

# BE REAL's BODYKIND



Including 2 BodyKind Pilot Study Findings from 2022 & 2023

## BE REAL'S MISSION

Spreading body confidence resources across the globe, so every child can grow up with a healthy relationship to food and their body.

## BE REAL'S BODYKIND: HIGH SCHOOL BODY IMAGE CURRICULUM

In May 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an [advisory](#) about the effects of social media on youth mental health. With regard to body image, the report warns, "Social media may perpetuate body dissatisfaction, disordered eating behaviors, social comparison, and low self-esteem." Over 75% of today's adolescents report "body image distress" (Milton et al., 2021). Research ties body dissatisfaction to eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Perkins & Brausch, 2019; McLean et al., 2022). Young people who don't like their bodies often suffer from low self-esteem and are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol (Bornioli et al., 2019).

There is a critical need for a body image curriculum to be taught in schools to prevent body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. BE REAL's *BodyKind* is an evidence-based, high school body image curriculum that addresses body dissatisfaction exacerbated by students' social media use. This 4-lesson intervention is designed for health class, but can be used in any class teaching social-emotional curriculum.

*BodyKind* starts with what the field of eating disorder prevention has learned from two decades of research. *BodyKind* is the first universal body image intervention to be developed for, to include content about, and to be pilot tested among a *diverse* cohort of adolescents. *BodyKind* is the first high school, body image curriculum to use self-compassion as a modality to address body dissatisfaction.

✓ (4) 50-MINUTE LESSONS

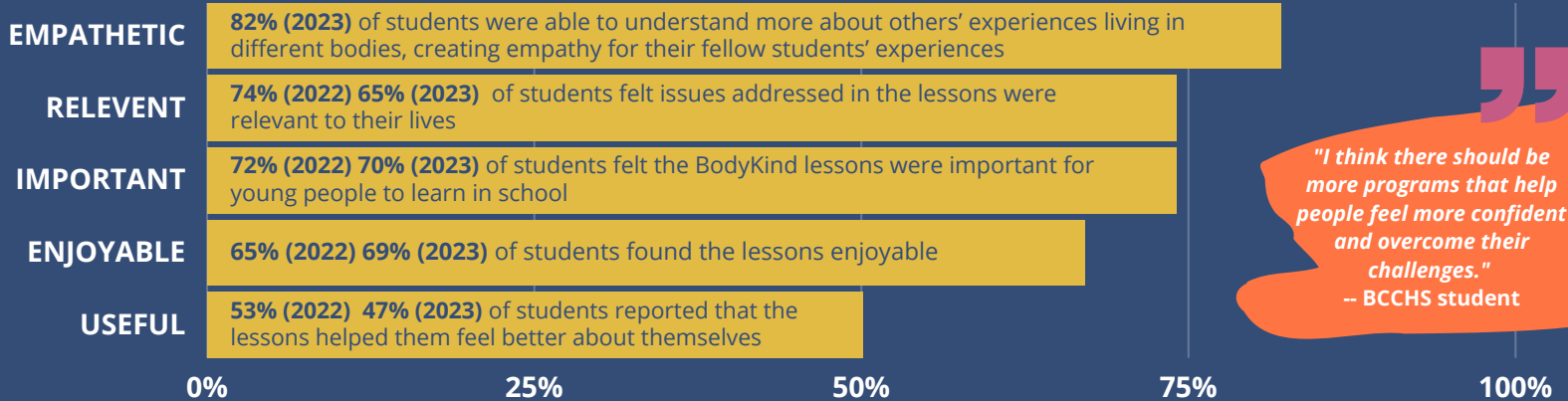
✓ WORKSHEETS

✓ CLASSROOM SLIDES

*"There are some days when I wake up and criticize myself and feel ashamed. However, I have been applying what I learned in this program and now I tell myself to stop. Stop and appreciate who I am. No one in this world is perfect. I can be happy for who I am and love myself."*  
-- BCCHS student

## 2 PILOT STUDIES, CREATED & ANALYZED BY OUR UNC CHARLOTTE ACADEMIC TEAM

In April 2022, BE REAL trained teachers at Brooklyn Center Community High School (BCCHS), a high school north of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The BCCHS student body has 92% students of color. BCCHS teachers delivered all four *BodyKind* lessons to 175 BCCHS students. Then students were surveyed by our team from UNC Charlotte to see what they thought. We were thrilled with their responses, below. In May 2023, BE REAL went back to Minneapolis for another pilot study with 300 more students from Armstrong High School and Cooper High School. The amazing feasibility and acceptability pilot results were validated a second time. The comments on this fact sheet are from students who participated in the *BodyKind* lessons.



*"I think there should be more programs that help people feel more confident and overcome their challenges."*  
-- BCCHS student

Promising preliminary pilot data in 2023: Students with lowest body esteem scores demonstrated an increase in self-compassion from pre- to post- intervention

# BODYKIND CURRICULUM MEETS HEALTH EDUCATION CURRICULUM ANALYSIS TOOL (HECAT) STANDARD 2: ANALYZING INFLUENCES



## LESSON 1

**Appearance Bias.** Students learn about appearance bias—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.

**59% (2022) 48% (2023) of students thought Lesson 1 empowered them to challenge the appearance bias they encounter in their lives**

*"Sometimes I have issues loving myself, but this helped remind me that my body and personality offer so much more than my negative thoughts!"*  
-- BCCHS student

## LESSON 2

**Social Media, Comparisons, and Self-Compassion.** 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.

**54% (2022) 55% (2023) of students believed Lesson 2 helped them use self-compassion to challenge their self-critical thoughts**

*"Compassion for myself was something I took (from the lessons) and reflected a lot on. I tried to challenge my mindset to count things I should be grateful for about myself."*  
-- BCCHS 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.

**69% (2022) 68% (2023) of students thought Lesson 3 helped them realize that being compassionate to others can help everyone feel better about themselves**

*"I have started to think about the things I say and how they affect others."*  
-- BCCHS student

## LESSON 4

**Taking Action.** In Lesson 4 students are given the tools to become agents for change focusing on real steps they can take to create a better world. Students receive guidance on creating their own Roadmap for Taking Action that takes an idea from the issue stage to the action stage.

**44% (2022 & 2023) of students thought Lesson 4 empowered them to tackle social issues of concern to them**

*"I want to get more involved with important things in the world."*  
-- BCCHS 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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**JAN MOONEY**

Doctoral student in the Health Psychology Ph.D. Program at UNC Charlotte



**K.G. SMITH**

Healthcare administration graduate student at UNC Charlotte



**VERENICE GOMEZ-TREJO**

Chemistry major graduate of the University of Chicago

*"These topics are NOT what we usually learn in school and having this chance to be able to learn more about myself and my body is great. I hope you know that what you are doing is changing people's lives."*

-- BCCHS Student from *BodyKind's* 2022 Pilot Study



SCAN FOR RESOURCE CITATIONS