



# confident me

School Workshops  
for Body Confidence



**FIVE SESSIONS**



**WORKSHOP 3**

## **Confront Comparisons**

Workshop Guide for Teachers



## Learning outcomes:

### *In this workshop students will:*

- **Understand that comparing looks to individuals and media images is automatic and part of human nature.**
- **Identify the ways in which the process of comparing looks often has negative consequences** for themselves and their friends.
- **Develop new ways to respond to comparison situations** that have positive outcomes for themselves and people around them.

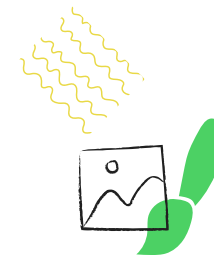
## Resources you will need:

### WORKSHOP MATERIALS

- Workshop guide
- Workshop presentation
- Three activity sheets
- Going further sheet
- **Film embedded in the workshop presentation:**
  - [“Change One Thing”](#)

### FROM YOUR SCHOOL

- **Projector (with sound) and whiteboard**
- **Students will each need a pen**
- Optional**
- **Spare paper**
- **Flipchart and markers**



# Overview of workshop modules



Total Time: 45 Minutes

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05

## Introducing Comparisons

13 Minutes

What have we learned?

What are we learning today?

How do we compare with those  
around us?

How do we compare our looks?

What happens when we  
compare?

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## Problems with Comparing

27 Minutes

What is the impact of these  
comparisons?

The 'whirlpool of comparisons'

What can we do instead?

How can we change our script?

Can you catch yourself?

How will you change your script?

Page  
13

## Be a Champion for Change

5 Minutes

What have we learned today?

How will you be a champion  
for change?

Going further

Congratulations!





# How to use this guide

## Presentation

These are visual cues and learning objectives to help you steer the workshop and deliver it effectively.

## Navigation Icons

These icons indicate planned activities for the classroom, such as playing a video or completing a worksheet.

Confident Me / 3 Confront Comparisons / Teachers' Guide			
Presentation	Teacher Actions	Desired Responses	Teacher Notes
 <p><b>Activity 1</b></p>	<p>Instruct students to add their ideas to the second boxed activity of Activity sheet 1.</p> <p>Facilitate a short class discussion.</p> <p><b>1. Looking at all of these things, how helpful do you think it is to make these comparisons?</b></p>	<p> Making comparisons based on looks is not helpful to anyone – and can have a number of negative consequences for us and those around us.</p>	
 <p><b>The 'harmful spiral of comparisons'</b></p>	<p>Explain that when we compare our looks to others, it is easy to get stuck in a "downward spiral," in which we just feel worse about ourselves the more we do it. This can feel like getting caught in a whirlpool.</p> <p>Invite students to explain:</p> <p><b>What is a whirlpool?</b></p>	<p> It is a powerful force; it pulls things downward; it is hard to escape; lots of things get sucked inside it.</p>	

## Suggested Time Allocation

This is the amount of time generally recommended for students, to achieve learning outcomes and improve body confidence. This may be adapted to suit the needs of your class.

## Teacher Notes

Ideas and guidance for optimising the effectiveness of the workshop for students.

## Teacher Actions – What to say

Numbered points in bold are instructions of what to **say** to the students. These highlight important questions to ask students to ensure key concepts are addressed with optimum impact on body confidence.

## Teacher Actions – What to do

This text indicates instructions to help structure workshop activities, e.g., when you should play films or use worksheets. You can adapt these to suit the specific needs of your class.




## Desired Responses from Students


Text not only indicates possible answers to look for from students, but also offers ideas for guiding their responses as they develop their understanding of key concepts and improve their body confidence.

# Introducing comparisons



13 Minutes

Presentation	Teacher Actions	Desired Responses	Teacher Notes
	<p>Welcome students to the 'Confront Comparisons' workshop. Remind students that the five-session programme aims to help them to explore helpful ways to manage appearance pressures and build body confidence.</p>		
	<p>Invite students to share what they learned in the previous workshop.</p> <p>Summarise any key learning outcomes from the previous session students have missed.</p>		
	<p>Briefly explain the areas of focus for today's workshop. Remind students of the ground rules to help create a supportive, non-judgemental environment throughout the five-session programme.</p>		

