Summary of the project:

Targeting inactive girls aged 14-16 with poor body image, aiming to prevent the onset of eating disorders. Running Jan-July 2019.

Believe in You Teens are an independent group who work across the Hastings and Rother areas in Sussex.

Believe in You is an exclusive support service, with a passion to improve Mental Health and emotional wellbeing amongst teenagers and young people.

They specialise in issues which include depression, anxiety, self-harm, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, problems at school, risky behaviour, social isolation, body image/gender issues and anger management.

The satellite club set up at St Leonard’s Academy is for girls that have all been referred by the school as having a poor sense of self, and would be seen as being at risk of developing a negative relationship with food to control their body weight. The aim of the project was to not only inspire the girls to access fitness in a safe, fun, nurturing environment, but to educate them about the importance of healthy nutrition and become more body confident as a result of sessions.

Main issues or challenges:

In one of the initial sessions, we gave the girls a blank sheet of paper, simply with a hashtag on, which they were asked to write one word to describe how they felt around their bodies. Not one of the group wrote anything positive, and even girls who were perceived as ‘slim’ had a really negative sense of self.

Action:

We are currently at the point of week 6; so far the girls have taken part in 4 weeks of bootcamp style fitness sessions with a female Personal Trainer, and taken part in one interactive workshop around nutrition and the importance of having a healthy relationship with food. After half term, the girls will start 4 weeks of boxing with the same female trainer, followed by workshops including the impact of social media on body ideals, positive Mental Health, and feeling good from within, followed by a 4 weeks block of Zumba, and 4 week free sport choice.
Impact & Outcomes:
The girls have all engaged brilliantly, and attendance has been well maintained. Most of the girls have a negative perception of PE lessons at school and are reluctant to engage. We have kept sessions fun, relaxed and on their level, which has impacted on the high attendance. The girls all have personalised T-Shirts for sessions, and our primary aim is for the girls to all leave on a high, feeling great about their bodies and more likely to engage in other sport and fitness outside of school.

Feedback:
It’s a really great session to run each week, and an absolute pleasure to work with girls who really benefit from the activities offered. We hope we can make a real difference to their lives!

Mental wellbeing ✅  Physical wellbeing ✅  Individual development ✅  Economic development ✅  Social and Community Development

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