



Activity: 9-10.13.1

Key Messages

- The media can be a powerful force in shaping our body image, gender and sexual lives.
- The images we see in the media are often digitally enhanced and altered.

Activity Details

Victorian Curriculum

Health & PE Evaluate situations and propose appropriate emotional responses and then reflect on possible outcomes of different responses to health and wellbeing VCHPEP147

Capabilities VCCCTR047

Time 30 minutes

Levels 9 & 10

Equipment • a set of *okay or not okay* cards

Okay or not okay?

Purpose

To reflect on the role of media in shaping body image, sexuality and gender.

To recognise that media images are digitally enhanced and explore the impact this may have on young people's body image.

Teaching notes

The media is a powerful shaping influence in the lives of young people. This activity allows students the opportunity to explore different ways that the media can impact on their sexual sense of self.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that, throughout the following activity, you want them to consider positive and negative effects of the media on body image, gender and sexuality.
2. Ask students to work in groups and give each group a set of cards.
3. Ask the students to read the scenarios on each of the cards and answer the questions listed at the end.
4. When students have completed the activity, work through each scenario, and the answers, as a class.
5. Allow for discussion and explore any differences of opinion.
6. In conclusion to each scenario discussion, ask the class to suggest clear and definite strategies to overcome the impact of the media and/or porn.





Scenario 1

A teenage couple (male and female) are sitting on the couch watching TV. A commercial comes on for cosmetics. The guy comments about the actress/ model in the ad, 'She's so hot. Why don't you look that hot?' It's the first time he has ever said anything negative about his girlfriend.

- How would the girlfriend feel?
- What could she say to her boyfriend about the way she feels?
 - What if he continues to say things like that to her?
- What possible effect has the commercial had on the couple?



Scenario 2

Two male friends are sitting on the couch reading magazines. One of the guys has a weight problem. He finds an article about a celebrity trainer. He shows his mate the picture of a guy with a 'six pack'.

'Check out this guy's abs. I wish I had abs like that,' he says.

His friend replies, 'Man that guy's a fag. All guys who spend that much time in the gym are fags'.

- What might each guy be thinking about?
- What stereotypes are the friends perpetuating here?
- Is it possible, or desirable, for all people to achieve a well-defined and toned body shape?



Scenario 3

A guy and his girlfriend have been dating for a while and their relationship has become more physical. After seeing her vulva for the first time, he is shocked and tells her it doesn't look normal. He says it's not like the ones he has seen in pornos. The next day, he updates his Facebook status to 'single'.

- How has porn influenced this guy's view of what women look like?
 - How do you think she would feel?
- How will this affect her future relationships?
- How is porn affecting his relationships?



Scenario 4

Cassie has feelings for Sophie, a girl in her class who is an 'out and proud' lesbian. When Cassie asks Sophie out, she says yes. Cassie is happy they have a date but she starts to get nervous because she has never even kissed anyone before. She decides to do some research on the Internet. She watches some girl-on-girl porn. Now she is scared. What if Sophie wants to do that stuff with her? She is starting to wish she had never asked Sophie out.

- Why might the porn site scare Cassie?
 - Is porn sex realistic sex?
- What would be a better place for Cassie to get information?
 - How might this experience affect her date?



Scenario 5

Ben, who's 15, is at his friend's house hanging out one night, eating pizza and watching TV. His mate mentions that his dad has some porn DVDs they could watch if they wanted. Ben hasn't seen porn much before, so he agrees. After watching porn, the thing that amazes Ben the most is that all the guys have really big penises and the women seem to like that. He starts to worry that his penis is too small, that he won't be good at sex, that he will never find a girlfriend.

- How has porn affected Ben?
- What has it done to his self-image, to his confidence?
 - How might this affect him in the future?
- What would you say to Ben about the men in porn?



Scenario 6

Sandy is at her cousin Gemma's 16th birthday sleepover. She is excited because she's only 14 and has really looked up to Gemma for years, plus she gets to hang out with Gemma's friends.

During the night, the girls talk about relationships, fashion and school. One of the girls decides to read out aloud the letters page in a fashion magazine. The first letter is about a girl who says her boyfriend really wants her to have a Brazilian wax but she's scared it will hurt. Some of the girls start to laugh. One girl says, 'Yeah, it hurts but you've got to do it! Pubic hair is gross!'

Gemma notices Sandy looking embarrassed. She asks what's wrong. Sandy confesses she's never had a wax. Gemma says, 'That's okay. There has to be a first time for everybody.' Now Sandy wants to get waxed. She wants to be like Gemma and her friends.

- How has the magazine letter influenced the girls' idea of what is normal?
 - Why does Sandy want to get a Brazilian wax?
- How have Sandy's feelings about what's 'normal' changed?
 - How do magazines impact on a person's self-image?