

The Body Project | The Latest Literature (2021-24)

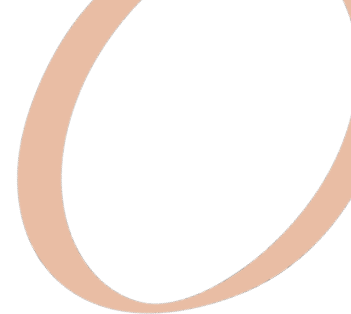


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Effectiveness & Implementation Studies

- D’Adamo et al. (2023) tested whether *The Body Project*, when delivered by peer leaders, reduced onset of subthreshold/threshold anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and purging disorder over a 2–4-year follow-up period.
 - Peer-led Body Project groups produced a 46% reduction in onset of subthreshold/threshold bulimia nervosa and a 62% reduction in onset of purging disorder relative to controls over follow-up.
 - Rates of onset of subthreshold/threshold anorexia nervosa and binge eating disorder did not significantly differ between peer-led Body Project participants and control participants.
- Martínez de Alva (2023) estimated the cost effectiveness of rolling out *the virtual Body Project* in Sweden compared to an expressive writing intervention or no intervention and found the virtual Body Project yielded lower costs, a greater return on investment, and larger quality-adjusted life years.
- Stice et al. (2021) tested (1) whether *The Body Project* is similarly effective for different racial and ethnic groups and (2) whether an improved match between minority participant race/ethnicity and fellow group members is associated with larger effects.
 - Results suggest that *The Body Project* produced relatively similar effects for racial/ethnic minority groups relative to White participants, that the effects were sometimes larger for Asian and Hispanic participants.
 - There was no evidence that an improved match between the race/ethnicity of minority participants and their fellow group members was associated with larger intervention effects.

- Stice, Bohon et al. (2023) tested the effectiveness of the online delivery of *The Body Project* with young women aged 16-27, and examined whether a pay-it-forward donation model could support sustained implementation.
 - The virtual delivery of *The Body Project* resulted in large reductions in eating disorder risk factors and symptoms compared to the control group.
 - The effects of the virtual delivery appear greater than some in-person groups (age-range is a factor here).
 - Results suggested that a pay-it-forward donation model is not an effective approach to support sustained implementation.

- Stice, Rohde and colleagues recruited 63 universities to deliver *The Body Project* to determine how to maximize the effects of the programme in the future. A total of 1387 university students completed *The Body Project* as part of this trial. Based on this work:
 - Stice, Rohde et al. (2023a) reported that *The Body Project* can be effectively implemented at universities using peer educators and a train-the-trainer approach and that adding a technical assistance (for virtual delivery) and quality assurance consultations resulted in significantly larger improvements in outcomes for group participants, and marginally higher adherence and competence by peer educators.
 - Stice, Rohde et al. (2023b) reported significantly greater reductions in eating disorder symptoms were found for:
 - the four-session versus two-session version of *The Body Project*.
 - the online delivery of *The Body Project* groups versus in-person sessions (remembering these are university students).
 - when observation-based supervision was provided to peer educators during intervention implementation versus when it was not.
 - Rohde et al. (2023) reported that positive perceptions of *The Body Project* by facilitators and their supervisors predicted better participant outcomes.

Testing The Body Project with Different Populations

The Body Project is participant-driven and so is adaptive by design. Participants are given an opportunity to describe and criticize the appearance ideal that is promoted in their (sub) culture. Therefore, most of the adaptations described in the studies below are limited to translations and amendments to the examples to make them more culturally sensitive / age or context appropriate etc.