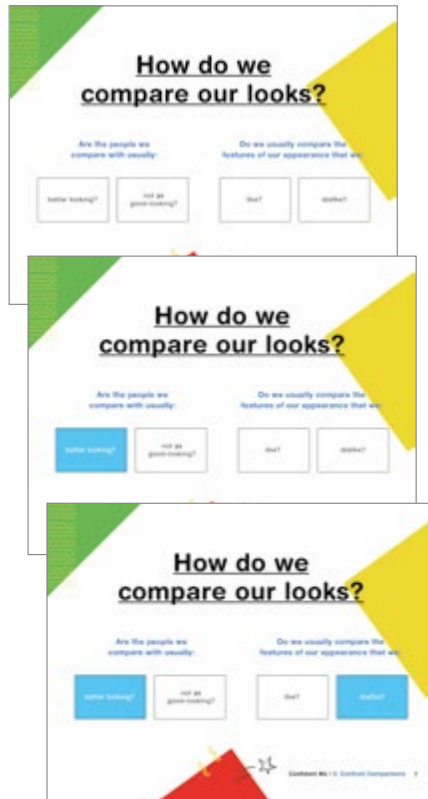
Presentation	Teacher Actions	Desired Responses	Teacher Notes
	<p><i>Explain that it is common to compare ourselves and our appearance to other people in everyday life, not just celebrities.</i></p> <p><i>Play the “Change One Thing” video.</i></p> <p><i>Facilitate a short class discussion.</i></p> <p><b>1. What does this video show us about how people compare themselves to others?</b></p>	<p>Everyone in the video compares themselves to others and wishes they had a feature that someone else has, which is pointless and makes no one happy.</p>	

Presentation

Teacher Actions

Desired Responses

Teacher Notes



**1. Step forward if you think we most often choose to compare features of our appearance with someone who we think is better looking, or step back if you think we compare with someone we think is not as good-looking.**

**After students have voted, click through to the next slide to reveal the correct answer.**

*Explain that when we make comparisons our minds often play tricks on us in the way we make these comparisons, such as by breaking our bodies into pieces rather than considering our whole selves.*

**2. Step forward if you think we most often compare the parts of our body that we like. Step back if you think we compare parts of our body that we don't like.**

**After students have voted, click through to the next slide to reveal the correct answer.**

We most often compare our appearance to people who we think have better features.

We most often compare the parts of our appearance that we don't like.

*You can ask students to raise their hand, if more appropriate.*

*Take a moment to allow students to reflect on the result – is the room evenly split?*

*You may need to warn the class to be respectful of each other's views, especially if there are students who are not in agreement with most of the class.*

*We usually compare our appearance with people we think are better looking than us. However, you may need to acknowledge that some people may also compare their looks with people they think don't look as good as them, which boosts their confidence.*

*It's important to note that both forms of comparisons can be unhelpful, so all students can benefit from learning how to avoid this behaviour.*



*Instruct students to complete the first boxed activity of Activity sheet 1 with the results of their class vote.*

# Problems with comparing



27 Minutes

## Presentation



## Teacher Actions

Explain to students that we are now going to consider the problems comparing our looks can cause.

Arrange students into small groups to discuss the following two questions:

**1. What do you think is the impact of comparing what we don't like about the way we look with people we think look better than we do?**

**2. How does this affect our feelings, thoughts and behaviors?**

Invite one or two groups to share feedback, using the following questions as further prompts.

**1. How would these comparisons make us feel?**

**2. What sort of things might we think?**

**3. What might we do as a result?**

## Desired Responses

## Teacher Notes

Try to guide students to give answers about their feelings, thoughts and behaviors. However, if breaking down ideas into the different categories is too complex for your class, simply compile an overall list of the different negative impacts making appearance-based comparisons might have.

Having negative feelings when you compare doesn't mean there's actually something wrong or that you're really 'worse' than the other person; people can still have strong feelings even if the basis for these feelings isn't true.



Answers could include sad, dissatisfied, worried, and guilty.


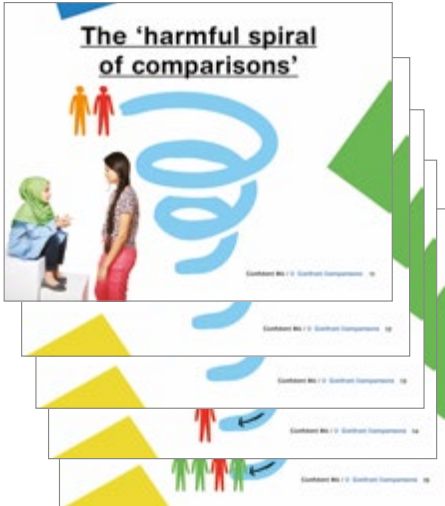


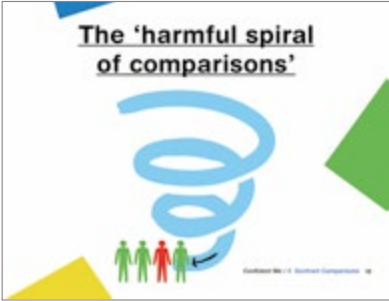

Answers could include 'I'm not good enough', 'I need to change', 'I wish I looked like them', and 'I need to lose weight/build muscles'.


