body shapes and sizes and of all different colored skin and that it comes off more realistic and natural looking.
- Emphasize that nobody should compare themselves to celebrities and advertisements because they are not natural looking and it is not a realistic goal. They should instead focus on how they are all beautiful and focus on what they love about themselves.
- Conclude by asking the students to turn to the person next to them and tell them one thing they think is beautiful about the other person.

Lesson 5
Goal: Show students photos of people in the public eye who are not necessarily considered “skinny” but are still considered beautiful and Offer safer alternatives to losing weight

Activity:
- Show pictures of celebrities who are not “skinny”, but more curvy and are proud of it.
  - Beyonce
  - Jessica Simpson
  - Salma Hayek
  - Queen Latifa
  - Kim Kardashian
- Explain that everyone should accept their body and that beauty lies in the differences.
- Ask students what are some activities they partake in after school
- Suggest ways to change the activities to become more exercise-oriented
  - walking instead of being driven around the corner
  - riding bikes
  - playing pick-up sports games
- Address that many young girls are falling victim to eating disorders in order to fit the “beautiful” image dictated by our society
● Encourage eating healthier instead of eating less
● Suggest healthier substitutions for foods that are commonly eaten
  - instead of a hamburger have a lean turkey burger
  - instead of french fries have mashed potatoes
  - instead of chicken nuggets have grilled chicken
  - instead of white bread eat wheat bread
● Explain how dangerous eating disorders can be:
  - Explain that food is essential to fuel the body’s functions
  - Discuss eating disorders:
    - anorexia-- being underweight for one’s height and not eating a sufficient amount of food to nourish the body
    - bulimia-- purging of one’s meals after consumption
  - Without the proper amount of food in the diet the body will not execute functions properly.
  - An unfortunate but serious consequence of an eating disorder, (especially anorexia) is death.
● Tanning is another way to harm your body in order to fit in.
  - Explain that small amounts of sunlight are healthy for a person’s body but the concentrated UV exposure from extended use of tanning beds can cause cancer.
● Conclude on a positive note, reminding students to love and embrace their body.

Lesson 6
Goal: To get the students to socialize with one another; people they would not usually socialize with.

Lesson:
● Review that everyone is beautiful inside and out and that nobody is “perfect”

Activity:
● Bring students together for a small party with snacks and drinks. (about 20 minutes)
● Condition of the party: Students must talk to two people they do not know very well and get to know the person that they are inside.
● Bring students together and have them say two things they liked about the two people they spoke to at the party.
● Show the Anti-bullying you tube video:
  -http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDmkA00FtfA
The American Obesity Association says that 65% of adults and 30% of children are overweight, and 30% of adults and 15% of children meet the criteria for obesity. In a 1994 survey 40% of 9-year-olds have been on a diet. These statistics can be explained from a number of reasons. One, is the effects of the media on children and by constantly seeing women with these skinny bodies children will begin to see these bodies as perfect and their own as wrong. This leads to depression, obesity/anorexia, and a child with a severe case of low self-esteem. Just by searching celebrity body images, hundreds of examples come up of the stars who have starved themselves to be famous or the models who have been told they were too fat and constantly reminded to lose weight. So why can’t we just stop the way these celebrities are looked at and embrace a model with curves? These increasing demands that the media puts out to children on the importance of looking good and being the skinniest person has resulted in children eating as a comfort to cope with the fact that they don’t look that way. It has been found that a large number of high school students use unhealthy methods to lose or maintain weight from starving themselves to vomiting to even taking diet pills or laxatives. I feel that there is an opportunity for change and that starts in schools. It is a perfect and safe place to educate children on healthy eating behaviors. Beginning from grammar school, children are becoming more aware of the environment around them. The only way to affect them and prevent these statistics from growing is educating them starting at the earliest age possible of the truth about the media, and about having a healthy body and loving your body no matter what. For many people, especially those in their early teens, body image can be closely linked to self-esteem. That's because as kids develop into teens, they care more about how others see them. This leads to the problem of bullying. Bullying may have long term effects for the victim and can lead a person to take on an eating disorder or even commit suicide. Our New Jersey schools need to have educating our children about the effects of bullying and how to embrace a person’s body on the top of their list. By starting with lesson plans that incorporate these concepts for all children in elementary schools, we can put an end to bullying and teach our children to love themselves and each other the way we love them!

Rivka Yudkowitz
Sent to Cosmopolitan magazine at http://cosmopolitan.com/tellcosmo

Body image issues have become a very big problem among the teenage/young adult population. The young girls who are reading these magazines have very impressionable minds and the media only perpetuates this problem by providing them with pictures of airbrushed actors on the cover and the models in the advertisements within these magazines with which to compare themselves. From the seemingly perfect celebrities to the unnaturally thin models, the readers form a skewed perception of how their bodies should look. It is important to teach this
population to love their body for what it is and not to strive to look like how the media says they should look. Even Olivia Wilde is quoted in the April 2011 issue of Cosmopolitan saying that she was ‘declared too fat and too skinny on the same day from the same photo’. This just shows that the media is too judgmental and it is messing with the moldable minds of this population. The media should instead portray women in realistic ways to help teach young adults to be happy with the way they look and not to strive to reach an unattainable goal that the media propagates.

Samantha Nuzio  
Sent to Seventeen Magazine  
(Contact the Editor)

Bullying is not an issue that should be taken lightly; at any age it can have major effects on one's self esteem. Body image is the perception of one's body and can be swayed toward a negative view when exposed to our society's opinion of what beauty is. In the world we live in, a size two for women is idealized. Just look at all the models shown on television and in magazines; airbrushed to perfection. Personally, I know I have been through many situations where bullying and even comments not meant to be harmful have made me feel badly about myself. For example, since sophomore year of high school I have lost 80 pounds. I was out with my friends and one of them made a comment about how heavy I was freshman year. He never expected to see me crying the next minute; thinking I was over it since it was so long ago. The point is that one can never estimate how a comment can really affect someone.

Our society is so shallow; we are taught to judge people by their exterior and some are not taught to censor their thoughts. Bullying has caused issues from grade school to college students and beyond. Children as young as nine years old are deciding they need to be on diets which can be detrimental to their health. This may even lead to the development of eating disorders in the future. Bullying is an avoidable problem that can lead to many serious issues. It needs to be addressed at a young age in order to help prevent serious incidents in the future.

One of the best ways to prevent bullying would be to introduce students as young as possible to anti-bullying workshops in schools. Children should be taught to accept everyone for who they are; no matter what they look like. People come in all shapes and sizes and as a society we need to be able to embrace that. The simplest thing to do is to remember “the golden rule”. This does not only stand true for children and teens but also for adults, because no one actually WANTS to be bullied. Think twice before speaking next time, you never know how it can truly affect someone.