Different Countries

- **Al Shebali et al. (2023)** adapted and evaluated *The Body Project* for **young Saudi women**.
 - Programme adaptations included translating materials into Arabic and culturally sensitive modifications to some of behavioural tasks (e.g., instead of “wearing shorts to school / going to the public pool in a swimsuit” suggestions included “wearing a belt to show your waist”).
 - The programme was tested during the COVID-19 pandemic so was run online in group sessions.
 - **Results:** The intervention was effective in reducing disordered eating, body dissatisfaction and mood.
- **Hudson et al. (2021)** adapted and evaluated *The Body Project* for **young Brazilian women**.
 - Programme adaptations were minimal. They included translating materials into Portuguese and adapting some of the examples to be more relevant to a Brazilian audience – e.g., changing some of the names of TV shows to Brazilian examples.
 - The programme was run in person across 4 group sessions.
 - **Results:** The intervention was effective in improving body image and reducing eating disorder risk factors and symptoms. Effects were maintained through 6-month follow up.
- **Luo et al. (2021)** adapted and evaluated *The e-Body Project* for **young Chinese women**.
 - Programme adaptations included translation into Mandarin and imagery was replaced to represent Chinese women.
 - The programme was run online across 6 x 45-minute self-directed modules.
 - **Results:** The eBody Project programme for Chinese women was effective in improving body image and reducing eating disorder risk factors and symptoms compared with a control group. Improvements were sustained at 6-month follow up.
- **Wu et al. (2023)** adapted and evaluated *The e-Body Project* for **young Chinese women** with a focus on cosmetic surgery.
 - The programme was run online across 2 x 45-minute self-directed modules.
 - An explicit focus on cosmetic surgery was added to many core activities – e.g., explore costs associated with pursuing the appearance ideal and cosmetic surgery; Write a letter to adolescent girl to help her resist social beauty pressure and to reduce her favourable attitudes toward cosmetic surgery.
 - **Results:** The intervention reduced beauty-ideal internalization and favourable attitudes toward cosmetic surgery, but effects were not sustained 4 weeks later.

Church Settings

- **Blomquist et al. (2021)** adapted and evaluated *The Body Project* for **adult women in Christian church settings** = *Reclaiming Beauty*.
 - To be adapt *The Body Project* to target adult women, the programme explains that the appearance ideal embodies both a thin body shape and youthful physical features.
 - The programme includes faith-based adaptations to the programme such as discussing God's perspective of beauty (in contrast to the appearance ideal), exploring costs of pursuing the appearance ideal to one's relationship with God and to the church, discussion of what Scripture says about internal and external beauty, and starting and ending each session with a prayer.
 - The programme was run in 2 x 120-minute sessions in church settings.
 - **Results:** *Reclaiming Beauty* decreased thin-ideal internalization, body surveillance, and eating psychopathology in adult women.
- **Blomquist et al. (2024)** adapted and evaluated *The Body Project* for **mothers and daughters (aged 11-18 years) in Christian church settings** = *Reclaiming Beauty for Mothers & Daughters*.
 - Working from *Reclaiming Beauty* (above), this version aimed to encouraging mothers and daughters to write letters to each other describing how God sees their beauty and why it is not worth pursuing the appearance ideal.
 - The programme was run in 3 x 90-minute sessions in church settings.
 - **Results:** *Reclaiming Beauty for Mothers & Daughters* improved body image, decreased eating psychopathology and reduced risk factors (thin-ideal internalization and physical appearance comparison) for body dissatisfaction in both adult women and adolescent girls.

Athletes

- **Perelman et al. (2022)** adapted and tested the acceptability *The Body Project* for **male athletes** = *The Male Athlete Body Project*.
 - This was an adaptation of an earlier modification of *The Body Project* for female athletes. Language was adjusted to be appropriate for men and focus on a muscular ideal. Athletes also learned about Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S).
 - The programme was run in 3 x 80-minute sessions.
 - **Results:** *The Male Athlete Body Project* improved body image and reduced some eating disorder risk factors (e.g., drive for muscularity, supplement use, and body-ideal internalization) compared to a control group.
- **Sundgot-Borgen et al. (2024)** adapted and tested the acceptability *The Body Project* for **adolescent athletes (girls and boys; aged 13-14)** = *The Young Athlete Body Project*.
 - Adaptations included the addition of two educational sessions on sports nutrition, RED-S and social media literacy before the 4 x workshop sessions. Some of the workshop activities included a sports focus. For example, exploring "how can we reduce body idealization in general and within sports". Some of the examples were also adapted for a younger adolescent audience.
 - Groups were split by sex to create a safer environment for sharing personal experiences and sex-specific challenges.
 - The programme was run as 6 x 60-minute sessions.
 - **Results:** Girls reported greater satisfaction with the programme. The programme showed promise, but further refinements are required before a larger scale trial.

