

Dr Kristy
GOODWIN

*Selfies, Social Media, Screens
& Self-Esteem*



**ONLINE
MASTERCLASS SUMMARY**









Selfies, Social Media, Screens & Self-Esteem

Online Masterclass Summary by Dr Kristy Goodwin



Kids are growing up in a digital culture where selfies and social media are common place. What’s the impact on their body image and subsequent self-esteem? This online masterclass arms parents and educators with critical information and practical strategies to help kids and teens develop healthy body images and bolster their self-esteem.

OVERVIEW

-  Body Image
-  Developing digital brain
-  Impact of social media & screens
-  Developing healthy habits

1. BODY IMAGE

Body image refers to the way people think and feel about their physical appearance. It encompasses ideas about a person’s size and shape, skin colour, birthmarks, scars, facial features.

Today’s kids and teens express dissatisfaction with their bodies and this impacts their self-esteem. Young people who have body image concerns may feel worried, distressed and unhappy about their appearance, weight or shape. They may be concerned about being too large, too small, too dark, too fair, not curvy enough, or not muscular enough.

This type of body dissatisfaction can cause a great deal of distress and result in severe psychological and physical issues. As a result, body dissatisfaction has been identified as a serious public health issue and is even more pronounced in the digital world (in the age of Snap Chat Dysmorphia, selfies and photo filters).

WHAT SHAPES BODY IMAGE?

PARENTS, PEERS AND MEDIA (TV SHOWS, MUSIC VIDEOS, MOVIES, SOCIAL MEDIA).

WHEN DO KIDS FORM THEIR BODY IMAGE?

COMMON SENSE'S 2015¹ REPORT ON BODY-IMAGE STUDIES, CHILDREN, TEENS, MEDIA, AND BODY IMAGE, FOUND THAT MORE THAN **HALF OF GIRLS** AND APPROXIMATELY **ONE-THIRD OF BOYS AGE 6-8** INDICATED THEIR IDEAL BODY WEIGHT IS THINNER THAN THEIR CURRENT WEIGHT.



THE STUDY ALSO FOUND THAT MANY CHILDREN HAVE FORMED AN IDEAL BODY IMAGE BY 8 YEARS OF AGE.



THE STUDY ALSO FOUND:

BY AGE 6, CHILDREN ARE AWARE OF DIETING AND MAY HAVE TRIED IT; 26 PERCENT OF 5-YEAR-OLDS RECOMMEND DIETING AS A SOLUTION FOR A PERSON WHO HAS GAINED WEIGHT;



5 TO 8 YEAR OLDS WHOSE MUMS EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH THEIR OWN BODIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE DISSATISFIED THEMSELVES;

BY THE TIME KIDS REACH **AGE 7**, ONE IN FOUR HAS ENGAGED IN SOME KIND OF DIETING BEHAVIOR; AND, BETWEEN 1999 AND 2006, HOSPITALIZATIONS FOR EATING DISORDERS AMONG CHILDREN BELOW THE **AGE OF 12** SPIKED **112 PERCENT**.





DID YOU KNOW...

Preschoolers often express awareness about body image issues. However, their educators and parents may miss opportunities to promote positive body image formation because there's a misunderstanding that they're too young to have these concerns.

Children as young as 5 years of age express dissatisfaction with their body.



BOYS HAVE ISSUES WITH BODY IMAGE TOO.

Male toy action figures exceed even that of the biggest bodybuilders.

87% of female TV characters aged 10 to 17 are below average in weight.

The media bombards kids and teens with unrealistic, sexualised, and stereotypical images and messages about bodies.



41% of teen girls admit they use social media to "make themselves look cooler." Research shows that girls as young as five years old who are exposed to music videos or women's magazines are much more likely to be aware of dieting practices and cultural pressures to be thin².

Concerns about personal appearance seem to emerge around the age of six or seven years old.



KEY MESSAGE- Body image forms early and lasts a life time.

2. DEVELOPING DIGITAL BRAIN

70% of a child's brain development can be attributed to experience and **30% GENES**

So your child's or teen's digital experiences have a profound impact on their well-being and cognitive development. This is why we need to think carefully about their social media habits and media exposure.

Tween and teen years are a superstorm for body image. The combined weight of rapid brain development, vulnerability, the need for external validation, a move from the family unit and seeking peer relationships and a desire to compare themselves means young people can be significantly impacted by technology.

MIRROR NEURONS mean young people are hard-wired to imitate. This is a concern if they're **consuming** media that portrays unrealistic or unhealthy body images.

¹ <https://www.common sense media.org/research/children-teens-media-and-body-image>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2792687/>



In teen brains their **STRIATUM** releases **DOPAMINE** (the feel-good neurotransmitter) and this means teens are super-sensitive to different rewards (especially likes and comments). This is why teens can become 'attached' to social media.

KEY MESSAGE- The developing brain is impacted by experiences.

3. IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND SCREENS

DID YOU KNOW...

// The average female aged between **16 AND 25 YEARS OLD** spends over five hours a week taking and editing selfies.

