

Picture Perfect

WIN Kids Curriculum for 5th and 6th grade

Designed for classrooms, community youth groups, and other educational settings



Lesson Objectives

- Demonstrate skills to challenge the assumption that media messages make it seem impossible to be successful and happy unless we look a certain way.
- Know how attitude and self image are related.
- Understand that the media provide false images of body perfection.



Wellness IN (WIN) the Rockies Principles

- Be critical of messages that focus on unrealistic body images as symbols of success and happiness.
- Help people feel good about their bodies and about who they are.



Health Standards

Content Area – Consumer Health

National Health Standards 4 (influence) and 5 (communication)

Wyoming Health Content and Performance Standards 4 and 5

Montana Health Enhancement Content Standards 5 and 6

Idaho Grade 5 Health Performance Standards 943 and 944

Idaho Grade 6 Health Performance Standards 953 and 954

Note: Suggested standards can be met depending upon lesson components selected and assessed. Potential assessment tools are designated with a ✓.



Approximate Length

- 40 minutes



Over the years, more and more Miss America winners have met the criteria to be considered undernourished.

Their body weight has decreased 12%.

-JAMA

Materials and Preparation

Handouts (1 per student):

Appearance Assumptions

What Would You Say?

Envelopes (1 per student)

Incredible Body Image Facts (2 brochures, post on walls)

Behind Closed Doors video tape (approximately 8 minutes, see Source and Materials)

VCR and television

Fashion magazines (2 or 3)

On the board write:

Assumption

Media messages make it seem impossible for me to be successful and happy unless I look a certain way.





Background for Educator

Ever dream of being a super model or action hero and having the perfect body? We are bombarded daily with images of “ideal” or “perfect” male and female bodies through mass media. Mass media is a form of communication that is designed to reach the mass of the people. It usually includes television, radio, magazines, newspapers, and the Internet.

For virtually everyone, the ideal body is an unrealistic and unattainable target. Unfortunately, some people adopt extreme and unsafe measures trying to achieve the ideal look. Images in magazines and on television appear to be real people rather than carefully crafted images. Fashion photos utilize many techniques to alter or change a model’s appearance and create a manipulated illusion rather than a realistic representation of a human body.

Assumptions are beliefs we take as true without proof. They can be very powerful for all of us, but especially for children and adolescents when reinforced by parents, teachers, peers and media. Assumptions can serve as filters or blinders determining how we interpret reality and shaping our thoughts and feelings. They often become self-evident truths. Evidence suggesting our assumptions are wrong is often rejected.

Negative body-image assumptions adversely influence self-acceptance and respect for body-size diversity. Psychology professor Thomas F. Cash has developed a tool to explore the relationship between appearance and body image. Through several hundred responses to his “Appearance Assumption Help Sheet,” Cash found that 75 percent of people who agreed with appearance assumptions (*assumers*) also had problematic body image. *Assumers* usually had a negative assessment of their overall looks. People who disagreed with the assumptions (*doubters*) usually had a positive view of their appearance and seldom had a negative body image.

Can assumptions be effectively challenged so assumers can become doubters? The video in this lesson shows a behind-the-scenes perspective on fashion photos. It provides a challenge to the assumption that “media messages make it seem impossible for me to be successful and happy unless I look a certain way.” For some youth audiences, the video and this subject area require advance preparation. Educators are encouraged to preview and prepare accordingly.



Lesson Script

Picture Perfect Overview

1. (*Distribute **Appearance Assumptions** and one envelope per student.*) Please fill out this worksheet. When done, fold the worksheet and put in the envelope. Seal the envelope and write your name on the outside. I will collect these and return them to you at a later date. (*A few weeks after this lesson, complete this worksheet again. Have students compare their responses and write a paper about changes they made or changes they want to make.*) ✓

2. (Point to word **Assumption** written on the board.) An assumption is a belief taken to be true without proof. Assumptions affect how we view the world. They influence how we think and what we pay attention to. Assumptions about appearance can affect how we feel about ourselves and others.

3. One common body-image assumption is the following: “media messages make it seem impossible for me to be successful and happy unless I look a certain way.” (Point to this assumption written on the board.)

- * What are media messages?
- * Why do you think this assumption is true for some people?
- * What do media messages tell us about how we should look?



Most female fashion models are thinner than 98% of American women.
-EDAP

4. Let’s watch a short video about how the fashion photographs you see in advertisements are created. (Watch the video **Behind Closed Doors**, approximately 8 minutes. See Sources and Material at the end of this lesson for ordering information.)

