

BODY IMAGE FOR TEENS

LESSON PLANS FEATURING

NAKED BEACH



BODY IMAGE: NAKED BEACH

NAKED BEACH is a televised experiment, broadcast on Channel 4, based on research by Dr Keon West at Goldsmiths University. Dr Keon's research shows that **being exposed to a diverse range of naked bodies improves body image.**

NAKED BEACH aimed to explore the research in a way that was genuinely educational and family friendly. It took three 'guests' each episode who had **chronically low body image** satisfaction and sent them to live in a Greek villa with **eight body positivity campaigners** for four days.

During the guests' stay, their body positive hosts were **completely naked apart from beautiful body paint**, which obscured their genitals. The guests were tasked to participate in activities designed to challenge their negative beliefs about how they looked, such as '**Naked Homework**' (spending 20 minutes naked in front of a mirror before bed) and the '**Five Minute Flash**' (standing in front of one of the hosts naked and observing each other bodies).

It is important to recognise that the nudity in **NAKED BEACH** is not in any way gratuitous, or designed to titillate. The show was aired before the watershed (8pm) and was **designed to be watched by teenagers and families.** The body paint ensures focus is on body shape and how naked bodies move, as opposed to specific parts.



BODY IMAGE: THE RESOURCE

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Research shows **Britain has some of the lowest body image scores in the world**, with a third of all Brits saying they're unhappy with the way they look. 91% of British women say they're not body confident, 45% of men report to hate what they see in the mirror and **one in four children worry about their appearance**. Furthermore, the Girlguiding National Attitude Survey found 52% of 12-14 year olds avoid everyday school activities such as physical education, performing or presenting and even putting their hand up in class because of concerns over how they look.

Lack of body image satisfaction interferes with young people's ability to engage fully with their education and is also a diagnostic criteria in common **mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and, of course, eating disorders**. Increasingly, young people's understanding of what constitutes a 'normal' body is driven by digitally altered images on social media and pornography. They are therefore rarely exposed to perfectly normal features such as stretch marks, love handles, scars, skin conditions or natural breasts.

Naked Beach aims to change that.

This resource focusses on two of the guests – Darrell and Jolie – Select the one which you feel will resonate most with your class. The video resources were created by Barefaced TV with permission from Channel 4. Lesson plans were created by Natasha Devon MBE.

ABOUT NATASHA DEVON MBE

Natasha Devon has been working in schools, colleges and universities for more than a decade educating teenagers, teachers and parents on mental health and related issues, including body image and gender equality. To date, her award-winning classes have been presented to more than 150,000 young people in over 200 schools throughout the UK and beyond.

Natasha is a patron for the charity No Panic, a trustee for Student Minds and was briefly the government's first ever mental health champion for schools. In 2015 she received an MBE for her services to young people and in 2016 the Sunday Times and Debretts named her one of the 500 most influential people in Britain. Her book 'A Beginner's Guide to Being Mental' was published in May 2018 by Bluebird at Pan Macmillan.



BODY IMAGE: LESSON PLAN

FORMAT

Each lesson pack contains two videos with notes for teachers containing background information, suggested discussion points and statistics.

Video one should be shown at the beginning of the session and video two approximately 20 minutes in.

The session is designed to last for one hour.

AGE RANGE

13-16 (years 9-11)

TOPICS COVERED

Body image
Confidence/Self-Esteem
Social Media
Pornography (as it relates to body image)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- * To help pupils understand how a lack of body confidence affects other areas of life (such as participation in sport/healthy life choices and enjoyment of social activities.)
- * To debunk the myth that feeling positive about one's body encourages unhealthy behaviours/obesity.
- * To expose pupils to a range of normal bodies in an appropriate way.
- * In doing so, to undo some of the conceptions of 'normal' they may have internalised from social media and pornography.
- * To give pupils techniques they can use to improve their own body image and confidence.
- * In doing so to reduce body image-based bullying.
- * To encourage pupils to use their social media in a way that enhances their body image and self-esteem.

BODY IMAGE: DARRELL

Darrell used to be very physically active – sport played a big part in his life until he injured his knee.

Whilst recovering from his knee injury he gained a lot of weight, which left him feeling too self-conscious to exercise.

His insecurities also had a profound impact on him socially – he avoided dating and socialising – so his lack of body confidence was having a significant impact on the quality of his life.



INTRODUCING VIDEO 1

Explain body image is often seen as a 'girly' issue, but we all have a body and therefore it is universal.

STATS:

90% of teenagers of all genders are unhappy with their body.

45% of men will go through a period of muscle building obsession at some point in their lives.

56% of 8-18 year old boys struggle to talk about their body image issues.

Discussion point – Why do the class think male body image issues are less known and talked about?

VIDEO 1: DISCUSSION POINTS

* How does Darrell's story challenge the commonly held belief that hating your body motivates you to 'get in shape'?