Young Women with Type 1 Diabetes

- **Wisting et al. (2021)** adapted and evaluated *The Body Project* for **young women with Type 1 Diabetes** = *The Diabetes Body Project*.
 - The programme was designed to be delivered online.
 - The script was adapted to include issues specifically related to type 1 diabetes by adding two diabetes specific sessions following the original four sessions, delivered in the same interactive format. The diabetes sessions included activities such as: a group discussion on strategies to live well with diabetes and maintain good self-care and writing a letter to a younger girl with type 1 diabetes with advice on how to gain a more positive relationship with her diabetes.
 - **Results:** *The (virtual) Diabetes Body Project showed preliminary evidence that the programme improved eating disorder risk factors and symptoms.*
- **Hage et al. (2023)** qualitatively explored participants' experiences of *The Diabetes Body Project*.
 - Participants were invited to attend focus groups interviews after completing the intervention.
 - **Results:** Participants appreciated the opportunity to meet other young women with type 1 Diabetes. Participants would have preferred a more integrative approach to the programme, combining considerations about their condition and the appearance ideal throughout, rather than sequentially.

Young women with an eating disorder

- **Maas et al. (2023)** tested the feasibility and acceptability of *The Enhanced-Dissonance Body Project* with women in treatment for an eating disorder.
 - The programme was designed to be delivered in person as 6 x 60-minute group session as a supplement to standard treatment.
 - A few small adaptations were made to make the programme appropriate to an eating disorder treatment context. For example, the original protocol asks to wear as little clothing as possible during the self-affirmation mirror exercise. As wearing little clothing was considered too triggering, this instruction was omitted.
 - **Results:** *The Body Project* was acceptable to patients, therapists and treatment directors. It was difficult to discern effects attributed to the programme, separate from standard treatment effects.

LGBTQ+

The PRIDE Body Project and the EVERYbody Body Project are both discussed within the LGBTQ+ Booster Training. The materials for these two versions are provided for all attendees of the booster training.

The PRIDE Body Project (for Sexual Minority Men)

- Alvarez and colleagues (2024) found that sexual minority men who report high levels of social activism-focused community involvement (e.g., doing voluntary work in the gay community) benefited more from *The PRIDE Body Project* than those who reported low engagement in such activities.
 - Encouraging LGBTQ+ community involvement could help enhance eating disorder prevention efforts for sexual minority men.
 - The implementation of *The PRIDE Body Project* may benefit when it is implemented in community spaces such as LGBTQ+ community centres or in partnership with LGBTQ+ organisations or groups.

The EVERYbody Project (for diverse groups of young adults)

- Cio et al. (2023) tested a novel facilitation approach for The EVERYbody Project for American college students.
 - The brief (2 x 2 h) dissonance-based programme was open to all college students and delivered by “expert” diverse peer leaders who were screened for facilitation readiness.
 - Peer leaders were recruited based on lived or academic expertise in social justice and body image and were required to attend a 2-day intensive training (16 h). They could also attend an optional half-day training on power & privilege. All expert peer facilitators held at least one socially marginalised identity.
 - **Results:** Body image and related outcomes were improved through 3-month follow-up relative to a comparison condition, suggesting that expert peer facilitation may be a viable option for delivering universal, inclusive body image programming.

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