



CONSCIOUS YOUTH BEHAVIOURS.  
IN EMERGING REALITIES



Non-formal education practices:

# Cyberbullying & Body Shaming

R2 CYBER TOOLKIT



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<b>#1</b>	<b>I am a child like you!</b>
<b>Threats</b>	<b>Cyberbullying and Body Shaming</b>
	Cyberbullying encompasses the malicious use of digital platforms—such as social media, chat rooms, e-mail, and websites—to harass, threaten, humiliate, or target individuals or groups with repeated, deliberate intent. This digital form of bullying can deeply affect the mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being of victims, spanning across various online environments where interactions occur. A particular manifestation of cyberbullying, known as body shaming, specifically targets an individual's physical attributes, including body shape, size, or appearance. This focused attack not only undermines the victim's self-image but also contributes to a wider culture of scrutiny and judgement online, amplifying the detrimental effects of cyberbullying.
<b>Typology</b>	Group discussions and debates
<b>Duration</b>	180 minutes/3 hours (The program can be adjusted according to the age of the students)
<b>Modality</b>	In-presence
<b>Aim</b>	The main aim of this activity is to develop empathy and active listening as the main way to reduce the phenomenon of bullying in general and bodyshaming in particular. Also, this activity aims to develop critical thinking, the ability to understand the differences between people but also the short- and long-term consequences that certain expressions used can have.
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p>Develop the ability to analyse one's own language.</p> <p>Improving the ability to empathize with others.</p> <p>Understanding individual differences in setting personal boundaries.</p> <p>Developing active listening skills.</p>
<b>Trainee profile</b>	Participants aged 13-18
<b>n° participants</b>	15-20
<b>Materials</b>	<p>Internet connected devices (phones)</p> <p>Flipcharts, markers and sticky notes.</p> <p>Worksheets (examples of body shaming)</p> <p>Leaflet with theoretical information</p>
<b>Preparation</b>	Prepare the worksheets (See attachments) and leaflets with the theoretical part.

<p><b>Implementation</b></p>	<p><b>Session 1</b></p> <p><b>Introduction-Therapeutic story (10 min):</b></p> <p>The Lion and the Forester</p> <p>One day the lion and the forester meet in the forest. They start talking about what else is happening in the forest. From word to word, they end up contradicting each other and the forester says to the lion "Oh, but you are still ugly with your tangled mane. I have never seen an uglier creature." The lion looks at him carefully and says: "Please use the hatchet you have in your hand and hit me". The forester replies "I don't want to hit you. Just because you're so ugly doesn't mean I have to hit you." The lion insists until he manages to convince the forester to hit him. After this event, everyone goes their separate ways, but they meet again after a few years. The forester asks the lion if its wound is healed. The lion asks the forester to look for himself and see if it is cured. The wound had healed well, and the forester said to the lion "It's hard to tell where I hit you." The lion looks at the forester and answers him "It's true, it's healed, but you said I'm ugly, I'm still in pain. Don't forget," a knife wound is not like a word wound." Only then did the woodsman realize how wrong he was and realized that sometimes words leave deeper scars than physical wounds.</p> <p>What do you think is the moral of the story?</p> <p>Why do you think that the wound produced by the word has not healed?</p> <p>How do you think the lion felt? What about the forester?</p> <p><b>Group discussions and debates (30 min):</b></p> <p>The students are presented with examples of body shaming taken from the pages of public figures posted by people on social networks (For example, "Look, this is how plastic pollutes the oceans"(comments to a person who has had plastic surgery), "The toes are a bit long" , "Put your hand and eat because your stomach is stuck to the column"(expression used with the meaning "you are too skinny because you don't eat/ have nothing to eat"). These are some examples of comments received by a local star on the last picture posted on Facebook). Examples can be taken from the Facebook, Instagram pages of relevant people for young people in each country. Young people go to the Facebook or Instagram page of their favourite celebrity and then go to the comments section of the latest photos posted by her. From there they will select those comments that are related to the celebrity's appearance.</p> <p>The students will have the task of completing the list with at least 5 examples taken either from their pages (if applicable) or from other pages of public figures. After they complete the task, the examples found will be discussed. After the discussion, students will receive leaflets containing theoretical information about body shaming (Appendix 1).</p> <p>In which category could you enter the examples found (body shaming related to weight, appearance, hairiness, gender)?</p> <p>What are the most frequently used expressions?</p>
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Have you come across expressions that you thought were funny? What about expressions that you found disturbing?

