

AUTISM SNAPSHOT 2022

Butterfly Foundation's first BodyKind Youth Survey was conducted in 2022 to better understand the body image experience of young Australians aged 12 to 18 years. In total, 1635 young people responded.

What do Autistic young people have to say?

Who are they?

97 (5.9%) of survey respondents reported an Autism diagnosis.

The majority of those were aged 15-18 years.

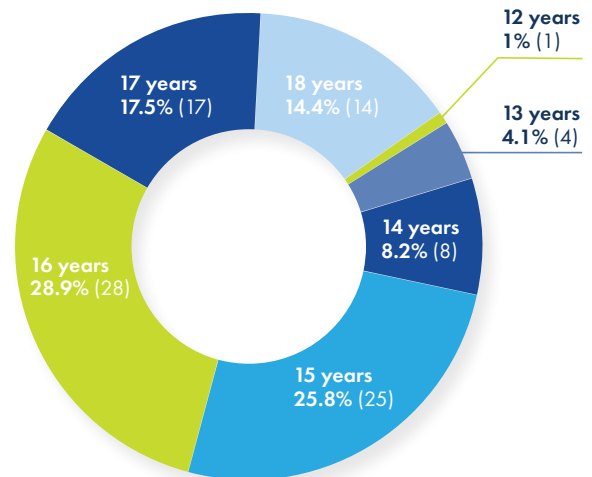


Figure 1. Age distribution of Autistic young people (right)

The sample comprised **35.1%** of young people who identified as female (**35.1%**), male (**30.9%**) and preference for a different term (**22.7%**).

Respondents most frequently identified as:

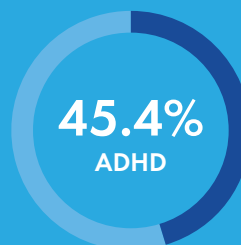
Heterosexual
26.8%

Using a different term
45.9%

Bisexual
23.7%

Non-Indigenous
93.8%

Respondents also reported rates of:



Their body image

Over **6 in 10** 

reported some level of body dissatisfaction.

38.6% 

reported a high level of concern about their body image.

44.4% 

reported a high level of body dissatisfaction.

66.3% 

desired to be thinner, while 72.2% desire to be more muscular and 58.8% taller.

The proportion of high body dissatisfaction in Autistic young people is greater than the total sample proportion (29.7%).

How much do Autistic young people appreciate their body?

60.8%

never or rarely speak positively about their body.

68.0%

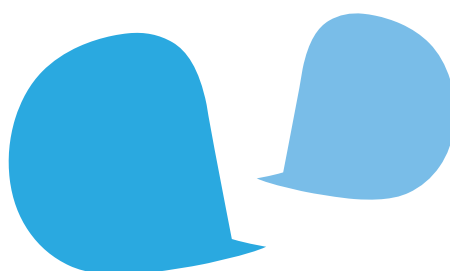
never or rarely talk to someone if they're not feeling good about their body or appearance.

76.3%

often or always try to value people for their personality and who they are rather than how they look,

48.5%

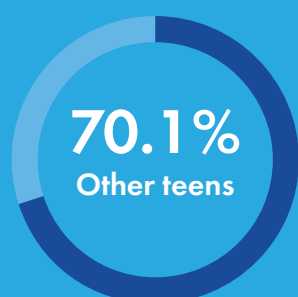
never or rarely feel grateful for what their body allows them to do.



yet **48.0%**

never or rarely spend less time focusing on their appearance to have more time for other things they enjoy.

Autistic young people most frequently compare their bodies to:



Has body image ever stopped Autistic young people from doing certain activities?

Greater life disengagement was reported by Autistic young people compared with total sample proportions.



58.3%

reported a high level of disengagement from going to the beach.



45.8%

reported a high level of disengagement from going to a social event, party or gathering.



51.6%

reported a high level of disengagement from going clothes shopping.



53.1%

reported a high level of disengagement from doing a physical activity/sport.



44.8%

reported a high level of disengagement from giving an opinion or standing up for themselves.



4 in 10

reported body image affected their willingness to raise their hand in the classroom quite a bit or all the time.

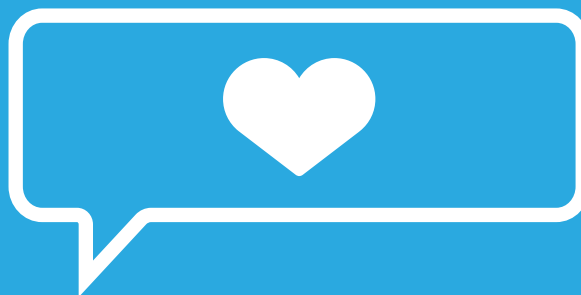


Social media

Of the 92 who reported using social media,

64.1% described using social media more than they would like.

48.3% reported that social media made them feel dissatisfied with their body.



62.9% never or rarely remind themselves that the bodies they see on social media do not reflect the different bodies in real life.

In relation to social media literacy strategies:

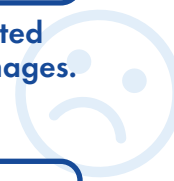


72.8%

never took a break because it was affecting how they felt about their body.

47.8%

never posted unfiltered images.



58.7%

never unfollowed pages that made them feel bad about their body.

64.1%

often or always comment kindly and honestly on a friend's post.



What is their experience of appearance-related teasing?

86.6%

reported receiving negative comments or being teased about their appearance.

This happened most frequently at



School 71.4%



Home 52.4%



Social Media 39.3%