



# LESSON PLANS!

## BEAUTY: GOING BEYOND LOOKS

### PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

To broaden the concept of beauty

Why should you do this activity with your students?

- To develop a positive body image by developing a broader concept of beauty

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 **SKILL**

Self-esteem

 **RECOMMENDED  
LEVEL**

All secondary levels

 **DURATION**

90 minutes

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## BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING

- Health and well-being

## SUBJECT AREAS AND COMPETENCIES

### English, language arts

- Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn
- Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts
- Produces texts for personal and social purposes

### Physical education and health

- Adopts a healthy, active lifestyle

## CROSS-CIRCULAR COMPETENCIES

### Intellectual competencies

- Uses information
- Exercises critical judgment
- Uses creativity

### Personal and social competencies

- Achieves his/her potential
- Cooperates with others

### Communication-related competency

- Communicates appropriately

## MATERIALS



- (2) excerpts from the book *Romy, accepter son corps à l'adolescence* (Romy: Accepting Your Body During Your Teenage Years)
- 1 preliminary questionnaire per student
- 1 set of three photos per student
- 1 pad of sticky notes per team (such as *Post-its*)
- 1 felt-tip pen per team (such as a *Sharpie*)
- Bring adhesive putty, tape or magnets so that students can display their photos

# CONTENTS

## INFO

Theories on body image

03

## PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY: 15 MINUTES (AT HOME)

- **STEP 1:** Have students read a text at home dealing with challenges faced by 2 young people concerning their appearance
- **STEP 2:** Quiz on the text and personal reflection

05

## WARM-UP ACTIVITY: 20 minutes

- **STEP 1:** Prepare the activity on the impact of social media on the perception of beauty
- **STEP 2:** Distribute photos to students
- **STEP 3:** Explain instructions to students
- **STEP 4:** Observe and compare the results of the activity
- **STEP 5:** Launch the following activity

09

## PREPARATION PHASE: 10 MINUTES

- **STEP 1:** Reflect on the behaviour of the characters in activity 1 to understand the subjectivity of the criteria for beauty
- **STEP 2:** Discuss and become aware

13

## IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: 30 MINUTES

- **STEP 1:** Prepare student brainstorming activity on the lexical field of the word "beauty"
- **STEP 2:** Give brainstorming activity directions to students
- **STEP 3:** Read the results of the brainstorming session and initial thoughts and discuss the term "beauty"
- **STEP 4:** Prepare the second phase of the brainstorming activity: students change groups
- **STEP 5:** Analyze the other teams' answers

14

## INTEGRATION PHASE: 5 MINUTES

Formulate a new definition of the word "beauty" following the previous exercises

17

## CHALLENGE OF THE DAY AND REVIEW AS A CLASS: 10 minutes

Recognize one's own beauty and that of a family member or friend, beyond looks.

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## INFO

## WHAT IS BODY IMAGE?

Body image is the **perception** young people have of their **own body**. It is the answers, positive and negative, that young people give to the following questions when they look at their body:



Every young person has a different perception of their body, based on their **emotions**, **thoughts** and **behaviours**.

Thus, a young person who has a negative body image tends to:

-  **NOT ACCEPT THEIR BODY,**  
reject it or want to change certain parts
-  **SEE THEIR BODY IN PARTS** (and not as a whole),  
emphasizing the least desirable parts
-  **FEEL SHAME,** guilt or hatred towards their body
-  **NOT RECOGNIZE AND NOT RESPECT THE NEEDS** of their body
-  **TRY TO ACHIEVE A BODY THAT IS NOT THEIR OWN**



**PLEASE NOTE** that a young person with a positive body image may also be dissatisfied with certain aspects of their appearance, but it will figure less prominently in how they perceive their body, unlike young people with a negative body image.

## INFO

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO DEVELOP A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE?

Did you know that approximately **55%** of teens were dissatisfied with their appearance? By helping your students maintain a positive body image, you will have a positive impact on their mental and physical health.

### A YOUNG PERSON WHO IS DISSATISFIED WITH THEIR BODY IS AT GREATER RISK OF DEVELOPING:

- an unhealthy relationship with their body and food;
- preoccupations with food;
- weight control behaviours;
- eating disorders;
- anxiety and avoidance;
- symptoms of depression;
- isolation;
- poorer academic results.

Would you like to better understand body image issues in adolescence and implement an initiative promoting body diversity in your school?

