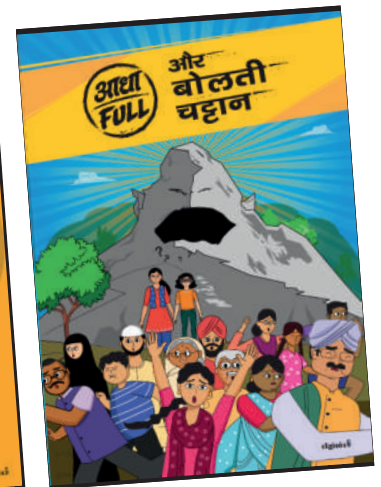


# TEACHERS Guide for WHO AM I ? Comic Books





# Welcome Note

Dear Teachers

Investing in children's learning and skills development — especially those who are in most disadvantaged situations — is an area of focus for the education programme in India. The programme aims to equip children with the skills necessary to pursue a productive life and to participate in society. The education programme is now focusing on improving the body image and self-esteem of adolescents of all genders. A series of “Who Am I?” comic books have been created to foster positive body image and self-esteem among children, while simultaneously increasing their understanding of harmful gender norms. The series will be rolled out as a programme by teachers in government schools across programme areas. Hence, your role is critical as it will contribute to supporting learners in understanding harmful gender norms and body image issues and build their confidence and competence to negotiate change. We are excited to have you on board as 'Body Confident Champion' to lead this process on the ground.

Since you will be imparting the sessions with the students, your role assumes centrality in this larger global movement to empower youth. It is important that you are a positive body image role model throughout the session as this will impact and inspire the students. To assist you with this important work, this Teachers Guide has been developed to provide you the information on your role, and the tools you will need to take on this responsibility. We look forward to working with you!

Education Department



# Girls and Beauty Confidence: The Global report

The 2017 Dove Global Girls Beauty and Confidence Report is the largest academic report from Dove to examine the impact of body esteem, pressures and confidence on girls everywhere

**Over half of girls** around the world **do not** have high body esteem

## When girls don't feel good about the way they look...

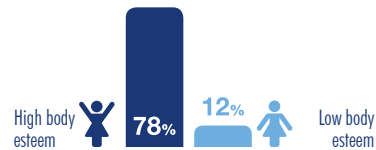
**8 in 10**  
avoid seeing friends and family or trying out for a team or club

**7 in 10**  
stop themselves from eating or otherwise **put their health at risk**

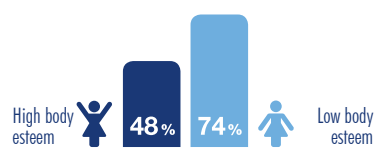
**7 in 10**  
will **not be assertive** in their opinion or **stick to their decision**

## But when a girl has high body esteem...

...she is **more likely** to think **she is beautiful**, even if she looks different than images in the media



...and is **less likely** to feel **pressure to be beautiful**



**7 in 10 girls**  
think there is **too much importance placed on beauty** as a source of happiness

**8 in 10 girls**  
say taking **time to do things that make them feel happy** makes them feel more confident

**7 in 10 girls**  
think **images in the media are digitally air brushed or altered**

**Nearly all girls**  
around the world think **every girl has something about them that is beautiful**

To help a girl you know, visit [dove.com/selfesteem](http://dove.com/selfesteem)

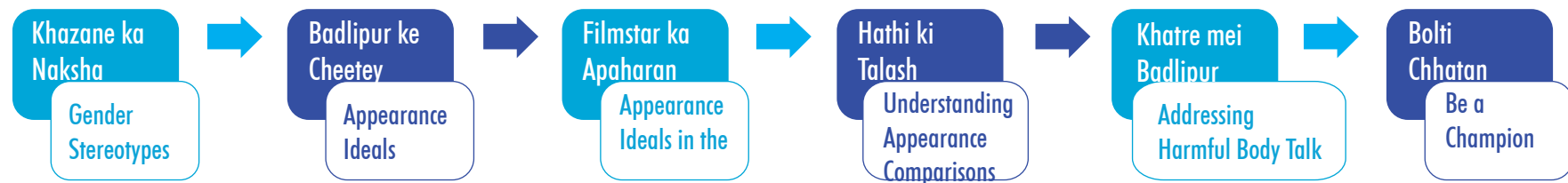
## The Need to Intervene

Puberty and changing bodies can be difficult to accept, particularly when there is constant external pressure on adolescents and they do not have the freedom to explore their identity. The education programme aspires to help young people develop a notion of celebrating this stage of life by helping them accept themselves, be comfortable with their bodies, stand up to common pressures, and consequently, build their self esteem.

## Vision of the Program

The vision of the program is to enhance body confidence and self-esteem among adolescents in eight states of India and increase their understanding of harmful gender norms. This is based on an evidence-based model that focuses on improving adolescents' understanding and challenging of gender stereotypes, appearance ideals, media messages, body comparison and harmful body talk. The process will support you in becoming a body confidence champion.

The WHO AM I? comic books are contextualized resources created in collaboration with global and local health psychologists and body image experts using the most up-to-date research around body image interventions to foster body confidence and self-esteem among children. These resources are being used by teachers like you as supplementary materials in the existing life skills curriculum being implemented by the state governments. The WHO AM I? program consists of six comic books covering six different themes as mentioned below:



- Each theme targets a risk factor for low body confidence — targeting each of these throughout the sessions increases the likelihood that the program will have a positive impact on adolescents.
- The comic books are designed to be delivered at a rate of one session per week, over a period of six weeks. Of course, you can change this timeframe to suit the timetabling needs of your school.
- The content is suitable for all genders. In fact, we encourage you to deliver the program in co-educational classrooms!
- This teacher's guide is to help you deliver the comic books effectively with the children in your school.

## Overview of Workshop Modules

Under each of the thematic areas, the following key messages will be delivered to the children through the WHO AM I? comic books by the teachers:

### Comic 1: Gender Stereotypes

- When society decides what boys and girls can and cannot do, we call them stereotypes. It has been going on for years and is social.
- It is harmful for both boys and girls and prevents them from moving forward in life. For example, because of it, boys who like to cook, don't do it thinking that only girls should be cooking. Similarly, girls who enjoy playing cricket do not play this game, thinking that only boys can get ahead at it.
- It is important that both boys and girls are given equal opportunities to advance.

### Comic 2: Appearance Ideals

- We try to look like what is shown to be an ideal form on TV and advertisements, due to which we feel pressure. For example, girls feel pressure to look fair and thin. Boys are under pressure to look well-built.
- It is harmful to try to achieve what is called the ideal body form. We waste money, time, and peace of mind to achieve the ideal form. Time which we can be using to do our favorite things.
- We need to appreciate ourselves for our qualities. We must also remind ourselves that we like people for their qualities and not for their looks.

### Comic 3: Appearance Ideals in the Media

- How people look in TV, films, and advertisements is not the reality. They have a big team working on how they look, before their photos are taken. First, their makeup is done, hair is styled, and they are given nice clothes to wear. After that, their photos are taken. The photos are also edited further. For example, they are made to look taller, or the marks of their face are removed to make them look more beautiful.
- What we see on TV and in commercials is designed to make us feel bad about ourselves and our looks, so that we buy things that we think will help us achieve the ideal look.
- This is why we cannot compare ourselves to what we see on TV and advertisements. Because what we see is not the truth and nor is it an achievable standard. It is just a scheme to sell products which ultimately just hurts us.

#### Comic 4: Understanding Appearance Comparisons

- It is natural to compare yourself to others or to celebrities. We only compare ourselves to people who we think are better than us.
- Comparing looks is harmful. When we compare our looks to others' we fall in the trap of no matter how much we try to look like them, we cannot do so. And this makes us feel even worse. And by looking at us, our friends also start comparing themselves to others. This results in us feeling pressured to look like other people. Similarly, everyone who compares their looks to others, falls in this trap.
- Comparing your looks to another person's is a waste. Everyone is unique. We should not try to look like other people. Rather, we should embrace our uniqueness.

#### Comic 5: Addressing Harmful Body Talk

- People talk about physical appearances without giving it a thought, because this is common in our society. This is because people feel the pressure to have the ideal appearance portrayed in TV and advertisements. Conversations related to physical appearance are called body talk. These conversations can be both positive (you look so nice, have you lost weight?) or negative (I wish I looked more muscular). These conversations can be about you, your friends or even film stars.
- Some people talk about physical appearances with good intentions, but these conversations are harmful for everyone and build the pressure to have an ideal body. These conversations distract from a person's skills and interests. Body talk is only not harmful for people who are praised, but is also harmful for people around them. For example, they start feeling like that lack something. Because of this, they spend all their time worrying about their looks.
- Conversations about physical appearance happen often. It is important to stop them and challenge the people who talk about it. When body talk takes place, it is important for us to explain that it is harmful, and change the topic to a person's qualities instead.

#### Comic 6: Be a Champion of Change

- Stereotypes have been around for years and are societal. They are harmful for both boys and girls and prevent them from getting ahead in life. It is important that girls and boys, both, get equal opportunities to advance.
- TV and advertisements show us an ideal body which adds pressure on us to look like that. What we see on TV and in commercials is designed to make us feel bad about ourselves and our looks, so that we buy things that we think will help us achieve the ideal look. This is why we cannot compare ourselves to what we see on TV and advertisements. Because what we see is not the truth and nor is it an achievable standard. It just costs us time, money, and mental peace.
- Comparing looks or talking about physical appearances is common in our society. These conversations are harmful for everyone and build the pressure to have an ideal body. These conversations distract from a person's skills and interests. Body talk is only not harmful for people who are praised, but is also harmful for people around them. For example, they start feeling like that lack something. Because of this, they spend all their time worrying about their looks.

## Instructions for Using the Guide

- This guide is for educators rather than students. Students will just be provided with the comics, and you will use this guide to run each session.
- It is important that you read the comics before reading this teacher's guide, otherwise it will be difficult for you to understand this guide.
- Exercises 2 through 7 include a summary of each comic book and instructions for conducting each session.
- This guide will take time to read but will ensure the best handling of sessions.
- Please try to follow the instructions as much as possible. However, you can be as flexible as needed in implementing the instructions and conducting the activities.
- While discussing each comic, in individual chapters, we have also given some information and instructions for teachers. Teachers can use these for classroom discussion after children have read these comics. This information can be adapted based on the children's responses.
- Instructions related to comics are given in bold in each chapter, read these instructions aloud to the students while conducting the session.



# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

## COMIC PAGES



## TEACHER ACTIONS



After students have finished reading the comics, invite a few students to share what they felt were the main messages of the story.

Once you feel that the students understand the main messages, arrange them into small groups. Instruct them to complete Activity 1.

The activity asks students to form small groups and make a list of all the different costs associated with attempting to match

## DESIRED RESPONSE (from Students)



- Time: on one hair, make-up, skin, extreme exercising, dieting, checking or comparing your appearance with others, experiencing negative emotions. All this prevents you from studying, being with your

### Teachers Note:

- Ensure that students voice their opinions in their own words, and that they are as detailed and realistic as possible with their examples.
- Ensure that students do not take this as an opportunity to share tips on how to meet appearance ideals.

## TEACHERS NOTES

These are helpful tips and ideas to assist you during the workshop.

### COMIC PAGES

These are the comic book pages that you will refer to while conducting the workshop.

