

Dove Self Esteem Project Body Confidence Workshops: Summary of Research Findings

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BACKGROUND

BODY IMAGE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Body image refers to how an individual thinks, feels, and behaves in relation to their body and appearance. Body image has become one of the leading concerns for young people in the United Kingdom. For many adolescents, debilitating levels of poor body image are now considered 'normative' and research shows that body image concerns contribute to a range of negative impacts on young people's physical and mental health, the way they perform at school, and their relationships with other people.

For instance, poor body image contributes to many health-compromising behaviours among young people, including smoking, disordered eating, self-harm and the avoidance of exercise; and is also associated with poor self-esteem, anxiety and depression. Dieting and eating disturbances commonly associated with poor body image can have a detrimental effect on cognitive tasks frequently performed in the school setting. In particular, dieting and restrictive eating are associated with poor attention-span and memory difficulties. Students with lower grades are more likely to report that body image concerns interfere with their academic performance. One study found that 31% of UK teenagers avoid classroom debate and 20% absent themselves from school when they lack confidence about their appearance. The increasingly high prevalence of both the physical and psychological health challenges associated with poor body image has become a major public health concern making research in this area very important.

In response to these concerns, the Dove Self Esteem Project was founded in 2004 to ensure the next generation of women grow up to be happy and content, free from misconstrued beauty stereotypes and the burden of self-doubt. It delivers self-esteem and body confidence education to children (both girls and boys) aged 8-16 years through lessons in schools and workshops for youth groups. It also provides information and activities for parents online. So far, Dove has reached over 15 million young people with their self-esteem educational materials since 2004.

WHY DID WE NEED TO DO THIS RESEARCH?

Research has shown that there are six core factors that have a strong impact on body image among young people: friends, family and relationships; teasing and bullying; talking about appearance; media and celebrity culture; competing and comparing looks; and respecting and looking after our bodies. The Dove Self Esteem Project, in collaboration with world leading experts in body confidence from the Centre for Appearance Research at the University of the West of England and La Trobe University, have developed a series of new world-leading healthy body image workshops which address each of these core topic areas. By using the most effective evidence-based techniques for improving body image in the classroom, it is envisaged that these materials will arm young people with the right information and tools to ensure they grow up to be body confident.

The Dove Self Esteem Project has teamed up with body image researchers at the Centre for Appearance Research in order to evaluate their new 5-session body confidence workshops for schools.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A research team comprised of body image experts from the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) at the University of the West of England conducted a research study to evaluate the Dove Self Esteem Project's new Confident Me 5-session Workshop Series for girls and boys aged 11-14 in six secondary schools in England. Your school was one of the schools that kindly agreed to take part in this research project.

We used a longitudinal research design in which we asked students to complete a number of questionnaires over a period of time to allow us to accurately study the impact of this new body image resource on body image and related outcomes. By comparing the change in students' responses on the questionnaires between students who did and did not take part in the workshops, we were able to test the immediate short term and the longer term impact that the workshops had.

Overall, the questionnaires were given to 1495 girls and boys in Year 7 and Year 8 across six schools between September 2014 and July 2015. We examined students in Year 7 and Year 8 because we know from previous research that this is an age where body image interventions have been found to be most effective. This is likely due to this being a crucial transitional phase for young people, where body image concerns and appearance ideals have yet to become fixed, making these attitudes more susceptible to change.

In evaluating the impact of the Dove Self Esteem Project 5-session workshops, not only did we measure how body image changed or stayed the same among students, but we also measured a number of associated outcomes, such as overall self-esteem, perceptions of teasing about appearance, internalisation of appearance ideals, and the extent they compare the way they look to others around them. The results of the research are summarised in this report, with a particular focus on the results from students in your school.

RESULTS SUMMARY

The results presented below summarise the overall research findings. These findings were consistent across all schools; therefore you can be confident that the results reported here are reflective of the impact that the body image workshop had at Newent Community School.

For girls

- Participation in the Dove Self Esteem Project Body Confidence Workshops resulted in significant improvements in body image for girls one week following the workshop, and this was maintained at 8-10 weeks and 6 months after the workshops were completed.
- Girls that took part in the workshops reported greater self-esteem 8-10 weeks after the workshops were completed, although this was not maintained at 6-month follow-up.
- In addition, the workshops produced reductions in the frequency of appearance related teasing among girls 8-10 weeks and 6 months after the workshops were completed.

