

BODY POSITIVE

A NWAC Fact Sheet For Parents and Caregivers of Indigenous Youth



AS A PARENT OR CAREGIVER, it's important to keep in mind that **our children hear and see the way we view our own bodies**. From this, they learn how to view their own bodies. They also learn from their other interactions with friends and other communities.

Many of us are **overly critical of our bodies** and make less than kind comments about ourselves, often without even noticing. Just as we should avoid doing this in general, it's especially important not to do this in front of our children and youth. We should also avoid commenting on our children's bodies. Instead, **we should speak about ourselves and our bodies in positive ways**—ways that we would want our kids to speak about themselves and their bodies. **Many Indigenous communities have teachings about how sacred our bodies are. This is the kind of messaging we should be modelling for our children.**

Everyone has their own insecurities about their body, and social media and society have added to these insecurities. **Remember that people come in different shapes, sizes, and colours, and that it's never ok to comment on the way someone looks.**

Taking pride in your body is an important part of self-growth, self-love, and self-worth. We are more than how we appear. We are made up of different pieces that make us a unique person. This is especially important during times where body and minds may be going through many changes.



AVOID SAYING THINGS LIKE:

- ▲ I look bad today.
- ▲ I look too big; I look too small.
- ▲ Using words like skinny and fat.
- ▲ I hate this or that about my body.
- ▲ I wish I looked like that person.
- ▲ I could never wear that.
- ▲ I shouldn't eat this.



INSTEAD, USE BODY-POSITIVE STATEMENTS:

- ♥ My body is allowed to change.
- ♥ I am so much more than my appearance.
- ♥ My body makes me unique.
- ♥ I am not a size or weight; I am a person.
- ♥ My body is strong.
- ♥ My body can rest; my body can move.
- ♥ My body takes care of me.

AS A TEAM:

Communicate by having conversations about **self-confidence and self-worth** and how this does not come from appearance. **Understand** that people have lots of different kinds of insecurities that may affect how they see themselves and how they interact with other people. **Encourage** conversations as a way to **normalize insecurities and differences**, as well as **self-expression and individuality**. **Model positive reinforcements** and use kind words when talking about our bodies and insecurities.

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WOMEN ARE THE LIFE-GIVERS,

but women are not going to be life-givers without men. So, that's a balance in life. Our Two-Spirited people bring that balance again, of masculine and femininity. Our lives are not about our sexuality or even our gender identity, it's about us being a human being. It's about us following those teachings that our ancestors put in place for us, those teachings of kindness and respect, truth, honesty, humility, love, wisdom, about living those ways of life. Trying to look at each other as a valuable portion of a community, what gifts does that person have to bring to the table, so that we can become a very rich table, right?

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(Elder Laureen Waters Gaudio, 2019)



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Native Women's Association of Canada
L'Association des femmes autochtones du Canada

