

Body image for teenagers

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Hello and thank you for taking the time to listen. My name is Maaya Hori, and today I will be talking about body image for teenagers. Now remember the time when you were a teen. Did you ever feel insecure or unhappy about the way your body looked in the mirror? You may or may not, depending on the generation you were living in as a teen. As we live in a world full of unexpected dangers and biased thinking, lots of teenagers around the globe are stressing over many types of problems only young people go through, such as body image issues. In fact, over 53 % of girls in the US are insecure or unhappy with how their body looks. People need to start normalizing different kinds of body types and body shapes, so anyone can feel confident with the body that they were born in.

Living as a teen now can be very difficult. Not only do we go through teenage phases such as uncontrollable emotions and puberty, but we also have the pressure to fit into the beauty standards of society these days. This is not just for girls who want to be slim, skinny, and wear stylish clothes. Men and boys suffer from body insecurities as well. They, also pressurize themselves to look more muscular, stronger, and more attractive. Social media can greatly affect teenagers sometimes because of unrealistic and edited body features that can make teens expect more from themselves. Girls tend to start unhealthy habits to get the ‘perfect’ body; such as strict diets that leads to eating disorders and boys who want more muscles, start taking in unhealthy amount of protein that are only good for you if you eat the suggested amount. My friend from the US also had the same problem. Even though she looked perfect, she still considered herself obese, and there were times when she skipped lunch so she can lose more weight. I was starting to get worried for her, so I asked her,

“You look so perfect already. Why lose more weight?” She answered.

“Because I want to be skinny like the other girls. And, because my mom told

me I needed to lose weight.” At that moment, I was shocked. Why would any parent tell their child to be skinnier? It never occurred to me that an adult can be one of the reasons that teens feel insecure.

Recently, I discovered that one of my favorite childhood toys, which was the Barbie doll has changed since I last saw it at the toy section 7 or 8 years ago. Barbies were known to be always skinny and gorgeous and perfect. However, I recently went online and was surprised to find an article from the Times stating that Barbie dolls have come out in various body shapes such as curvy, tall, and petite. I thought it was important and clever for the company to educate children from a small age that any body type is okay. I hope that in the future, teens will be confident with their body and accept any type of body.

Teens need to accept the fact that nobody on this planet is perfect. Some people may seem perfect such as models. Ideal body shape, long and lean legs, perfect skin, flat stomach, skinny waist, yea, yea, yea. People need to start realizing that these body shapes are not easily achieved. People need to start appreciating the body that they were born in. People need to start accepting and normalizing different body types. Thank you for listening.