### TEACHER ACTIONS

These are the instructions for you while taking the session. These are the things you say to the students to ensure optimum impact of the workshop. You can modify these if required to meet the needs of the students.

### DESIRED RESPONSE

These are the possible answers to look for from the students. They also help you in guiding their responses as they develop their understanding of the key concepts.

## To Ensure Effective Delivery of the Sessions, we encourage you to-

- familiarize yourself with all the materials before delivering the sessions
- check if your classroom can support the slides and videos in the Student Presentation
- follow the Teacher's Guide as closely as possible
- check the students' understanding as you go through each session. Some of the concepts might be new to your students.
- adapt the language to suit the needs of your class. You might want to simplify the language
- deliver one story session every week
- complete the set of six sessions in six weeks
- do not exceed 45 minutes (one period) per session
- complete the optional activities in class if there is time, or encourage students to finish them at home
- share the theme or key messages of the story before starting each session. This will help students relate the events in the story with the key messages

## Create the Right Environment

- Create a safe space by creating ground rules.
- Try to ensure that appearance ideals and pressures are challenged by students consistently throughout the sessions.
- Small single-sex groups may increase student comfort during activities.
- Body confidence can be a sensitive subject. It is, therefore, important that all students take the session seriously.
- If you are concerned about any student's behaviour or response, please speak to the school counsellor.

## Be a Body Confidence Role Model (Inspiration)

- Remember that discussing people's weight and appearance (including your own, and that of people in everyday life and the media) reinforces appearance pressures.
- Avoid sharing personal stories.
- Avoid Speaking negatively about your appearance in front of students.
- Talk respectfully and kindly to yourself and your body, and others.

## Your Role as a Teacher/Facilitator

- Knowing your subject is important. In this case, it will be your session content, the WHO AM I? comic books. These books are the basis of your sessions with the children. Read them in advance and understand the concepts before taking the session.
- Help a group find new ways of thinking about and analyzing their situation.
- Make sure to build trust and respect between the members of the group and encourage dialogue and learning, from which the whole group will benefit.
- Deliver the session as per the training schedule and content outlined in this training manual and ensure that you complete the activities on time.
- Let your students know that they can ask you to repeat instructions at any time if they need more clarity. Encourage them to ask questions.
- Engage with your students! Whether it is finding a solution, writing key points, or sticking chart-papers and agreeing to a duration of a break, ensure that these chances are shared by several people.
- Make your students your partners. Tell them that a training is a participatory activity and succeeds only when everyone contributes and learns.
- Ensure that boys and girls speak equally. When breaking up into groups or allocating speakers/leaders, ensure that they students of all genders have equal opportunity.

## Resources or Materials Required



Who am I? Comic Books




A Whiteboard or flipchart  
or a Blackboard



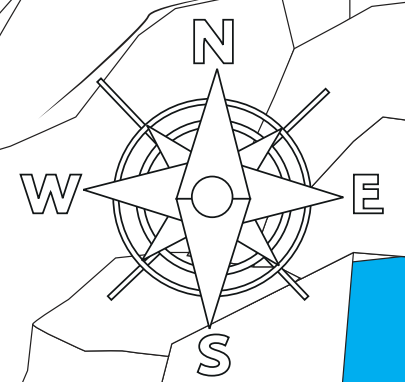
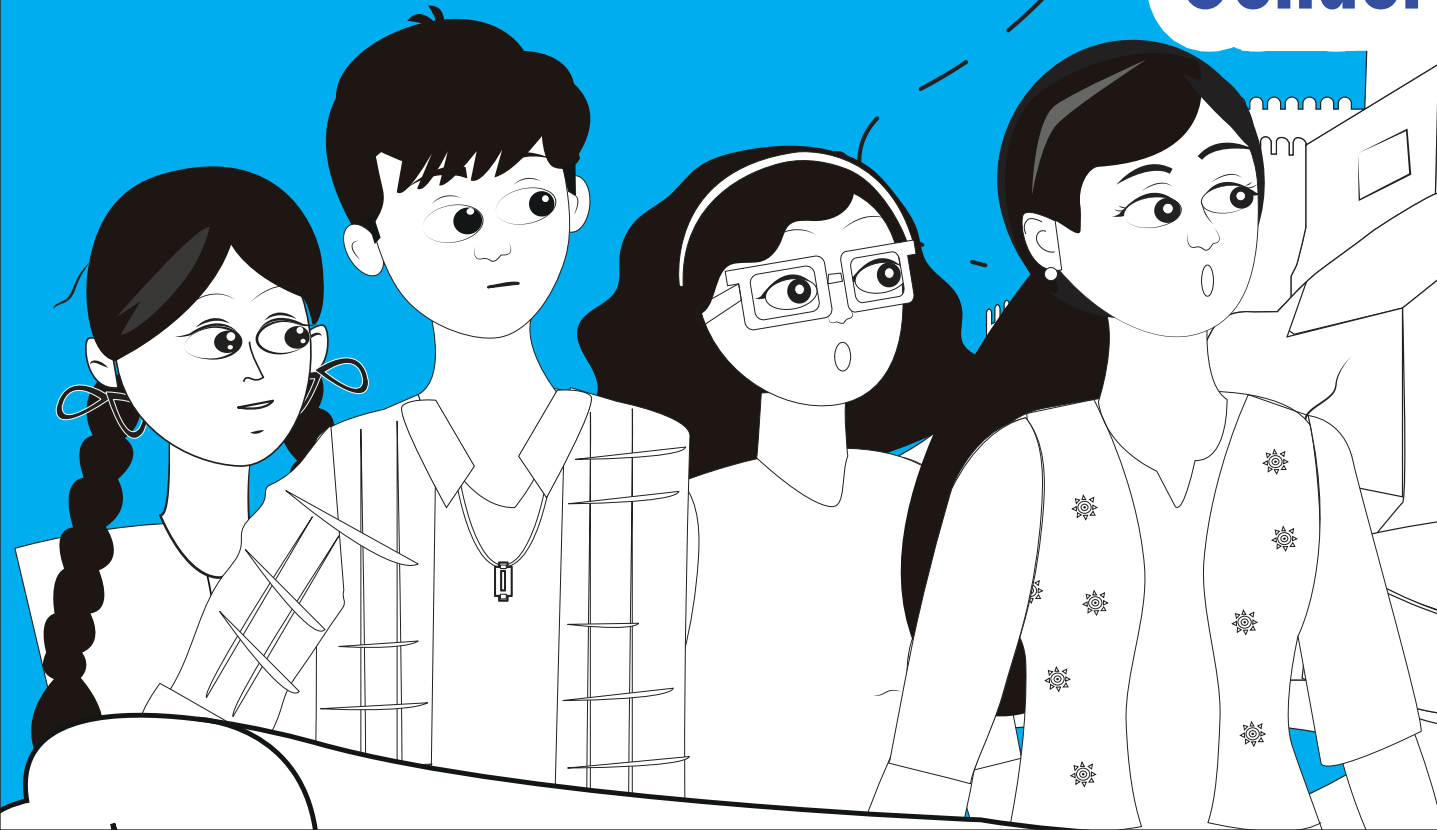
Enough Stationary like  
Paper and Pens for all  
the Participants

## Your Role as a Teacher/Facilitator

Student:	Teacher's response:
<p>It makes me feel good to compare myself to someone less good-looking than myself. . . what's the problem with that?</p>	<p>This can be harmful because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constantly looking for people you think are less good-looking takes a lot of time and effort and will lead to a negative and critical outlook.</li> <li>• Constantly comparing yourself to others can also create pressure on yourself.</li> <li>• You will always be pre-occupied with comparing yourself to who you think is worse than you or better than you</li> <li>• You are also still focusing on appearance rather than appreciating your other qualities, and those of others</li> <li>• It is also unkind to think negatively about someone else's appearance.</li> </ul>
<p>What's wrong with wearing makeup or applying hair gel? Doing this helps me feel more confident</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is nothing wrong with wearing make-up or applying hair gel. You just need to remember that it is only one aspect of who you are.</li> <li>• It can be fun and creative to play with your appearance, but you shouldn't feel you have to do these things if you don't want to. They are your choice.</li> <li>• You are so much more than your appearance!</li> </ul>
<p>I am happy with my appearance - this is not relevant to me</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's great that you feel body confident. However, people around you may not.</li> <li>• These sessions will help you support others who may be struggling with body confidence.</li> <li>• These sessions will help you learn how to avoid engaging in body talk, which can have a negative impact on others' body confidence (as well as your own).</li> </ul>
<p>What's wrong with talking about our appearance? I think it's nice to give compliments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We understand that it might initially seem difficult to stop engaging in all conversations related to appearance. However, we are trying to minimize body talk in your life and amongst your peers because it can put excessive importance on appearance and reinforce appearance-related pressures.</li> <li>• Giving and receiving appearance-based compliments might initially feel good, but, it can have a negative impact in the long term. For example, if someone receives compliments after spending a lot of time and money styling their hair, they may feel additional pressure to continue styling their hair this way. They may feel their original hair was not good enough and requires styling all of the time.</li> <li>• Can you see how appearance-based compliments may reinforce the importance of appearance?</li> </ul>
<p>My mother compares me to other people my age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your mother about what you have learnt in the sessions. Appearance comparisons are harmful</li> <li>• Ask your mother not to compare you with others</li> <li>• Even though your mother may compare your appearance with that of others, she loves you for who you are. She is equally vulnerable to appearance pressures, too.</li> </ul>



# Comic Book 1: ADHAFULL AUR KHAZANE KA NAKSHA Gender Stereotypes



# PART 1: OVERVIEW BEFORE THE SESSION

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## KEY MESSAGE



By the end of this section, students will understand how appearances and behaviors reflect gender stereotypes. They will be able to recognize how stereotypes harm them and develop strategies to stop perpetuating harmful gender norms.

## SUMMARY OF THE STORY



The story is about Seema and the ADHAfull breaking gender stereotypes in Bhadlipur. Seema comes across a treasure map hidden in Badlipur and decides to look for it. However, her mother stops Seema from going out on the treasure hunt because she feels girls should stay home and learn housework instead of going out on adventures.

Seema understands that these are gender stereotypes that prevent girls from following their dreams. With the help of the ADHAfull team, Seema finds the treasure. Her adventure is published in the newspaper, and she is interviewed by the media.

Seema is applauded by everyone for her courage, and her family is proud of her. Seema proves that if girls are given equal opportunities, they can achieve anything they want and break the gender stereotypes prevalent in society.

Please see below for an introduction to gender stereotypes in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.

### What is the difference between gender and sex?

Although it is often used interchangeably, gender is not the same as sex. Sex is a biological distinction between males, females, and intersex individuals. At birth, infants are assigned a sex based on a combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs, and genitalia. Intersex individuals are born with reproductive anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of male or female. In general, sex does not change by itself over time or according to culture or geography, although some individuals chose to surgically alter their sex.

Unlike sex, gender is a social construct; it is influenced by social conceptualizations and not biology. Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, attributes and opportunities that any society considers appropriate for girls and boys, and women and men. Gender interacts with, but is different from, the binary categories of biological sex (<https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender>). Gender definition also extends to those who do not fall into male or female category and are referred to as the third gender. Gender also refers to power relations between and among them. While gender may begin with the assignment of our sex, it doesn't end there. A person's gender is the complex interrelationship between three dimensions: Physical Identity, Personal Identity, and Social Identity. What is Gender Stereotypes?

