



BIO Girls Teen Program
Body Image Module Pilot Research Findings
July 2022

The Body Image Module of the new BIO Girls Teen Program launched July 2022! Eleven teen participants joined two co-facilitators for four 2-hour sessions. The sessions covered appearance ideals, pressure, media, and body acceptance. Participants engaged in discussion, group work, mindfulness activities, and art projects. In addition, all participants made their own Vision Board as a reminder that they are beautiful.

Before the program started, teens completed a brief set of surveys on body esteem, body acceptance, internalization of appearance ideals, and social comparison. Participants also completed the same set of surveys after the four sessions were over.

Overall, teens in the program experienced increases in body acceptance and body esteem and decreases in internalization of appearance ideals and social comparison. This is EXACTLY what we were hoping to find!

100% of participants experienced increased body esteem. In fact, girls SIGNIFICANTLY increased their body esteem by the end of the program. This means that participants were significantly happier with their bodies by the end of the program.

9 out of 10 teens experienced decreased social comparison. This means that participants were less likely to compare themselves to others by the end of the program. This finding goes hand-in-hand with increases in body esteem: girls who are happy with their bodies should not need or want to compare themselves to others!

50% of participants experienced decreased internalization of appearance ideals, or believing in the societally-prescribed expectations for girls and women to look a certain way. 82% of teens increased in body acceptance. Due to the nature of these being deeply-ingrained thoughts, it is not surprising that we did not see 100% of participants experience changes. The program was conducted over a 2-week period; it would likely take longer to see higher rates of change. However, it is worth noting that NO participant experienced an increase in internalization of appearance ideals or a decrease in body acceptance – participants either changed in the expected ways or did not show any change.

Based on our findings, we know that teens received messages from the curriculum content that helped improve their attitudes and feelings about their bodies. We also know that it takes more than a few program sessions to change deeply-ingrained thoughts. In the future, we will add a fifth session devoted



to healthy ideals and health at every size, hoping to continue to boost teens' body esteem and work towards helping more teens lower their internalization of appearance ideals.

Teens who participated in the program had positive things to say. All teens reported that they loved the activities in the program, including watercolor painting, Vision Boards, and yoga. They also liked working in small groups, meeting new people, and the leaders of the program. They enjoyed the lessons, particularly noting that they learned to accept all body shapes and that the lessons helped them feel better about themselves.