

Researchers at the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) at UWE, Bristol are being supported by the VTCT Foundation to work with the charities involved in the Appearance Collective (AC) to provide evidence-based psychosocial support for people affected by visible differences. We are incredibly excited by this collaboration and look forward to what we can all achieve by working together.

Sharing our knowledge and expertise

CAR are committed to sharing our knowledge and research findings, and this year we have spoken at a number of Appearance Collective charity events. We have also been busy engaging in other activities to raise awareness of the psychosocial impact of living with a visible difference, and to promote our research.

Jade Parnell presented her PhD on promoting acceptance of socially stigmatised appearances in preadolescents to the Bristol Inter-disciplinary Group for Education Research (BRIDGE) team, based here at UWE. Jade also wrote a blog post for BRIDGE, discussing how we can promote acceptance of stigmatised appearances in primary schools. You can read

her blog here: <https://blogs.uwe.ac.uk/education/how-can-we-promote-acceptance-of-stigmatised-appearances-in-primary-schools/>



Alopecia & hair loss were in the news in June. **Nick Sharratt** contributed to a Channel ITV news piece and then spoke on Eddie Mair's LBC radio show. **Alopecia UK** also featured in the latter, which focussed on the psychosocial impact of hair loss and Alopecia within the context of media reports relating to the potential to utilise stem cells to regrow hair.

CAR attends the VTCT Foundation showcase

It was great to meet many Appearance Collective members at the annual VTCT Foundation Showcase event at the Royal College of Surgeons, London on 15th July. Nine members of the team attended the day, and made the following presentations on some of the work being carried out within the VTCT Foundation research programme at CAR:

Di Harcourt: An overview of year 2 of the VTCT Foundation research programme at the Centre for Appearance Research

Bruna Costa: Experiences of volunteering to help charities that support people with a visible difference

Jade Parnell: Understanding attitudes and friendship behaviours towards socially stigmatised appearances in children aged 4-10 years

Fabio Zucchelli: Psychological flexibility and its influence on how people with appearance-affecting conditions deal with daily body image stressors

Bruna Costa & Claire Hamlet: Training: What's out there, and what are the gaps?

In addition, Brunna Costa and Claire Hamlet led a consultation exercise, gathering feedback from attendees on their training needs and priorities. We are currently analysing this data and will be asking for input from those organisations who could not attend, in the near future.



Follow us on Twitter @CAR_UWE and on Facebook: www.facebook.com/AppearanceResearch/. You can also listen to our podcast which explores the world of appearance, the latest research in the field and features leading appearance experts: www.uwe.ac.uk/car/podcast

Research findings

'Everybody's Different: The Appearance Game'. An evaluation of an appearance-related board game with primary-school children

Appearance dissatisfaction is increasingly prevalent in children, and is associated with negative outcomes such as anxiety, disordered eating and poor school engagement. Additionally, people living with visible differences (e.g., scarring, craniofacial conditions) can encounter societal stigma, potentially leading to social anxiety, low social self-esteem and avoidance. To address this, we developed **'Everybody's Different: The Appearance Game'**, an educational board game aiming to increase knowledge of appearance-related issues, positive body image and acceptance of appearance diversity. In this study, we carried out a trial with 259 children aged 9-11 years, to test the effectiveness of the board game. Positively, findings showed that **'Everybody's Different: The Appearance Game'** significantly increased positive body image and knowledge of board game content. However, media literacy and perceptions of appearance diversity did not change. The game may be an effective way to educate primary school-aged children and improve their body image. However, future research should consider how to increase media literacy and acceptance of appearance difference in children; for example, by increasing the time children spend playing the game, or using it alongside discussions and lessons about appearance-altering conditions.



For more information about this project, please contact Ella: ella.guest@uwe.ac.uk. **'Everybody's Different: The Appearance Game'** is available at www.appearancegame.com

THANK YOU!

One thing is even more crucial to keeping the wheels of CAR turning than the obligatory tea and cake... that's participants for our research!! We are, of course, very grateful to the individuals that chose to do this but also to you, members of the Appearance Collective, who respond to our requests to promote our studies through your social media, newsletters and member updates.

You might recognise some of the following studies as being ones that you may have advertised for us in recent months:

- Interviews conducted by Maia Thornton, with parents/carers of children and young people with appearance altering conditions or injuries, to hear about their experiences of caring for their child and the support their family has received.
- Fabio Zuchelli's "Looks and daily life" study which was a survey for anyone with an appearance-affecting condition. It explored how people with visible differences respond to body image concerns in daily life, and how this may be influenced by tendencies to (a) avoid painful thoughts and feelings, and (b) get caught up in thoughts;
- 'Revealing (in)visible difference' an interview study exploring people's experiences of telling others about a difference that is not always apparent or obvious, led by Nick Sharratt;
- Ella Guest's assessment of an online programme for people with visible differences, which encourages people to focus on what their bodies can *do*, rather than how they *look*.

We are happy to report that recruitment went well for all these studies. We are always looking for new ways and ideas about how to reach people who might be eligible and interested in taking part in our research, so please contact us if you have any suggestions. Thank you.