



# A TOOLKIT FOR BODY IMAGE ANXIETIES AGES 11-25

We at 'BODY IMAGE COACH CIC' acknowledge that with awareness of the complexity of body image, we will not always satisfy those engaging with it.

This toolkit has been informed by our lived and professional experience and we have based examples on approaches we as the authors are most familiar with.

This is part of a wider program that plans to support various providers to work harmoniously together, through a referral process at [www.bodyimagecoach.co.uk](http://www.bodyimagecoach.co.uk)

Our work is delivered online, and we put appropriate safeguarding practices in place. Our services are educational and skills-based. We do not provide therapy, crisis support, diagnosis, or mental-health treatment. If you or a participant needs urgent help with mental or physical health, you should seek immediate support through emergency services such as calling 999, attending A&E, or contacting NHS 111

## OUR PROJECT

Welcome to our Body Image Coaching program.

An online service that addresses body image anxieties for young people, through powerful on-line animation videos and 1-1 support where needed. We work as a non-clinical early intervention Tier 1 service with early onset body image challenges around how someone looks, feels and thinks about themselves.

## CONTACT US

To make a referral, please email:

[hello@bodyimagecoach.co.uk](mailto:hello@bodyimagecoach.co.uk)



## BODY DISMORPHIC DISORDER SIGNS

- Pre-occupation with appearance for over 1 hour per day
- Anxiety about appearance and never feeling good enough
- Feelings of despair around one or more parts of the body
- Using coping mechanisms to hide or camouflage body part
- Compulsive behaviors such as repeatedly checking mirrors  
Feeling shame and/or disgust
- Comparing own body part with others/judging self and others

## **MUSCLE DYSMORPHIA/BIGOREXIA**

- Pre-occupation with appearance for over 1 hour per day
- Anxiety about appearance and never feeling big enough
- Feelings of despair around one or more parts of the body
- Excessive exercise, weight training and/or steroids/other ways to become bigger
- Compulsive behaviors such as repeatedly checking mirrors
- Feeling shame and/or disgust
- Comparing own body part with others/judging others

# ASPECTS OF BODY IMAGE

## **PERCEPTUAL**

**How you see  
your appearance**

How you view yourself when you look in the mirror or think about your appearance.

## **COGNITIVE**

**How you think  
about your  
appearance**

The thoughts, beliefs and self-talk you have about your body and appearance.

## **AFFECTIVE**

**How you feel  
about your  
appearance**

The emotions that can arise when you think about your body or appearance, such as confidence, worry or embarrassment.

## **BEHAVIOURAL**

**How you respond**

The habits and behaviours you notice because of the way you think and feel about your appearance.

## **SPOTTING THE SIGNS – BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER/MUSCLE DYSMORPHIA**

Muscles growing rapidly / New square jawline from face yoga / Cosmetic injections: fillers/Botox

Mental health problems / too preoccupied / too self-conscious / no confidence

Constantly grooming oneself / Mirror checking / Fidgeting /Shame and guilt /

Constantly checking body and face parts with hands

Comparing with others / mood outbursts / OCD / hiding body parts

### **Behaviors:**

Frequent toilet trips /camouflaging / excess makeup / Obsessive fact finding

Spending money on products, vitamins, cosmetics, creams / Influenced by the wrong role models /

Dependence on makeup /creams and other cosmetics or substances / In a state of constant deep shock / Panic attacks / Compulsive mirror checking / Intrusive thoughts / Reassurance seeking / change in language around self

/ Staying away from the camera / Taking pictures and zooming in / scrutinizing self or others / Comparing /

Perfectionism /Fidgeting / Using hands to feel skin or body/face shape / Change in personality / Preoccupied /

Unable to focus / OCD / Paranoia when around others / Isolation / Extreme coping strategies – alcohol, drugs, steroids, gaming, sleeping, truancy, anger outbursts, hiding, meltdowns / skin picking / Hair pulling / Avoidance /



## **GUIDANCE**

**What can you do to address body image before it becomes a difficulty?**

**ACTION:** [Implementing our body image awareness workshop](#) to all children ages 11 plus, with [session plan](#), will offer a space for young people to explore their feelings around body image and express how they think and feel about their body.