For boys

- Boys who received the workshops reported greater self-esteem than those who did not at 8-10 weeks after the workshops were completed. However, this was not maintained 6 months following the workshops.
- Boys who received the Workshops reported experiencing a greater frequency of teasing than those who did not receive the Workshops one week following the workshops. However, this was not evident at 8-10 week or 6 month follow-up, and there were no differences in boys with respect to feeling upset due to appearance-related teasing at any time-point.

Overall feedback

- Students and teachers reported that they liked and valued the key messages of the Dove Confident Me 5-part Workshops for Body Confidence.
- Specifically, 32% of boys and 40% of girls who took part in the workshops thought they were 'very helpful', and 51% of boys and 65% of girls felt they were an important lesson to take part in.
- Students frequently reported liking the videos, the role play activities and being able to talk freely about their feelings and opinions on the topic of body confidence.
- Teachers were very positive about the resources provided and felt well supported to deliver the workshops. However, teachers had some concerns about the length of each workshop, and made suggestions on how they could be streamlined or adapted to suit different ability levels within a year group.
- Workshop 4 'Banish Body Talk' was the only workshop that both teachers and students felt needed to be improved in the future, as the key messages were not clear from the resources provided.
- This feedback has since informed further development of the Dove Self Esteem Project Body Confidence Workshops.

These results are promising and indicate the workshops are helpful in promoting body confidence among young people.

RESULTS FOR NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The findings presented in this section are for students at Newent Community School specifically.

A total of 140 students from Newent Community School took part in this study, including:

- 71 Year 7 boys (mean age 11.2 years)
- 69 Year 7 girls (mean age 11.3 years)

For each outcome covered in this section, there are two pieces of information presented:

1) Comparisons between Newent students and students from other schools before the workshops:

The responses received from Newent students *prior to the workshops taking place* ('pre-workshops') were compared to the responses from students at the other three schools whose Year 7 students took part in the study 'pre-workshops'. This provides you with information on where your students stood on these issues prior to receiving the workshops, in comparison to other schools in England.

2) The impact of the workshops on Newent students:

In order to show the impact of taking part in the Workshops on Newent students, responses are provided at 4 time points for your school:

- 'Pre-workshop' scores – these responses were collected during the questionnaires completed approximately one week prior to the students receiving the workshops
- 'Post-workshop' scores – these responses were collected during the questionnaires completed up to one week after they received the workshops.
- '8-10 week' and '6-month' follow-up scores – these responses were collected during the questionnaires completed 8-10 weeks and 6-months following the workshops, which show the impact of the workshops over time.

The average scores for boys and girls for a number of body image related outcomes are displayed in the graphs, indicating the impact the workshops had in your Year 7 students.

SELF ESTEEM AT NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Self-esteem refers to an individual's overall judgment of their own self-worth and is closely associated with body image. In the questionnaire, self-esteem was measured by asking students to state whether they agreed or disagreed with 6 statements regarding self-esteem on a scale from 1 to 4. Example statements include 'On the whole, I am happy with myself' and 'At times, I think I am no good at all'. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem, with a maximum score of 4.

Results

- 1) Self-esteem scores among Year 7 girls at Newent before the workshops were **significantly higher** than the self-esteem scores of Year 7 girls from other schools that took part in the research. There were no differences in the self-esteem scores among Year 7 boys at Newent before the workshops compared to Year 7 boys from the other schools that took part in this research.
- 2) The graph below shows self-esteem scores at Newent before, one week after, 8-10 weeks, and 6 months following the workshops. As can be seen from the graph, self-esteem appeared to increase after the workshops at Newent. Statistical analyses of all the schools that took part showed that this increase in self-esteem was significant for boys and girls at 8-10 week follow up.