Questions adjust based on the type of examples students find.

In the second part of the activity, the students will be divided into groups of 4 and will have the task of identifying in the common vocabulary of people those personal questions/remarks concerning the body appearance (and not only) that should be avoided. Questions like "Have you lost weight yet?", "Are you going to eat everything?", "Have you gained weight yet?", or certain expressions which are sometimes considered jokes: "put a stone in your pocket so the wind doesn't blow you away" and so on. After identifying these questions, also within the groups, they will have the task of presenting the emotion that the person asked will feel.

**Reflection (10 min):**

How often have you heard these remarks? Have you used them? Have you ever thought about the emotion the other person might be feeling? What are the short- and long-term consequences that certain expressions used can have the on the person? How did you feel when you heard them addressed to other people?

**Session 2**

**1. Introduction (5 min):** a brief recap of the previous session is carried out: What are the main pieces of information that you remember? Was there any part of the activity that made you think?

**The Masks (20 minutes):**

Each student will be asked to write in block letters a list of some physical characteristics (3-5 characteristics) that they think other people see in them. The lists are collected, shuffled, and distributed randomly. Each student's task is to identify the person described in the list given and confirm/deny those traits.

The aim of this exercise is to help young people form a more complex image of themselves. Not infrequently young people find that the image others have of us does not coincide with the image we think others have of us. For example, a young person who has a complex because he has big eyes will think that others see this in him and characterize him by this, but it is possible that others do not even notice or give importance to this aspect and characterize him by the way he dresses or by the color of his hair. So the purpose of the exercise is also to emphasize the positive aspects that others notice in them. **VERY IMPORTANT:** It must be specified from the beginning of the activity that the topic must be approached in a respectful manner, without insults or inappropriate jokes. After completing the task, students who wish can answer a series of questions: What surprised you in this exercise? What is the most important thing you learned today? Why do you think this?

**The exercise - Personal terminals (20 min)**

The teacher will draw on the blackboard or on a flipchart sheet a line that will represent a continuum from the end of "Joke" to the end of "Attack on the person". Each student will think of an expression, or a word related to physical

appearance or gender, what was said to him or what he heard said to another person and to specify roughly where it would fall on that continuum, if it can be considered a joke or is more of an insult. For example, in Romania there is an expression used quite frequently when a person comes "what wind brings you here?". Used to a skinny person it might not be perceived as an insult but if we say "you are so skinny that the Somalians have opened an NGO with your name" then the chances that the person will feel insulted increase.

After all students have written down the examples on that continuum, the teacher will debate together with them the way people perceive certain remarks differently. Why do people use such words? Is it a form of bullying or not? How did you feel when you realized that people have different limits?

**Reflection** (5 min):

What made you curious today? How can you apply these learnings in the future?

**Session 3**

**Introduction:** Energizing game (5 min):

Favourite colours: we recommend using this game for a group that has problems with interpersonal communication (at school (?) or in everyday life). Gather the participants and explain that you would like to get to know them better. For this, everyone should think about their favourite colour, and at the instructor's signal (for example: 1, 2, ready!), everyone should shout it as loud as possible. Then ask a few participants if they can specify the favourite colour of any of their colleagues/neighbours. It is very likely that the majority will not be able to do it. Ask them why they can't say? This little game makes it very clear to the participants that for good communication you need to speak as well as listen.

