

# LESSON PLANS! ACCEPTING AND RESPECTING BODY DIVERSITY

## PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

To instill a **genuine culture of acceptance of body diversity in your class.**

Why should you do this workshop with your students?

- To help them build instincts that prevent them from believing or spreading prejudices, especially those based on appearance.
- To help them develop a healthy body image and embrace body diversity.

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 **COMPETENCY** Self-esteem

 **RECOMMENDED LEVEL** All high-school grade levels

 **DURATION** 45-50 minutes

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## QUEBEC EDUCATION PROGRAM

### BROAD AREAS OF LEARNING

- Health and well-being
- Citizenship and community life

### SUBJECT AREAS AND COMPETENCIES

#### English, language arts

- To use language to communicate and learn
- To write texts for personal and social purposes

#### Physical education and health

- To adopt a healthy, active lifestyle

### CROSS-CIRCULAR COMPETENCIES

#### Intellectual competencies

- To exercise critical judgment
- To use creativity

#### Personal and social competencies

- To realize their potential
- To cooperate with others

#### Communication-related competency

- To communicate appropriately

### MATERIALS:



- Bristol board / cardstock / sheets of paper
- Pencils or markers
- Illustration file

## CONTENTS

### INFO

Theoretical concepts about prejudice

03

### ICEBREAKER: 5–10 minutes

05

### PREPARATION: 15 minutes

06

- **STEP 1:** Understand the concept of diversity
- **STEP 2:** Introduction to body diversity
- **STEP 3:** Understand the importance of respecting and promoting body diversity

### ACTIVITY: 20 minutes

10

“This year’s challenge”: Adopt a body diversity acceptance code of conduct in the classroom

- **STEP 1:** Ask your students to form small groups and think of some rules they would like to include in the code of conduct
- **STEP 2:** Discuss the rules suggested by students as a class

### EXIT TICKET TASK: 5 minutes

12

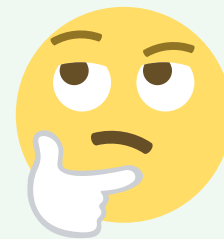
Commit to respecting the code of conduct

## INFO

**WHAT IS PREJUDICE?**

Prejudice is an opinion or belief that you accept without having all the facts — and sometimes it's imposed on you.

**Prejudices are generally untrue and easily spread!**

**WHERE DO PREJUDICES COME FROM?**

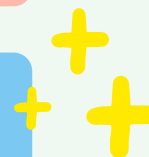
**Prejudices are created based on information we get from:**

- our culture
- personal experiences
- comments we've heard
- institutional influences
- outside factors like social media

**WHAT TYPES OF PREJUDICE ARE THERE?**

**Prejudice can target all kinds of personal characteristics:**

- abilities
- age
- social status
- ethnic origin
- gender identity or expression
- physical appearance and weight
- religious affiliation
- sexual orientation
- etc.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF PREJUDICE?**

We know that appearance-based prejudices are fairly common in our society. They can be based on size, weight, strength, hair colour, skin colour, disabilities, and more.





## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SPREADING PREJUDICES?

Prejudices not only harm their targets, they also harm the people who believe them! Prejudice is a mental block that prevents people from understanding and being open to others.

**Prejudice can lead to discrimination and bullying.**

## HOW ARE PREJUDICES SPREAD?

Unfortunately, it's pretty easy to spread prejudice. It happens when misinformation, a lack of nuance, or incomplete information is shared.

### For example:

- expressing an idea without proof
- accepting information without asking questions
- rejecting more factual or scientific information

## HOW CAN PREJUDICE BE PREVENTED?

It's virtually impossible to harbour no prejudices. The important thing is to recognize which ones we have so we can gradually develop fairer thinking. **The best way to fight prejudice is to seek out the necessary information and keep an open mind.**



ICEBREAKER:  
5-10 MINUTES

PREPARATION:  
15 minutes

ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

EXIT TICKET  
TASK: 5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: Understand appearance-based stigma

