



Reference Material: Self-Concept & Self-Esteem

Learning Objectives:

To enable learners to:

- Understand the development of self-concept , self-esteem and self-confidence
- Understand the importance of having a positive self esteem
- Develop a positive self-image

The facilitator should emphasis the following:

- Awareness of positive traits/ qualities makes one feel good and enhances self-esteem
- Positive feedback from important people in our lives (for example, friends, family, teachers) also helps us to feel good about ourselves
- Appreciating others also makes us feel good
- When we feel good, we respond to everyday situations more positively
- We should be honest and genuine in our appreciation of ourselves and others
- Positive outlook helps us to recognize and work on our failings and shortcomings and continually improve ourselves without being very hard on ourselves
- Positive outlook towards ourselves and others helps us to provide helpful criticism to others which helps them to improve rather than hurt them

READING MATERIAL:

Self-concept is how you perceive your behavior, abilities, and unique characteristics.¹ For example, beliefs such as "I am a good friend" or "I am a kind person" are part of an overall self-concept.

Self-concept tends to be more malleable when you're younger and still going through the process of self-discovery and identity formation. As you age and learn who you are and what's important to you, these self-perceptions become much more detailed and organized.

At its most basic, self-concept is a collection of beliefs one holds about oneself and the responses of others. It embodies the answer to the question "Who am I?"





Rogers' Three Parts of Self-Concept

Humanist psychologist Carl Rogers believed that your self-concept was made up of three different parts:

Ideal self: The person you want to be

Self-image: How you see yourself, including attributes like your physical characteristics, personality traits, and social roles

Self-esteem: How much you like, accept, or value yourself, which can be impacted by a number of factors including how others see you, how you think you compare to others, and your role in society

Incongruence and Congruence

As mentioned earlier, your self-concept is not always perfectly aligned with reality. When it is aligned, your self-concept is said to be "congruent."

But when there is a mismatch between how you see yourself (your self-image) and who you wish you were (your ideal self), your self-concept is "incongruent." This incongruence can negatively impact your self-esteem.

What is Self-Esteem?

the term self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall subjective sense of personal worth or value. In other words, self-esteem may be defined as how much you appreciate and like yourself regardless of the circumstances. Your self-esteem is defined by many factors including:

- Self-confidence
- Feeling of security
- Identity
- Sense of belonging
- Feeling of competence

Other terms that are often used interchangeably with self-esteem include self-worth, self-regard, and self-respect.

Self-esteem tends to be lowest in childhood and increases during adolescence, as well as adulthood, eventually reaching a fairly stable and enduring level. This makes self-esteem similar to the stability of personality traits over time.





Why Self-Esteem Is Important

Self-esteem impacts your decision-making process, your relationships, your emotional health, and your overall well-being. It also influences motivation, as people with a healthy, positive view of themselves understand their potential and may feel inspired to take on new challenges. People with healthy self-esteem:

- Have a firm understanding of their skills
- Are able to maintain healthy relationships with others because they have a healthy relationship with themselves
- Have realistic and appropriate expectations of themselves and their abilities
- Understand their needs and are able to express them

People with low self-esteem tend to feel less sure of their abilities and may doubt their decision-making process. They may not feel motivated to try novel things because they don't believe they're capable of reaching their goals. Those with low self-esteem may have issues with relationships and expressing their needs. They may also experience low levels of confidence and feel unlovable and unworthy.

People with overly high self-esteem may overestimate their skills and may feel entitled to succeed, even without the abilities to back up their belief in themselves. They may struggle with relationship issues and block themselves from self-improvement because they are so fixated on seeing themselves as perfect.

Low Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem may manifest in a variety of ways. If you have low self-esteem:

- You may believe that others are better than you.
- You may find expressing your needs difficult.
- You may focus on your weaknesses.
- You may frequently experience fear, self-doubt, and worry.





- You may have a negative outlook on life and feel a lack of control.
- You may have an intense fear of failure.
- You may have trouble accepting positive feedback.
- You may have trouble saying no and setting boundaries.
- You may put other people's needs before your own.
- You may struggle with confidence.

