



Supporting your wellbeing

Session 5: Self-esteem


SUMMARY OF TOPICS

What is self-esteem?


Causes of low self-esteem

Links to mental health problems

Tips to improve self-esteem



Self-esteem is the thoughts, opinions and values we have about ourselves.



LOW SELF-ESTEEM

We all have times when we don't feel our best or lack confidence. This might be due to facing a new or uncertain situation, going through a challenging time, or just part of life's ups and downs.

Having low self-esteem does not always correspond to having mental health difficulties, however it can have a negative impact on general wellbeing in your day to day life.



CAUSES OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Many different aspects of life may cause a person to have low self-esteem, but some common causes are:

- Childhood upbringing.
- Bullying or abuse.
- Experiences at school.
- Prejudice or discrimination.
- Serious illness.
- Bereavement.
- Mental or physical health problems.
- Work issues, such as unemployment.
- Body image.
- Financial worries.
- Problems with housing.



Talking about mental health: self-esteem



EFFECTS OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM

- Hide away from social situations.
- Reluctant to try new things.
- Avoid challenging situations.
- Can harm your mental wellbeing.

REASONS FOR LOW SELF-ESTEEM



FAILING AN EXAM

This may lead to the belief that you are not clever enough, when in reality most people experience some failures throughout life.

NOT INVITED TO AN EVENT

You may feel that nobody cares about you, whereas there could be a genuine reason such as missing an email, or the event being members only.

NOT GETTING A JOB

It can feel really personal when you don't get a job, but remember in most cases there may be tens or even hundreds of people applying, and sometimes luck plays a part.

**Write down 5 positive things
about yourself.**

THIS CAN BE THINGS YOU KNOW
ABOUT YOURSELF, OR POSITIVE
COMMENTS THAT OTHERS HAVE
MADE TO YOU.

IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM

*Further guidance available from
www.nhs.uk*

1

RECOGNISE WHAT YOU'RE GOOD AT

We're all good at something – even if it's not the 'traditional' things like being academic or good at sports. You might be great at cooking, art or even being a good friend and listener.

Keep adding to your list of 5 things you like about yourself, to help keep your self-esteem at a healthy level.

IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM

*Further guidance available from
www.nhs.uk*



BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Making connections is one of the five ways to wellbeing, so it makes sense that good relationships will also boost your self-esteem.

If you spend time with people who criticise you, then this will have a negative impact on the self-esteem of even the most resilient person.

Try to spend more time with people who are positive and appreciate you.

IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM

*Further guidance available from
www.nhs.uk*

3

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

When something goes wrong, try not to blame or criticise yourself. There are usually many external factors that can make something go wrong, not just your own actions.

Think about what you would say to a friend when they face a challenging situation, and give yourself the same advice.

IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM

*Further guidance available from
www.nhs.uk*

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BE ASSERTIVE

Being assertive is all about striking the right balance to respect your own needs against the needs of others.

Make sure your voice is heard, while still recognising and understanding the voices of others.

This may also mean saying no even when it is difficult, in order to avoid becoming overburdened or resentful of others.

IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM

*Further guidance available from
www.nhs.uk*

5

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

It's normal to feel nervous or afraid in the face of a new challenge, such as starting university, meeting new people, or giving a presentation.

However in order to increase your confidence and self-esteem you need to take on these challenges. Once you see what you can achieve, this will boost your confidence in your abilities.

A blue-tinted photograph of a student's workspace. In the foreground, a student's hands are visible, writing on a piece of paper. The desk is cluttered with various items: a laptop, a notebook, a pen, a pair of glasses, and a small container. In the background, another student is partially visible, working on a laptop. The overall scene conveys a sense of focused study and collaboration.

A Student's Experience

Challenge Yourself

1. Set yourself a goal that you would like to achieve. This could be a small short term goal, or something longer term.
2. Make some notes of how you are going to achieve this goal.
3. Write down some words that describe how you will feel when you have achieved this goal.
4. Refer back to your goal when you have times when you doubt yourself or are feeling low, and use this to motivate you forwards.

FURTHER SUPPORT

It's important to remember that if you have low self-esteem that stems from previous trauma, some of the self-help techniques won't be enough to help. There are a number of support organisations where you can get professional help to overcome these issues.

- KEELE COUNSELLING AND MENTAL HEALTH
- BIG WHITE WALL
- VICTIM SUPPORT
- NAPAC
- SURVIVORS TRUST



THANK YOU

WE HOPE YOU FOUND THIS
RESOURCE HELPFUL