### What is Gender Stereotypes?

A stereotype is a belief or expectation that a person will act a certain way based on the group they belong to. We all have stereotypes based on gender, geography, community and other groups. A gender stereotype is a belief or expectation that a girl or a woman will do certain things that a boy or a man can't do and that a boy or a man will do certain things that a girl or a woman can't do.' It reinforces the message that women and men are not able to do some things because of constraints in society. For example, a woman cooks, and a man does not belong in the kitchen.

Please see below for an introduction to gender stereotypes in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.

### How can we avoid gender stereotyping?

Gender stereotyping allows your brain to make a snap judgment based on characteristics such as gender, race, or age. These judgements are a result of beliefs and perceptions that stem from cultural and societal conditioning. While people think sometimes it works when you want to make a quick decision, it typically leads to discrimination and unfair judgment of people. Gender deeply influences every part of one's life.

Keep the following guidelines in mind to ensure that you are aware of your bias and how to keep them at bay:

- The first step is to admit that you have those biases. You are a human after all.
- Be aware of these biases and take steps to correct them by identifying situations when they occur. For example, as a parent are you behaving differently with your sons and daughters? As a sports teacher, do you differentiate between girl and boy students or discriminate with someone who identify themselves from their sex?
- The only way you can train your mind to not stereotype is by opening up to diverse experiences. Travel and educate yourself to mitigate biases. Take the cab driven by a female driver. Respect the man who stays at home so that his wife can have a career.
- It is not sufficient to be just aware of your biases. You also need to make others aware of their inherent biases. Talk to family and friends whenever you see gender bias.



# PART 2: DURING THE SESSION

45 minutes



## COMIC PAGE



## TEACHER ACTIONS



Introduce yourself (who you are and what your role is).

Tell them that 'In today's class, we are going to learn something new and exciting. Today is the first in a series of six workshops that will help you learn ways to feel confident about the way you look and your body. These workshops are called 'Who am I?'.

Say — 'Before we begin the lessons today, we are going to share some ground rules to help create a positive environment throughout the workshops.'

Ground rules mean the rules or agreements the group will be following to ensure smooth working and learning together.'

- Share one or two examples of ground rules.
- Invite students to share more ground rules.
- Lastly, ask — 'does anyone have any other rules they want to share?'

## DESIRED RESPONSE (from Students)



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Teachers Note:  
Here are some sample ground rules:

- Respect Diversity
- Ask questions
- Keep it confidential
- Please contribute

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Say - "Do you know what is meant by gender stereotypes?"

Take responses from the students and then say —

"Great! Today we are going to learn about gender stereotypes and how behaviors can reflect these gender stereotypes. We will also learn how we can recognize stereotypes and their harmful impact and develop strategies to stop perpetuating harmful gender norms."

Instruct students to read the story (this may be in small groups, or individually).

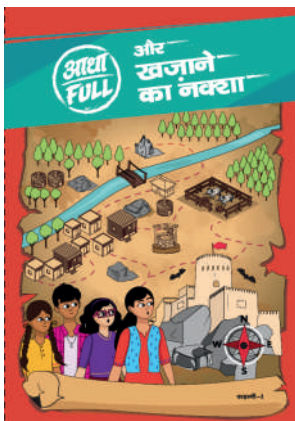
DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



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Teachers Note:  
This is a simple pre-assessment to check the understanding of the students. This is not to be evaluated.

## COMIC PAGE



## TEACHER ACTIONS



- Show the TITLE PAGE of the comic book to all the children and ask them 'What is the name of the story?'. Children will say the name of the story aloud.

- Thank them and then tell them 'So today we are going to read, this story called 'Khazane ka Naksha.' This story is about a group of children who go on an adventure to find a hidden treasure. Let's first read and then we will discuss this in length.'

- The story discusses gender stereotypes and the harmful impact of these stereotypes.

- Instruct students to read the story (this may be in small groups, or individually).

After students have finished reading the comic book, invite a few students to share the following

- How did you feel?
- What do you think is the story all about?
- What do you think are the main messages of the story?

## DESIRED RESPONSE (from Students)



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### Teachers Note:

It may happen that some of the students do not respond to your questions. Here are some of the discussion points which could help you to facilitate the discussion —

- Have you come across the word 'stereotypes' before? What do you think it means?
- Have you ever heard the terms 'conservatism / stereotypes' before? What do you think they mean?
- What is your opinion about Kitti's mother's beliefs regarding what girls should or shouldn't do?

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Summarize the discussion by saying –

‘A stereotype is a belief or expectation that a person will act a certain way based on the group they belong to. We all have stereotypes based on gender, geography, community and other groups. A gender stereotype is a belief or expectation that a girl or a woman will do certain things that a boy or a man can't do and that a boy or a man will do certain things that a girl or a woman can't do.’ It reinforces the message that women and men are not able to do some things because of constraints in society. For example, a woman cooks, and a man does not belong

Once students understand the main message, tell them, 'Now, you have seen two activities on the last page of the stories. We are now going to do these.

Arrange them into small groups. Instruct them to complete the Required Activity.

The activity asks students to recognize gender stereotypes they come across in their daily life. For example, who helps with cooking for the family or sleeps till late in the morning? The students should identify the doer as a girl (G) or boy (B) for all activities.

Once the students have marked their responses, ask them to share them with the class and facilitate a discussion.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



- B B G B G
- G B G B G

Teachers Note:

Ensure that the students understand the meaning of important words like ‘stereotypes’.

Feel free to drive the discussion using other points mentioned in the story.

You can also explain the following meaning of gender stereotypes to the students -

Stereotypes are beliefs/customs according to which a person is expected to behave in a certain way or do or not do certain things. These expectations depend on which group the person belongs to in the society. We all have stereotypes based on gender, geography, community and other groups. Gender stereotyping is a belief or expectation that girls and women will do things that boys and men cannot and that boys and men will do things that girls and women cannot. It reinforces the message that women and men are not able to do certain things because of societal constraints. For example, a woman is supposed to cook, or that a man's place is not in the kitchen.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Following this discussion, ask the students:

1. Why do you think it is unfair to assign gender roles to boys and girls in society?

2. Now that we know how harmful gender stereotypes are, what should be done to stop them?

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



- Gender stereotypes put undue pressure on boys and girls to behave in a certain way.
- Gender stereotypes restrict career choices.
- Gender stereotypes put the burden of unpaid care work on girls and women.

- Make career (business) and life choices according to your interests, passions, talents and abilities, and not on the basis of gender.
- Talk to families, communities, and peer groups.

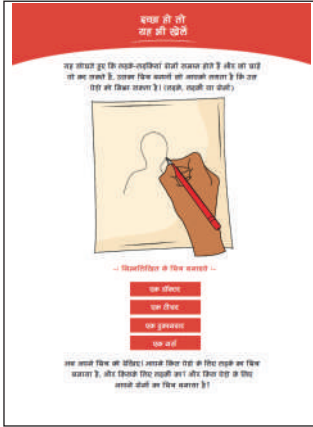
Teachers Note:

- Help the students identify gender roles from day to day life.
- Do not give away the answers. Help them recall their observations and share.
- Encourage them to share from their own environment and experience

Teachers Note:

- Help students come up with innovative ideas to fight gender stereotypes.
- Inspire the students to speak up, call out the discrimination they see and experience around them, and take action against it.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Optional Activity 2:

Complete in class if time permits or encourage students to do it at home.

- a) Draw a picture of a doctor, a teacher, a shopkeeper and a nurse.
- Ask students to complete this activity individually.
  - The activity asks students to think about people of different professions. Ask them if they remember them for their expertise and knowledge or for their gender.
  - Once students have completed the task, invite them to share their answers if they feel comfortable.
  - Following this, ask the students:
    - A) Have you all drawn the same gender for each profession?
    - B) Have you thought about what gender you will assign to each profession before drawing them?
    - C) So, do we all agree that gender stereotyping is at play all the time and it holds people back from achieving their dreams?

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



- Students might draw from their recollection of these professions. Some might also draw not from their recollection but from what they aspire to be. For example, some female students might draw a woman soldier, or some male students might draw a male nurse. Encourage!

- A) No
- B) Yes. Also, though if there is a correct gender for these professions or not.
- C) Yes!

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COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Ask them, 'How are you all feeling now?'

Also, ask them, 'Now, how many of you understand the meaning of gender stereotypes?'

Then tell them that next time we are going to talk about another interesting story viz. Badlipur ke Cheetay'.

Also, tell them to share their learning with their family members and friends.

Thank all the children, and close the session.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



A series of horizontal dashed lines provided for students to write their responses.



**Comic Book 2:**  
**ADHAFULL AUR**  
**BADLIPUR KE**  
**CHEETAY**  
**Appearance Ideals**



# PART 1: OVERVIEW BEFORE THE SESSION

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## KEY MESSAGE



By the end of this section, students will understand

- We try to look like what is shown to be an ideal form on TV and advertisements, due to which we feel pressure. For example, girls feel pressure to look fair and thin. Boys are under pressure to look well-built.
- It is harmful to try to achieve what is called the ideal body form. We waste money, time, and peace of mind to achieve the ideal form. Time which we can be using to do our favorite things.
- We need to appreciate ourselves for our qualities. We must also remind ourselves that we like people for their qualities and not for their looks.

## SUMMARY OF THE STORY



The story Badlipur ke Cheetey is about siblings, Abhay and Payal, who do not want to participate in the sports competition because they feel pressure to adhere to appearance ideals.

Abhay is worried that running in the competition will ruin his hair, and that it will no longer look like the hair of celebrities on TV and in advertisements. Payal is worried that her skin will get darker.

ADHAfull then helps Abhay and Payal understand the costs of trying to match unrealistic appearance ideals and how much they miss out on in the form of education, money, and friendships, when they spend so much time focusing on their appearance.

Please see below for an introduction to appearance ideals in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.

### What are appearance ideals?

'Appearance' means the way we look. 'Ideals' means the best or something that is considered perfect and is usually determined by people around us. Therefore, appearance ideals would mean the 'best' or the 'perfect' way to look according to people and society around us. However, just because they are what society tells us is the 'best' way to look, appearance ideals can often be unrealistic for most people to achieve.

Appearance ideals change over periods of time and are often influenced and determined by various sources. They can also be shaped by problematic social norms like racism, classism, ableism and sexism.

### Where do appearance ideals come from?

Appearance ideals come from several sources around us, such as advertisements, magazines, Bollywood, the fashion industry, diet industry, our society (for example, parents, friends), social media, and also our own thoughts.

It is important to understand where appearance ideals come from, so that we can change how we respond to them and how they affect us.

**Please see below for an introduction to appearance ideals in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.**

### Are appearance ideals the same for girls and boys?

No, typically in society, appearance ideals are different for boys and girls.

For girls, some appearance ideals today include being slim; having long, slim, hairless legs; flawless and fair skin; hairless body; long, manicured nails and large lips. For boys, some of the common appearance ideals today are being tall and muscular; having six-pack abs; thick, styled hair; fair skin and low body fat.

Even though the appearance ideals are different, they exert similar pressures on boys and girls to try and match them.

### How have appearance ideals changed over time?

In India, certain appearance ideals have stayed the same throughout the years.

Traditionally, we as a society were more flexible about weight and shape, and how they were represented in media in earlier years. Heavier and bigger bodies were perceived more positively. There was diversity in heroes and heroines, with some being tall and others being short, and some being heavier than others. However, today all heroes are expected to be tall and have muscular bodies with 6-pack abs. Heroines are criticized in the media if they do not look thin, fair, and have long hair.

