

# Go Beyond Your Comfort Zone

**W**e 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*

### KEY GOALS

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

- ⊙ Limit RED foods
- ⊙ Increase GREEN activity
- ⊙ Hold 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.



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.

#### SPECIAL FOCUS

### 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

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

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

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# 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 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                              |
|------------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Almost Never or Never</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Often</i> | <i>Almost Always or Always</i> |
| _____                        |                  |              |                                |
| _____                        |                  |              |                                |
| _____                        |                  |              |                                |
| _____                        |                  |              |                                |
| _____                        |                  |              |                                |
| _____                        |                  |              |                                |
| _____                        |                  |              |                                |
| _____                        |                  |              |                                |

Which of these things would you most like to change?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Try An Activity Just Outside Your Comfort Zone

*Make a plan to do it. Think about your motives, your skills, and your support.*

Activity:

### My Motives – Why I want 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?

### 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?

How should I ask for support?

# Go Beyond Your Comfort Zone

## How Did It Go?

*What happened when you went outside your comfort zone? Evaluate a challenging activity that you tried.*

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?	
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?
  - ▶ Are you ready to try it again?