## ICEBREAKER

### 5-10 minutes



#### INFO

#### What is stigma?

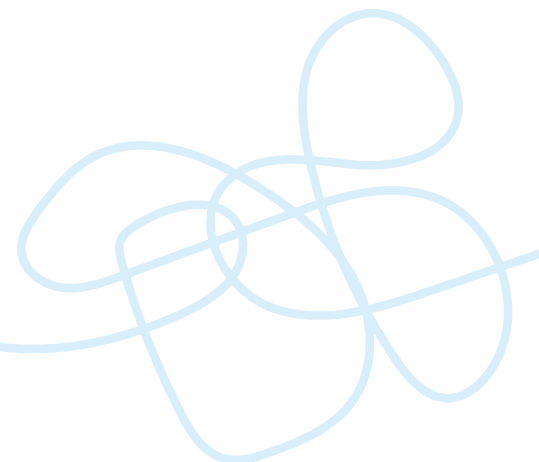
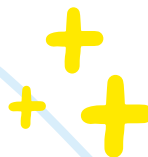
Appearance-based stigma means negative beliefs about a person or group of people because of what we think makes them different. This can lead to prejudice, negative attitudes, and discrimination, which means treating people unfairly based on their how they look.

#### WHAT TO SAY “Do you know what appearance-based stigma is?”

This form of stigma stems from prejudices we have about someone’s appearance. These prejudices were created by our society, its beauty standards and (unfounded) beliefs, and our life experiences.

Appearance-related prejudices are the most common ones (as much as, if not more than, racism or sexism). For example, did you know that statistics show that **9 out of 10 cases of bullying are due to prejudices about appearance?**

During today’s workshop, we’ll work together to fight the spread of appearance-based prejudice.”



ICEBREAKER:  
5-10 MINUTES

PREPARATION:  
15 minutes

ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

EXIT TICKET  
TASK: 5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: Guide the students toward an understanding of body diversity

# PREPARATION

## 15 minutes



### INFO

#### What is body diversity?

Body diversity is an important societal value that should be considered and respected, both individually and collectively, as it promotes the true representation of human bodies.

Body diversity refers to diversity in all aspects of our bodies.

- It celebrates our uniqueness and the value of being unique.
- It counterbalances unrealistic, unattainable beauty standards that aggressively try to fit everyone into the same mould.
- Body diversity is a reality check; it reminds us that humans are diverse by nature.



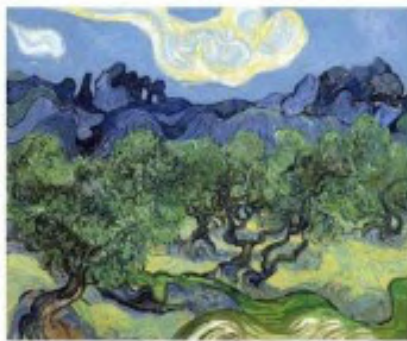
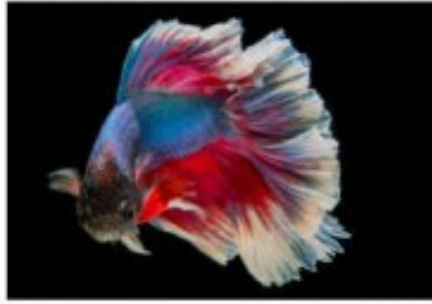
**Consider using images that reflect this diversity in your classes.** Choose different body shapes (e.g., don't always choose the same silhouette) and opt for a range of images, even if this means using non-gendered images and not focusing on appearance or the body. Your images can represent objects, places, and specific topics rather than just people.



## STEP 1: Understand the concept of diversity

### WHAT TO DO

Start the discussion by presenting images that show diversity in nature (landscapes, animals). Print or project the following illustration file.