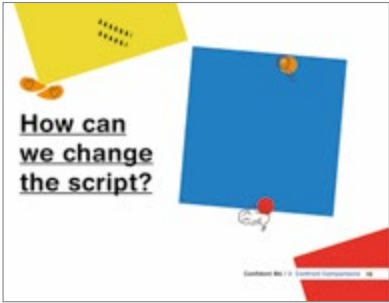
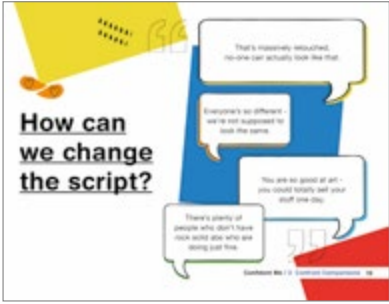




Answers could include extreme dieting, not going out with friends, and spending a lot of time/money on appearance.



Presentation	Teacher Actions	Desired Responses	Teacher Notes
 <p>Activity 1</p> <p>Worksheet</p> <p>Confident Me / 3 Confront Comparisons / 18</p>	<p><i>Instruct students to add their ideas to the second boxed activity of Activity sheet 1.</i></p> <p><i>Facilitate a short class discussion.</i></p> <p><b>1. Looking at all of these things, how helpful do you think it is to make these comparisons?</b></p>	<p>▶ Making comparisons based on looks is not helpful to anyone – and can have a number of negative consequences for us and those around us.</p>	
 <p>The 'harmful spiral of comparisons'</p> <p>Confident Me / 3 Confront Comparisons / 19</p> <p>Confident Me / 3 Confront Comparisons / 20</p> <p>Confident Me / 3 Confront Comparisons / 21</p> <p>Confident Me / 3 Confront Comparisons / 22</p>	<p><i>Explain that when we compare our looks to others, it is easy to get stuck in a “downward spiral,” in which we just feel worse about ourselves the more we do it. This can feel like getting caught in a whirlpool.</i></p> <p><i>Invite students to explain:</i></p> <p><b>1. What is a whirlpool?</b></p>	<p>▶ It is a powerful force; it pulls things downward; it is hard to escape; lots of things get sucked inside it.</p>	

Presentation	Teacher Actions	Desired Responses	Teacher Notes
 <p>The 'harmful spiral of comparisons'</p>	<p>Explain how the process of comparisons can be like a whirlpool as you click through the next four slides. Click before reading each statement. Emphasize the distance from where the figure in the illustration started at the top of the whirlpool.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. You compare yourself to someone else. How does this make you feel?</b></li> <li><b>2. Then you compare yourself again. How do you feel now? Can you think of any reason why this might be worse than before?</b></li> <li><b>3. So the more you compare, the worse you feel about yourself.</b></li> <li><b>4. When we get stuck in the whirlpool of comparisons, what impact do you think this has on your friends?</b></li> </ol>	<p>▶ Dissatisfied, critical of your appearance and wanting to change.</p> <p>▶ You already felt bad; you wish even more that you were different; you are more aware of others who you feel are better looking; you feel further away from achieving appearance ideals.</p> <p>▶ Talking and focusing on comparisons can draw our friends in as well. They might also start comparing and feel pressure to match appearance ideals. Everyone ends up getting pulled into the whirlpool of comparisons.</p>	<p>Emphasise that our words and actions can have a huge impact on those around us. When we regularly compare ourselves to others, this creates a culture of everyone wanting to look different and feeling bad about ourselves.</p>
 <p>What can we do instead?</p>	<p>Initiate a class vote.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Raise your hand if you think it would be a good idea to free ourselves from getting caught in the whirlpool of comparisons. What are some ways we can do this?</b></li> </ol> <p>Invite students to suggest actions they could take instead.</p>	<p>▶ Complimenting others and ourselves on things other than appearance, and focusing on enjoying each other's company rather than being critical of ourselves and each other.</p>	<p>Help students identify that breaking free from the whirlpool of comparisons means not comparing with people they think look better than they do and not comparing features they don't like about themselves.</p>

Presentation	Teacher Actions	Desired Responses	Teacher Notes
 <p><b>What can we do instead?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complement ourselves and others on things that aren't about appearance</li> <li>Focus on the good things about ourselves and others</li> <li>Keep to the facts</li> <li>Enjoy each other's company instead of being critical</li> <li>Celebrate ourselves and our friends</li> </ul>	<p>Ask a few students to read aloud the ideas listed in the presentation.</p>		
 <p><b>How can we change the script?</b></p>	<p>Explain that even though it is natural to make comparisons, students can learn to 'catch themselves' when they are about to compare their appearance and, instead, respond in a more positive way to help themselves and others. This takes practice.</p> <p>Ask several students for ideas.</p>		
 <p><b>How can we change the script?</b></p> <p>That's massively outweighed - no-one can actually look like that.</p> <p>Everyone's so different - let's not suppose to look the same.</p> <p>You are so good at art - you could totally sell your stuff one day.</p> <p>There's plenty of people who don't have rock music gear who are doing just fine.</p>	<p>Read aloud the suggestions in the presentation as additional examples of how they can change the script.</p>		


