Go Beyond Your Comfort Zone

We all have comfort zones. There are some physical activities we feel OK doing. There may be others that we are not comfortable doing. We put limits on ourselves. We only do what we feel safe doing. We stay in our comfort zone.

Being overweight can cause you to feel bad about your body. You just don't feel comfortable doing some things. Or you don't like the way you look doing them. So you avoid them.

Maybe you don't like how you look in your swimsuit. You think others are thinking about how you look. So you avoid going to the beach or the pool. Or you may go, but you hide your body under a big t-shirt. You narrow your comfort zone. You miss out on the fun of swimming and playing in the water.

You might not like how you look playing basketball. You think you look fat. You think you look clumsy. So you don't do it when anyone else is



around. Maybe you watch from the sidelines. You don't try to join in the fun. Instead, you hide in your comfort zone.

Staying in your comfort zone can be a problem. It can keep you from doing GREEN activity. It can keep you from doing things with other people. It can keep you from doing a lot of things you might like to do. It can make it harder to like yourself.

You may feel safe. But you miss out on a lot of fun when you limit yourself like this.

How to tell if you are limiting yourself because of your body image

Make a list of activities you like to do. List activities your friends do. List activities you would like to try. Then ask yourself: What activities do I stay away from? What feelings GOALS

Accepting your body will help you meet your 4 key goals:

- Limit RED foods
- Increase GREEN activity
- Mold Family Meetings
- Keep Track of Weight

or thoughts keep me from doing them? Would I try them if I had a different body shape?

Use the activity in the Help Sheet. It will help you see if there are some ways you are limiting yourself because of feelings about your body.



Learn to go beyond your comfort zone.

You can learn to do things you aren't comfortable with now.

Think about a physical activity that's a little beyond

Here's what you'll learn about in this module:

- How to tell if your feelings about your body limit what you do
- How to expand your comfort zone so you can do more things



your comfort zone. Pick something you would like to do if you felt OK about your body. Pick something that makes you feel a little uncomfortable. But not too uncomfortable. Start with something you have the best chance of success with right away.

- ▶ Then ask yourself: Do I want to continue to feel this way about my body? Do I want to continue to limit what I do? Or, would I like to accept my body more? Would I like to try things that will let me have more fun? Will I try some things that I would like to do even if I am not 100% comfortable?
- Challenge yourself to try the activity. Make a plan for it. Think about your motives, your skills, and your support. Think about:
 - Why you want to do it
 - ► The skills you have
 - What could help you
- Then put your plan to work. Ask your family for support. Ask your friends.
- Believe in yourself. Put your worries aside. Think positively.
 Try to enjoy yourself.
 Remember, progress comes one step at a time.
- Think about how it went after you do an activity:

- What was fun about it?
- What was hard or challenging to you?
- How did you handle the challenge?
- How did you handle being teased, if you were?
- What would you have done differently, if anything?
- How do you feel about yourself now?
- Have you praised yourself for doing it?
- Are you ready to try it again?

Be realistic about your goals.

Sometimes people get confused about their goals. They want to see big changes in their bodies right away. But that doesn't work. It's not a realistic goal. Sure, losing weight can be a long-term goal. Getting stronger can be a long-term goal. That's OK. But you need to get started. You need to be patient. Progress comes one step at a time.

You need to set realistic goals. You can't suddenly have a different body. Instead, you can change the way you feel about your body. These are realistic goals:

- To accept your body as it is.
- To expand your comfort zone.
- To feel OK about trying new things.

Staying in your comfort zone can keep you from doing GREEN activity. It can keep you from having fun.



How are you handling

comparisons you make about your body?

Most of the time comparing yourself to others isn't helpful. It can make you feel bad about yourself. It can make you feel bad about your body. This can limit what you do.

Be fair to yourself when you compare yourself to others. How you compare yourself can have a lot to do with how you feel about yourself.

It's not fair to compare yourself to the best player on your team. Or to one of the older kids. Don't compare yourself to someone who has practiced more. That's not fair either.

