



# IMAGO

a design approach to improving social wellbeing in adolescents

Loneliness is a large and growing problem among adolescents. Body image has a strong relationship with loneliness, especially among young people. Therefore, a promising way to increase social wellbeing among this group is by increasing body satisfaction.

Body dissatisfaction often results from internalising dominant cultural beliefs about appearance. An example of a dominant belief is that having a fit body can be interpreted as an achievement of discipline and perseverance that an individual has worked hard for. The reverse then also rings true: unfit people are lazier, less disciplined and more likely to give up. Many of these beliefs are so common that they seem unchangeable. However, history shows us that appearance ideals have changed dramatically in the past.

Changing these beliefs is difficult and slow, but a good place to start is by realising there is often more nuance and variety in beliefs about being healthy and fit than we assume. While one person values a low-fat sixpack for the hard work that goes into it, another values the freedom a healthy and able body provides. It seems these behaviours and beliefs are closely related to expressing identity and feeling connected with others.

IMAGO is a fun and light-hearted game that invites adolescents to discuss dominant cultural beliefs about appearance and discover that there are more differences between people's personal motivations and aspirations than they may know.



# 40%

OF BOYS BETWEEN 11-17 YEARS OLD WITH A HEALTHY WEIGHT WANT TO GAIN WEIGHT

# 52%

OF GIRLS WITH A HEALTHY WEIGHT BETWEEN 11-17 YEARS OLD WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT

Nagata et al. (2019)

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