

STORIES OF HUMAN INTEREST - 2



Vrinda was delighted they were moving to a new neighborhood. It was green, clean and well.... new. She particularly loved the common garden that was beautiful and well maintained. She looked forward to spending morning time there, taking brisk walks on the cinder walking turf especially created for comfort and protection from injury.

As per her resolve, she started off on her daily dose of fresh air and exercise. There were other walkers too who were regular. Routinely they crossed paths while walking. Gradually they became familiar with each other and would sometimes chat while cooling down after the workouts.

Vrinda gradually realized that she didn't quite feel upto going for her morning walks. Her parents too were a little surprised at a sudden lack of interest in an activity hitherto enjoyed so much. A few days passed and she kept on feeling out of sorts. But being an intelligent and aware girl, she could understand what the root of her discomfort with the morning walks was. Something she knew but didn't want to share with anyone. The reason was the negative comments about her physique, her appearance, "friendly tips" to improve her posture, her hair, her skin, her weight etc. etc.

She was constantly bombarded with signals from her "walking friends" that she was unattractive and needed to work on her body. This obviously lowered her self-image and her self-esteem took a severe beating. She was preoccupied with thoughts of being undesirable, of not being smart. She was now not so sure of herself and felt less and less confident.

She became mildly depressed. Can you guess what she was a victim of? **BODY SHAMING!!!**

Body Shaming is Bullying.

What is Body Shaming?

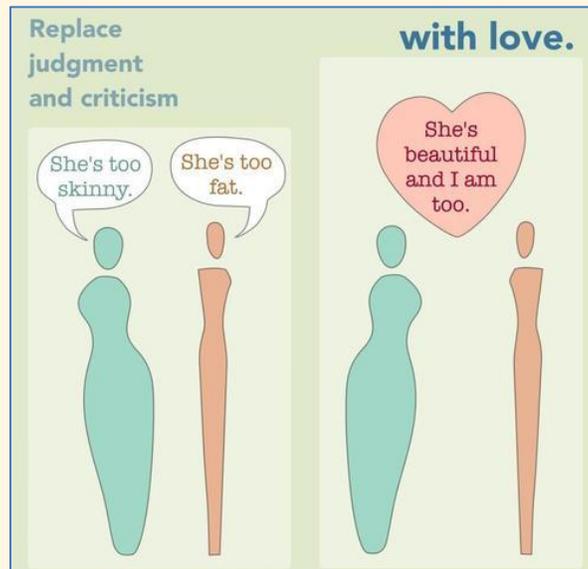
The **definition** of **body shaming** is the practice of making critical, potentially humiliating comments about a person's **body** size or weight. An example of **body shaming** is telling a child that he or she is "too fat". Other examples of **body shaming** are when thin women are told they are "too skinny", short guys are taunted on their height (or lack of it), dark skinned are advised to try something to become fairer or when someone's gait or posture is commented upon or worse still made fun of.

Body shaming is manifested in following ways:

- When it is done by self to self, meaning thereby that we carry a negative self-image, talk negatively about our body and thus invite similar comments from those around us.
- When we light-heartedly comment negatively about other people's so called short comings. Even though it is without any ill will, it is nevertheless very insensitive.
- We may criticize someone's appearance behind his/her back; that's also body shaming and not right.
- Or we criticize someone's physical attributes knowingly to hurt the person or get even with him or her, to settle a score.

All body shamers must develop empathy, exercise restraint in commenting and look within for one's own failings. **Do not judge.**

All victims of body shaming must learn to value self, learn to love the precious gift that our body is and sift mild teasing from vicious attacks. **Accept yourself and do something to change something about yourself because YOU want it changed, not because of pressure from others.**



Have you witnessed, been a victim of or engaged in Body Shaming?

You are most welcome to share your views or experiences with SSETU at ssetu@ahduni.edu.in



Interesting blogs will be shared on the website.