Watch our **webcast** with Marie-Michèle Ricard, psychoeducator and psychotherapist (in French only).

FONDATION  
JEUNES  
EN TÊTE

Live

IMAGE  
CORPORELLE  
LES ENJEUX  
LES SOLUTIONS

avec  
Marie-Michèle Ricard,  
psychothérapeute

PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY:  
15 minutes

WARM-UP ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

PREPARATION :  
10 minutes

IMPLEMENTATION:  
30 minutes

EXIT:  
5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: To become aware of your relationship with appearance

## PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY (at home)

### 15 minutes



**WHAT TO DO** To begin this thought process, we recommend that you distribute this reading worksheet to your students, which they will have to fill out for the next class.

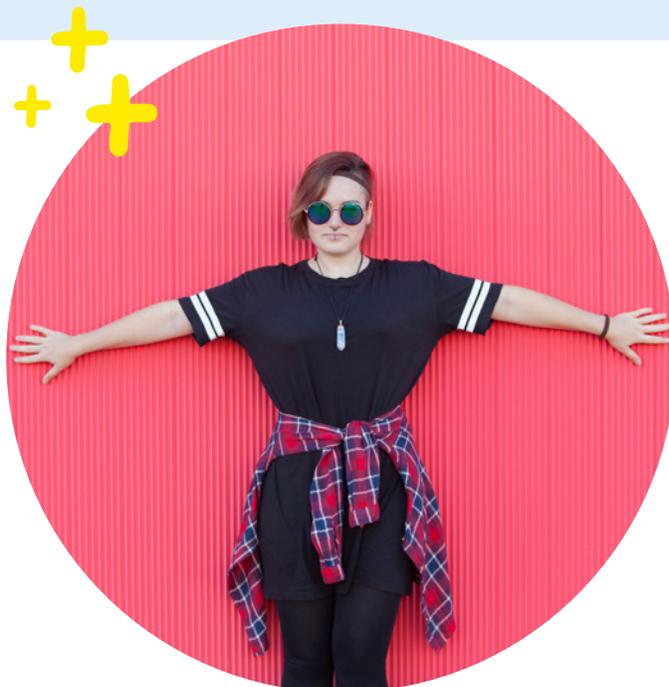
Tell your students that is a personal reflection (there are no right or wrong answers to this questionnaire) and that the answers that concern them will not be disclosed to the class.

This exercise will simply help them start to think about the concept of beauty, which you will discuss in the next class.

**WHAT TO SAY** “Before starting, I want you to know that this questionnaire marks the start of a reflection on body image and perceptions of beauty.

Don't worry – you won't have to disclose your individual answers in class.

So, I ask that you be really honest with yourself throughout the exercise.





**STEP 1: READ THE TWO EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK *ROMY, ACCEPTER SON CORPS À L'ADOLESCENCE* (ROMY: ACCEPTING YOUR BODY DURING YOUR TEENAGE YEARS) BY MARIE-MICHÈLE RICARD**

Accepting your body in adolescence to understand what the characters Gabriel and Romy are experiencing.

### EXCERPT 1 – ROMY

*Standing, frozen. I'm in front of my clothes closet and staring into the void. Not because there's nothing in it – quite the contrary – it's overflowing! But because I find nothing. I'm tired of spending so much time in the morning picking out my clothes, looking in the mirror, scrutinizing myself, getting angry, feeling hopeless. I'm sick of seeing my mirror as my sworn enemy. I'm at the point where I stress out just thinking of standing in front of it. There, now I have a lump in my throat. I'm tearing up.*

*I'm starting my last year of secondary school. Wow, it's unbelievable – the start of my last year. I've waited so long for this. It's here, finally! Being one of the oldest, one of the coolest. Being someone that the younger students look at and aspire to become. I still remember starting back to school in my first year of secondary school. Looking at students in their final year from a distance, they seemed so big, so cool. Now that it's my turn, I feel like I'm not at all interested! I think about prom, my dress, etc. and I start to feel anxious. I look at myself in the mirror and I feel ugly. There's an annoying little voice that tells me that everything is wrong.*

*"That, that and that," it's TOO big, TOO flabby, TOO crooked. The more I look at myself, the sadder I feel. I don't even feel like going to school. What's happening to me? Why do I feel like this? Why is my head fighting with my body?*