* **Research by Girlguiding shows 52% 12-14 year old girls avoid everyday school activities because they don't like how they look. What activities do the class think they might avoid? (sport/PE, performance/presenting, participating in class).**

* Lots of people think the body positivity movement promotes an 'unhealthy lifestyle' by encouraging people to love themselves the way they are – yet research actually shows people who accept their bodies make healthier choices because they have the confidence to exercise and aren't caught in a yo-yo dieting cycle.

* **Can you tell how healthy someone is by looking? Actually, the evidence would say 'no' – health is a lifestyle, not a look and humans are meant to be diverse in shape and size.**

* The link between obesity and health issues actually has a third component: an unhealthy lifestyle. It is a lack of physical activity and eating a poor diet which in fact causes disease. If someone is overweight but has a healthy lifestyle they don't have an increased chance of developing illness.

BODY IMAGE: DARRELL

VIDEO 2: DISCUSSION POINTS



- * **Did the nudity provoke a reaction from pupils (e.g. shock/laughter)? If so, discuss why this was?**
- * What is the British attitude to nudity? Nudity is everywhere in advertising and online and yet we can be very prudish about it – why is this?
- * **Where do we usually see naked or semi-naked people? (social media, advertising, porn).**
- * What DON'T you tend to see on these platforms? (scars, stretch marks, love handles, skin conditions such as vitiligo, real breasts, disabilities, a range of bodies).
- * **How does this perpetuate unrealistic ideals?**
- * Dr Keon's research shows spending time around a range of normal, naked bodies improves body image, why do you think this is?

TAKEAWAYS



- * **What does Naked Beach teach us about our own lives? (The wallpaper of our world shows unrealistic bodies which in turn impacts our participation in activities which would improve our health and happiness).**
- * How can we change this?
- * **Using your power as a social media consumer: social media gives us the privilege to choose who is in our online wallpaper. Naked Beach shows if we pick people who make us feel positive it will improve our body image.**
- * Diversity is also important – humans aren't the same so it's important we are exposed to a range of shapes, sizes, colours and abilities.

BODY IMAGE: JOLIE

Jolie has a skin condition called vitiligo. Vitiligo causes white patches to appear on the skin, due to a lack of melanin. It affects around 1% of people in the UK. The condition has worsened over time and has left her face, torso and her ears covered in white patches. Jolie's issue with her skin has really begun to knock her confidence, and she always wears layers of clothing to cover herself up. She never takes her kids swimming because she is too embarrassed be seen in a swimming costume.



VIDEO 1: DISCUSSION POINTS

*** Pupils probably did not notice that Jolie has vitiligo, it is not very noticeable. The things we think of as 'flaws' often appear much more noticeable to us than they are in reality.**

*** This is because of a psychological tendency human beings have known as 'compartmentalisation': when we look in the mirror we divide our bodies into small parts and 'zoom in' on the elements of our bodies we like the least. Over time, our least favourite parts become magnified in our heads.**

*** When other people look at us, they do not compartmentalise. We tend to focus on other people's faces and take in their body as a whole – noticing only approximate shape and size.**

BODY IMAGE: JOLIE

VIDEO 2: DISCUSSION POINTS



*** Did the nudity provoke a reaction from pupils (e.g. shock/laughter)? If so, discuss why this was?**

*** What is the British attitude to nudity? Nudity is everywhere in advertising and online and yet we can be very prudish about it – why?**

*** Ayesha said to Jolie ‘in order to feel good about yourself you have to take risks’ – discuss with pupils how ‘confidence’ is just practising something until it doesn’t become scary any more and how this also works in reverse: avoiding activities encourages a lack of confidence.**

*** Where do we usually see naked or semi-naked people? (social media, advertising, porn). What DON’T you tend to see on these platforms? (scars, stretch marks, love handles, skin conditions such as vitiligo, real breasts, disabilities, a range of bodies). How does this perpetuate unrealistic ideals?**

*** Dr Keon’s research shows spending time around a range of normal, naked bodies improves body image – why do you think this is?**

TAKEAWAYS

*** Five minute flash: Dr Keon’s research showed most people cannot sustain a high level of anxiety about an awkward situation for more than about 90 seconds: after that, our brains start to acclimatise. What might the pupils challenge themselves to try if they knew after 90 seconds it wouldn’t feel weird any more?**

*** What does Naked Beach teach us about our own lives? (The wallpaper of our world shows unrealistic bodies which in turn impacts our participation in activities which would improve our health and happiness).**

*** How can we change this?**

*** Using your power as a social media consumer: social media gives us the privilege to choose who is in our online wallpaper. Naked Beach shows if we pick people who make us feel positive it will improve our body image.**

*** Diversity is also important – humans aren’t the same so it’s important we are exposed to a range of shapes, sizes, colours and abilities.**

BODY IMAGE: THE HOSTS