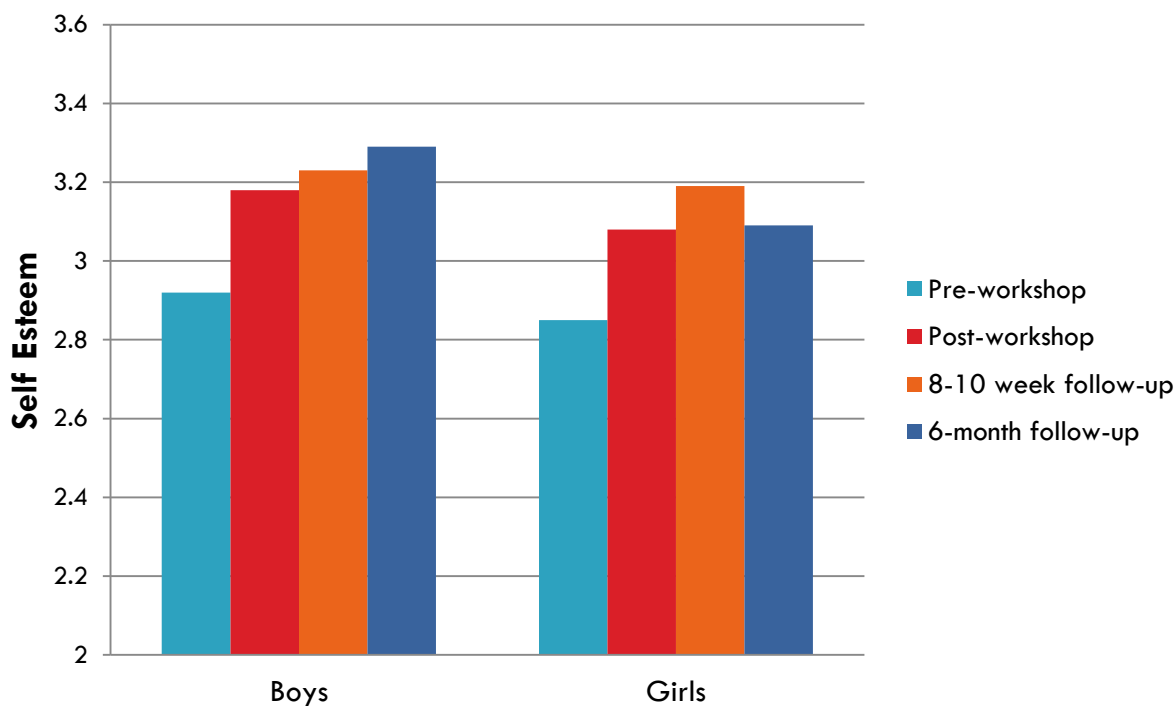


Figure 1. Average self-esteem scores at Newent before and after the workshops.

BODY ESTEEM AT NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Body esteem is a measure of global body image. Body esteem was measured by asking students to respond to items on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Example items included “I like what I look like in pictures” and “I’m satisfied with how I look”. Higher scores reflect more positive body esteem, with a maximum score of 5.

Results

- 1) Body esteem scores of girls at Newent were **significantly higher** before the workshops than the body esteem scores of girls from other schools that took part in this research. Body esteem scores among Newent boys were not significantly different to the body esteem scores of boys from other schools that took part in this research.
- 2) The graph below shows body esteem scores at Newent before, one week after, 8-10 weeks after, and 6 months following the workshops. As can be seen from the graph, body esteem appeared to improve among students after receiving the workshops. Statistical analyses of all the schools that took part showed that this improvement in body esteem is significant in girls at post-workshop and maintained at 8-10 week and 6 month follow-up.