// Women take an average of seven shots to get one image, according to the poll; Kim Kardashian said it takes about 15 to 20.

// If all your child sees are unrealistic body types they'll come to believe they're the ideal.

// Teens suffer from 'compare and despair' when using social media

// 42% of surgeons from the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons found that were asked to perform procedures for improved selfies and pictures on social media platforms (selfie dysmorphia)

// Kids are using beautifying filters such as Facetune and RetouchMe

Extreme body portrayals in media in the form of dolls and action figures are shaping young children's concept image of an ideal body. And female characters in family films, on prime-time TV, and on kids' TV shows are nearly twice as likely to have an uncharacteristically small waist as their male counterparts.













In the past, the media (magazines and advertising) were criticised for upholding dangerously unrealistic standards of success and beauty. Models wearing Size 0 clothing were idealised, even though it was generally acknowledged that they were retouched, and photoshopped.

However, today, with the advent of social media, these impossible standards are not only being not perpetuated by celebrities and models but also by classmates and friends. Social media allows teens to curate their lives, and the resulting social media feeds are highly edited, filtered highlight reels. These curated and edited images are causing distress for many kids.

KEY MESSAGE- Developing brain is vulnerable to media's impact on body image.

4. DEVELOPING HEALTHY HABITS

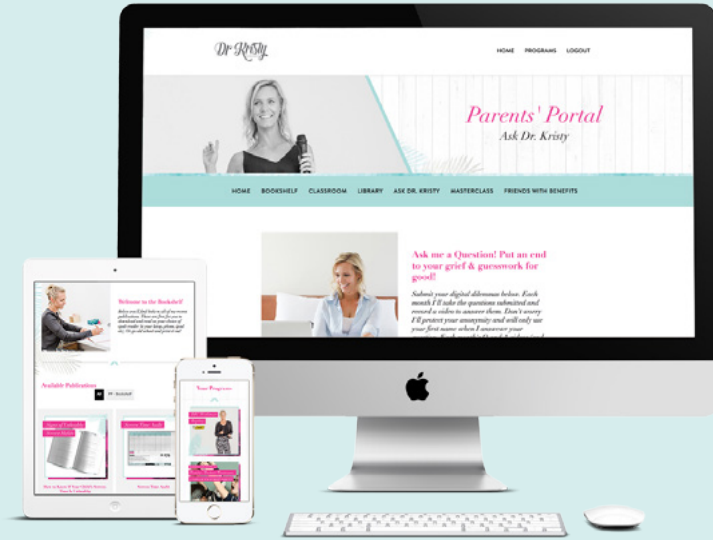
Tips for developing healthy tech habits to promote healthy body image

-  Be the pilot of the digital plane- teach kids and teens how to interpret media and use social media.
-  Talk early and often about the way characters and people are depicted in the media. Help them to appreciate all types of people.
-  Teach kids critical literacy skills. Ask how much styling or photoshopping has been involved? What's the purpose of the image- is it for advertising?
-  Emphasise your child's and teen's health not weight.
-  Talk about health and eating healthy foods as opposed to physical appearance and physiques.
-  Focus on what their bodies can do as opposed to their appearance.
-  Find good examples- discuss positive and healthy role models in the media. Celebrate people who achieve things based on their actions rather than their physical appearance.
-  Be a positive model- avoid talking about diets or body types in front of your children.
-  Be aware of vulnerable kids. Kids with pre-existing mental health issues such as anxiety or depression may be more at risk of developing unhealthy body images and poor self-esteem.
-  Build self-esteem via real 'face time'- get kids and teens involved in something that they're interested in away from technology. It may involve sports, music or volunteering. It helps them to focus on what they can do instead of how they look.
-  Avoid using technology as a punishment tool- as kids will be reluctant to share or talk about unhealthy body images with you, if there's a perceived threat that you'll confiscate devices.
-  Discourage devices @ night- kids' and teens' amygdala is on at night (the emotional part of their brain) and their logical, prefrontal cortex switches off. So at night time, they're much more susceptible to heightened emotional states when scrolling through social media.

KEY MESSAGE- Assume an active role.



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GOODWIN



Don't forget to submit your digital dilemmas via the portal

SWITCHED ON,
Parents'
PORTAL

FIND OUT MORE

Get Social with Dr Kristy



WEBSITE

FACEBOOK

INSTAGRAM

About Dr Kristy

Dr Kristy Goodwin is one of Australia's leading digital health, wellbeing and productivity experts (and mum who also deals with her kids' techno-tantrums!) She's the author of Raising Your Child in a Digital World, a speaker, media commentator and digital wellbeing researcher, who doesn't suggest that we ban the iPhone (digital abstinence isn't the solution). Kristy worked as an educator for fourteen years before becoming an academic and speaker. She has worked with clients including Apple, Westfield, Bank of Queensland, Nickelodeon Channel, the National Broadband Network, McDonalds, NSW Department of Education and Optus, she's spoken at national and international conferences, at schools, workplaces and medical conferences throughout Australia. Kristy's on a mission to empower people to tame their technology habits and not be a slave to the screen!