### EXCERPT 2 – GABRIEL

*New year, new school, new city. If I had been able to choose, it's not the choice I would have made. My father's in the army and we unfortunately have no choice when it comes to his different work assignments. I managed to attend my first 4 years of secondary school at the same school.*

*Four years at the same place...quite a feat. But now, I'm a new student in my final year. I don't like it at all. What are the others going to think of me? In the final year, everyone already has their own circle of friends. I don't feel like being the school reject. Why wasn't I born with my father's genes? Tall, muscular, strong. No. I have my mother's genes.*

*My grandmother's, even! I'm short (it's even a family joke) and underweight. No matter how much bodybuilding I do, nothing works. And I don't like weight training. Can a person skip the first day of school? Can a person skip their last year of secondary school? Would anyone really notice if I didn't show up at school? Okay, then. If you've got to go, you've got to go.*



STEP 2: THINK AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW

EXCERPT 1 – ROMY

CIRCLE THE EMOTIONS THAT ROMY FEELS WHEN SHE LOOKS AT HERSELF IN THE MIRROR



Angry – Motivated – Hopeless – Fed up

Peaceful – Stressed out – Sad

Emotional – Invincible – Powerless

Distressed – Good – Happy

ROMY'S BODY HAS PHYSICAL REACTIONS WHEN SHE LOOKS AT HERSELF IN THE MIRROR. IDENTIFY A SENTENCE OR AN EXCERPT THAT EXPLAINS HOW HER BODY REACTS.



Four horizontal yellow lines for writing.

ROMY IS A TEEN LIKE YOU. DO YOU THINK THAT THE PERCEPTION SHE HAS OF HER BODY MIGHT BE A DISTORTED VIEW OF REALITY? WHY?



Four horizontal yellow lines for writing.



HAS A SITUATION LIKE THE ONE ROMY IS EXPERIENCING EVER HAPPENED TO YOU? IF SO, EXPLAIN THE CONTEXT AND CIRCUMSTANCES.



Four horizontal yellow lines for writing.





# EXCERPT 2 – GABRIEL

LIKE ROMY, GABRIEL DOESN'T LIKE WHAT HE SEES IN THE MIRROR. WHAT WORDS DOES HE USE TO DESCRIBE HIMSELF?



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GABRIEL'S FAMILY LAUGHS ABOUT HIS HEIGHT: «I'M SHORT (IT'S EVEN A FAMILY JOKE) AND UNDERWEIGHT." EVEN IF THE MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY HAVE NO ILL INTENTIONS, WHAT IMPACT CAN THEIR JOKES HAVE ON GABRIEL?



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GABRIEL DOESN'T LIKE TO DO WEIGHT TRAINING. HAVE YOU EVER DONE A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THAT YOU DON'T LIKE JUST TO CHANGE YOUR BODY?



**If so, how did it impact you (positively or negatively)? Explain.**

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**If not, what is your goal when you engage in a particular sport or physical activity?**

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**Thanks for being honest in taking part in this activity!**

We will continue the discussion in class. If the activity triggered difficult emotions in you or if you have questions about your body image, visit the site [www.fondationjeunestentete.org](http://www.fondationjeunestentete.org) or contact Tel-Jeunes at 1-800-263-2266 to speak to a youth worker free of charge.



PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY:  
15 minutes

WARM-UP ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

PREPARATION :  
10 minutes

IMPLEMENTATION:  
30 minutes

EXIT:  
5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: To understand the impact of social media on the perception of beauty

## WARM-UP ACTIVITY

### 20 minutes



#### INFO

**In this section,** we propose that you initiate a discussion with your students about the influence of social media on their perception of beauty. The final objective is to make them realize the extent to which beauty is made up of subjective and variable criteria, and is steeped in social constructs. Your students will then be able to understand how social media shape their relationship with beauty and can impact their behaviour with respect to appearance and their relationship with their own body.

#### STEP 1:

**WHAT TO DO** Before your students arrive, write the name of the three following places on the classroom walls: **“the walls of my house,” “on my Instagram page”** and **“in private, out of public view”**. You can use cardboard taped to the walls or write on the board, making sure you have three separate locations so that students can easily move around and have enough room to tape their photos.

