

Young woman bullied as a teen and shamed into plastic surgery speaks about her ordeal

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A YOUNG person from YMCA Humber's Foyer Project in Grimsby has appeared on Sky News as part of the charity's Be Real campaign, discussing body image concerns of school students.

Courtney Peet, 21, was bullied about her appearance throughout school, which led her to undergo plastic surgery when she was just 16 years old.

Her low body image and the constant bullying at school resulted in her isolating herself and she ended up dropping out of college early, after classmates circulated memes* of her online.

Courtney is now a Be Real Ambassador and is using her experience to help other young people who are struggling with low body image.

She said: "I first started worrying about my appearance roughly at age 10. I was mainly worried about my weight and how thick and chubby I was.

"Freestyle dancing has always been a big part of my life and I would often compare myself to other dancers.

"I also had issues with the way my face looked because I had a severe under bite. I got taunted and bullied for this daily and kids always told me that the way my face looked was the first thing people notice about me.

"I started to believe it and I became my own worst critic.

"I have always been bullied for as long as I can remember.

"Throughout secondary school and college it got worse and it was happening every day.

"College was the worst stage of my life - I was getting bullied every day, in and out of my lessons, and even when I went home, online - I just couldn't get away from it.

"I often missed college because I didn't want to face the bullies and at home I felt safe.

"In the end I left school early, only sitting my exams and I eventually dropped out three months into my college course after the bullying didn't stop, despite me changing courses and groups.

"The bullying was a mixture of verbal, physical and online abuse.

"One evening I went home and saw loads of photos people took of me that day online.

"The pictures were defaced with nasty comments saying things such as "fat bitch always eating" and calling me horrible names.

"Going into college after this was unbearable, I was so embarrassed. I didn't want to face anyone. I didn't want to be here anymore.

"The support I got from my school and college was horrendous.

"I was treated like the perpetrator, rather than the victim and I was asked to move courses and classes instead of the school dealing with the bullies head on.

"I had been thinking about jaw surgery since I was 14 years old, but at that age I was too young.

"As soon as I turned 16 years old, I went ahead with it.

"The surgery was seven hours long and I was in so much pain and bleeding constantly afterwards.

"It didn't go as planned and my jaw had become infected, so I had to go through the whole thing twice.

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“Thankfully, things are different now, because I have accepted me for me and I’m the happiest I’ve ever been.

“I still have the odd down day and I still get abuse from people, but I have learnt to cope with it in a better way.”

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