Sometimes it's OK to compare yourself to someone you are learning from. Maybe someone is teaching you to play ball, a guitar, or chess. Maybe someone is teaching you to sing. It's OK to see how much you are learning. How much you are improving.

Alicia's mother heard about a soccer league for girls at the Y. She told Alicia about it. "It's for girls your age," she said to Alicia. "You like soccer. Why don't you sign up?"

"No. That's not for me," said Alicia. "I wouldn't feel comfortable."

"Why not? You like soccer. You could have fun and get some physical activity," her mother said.

"It's how I look. I look fat in gym clothes. Just look at my legs. Look at my thighs," Alicia said. "Besides, I'm clumsy. I don't play that well. I'd be the worst player on the team." Start with an activity you have the best chance of success with right now.

"That's OK," her mother said. "You'd be on the team. You'd be having fun. You'd be with people you like. You'd get better over time. Let's see if we can make a plan. Maybe there's a way you can expand your comfort zone."

"All right. Maybe we can find a way," said Alicia. They talked it through and made a plan. Alicia said she would try it for a while. She decided to try expanding her comfort zone.

- ► She would wear sweatpants. "I'll feel more comfortable that way," she said.
- ➤ She would focus on her goals. She would think about what she was doing. She would not compare herself to other people. "One goal is to try hard. Another is to learn to pass the ball better. I won't worry about how many points I score."
- ► She would think positive thoughts. "I'll remind myself that I'm out there trying, and that's progress," she said.
- ▶ She would also ask her friend Anita to join her. "That way we can support one another," she said.

After the first game, Alicia said, "It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. In fact, it was kind of fun. But I still didn't feel completely comfortable." Her mother praised her for trying.

During the second game, she got really hot and sweaty. She decided to take off her sweatpants. She was nervous about it. "But so what," she said to herself. "What these girls think isn't the end of the world. Besides, Anita's heavy, and she's wearing shorts." So Alicia took the risk. She wasn't as hot, and no one said a word about her legs. Soon she really got into the game. She forgot about how she looked.

Alicia told her mother what she had done. Her mother was very surprised and happy for Alicia. "I'm really proud of you," she said.

"You've expanded your comfort zone. This is a small win. You can build on it. It will help you learn to try other new things. You can expand your comfort zone little by little." Alicia thought so too.

Plan ways to go beyond your comfort zone. Then just do it. What do you like about Alicia's plan?

Is there a situation you'd like to handle like this?

Suppose you feel uncomfortable in both a swimsuit and gym clothes. You don't play basketball or go to the beach. But you're more comfortable in gym clothes than a swimming suit. So you try basketball. You have fun. You learn to feel better about your body. Now gym clothes aren't so bad. That's a win.

After a while you may be ready to try going to the beach. That would be another small win, even if you kept your shorts and t-shirt on most of the time. This is how you take one step at a time. Each step expands your comfort zone.

- Use your positive thinking skills when you compare yourself. Turn your negative thoughts into positive thoughts. Remind yourself of your positive qualities. Remind yourself of all the things your body can do. Remind yourself that you are learning how to do something new. Focus on what you can do. Focus on your positives. Praise yourself for trying. Praise yourself for getting better. Praise yourself for going beyond your comfort zone.
- biggest challenge. Start with one you have the best chance for success with right away.
- Make a plan to change what you can. You can't change everything all at once. You do it step by step. It's just like losing weight. You expand your comfort zone one step at a time.
- Use the Help Sheet to help you plan. Use it to keep track of your progress.
- Remember to praise yourself for trying.

Skills and Goals for feeling positive about my body

- Learn how my feelings about my body limit what I do.
- Learn what triggers bad feelings about my body.
- Stop comparing myself unfairly to others.
- Learn to expand my comfort zone so I can do more things.

Learning to feel OK about your body will help you be more active. It will help you have more fun.



What can I do to expand my comfort zone?