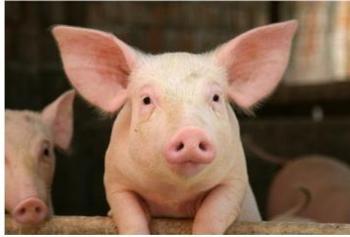
#### STEP 2:

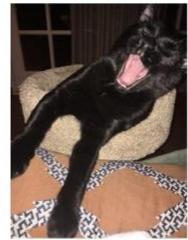
**WHAT TO DO** **When students arrive, give three photos to each student.** Have adhesive putty, scotch tape or magnets on hand so that students can post their photos on the designated surface.

#### HERE IS A SET OF PHOTOS TO PRINT OUT.



**WHAT TO DO** **You will have cut the photos out beforehand.** Now you can distribute them to your students so that each person has 3 photos of the same animal. If you have more students than photos, don't hesitate to print out the photos twice.





**PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY:**  
15 minutes

**WARM-UP ACTIVITY:**  
20 minutes

**PREPARATION :**  
10 minutes

**IMPLEMENTATION:**  
30 minutes

**EXIT:**  
5 minutes

**OBJECTIVE:** To understand the impact of social media on the perception of beauty

### STEP 3: Read the directions for the warm-up activity out loud.

#### WHAT TO SAY

“You are each holding three different photos of the same animal. Now, locate the three places (real and virtual) written on the classroom walls: **“the walls of my house” – “on my Instagram page” – “in private, out of public view.”**”

Imagine you are the animal in these photos. If the photos you are holding were yours, where would you be comfortable posting them among these three places?

**More than one photo can be put in the same place.**

**When I give the signal,** I'll ask you to go put your photos under the name of a place in the classroom. Take the time to think. This is not a race. Then, go back to your seat.

### STEP 4: Invite the students to observe and compare the type of photos posted in the same place.

#### INFO

By inviting your students to compare the photos posted under the same place, you will allow them to see similarities in their answers, as well as differences, which are sometimes significant. Highlight these differences so that your students understand that beauty is a subjective concept that is specific to each person. You can also explain that preconceived notions about appearance are learned in early childhood, the same way we learn racist or sexist attitudes.

**Society, upbringing and personal experiences contribute to the development of rigid criteria related to appearance and are the basis for intolerance and stigmatization. But - good news - everything that's learned can be unlearned!**

**WHAT TO DO** Get your students to describe their observations.

#### EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO GET THE DISCUSSION GOING:

- What are your observations?
- Can someone explain their choices?
- What was your approach?
- Why save this type of photo for social media?
- Why not show these in public (pointing to the photos in the “in private, out of public view” section)?

**WHAT TO DO** Indicate that all the choices made by the students are not the same because beauty **is a matter of perception.**

Write on the board: “Perception of beauty” to reveal the workshop topic.

PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY:  
15 minutes

WARM-UP ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

PREPARATION :  
10 minutes

IMPLEMENTATION:  
30 minutes

EXIT:  
5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: To understand the subjectivity of beauty criteria

## PREPARATION PHASE

### 10 minutes



#### INFO

**In this part**, we return to the idea of the subjective, personal perception of beauty through the experiences of the characters Romy and Gabriel. The objective is to help students gain perspective on their own perception of beauty and open up to a broader view of it.

### STEP 1: REVISITING THE EXERCISE DONE BEFOREHAND IN CLASS OR AT HOME

**WHAT TO DO** Ask your class questions orally.

**WHAT TO SAY** “Based on your reading of the excerpt about Romy, **how would she describe beauty?**”

Based on your reading of the excerpt about Gabriel, **how would he describe beauty?**”

### STEP 2: LET A FEW STUDENTS ANSWER, THEN RE-OPEN THE DISCUSSION

**WHAT TO SAY** “If we summarize, we could define beauty as being “someone or something beautiful, that conforms to an aesthetic ideal.”

Then ask:

**But on what are we basing our definition of beautiful?  
What are your criteria?**



**WHAT TO DO** Ask several students to get different answers. Conclude by saying:

**WHAT TO SAY** “Based on this exercise, we can understand that these criteria may be rooted in norms, but may also be different for each person.”

PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY:  
15 minutes

WARM-UP ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

Preparation :  
10 minutes

IMPLEMENTATION:  
30 minutes

EXIT:  
5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: To reinforce learned concepts

# IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

## 30 minutes



### INFO

**In this section,** we invite you to have your students think about the concept of beauty in its broad sense, beyond even the physical characteristics of a person. By creating the lexical field for the word “beauty,” students will see that it can be related to moral or psychological qualities, or to a particular situation. For example, the Little Prince admires his rose because it is the only one on his planet. This reflection will gradually bring them to deconstruct their preconceived ideas about appearance and to integrate the idea that beauty is in everyone, regardless of their appearance.

