

THE WEIGHT ENDS NOW

Teenage boys open up about their struggles with body image

by merritt reddin

Two years later and 90 pounds lighter, SIPA high school student **Duffy Adams**, 12, is a different person than he was when he was an obese 15-year-old. He knows he's not "the fat kid" anymore, but the mirror tells a different story.

"How I look is so distorted to me. It's like having a picture and every time I look at the picture it gets blurrier and blurrier," Adams said. "As I've come to talk to other people who have lost an incredible amount of weight or people with body image issues, I've seen that a lot of other people also have issues with this."

Adams can't escape the constant thoughts and insecurities associated with his appearance.

"When I look in the mirror, I don't know what I look like. Everything I do is centered around how I look," Adams said.

Adams has struggled with body image issues his whole life, growing up obese and having to deal with incessant judgments from himself and others. He had to grow up in a world with clear expectations for men.

Build a Beach Body!

Shred Your Abs!

GET STRONG!

Phrases used in magazines, urging men to drop everything and get in shape without any regard to simply being healthy.

Recently in the media, there has been a movement of acceptance for all women. Women of all heights, weights, and body types have been appearing in advertisements. The issue hasn't been solved, but a dialogue has been started.

Men, on the other hand, have been excluded from the movement.

"When we talk about body image issues in terms of taking a look at what's advertised in the news today or on billboards, it is mainly focusing on problems with the way women are portrayed. There are definitely problems with the way women are portrayed, but I haven't seen a lot of advertisements criticizing the way they portray the male body," **John Romanski**, SIPA assistant, said.

Boys grow up seeing athletes and actors with toned bodies and large physiques, and are never taught that those people spend hours upon hours perfecting their physical appearance.

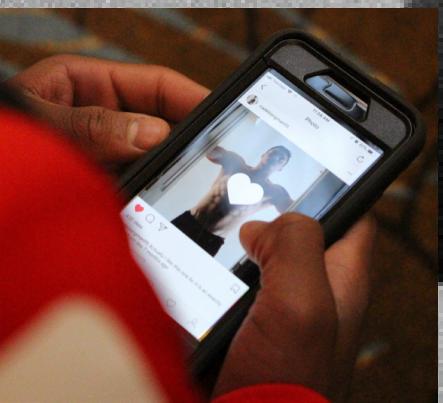
"It definitely takes a toll when you see people that you look up to and they all look different from you, and then you feel like you should look like them," Adams said.

Society doesn't realize and acknowledge the day-to-day struggles that boys and men face concerning body image. Expectations have been set that haven't been contradicted yet.

"There's this expectation that boys don't care. A lot of men aren't willing to say that there's a problem because there's this culture of staying silent and manning it out," SIPA high school student **Layne Barron** said.

For so many men like Adams, body image issues monopolize their mind. It affects their daily life and how they live it.

designer livi lesch, mollie ping; photographer olivia wander



NIP, TUCK, AND HIDE: SIPA high school student, **John Jefferies**, 11, prepares for plastic surgery on his face. "There's definitely an emphasis in media on women's body image and almost none on male body image. They can just do the same thing they're doing to emphasize women's body image with males essentially," Jefferies said.

INSTA- ENVY: **Owen Donnelly**, 9, a SIPA high school student, scrolls through Instagram looking for a new bathing suit to buy. "One time I wanted to buy a bathing suit... When I went to the website the model was really in shape. It made me think that I need to get in better shape. Maybe social media could promote more diverse body types," Donnelly said.

LIFTING UP SPIRITS: SIPA high school student, **Nick Dunaway**, 11, hits the gym despite already being confident in his skin. "I think social media is pointless. I like the way I look and that's good enough for me," Dunaway said.

MEASURING UP: SIPA high school student, **David Rivers**, 12, stands silent as his bicep is measured. "I feel like if it was a group effort where people start to accept themselves, then everyone else will start to accept themselves. If the media used a wider variety of models, that would help too," Rivers said.