Hence, appearance ideals can change over time with changes in what is considered the ideal and perfect look by society.

Please see below for an introduction to appearance ideals in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.

### What are the costs associated with trying to match appearance ideals?

It is important to understand that it is difficult and unrealistic to try and attain appearance ideals, and it has several negative consequences or costs in relation to time, money, and emotions.

- **Time:** A lot of time is spent on maintaining one's hair, make-up, skin, diet etc, which could be better spent on studying, spending time with family or participating in activities like sports and arts.
- **Money:** A lot of money is spent on working towards and maintaining the appearance ideal in the form of money spent on hair products, skincare, make-up, gym membership and so on.
- **Emotions and Feelings:** Trying to match appearance ideals can lead to negative feelings of anger, frustration, sadness, jealousy, anxiety, shame and unhappiness.

# PART 2: DURING THE SESSION

45 minutes



## COMIC PAGE



## TEACHER ACTIONS



- Start the session by recalling the group rules.
- Ask them the name of the story of the previous session.
- Then, show the TITLE PAGE of the comic book to all the children and ask them, 'What is the name of the story?' Children will tell the name of the story aloud.
- Now ask them if they know what appearance ideals are.

Say - "Do you know what is meant by appearance ideals?"

Take responses from the students and then say –

"Great! Today we are going to be learning about appearance ideals and where they come from. We will also recognize how they can create pressures for us and impact our daily lives. Finally, we will develop ways to challenge these appearance ideals and resist appearance pressures."

Instruct students to read the story (this may be in small groups, or individually).

## DESIRED RESPONSE (from Students)



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Teachers Note:  
This is a simple pre assessment to check the understanding of the students. This is not to be evaluated.

Teachers Note:  
Ensure that all students understood the story and the main messages. If there were bits they did not understand, go back to the page and explain.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



After the students finish reading the comics, invite some of the students to share what they thought were the main messages of the comics. Please share the main learnings of the stories with the students.

We try to look like what is shown to be an ideal form on TV and advertisements, due to which we feel pressure. For example, girls feel pressure to look fair and thin. Boys are under pressure to look well-built.

It is harmful to try to achieve what is called the ideal body form. We waste money, time, and peace of mind to achieve the ideal form. Time which we can be using to do our favorite things.

We need to appreciate ourselves for our qualities. We must also remind ourselves that we like people for their qualities and not for their looks.

After you think that the students have understood the main messages, divide them into small groups and instruct them to complete activity 1.

Take out some time to think about what you learnt from the story. Choose the sentences from the list given below that show that striving for the ideal body is harmful.

Some examples for the students:

1. Spending a lot of time and money.
2. Getting late for school.
3. Having constant arguments with their parents.

The first two above highlight the harmful consequences of striving for ideal body while the third option does not. This activity requires students to identify sentences that show the harmful effects of striving for the ideal body.

Teachers Note:

- Make sure students state their opinion in their own words and that their examples are detailed and realistic.
- Make sure that students do not use this discussion as a way for sharing tips for achieving an ideal body.
- Don't blame anyone (for example, don't blame parents or friends.) Depictions of an ideal body are part of our daily lives and are so common that we are not even consciously aware of them.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Following this discussion, ask the students:

1. How could you spend your time, money, and energy in a better way?

2. Put your hand up if you agree that it isn't worth sacrificing time, money, and energy into trying to achieve something that is not possible.

After this, say:

It would be better to put these resources into more worthwhile activities that we enjoy.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



▶ Examples include:  
Spending time with friends and family.

Doing something you enjoy.

Learning a new skill or hobby.

▶ All hands up!

Encourage students to think about how Abhay and Payal ended up better spending their time in the story.

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COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Ask them 'How are you all feeling now?'

Next time, we will be reading a story that will help us understand how the media (for example, television, social media, magazines) can promote unhelpful messages and put pressure on us to match appearance ideals.

Ask the students - "Now, do you understand what appearance ideals mean?"

Tell them to share their learning with their family members and friends.

Thank all the children and close the session.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



▶ Yes!

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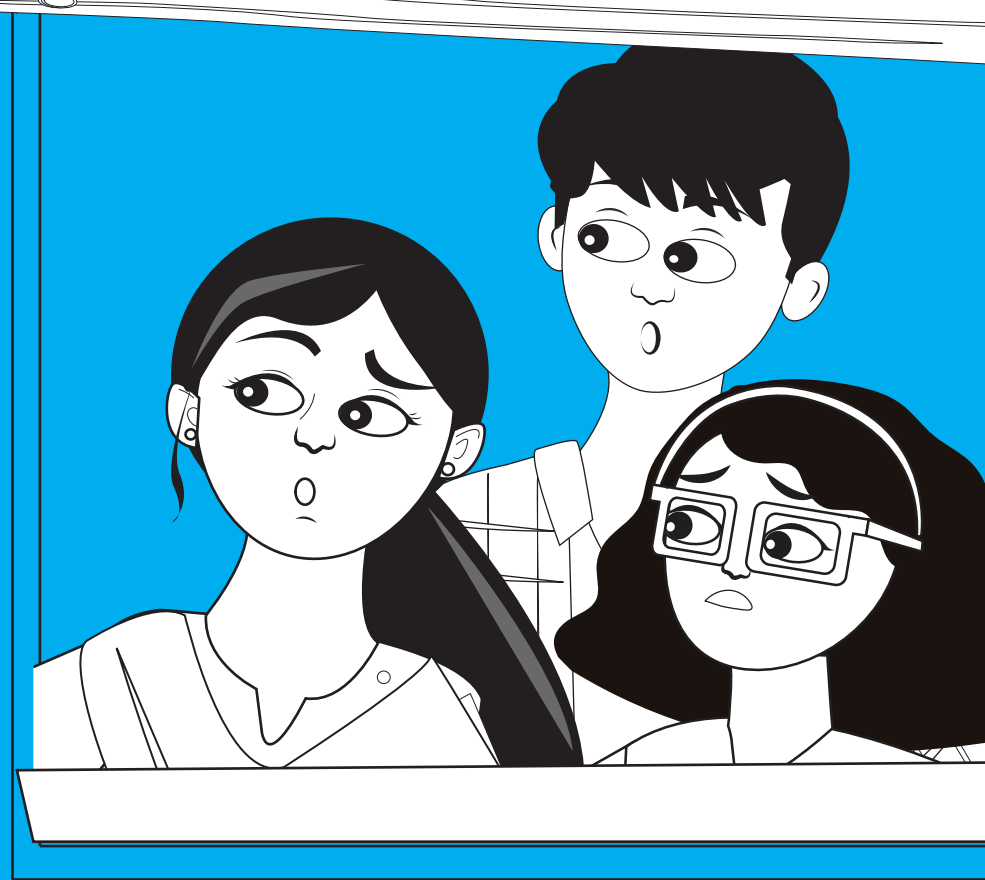
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**Comic Book 3:  
ADHAfull AUR  
FILMSTAR KA  
APAHRAN  
Appearance Ideals  
in the Media\***



# PART 1: OVERVIEW BEFORE THE SESSION

## KEY MESSAGE



By the end of the session, students should understand that :

- How people look in TV, films, and advertisements is not the reality. They have a big team working on how they look, before their photos are taken. First, their makeup is done, hair is styled, and they are given nice clothes to wear. After that, their photos are taken. The photos are also edited further. For example, they are made to look taller, or the marks of their face are removed to make them look more beautiful.
- What we see on TV and in commercials is designed to make us feel bad about ourselves and our looks, so that we buy things that we think will help us achieve the ideal look.
- This is why we cannot compare ourselves to what we see on TV and advertisements. Because what we see is not the truth and nor is it an achievable standard. It is just a scheme to sell products which ultimately just hurts us.

## SUMMARY OF THE STORY



This story is about Ranu, who has lost interest in everything around her and has become sad. This is because she wants to look like the film actress, Sameera Kapoor, as she thinks that if she looks like her, she will also have her perfect life.

The ADHAfull introduce her to Sameera, who helps Ranu realize that she looks the way she does in the media because a lot of time, effort, and money is spent to try and sell a product of a film. Ranu understands that images in the media are created through the work of many different people (e.g., stylists, directors, make-up artists) before the image is taken; and this is followed by manipulation and airbrushing of the image after it is taken.

Consequently, Ranu realizes that it is not fair to compare herself to individuals and the images in media and that she is happy being herself.

Please see below for an introduction to appearance ideals in the media in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.

### What do we mean by the media?

Media refers to television, newspapers, magazines, films, as well as social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. We categorize media into personal and professional media.

Personal media refers to the images, messages and films produced by yourself, your friends, and other students. Examples include

- Selfies on social media channels like Facebook, Instagram
- YouTube
- Creating music videos

Professional media refers to the images, messages, and films produced by communication experts at companies or businesses. Examples include:

- Bollywood films at the cinema
- TV programmes
- Advertising on social media channels and hoardings
- Music videos on YouTube
- Print media like magazines

\*Please note that the above information about personal media may not be suitable for children. If so, then this knowledge is just for your information.

Please see below for an introduction to appearance ideals in the media in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.

### How are images of people in professional media manipulated?

Images we see on professional media go through several steps and manipulations.

Steps before the image is taken:

- The photographer is chosen
- The model is selected
- Lighting and scenery are prepared
- The model is styled appropriately, including their hair and make-up
- A director instructs the model how to pose
- 100s of images are taken

Steps after the image is taken:

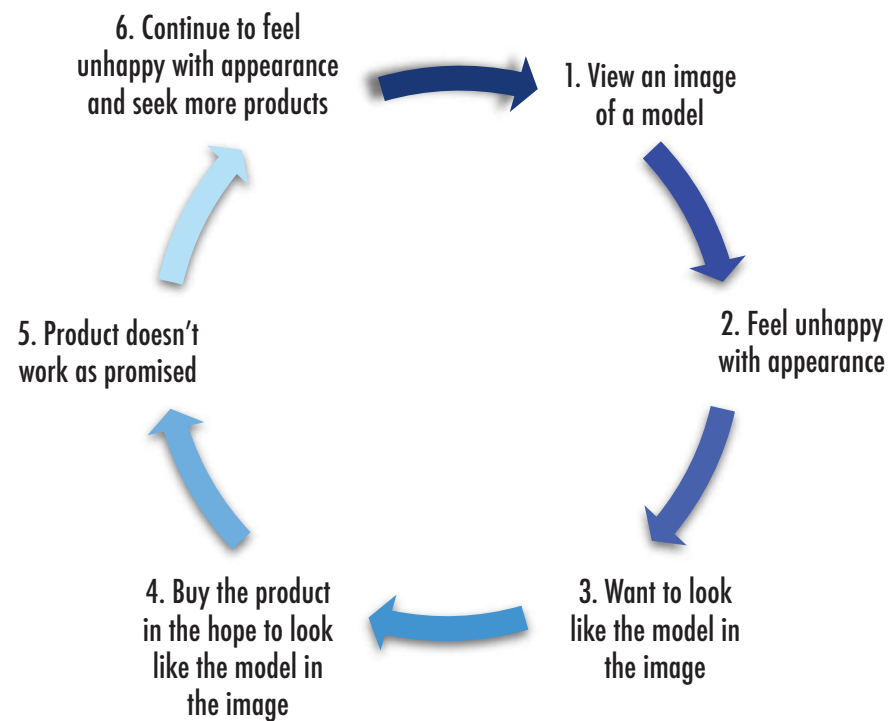
- The 'perfect' image is selected
- Airbrushing takes place: skin tone is made fairer, the legs, arms, and stomach are made slimmer, the neck and legs are elongated, the hair is made fuller, all blemishes are smoothed away, teeth are whitened, eyes and lips are made bigger, etc.