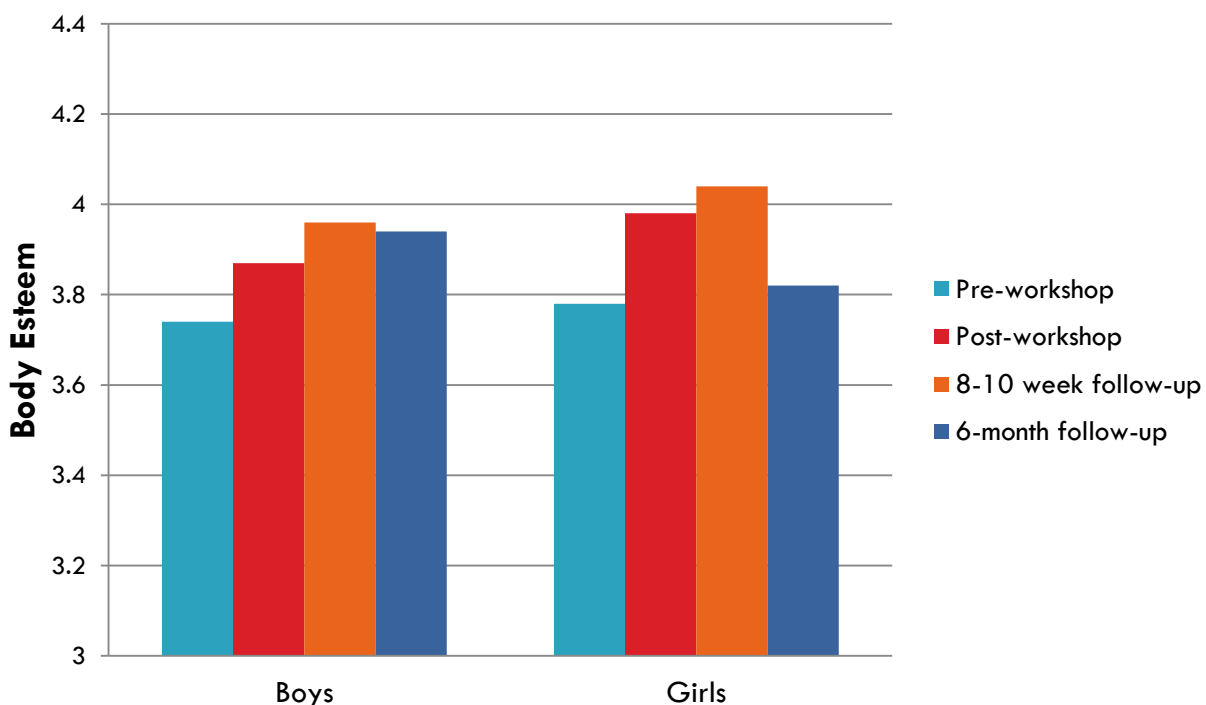


Figure 2. Average body esteem scores at Newent before and after the workshops.

INTERNALISATION OF APPEARANCE IDEALS AT NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Internalisation of appearance ideals refers to the extent to which individuals ‘buy into’ or accept culturally defined ideas of appearance. Internalising media messages of what constitutes the ‘ideal look’ has consistently been shown to have a negative impact on girls’ and boys’ body image. Internalisation of appearance ideals was measured using a 9-item measure which asked students if they compare themselves to, or wished to be like, people they see in the media (‘I compare my body to the bodies of people who appear in magazines’, for example), on a 5-point scale. . Higher scores reflect a higher desire to look like the ‘ideal person’, with a maximum score of 5.

Results

- 1) Internalisation scores among Newent girls were not significantly different to the internalisation scores of girls from other schools that took part in this research. However, for boys, internalisation scores were **significantly lower** before the workshops than the Year 7 boys from the other schools that took part in this research.
- 2) The graph below shows internalisation scores at Newent before, immediately after, 8-10 weeks and 6 months following the workshops. As can be seen from the graph, internalisation appeared to decrease after the workshops at Newent. Statistical analyses of all the schools that took part showed that this reduction in internalisation is not significant.