**Please get in touch for pre and post workshop questionnaires, if you would like to measure outcomes.**

**ACTION:** For those struggling with their body image, after the awareness workshop.

[Access our online form](#)

EDUCATE PARENTS WITH OUR [YOUTUBE CHANNEL](#)

# GUIDANCE FOR FRONTLINE STAFF

## When a person presents themselves as struggling with their body image:

<b><i>Do's</i></b>	<b><i>Don'ts</i></b>
<i>Start with 'how are you feeling', a simple opening.</i>	<i>Don't probe too much around body image as this is probably the last thing they want to talk about</i>
<i>Ask open Q's IE: what's on your mind and start your q's with: What, When, Where, Why, How, to help them express their thoughts.</i>	<i>Don't assume they're ok about their body image if they choose not to express their thoughts</i>
<i>Observe body language, IE: I can see you are taking a deep breath when you say that, can you tell me more about this?</i>	<i>Don't pressure them too much if they don't want to elaborate</i>
<i>Ask how long this has been a problem, ask if anyone else knows</i>	<i>Don't point out to them, any signs telling you they are struggling, IE: we can see you are too thin, too obese etc, instead say we can see that you may be struggling, how can we help?</i>
<i>Ask if they would prefer to talk about their problem with a body image coach with lived experience</i>	<i>Don't brush off what they tell you, by side tracking, IE: I hear that you can't do PE but we need you to attend PE as part of your PSHE</i>
<i>Ask them if they feel suicidal, don't be afraid to ask</i>	<i>Don't tell them they look fine, pretty, handsome etc as this magnifies the problem</i>
<i>Let them know that many people go through body image difficulties too and there is a way through this</i>	<i>Don't force them to change their behaviors and coping strategies, IE: by forcing them to stay in the playground if their coping strategy is to be in a classroom. Find solutions that make them feel safe. Safety is key!</i>
<i>Focus on their symptoms, not the problem, IE: they have a panic attack, how can you support them with their panic (symptom) until they feel more comfortable talking about this.</i>	<i>Don't show any frustration, judgement or personal views, your only job is to support them to feel safe now and in the future</i>
<i>Give them a sense of control over what information they give you, IE: what would you like to tell me about your body image concerns?</i>	<i>Don't treat them any differently to others, they are simply looking for a direction, not special treatment</i>
<i>Give them a sense of control over what support they need, IE: what can we do for you, to support you? What do you need?</i>	<i>Don't label or diagnose or put words into their mouth, IE: it sounds like you have anxiety</i>
<i>Validate what they tell you, it makes a big difference, IE: I hear you and that must be very exhausting for you to be going through this.</i>	<i>Don't take it personally if they don't want to talk as this is their biggest and darkest secret and you have just found out</i>
<i>Encourage professional help</i>	<i>Don't judge them if they become defensive, they are feeling unsafe and vulnerable. Just listen and offer support.</i>

## **COACHING QUESTIONS TO USE WHEN A PERSON COMES TO YOU FOR SUPPORT**

How are you?

What are the symptoms you are having?

Do you feel safe?

What is the hardest part of this for you?

What do you think is happening here?

How are you coping with this?

How do you see your physical self?

How do you feel about your body/face?

How is all of this making you feel?

What's coming up for you when we talk about this?

In what ways do you think about your body/face?

What's your thinking around what we've discussed today?

Would you like further support?

Is there anything blocking you from wanting further support?

What would be a good way forward for you?

What do you feel is the best outcome from today?

**TED = TELL, EXPLAIN, DESCRIBE** (Tell me how I can help you today, explain what you are going through, describe how it makes you feel. FOCUS ON **SYMPTOMS AND SAFETY 1<sup>st</sup>**, BODY IMAGE DISCUSSIONS 2ND

