

For immediate release

Netsafe & Bodyright.me Announce Body-Positive Initiative #beyourselfie for Mental Health Awareness Week 29 Sept - 2 Oct

- *New Secondary Schools Learning Module #beyourselfie to launch 2023*
- *Kiwis asked to ditch social filters during Mental Health Awareness Week #beyourselfie*

Auckland, New Zealand 26 September 2022: To mark Mental Health Awareness Week, (MHAW) Netsafe has announced a partnership with global movement Bodyright.me, to raise awareness of the link between online misrepresentation of the human body via unethical retouching, body dysmorphia, and mental health.

As part of the partnership, which aims to combat unethical retouching, Netsafe and Bodyright.me will launch a Learning Management System module called #beyourselfie into New Zealand secondary schools in early 2023, raising awareness of the need for body positivity and mental health online.

Kiwis are also being asked to share unfiltered images of themselves online during MHAW using the hashtag #beyourselfie.

The partnership comes at a time when 33% of New Zealand teens spend 4 or more hours online in an average day, and four in ten currently use five or more social media platforms¹.

While social media is an effective way to connect and share information, it can also be harmful to mental health, and a recent study has shown teenagers who spend more than three hours a day on social media are more likely to develop mental health problems including depression, anxiety, aggression, and antisocial behaviour².

Bodyright.me spokesperson and psychologist Sara Chatwin says, "We're seeing an increase in people battling self-esteem issues with unrelenting exposure to these altered social media images linked to mental health issues, eating disorders and body dysmorphia."

"Young people don't go a day without being exposed to this kind of stuff and are heavily influenced by it. They have access to filtered images from an early age, and their perceptions are shaped by the material they see. Sharing retouched, filtered images of yourself doesn't help your mental health, but normalising real bodies and celebrating yourself as you truly are does. Bodyright.me is a movement to end unethical re-touching and help people reclaim their bodies as they truly are."

¹ Netsafe [teen digital profile fact sheet](#)

² [Social Media Keeping It Healthy](#)

The use of filters and online editing is widespread, with 90% of young women reporting they use a filter or edit their photos before posting³, and 32% of teenage girls saying when they felt bad about their bodies - Instagram made them feel even worse⁴.

Brent Carey, Netsafe CEO says, "We're focussed on finding ways to support safe and positive online experiences that support mental health and partnering with Bodyright.me to spread an educational message about body positivity online and in secondary schools with #beyourselfie is a great way to do this."

"Our research shows that digital parenting tends to become less prevalent as children become older, 75% of 9-11-year-olds aren't allowed to visit social networking sites compared to 34% of 12-14 and just 4% of 15-17-year-olds. Ideally, parents of older children should remain involved in their kids' engagement with an increasingly filtered and artificial digital environment as they navigate a series of challenging developmental changes like identity formation."

This year's MHAW theme is Reconnect - with the people and places that lift you up, hei pikinga waiora. To celebrate this theme Netsafe and Bodyright.me are asking Kiwis to reconnect authentically by showing their friends and whanau they are proud of how they look without filters by posting unfiltered images of themselves using the hashtag #beyourselfie.

The Netsafe and bodyright.me Secondary Schools #beyourselfie Learning Module will roll out across secondary schools nationwide from February 2023 onwards.

About Bodyright.me

Recognised as a Fast Company global innovation Bodyright.me is a New Zealand founded global movement to end unethical retouching, filters, and the misrepresentation of the human body. It is like a copyright for the human body and works in a similar way: when brands, influencers and individuals use the Bodyright.me ® symbol they are indicating the image is their own and that it is unfiltered and untouched. The ® can be added to the image or included in the accompanying copy, and is available for download at [Bodyright.me](https://bodyright.me)

Bodyright.me challenges all businesses and brands to join the fight against unethical retouching and filters by committing to their own unethical re-touching policy and using the ® symbol to demonstrate the unfiltered authenticity of their imagery. Tag @bodyright.me on Instagram or TikTok.

About Netsafe:

Netsafe is an independent non-profit organisation with the purpose of supporting people in Aotearoa to create safe and positive online spaces, by providing free support, advice, and education to all ages.

³ Professor Rosalind Gill, from the university's Gender and Sexualities Research Centre

⁴ [The New Yorker: Instagram for Kids and What Facebook Knows About the Effects of social media](#)

Visit netsafe.org.nz for helpful resources and guidance. If you require online safety assistance or wish to report an incident of online harm, please call toll-free on 0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723) seven days a week to speak with one of our team.

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