As a result of all these different steps, the individuals we see in professional media look completely different from most people, and even from the way they look in real life.

Please see below for an introduction to appearance ideals in the media in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.

### How do these media messages affect individuals?

These media messages create a vicious cycle, where individuals feel constantly unhappy with their appearance, and continue to keep buying more products in the hope of meeting appearance ideals [refer to the diagram]



**Please see below for an introduction to appearance ideals in the media in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.**

### What can we do to change how we respond to media messages?

As individuals, we can take the initiative to challenge appearance ideals that are portrayed by both professional media and personal media:

- Avoid retouching or editing photos on our own personal media
- Campaign against retouching of photos by writing to magazines, brands and advertisers
- Tell a friend you like their natural photo, and 'like' it!
- Unfollow social media accounts that reinforce appearance ideals and only make you feel bad about yourself
- Post body-positive comments.
- Post messages and comments on others' photos which are not related to appearance. Focus on the location of the photo or what the people are doing instead.

# PART 2: DURING THE SESSION

45 minutes



## COMIC PAGE



## TEACHER ACTIONS



- Start the session by recalling the group rules.
- Ask them the name of the story of the previous session.
- Then, show the TITLE PAGE of the comic book to all the children and ask them, 'What is the name of the story?' Children will tell the name of the story aloud.
- Now ask them to raise their hand or call out if they know what are manipulations in the media.

Say - "Do you know what is meant by appearance ideals?"

Take responses from the students and then say —

"Great! Today we are going to be learning about appearance ideals and where they come from. We will also recognize how they can create pressures for us and impact our daily lives. Finally, we will develop ways to challenge these appearance ideals and resist appearance pressures."

Instruct students to read the story (this may be in small groups, or individually).

## DESIRED RESPONSE (from Students)



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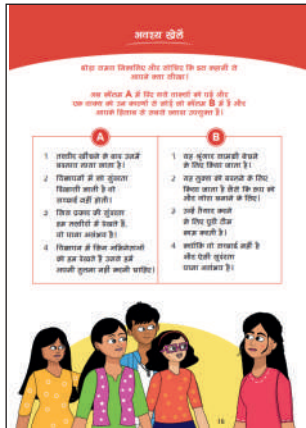
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Teachers Note:  
This is a simple pre assessment to check the understanding of the students. This is not to be evaluated.



COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



After the students finish reading the comics, invite some of the students to share what they thought were the main messages of the comics.

Please share the main learnings of the stories with the students.

How people look in TV, films, and advertisements is not the reality. They have a big team working on how they look, before their photos are taken. First, their makeup is done, hair is styled, and they are given nice clothes to wear. After that, their photos are taken. The photos are also edited further. For example, they are made to look taller, or the marks of their face are removed to make them look more beautiful.

What we see on TV and in commercials is designed to make us feel bad about ourselves and our looks, so that we buy things that we think will help us achieve the ideal look.

This is why we cannot compare ourselves to what we see on TV and advertisements. Because what we see is not the truth and nor is it an achievable standard. It is just a scheme to sell products which ultimately just hurts us.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



Photos are edited after they are clicked.	This is done to sell beauty products.
The beauty shown in advertisements is not the truth.	This is done to change their appearance. For example, to make them look fairer.
The kind of beauty we see in photos is impossible to achieve.	A whole team works to get them ready.
We should not compare ourselves to the celebrities we see in advertisements.	Because that is not the truth and it is impossible to achieve such beauty.

Teachers Note:  
Ensure that students understand the meaning of important words such as foul play, strategy, and comparison.

Teachers Note:

- Ensure that while describing the activities, you do not reveal the answers. A few examples will be enough to explain it.
- Ask the students to be creative and mention points which are not already listed as examples.
- Ask the students whether they understand all the points/things listed by other students? If some students do not understand them, explain it to them.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Optional Activity:

Complete it in class if time is available, or encourage students to do it at home.

It is important to remember that we value the people in our lives because of non-appearance related qualities.

Ask students to complete the activity individually.

The activity asks students to think about someone important in their lives (e.g., a family member, a friend), and then think about why they appreciate that person in their lives.

Once students have completed the task, invite them to share their answers if they feel comfortable.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



▶ Students might state qualities such as kindness, thoughtfulness, sense of humor, intelligence, being a good listener or good at a sport.

A series of horizontal dashed lines provided for students to write their responses.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Following this, ask the students:

1. Do these individuals look like appearance ideals?
2. Think about what is most important in an individual — is it their looks or their qualities?
3. So, do we all agree that we appreciate the people we love because of their qualities, and not because they match appearance ideals?

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



▶ No!

▶ Their personality and their qualities — who they are as a

▶ Yes!

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple horizontal dashed lines.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Following this discussion, ask the students:

1. Why do you think it is unfair to compare the way you and your friends look to images of celebrities you see in the media?

2. So, do we all agree that it is unrealistic to compare ourselves to celebrities we see in the media and that these

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



▶ • Common people are not represented by models and don't have access to stylists and professionals to make them look like appearance ideals. It is like comparing things on totally different levels, which is unfair.

• It requires a lot of time, effort and money to look like that, which average people don't have.

▶ Yes!

Teachers Note: Ensure they know the meaning of key words like compare and unfair.

Teachers Note:

- Make sure the students verbalize why they think it's unrealistic to compare themselves to images of celebrities.
- Help students recognise that even celebrities don't look like they do in advertisements when they're going about their daily lives. Normally, they do not have all the stylists, makeup artists and digital distortion of images to change their

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Ask them, 'How are you all feeling now?'

Next time, we will read a story that will help us understand the negative effects of comparing our appearance with other people.

Now, ask them to raise their hands or call out if they understood what media manipulations are.

Tell them to share their learning with their family members and friends.

Thank all the children and close the session.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



▶ All Hands Up!

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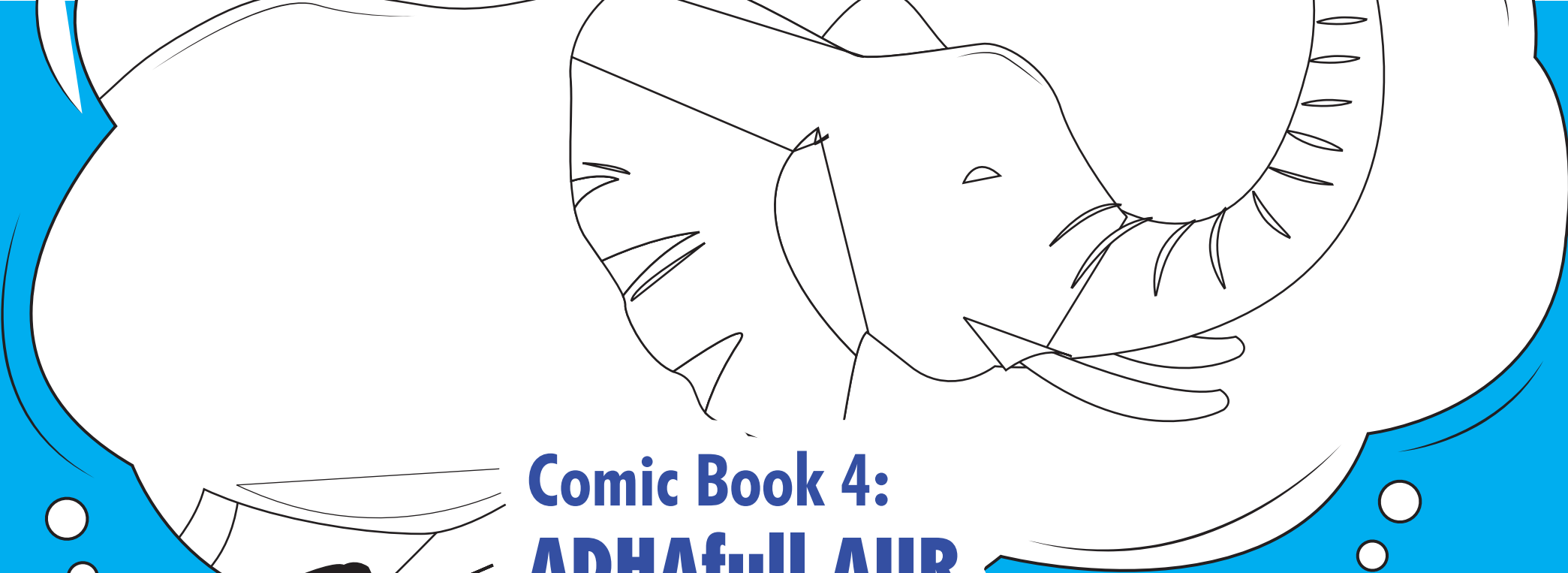
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**Comic Book 4:**  
**ADHAfull AUR**  
**HATHI KI TALAASH**

**Understanding**  
**Appearance**  
**Comparisons**



# PART 1: OVERVIEW BEFORE THE SESSION

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## KEY MESSAGE



By the end of the session, students should be able to understand that

- The process of comparing their looks to others can have negative consequences for themselves.
- New ways to respond to situations when one is comparing themselves, so that it has a positive outcome for the individual and the people around them.
- Each person is unique, and we should focus on accepting and appreciating ourselves as we are.

## SUMMARY OF THE STORY



In this story, Vivek constantly compares himself to Khoobilal, the elephant keeper. Khoobilal has a muscular body and thick hair. Vivek feels so angry and upset that he doesn't look like Khoobilal, that he steals his elephant.

The ADHAfull help Vivek to realize that he should stop comparing himself to others, as it will only trouble him and make him feel bad about himself.

They also help him understand that he should not worry about looking like anyone else because everyone is unique and good, just as they are.

**Please see below for an introduction to the concept of appearance comparison in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.**

### **What do we mean by appearance comparisons?**

In the previous story, we learnt about how people often compare themselves to celebrities and people in the media. However, it is also common for people to compare themselves and their appearance to those around them in everyday life. It can happen automatically without us even realizing and in relation to many aspects (e.g., jobs, relationships). However, it creates problems when we compare looks, as it makes us feel bad.

### **How do we compare our looks to others?**

People usually compare their looks to other people they consider to be better looking. They are also likely to compare parts of their appearance that they tend to dislike (e.g., their hair, skin colour). This makes them feel unhappy with how they look and leads to other negative emotions like anger, jealousy, and sadness.



Please see below for an introduction to the concept of appearance comparison in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.

### What is the problem with comparing our appearance?

Appearance comparisons are harmful and can negatively affect our friends and us. When we compare our appearance to that of others, it is easy to get stuck in a harmful 'downward spiral'.

Comparisons usually make people feel dissatisfied and critical of their appearance and want to change it. The more someone compares themselves to others, the worse they feel. It makes them feel bad, more aware of others who are better looking, and even further away from matching appearance ideals. This spiral of comparison then affects people around them - talking and focusing on comparisons can drag others into the spiral. They might also start comparing themselves and feeling pressures to match appearance ideals. Everyone ends up getting pulled into the spiral of comparisons.