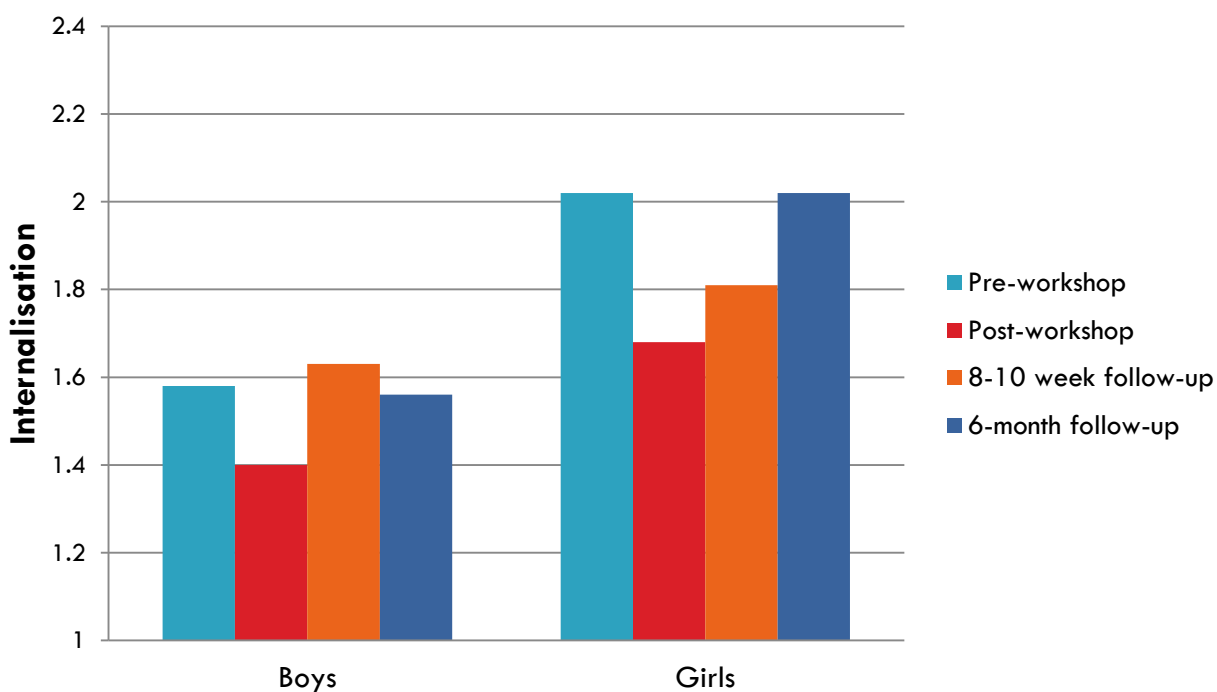


Figure 3. Average internalisation scores at Newent before and after the workshops.

APPEARANCE COMPARISONS AT NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Appearance comparisons refer to the extent someone compares their appearance to the appearance of others. Making appearance-related social comparisons has consistently been shown to have a negative image on girls and boys body image. Appearance comparisons was measured using a 12-item scale asking students how often they compared various parts of their bodies to celebrities, people their age, and their parents ('How often do you compare your weight to other people your age', for example), on a 5-point scale. Higher scores indicate a higher frequency of making appearance-based social comparisons, with a maximum score of 5.

Results

- 1) Appearance comparison scores among Newent students were not significantly different to the appearance comparison scores of students from other schools that took part in this research.
- 2) The graph below shows comparison scores at Newent before, one week after, 8-10 weeks and 6 months following the workshops. As can be seen from the graph, appearance-related social comparison appeared to decrease after the workshops at Newent. Statistical analyses of all the schools that took part showed that this reduction in comparison is not significant.

