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# *Toolkit for the prevention of body-shaming*

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# Introduction

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This toolkit was produced as part of the “**Body Shining**” Erasmus+ project. It aims at offering youth workers art-based training tools to facilitate their work concerning body-shaming phenomena among young people from different cultural and social backgrounds.

This book consists of a collection of methodologies developed by all 5 partner organisations (ANIMUS, ATYPICAL, ELAN, MOH and SMOUTH). Each organisation developed and implemented 2 methodologies relating to the prevention of body-shaming phenomena in their own city. These workshops took place in Bari, Belfast, Larissa, Paris and Sofia with youth workers and youths participants either together or separately. Each organisation also implemented two methodologies, other than its own, developed by other partner organisations to check their function and potential in different settings.

The following collection of tools will hopefully inspire and assist youth workers to bring up and raise awareness about the act of body-shaming in order to prevent such phenomena.

Before presenting these tools, it is considered appropriate to understand some basic concepts related to the subject in question. For this reason, the following sections begin with a reference to the concept of prevention and its different forms and objectives, including some general principles that should guide a prevention’s intervention through non-formal education workshops. Continuing, the concept of shame is explained in order to understand exactly what this emotion is, where it comes from and how it can affect people. The theoretical framework of what body-shaming is and how it arises is explained in depth in the [IO1 book](#). After the brief theoretical overview, there are some instructions on how to use this toolkit, the templates of the suggested methodologies, as well as some short indicative videos with their implementation.

## What does prevention mean?

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General introduction to prevention interventions

To begin with, prevention is usually understood in three levels :

- **Primary prevention:** the term primary prevention consists of **intervening before the occurrence of an event** that causes unpleasant consequences, which means breaking the network of causal relationships surrounding that event by removing one or more links in the chain. Education and information play a vital role in this process.
- **Secondary prevention:** secondary prevention is the **early detection of a developing, but not clearly visible problem**, in such a way that early intervention makes the prognosis more favourable. Secondary prevention is considered to be working with 'high-risk' individuals or groups.

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- **Tertiary prevention:** tertiary prevention means **preventing relapse of a "disease"** or limiting the impact of symptoms. This level of prevention is usually closely linked to treatment.

Prevention's interventions can be made in different contexts, with different goals, using different methods and with different content. Their duration can also vary, but they usually have a beginning, a middle phase and an end. In each case, an intervention has:

1. clearly stated **objectives**;
2. defined **methodology**;
3. defined **theoretical framework**;
4. to **meet the characteristics and needs** of the target group.

Interventions in prevention are divided into:

- those that focus on individuals;
- and into group - community interventions.

The interventions focused on individuals aim at cultivating techniques in each person for better adaptation to the environment and do not aim at a change to the wider context. On the other hand, the second type of interventions –which is what we aim to do in the project - seeks to promote change in society.

Prevention interventions can also be divided into:

- universal (the intervention can target anybody in the general population);
- those who aim at risk and high risk groups (e.g. in the body-shaming context could be dancers, models etc.);
- and those who focus on individuals who are already experiencing difficulties (e.g. people who are already dealing with fat shaming).

These categories are not competitive or cancelling to each other, but they can complement each other.

The effects of prevention are not immediately visible, (like probably those of therapy), but they are possible and also expected. The interventions need to be sensitive to cultural diversity and promote the values of equality, social justice and human dignity. The goal is to positively influence the attitude and behaviour of the person or group we are targeting (either the people receiving negative evaluations about their body shape or the people that are prone to making these kinds of comments).

In IO2 we tried to focus on preventing body-shaming attitudes in the community. Depending on the organisation and the suggested methodologies, the level of prevention, the specific aim and the target group varied. Consequently, our work regarding body-shaming was mainly done at a level of diversity acceptance, and breaking down myths and beauty stereotypes. This work also concluded an approach to the issue of normative attitudes and gender performativity. In IO3 we will focus on body acceptance and cultivating self-esteem, which is also another aspect of prevention relating to body-shaming phenomena.

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# Guidelines for developing methods/tools for the prevention of body-shaming

Although some methodologies are already provided in this book, below you will find some general guidelines for youth workers who want to create from the beginning non-formal education methodologies.

General guidelines for creating a non-formal education methodology:

A methodology would ideally:

- have clear main objectives and sub-objectives;
- have a clear framework regarding the duration of its stages;
- take into account the characteristics of the target group at each stage of its design and implementation;
- give a clear picture of the resources - tools to be used;
- be feasible and achievable based on the available resources and the context;
- value group experiential process and synthesis of ideas;
- be an experimental process where there are no ready conclusions, and not resembling a lecture;
- create a climate of respect for every opinion and creative dialogue;
- promote free expression of ideas while creating at the same time a climate of safety and confidentiality
- not rely on the emergence of personal experiences – but neither to hinder/prevent such a narration if it comes up by the participants;
- encourage active participation - but make sure that there are alternative ways of participation in case of difficulties;
- allow time for feedback;
- use inclusive, non-discriminative and adapted to the target group language.

## References/ further reading on prevention:

Albee, G. W. (1996). Revolutions and counterrevolutions in prevention.

Coie, J. D., Watt, N. F., West, S. G., Hawkins, J. D., Asarnow, J. R., Markman, H. J., Ramey, S. L., Shure, M. B., & Long, B. (1993). The science of prevention: A conceptual framework and some directions for a national research program. *American Psychologist*, 48(10), 1013–1022. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.48.10.1013>

Kessler, M., & Albee, G. W. (1975). Primary prevention. *Annual review of psychology*.

Rappaport, J. (1987). Terms of empowerment/exemplars of prevention: Toward a theory for community psychology. *American journal of community psychology*, 15(2), 121-148.

*Authors of the chapter: Lydia Pantziou, Despoina Bounitsi, Dimitra Zacharouli*

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# What is shame?

Given that our aim is to prevent the occurrence of body-shaming incidents and to limit the influence they have when they happen, we believe it is important to understand and keep in mind the mechanism of shame in general before focusing on this particular phenomenon.

## **What is the feeling of shame:**

Shame is a central human feeling, it is connected with the experience of weakness, defectiveness, inferiority and failure, with the feeling that we are less than others and that others look at us with contempt and scorn. Shame can be associated with a strong sense of being exposed, with an experience of both bodily and psychological "nakedness". Very often people who are sensitive to shame are more sensitive to size, comparison, competition.

The observer is experienced as disapproving or hostile. People sensitive to shame will try to hide their sensitivity by avoiding situations in which they might be "seen" by others.

Those experiencing shame hide their own need for and dependence on others from their minds, leading to a sense of extreme independence and rejection of a social reality in which everyone actually depends on someone.

Shame goes hand in hand with a self-perception associated with failure - failure to achieve certain goals, tasks, living up to standards. Standards that are set internally (ego ideal) or by external circumstances (social criteria). Whatever the external circumstances and factors, the person's perception of "failing" is an important component regarding the experience of shame.

The feeling of shame leads one to preemptively strive to hide or disappear, it can manifest as shyness as well as grandiosity.

## **Roots:**

The roots of shame are thought to be difficult to locate solely in the internal or external world. Shame is a complex effect resulting from an interaction between intrapsychic and social phenomena. Both intrapsychic and external influences are equally important and interact within each individual. Shame is an intensely intrapsychic phenomenon and at the same time one of the most directly socially and interpersonally conditioned features of the psyche.

In different people, shame may differ in its degree and manifestations. In some people, it is more limited and reflects an experience of inability of certain parts of the personality to cope - it is reactive and situational. In other people, the experience of shame is an enduring characteristic, penetrating deeply into aspects of the personality.