Therefore, comparing ourselves to others creates an environment of everyone comparing themselves, wanting to look different, and feeling negatively about themselves.



**Please see below for an introduction to the concept of appearance comparison in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.**

### How can we break the cycle of comparison?

It is possible to break the cycle of appearance comparisons, and the first step is recognizing its negative impact. It also means not comparing oneself to people we think look better or worse than us, and not comparing our features or appearance with others.

It can also involve complimenting others about non-appearance related qualities and focusing on good things about ourselves and others. We might also consider appreciating our body for all its different functions, such as running, breathing, eating, or even dancing!

45 minutes



# PART 2: DURING THE SESSION

## COMIC PAGE



## TEACHER ACTIONS



- Start the session by recalling the group rules.
- Ask them the name of the story of the previous session.
- Then, show the TITLE PAGE of the comic book to all the children and ask them, 'What is the name of the story?' Children will tell the name of the story aloud. Teachers Note: This is a simple pre assessment to check the understanding of the students. This is not to be evaluated. DESIRED RESPONSE (from Students)

## DESIRED RESPONSE (from Students)



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Say - "Do you know what is meant by appearance comparison?"

Take responses from the students and then say —

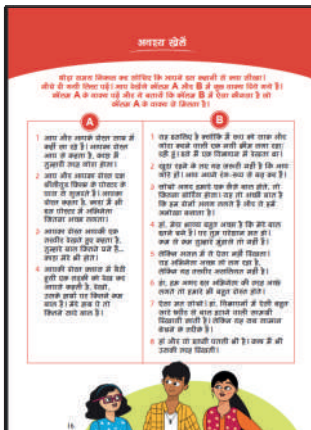
"Great! Today we are going to learn about appearance comparisons, and how comparing our looks to people in media and our daily life is part of human nature. We are going to understand the ways in which comparing looks can have negative consequences for us, and those around us. We are also going to practice ways to avoid making comparisons."

Instruct students to read the story (this may be in small groups, or individually).

Teachers Note:  
This is a simple pre assessment to check the understanding of the students. This is not to be evaluated.



COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



After the students finish reading the comics, invite some of the students to share what they thought were the main messages of the comics. Please share the following important learnings with the students.

Please share the main learnings of the stories with the students.

- It is natural to compare yourself to others or to celebrities. We only compare ourselves to people who we think are better than us.
- Comparing looks is harmful. When we compare our looks to others' we fall in the trap of no matter how much we try to look like them, we cannot do so. And this makes us feel even worse. And by looking at us, our friends also start comparing themselves to others. This results in us feeling pressured to look like other people. Similarly, everyone who compares their looks to others, falls in this trap.

Comparing your looks to another person's is a waste. Everyone is unique. We should not try to look like other people. Rather, we should embrace our uniqueness.

After you think that the students have understood the main messages, divide them into small groups. Instruct them to complete the activity given below.

Read the statements below. You will see that there are statements given in column 'A' and column 'B'. Read the statements in column 'A' and tell which statement in column 'B' is similar to the one in column 'A'.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



You and your friend are going somewhere together. your friend says to you that they wish they were as fair as you.	This is because I am using a product to make my skin clean and fair. I saw it in an advertisement.
You and your friend walk past the poster of a bollywood film. Your friend says, I wish I...	Being fair is not essential to being happy. You are bigger than your appearance.
While looking at one of your pictures, your friends says, your hair is so thick, I wish mine were also like that.	Think if we had the same hair it would be so boring. It is good that we look different and...
Your friend sees a girl sitting in the class and says to you, see how little hair she has on her arms. I wish my arms also...	Yes, it is my good luck that I have good hair. But you don't worry. At least you don't have pimples.
	But he does not look like that in reality. While this actor is looking good, this picture...
	Yes, if we looked good like this actress, we would have lots of friends.
	Don't think like that. Yes, we see a lot of advertisements from hair removal products...
	Yes, and she is so thin also. I wish I looked like her.

Teachers Note:

- Ensure that students understand the key terms such as comparison, media, daily life, results, and human nature.
- Ensure that all the students have understood the story and the key learnings from it. If there is anything they did not understand, go back and explain it again.

Teachers Note:

- Ensure that in the student's responses, they include that each person is unique and that they do not need to look like anyone else. They should stay happy and not compare themselves to anyone else.
- Tell students that it would be helpful to practice different scenarios like this in real life outside of the classroom.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Following this discussion, ask the students:

Why do you think we should not compare our appearance?

After this, say:

- So, do we all agree that comparing ourselves to someone else makes us feel bad about ourselves, and it can also make the people around us feel pressured to meet appearance ideals?
- Instead, we should realize that we are all unique and don't need to look like anyone else.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)

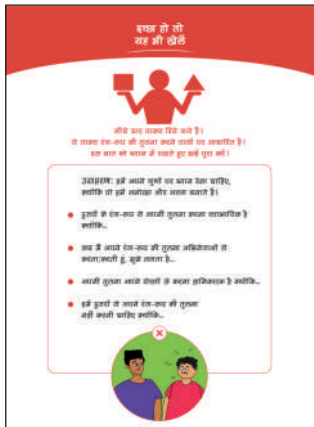


- It makes us feel dissatisfied and critical of ourselves.
- It leads to a negative spiral, where the more we do it, the worse we feel.

Yes!

Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of horizontal dashed lines.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Optional Activity 2:

complete it in class if time is available or encourage students to do it at home.

It is important to understand the negative effects of comparing our physical appearances to others, both on us and on those around us.

Ask the students to complete the optional activity individually.

In this activity, the students are asked to complete sentences to help them learn about the harmful effects of comparing looks.

After this discussion, ask the students:

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



It is natural to compare our looks to others' because..... it is in our nature for us to compare ourselves to people who we think are better than us.

When I compare my appearance to that of celebrities, I think that..... I will never be able to look like them and life is worthless.

It is harmful to compare yourself to your friends because..... then we get stuck in a trap of constantly trying to look more and more like them, and when we cant, it makes us feel bad.

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**Teachers Note:**  
Help the students understand that to stop the cycle of comparison, they need to stop comparing themselves to others.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



So, should we be comparing ourselves to people around us? ▶ No!

After this, say:

Remember, when you compare yourself to someone else, it makes you feel upset and sad.

Then, when you change your behaviour and appearance to look like others, you feel worse about yourself and this keeps going on. The only way to end this cycle is to stop comparing yourself with others and accept that everyone is unique as they are.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of horizontal dashed lines.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Ask them, 'How are you all feeling now?'

Ask the student - "Do you understand the meaning of appearance comparisons now?"

Are you ready to challenge appearance comparisons in your daily life?

Next time, we will read a story that will help us understand the negative impact of body talk. This is when we talk about our appearance, or that of others, in both a positive and negative way.

Tell them to share their learning with their family members and friends.

Thank all the children and close the session.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



▶ Yes!

▶ Yes!

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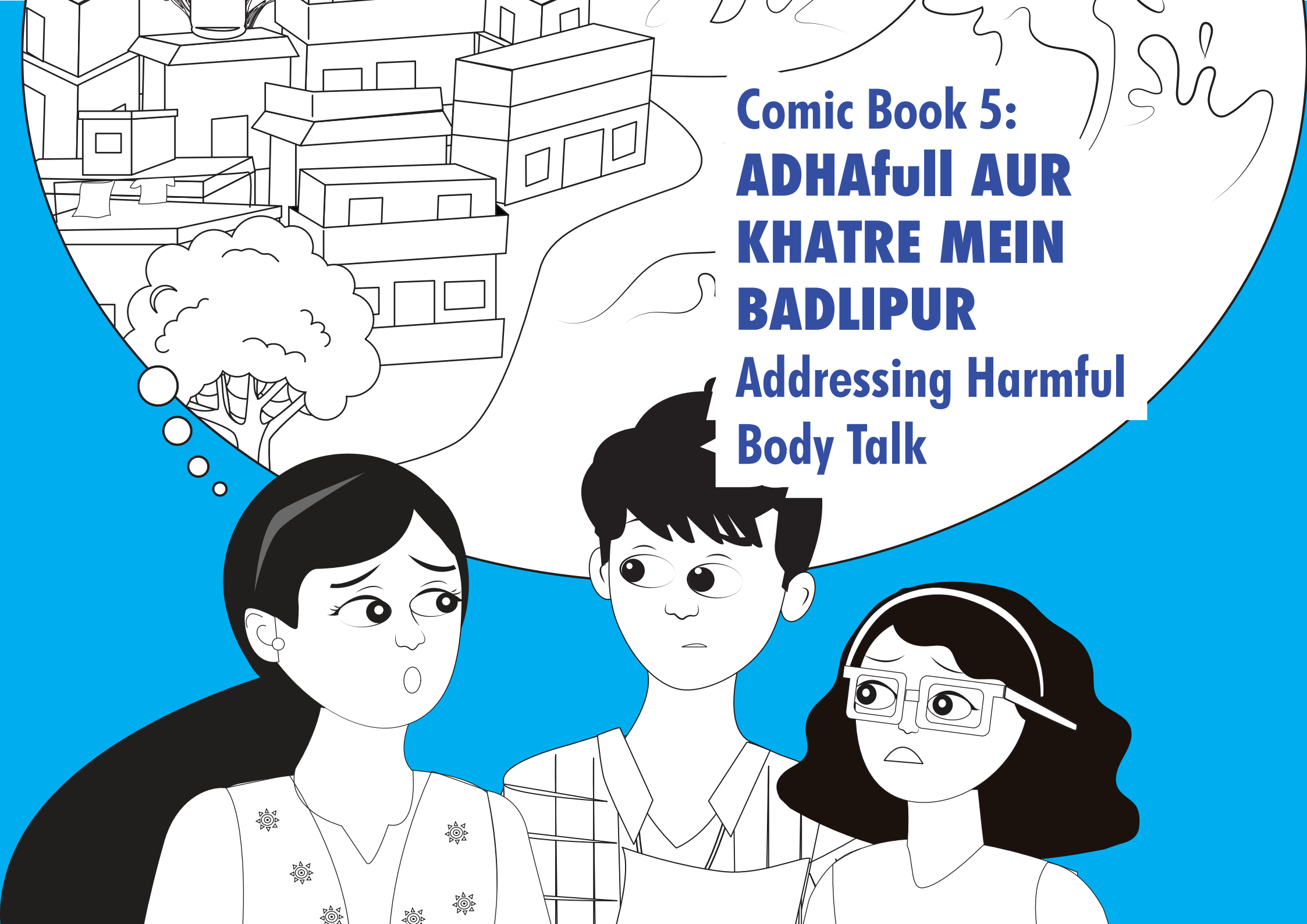
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Teachers Note:  
Help students identify that to end the cycle of comparison they need to stop comparing their appearance with that of others



The illustration features three characters in the foreground: a woman on the left with a surprised expression, a man in the center looking at a document, and a woman on the right wearing glasses and looking concerned. Above them is a large thought bubble containing a cityscape with a tree. The background is a solid blue color.