**ICEBREAKER:**  
5-10 MINUTES

**PREPARATION:**  
15 minutes

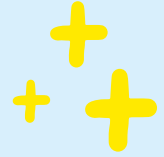
**ACTIVITY:**  
20 minutes

**EXIT TICKET  
TASK:** 5 minutes

**OBJECTIVE:** Guide the students toward an understanding of body diversity

**WHAT TO SAY** “Let’s start by taking the time to look at these images. What do they mean to you?”

## STEP 2: Introduction to body diversity



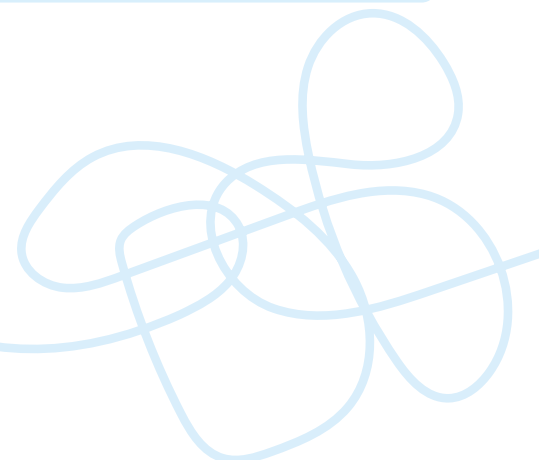
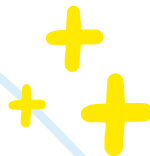
**WHAT TO DO** Help your students become aware of body diversity and to what point we are all different by encouraging them to raise their hands and name different features of the body.

**WHAT TO SAY** “We’ve just seen an example of the diversity that can be found in nature. Now, let’s think about the diversity in the human body. Can you name some features we use to describe the body?”

**Here are some examples to round off the list:**

- Height
- Hair colour, texture and length
- Eye colour
- Skin colour
- Shoe size
- Beauty spots / birthmarks
- Body hair
- etc.

**WHAT TO SAY** “We are all different. And just like we can’t expect that we will all have the same shoe size or be the same height, it’s impossible to expect that everyone will weigh the same. But all bodies are entitled to respect.”



ICEBREAKER:  
5-10 MINUTES

PREPARATION:  
15 minutes

ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

EXIT TICKET  
TASK: 5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: Guide the students toward an understanding of body diversity

## STEP 3: Understand the importance of respecting and promoting body diversity

**WHAT TO SAY** “We’ve just seen what body diversity can look like. It’s nothing new; body diversity has always existed. Why do you think it’s so important to accept and respect it?”

**Wrap up the discussion by saying:**

“Accepting body diversity is a very important value that ensures all bodies are respected and represented. It helps minimize the importance of the single beauty ideal by illustrating and reminding us that humans are diverse by design.

Each body is **unique**, has the **right to exist**, and **deserves respect**. Our diversity is what makes us beautiful.”



ICEBREAKER:  
5-10 MINUTES

PREPARATION:  
15 minutes

ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

EXIT TICKET  
TASK: 5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: Develop a body diversity acceptance code of conduct in class

## ACTIVITY: “This year’s challenge” 20 minutes

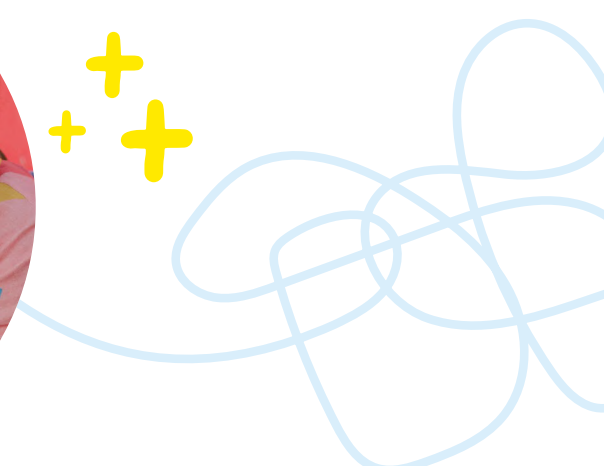
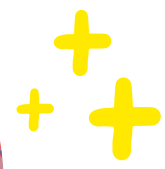


**WHAT TO DO** To fight appearance-related prejudice and increase the acceptance of body diversity, ask your students to work together to establish rules to follow in class — and outside the class too!

**WHAT TO SAY** “I suggest we work together to develop a body diversity acceptance code of conduct to combat appearance-based stigma. The rules we establish will become our class policy, but I encourage you to follow outside the class too.”

### STEP 1: Ask your students to form small groups and come up with a few rules they would like to include in the code.

**WHAT TO DO** Distribute materials that they can use to write down the rules (bristol board, cardstock, large sheet of paper, etc.). Give your students 10 minutes to reflect.



ICEBREAKER:  
5-10 MINUTES

PREPARATION:  
15 minutes

ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

EXIT TICKET  
TASK: 5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: Develop a body diversity acceptance code of conduct in class

## STEP 2: Get everyone back together to share the rules they've come up with.

### WHAT TO DO

Ask one student from each group to present their sheet with their group's rules, and then pool them to make a code of conduct with five rules that you can write on a new poster.

