



SELF ESTEEM

POSITIVE LIVING SKILLS SELF ESTEEM NEWSLETTER



Parents, carers and families are an integral part of the Positive Living Skills Initiative.

The other concept of focus as it relates to Positive Living, and which underpins this Program, is that we have the ability to choose a positive focus daily. When we learn that we have the capacity and the power, and ultimately the responsibility, to choose a positive focus, our level of fulfilment within our life experience improves dramatically. As human beings, we assign meaning to the events that occur in our lives through a range of filters. We experience our own unique version of reality in our lives through our beliefs and values, our rules about how we believe the world should be or how people should behave, and through our history and background, our past experiences, our culture and family history and so on. So when we experience an event, the event on its own doesn't have meaning. We decide what the event means based on how we filter it.

The Positive Living Skills program is a universal and practical program designed specifically for children from Preschool to Year 6, and the principles and positive effects of the learning experiences can reach teachers, school staff, parents, families and wider communities. The goal is to prevent problems before they develop, by implementing a positive life skills program from an early age. The Positive Living Skills program assists to create habitual positive, healthy supportive behaviours by guiding children to learn to understand and self-direct their own thinking processes, emotions, actions, responses and outcomes, and build effective social skills. A child's self-esteem develops over time, starting from birth. Self-esteem in young children is generally positive and at this stage children may overestimate their abilities, particularly around the age of 4. As the child grows, they begin to incorporate feedback and experiences into their self-image, getting a more balanced idea of their capabilities. By the age of 7, and possibly younger, children are able to compare their performance against their peers and their perceived abilities or weaknesses compared to similar aged children or siblings becomes an important factor to their developing level of self-esteem. As they become self-aware, children can begin to understand their self-talk, and then link this to their choice of focus and beliefs, and they can build healthy self-esteem. As they build skills to self-direct their thoughts emotions and behaviour in positively challenging and self-supportive ways, they will move toward achieving the outcomes they seek.



Definitions: For the purpose of the Positive Living Skills program:

Self-esteem Comes from inside me. Healthy self-esteem is believing in myself and being kind to myself. It is being confident in the choices I make, knowing that even when I make a mistake, I remain proud of who I am.

Self-confidence is Knowing that I can learn and achieve.

Self-Respect is How I feel about myself and how I treat myself

It's important to note that healthy self-esteem is not about being over-confident; it is about believing in yourself and knowing what you do well, and how to build your skills in the areas that you choose.

A person's level of self-esteem is a direct reflection of their evaluation of their own worth. Our self-concept is based on our positive or negative evaluation of our own worthiness or capacity. Self-confidence is our trust in our own abilities, qualities and judgements, and our feeling of personal capacity, and self-respect is our feeling of personal worth. How a person views and values him or herself can have a significant impact on almost everything they do including their career, relationships, mental wellbeing and happiness. Developing and maintaining a healthy level of self-esteem means that we can feel capable to handle life's challenges, we have the capacity to understand and solve problems, and we feel we have a right to achieve fulfillment and be treated with respect. Positive or healthy self-esteem can also have a marked effect upon a child's academic performance by increasing their motivation, ability to focus and willingness to take risks. Once a child has low self-esteem it can be very challenging to reverse their feeling of worthlessness and they can enter a negative or destructive cycle.

People with healthy self-esteem:

- Know what they stand for and are willing to defend those values and beliefs, feeling secure enough to question them in light of experience and of others' viewpoints
- Are sensitive to others' feelings and needs, and seek success, but not at anyone else's expense
- Believe in their ability to manage challenges and their ability to prevail despite challenges, looking for positive meaning from very challenging experiences
- Trust their own judgement to make decisions, even when others do not agree with those decisions
- Consider themselves equal to others, not superior or inferior
- Are able to ask others for help, and at the same time are confident in their ability to solve problems
- Spend more time in the present rather than in the past or future
- Learn from past experiences and are not afraid to take calculated risks

Research has shown that children who have healthy self-esteem:

- Are usually physically healthier,
- Have better interpersonal relationships,
- Are bothered less by worries and stress and are not so often depressed,
- Manage problems better,
- Try new things without too much fear of failing,
- Are more motivated, and
- Have less behaviour problems.



Techniques to promote Healthy Self-Esteem:

Beliefs and Self Talk:

For us to understand our current level of self-esteem and to begin to build a healthier level of self-esteem and confidence it is essential to begin the journey to self-awareness. When we become aware of how we habitually speak to ourselves in our minds, and how those thoughts support our beliefs and views about ourselves and others and how we create our experience, we can begin to shape our self-esteem in healthy ways that support nurture and positively challenge us.

Respect:

Respect for self is a key factor of self-esteem. Respect starts from inside us, and when we respect ourselves, we can give and receive respect from others. We respect ourselves when we make wise choices that help us to feel good inside about ourselves, we are kind to ourselves, and we treat others as we like to be treated. We also have the courage to say no to something that we do not feel is right for us, despite external pressure from any source.

Physiology:

By making changes to our physiology or body language we can positively or negatively influence our emotional state and sense of confidence and personal power. Strategies involving confident states have been proven to have powerfully positive consequences in both the short and long term.

Growth mindset:

Building and developing a growth mindset is an essential underpinning element of the suite of Positive Living Skills programs and features heavily in the Self-Esteem unit. A growth mindset is based on the belief that we all have the capacity to learn and grow and that our abilities are not fixed, but that with persistence and patience and effort we can move toward the goals we wish to pursue in our lives, and achieve our personal potential.

Here are some ideas on how the concepts of Focus can be applied in your home life:

- As children build their level of self-esteem, they collaborate more effectively with others enhancing cooperation at School with students and teachers and at home with siblings, friends and family members
- Greater self-esteem encourages more effective and assertive communication. Those at home can listen and help them feel valued and reward effort over outcomes
- Encouraging children to face and handle their own set-backs and challenges and to realise their own ability to problem solve will assist to build their resilience and healthy self-esteem
- Every child is unique and will develop as an individual. As adults we can support them to build their self-esteem by encouraging them to try new things, and pursue the skills and goals that are important to them
- We can also support children to build a healthy self-esteem by removing comparisons.
- Children who are supported to build healthy self-esteem are more inclined to be self-driven and motivated for all pursuits within and outside of School
- Acknowledge positive behaviour and encourage strengths and unique talents

For more information about the Positive Living Skills program, and to access free resources from the Positive Living Skills family link, visit www.positivelivingskills.com.au