## **Factors:**

The experience of shame is a normal process in human development, characteristic of the period of childhood. It is believed that there is something shameful in childhood itself - children are smaller, more dependent, less effective, and every child at some point experiences feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, failure. But this alone is not a sufficient condition for shame to emerge as a persisting affective state. Only when a child's natural vulnerability is systematically exploited by external or internal factors there is a risk of feelings of humiliation.

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Feeling of shame is more often seen as a persistent personality characteristic in people: with a history of physical abuse, sexual abuse in childhood/adolescence; in people who have been humiliated in childhood by parents, siblings or other significant others as if this happens simply because they were children (with less ability and capacity); in people whose parents/caregivers were perceived as being extremely critical.

### **Relations:**

Often, experiences of shame emerge at an early age in interactions with significant figures. We recognize that each child carries his or her own potential and characteristics, strength/intensity of desires and impulses, and ability to satisfy them.

Although the parent/caring adult is stronger and more capable than the child, they may often be needy and lack the capacity to tolerate frustration - feeling like a vulnerable child who needs a protective other. The child's inevitable failure to provide for the adult's needs is experienced by the parent as a lack of gratitude. These unmet and unattainable needs of the parent are unconsciously projected onto the child and lead to feelings of inadequacy.

### **Consequences:**

Chronic exposure to shaming and humiliation in childhood fosters the growth of an adult who disqualifies himself/herself. In attempts to cope with these difficult feelings, mental defences emerge designed to counteract or invalidate the experience. Vindictive attacks on humiliating (persecutory) figures or acts of revenge may occur - this may be withdrawal of love for those considered persecutors; withdrawal from people and life.

The consequences of the above may take the form of shyness and self-disqualification, as well as grandiosity and omnipotence and lack of need for others.

The phenomenon of body-shaming carries the idea of negative influence from the outside in, but it is also an internal process, linked to one's resources and personality characteristics, shaped mostly in early childhood.

### **Literature:**

Garfinkle, E. (2012). Shame: The Hidden Resistance. *Can.J.Psychoanal.*,20:44-69

Morrison AP. Working with shame in psychoanalytic treatment. *J Am Psychoanal Assoc.* 1984;32(3):479-505. doi: 10.1177/000306518403200303. PMID: 6481082.

**Author of the chapter:** Margarita Rafailova, Elena Golemeeva



## General guidelines


for the facilitators of a body-shaming prevention methodology:

When selecting and implementing a method, try to aim to:

1. Raise awareness about and break down/ challenge stereotypes
2. Provide opportunities for self-observation and self-awareness
3. Promote self-esteem and self-confidence
4. Promote equality and equity
5. Enhance acceptance of diversity
6. Avoid both victimising and accusing/criticising people for their attitudes or words - anyway we can all be in the position of the victim and the culprit at some point.
7. Make it accessible and inclusive – always in relation to your specific target group-by being aware of different ways of communication, different disabilities and access requirements.
8. Make use of art-based tools in a way that all participants regardless of their experience in arts can join and enjoy-it's not for dancers, or painters or professional photographers! Art is our pathway to self-expression and transformation of experience.

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# How to use this toolkit

Below there are 10 templates with detailed instructions for the implementation of different methodologies aimed at prevention of body-shaming. Each template is accompanied by a short video  on the application of the methodology and some brief instructions. When you are about to choose and apply the methodologies suggested, keep in mind the things below:

- Choose the methodology you want to apply based on your needs, objectives and knowledge/skills. These instructions are indicative and you will need to think about whether you need to change and adapt something based on your own context. You may need to adjust the time, the space, the tools, or even the artistic practice in order to make it work for your specific target group and in your local context;
- Carefully consult the theory and the templates in combination with the videos;
- Make sure you understand and feel familiar enough with the theory and the tools suggested if you wish to apply them. The IO1 book “What does Body-Shaming mean?” can be a useful tool to understanding the phenomenon and to familiarise yourself with the appropriate language and concepts. You can find the book available online [here](#).



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## *Collection of practices*

# De-centering images of bodies



Click to watch  
the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
Élan Interculturel



**Artistic disciplines involved:**  
photography



**Number of participants:**  
6-18



**Source / Author:** Vera Varhegyi, based on the method of critical incidents created by Margalit Cohen-Emerique and the iceberg metaphor proposed by E.T. Hall



**When to use:** Appropriate as the first activity of your workshop in order to introduce the iceberg theory (next activity). This activity works better if the group already developed some trust and participants feel free to express their doubts, reveal their prejudices etc.



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:** The aim of the activity is to unveil a basic mechanism of human perception, that also underlies acts of body-shaming: we don't perceive images and people neutrally and objectively. Instead, we immediately interpret and evaluate what we see, mobilising our own norms, values and representations – that is our frame of references. This frame also includes ideas and expectations on what is a good body, a nice body, inferences on the characteristics of people that have different forms, shapes and functionalities of the body. The activity wished to raise awareness of these hidden mechanisms to stop their automaticity and prevent acts of body-shaming.



**Time/ Duration:**

30-60 minutes depending on the size of the group

**Space & Equipment requirements/ materials:**



- Select the images that represent a great diversity of bodies in terms of functionalities, decorations and modifications, forms, colours, genders, ages, racialization.
- Even if this is not the focus of the activity, you should know the contexts of the images you are presenting
- You should think in advance about the values and norms that could come up concerning the specific images
- Material: flipchart, marker, printed images

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## Description of the activity

### Step 1:

Before starting the activity, we recommend warning the group about the sensitivity of the activity. We will work with images depicting people who are not with us, representing different groups. We can honour the protagonists of the images. This does not imply that we cannot talk about how we feel, what we think with respect to these images. In fact, the activity only works if we suspend our desire to be perfectly interculturally and politically correct. It is ok if we are surprised. In fact, we should be surprised. To allow us to do that, we should allow us to make mistakes, speak openly, not judge each other. For the same reason, what we do should be confidential, and should not go out of the room. (Except of course what the facilitators say.)

### Step 2:

Invite participants to visit the “exhibition” you have created with the preselected images, and ask them to have a look at each image. Ask them to choose the image that triggers the most intense emotional reaction for them (it does not matter whether positive or negative). At this point they should not talk about the images, nor should they analyse them, just choose one. The first choice is often the best choice. Several people will probably choose the same image, this is ok. In the following step, you’ll create small groups around the images. Groups of 3-4 people work best, try to ask participants not to be more than 4 with the same image.

### Step 3:

As a second step, invite the small groups to explore together three questions (they don’t need to agree).

1. How does the image make them feel?
2. What is the part of the picture responsible for these emotions? (Participants should be able to point at this with their fingers: it must be visible, objective, not an interpretation)
3. What are their own values / norms and representations that are touched by the image? What are the values that explain the emotional reaction?

### Step 4:

After 15 minutes, you can invite a couple of groups to give their answers.

Draw an iceberg on the flipchart, present it to participants as a metaphor that is widely used by intercultural trainers. Ask them why they think it is so. Appreciate together the power of the iceberg as a visual tool to show that there is a smaller visible side above the waterline and a much bigger hidden part that sustains the small top part. The top part is the objectively perceivable manifestations of culture, and the hidden part includes the norms, representations, values that sustain culture’s manifestations.

Make sure to help participants stick to the questions: if they are asked about visible elements, they should do so. If you ask about emotions, they should talk about emotions etc. As they give their answers, you can write them on an iceberg drawing: at the top the “visible ele-

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ment”. Around it, the emotions. Underneath the values and norms connected to it. Don’t hesitate to help them be more precise in naming emotions or values, this is not always easy.

### **Debriefing / Assessment / Evaluation:**

To debrief the activity, you can ask participants to share how they felt, what was easy for them, what was difficult. You can also ask them whether there is a change in the way they see the image now that they have gone through decentering.

You can also discuss whether they feel they can apply what they learnt here to a situation of real encounters with real people.