**If you need more rules to round out the code, here are a few examples you can suggest. Introduce them to your students by saying, "Oh, and what do you think about this statement...?"**

- All bodies are entitled to respect.
- All bodies have their own unique features.
- We do not tolerate or make any negative comments about appearance.
- We understand and accept that all body shapes exist and are all equally important.
- The human body is diverse in its colour, size, shape, height and all its other features.
- Each person has their own unique body.
- Try your best not to rely on first impressions.
- Do not share your prejudices so you can stop their spread.
- Develop relationships by learning how to get to know people for who they are.
- Fight for body diversity.
- Condemn all forms of bullying.



ICEBREAKER:  
5-10 MINUTES

PREPARATION:  
15 minutes

ACTIVITY:  
20 minutes

EXIT TICKET  
TASK: 5 minutes

OBJECTIVE: Commit to following the code of conduct

## EXIT TICKET TASK

### 5 minutes



**WHAT TO SAY** “Each of us is now responsible for this code of conduct. This means that every one of us is committed to following this body diversity acceptance code of conduct and doing something when any of its rules are violated.

If you witness **negative** conversations about someone’s appearance, remind your classmates that you have all committed to following the code, which includes zero tolerance for negative comments about appearance.

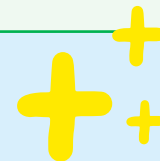
If you witness or are a victim of bullying or discrimination, you have to act and condemn it!”

#### INFO

**If you, as a teacher, witness an episode of bullying over a student’s weight, here is what you should do:**

1. Intervene directly by recognizing the bullying and stopping it immediately.
2. Validate the experience of the person who is being bullied and treat them with empathy and sensitivity.
3. Refer to the school counsellors for intervention with the bully, group and/or victim. This intervention should target the inappropriate behaviour and seek a healing resolution. All schools have a bullying prevention and intervention plan, and each school has a responsibility to ensure that its learning environment is safe for everyone.
4. Consistently demonstrate zero tolerance for any form of bullying (whether or not it’s related to weight).

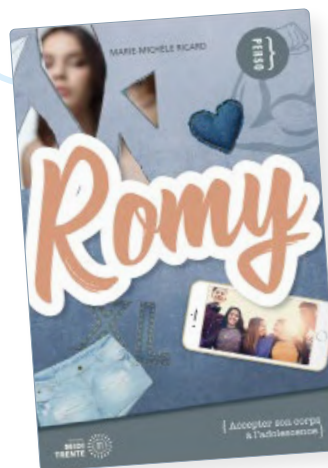
**Remember that ignoring the behaviour helps no one. Bullying must be stopped, and concrete action must be taken.**



## BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR, MARIE-MICHÈLE RICARD

### ROMY : accepter son corps à l'adolescence

Éditions Midi-Trente



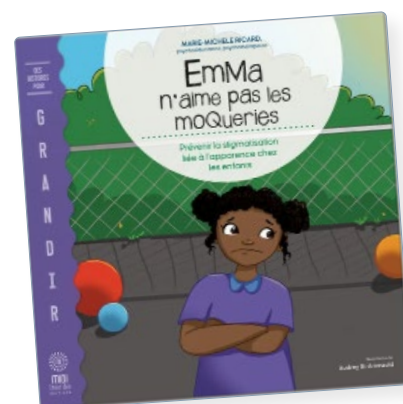
### DE L'INSATISFACTION À L'ACCEPTATION CORPORELLE Développer une relation plus positive avec son corps

Éditions JFD



### EMMA N'AIME PAS LES MOQUERIES Prévenir la stigmatisation liée à l'apparence chez les enfants

Éditions Midi-Trente



## DISCOVER OUR TOOLS

### A TEENAGE BODY IMAGE MINI-GUIDE,

which includes key tools to promote body diversity and scenarios to help you react appropriately.



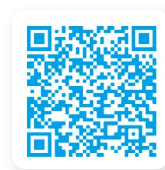
### A LESSON PLAN

to help your students develop a positive body image by building a broader understanding of beauty.



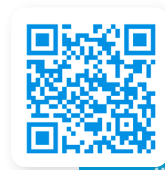
### PODCASTS

to help you better understand the role you as a teacher can play in helping your students improve their body image [in French only].



### TESTIMONIALS

from teens and advice from a psychoeducator on how to help young people accept their bodies.



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