**Comic Book 5:**  
**ADHAfull AUR**  
**KHATRE MEIN**  
**BADLIPUR**  
**Addressing Harmful**  
**Body Talk**

# PART 1: OVERVIEW BEFORE THE SESSION

## KEY MESSAGE



By the end of the session, students should be able to understand:

- People talk about physical appearances without giving it a thought, because this is common in our society. This is because people feel the pressure to have the ideal appearance portrayed in TV and advertisements. Conversations related to physical appearance are called body talk. These conversations can be both positive (you look so nice, have you lost weight?) or negative (I wish I looked more muscular). These conversations can be about you, your friends or even film stars.
- Some people talk about physical appearances with good intentions, but these conversations are harmful for everyone and build the pressure to have an ideal body. These conversations distract from a person's skills and interests. Body talk is only not harmful for people who are praised, but is also harmful for people around them. For example, they start feeling like that lack something. Because of this, they spend all their time worrying about their looks.
- Conversations about physical appearance happen often. It is important to stop them and challenge the people who talk about it. When body talk takes place, it is important for us to explain that it is harmful, and change the topic to a person's qualities instead.

## SUMMARY OF THE STORY



This story is about Adrak and Khoobillal, and the negative impact of body talk. Khoobillal's uncle keeps praising him for his muscular body in front of Adrak. This makes Adrak feel concerned about his own looks, and pressurized to meet appearance ideals as well. If the uncle did not compliment him, Adrak thinks it must mean that his body is not muscular enough

However, when there is a crisis in town and Adrak rushes to save everyone, it makes Khoobillal realize that he should have been helping Adrak. Instead, all his time went in taking care of his looks and worrying about his appearance, due to the pressure he felt from his uncle's comments to maintain his muscular appearance.

Both Adrak and Khoobillal realize that commenting on looks (either in a positive or negative manner) has a negative impact and it pressurizes individuals to meet appearance ideals and focus on their appearance.

**Please see below for an introduction to the concept of body talk in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.**

### What are some examples of body talk?

Negative comments on others' appearance: 'You can't hit that ball because you don't have any muscles.' These are intentionally harmful comments (i.e., teasing) about another person's appearance.

Negative comments about self: 'My legs look so fat.' People often make negative comments about their appearance, without realizing the negative effects on themselves and others. Those around them may start focusing on the shape of their own legs.

Positive comments about others' appearance: 'You look so thin in that dress. I wish I looked like you.' Whilst this comment is well-meaning, it encourages people to think about their weight and whether they are slim enough, thus strengthening appearance pressures.

**Please see below for an introduction to the concept of body talk in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.**

### What do we mean by body talk?

Body talk is any conversation or comment about appearance, whether positive or negative, that reinforces appearance ideals. It can include comments about one's appearance, a friend's or a celebrity's appearance. These comments can include positive comments like 'you look good - have you lost weight?' or negative comments like 'my thighs are too big.' All body talk is harmful and can create and maintain pressures to meet appearance ideals.

### Why do people engage in body talk?

In our society, people may engage in body talk for several reasons:

- It is a common form of greeting.
- they want to fit in.
- they want to reassure an individual about their appearance.
- they need reassurance themselves.
- they want to seem modest.
- they have a habit of commenting on people's appearance.

Please see below for an introduction to the concept of body talk in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.

### What is the impact of body talk?

Body talk has a negative impact on individuals receiving the comments, as well as people who might overhear the body talk. Body talk maintains and encourages appearance ideals and can pressure individuals to spend more time and attention focusing on their appearance. Further, whether it is a positive or a negative comment, appearance-related comments can make the individual receiving the comment feel bad and lead them to engage in unhealthy behaviors to maintain appearance ideals. For example, in the story, Khoobilal compromises on other things to maintain his body. He worries that he will no longer be attractive if he stops working out and his appearance changes.

Body talk can also have a negative impact on other individuals who are not receiving positive comments about their appearance. They feel their appearance is not good enough as they didn't receive a compliment, which may lead them to spend lots of time and money trying to "improve" their appearance. In the story, Adrak started questioning his appearance because Khoobilal's uncle did not compliment him. As a result, he worried that he wasn't attractive.

Hence, body talk reinforces and increases appearance pressures for everyone involved and can be harmful.

**Please see below for an introduction to the concept of body talk in order to aid your understanding on the messages behind the story.**

### **What can we do to challenge and stop body talk?**

Body talk is often a result of habit, or a conversation topic people rely on in social situations. Therefore, it can often be difficult to challenge it. However, it is important for individuals to begin challenging body talk whenever it occurs and to instead focus the conversation on an individual's inner qualities, or to point out how body talk reinforces appearance pressures. The activities will further help students practice how to challenge body talk.

# PART 2: DURING THE SESSION

45 minutes



## COMIC PAGE



## TEACHER ACTIONS



- Start the session by recalling the group rules.
- Ask them the name of the story of the previous session.
- Then, show the TITLE PAGE of the comic book to all the children, and ask them, 'What is the name of the story?' Children will tell the name of the story aloud.

## DESIRED RESPONSE (from Students)



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Say – "Raise your hands if you know what is body talk?"

Take responses from the students and then say – "Great, we are going to learn about body talk today and how it can maintain appearance ideals and appearance pressures in society. We are also going to understand how body talk can be harmful and make individuals feel bad about themselves. We will learn how to challenge body talk and practice giving non-appearance-related compliments to one another.

Instruct students to read the story (this may be in small groups, or individually).

Teachers Note: This is a simple pre assessment to check the understanding of the students. This is not to be evaluated.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



After the students finish reading the comics, invite some of the students to share what they thought were the main messages of the comics. Please share the main learnings of the stories with the students.

People talk about physical appearances without giving it a thought, because this is common in our society. This is because people feel the pressure to have the ideal appearance portrayed in TV and advertisements. Conversations related to physical appearance are called body talk. These conversations can be both positive (you look so nice, have you lost weight?) or negative (I wish I looked more muscular). These conversations can be about you, your friends or even film stars.

Some people talk about physical appearances with good intentions, but these conversations are harmful for everyone and build the pressure to have an ideal body. These conversations distract from a person's skills and interests. Body talk is only not harmful for people who are praised, but is also harmful for people around them. For example, they start feeling like that lack something. Because of this, they spend all their time worrying about their looks.

Conversations about physical appearance happen often. It is important to stop them and challenge the people who talk about it. When body talk takes place, it is important for us to explain that it is harmful, and change the topic to a person's qualities instead.

After you think that the students have understood the main messages, divide them into small groups. Instruct them to complete the activity. Students are given a passage that must be taken into account in order to do this activity. Read the given passage and state which of the following sentences may be the appropriate answer to the above passage. Write 'Yes' against the correct answer and 'No' against the incorrect statements.

By doing this activity, students will understand the importance of not engaging in conversations about physical appearance and understand how to challenge body talk.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



For Activity 1, students will need to answer the following:

- Don't feel the pressure to have an ideal body. Remember that the images we see in magazines is not the reality of the celebrities.
- It is bad to talk about looks and it wastes a lot of time. Come, let's talk about what we are going to do after school!
- Don't say that! You have many qualities that are more unique and important than your physical appearance.

Encourage the students to think about what Aadhafull told Adrak to challenge body talk.

Teachers Note:

- Ensure that all the students have understood the story and the key learnings from it. If there is anything they did not understand, go back and explain it again.
- Ensure that students understand that talking about physical appearance can become a habit. Help them understand that if they do not engage in body talk themselves, they can change the behaviour of their peers too.

Teachers Note:

- Also help the students understand that sometimes it can be difficult to redirect conversations about physical appearance to another topic, but it is important to do so in our daily lives.



COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Following this discussion, ask the students:

Why do you think we should not talk about appearance?



After this, say:

So, can we all agree that body talk is harmful, and can make individuals feel pressured to maintain appearance ideals?



Instead, we should interact with people and pay attention to their other qualities, apart from looks.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



- Body talk (both positive and negative) is counter-productive and harmful.
- It can lead to focusing too much on appearance and not on other qualities, which matter more.

Yes!

Encourage students to think about how body talk made Adrak feel insecure about his own appearance.

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COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Optional Activity 2:

If time permits, do this in class. Otherwise, encourage students to complete it at home.

It is important to practice complimenting people. However, this praise should not be linked to their looks or physical appearance.

Students are given a list of some common qualities that define people. Tell the students to turn to the person sitting next to them and think about the quality that best describes them. Now tell the students to discuss with each other why they chose this particular quality.

After this activity, tell the students:

Remember, we should give importance to a person's qualities, rather than their looks. Talk or praise related to looks or their physical appearance increases the pressure on individuals to maintain an ideal body. The only way to end this cycle of body shaming is to challenge it, and refuse to participate in it.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)

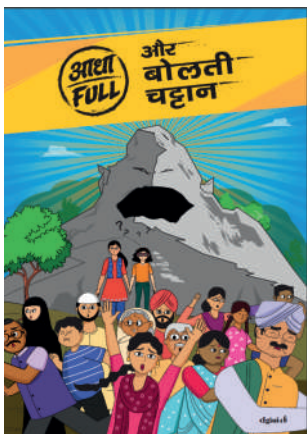


You are really funny.

- I can trust you.
- You are a good friend.
- You are always there for me when I ask you for help.
- I think you are really intelligent.
- You make me smile.
- You're fun to be around.

Encourage students to think about how everyone in Badlipur called Adrak a hero for saving them, and no one focused on his appearance.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



Ask them, 'How are you all feeling now?'

Say - "Now, raise your hands if you have understood what is body talk."

Great, next time we will read our last comic, which summarizes everything we have learnt so far about challenging appearance pressures. We will also make plans to spread the word and encourage others to challenge appearance pressures, too.

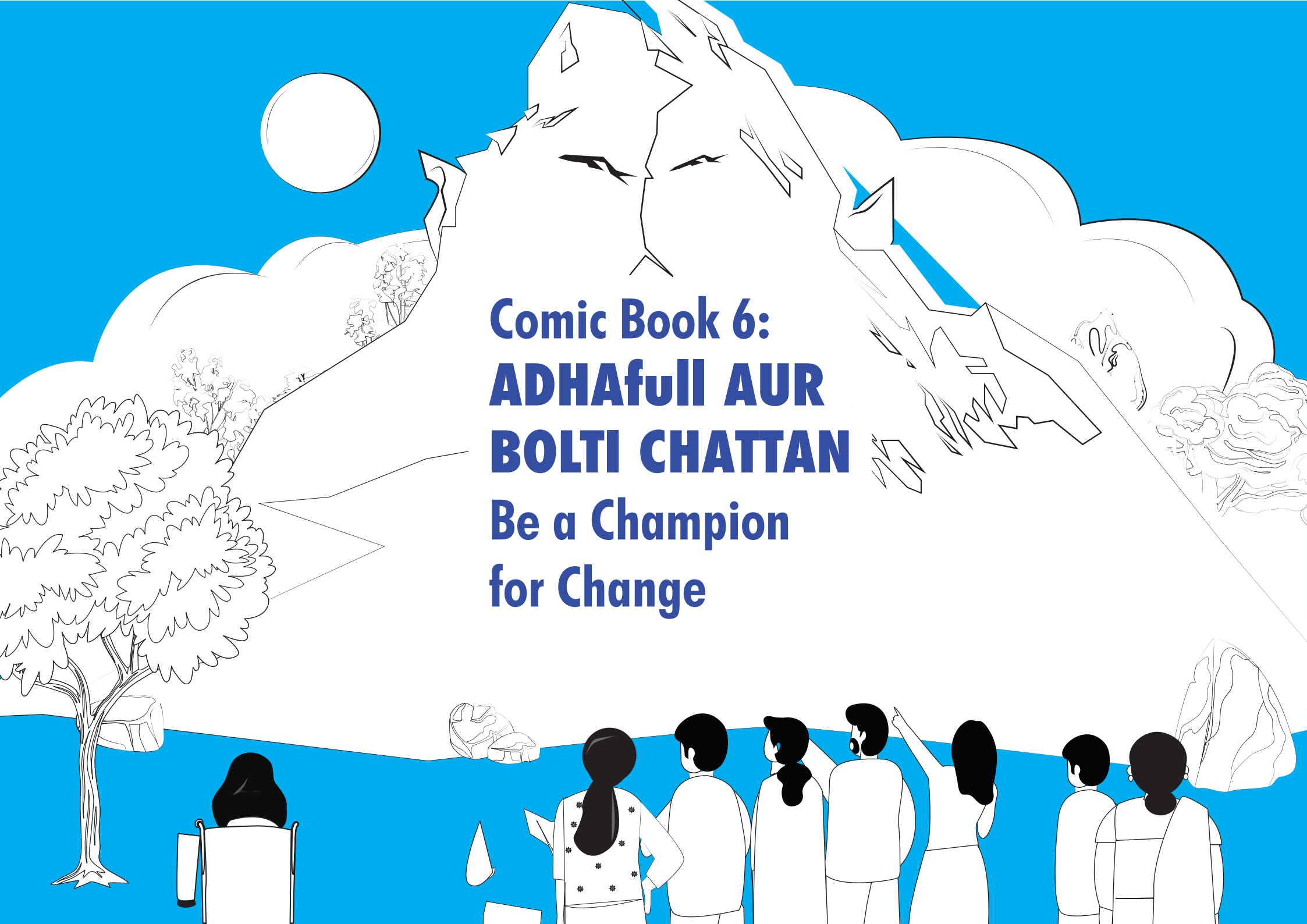
Tell them to share their learning with their family members and friends.