To assess the activity, observe the engagement of participants and to what extent they manage to talk about their own frame of references instead of placing affirmations on the people in the images.

### **Remarks / Pay attention to:**

Participants may not know about the concept of “value”. Tell them to imagine values as compasses, which indicate for a given society what is considered good and worthy. Norms are the socially accepted representations and behaviours.

### **References:**

The method of critical incidents was developed by Margalit Cohen-Emerique. The decentering with images activity was created by Vera Varhegyi. The iceberg metaphor comes from E.T. Hall. Using the icebergs as an illustration was the idea of Cécile Stola (élan interculturel)

# Icebergs and incidents



Click to watch the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
Élan Interculturel



**Type of method:** Non-formal pedagogy, analysis of incidents



**Number of participants:**  
6-20



**Source / Author:** The method of critical incidents created by Margalit Cohen-Emerique and the iceberg metaphor proposed by E.T.Hall Using the icebergs as an illustration was the idea of Cécile Stola (élan interculturel)



**When to use:** Suitable to use after the activity of decentering images in order to anchor the notion of the iceberg and smoothly get involved in the sharing of the incidents.



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:** We propose to analyse acts of body-shaming as critical incidents, through a process that opens up the frames of references of both the person who narrated the situation and the person who triggered the incident. This means that we try to identify the norms, values and representations of both parties that explain why a situation of conflict happened. The analysis does not try to relativise acts of body-shaming, nor to excuse the perpetrators of such acts. However, it points to the importance of underlying cultural norms and values that may have contributed to it.



**Time/ Duration:**  
60-90 minutes

## Space & Equipment requirements/ materials:



- A4 papers for participants to write down their critical incidents
- Flipchart paper, markers for the small group analysis
- Blue tack / flipchart stand to place the flipchart papers in front of the group during the plenary review of the analysis

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## **What can the method of critical incidents bring to prevent acts of body-shaming?**

Losing the illusion of our neutrality and objectivity

Margalit Cohen-Emerique created the method of critical incidents to unveil how our cultural norms, values, representations influence the way we feel, think about, and react to each other, in particular in situations of conflict and misunderstanding. Such situations happen because we don't see each other objectively and neutrally, as we really are. Instead, our vision is blurred by what she calls our "cultural frame of references", that is like a pair of glasses which we always wear without being aware of them, without even knowing how they distort our perception. These glasses include the categories we learnt (e.g. man/woman, black/white, fat/skinny) as well as stereotypes attached to these categories ("men are competent / women are kind", "skinny is healthy / fat people are lazy").

The cultural layer of our glasses reflects all those values and norms that we have learnt from our culture(s) and that orient our behaviour by telling us what is the meaning of everything, what's right or wrong, what's beautiful and how we should get there.

### **Culture is everywhere, especially in our bodies**

Our bodies are also saturated with cultural norms and prescriptions. Us humans, we are animals that try so hard to forget our biological nature that to hide it, everything about the body is subject to intense cultural coding: how we relate to it, how we dress it, how we walk, sit, what parts of it we hide and show in public, what noises of it are acceptable and which are not, what we put in it, how we let different forms of excrements leave it and so on, nothing happens in spontaneity, all is subject to strict cultural choreography, to which transgressions are punished with at least with shaming, but possibly even with legal persecution (as "public indecency"). All this started way before a global capitalist system gave a last blow to the diversity of bodies, obtaining the monopoly of redefining in a quite intransigent way the border between perfect and nonconforming bodies.

### **What does this mean for body-shaming?**

Acts of body-shaming do not occur in a social void, and most likely they are not consequences of the individual meanness and creativity of their perpetrators. Rather, they are informed by prevailing cultural norms and expectations and what is the right body and what are our duties on improving our bodies.

### **So, how to apply the method concretely?**

We propose below the activity "icebergs and incidents" that you can apply to unveil how cultural representations and norms of the body play out in acts of body-shaming. To facilitate learning the method, we propose the lead-up exercise "decentering images of bodies" that follow the same structure of analysis but uses photographs instead of real-life situations. As a follow-up, we propose the forum theatre exercise, which helps you to practice ways to step up against acts of body-shaming, using what you may have learnt about the cultural norms and representations underpinning acts of body-shaming.



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## Description of the activity

### Step 1

Precautions: Before starting the activity, we recommend warning the group about the sensitivity of the activity, inviting participants to take care of each other, be responsible for what they express and give importance to what others express.

Start by collecting situations of body-shaming that participants may have experienced as targets or perpetrators. The collection can happen in writing (where each participant writes down an experience) or orally (where groups of 3-4 participants share with each other their own experiences of body-shaming. If you have collected situations in a written form, it may be a good idea to read them all and choose the ones you feel confident in analysing. We don't recommend analysing open acts of deliberate violence.

### Step 2

Introduce the role of the narrator and the support people: the narrator should read the situation to the team members and answer any questions of clarification. At this point, the others should not try to solve the incident, nor should they assess how the narrator behaved. In no case should they judge the narrator. They should be in an attitude of active listening, support, then later on when they explore the frames of references they should ask questions / propose values and norms to the narrator.

### Step 3

Invite participants to make an inventory of all the people present in the situation. Ask them to reflect on their relationships, as well as relationships between their social groups. Invite them to discuss who have more status / power in the society or in the situation. Also explore the context: whether and how elements of the physical and social context have influenced the situation.

### Step 4

In this activity we will work with two icebergs: first one to analyse values and norms of the person who experiences the shock and then another one for the person(s) who triggered the shock.

When exploring the icebergs, it is very important that the groups start with the iceberg of the narrator first, and then explore the iceberg of the other person. Concerning this latter, it must be clear that what we can emit are only hypotheses as the other person is not present.

### Step 5

You can either let small groups do their work independently, or do the work in plenary under your guidance. If they work in small groups, you'll need to check them from time to time to see where they are, whether there are misunderstandings or blockages etc. It is also possible to create two groups, one to work on the iceberg of the narrator and another one on the iceberg of the other person. This can be done if members of the group share social identities with the person who has 'triggered' the shock experience.

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## Debriefing / Assessment / Evaluation:

If subgroups have worked separately, you can share their work in plenary. At the presentation: invite groups one by one to show their analysis. It is still important that the narrator of an incident cannot be the one that presents the analysis. To present the analysis they should start with the table of identities, briefly showing what are the identity elements that separate and that connect the two parties. When the presenter explains the icebergs, the facilitator and the other participants can propose new elements that the group hasn't thought about.

## Remarks / Pay attention to:

The method of critical incidents can result in enlightening revelations, but only when we manage to go beyond a superficial level. It is your mission to help participants go "deep beyond sea level" and identify the values and norms relevant in the situation.

When exploring the frames of references (values, norms, representations etc.) support team members can use questions such as (e.g.): what does "femininity" mean to you? Is gender equality important to you?

## References:

Margalit Cohen-Emerique 2015 *Pour une approche interculturelle en travail social Théories et pratiques* Rennes : Presses de l'EHESP

For a presentation of Cohen-Emerique's method in English see <https://www.training4interculturality.eu>



# Forum Theatre

*as a resource to react to acts of body shaming*



Click to watch  
the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
Élan Interculturel



**Type of method:** Theatre  
(Theatre of the Oppressed)



**Number of participants:**  
12-20



**Source / Author:**  
Vera Varhegyi / Panni Vegh



**When to use:** Suitable at the last stage of the two previous activities in order to work through the critical incidents that were shared earlier in the session thanks to the help of the group and the experience of embodiment.



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:** Forum theatre can give a chance to practice strategies to step up against acts of body-shaming, either as people who are the targets of such acts or as witnesses / allies to the targets.