### STEP 1:

**WHAT TO DO** Form teams of four or five students and draw on the board as many columns as there are groups plus one (1) extra one (in the middle) that will be used for the conclusion of the exercise.

GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4

### STEP 2:

**WHAT TO DO** Read the instructions for the activity, reminding students that it is a lexical field (give an example, if necessary).



**PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY:**  
15 minutes

**WARM-UP ACTIVITY:**  
20 minutes

**Preparation :**  
10 minutes

**IMPLEMENTATION:**  
30 minutes

**EXIT:**  
5 minutes

**OBJECTIVE:** To reinforce learned concepts

**WHAT TO SAY**  In teams, you have 10 minutes to create a lexical field for the word "beauty."

-  - Choose one person who will be responsible for going to get the material (a pad of sticky notes and felt-tip pens).
- Choose a column on the board for your group.
- Write the word "Beauty" on a sticky note and stick it in the centre of the surface.
- Write one word per sticky note related to the word in the centre (write rather big).
- Stick the sticky notes so that they form a cloud around the word in the centre.

### STEP 3:

**WHAT TO DO** Once the sticky notes have been stuck to the board, take the time as the whole class to look at the lexical fields of each group.

Invite the students to describe their observations and explain their reasoning without saying whether any answer is right or wrong. Remind the class that beauty is a matter of perception.

**WHAT TO SAY**  Examples of questions that you can ask them to lead the discussion:

-  - Which words are repeated from one team to the next?
- Which words seem unique?
- Do you think that certain words don't make sense or are not related to the theme of beauty?
- Why?

**WHAT TO DO** If the students wrote words that are not related to physical appearance (qualities, feelings, skills, behaviours, etc.), take advantage of the opportunity to ask the students about their reasoning.

**WHAT TO SAY**  If there is no lexical field that contains this type of word, ask the question:

- Charisma is perceived and is felt, but cannot be observed through a specific behaviour. Could "charisma" be part of the lexical field for the word "beauty"?
- Are there other qualities, attitudes or behaviours that might belong to the lexical field? Which?

**WHAT TO DO** Let a few students answer, then conclude by saying that beauty is a lot more than what is just related to looks. Having a very broad, comprehensive view of beauty, including several qualities, ways of being, of feeling, etc., can help you feel good in your body.

PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY:  
15 minutes

WARM-UP ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

Preparation :  
10 minutes

IMPLEMENTATION:  
30 minutes

EXIT:  
5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: To reinforce learned concepts

## STEP 4: Ask the students to change places.

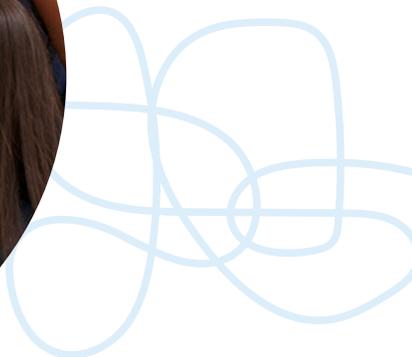
**WHAT TO SAY** “ Group 1 will move to work on group 2’s lexical field, and so on.  
The goal is to work on a different lexical field than that of their own team.”

## STEP 5: Read the following instructions.

**WHAT TO SAY** “ Now, you need to analyze the lexical field of another team.

“

- Find words that aren't related to physical appearance (qualities, feelings, skills, behaviours, etc.).
- Choose one person on the team to be responsible for sticking the sticky notes that contain these words in the middle column to form a new lexical field.
- Return to your seats and have a look at this new lexical field.



PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY:  
15 minutes

WARM-UP ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

Preparation :  
10 minutes

IMPLEMENTATION:  
30 minutes

EXIT:  
5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: To reinforce learned concepts

## INTEGRATION PHASE

### 5 minutes



**WHAT TO DO** Once the students have looked at the new lexical field, ask the question again:

**WHAT TO SAY**  Now that you've done this exercise, **"What is beauty?"**

**WHAT TO DO** Let the students answer. The goal is to have them see that their concept of beauty has broadened.

**INFO** **To help them, here are a few possible answers:**  
Beauty is a perception. It's also love of self, freedom, well-being, etc.