“What Would You Say?” Activity

1. The fashion photos in magazines are not the same as taking a photograph with the family camera. Which are real and which are fantasy? Which pictures show the variety of human body shapes and sizes? Fashion photographs are illusions that are created using many different methods.

2. How were the models and their clothing altered or changed in the video?

- * clothes radically refitted using tape, ties, pins and clamps
- * models physically reshaped using tape, pads, girdles, shapers and cinchers
- * models and clothing electronically retouched – inches and wrinkles removed

3. What can we do to challenge or question the assumption “media messages make it seem impossible for me to be successful and happy unless I look a certain way?” Let’s role play. Break into groups of 3 to 4 people (Distribute **What Would You Say?** worksheets and assign each group one of the statements.) One person reads the statement and tries to defend it as true. The rest of the group tries to get the first person to question his/her assumption. Talk about what you would say to someone who made that statement. ✓

If students find it difficult to respond to the statements, here are some questions to get them thinking.

1. I wish I looked like that model in the picture.

- * What would life be like if we all looked the same?
- * Does that model really look like the image you see?

2. I would be happy and rich if I were taller.

- * What kinds of things make you happy now?
- * Are only tall people rich?

3. I should wear baggy clothes because I don't have the ideal body.

* *Who says what the ideal body is?*

* *What would happen if you wore clothes that you felt good in?*

4. Those models have it made! I would do anything to look like that.

* *What if that model is actually miserable and/or unhealthy?*

* *Does that model really look like the image you see?*

4. Share your replies with the rest of the class. ✓ Are there a few common or especially effective responses that can be used to question assumptions about how we look?

➤ LANGUAGE or ENRICHMENT Option: Have students prepare a written response to any of the “What would you say?” statements. Or have them write their own statement and response.



WIN the Home: Magazine Madness

1. Ask students to do this activity with family members or share their observations with them. (*Provide magazines for students who do not have access to one. They can tear out the page they want to critique.*)

2. Have students find one advertisement in a fashion magazine or another popular magazine that they think has been altered. Have them critique the photograph and note how they think the image was created through enhancements and alterations.

3. During a later class period, have students share their ads and findings. ✓ (*Reinforce the idea that these are illusions or manipulated images and not how the person really looks.*)

Please note: pilot testing of lessons has determined that WIN the Home activities are most successful when students have time over a weekend to complete them, when a follow-up is conducted in class, and when students receive credit for completion.



Additional Ideas

➤ **Incredible Body Image Facts** - Refer to the **Incredible Body Image Facts** brochure/poster. Ask students to select a statement they find interesting. Have them prepare a written response to the following question:

How does this fact affect how people think about their bodies? ✓

➤ **Picture Me** - Have students fold a blank piece of paper in half and lay open. On the left half, write the heading “Things about me people can see.” Students can list things like hair color, height, nice smile, etc. On the right half, ask them to write the heading “Things about me people cannot see.” Students can list things like own 2 dogs, good listener, like to play baseball, love to read mysteries, etc. Students can then prepare a short paper on what these lists mean to them. ✓



Sources and Materials

Behind Closed Doors IV with Joan Lunden.” Educational Video. LMNO Productions, NewLife Entertainment, 1996.

Cash, Thomas. *The Body Image Workbook: An 8-Step Program for Learning to Like Your Looks*. Oakland, California: New Harbinger Publications, 1997.

“Eating Disorders in the USA: Statistics in Context.” Eating Disorders Awareness and Prevention (EDAP), Inc. Accessed 14 Jan. 2002. <<http://www.edap.org>>.

Rubinstein, S. and Caballero, B. “Is Miss America an undernourished role model?” *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*. 238.12 (2000). Downloaded 14 Jan. 2002. <<http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v283n12/ffull/jlt0322-6.html>>.

To purchase the **Behind Closed Doors IV** video, contact Remuda Ranch Programs at 800-445-1900 or 928-684-4292. The cost is approximately \$11.00.

To purchase the *Incredible Body Image Facts* brochure (Title No. R813), contact ETR Associates at 800-321-4407.

WIN the Rockies wishes to thank all of the educators who reviewed this lesson and offered suggestions. Reviewers included: Aleida Saiz, Cyndy O’Neal, Betty Skalsky, Shellie Healy, Suzy Pelican, Rhonda Andersen, Betty Holmes, Becky Green, Joan Gunnerson, and Wendy Smith and her students.

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WIN the Rockies is a community-based research, development and education project to improve health of residents in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Supported by award 0004499 through IFAFS (Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems) Competitive Grants Program/USDA.

The University of Wyoming, Montana State University, the University of Idaho and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. These universities are equal opportunity affirmative action institutions.

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