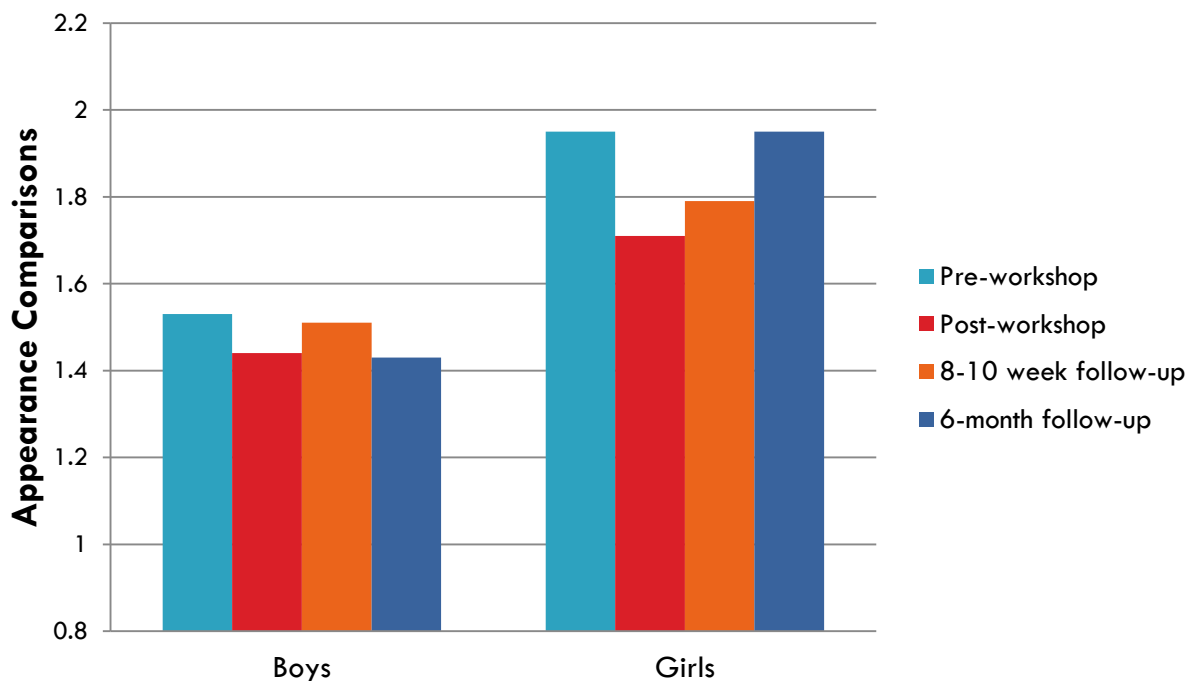


Figure 4. Average appearance comparison scores at Newent before and after the workshops

TEASING ABOUT APPEARANCE AT NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL

We asked students' two types of questions related to appearance based teasing.

- 1) The *frequency* at which students felt they were teased about the way they look. This was measured using 2 items; 'How often have you been teased about the way you look?' and 'How often have you been teased about your weight or body shape?' Responses were given on a 1-5 scale, where 1=never and 5=always.
- 2) How *upset* they have felt due to appearance related teasing. This was measured using 2 items, which were answered only by the students that had reported some level of teasing; 'How UPSET were you by this teasing about the way you look?' and 'How UPSET were you by this teasing about your body weight/shape?' Responses were given on a 1-5 scale, 1=not upset and 5=very upset.

Results

- 1) There were no significant differences in the average frequency or effect of teasing about appearance among Newent students in comparison to students of the same age and gender in other schools. Rather than providing average scores, we decided that to aid interpretation of your schools results, it was more helpful to provide frequencies of responses to the teasing questions. The tables below show the frequencies of scores for Newent Community School. These results are taken from the 'pre-workshop' questionnaire.

Table 1 - Frequency of responses to the question 'How often have you been teased about the way you look?'

	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Always (%)
Boys	34 (48)	30 (42)	2 (3)	3 (4)	2 (3)
Girls	27 (39)	35 (51)	3 (4)	4 (6)	0

Table 1 - Frequency of responses to the question 'How upset were you by this teasing?' from the 37 boys and 42 girls who have experienced teasing about their appearance at Newent Community School.

	Not at all upset (%)	Not very upset (%)	A little upset (%)	Upset/very upset (%)
Boys	12 (32)	12 (32)	5 (13.5)	8 (21.5)
Girls	2 (5)	17 (40.5)	11 (26)	12 (28.5)

NEGATIVE MOOD AT NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Research shows that positive and negative mood is closely associated with body image. We therefore asked students to rate how often they had felt certain emotions over the past two weeks (for example, sad, scared and angry). Students responded on a 5-point scale from 1 = not at all to 5 = very much. Higher scores reflect more frequent negative mood, with a maximum score of 5.

Results

- 1) There were no significant differences in the average negative mood scores of Newent students in comparison to students of the same age and gender in other schools.
- 2) The graph below shows negative mood scores at Newent before, one week after, 8-10 weeks and 6 months following the workshops. As can be seen from the graph, negative mood appeared to decrease for girls following the workshops at Newent. Statistical analyses of all the schools that took part showed that this short term immediate reduction in negative mood is not significant.

