



# CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS

## 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.”  
 -- 2022 Pilot, Brooklyn Community High School (BCCHS) student

## CREATING CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS FOR BODYKIND

### LOCAL BODY STORIES

In *BodyKind's* Lesson 1 students read a collection of people's body stories called *Understanding Others*. From these stories, students gain an awareness of how different people experience their body image, whatever their body size, skin shade, facial features, sexuality, gender representation and ability. These are real human stories. For the Cultural Adaptations, we research relevant body stories to reflect cultural appearance stereotypes and appearance-related issues that are local to that culture. These stories are meant to resonate with local students and give them insights into other's lived experiences.

### LOCAL IMAGERY & LANGUAGE

In our *BodyKind* Cultural Adaptations we add pictures of local people and also include local landmarks in the adapted Toolkit. With language, we work with the local team to have all of the contents translated. For adaptations where the students learn in English, we can adjust for any local variations in spelling, phrasing, and word usage, as we did with *BodyKind's* Cultural Adaptation for Ireland.

### LOCAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM STANDARDS

We will work with the local team to meet the education curriculum standards in their area for social emotional learning. If there are requirements for skills-based learning we will match up our learning objectives to meet local needs. We can add material where possible in alignment with *BodyKind's* lesson objectives.

### LOCAL RESEARCH & INTERVIEWS

In gathering the *BodyKind's* body stories, the BE REAL team researched body dissatisfaction and eating disorders for different people based on body size, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, sexuality and gender identity. We studied real human stories for our *Understanding Others* Body Stories series that reflect what the research knows about how different people and different communities experience body image issues. For the Cultural Adaptation, we will research local body image experiences with the local team.

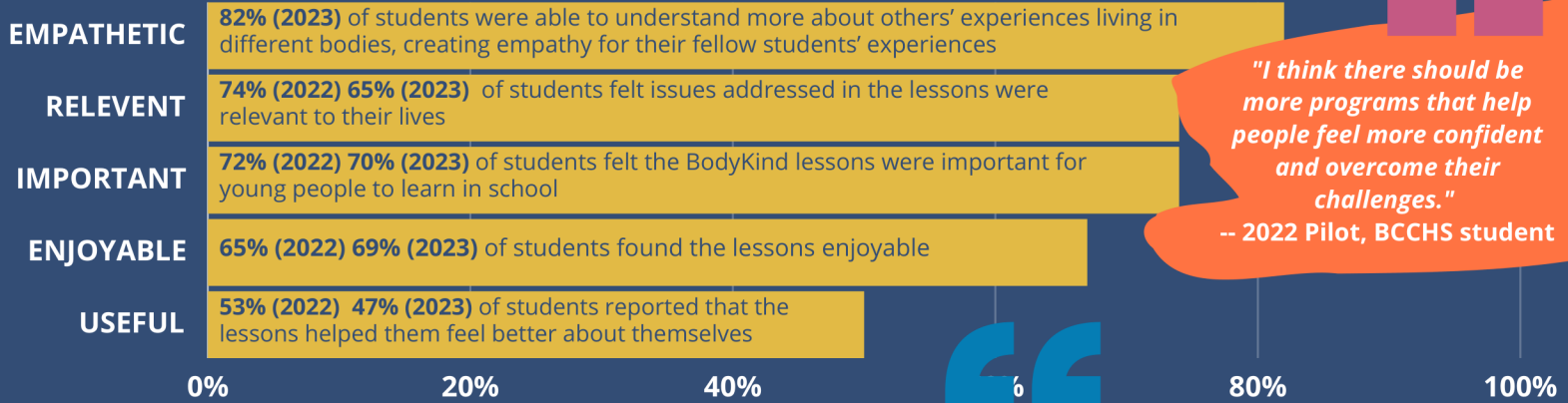
“Sometimes I have issues loving myself, but this helped remind me that my body and personality offer so much more than my negative thoughts!”  
 -- 2022 Pilot, BCCHS student

## 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 Minneapolis, Minnesota high school with 90% students of color. BCCHS teachers delivered all four BodyKind lessons to 150 BCCHS students. Students were surveyed by our team from UNC Charlotte to see what they thought.



In May 2023, BE REAL went back to Minneapolis for another pilot study with 300 students, this time from Armstrong High School and Cooper High School. Our 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.



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

*"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."  
-- 2022 Pilot, 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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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*

In partnership with



**NATIONAL ALLIANCE**  
for Eating Disorders