**Time/ Duration:**  
60-90 minutes

## Space & Equipment requirements/ materials:



The working space should be big enough to do some demechanisation and image theatre activities, as well as to create a stage and a space for the “spectators”

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## **Description of the activity:**

### **Step 1: Start**

You have two main options for selecting the situations to work on. A longer and more organic process allows participants to work on situations that they have experienced. In this case, give participants the time to share situations together, and create a common situation that incorporates elements from several participants. The second option is that you offer situations to participants in the form of descriptions. These “given” situations will expose them less, but may be less relevant for them. Either way, create small groups of 4-5 participants. Ask them to perform the situation as it is described, trying to finish the scene at the peak of the conflict, without providing any solution or a happy end. The performance shouldn't be more than 3-4 minutes, and the players should pay attention to provide their audience with basic information within the play (who are the participants, where are we, what is the relationship between the people, any other important information).

### **Step 2: Rehearsal**

The groups discuss and make rehearsal of the situation in a timeframe of 10-20 minutes. Go around at the beginning making sure that the groups have an understanding of their situation and of the task, and ask them to try out the scene at least once. The scene should not be longer than 3-4 minutes, and it can be helpful to underline that the groups should introduce the situation and the people who are present in it clearly – shouldn't be told in words as a preface, rather played out in the scene.

### **Step 3: Presentations**

Groups present their play one by one. Invite the performers to occupy the space, to get into their starting positions. Ask them whether they are ready to start, and when they are, invite the rest of the participants - the spect-actors, to count with you 1-2-3 and then call out “action!” to start the play. Ask the groups to show their scene (or sequence of scenes), one by one, stopping at the peak moment. The other groups should pay attention to understand: 1. What is happening 2. Who are the people involved, what is the relation between them 3. Which character is in the worst situation? It may be useful to let the spectators have a deeper understanding of whom the characters are, how they feel and what is important for them (i.e. making explicit the emotional reactions but also the values of the characters). You can do this interactively, inviting the spectators to give their opinions on how characters feel / what is important for them, or to ask questions to the characters (“do you feel angry?”) or you can ask the characters themselves.

### **Step 4: Interventions**

Ask the participants whether they have any idea to change this situation to have a better ending. When a person starts to tell their ideas, ask them to try out the strategy or idea in the scene, instead of talking. After the trial the group should give a clap for the performance of the person, regardless if they feel that we arrived at a better ending or not.

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## **Debriefing / Assessment / Evaluation:**

After each intervention, you can ask if the person could realise what they planned at the beginning and how the intervention felt. Ask the group to think about what resources the new performer used to change the situation, and how the situation changed. You can note the different resources / strategies used on a flipchart paper, so you can use them in a recap, giving importance to the particular resources useful in negotiations.

## **Remarks / Pay attention to:**

Before this part, some warm-up activities are needed to make sure that your participants' creativity is awakening; they are not thrown into a role play activity after a heavy lecture, as big changes in the dynamics can cause resistance or avoidance.

If you work with acts of body-shaming that participants in the group may experience, take care of not putting them into a difficult situation by minimising or relativising the experience.

In putting the situations on scene, some participants may be tempted by displaying caricatural representations of the characters present in the situation. Remind them this is not the point of the exercise. It is unavoidable that in representing specific characters we recur to stereotypes to some degree, but not all stereotypes add to the scene, and some create unnecessary and potentially harmful distractions (eg; accents of minority members, mannerisms attributed to specific sexual orientations).

## **References:**

Augusto Boal 1992 Games for actors and non-actors Routledge

# Things I wish you Knew

## Access Needs



Click to watch  
the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
University of Atypical



**Type of method:**  
Movement, writing



**Number of participants:**  
8-10



**Source / Author:**  
Amy Frazer, Zara Lyness, SoSo Ni Cheallaigh



**When to use:**  
Appropriate for disabled and non-disabled people to learn from each other at the beginning of a workshop/first time they meet.



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:**  
Developing understanding and creating awareness of different Access Requirements.



**Time/ Duration:**  
90-120 minutes

### Space & Equipment requirements/ materials:



Pens, paper.

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## Description of the activity:

### Part 1: Warm Up

Short meditation exercise

Throw tension away –

Pouring sand into the body, filling the body from the feet upwards.

Once the body has been slowly filled and everyone is heavy and relaxed, get them to expel the sand as fast as they can – they can stand, shout it out, send it out through fingers...

### Part 2: EXERCISE: Prevention of Body-Shaming -

Things I Wish You Knew //

Your Needs, My Needs & The Needs of the Group

Introducing the idea of creating accessible spaces

Opportunity for a flip chart mind map or a verbal discussion.

If flip chart: write in the centre: “Accessible Spaces”

“We are going to talk about what it means for a space to be accessible. Right now, we are exploring what that phrase means to you. We will go round the circle, there are no right or wrong answers, we will all understand it differently, so just answer as you understand it.”

Begin with the facilitator and share your own example. “A space where as many people as possible are welcome” the second facilitator provides another example.

Go round the circle (like Check-In) and ask for a word or phrase.

Go through the mind map/discussion with the group and notice patterns.

Facilitator introduces: “accessible space = what I need to do my best work.”

Like all things, accessibility is a scale. When we think of access, we think about the all-or-nothing approach. There are certain access needs, such as wheelchair access, that are non-negotiable. These must be in place. But for everyone, whether we identify as disabled or not, we have preferences of working that help us be happier and healthier.

Show an example list for the facilitator’s “What I Need to do my best work”

Give 5-10 minutes for the group to each fill out their own “What I Need to Do My Best Work”

### THEN:

Segue into the concept of needs navigation

i.e. “for each of us accessible space meant something completely different, we see things differently, and we need different things” or “so we all care about including people, and making sure no one is left out, but how can we do that when there are so many different kinds of people out there”

**INTRODUCE: Your Needs, My Needs, The Needs of the Group.**

(You can get participants to repeat after you)

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Discuss the idea that school, work or home will never be perfect, but you can always do your best to recognize your own needs, assert your needs, and listen to and assert the needs of others. This way, you can work to compromise and meet as many needs as possible so we can do the best for the group.

Put participants into pairs. They use their list of access needs and see where there is conflict and agreement and how they would facilitate the space. Write down the list of needs of their shared space.

After 5 minutes in pairs, you join a pair with another pair, they must create a new list as a new group, asserting their individual and shared needs.

After 5 minutes in fours, you join a four with another four, and they must create a new list as a new group, asserting their individual and shared needs.

Continue until the group is altogether again and discuss compromises and shared needs for a space.

### **Debriefing / Assessment / Evaluation:**

10 minutes finish discussing needs, conflicts, compromises, and reflections on asserting your needs in a space and trying to make as accessible a space as possible.

### **Remarks/ Pay attention to:**

This workshop is designed to help people understand their requirements and understand other people's. It is good to observe the interactions of others and to see if people have a better understanding towards one another at the end.



# Don't beat yourself up

## Releasing burdens



Click to watch  
the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
University of Atypical



**Type of method:**

Visual Art/Sculpture/Land Art:  
using objects from the local environment



**Number of participants:**

8-12



**Source / Author:**

Amy Frazer, Zara Lyness, SoSo Ni Cheallaigh



**When to use:**

Appropriate for a range of people at any stage of the group.



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:**

Learning outcomes – reflecting on attitudes and the effect of trauma and dealing with stressors.

Addressing these stressors through reflection and action aimed towards a physical representation of leaving negative issues within an artwork;  
Developing teamwork skills to work creatively in an outdoor environment, mindfulness of the objects around us both natural and litter; Developing a strategy to identify the most negative feelings or situations currently experienced and a method of setting these issues down and walking away from burdens; Managing a discussion to focus on key negative words and emotions.



**Time / Duration:**

90 minutes

**Space & Equipment requirements / materials:**



The range of materials depends on the environment. Equipment required for the Bari beach location: charcoal, stones, flotsam and jetsam.