- What activity would you like to do that you are not?
- Pick just one thing to start with. Don't pick your

Notes to myself—some things I want to keep in mind this week:



Go Beyond Your Comfort Zone

Does Your Body Image Limit You?

How often do you avoid doing things because of your body image? Here are some	e behaviors
commonly avoided by people because of thoughts or feelings about their bodies.	Write down the
number that best fits how often you avoid each behavior.	

	0	1	2	3	
Almo	st Never or Never	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always or Always	
	Looking at myself	in a mirror or a pict	ure		
	Physical activity that might call attention to my shape or weight, such as dancing, exercising, or playing recreational sports				
	Physical contact and hugs because I might show others how my body feels				
	Places where much of my body is exposed, like the pool, the beach, and public dressing rooms or showers				
	Social functions where people could see me eat				
	_ Wearing clothes that might reveal my body's shape or size				
	_ Weighing myself because I am uncomfortable with my weight				
Which	of these things wou	ld you most like to	change?		
1.	_				
-					
2.					

Try An Activity Just Outside Your Comfort Zone

What makes it uncomfortable? How will I feel about myself if I learn to do it and feel OK? My Skills How can I handle feeling uncomfortable? Or being teased? What could I say to myself? What skills will help me do the activity? My Support Who could encourage me? Or do it with me? Or teach me to do it?	Why would I like to do it? What makes it fun? What makes it uncomfortable? How will I feel about myself if I learn to do it and feel OK?
What makes it uncomfortable? How will I feel about myself if I learn to do it and feel OK? My Skills How can I handle feeling uncomfortable? Or being teased? What could I say to myself? What skills will help me do the activity? My Support Who could encourage me? Or do it with me? Or teach me to do it?	What makes it uncomfortable? How will I feel about myself if I learn to do it and feel OK?
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Who could encourage me? Or do it with me? Or teach me to do it?	What skills will help me do the activity?
Who could encourage me? Or do it with me? Or teach me to do it?	
Who could encourage me? Or do it with me? Or teach me to do it?	
How should I ask for support?	My Support Who could encourage me? Or do it with me? Or teach me to do it?
How should I ask for support?	
	How should I ask for support?



Go Beyond Your Comfort Zone

How Did It Go?

What happened when you went outside your comfort zo		tire
Activity:	Date I did the activity:	
What was fun about it?		
What was challenging to you?		
How did you handle the challenge?		
How did you handle being teased, if you were?		
What would you have done differently, if anything?		
what would you have done differently, it differing.		
How do you feel about yourself now?		
Have you praised yourself for doing it?		
Are you ready to try again?		





Go Beyond Your Comfort Zone

Don't let your feelings about your body limit you.

- ▶ Be fair to yourself when you compare yourself to others.
- Try not to let being teased limit what you do.
- ▶ Use your positive thinking skills when you slip-up and compare.

Learn to go beyond your comfort zone.

- Think about activities you would like to do if you felt comfortable with your body.
- Pick an activity that's a little beyond your comfort zone. Start with one you have the best chance of success with right now.
- ► Challenge yourself to try the activity. Make a plan to do it. Consider:

Why you want to do it	The skills you have	What could help you
How will you feel about yourself if you do it?	What skills would help you do the activity?	How would support help you?
What makes it uncomfortable?	What could you say to yourself?	Who could do it with you?
Why would you like to do it?	How could you handle being uncomfortable?	Who could encourage you? Who could teach you to do it?
What would make it fun?	How could you handle being teased?	How will you ask for support?

- Put your plan to work. Ask friends and family members for support.
- Believe in yourself. Put your worries aside. Think positively. Try to enjoy yourself.
- After you've done an activity, think about how it went.
 - What was fun about it?
 - What was challenging to you?
 - How did you handle the challenge?
 - ► How did you handle being teased, if you were?
 - What would you have done differently, if anything?
 - How do you feel about yourself now?
 - Have you praised yourself for doing it?
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