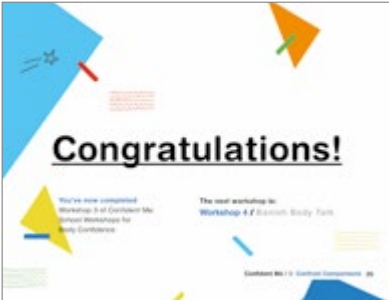
Presentation	Teacher Actions	Desired Responses	Teacher Notes
	<p>Arrange the class in pairs.</p> <p>Instruct students to complete Activity sheet 2, which involves rehearsing ways of how to think about, and respond differently in, comparison situations.</p> <p>Invite two or three pairs to present their role plays to the class.</p>		<p>Using role play is an invaluable way to get students into the habit of changing their script when confronted with a variety of different scenarios. Each example is a starting point from which students can identify their own internal scripts. The examples offer students the chance to model more positive responses, which they can then apply to their own lives, while avoiding the need for students to share personal examples.</p>
	<p>Instruct students to complete Activity sheet 3 independently.</p> <p><b>1. What are the different ways that you can challenge the process of making appearance comparisons in both yourself and others?</b></p> <p>Invite one or two students to explain why these responses will have positive outcomes for themselves and their friends.</p>		<p>Encourage students to think about the 'Person B' responses they created during the previous role-play activity.</p>

# Be a champion for change



5 Minutes

Presentation	Teacher Actions	Desired Responses	Teacher Notes
	<p>Ask for volunteers to recall, briefly, what they have learned in the workshop.</p> <p><b>1. What have we learned in today's workshop?</b></p> <p>Invite volunteers to read out the key learning points from the slide, and summarise any points students have missed.</p>	<p>▶ Students articulate the key messages in their own words.</p>	
	<p>Ask a few students to share:</p> <p><b>1. What different strategies for challenging comparisons have we learned?</b></p> <p><b>2. How else can you show your commitment to personally confronting appearance comparisons?</b></p> <p><b>3. Which one action will you commit to that will prevent you from making appearance comparisons in the future?</b></p>	<p>▶ Students could write a short statement celebrating their own personal qualities or practise staying alert for when they or their friends compare their appearance to others.</p>	<p>Help students choose small and specific actions, which will make it easier for them to keep to their commitments.</p>

Presentation	Teacher Actions	Desired Responses	Teacher Notes
 <p>The slide features the title "Going further" in a bold, black font. Above the title is a small lightbulb icon. The background is white with scattered colorful geometric shapes: a blue triangle, a red line, a green triangle, and a yellow triangle. In the bottom left corner, there is a small logo and the text "Going Further Sheet".</p>	<p>Ask your students to explore the ideas raised in today's workshop by completing the 'Going further' sheet before the next workshop. Encourage them to be aware of the ways they talk about appearance.</p>		
 <p>The slide features the title "Congratulations!" in a bold, black font. The background is white with scattered colorful geometric shapes: a blue triangle, a red line, a green triangle, and a yellow triangle. Below the title, there is text that reads: "You've now completed Workshop 3 of Confident Me. Thank you for your participation in this workshop for Body Confidence." and "The next workshop is: Workshop 4 of Confident Me Body Talk". In the bottom left corner, there is a small logo and the text "Confident Me / 3 Confront Comparisons 39".</p>	<p>Thank students for their participation, and draw the workshop to a close.</p>		<p>If possible, offer to stay behind or speak to students at another time about anything you have covered in the workshop.</p>

# Next Steps

You have now completed **Workshop 3: Confront Comparisons** from the **Confident Me: School Workshops for Body Confidence**. The next workshop in the series is: **Banish Body Talk**.

## ABOUT THIS WORKSHOP:

In this workshop, students identify the ways in which they engage in both positive and negative conversations about appearance, also known as 'body talk'. They will understand that body talk is common and people use it for lots of reasons, but the outcome is almost always unhelpful. They identify problems that body talk can cause and how it can contribute to appearance becoming an unhelpful focus of our identity, which shapes how we value ourselves and damages our self-esteem. Finally, students develop techniques to break the habit of reinforcing appearance ideals by practising ways to redirect or reframe conversations about appearance. This will have a positive impact on body confidence for students and their friends.

Access the materials for this workshop and others in the Confident Me: Five-Session Programme at: [dove.com/selfesteem](https://dove.com/selfesteem).