In an urban environment outdoors: chalk and found objects.

In a domestic or indoor environment: Paper, pens, pencils, chalks.

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## **Description of the activity:**

### **Part 1**

Introduce the theme of the workshop. 'Releasing Burdens' Explain the context – e.g. this workshop can be used with group leaders or youth groups. The aim of the workshop is to create a body, either by drawing the outline of a body on a surface or creating a body with found objects. If indoors, this can be drawn on paper and hung on a wall or drawn with chalk on the ground. If the workshop is outdoors you can use objects found in that environment such as stones from a beach – or alternatively a chalk drawn shape on the ground will work. 15 mins

### **Part 2**

Describe the background for this workshop. Most people will experience trauma to one degree or another. This can be directly, as a witness, learning about it happening to a known associate or repeated exposure. For some, work related activities can lead to more exposure to trauma.

Discuss with the group the feelings and behaviours they would like to release. This can include, avoidance, negativity, shouldering responsibility, guilt, hypervigilance and sensitivity. Spend a few minutes with the participants to talk with them on their ideas and words that they associate with stressors. 20mins

### **Part 3**

Ask the participants to select the three most impactful words, or stressors they feel most strongly at the current time, and invite them to write these words on the materials that are available. This could be paper, or using chalk on the ground or charcoal or chalk on stones from a beach. They can also use objects as metaphors for the words. 20 mins

### **Part 4**

Invite the participants to add their words to the body that has been created. The words can be left facing outwards or inwards. If the participants are comfortable, they can discuss their choice of words. 20 mins

### **Part 5**

In an outside environment, e.g. using stones on a beach, the activity will result in a piece of land art. The participants can choose to then pile more stones onto the body to leave the words exposed, and then actively consider leaving the stressors behind as they leave the body.

In an indoor environment the participants can choose to leave the drawing behind or, in some way, destroy the body. This could be by colouring and covering the surface of the body or, if it is a drawing, ripping off sections and everyone taking a piece and tearing it into as small pieces as they can. 10mins

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## **Debriefing /Assessment / Evaluation:**

Review some of the words people have chosen and discuss if participants are comfortable.  
Ask how they felt destroying the body at the end. 5mins

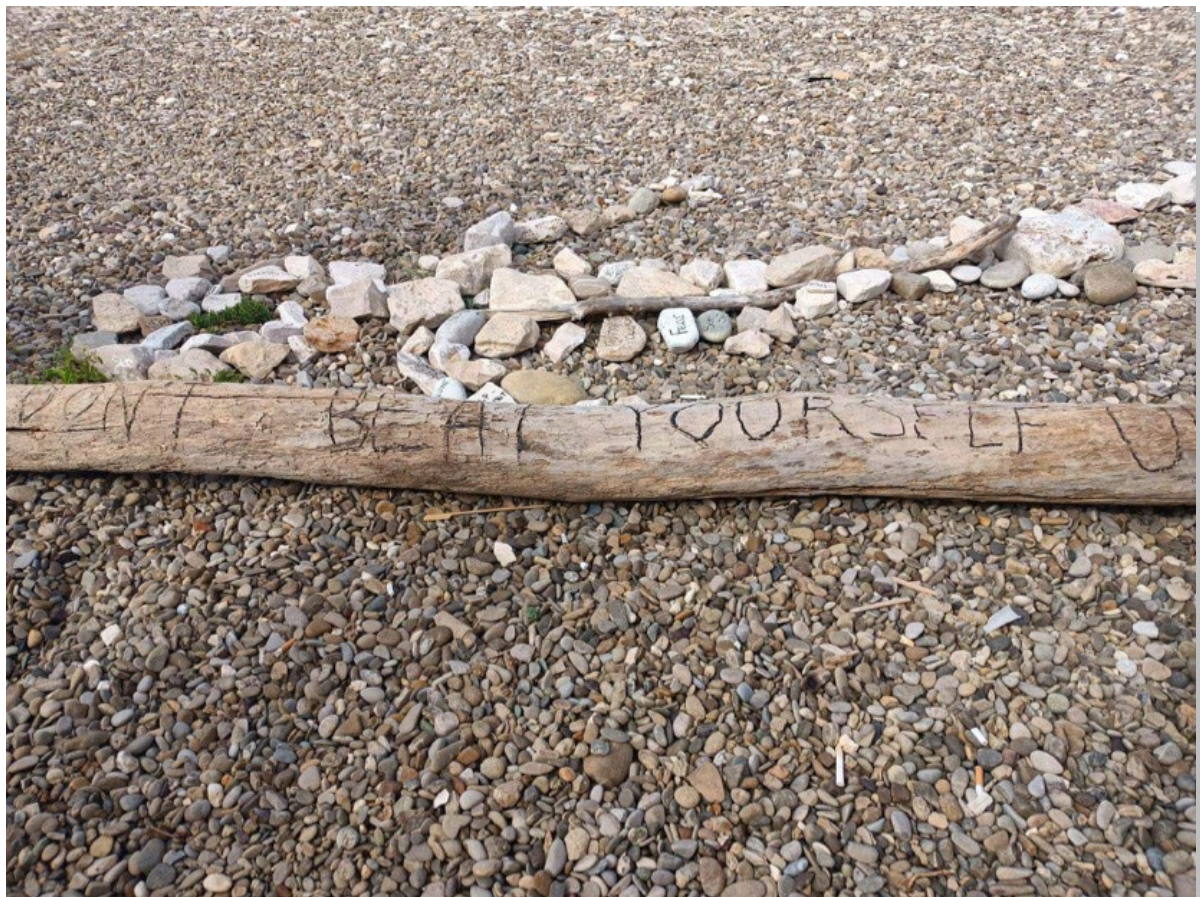
## **Remarks/ Pay attention to:**

Observe the different words people use and see if there is a commonality in what people are wanting to let go of.

## **References:**

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/home>

<https://arttherapytrainingandstudiogroups.wordpress.com/2020/04/20/environmental-art-therapy/>



# Self-portrait



Click to watch  
the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
Animus Association



**Type of method:**  
Projective techniques, Painting,  
Discussion



**Number of participants:**  
8-12



**Source / Author:**  
Margarita Rafailova



**When to use:**  
Appropriate for all stages of a group.



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:**

- Identifying the role of personal convictions in body-shaming;
- Awareness of self-shaming;
- Emphasizing the link between individual and social aspects of body-shaming;
- Cultivating techniques for self-acceptance.



**Time / Duration:**  
90-120 minutes

## Space & Equipment requirements / materials:



Meeting room/hall with tables and enough space for all participants, printed materials (self-portraits of popular artists - e.g. Cindy Sherman, Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol, Frida Kahlo, Salvador Dali, Van Gogh, Egon Schiele, Lucian Freud, Tamara de Lempicka), short presentation/brief information on artists' background, white paper, paints, smooth jazz/relaxing music.

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## **Description of the activity:**

### **Step 1: Warm up activity (5 min)**

All participants form a circle. The facilitator points out different characteristics related to people's appearance in general. Those of the participants who possess that certain characteristic switch their places.

### **Step 2:**

The facilitator distributes to each participant a self-portrait / photo of the chosen artists and asks them to think about the following questions: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you see that picture? What is the message it carries/ how did the artist perceive themselves? (10 min)

### **Step 3:**

Each participant presents their thoughts, and at this stage the different points of view are gathered without the facilitator evaluating or commenting. (20 min)

### **Step 4:**

Discussion: the facilitator gives a brief introduction of the artists, their messages and the context in which they worked. The aim is to add another perspective to the individual experience of the participants. (The facilitator may use powerpoint, additional pictures or any other type of presentation.)

