

# Media and Your Body Image

Media messages bombard us with unrealistic body images of women and men — they tell us how we should look and feel and sell us ways to achieve it, pressuring us to diet and exercise, even take supplements or undergo surgery, to attain the media culture's ideal body standard

Learn to **think critically** about unhealthy body image messages

Every time you see advertisements, watch TV, videos or movies, read magazines, listen to music, and go online,

**question** and **challenge** messages about **body image**:

Who created the message?

- Who wrote and produced the message?
- What is the purpose of the message?
- Who paid for and profits from the message?

What techniques were used to create the message?

- What words or images got your attention?
- If models or celebrities are featured, do they really look like that?
- Are the bodies airbrushed or altered in any way?

What values, beliefs and lifestyles are represented?

- What is the message about appearance, weight and food?
- What body shape and size does it suggest is desirable?
- What does it suggest to do to achieve that look?
- Is the information accurate and true? What's not said or left out?

How might different people interpret the message?

- How might the message make people feel about their body?
- How might a person with weight or food issues interpret the message?
- What expectations might someone have about different size people?

What does the message mean to you?

- How does it make you feel about yourself and your body?
- Does the message make you want to change something about yourself — your looks, eating habits or exercise routine? Is this positive or negative?
- If you could remake the message, what would you do?

What you see, hear and read in the **media** will **not** **cause** eating disorders, **BUT** can **influence** **YOUR** body image, make it **hard** to feel **good** about your body shape and size, and lead to **weight** and **food** issues

Media tell males:

**muscular is better**

Media tell females:

**thinner is better**

Voice **YOUR** **opinion** about body image

Criticize **unhealthy** messages

Compliment **healthy** messages