## CHALLENGE OF THE DAY

### 5 minutes



**WHAT TO DO** With the ideas related to the workshop, give the students a challenge to work on outside class as a final integration step.

**Read the following instructions:**

**WHAT TO SAY** “With the exercises we did today, we were able to realize that beauty goes beyond physical appearance.

**Here’s the first challenge I’m giving you:**

“

- Each of you will choose someone from among your family or friends. Identify something beautiful about this person outside their physical appearance.

- Reach out to this person (in writing or orally) to compliment them in the following manner:

- «You’re a beautiful person because (avoid referring to a physical aspect and mention the chosen characteristic).”

“

**And here’s your second challenge:**

Repeat the exercise, directing it to yourself:

«I’m a beautiful person because (avoid referring to a physical aspect and mention the chosen characteristic).”



PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY:  
15 minutes

WARM-UP ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

Preparation :  
10 minutes

IMPLEMENTATION:  
30 minutes

EXIT:  
5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: To reinforce learned concepts

## REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITY

### 5 minutes



**WHAT TO DO** In the next class, do a quick review of the challenge by asking the class the following questions orally (be careful not to force anyone to answer):

#### WHAT TO SAY

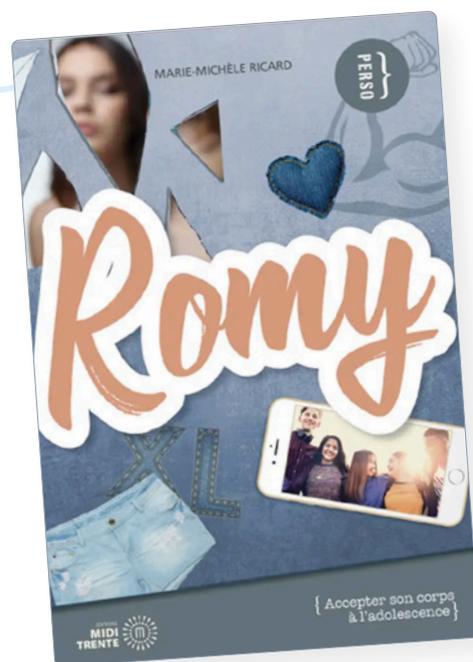
-  Who had a chance to complete one of the challenges?
-  Who had a chance to complete both challenges?
-  What was the most difficult part of the exercise (for the other person or for yourself)?
-  What was the other person's reaction following the compliment?
-  Does it feel good to validate yourself simply for what you are?



## RESOURCES

## ROMY : accepter son corps à l'adolescence (ROMY: Accepting Your Body During Your Teenage Years)

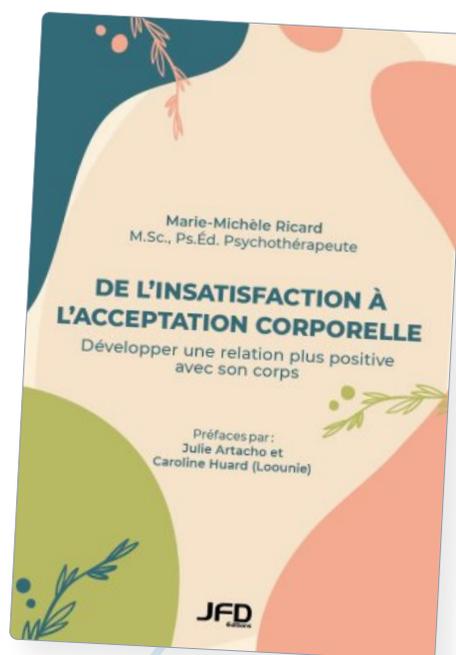
Marie-Michel Ricard



## FROM DISSATISFACTION TO BODY ACCEPTANCE

### Developing a More Positive Relationship with Your Body

Marie-Michèle Ricard



# CHECK THESE OUT

## THE MINI-GUIDE

on body image in teens, including key tools for promoting body diversity and role-plays to help you react better



## PODCASTS

to better understand the role you can play as a teacher with your students to improve their body image



## TESTIMONIALS

of several young people and advice from a psychoeducator to help young people accept their bodies



## ALL OUR TOOLS AND LESSON PLANS

in our School Toolkit to help young people develop good mental health



[fondationjeunesentete.org](https://fondationjeunesentete.org)

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