Note that the artists were using "themselves" - their image to express something: their inner state, their physical state, their ideology and views on society. Some do it literally on their bodies, others through drawing their faces and bodies.

In the discussion, the facilitator guides the participants to think about the following topics: how do we treat ourselves; do we want to hide or emphasize parts of ourselves; what is the meaning of body appearance for a person: expression, openness, barrier, cover or something else.

The facilitator makes a very brief description of body-shaming and the link between the inner/individual and social aspects of the phenomenon. (20 min)

### **Step 5:**

The facilitator asks the participants to use the materials in front of them (paper, plasticine, and paints) to represent/depict/picture themselves. The facilitator explains to them that they can do it in whatever way they want (there is no need to be realistic, the purpose is not to draw well). Tell them the pictures remain for themselves, but in the next step of the task, they will share their thoughts on the picture with another person of the group. It would be good to play nice background music. Let them enjoy that time. (30-40 min)

After the drawing time is over, the facilitator asks the participants to split into small groups (of two or three if needed) and think about what the group discussed in the first part of the workshop; ask them to discuss: Do they think that there are any sides of them which were left hidden from the drawing? What are the aspects they focused on? What do they think that expresses their personality as a whole? (20 min)

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## Debriefing / Assessment / Evaluation:

Closing activity and discussion on the whole workshop experience. (5 min)

## Remarks/ Pay attention to:

This practice mainly stimulates an inward look, deepening the participant's knowledge of the topic, through their own personal experience. It is appropriate to be combined with a practice that focuses more on social attitudes/collective perceptions.

## References:

Info about the artists:

- <https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/frida-kahlo-self-portrait-with-thorn-necklace-and-hummingbird>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxKR2cHmIPY>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wvfebv7qF70>
- <https://www.salvador-dali.org/en/artwork/exhibitions/22/self-portraits>
- <https://en.opisanie-kartin.com/description-of-the-painting-by-pablo-picasso-self-portrait-june-30-1972/>
- <http://arts.pallimed.org/2010/07/pablo-picasso-self-portrait-facing.html>
- <https://weprofessionalliar.wordpress.com/2012/06/22/egon-schiele-and-the-bod/>
- <https://www.wikiart.org/en/egon-schiele>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BN73JesYJhc>
- <https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/art-and-stories/stories/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-van-goghs-self-portraits>
- <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/02/08/lucian-freud-and-the-truth-of-the-body>
- <https://www.thecollector.com/lucian-freud/>
- <https://bensonian.wordpress.com/2011/08/09/what-does-the-body-tell-us-insights-from-lucian-freud/>
- <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/tamara-in-a-green-bugatti/>
- <https://www.tamaradelempicka.org/autoportrait-self-portrait-in-the-green-bugatti/>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITLmi5\\_r5HM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITLmi5_r5HM)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VH5MRtk9HQ>
- <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/warhol-self-portrait-t07146>
- <https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/andy-warhol-and-the-self-portrait>
- <https://www.moma.org/artists/5392>

# Can you see me?



Click to watch  
the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
Animus Association Foundation



**Type of method:**  
Mindfulness / Group interaction



**Number of participants:**  
8-10



**Source / Author:**  
Elena Golemeeva



**When to use:**  
Suitable for all stages of a workshop. Does not require prior knowledge of the group.



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:**

- Awareness that the perception of attractiveness goes beyond physical attributes
- Reflecting on the self through other's perspective
- Reflecting on the own process of evaluating attractiveness in others
- Drawing attention to one's strengths, rather than presumed weaknesses



**Time / Duration:**  
90-120 minutes

**Space & Equipment requirements / materials:**



Preferably a large space.

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## Description of the activity:

### Icebreaker activity - Two Minute Mixer (10-15 min)

This is an icebreaker activity for adults that is very effective for introducing people to one another. Have participants sit in a large circle. Each one will team up with the person sitting on the right of them. (If participants are an odd number, the moderator can join the activity). Each participant will then spend 2-minutes talking to their partner. They will discover each other's names and something about their background – where they work, what they like to do, why they are attending the workshop, etc. After the 2-minutes have expired, everyone will introduce their partner to the group.

This introduction has two purposes:

- 1) Presenting oneself is sometimes worrisome in front of a group of new people. Being presented by someone else can ease participants' anxiety in the unfamiliar setting;
- 2) Make everyone aware of what kind of people are part of the workshop, but distract them from keeping a track of who is precisely who, as the first part of the workshop requires a level of anonymity/objectivity.

### Practice

**Part 1 (60 min):** Participants will be placed in a wide circle facing inwards. They will be presented with 7 photos of seemingly random people. They have to look at the photos and write their impression of each person solely based on their appearance. Everyone will be asked to think and write notes of what the person in the photo communicates to them.

After that, in a mixed order, 7 stories (short passages of personal confessions) of the people from the photos will be read out loud to the whole group. After listening to each story, participants will be asked to write down what they thought about the person based on the story they heard. As an additional thought to consider, a question will be presented to the group by the moderator/s in order to facilitate their evaluation process:

- What is it that they felt hearing the story? What assumptions can you make about individuals based on their story?

During the first part of the activity, the moderator will keep track of the descriptions each participant provided based on the photos and the stories. Keeping notes numbered corresponding to the numbers labelling each photo and the story.

### Part 2 (30 min):

Participants' notes of the impressions they received from each photo and story will be collected and grouped. Then everyone will receive their impression of the photo with the story corresponding to it to review. Then the stories with a short bio and a photo will be presented together. Everyone will get the chance to discuss if there is a difference in ways they perceive individuals before hearing their story and after. The potential reasons for the occurrence will be discussed and reflect on our personal biases.



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## **Debriefing / Assessment / Evaluation:**

**Closing (5-10 min):** Participants will be asked to discuss their impressions of the workshop. How useful they found it. If they were able to identify something new about themselves. Provide feedback on the activities they took part in, etc.

## **Remarks/ Pay attention to:**

This practice is focused on exploring the social aspect of attractiveness. For greater impact, it is best to be combined with a practice raising awareness of individual perceptions.

## **References:**

The stories and photos of the individuals used in the practice were collected from the documentary HUMAN, but you can use any other source that can provide the same insight.

*HUMAN VOL.1.* (2015). Humankind Production.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdb4XGVTHkE>

*HUMAN VOL.2.* (2015). Humankind Production.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShttAt5xtto&t=4611s>

*HUMAN VOL.3.* (2015). Humankind Production.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0653vsLSqE&t=2079s>

# Consent



Click to watch  
the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
MOH - Mobility Opportunities Hub



**Type of method:**  
Non-formal education



**Number of participants:**  
Any (possibly in pairs)



**Source / Author:**

Isabella Mileti (inspired by the workshop done by Nitx - identifies as a non-binary transgender person. Since 2012, they have been performing in workshops and performances on the topic of sexuality and consent).



**When to use:**

At the beginning of the workshop to introduce a topic relevant to the activities, the concept of the consent we think we have on other people's bodies.



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:** The purpose of the workshop is to work on preventing the act of body-shaming through understanding the concept of consent. Why do we feel free to comment on other people's bodies? Working on consent means abandoning the idea that we can do it without the other person is ready or willing to receive our comments (both positive and negative):

- Working on the issue of consent
- Abandon the habit of commenting on other people's bodies



**Time / Duration:**

60-90 min depending on the size of the group

**Space & Equipment requirements / materials:**



The space must be large enough for participants to move around during the activities. It must be an intimate space where they can feel safe, no matter if it is inside or outside. The materials we need are:

- three different images per participant (then to be multiplied by the numbers of the participants). The images should represent three different ways in which you want to be greeted (for more information, look at the activity called "greeting");
- Anything that can cover the participants' eyes (cloth, foulard, scarf). For more details, look at the activity called "contact";
- Music.

