BE REAL™ BODYKIND

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2024 RANDOMIZED CONTROL TRIAL (RCT) FINDINGS
BODYKIND INCREASES BODY APPRECIATION & SELF-COMPASSION IN STUDENTS

BE REAL's *BodyKind* body image program was tested with 1,150 high school students in Ireland in a rigorous research trial. The study found that students who participated in the *BodyKind* program had **statistically significant increases in "body appreciation" from pre- to post-survey.** Teaching an evidence-based program shown to improve body appreciation is helpful for young people struggling with body image because **body appreciation helps young people:**

- **Accept, respect and hold favorable attitudes toward their body, while rejecting appearance ideals**
- **Have positive self-beliefs like self-efficacy, self-compassion and resilience**
- **Be more attuned to their own needs while being motivated to eat adaptively, move their body, and take care of themselves**

Body appreciation also leads to: **Better self-esteem, flourishing, happiness and better overall mental health**

Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015; Tylka, 2018 & 2019; Linardon et al., 2022 & 2023; Keyes, 2007; Homan & Tylka, 2018; Swami et al., 2023

BODYKIND ADDRESSES BODY IMAGE PROBLEMS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA (AND ANYWHERE ELSE)

In May 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory about the effects of social media on youth mental health that warns, **"Social media may perpetuate body dissatisfaction, disordered eating behaviors, social comparison, and low self-esteem,"** (Surgeon General Advisory, 2023). In June 2024, Dr. Vivek Murthy recommended a warning label (like on alcohol and cigarettes) to be put on social media sites because of the mental health risks. In September 2024, 42 state attorney generals signed a letter in support of these warning labels. **Over 75% of today's adolescents experience "body image distress"** (Milton et al., 2021). Research ties body image issues to eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Perkins & Brausch, 2019; McLean et al., 2022).

BODYKIND HAS SIGNIGIFICANT BODY IMAGE AND SELF-COMPASSION BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

- **Students showed statistically signifcant increases in body appreciation post-intervention**
- **Students showed significant increases in self-compassion at 12-week follow-up**
- **68% of students reported greater compassion for fellow students' body image concerns (helpful to reduce appearance bullying)**

BODYKIND BENEFITS TEACHERS

35 teachers delivered *BodyKind* to 1,150 15-16-year-old students in the Irish trial. Teachers reported that the training increased their own knowledge on body image and they felt confident delivering the content.

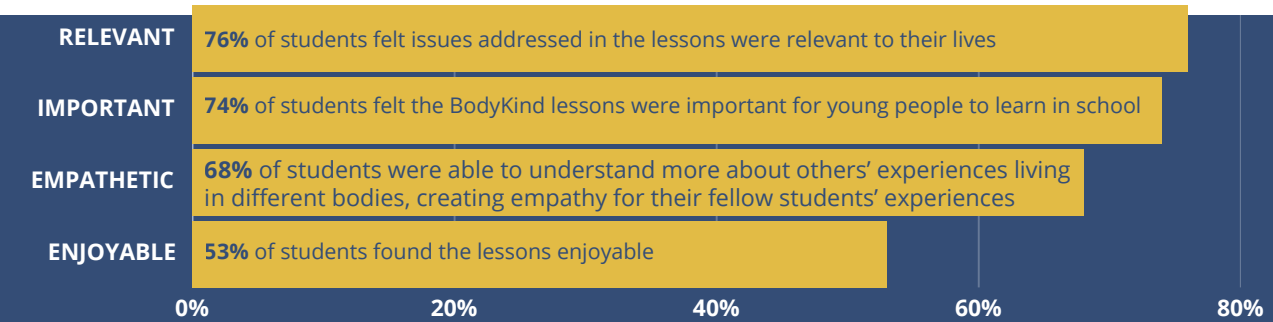
- **78% of teachers said it challenged their own body beliefs and behaviors**
- **73% of teachers said it improved the way they thought and felt about their own body**
- **100% of teachers said they were likely to recommend the program to other teachers**

> ***"It was a pleasure to do the course. It was the highlight of wellbeing for me this year. It is so thorough and so applicable to students' lives."***
> **-- 2024 RCT Teacher**

BODYKIND CREATED & ANALYZED BY OUR RESEARCH TEAM

- *BodyKind* was culturally adapted to the Irish context in collaboration with Irish students, teachers and a mental health clinicians.
- *BodyKind* was tested with 15-16-year-old students in 23 high schools across Ireland. For research methods, see BMC Journal of Public Health.

YMHlab Youth Mental Health · UCD Dublin University College Dublin Ireland's Global University · Irish Research Council An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn · JIGSAW Young people's health in mind



> ***"The program has helped me feel more positively about my body and appearance"***
> **-- RCT 2024 Student**

BODYKIND MEETS THE *2024 SHAPE AMERICA HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS & PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:* STANDARDS 2, 4, 7 AND 8

LESSON 1

Appearance Judgment. Students learn about appearance judgment—when a person is judged and treated differently based on how they look, rather than who they are or how they behave. Students explore how body confidence can be enhanced by (1) viewing their bodies as instruments, not ornaments; (2) having gratitude for what their body does for them everyday; and (3) accepting natural body diversity.

68% of students said that lesson 1 helped them understand more about how other people experience their bodies, while almost half reported that the program helped them understand more about their own body image

"I feel a bit better now if I look in the mirror. I see less bad things."
-- RCT 2024 Student

LESSON 2

Self-Compassion and Social Media. Once students become aware of appearance pressures, they analyze how these pressures show up in their lives and in the media. Students learn how self-compassion can be an effective tool to cope with the negative comparisons people make to other people.

43% of students believed Lesson 2 helped them use self-compassion to challenge their self-critical thoughts

"I've tried talking to myself as if it were a friend feeling bad about themselves and I was much kinder."
-- RCT 2024 Student

"I learned how much social media affects us in how we look. I know it did but perhaps not to the extent I would have thought it did without us even noticing."
--- RCT 2024 Student

LESSON 3

Compassion for Others. Lesson 3 teaches students how to apply the compassion they have shown to themselves in Lesson 2, to other people in their lives. Students learn how to build a kinder environment and reduce appearance pressures by reducing "body talk." Students discuss cultural myths about bodies that we all encounter in the world today, alongside corresponding facts from the research. Students also hear of other people's journeys from a more negative to a more positive body image, which helps them model paths to body confidence.

64% of students thought Lesson 3 helped them realise that being compassionate to others can help everyone feel better about themselves

"I thought about how my words might impact people."
-- RCT 2024 Student

"Everyone's different and it's important to accept them no matter what they look like."
-- RCT 2024 Student

BODYKIND WAS CREATED BY AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM OF BODY IMAGE EXPERTS

***BodyKind* was researched, written, and tested by an international team of teachers, academics, psychologists, and body image experts**

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Scan to get the curriculum

"This is a great program and I can't wait to see what you do with it."
- RCT 2024 Student

"All young people should take this program."
-- RCT 2024 Student