**Active listening** (35 min):

The participants are divided into groups of 3-5 people. Each participant will have a task within the group. For each group, a person will be designated who will have the task of transmitting a message to the other members of the group. The other members will also play a role: one will always interrupt the person speaking, one will only try to come up with counter arguments, one will not answer anything, one will always correct, etc. Group tasks are chosen or adjusted by the teacher according to the particularities of the group of students. By rotation, depending on the available time, the roles are changed within the group in such a way that each student ends up in the position of the one who has to convey a message. At the end the students will be asked how the experience was. When was the hardest time for them? But the easiest? What bothered them the most? After they finish answering they will receive some tips to improve their active listening skills.

Moment of reflection: Returning to the previous activity, how many times have you seen a similar situation? Does it sound like some of the discussions you have on your personal social media groups? Could such a simple discussion that only serves to convey a message or opinion escalate to body shaming?

**The exercise - Jar of encouragement** (10 minutes)

	The students will each receive a note on which they will write a message of encouragement for a person who has been a victim of body-shaming. Each student will put the note in a jar. After all the students have brought the notes, they will be read by the teacher and then the jar will be closed and given to the students to keep until they think that someone needs to hear some nice words that give us courage to go through a difficult time.
<b>Tips and hints</b>	Encourage participants to think critically after each proposed exercise, focusing on self-assessment and monitoring the language they use both in real life and online.  Customize the activities according to the age of the students in your school.
<b>Safety measures</b>	Create a respectful and nonjudgmental space for discussion.
<b>External references and resources</b>	Ronson, J. (2015). <i>So you've been publicly shamed</i> . Riverhead Books.  Twenge, J. M. (2017). <i>iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy--and completely unprepared for adulthood</i> . Atria Books.  Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti, G. W., Schroeder, A. N., & Lattanner, M. E. (2014). <i>Cyberbullying and online harassment: What the research tells us</i> . Palgrave Macmillan.
<b>Partner/ Author</b>	CJRAE Botoșani, Romania

### Appendix 1:

The concept of body shaming involves humiliating a person through inappropriate comments about their body size or shape. This type of criticism can be addressed to others or to oneself. You may feel dissatisfied with your weight or the way your body looks and judge yourself harshly.

Social media often emphasizes physical appearance and makes it easy to post hurtful comments about other people. The overall message is often one that you should strive for the perfect body and find ways to hide your flaws, and this can have a huge negative influence on your self-image.

#### Types of Body Shaming

Fat shaming: "You shouldn't wear that outfit until you lose weight."

Skinny shaming: "She really needs to eat a cheeseburger."

Attractiveness shaming: "What is a girl like her doing with a guy who looks like that?"

Body hair shaming: "Gross, underarm hair on women is such a turn-off."

Food shaming: "Are you sure you want dessert? You could stand to go without."

Gender shaming: "He's a man, he needs to bulk up more."

