

Heads Up for Wellbeing – Self-esteem

Self-esteem is important as it is a significant measure of our psychological wellbeing.



What is self-esteem?

- Self-esteem is the opinion we have of ourselves. This includes the thoughts we have about ourselves and our abilities, the kind of person we think we are and our expectations. We all have an opinion of ourselves, therefore we all have self-esteem. The value we consider ourselves to have will vary from person to person.
- Our life experiences play a significant role in determining whether we have healthy self-esteem or low self-esteem. Most people have had a mixture of both positive and negative life experiences and tend to have a range of different beliefs about themselves.
- Self-esteem can affect all aspects of our lives on a day-to-day basis, including how we think, feel and behave.

Healthy Self Esteem

- We tend to feel positive about ourselves and about life in general.
- We are better able to deal with life's ups and downs.
- We are able to take on new challenges/try new things

Low Self Esteem

- We tend to see ourselves and our life in a more negative and critical light.
- We feel that we are not good enough or can't do things.
- We also feel less able to take on the challenges that life throws at us.
- We hide ourselves away from social situations, stop trying new things, and avoid things we find challenging. (This might make you feel safe but because it reinforces your underlying doubts and fears. It teaches you the unhelpful rule that the only way to cope is by avoiding things)
- Living with low self-esteem can harm your mental health and lead to problems such as depression and anxiety.

There are a few things you can do to improve your self-esteem. Here are some simple techniques that may help you feel better about yourself.

Treating Low self-esteem – self help

Recognise what you're good at: We're all good at something. We also tend to enjoy doing the things we're good at, which can help boost your mood.

Build positive relationships: Try to build relationships with people who are positive and who appreciate you. If you find certain people tend to bring you down, try to spend less time with them.

Be kind to yourself: Being kind to yourself means being gentle to yourself at times when you feel like being self-critical. Think what you'd say to a friend in a similar situation. We often give far better advice to others than we do to ourselves.

Learn to be assertive: Being assertive is about respecting other people's opinions and needs and expecting the same from them.

One trick is to look at other people who act assertively and copy what they do. Pick up hints and tips from people you admire and let the real you come out.

There are more things you can do over the page...

There are quite a few things you can do yourself to help to improve your self-esteem.



Treating Low self-esteem – self help

Start saying "no": People with low self-esteem often feel they have to say yes to other people, even when they do not really want to. The risk is that you become overburdened, resentful, angry and depressed. Generally, saying no does not upset relationships. It can be helpful to keep saying no, but in different ways, until they get the message.

Give yourself a challenge: We all feel nervous or afraid to do things at times. But people with healthy self-esteem do not let these feelings stop them trying new things or taking on challenges. Set yourself a goal, such as joining an exercise class or going to a social occasion. Achieving your goals will help to increase your self-esteem.

Write some good things that other people say about you: Aim to have at least 5 positive things on your list and add to it regularly. Then put your list somewhere you can see it. That way, you can keep reminding yourself that you're OK.

Low Self Esteem – useful contacts – where to get help

Young Minds

- Messenger - just text YM to 85258 (texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus)
- Website - www.Youngminds.org.uk (click on the "How can we help you?" tab)
- Twitter - @YoungMindsUK

Mindful.org

- <https://www.mindful.org/five-ways-to-help-teens-build-a-sense-of-self-worth/>

kidshealth.org

- <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/self-esteem.html>