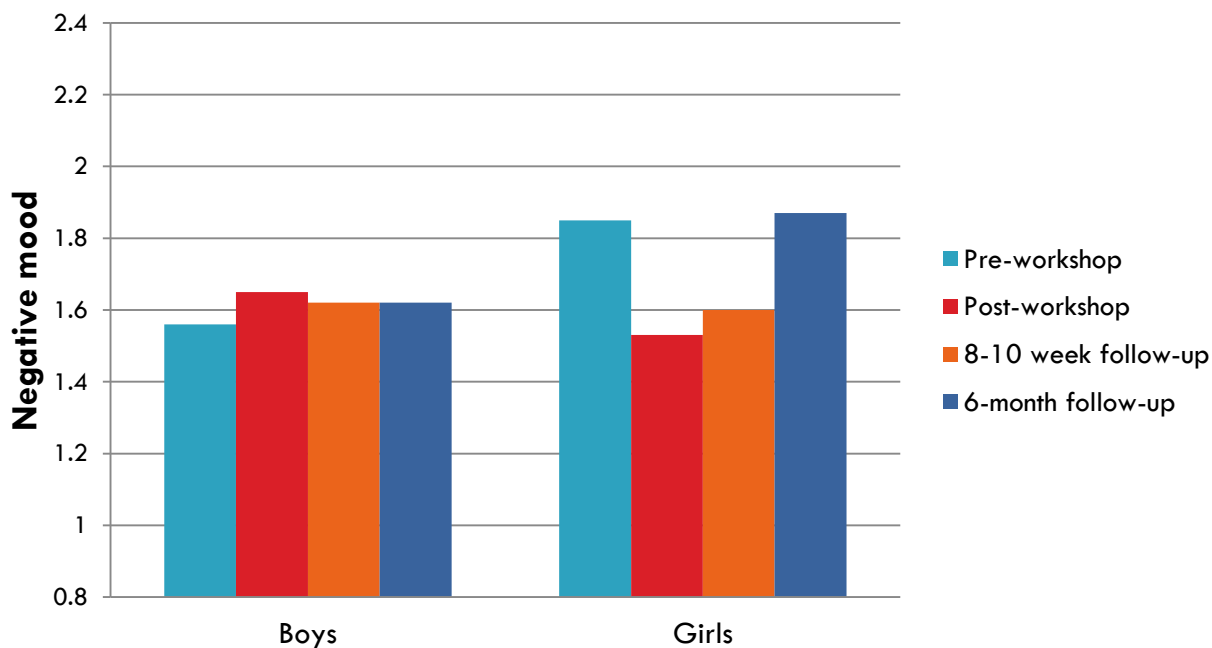


Figure 5. Average negative mood scores at Newent before and after the Workshops.

CONCLUSIONS & THANK YOU

The findings of this study have given us a valuable insight into young people's body image, and, more importantly, have provided us with a wealth of knowledge to allow us to continue to improve our body image workshops for schools. We are delighted with the impact these workshops have shown in your students, and would highly recommend you continue to utilise the Dove Self Esteem Project 5-session body confidence workshops for Schools at Newent Community School.

The Dove Self Esteem Body Confidence workshops for schools will be available for free download from dove.selfesteem.com from September 2015 onwards.

NEWENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL HAS HELPED TO IMPROVE BODY IMAGE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

The study results and the feedback and recommendations from all students and teachers who took part in the research, including those at Newent Community School, were gratefully received and carefully considered by the research team and the Dove Self Esteem Project. Adjustments to the workshops were made based upon this feedback at the conclusion of the study, and the optimised version of the workshops will shortly be available to download for free in more than 20 countries around the world from selfesteem.dove.com. As a result, Newent Community School's participation in this research project has made a substantial and positive contribution to fostering healthy body image among young people across the globe.

We would like to sincerely thank the students, parents and teachers at Newent Community School for taking part in this research and for working with the staff at the Centre for Appearance Research. We hope that we can continue to work with Newent Community School in the future. If you have any further feedback about the workshops or your experience of taking part in this research project, we'd love to hear from you.

Thank you from the team at the Centre for Appearance Research & the Dove Self Esteem Project!



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