## **USING OUR EARLY PREVENTION SERVICE**

### **OTHER SERVICES THAT CAN HELP:**

**Local Mind**

**Youth Wellbeing**

**Youth Access**

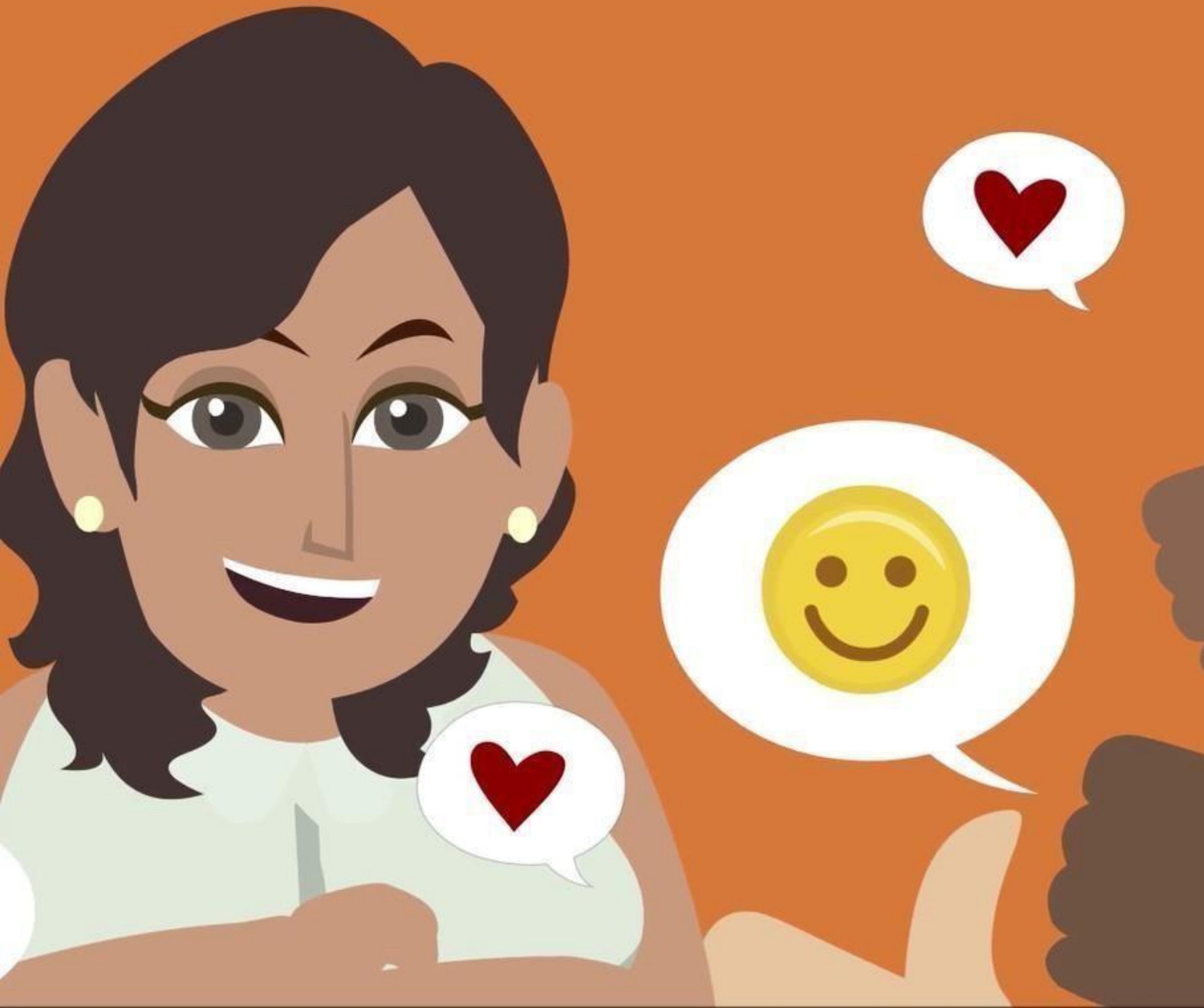
**Childline - 0800 1111**

**SHOUT Text 85258**

**Papyrus Hope line UK 0800 068 4141**

**SAMARITANS: 116 123**

## TESTIMONIALS



*"I would absolutely recommend this. Pupils found the exercises invaluable and it was great to see them talk about this topic with each other as a team."*

Loxford School Ilford

We've received excellent feedback from schools, parents, and teens we work with. Check out what people are saying [here](#).

FULL DETAILS OF OUR TEAM CAN BE FOUND HERE



[BODYIMAGECOACH.CO.UK](http://BODYIMAGECOACH.CO.UK)

