THE BODY PROJECT
Empowering Generations

# The Body Project for Males

# Participant Workbook

**Your Facilitator is:**

This workbook contains the information that you need to complete the bridging exercises between sessions.

There are also some blank pages at the end for you to make notes as we go through if you want to as we know that there will be lots of interesting discussions and it may feel like a lot to remember.

You are free to take pictures of the group work in session 1 but please be mindful to keep in line with the group agreement ☺

We would love to be able to use your work and share your ideas in sessions with others (obviously we won't identify you) – if you are happy for us to do this, please send a copy of your workbook to: Thebodyproject@glos.ac.uk

1. **Session One, Exercise #1: Letter to a Younger Man**

Please write a letter to a younger man who is struggling with body image concerns. Write about the costs associated with pursuing the appearance ideal. Think of as many costs as you can.

If writing a letter isn't for you, instead of writing a letter, you may want to make a reel or story on social media, or a short video that you can share with us, or you can also do it as a voice note if that helps. Another option could be to use artwork to do this, and we can talk about it next week.

Feel free to work with a friend or family member in generating ideas or use any of the ones we discussed in the group. Please bring your work to our next meeting so we can discuss your responses and feelings about this assignment.

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**2. Session One, Exercise #2: Mirror Exercise Form**

Please stand in front of a mirror and look at yourself and write down your positive qualities. Please list as many as you can, we'd love to see 15! This includes physical, emotional, intellectual, and social qualities.

For instance, you may like the shape of your arms, the strength of your legs, your hair, the sound of your laugh, or the fact that you are a good friend. Please make sure to include at least some physical attributes on your list. You can think about what your friends or family would say about you.

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**15**_____

**3. Session Two, Exercise #3: Community Interviews**

Please talk to three people and ask them to discuss the main costs of pursuing the appearance ideal, these can be family members, friends, someone on a sports team or someone you know through school.

Please take notes as you're talking to them, jotting down important points and key takeaways from your discussion. If it's easier, and you have permission, you can record the sessions and then you can tell us the key things next week.

**Interview #1:**

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**Interview #2:**

**Interview #3:**

**4. Session Two, Exercise #4: TOP 10 Activism List**

Please generate a top 10 list of things boys and men can do to resist the appearance ideal. What can you avoid, say, do, or learn to battle this appearance ideal?

We discussed some examples in session such as:

- Invite friends to join you in un-following influencers and 'healthy lifestyle' magazines that promote the appearance ideal.
- Post a comment on social media complimenting a positive post you see.
- Make a pact with friends to stop pro-appearance-ideal talk for a week (or more).
- Identify a younger friend or relative and commit to helping her fight the appearance ideal as they grow up.
- Cover all of the mirrors at home for a week so that other men can be freed from the pressure of looking perfect every day.
- Put post-it notes on mirrors in men's bathrooms saying things like 'appreciate your body' or 'your body doesn't define your worth'.
- Make a social media post that challenges the appearance ideal and share it with family and friends.
- Put post-it notes that say, "You're great the way you are" into men's fitness books at a library or book shop.
- Put up an "accept your body" poster in the men's bathrooms at school.

You could use these suggestions, but we would also like to see if you can think of others!

Please write your top 10 list down and bring it to the next group.

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## 5. Session Three, Exercise #5: Behavioural Exercise Form

We would like to challenge each of you to do two things that you currently do not do because of body image concerns to increase your confidence. For example, wearing shorts in the summer, going to the pool in a swimsuit, exercising in public, going out without make-up on, or posting unedited photos on social media.

We would like each of you to do two behavioural challenges next week (or the same one twice) and then let us know how it turned out during the next session.

The behaviours I plan to change are:

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To do this, I will:

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I will do these new behaviours by (date): _____

I will know I've succeeded in changing these behaviours when I:

_____

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Completing these new behaviours is important to me because:

**6. Session Three, Exercise #6: Body Activism Form**

The second exercise from last session (number 4) asked you to list 10 things that we could do to resist the appearance-ideal – what you can avoid, say, do, or learn to combat this social pressure. This might be referred to as "body activism."

Please choose two things from your list to do during the next week. You may want to write your body activism goal on this sheet to remind yourself of it.

This week I will:

1_____

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2_____

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## 7. Session Three, Exercise #7: Letter to a Younger Self

Please write another letter, this time to a younger version of yourself (approx. two pages), on how to avoid developing body image concerns. Use any of the information you have learned in these session, and any additional ways you may think of on your own. The goal is to help the younger version of you understand the different things they can do, say, avoid, or learn that will help him develop or maintain a positive body image.

## 8. Session Four, Exit Exercise #8: Self-Affirmation Exercise Form

Part of challenging body-related concerns involves talking about our bodies in a positive, rather than negative, way. We discussed some examples of this in the group, for instance, making a pledge to end complaints about your body or accepting compliments rather than objecting to them. Please choose three ideas that we talked about, or one of your own, to practice over the next week.

I pledge to myself that I will:

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9. **Please use these pages to make any notes or doodles that may help through the sessions!**