---

## Description of the activity:

### Step 1 (10 min): safe space

Give an explanation of the concept of consent and its relation to the topic of body-shaming.

**Safe space:** if people feel uncomfortable during any of the activities, they can decide to walk away without explanation.

### Step 2 (10 min): Icebreaker

Stand in a circle and do **body perception exercises:** start by moving and "waking up" the head, gradually progressing downward until you reach the feet. From the feet, do the opposite: start stopping them until you reach the head.

### Step 3 (15 min): greeting

The facilitator hands out three cards per participant. Each card represents a different way of wanting to be greeted, starting the first with zero eye contact, the second with a handshake, and the third with a hug. Music starts, and participants walk through the space showing the card they have chosen. In the case of participants with two different cards (and therefore different levels of physical contact), the person with the most physical contact will adapt to the other.

→ *The aim of the exercise is to respect the will of people who act in contact differently from us. For hugging and/or touching others, even in a simple greeting, consent is important.*

### Step 4 (15 min): eye contact

The facilitator will arrange the participants in two rows. Participants will then be placed facing each other with some distance between them. One row is "active," and the other is "passive." The active row starts moving toward the passive one, making sure to look into the eyes of the person in front of them. Any person who feels his or her personal space invaded, or who feels that he or she is invading the other person's personal space, can stop the exercise. The person being stopped should respond "thank you". When the first eye contact is over, the active row moves to repeat the exercise with another person (repeated two/three times).

Part two: the active and passive roles are reversed, and we begin again.

→ *It may/can be difficult to say "no" in some situations. The purpose of this exercise is to recognize our personal space and enforce it. We respond "thank you" to those who keep us out of personal space because it indicates to us that we are moving into the space of consent.*

### Step 5 (15 min): physical contact

It starts by walking in space, to music. When the music stops, we pair up with the person next to us. There is an active person and a passive person. The active person blindfolds the other, when the music starts again he starts manipulating his/her body (we mean touching it, moving arms, etc.). The person keeps repeating "yes" until he accepts the movements being made with his body. The passive person is free to say no, so the other can change movement or intensity of touch. The exercise is repeated by swapping the roles of active and passive.

→ *The aim of the exercise is to practice making the other understand what he or she has the consent to do and what he or she does not, increasing the degree of contact and thus the difficulty of tracing the space of consent.*

---

## **Debriefing /Assessment / Evaluation:**

(15 min) Closing activity and discussion on the whole workshop experience.

At the end of the workshop, you can ask participants whether they felt comfortable and whether they reflected on the concept of consent and new ways of respecting other spaces.

Also, ask how they now see the interrelationship between consent and the topic of body-shaming.

Finally, ask for general feedback.

## **Remarks/ Pay attention to:**

It's really important to create a safe space, in order to allow the participants to express themselves safely among the others.



# *A different narrative of the body with photography*



Click to watch  
the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
MOH - Mobility Opportunities Hub



**Artistic disciplines involved:**  
Photography



**Number of participants:**  
Any



**Source / Author:**

Isabella Mileti - (inspired by the work of three photographers: Diane Arbus, Shirin Neshat, Francesca Woodman).



**When to use:**

This activity can be used as the core activity of the workshop (combined with others present), or even on its own.



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:** The aim of this activity is to propose a body narrative different from the best-known ones. Through three female photographers who have used/shown the body as a vehicle for social messages.

- Getting to know other narratives;
  - Stop thinking of the body as an object, but think of it by virtue of how it moves in the world.
- The photographs presented in this toolkit serve as examples, but the methodology can be applied to any photograph that meets the objectives of the activity.



**Time / Duration:**

90 - 120 minutes

**Space & Equipment requirements / materials:**



**Space:** Any meeting/workshop room that can accommodate the number of participants. The room should be quiet and cozy, if possible.

**Materials:** Projector, sheets of paper, pens.

---

## Description of the activity:

Three photographs offering different narratives will be presented:

1. body as social complaint
2. body in connection with space/nature
3. "other" bodies.

### SHIRIN NESHAT

→ *It is recommended to study the context of artist's photographs*

#### Step 1 (15 min):

Show a photograph of the author. Focus on the description of the images, and then on the emotions, the photograph arouses in us.

Ask:

- Describe the photo (colors, spaces, objects, people)
- What emotions does photography arouse in you?

#### Step 2 (15 min):

The facilitator asks participants to write down a memory about their body, related to a moment of social engagement or more generally what they are able to experience because of their body.

#### Step 3 (10 min):

Ask participants to share their reflections. It can be a group discussion or in pairs (also depends on the number of participants).

#### Step 4 (10 min):

Optional: you may decide to introduce the author and how her work relates to the topic (body-shaming).

### FRANCESCA WOODMAN

→ *It is recommended to study the context of artist's photographs*

#### Step 1 (15 min):

Show a photograph of the author. Focus on the description of the images, and then on the emotions, the photograph arouses in us.

Ask:

- Describe the photo (colors, spaces, objects, people)
- What emotions does photography arouse in you?

#### Step 2 (10 min):

Trying to perceive one's own body in space.

- 
- What do you see around you?
  - What sensations does your body feel right now?

**Step 3 (10 min):**

Ask participants to share their reflections. It can be a group discussion or in pairs (also depends on the number of participants).

**Step 4 (10 min):**

Optional: you may decide to introduce the author and how her work relates to the topic (body-shaming).

**DIANE ARBUS**

→ *It is recommended to study the context of artist's photographs*

**Step 1 (15 min):**

Show a photograph of the author. Focus on the description of the images, and then on the emotions, the photograph arouses in us.

Ask:

- Describe the photo (colors, spaces, objects, people)
- What emotions does photography arouse in you?

**Step 2 (10 min):**

The facilitator asks participants to try to think (and write) about situations in which they have marginalized bodies and how they can re-signify them.

Ask:

Were there any episodes when you body-shamed other people?

- What do you think is behind this act?
- What do you think should be done to step up against the act of body - shaming?

**Step 3 (10 min):**

Ask participants to share their reflections. It can be a group discussion or in pairs (also depends on the number of participants).

**Step 4 (10 min):**

Optional: you may decide to introduce the author and how her work relates to the topic (body-shaming).

---

## **Debriefing /Assessment / Evaluation:**

Closing activity and discussion on the whole workshop experience. (15 min)

- Can being aware of new narratives help counter body-shaming?
- Thinking about one's own body differently, can it help one perceive others' bodies differently?

## **Remarks / Pay attention to:**

It's really important to create a safe space, in order to allow the participants to express themselves safely among the others.



# One picture - many stories



Click to watch  
the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
Synergy of Music Theater (SMouTh)



**Artistic disciplines involved:**  
Creative writing – photography



**Number of participants:**  
8-12 (can be done with more people,  
but it will take more time)



**Source / Author:**  
Despoina Bounitsi



**When to use:**  
Appropriate for any stage of a group, participants don't need to know each other before.



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:**

- Understanding the role of images in body stereotypes
- Prevention against Body-Shaming
- Identifying, understanding and breaking down stereotypes
- Acceptance of diversity



**Time / Duration:**  
90 minutes



**Space & Equipment requirements / materials:**  
Selected pictures, paper and pens for 12 people

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## **Description of the activity:**

### **STEP 1:**

#### **A picture tells a story (30 min)**

Create smaller working groups or couples and distribute one picture to each group. The pictures illustrate unknown people from all over the world.

Each group can have a different picture but it can also be very interesting if two of the groups have the same picture without knowing it so we can observe how the same group approached it.

