**Positive Psychology**

**Resource Pack:**

**Self-esteem**



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**Information for Teachers:**

Self-esteem refers to a person’s overall sense of his or her [value](https://positivepsychology.com/values-clarification/) or worth. It can be considered a sort of measure of how much a person “values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself” (Adler & Stewart, 2004).

According to self-esteem expert Morris Rosenberg, self-esteem is quite simply one’s attitude toward oneself (1965). He described it as a “favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the self”.

Various factors are believed to influence our self-esteem:

* Genetics
* Personality
* Life experiences
* Age
* Health
* Thoughts
* Social circumstances
* The reactions of others
* Comparing the self to others

An important note is that self-esteem is not fixed. It is malleable and measurable, meaning we can test for and improve upon it.

Research shows that people with healthy self-esteem:

* Are less critical of themselves and others.
* Are better able to handle stress and avoid the [unhealthy side effects of stress](https://positivepsychology.com/symptoms-of-stress/).
* Are less likely to develop an eating disorder.
* Are less likely to feel worthless, [guilty, and ashamed](https://positivepsychology.com/shame-guilt/).
* Are more likely to be assertive about expressing and getting what they want.
* Are able to build strong, honest relationships and are more likely to leave unhealthy ones.
* Are more confident in their ability to make good decisions.
* Are more [resilient and able to bounce back](https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-in-positive-psychology/) when faced with disappointment, failure, and obstacles (Allegiance Health, 2015).

Based on these positive outcomes associated with high self-esteem, it seems clear that looking into how self-esteem can be built is a worthwhile endeavour.

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| I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them. **HWB 2-01a / HWB 3-01a** |
| I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them. **HWB 2-02a / HWB 3-02a** |
| I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others. **HWB 2-05a / HWB 3-05a** |
| I understand the importance of mental wellbeing and that this can be fostered and strengthened through personal coping skills and positive relationships. I know that it is not always possible to enjoy good mental health and that if this happens there is support available. **HWB 2-06a / HWB 3-06a** |
| I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all. **HWB 2-10a / HWB 3-10a** |
| Through contributing my views, time and talents, I play a part in bringing about positive change in my school and wider community. **HWB 2-13a / HWB 3-13a /** |
| I am aware that positive friendships and relationships can promote health and the health and wellbeing of others. **HWB 2-44b** |
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**A close up of a logo

Description automatically generatedExperiences and Outcomes**

**Introduction to Lesson:**

This lesson will focus on the concept of self-esteem, it will encourage pupils to think about their own self-esteem, what affects their self-esteem and how to challenge their self-talk.

**Learning intentions and Success Criteria:**

Learning Intentions:

By the end the lesson I will learn about self-esteem, recognise my own unique strengths and qualities and challenge my self-talk.

Success Criteria:

I will have been successful if I can:

* Understand the concept of self-esteem
* Recognise my unique personal strengths and qualities
* Challenge any negative self-talk.



**Activity: What is meant by the term self-esteem?**

* Ask pupils to write down what they think self-esteem means.
* What does it mean to have low/high self-esteem?

Self-esteem refers to how we understand and value ourselves.

People with high self-esteem are realistic about their strengths and weaknesses and are able to set goals and work toward them. They also feel competency in areas they consider important and do not take other people’s negative impressions of them too seriously.

People with low self-esteem have a hard time honestly evaluating their strengths and weaknesses and often have an unrealistic, overall negative impression of themselves. They take other people’s opinions of their strengths and weaknesses more seriously than they should. Also, they do not feel competent in areas they consider important. People with low self-esteem tend to be pessimistic.

Self-esteem can play a significant role in your motivation and success throughout your life. Low self-esteem may hold you back from succeeding at school or work because you don't believe yourself to be capable of success. By contrast, having a healthy self-esteem can help you achieve because you navigate life with a positive, assertive attitude and believe you can accomplish your goals

**Activity: My self-esteem**

Ask pupils to quietly reflect on their own self-esteem.

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**Activity: Reasons why a pupil might have low self-esteem**

Pupils could work in groups to make a list of reasons why a teenager might have low self-esteem and what things could be done to enhance self-esteem.

Pupils could create a mind map of all their ideas.

After some brainstorming time, ask groups to share their ideas with the class.

**Activity: Who affects your self-esteem?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Your best friend | Friendship groups | Other pupils |
| People you don’t get on with | Yourself | Teachers |
| People you don’t know | Your sibling(s) | Parent(s) or caregiver(s) |

Pupils could out the card or number them in order of most importance to how they think they affect their self-esteem (The most important 1st).

Afterwards, pupils may want to share their thoughts with another group or as a class.

Discus how these people might affect self-esteem in a positive or negative way.

**Activity: “I am”**

The first step in building self-esteem is thinking positively about one’s self.

This activity utilises the effective and positive affirmation technique. Pupils are encouraged to think positively and with energy about what makes them who they are. The idea is that by writing down such positive thoughts, they are reinforced in their minds, and by thinking about themselves and their attributes positively, their self-esteem is heightened.

Pupils could create a list of “I am” statements. Some examples include: “I am a hard worker.” and “I am good at basketball.” Each sentence must begin with “I am…” The student writes down as many positive attributes and qualities about him or herself as he or she can think.

Then pupils could decorate their list using pictures, words, or symbols clipped from magazines that represent things they enjoy doing or own, places they’ve been, people they admire, or careers they desire, students create a collage. At the end of the session, post the collages around the room and have the other students guess which collage belongs to whom and state why they made that guess.

Below are additional or alternative tasks which also encourage pupils to think positively about themselves. These can be selected depending on the age and needs of the child.



**Additional Worksheet tasks:**

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**Activity: Changing my self-talk**

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Description automatically generatedPupils could use the template below to make a list of all the bad self-talk they engage in and the negative thinks they may say about themselves (left hand side). Pupils could then write a new self-talk that they would like to change the negative one to (right hand side).

**Activity: Agree or Disagree?**

Read out or issue the following statements for pupils to discuss whether they agree or disagree.

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| --- |
| What other people think of you and your behavior is more important than what you think yourself |
| It’s not being conceited (big headed) to feel proud of yourself and your achievements |
| It’s not what you look like that matters, it’s what kind of person you are and how you feel about yourself |
| If you’re not confident about something, it’s better to avoid doing it rather than risk making a fool of yourself |
| Imitating people by doing whatever is regarded as cool and trendy is the best way to boost your confidence. |

**Activity: Reassess your self-esteem**

Ask pupils to again reflect on their own self-esteem and reassess their self-esteem score.

* Compare it with the Self Star Rating from earlier.

* Do you think listing some personal strengths made you feel differently about yourself? If so, why might this be?

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**Extra Activity:**

Over the next week, pupils could use the Self Star Rating to take regular ratings of their self- esteem.

Pupils should pay attention to any changes in self-ratings. In particular, write down the things that help you to feel good over the next week. On a scale of 0 to 10 rate your self-esteem or how you feel about yourself today.

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