Thank all the children and close the session.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



Handwriting practice area with 14 horizontal dashed lines.



**Comic Book 6:  
ADHAFULL AUR  
BOLTI CHATTAN**  
**Be a Champion  
for Change**

# PART 1: OVERVIEW BEFORE THE SESSION

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## KEY MESSAGE



At the end of the session, students should understand that:

- Stereotypes have been around for years and are societal. They are harmful for both boys and girls and prevent them from getting ahead in life. It is important that girls and boys, both, get equal opportunities to advance.
- TV and advertisements show us an ideal body which adds pressure on us to look like that. What we see on TV and in commercials is designed to make us feel bad about ourselves and our looks, so that we buy things that we think will help us achieve the ideal look. This is why we cannot compare ourselves to what we see on TV and advertisements. Because what we see is not the truth and nor is it an achievable standard. It just costs us time, money, and mental peace.
- Comparing looks or talking about physical appearances is common in our society. These conversations are harmful for everyone and build the pressure to have an ideal body. These conversations distract from a person's skills and interests. Body talk is only not harmful for people who are praised, but is also harmful for people around them. For example, they start feeling like that lack something. Because of this, they spend all their time worrying about their looks.

## SUMMARY OF THE STORY



In this story, the Aadhaful plan a scheme to help everyone in the village remember what they have learnt about challenging appearance pressures.

The story focuses on how each individual is unique and should not aspire to look like actors and actresses on TV, especially as they look the way they do on screen due to a huge hair and beauty team, professional photographers, and editing and manipulation of the image once the photo is taken.

In addition, the story highlights why it is not fair to compare ourselves to media images and the harmful effects of these comparisons and body talk. The comic summarizes all the topics we have covered in the stories, and what we have learnt about appearance pressures from each of them.

This story should give the students a chance to consolidate everything they have learnt from the comics so far.

**The activities will further help them practice skills related to challenging appearance pressures in their daily lives and in their community and spread the message of body confidence.**

By the end of the comics, students should understand the key concepts related to appearance pressures.

### Appearance Ideals -

Appearance ideals mean the 'best' or the 'perfect' way to look according to people and society around us (slim, long hair, 6-pack abs etc). These ideals change over time, so it is not worth trying to match appearance ideals.

### Media Messages -

Images we see in the media are manipulated and do not reflect reality, as they are the result of many steps and processes. They also often promote appearance ideals in order to sell products and services. It is, therefore, pointless to compare ourselves to these images as they are unrealistic and unattainable.

### Appearance Comparisons -

The process of comparing our looks to others can have negative consequences for others and ourselves. Instead, we should focus on accepting and appreciating ourselves as we are, because each person is unique.

### Body Talk -

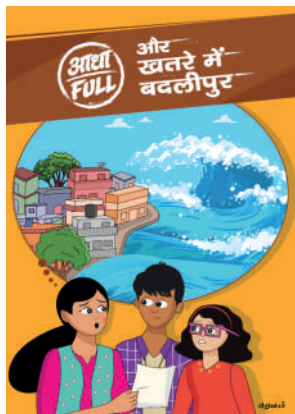
Body talk refers to any positive or negative comment about appearance that reinforces appearance ideals and ultimately maintains appearance pressures in society. It also makes appearance seem more important than it is. Instead, we should focus on valuing non-appearance-related qualities in individuals, like their personality, actions or interests.

# PART 2: DURING THE SESSION

45 minutes



## COMIC PAGE



## TEACHER ACTIONS



- Start the session by recalling the group rules.
- Ask them, the name of the story of the previous session.
- Then, show the TITLE PAGE of the comic book to all the children, and ask them, 'What is the name of the story?' Children will tell the name of the story aloud.

## DESIRED RESPONSE (from Students)



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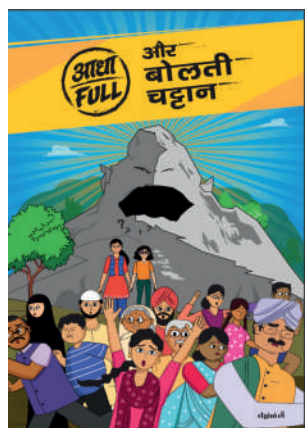
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Say - "Raise your hand if you know how to challenge appearance pressures in your community?" Take responses from the students and then say – "Great! In today's final session, we are going to summarize everything we have learnt about appearance pressures so far. We are also going to take a pledge and develop a plan to challenge appearance pressures in our community." Instruct students to read the story (this may be in small groups, or individually).

Teachers Note: This is a simple pre assessment to check the understanding of the students. This is not to be evaluated.

COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



After this, divide the students into 4 small groups. Give each group a pledge. Instruct them to complete the activity

Please share the main learnings of the stories with the students.

Stereotypes have been around for years and are societal. They are harmful for both boys and girls and prevent them from getting ahead in life. It is important that girls and boys, both, get equal opportunities to advance.

TV and advertisements show us an ideal body which adds pressure on us to look like that. What we see on TV and in commercials is designed to make us feel bad about ourselves and our looks, so that we buy things that we think will help us achieve the ideal look. This is why we cannot compare ourselves to what we see on TV and advertisements. Because what we see is not the truth and nor is it an achievable standard. It just costs us time, money, and mental peace.

Comparing looks or talking about physical appearances is common in our society. These conversations are harmful for everyone and build the pressure to have an ideal body. These conversations distract from a person’s skills and interests. Body talk is only not harmful for people who are praised, but is also harmful for people around them. For example, they start feeling like that lack something. Because of this, they spend all their time worrying about their looks.

Students have been given 4 incomplete statements that they have to complete based on their learnings from all 6 comics. By completing this activity, they will review a variety of concepts learned about body image and body confidence.

After each group shares their ideas, ask students to suggest ways to improve the plan.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



• We will not agree to stereotypes associated with boys and girls because. . . . . we understand that boys and girls are equal and can do anything.

• We will not try to look like film stars and models because. . . . . these looks are fake and trying to achieve them just costs us time, money, and mental peace.

• We will not compare our looks to anyone else because. . . . . everyone is special and unique and comparing looks is harmful.

• We will not make positive or negative comments about looks because. . . . .

Teachers Note:

- Ask students to give real examples of how this plan has been implemented in their community.
- If students are struggling, ask them to think of campaigns that deal with ideal appearance and mental health (for example, celebrity hashtag campaigns, rallies on social issues, poster campaigns).



COMIC PAGE 

TEACHER ACTIONS 

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students) 

After a few minutes, ask your students the following questions:

What key aspects have you learned that you will take with you?

And how are we going to remember these messages and the confidence of the physical champions in our daily lives?

Ask them how they are feeling now?

Tell them to share their learnings with their family and friends.

Thank all the kids before ending the session.

Teachers Note:  
Remember that students' responses are individual and equally valid, even if their views differ from those of others.

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COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



After a few minutes, ask the students the following question:

What key aspects have you learnt and will take away with you?



And we are going to remember these messages and champion body confidence in our daily life.



Ask them, 'How are you all feeling now?' Also, tell them to share their learning with their family members. Thank all the children and close the session.

DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



- Thinking critically about media images they see and why they are created a certain way (i.e., recognizing photoshopped images, thinking about the processes that went into creating an image etc.)
- Not engaging in body talk
- Not comparing oneself to celebrities' and friends' appearance
- Complimenting friends on things other than their appearance
- Standing up to teasing about appearance.
- Appreciating that everyone is unique (including their personality and appearance) and can be valued in their own way.

Teachers Note:  
Remember that students' responses are personal to them and equally valid, even if their ideas are different from those of others.

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COMIC PAGE



TEACHER ACTIONS



DESIRED RESPONSE  
(from Students)



After this discussion, say the following:

So, can we all agree not to succumb to the pressures of an ideal body and work towards ensuring that this message reaches others in our community as well?



Yes!

Optional Activity 2:

If time permits, do this in class. Otherwise, encourage students to complete it at home.

For the activity, ask the students to sit in a circle.

The activity gives students an opportunity to think and reflect on what they have learned from the 6 stories, and how they will apply these lessons to their lives.

Ask the students how they will share the learning from these comics with their friends and relatives. For example, ask them whether they will write a letter to their uncle about the topics covered in them.



Yes!



Teachers Note:  
This is a simple assessment to check the understanding of the students. It is not to be evaluated.

# Glossary of Body Image Concepts

Body Image	The way we think, feel and behave in relation to our body and appearance is called body image.
Body Confidence	Body confidence or confidence in body image is when we accept, and are happy with, how we look and what our bodies can do.
Gender	Gender is a biological difference between men, women and intersex individuals. But gender is influenced by social concepts, not biology. Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, characteristics and opportunities that society considers appropriate for girls and boys and women and men.
Gender Stereotypes	Stereotypes are a set of beliefs according to which a person is expected to behave in a certain way or to do or not to do certain things. These expectations depend on the gender of the person.
Ideal Appearance	Appearance means the way we look and ideal means the best. So ideal appearance means how we should be in order to look our best. It is usually determined by the people or society around us.
Ideal Appearance in Media	The images we see in the media are the result of extensive preparation, manipulation and transformation of the image. It is not realistic or possible to look like the people in these images. Besides this, the people shown in these images have extensive resources including makeup artists, hair stylists, and professional photo editors. The photos look like they do because of these people.
Appearance Comparisons	It is very common for people to compare their looks to people around them. This can happen unconsciously and in relation to many aspects of our lives (eg job, relationships). But this creates problems, because it makes us feel bad.
Talking about Physical Appearance (Body Talk)	Body talk can be any conversation or comment related to our physical appearance or that of others. This may be positive or negative.

# Additional Notes

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