Low self-esteem has the potential to lead to a variety of mental health disorders, including anxiety disorders and depressive disorders. You may also find it difficult to pursue your goals and maintain healthy relationships. Having low self-esteem can seriously impact your quality of life and increases your risk for experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Healthy Self-Esteem

There are some simple ways to tell if you have healthy self-esteem. You probably have healthy self-esteem if you:

- Avoid dwelling on past negative experiences
- Believe you are equal to everyone else, no better and no worse
- Express your needs
- Feel confident
- Have a positive outlook on life
- Say no when you want to
- See your overall strengths and weaknesses and accept them

Having healthy self-esteem can help motivate you to reach your goals, because you are able to navigate life knowing that you are capable of accomplishing what you set your mind to.

Additionally, when you have healthy self-esteem, you are able to set appropriate boundaries in relationships and maintain a healthy relationship with yourself and others.





Overly high self-esteem is often mislabeled as narcissism, however there are some distinct traits that differentiate these terms. Individuals with narcissistic traits may appear to have high self-esteem, but their self-esteem may be high or low and is unstable, constantly shifting depending on the given situation.⁶

Those with excessive self-esteem:

- May be preoccupied with being perfect
- May focus on always being right
- May believe they cannot fail
- May believe they are more skilled or better than others
- May express grandiose ideas
- May grossly overestimate their skills and abilities

When self-esteem is too high, it can result in relationship problems, difficulty with social situations, and an inability to accept criticism.

ACTIVITIES FOR GRADE 8-12

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zq-fSpFhNYw>

Discussion: Discuss points related to present concerns and acknowledge it

2. Special Candy Game

Objectives:

To get group to get to know each other and to have each member of the group think about things that are special and unique about themselves - they also find out things that they might have in common with others in the group





Materials:

10 pieces of small candy for each participant

Methods:

- I have participants sit in a circle
- Give each person 10 pieces of candy
- Go around the circle and have each person name one thing in their life that they think is special or some talent or ability that they possess
- As each person says what they want to say, the other members of the group throw that person a piece of candy if that is not something that they have in common with that individual

Example: I say, "I can play the piano." If you can also play the piano you do nothing, but if you cannot play the piano you throw me a piece of candy

- You should try to encourage the members of the group who are having a hard time thinking of something, as there should hopefully always be something to find in a persons life that is good
- The game should hopefully end at a point where all members have the same amounts of candy again or at least where everyone has some so that no one feels left out - this up to the leader

Idea shared during an activity workshop at the 1995 WVTRA Conference.

3. Advertising

Group Size: 2-10

Materials:

Magazines

Scissors

Glue

Construction paper

Markers

Pencils





Objective:

- To promote increased self-esteem
- To identify positive personality traits

Description: Introduce the group to advertisements. Talk about their purpose and the method in which ads get the message across - visually and with words. Ads promote the positive aspects of a product, the finer qualities. Ads also persuade a person into buying the product. *The individual's task in this project is to come up with an advertisement persuading someone to be their friend.* Individuals should depict positive aspects of themselves through pictures, words, or a combination of the two.

If an individual has a difficult time thinking of reasons someone would want to be their friend, have them think of characteristics they look for in a friend. At the end of the session have participants share advertisements with one another. Let other participants confirm the positive qualities of the presenter.

4. The Challenge Game

Size of Group: 6 to 12

Focus: self-esteem, fun

Description: a player challenges another team to perform a stunt. If the opposing team does not perform the stunt correctly, the team earns a point. Following discussion, break the group into two teams. Separate and give each team 10 minutes to think of one challenge per person. When ready, the teams get back together and begin challenging each other.

- The challenger must clearly communicate how they want the challenge duplicated
- The challenger must first demonstrate the challenge to be duplicated by the opposing team (unless it is a challenge in which everyone does together like running a race).
- each member of the opposing team can attempt to duplicate the challenge (in fact, each team member should be encouraged to take a risk and try)
- Mathematical challenges are permitted as long as the numbers (and answers) haven't been pre-selected.
- Asking opponents to solve trick questions is not permitted.

Examples of Challenges:

1. most baskets made with a wad of paper into a trash can wins
2. loudest whistle
3. most sit-ups
4. fastest reader of a paragraph out of a book





5. bend thumb back and have the same thumb touch the forearm

Discussion: discuss self-esteem and how competencies in leisure activities enhance self-esteem.

Expected Outcome: laughter, good feelings about self, knowledge that leisure skill development enhances + self-esteem

