

Me

## Body-Shaming: A Devastative Assault on Body Acceptance

"Too skinny". "Too fat". "No curves". "Too many curves". Women in society today are essentially expected to be perfectly shaped women that are comfortable with their bodies; however, this is impossible. These ideals of the "perfect" body not only conflict with the fact that all women are shaped differently, but they hurt teenage girls, like those in our own community, who are constantly put under pressure by pop culture to have whatever body type is considered fashionable.

Teenage girls are continuously exposed to all sorts of opinions from the media on how to look. Because they are just maturing and forming their own opinions on things, these girls are extremely vulnerable to influence from what they view on the internet, in magazines, and on television. When these young women see gorgeous, unrealistic models in airbrushed pictures that weigh less than they do, they begin to think that their bodies are not acceptable. This type of thinking has led to severe body image issues and self-consciousness that damages young girls.

In popular culture today, though, acceptance of a larger female body is becoming increasingly common, such as the rising popularity of plus-sized models and songs like "All About That Bass" by Meghan Trainor. Although this is helpful to curvier women with body issues, it does more harm than good. Instead of preaching acceptance of all body types, songs and magazine articles that focus on the acceptance of larger body types tend to emphasize that exclusively plump women are beautiful only because "men love their curves". Not only that, but these songs and articles claim that if a woman does not have large curves, which a great deal of women do not, they are not desirable or are not a "real woman". This upsetting phenomenon, known as "skinny-shaming", not only is wrong, but it hurts the self-esteem of thin women.

Furthermore, it is extremely hypocritical when done by previously shamed larger women. The whole point of body-acceptance is not to shame other women for have a different sized body, but to be comfortable with your own body for what it is, not because certain people can find it attractive.

In the result of all of the body-shaming and unrealistic expectations of the female body, young girls in Carbondale have not only fallen victim to this issue, but have become vicious attackers without even realizing it. Girls in our own community and schools shame their female friends and peers for not only being overweight, but for being too thin or not having curves. Despite meaning to be innocuous, comments such as, "You need to eat," or, "Your hips are so big!" coming from close friends can cause serious body image issues and a lack of self-confidence. As Simone de Beauvoir once said, "To lose confidence in one's body is to lose confidence in oneself." If young women are continuing to be shamed, girls in our community will stop following their dreams and achieving to the best of their ability because they are worried that they won't be accepted for their size.

To fix the problem of negative body image in our society, everyone simply needs to start accepting women's bodies for what they are, as opposed to what they could be. Similar to Martin Luther King Jr.'s philosophy of stopping hate by learning to love and accept each other, we, as a community, can stop the ridiculing of non-ideal body shapes by loving and accepting our own and other's bodies for how they are. Also, people need to be empathetic and understand that their words do hurt. As soon as this happens, teenage girls will find the confidence to accept themselves and become the best person they can be.

Body-shaming and the lack of body acceptance in young girls are serious problems in our community despite some action taken by the media. People need to come together to learn and teach that women's bodies are all right. Then, girls will realize that they are amazing the way they are for, in the words of Amy Bloom, "You are imperfect, permanently and inevitably flawed. And you are beautiful."