Ask the groups to discuss and write down briefly and spontaneously their first thoughts about the people they see in the pictures. (10 min)

Then ask the groups to build on these first thoughts and create a story about each person based on their thoughts and assumptions. That can be a short text (or a simple story-board/sketches if participants prefer not to write; the important thing is the communication in the group to create the story)) describing a day of that person -helping others to learn things about that person's life and personality. Alternatively, instead of reading the stories, the groups can present their story as a short theatrical act. (20 min)

### **STEP 2:**

#### **Presentation (15 min)**

Each group reads and presents their story and sticks the picture and the story on the wall, creating a small exhibition of photos and stories.

In this step the two groups that have the same picture discover how they created a story about the same person.

Then they complete the stories around the common picture on the wall.

### **STEP 3:**

#### **Messing up the stories! (15 min)**

The facilitator randomly changes positions in the pictures and stories and the stories are re-read, but now corresponding to other people's images. A discussion follows:

Do the new pairs of images and stories make sense? Could they be real people? What do they think?

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## **Debriefing / Assessment / Evaluation:**

Create a circle with all the people. Each participant takes the floor and explains how they felt in the process and what it is that they are holding on to as they leave.

Participants can also discuss the usefulness of the tool in relation to the objectives.

## **Remarks / Pay attention to:**

It is important to choose images that allow a clear picture of the person's body type and overall appearance.

It is also important that the participants do not see the images of the other groups before the presentation.

If time and group composition allows, the facilitator can distribute more images to each group and with different combinations of common images to enrich the process.



# Party night



Click to watch  
the video tutorial



**Partner organisation:**  
Synergy of Music Theater (SMouTh)



**Artistic disciplines involved:**  
Workshop using guided imagination and creative writing



**Number of participants:**  
Any



**Source / Author:**  
Lydia Pantziou



**When to use:**  
Development stage – participants have already worked jointly a bit and are ready to go deeper



**Objectives/expected learning outcomes:**

- Awareness of our thoughts and of our implicit biases.
- Understanding that none of us are solely culprits or solely victims. Implicit bias proves that just as we have internalized messages of body-shame, we have probably also been voluntary or unintentional agents of “body terrorism” at some point.



**Time / Duration:**  
90-120 minutes

## Space & Equipment requirements / materials:



Any meeting-/workshop room that can accommodate the number of participants. The room should be quiet and cosy, if possible.

Pens, markers and papers will be needed.

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## Description of the activity:

### Step 1: Icebreaker

Icebreaker/get to know each other (if needed): make sure that participants will feel safe to share.

Introduce the game “2 truths-1 lie about me” with reference to our bodies. Each participant will self-introduce, sharing in total 3 things about them related to their body/image/health/habits. (e.g. I work out every day, I eat chips for breakfast, I love salads...) We don't want it to be obvious which of these things are true and what the lie is. (10 min)

At the end of the workshop, participants will be asked to share with the group which statements were true and false. More details are mentioned at the end of the template.

### Step 2: Guided imagination

First, inform participants that this exercise aims to increase awareness of our thoughts and our implicit biases.

Remind them that probably none of us are solely “culprits” or solely “victims”. We all have internalised messages of body shame and avoiding to observe our (“not politically correct”) thoughts will not help us change them and make room for new ones.

Then, invite participants to sit comfortably and inform them that we will be doing a guided imagination exercise. Also inform them that if someone feels uncomfortable during the process they can at any time step out, and they can also let you know if they need anything. They can then close their eyes if they are comfortable with it. The instructions may look like this:

*“It's Saturday night, and you're invited to a party. You are still at home and starting to get ready. Think about what you want to wear and what your mood is. Think about your outfit choice. Once you feel ready, we can go to the party. You arrive. You enter the party, which is quite crowded. How do you feel? How ready do you feel to socialise? How much self-confidence do you feel to flirt? How are you with the people around you? How are you moving? Where are you sitting/standing? Are you dancing? Are you eating and drinking? ... Now we want you to think of a much fatter version of yourself (you can say 10-15 kilos more than you are now -or not, since it is quite relative if this is much or not). You're getting ready for the party again. What are you wearing? How do you choose your clothes? What's your mood? Whenever you feel ready you can go to the party. You enter the party full of people. How do you feel? How do you socialise? Are you ready to flirt? How are you with the people around you? How are you moving? Are you dancing? Are you eating and drinking? ... Now think again of your body. You are now a much thinner version of yourself (again you can propose a specific number e.g. minus 10 kilos, or not). ...”*

Repeat the same instructions-questions as before.

Give the participants some time to think in between the instructions. Gently, invite them to open their eyes and return their attention and consciousness to the room. (10min)

### Part 2

Participants are then invited to express their thoughts and feelings through writing a personal “diary” of these three party experiences. The way to write their thoughts and express can dif-

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fer for each participant (for example, someone could choose a different way to express than writing and maybe she/he could, for example, draw something relevant in the imaginary diary) (20min)

### **Part 3**

Participants can share what they have created and what were/are their thoughts. It is essential that dialogue is promoted in this step of the process. (35min)

As mentioned in the beginning, at the end of the workshop, participants will be asked to share with the group which statements from the game “2 truths- 1 lie” were true and which were false. Each person will have the opportunity to check the correctness of her/his assumptions about the others at the beginning.

(Questions for personal reflection of the participants on that if needed:

- Were your assumptions correct?
- Were you surprised by something you heard?
- Can you identify where some of these assumptions came from?) (15min)

### **Debriefing / Assessment / Evaluation:**

Helpful questions for debriefing:

- How did you feel with the process?
- Did you realise something new about your thoughts? About your behaviour? About body-stereotypes?
- Did something change?
- Will you “take” something with you from this workshop?

### **Remarks / Pay attention to:**

\*You can avoid questions like that if you think that they may be triggering to your participants.

### **References:**

Taylor, S. R. (2021). The body is not an apology (2nd ed.). Berrett-Koehler.

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# Finally, some artwork for inspiration

- Force Majeure: *Nothing to Lose*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52nBgBEIMSY>
- Grace Nichols: *The Fat Black woman's poems*  
<https://www.amazon.com/Black-Womans-Poems-Virago-Poets/dp/0860686353?asin=0860686353&revisionId=&format=4&depth=1>
- *Anti Body-Shaming Art exhibition in China*  
<https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1007576/in-involved-china%2C-eating-disorders-are-a-hidden-epidemic>  
<https://www.shine.cn/feature/wellness/2106040107/>
- Kritika Trehan- *EXCESS*  
<https://scroll.in/magazine/815803/are-you-a-wwf-wrestler-bengaluru-artist-tackles-body-shaming-with-satire>  
<https://www.amazon.in/Excess-Kritika-Trehan/dp/B01I365T26/>
- Beth Ditto  
<https://el-gr.facebook.com/bethditto>
- Pina Bausch: *Walzer*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrdwjlgakNO>
- *Candoco: Unlimited commissions*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Utpg6A5fnWo>
- *David Tool*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bP9ynfw-Ytl>
- Amanda LaCount  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cESejBJj1o&t=1s>
- Gitam University Theatre Group  
<https://thetheatretimes.com/a-street-play-that-conveyed-hard-hitting-messages-on-body-shaming/>
- Leonard Nimoy: *The Full body project*  
<https://www.rmichelson.com/artists/leonard-nimoy/the-full-body-project/zz300/>  
<https://www.featureshoot.com/2020/11/13-artists-activists-using-photography-to-explore-body-image/>
- Eleni Koumi- Loukoumh (a young Greek illustrator of body positivity)

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<https://www.instagram.com/loukoumh/?hl=en>

- Whitney Cummings: *Can I touch it?* (This is more about sexuality)

<https://whitnycummings.com/specials/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgQgdF8RhAc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jwq8u83ZhRE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yL0dp8t-0H8>





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# Thank you for reading the whole document.

If you want to know more about the project, explore more here:

- Website: [www.bodyshining.eu](http://www.bodyshining.eu)
  - Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bodyshining.eu/>
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## Explore the partners around Europe