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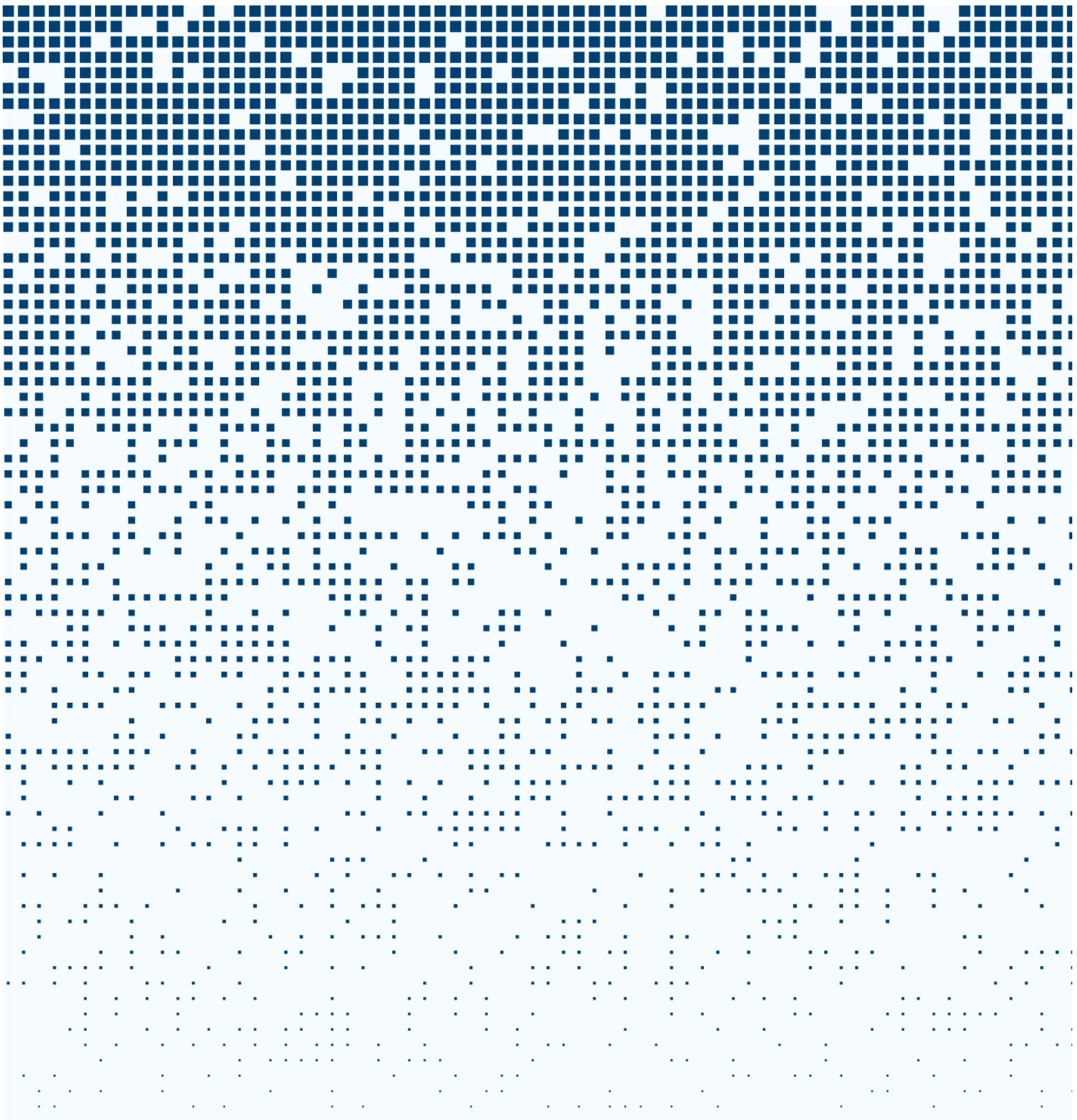
## Appendix 2:

Active listening is an essential skill in communication. It involves paying full attention to the person speaking, understanding, and responding empathetically to what they are saying. Here are some tips for practicing active listening:

1. Focus: Eliminate any distractions and focus on the person speaking. Be present in the present moment.
2. Eye contact: Maintain eye contact with the speaker. This shows that you are interested and paying attention.
3. Don't interrupt: Wait for the person you're talking to to finish before answering. Don't interrupt or try to formulate your answer while he's talking.
4. Summarize and validate: After the person has finished speaking, you can summarize what you understood and validate their feelings or experiences. For example: "I understand that you are feeling frustrated about the situation."
5. Open-ended questions: Use open-ended questions to encourage the person to express more. For example: "How do you feel about this situation?"
6. Empathy: Show empathy and understanding. Be open to the other's experiences and feelings.
7. Silence: Sometimes silence can be powerful. It allows the person to reflect and express their thoughts without pressure.



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