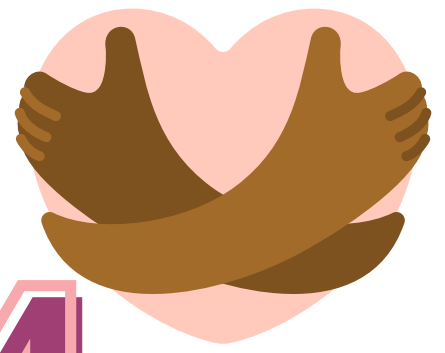# SELF-ESTEEM

What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is how we think, see and feel about ourselves. It isn't just about how we physically look but also how confident we feel.

But sometimes, we might find it hard to believe in ourselves and feel good enough. That's okay - it's normal to struggle with our self-esteem and this can change at different times in our lives.

Good self-esteem means we feel good about ourselves and confident in who we are and in our abilities. When we have good self-esteem, we're not too worried about what other people think, or how much we get wrong, because we accept ourselves just the way we are, without judgment. It also means we believe we are worthy and deserving of all the good things in life.

it's okay to feel your feelings

take care of your mind

you are enough

When we talk about self-esteem

We're often talking about lots of different things, such as:

Confidence – if we are struggling with our self-esteem, we may not feel confident doing things, even if we have done them before and know we can do them

How able we feel to share our opinions and ideas, and whether we believe what we have to say matters and is worth other people hearing

How much we recognise and value the skills we have, like if we are good at a subject at school, at making people laugh, or our hobbies

How we treat ourselves, and if we are kind to ourselves and practise self-care

How we think and feel about ourselves physically, also known as our body image.

How comfortable we are with getting things 'wrong' and our ability to brush things off and realise that our mistakes and 'failures' do not define us

We might have negative thoughts about ourselves, worrying that we aren't good enough or that we could've done things better. Often this is because we are comparing ourselves negatively to others, and feeling like we aren't as good as them or focussing on all the things we don't have that our friends seem to.

What can cause low self-esteem?

There are lots of different things that can cause low self-esteem, including things that have happened to us in the past, our mental health, or difficult situations at home. It can also be affected by things like:

MAKE YOUR OWN MAGIC

SELF-CARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Good sleep
- ☐ Meditate
- ☐ Exercise
- ☐ Read book
- ☐ Eat healthy
- ☐ Drink more water

- problems at school
- bullying
- a traumatic experience
- abuse or neglect
- friendships or relationships
- school or exam stress
- mental health problems
- physical health problems
- feeling under pressure from social media to look or act a certain way
- experiencing discrimination

Low self-esteem can also come from the way people in our lives treat us, for example if we are experiencing bullying. But the way we talk to ourselves – or about ourselves – can also affect our self-esteem. If you find you often talk about yourself negatively around others, even if it's as a joke, sometimes this can have a negative impact on the way you feel about yourself.

kindness   Peace   love   hope

What to do if you are struggling with your self-esteem

If you are struggling with your self-esteem, here are some things that you can do to start to feel more confident in yourself.

## Understand why you focus on the negatives

This can feel quite difficult at first, but understanding why you focus on the negatives can help you think about what is causing you to have low self-esteem. To help you understand why you focus on the negatives, ask yourself:

- What negative things do you think about yourself?
- When did you start thinking these things?
- What has happened or is happening to make you think this way?

Challenge your negative thoughts

When you start thinking negative things about yourself, consider whether there is another way of looking at them. You might struggle with negative feelings because you feel like you have to do things 'perfectly' all the time. When you haven't done something perfectly, you might feel like you 'failed'. Instead, you could look at these moments and think 'I did okay there', or, 'it didn't go to plan, but I got through it'. By looking at situations from this point of view, it can take away the pressure to be 'perfect'.
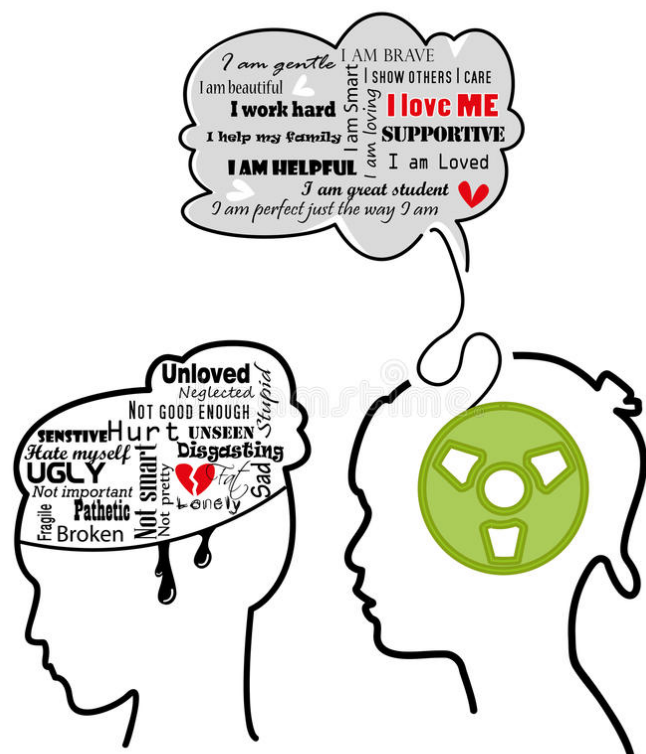
You could also:

Think about what advice you would give to a friend who is struggling with these negative feelings; how would you help them to feel better?

Remind yourself of times that prove these negative thoughts aren't true. They don't have to be big events, it can be small everyday things like when you felt good in an outfit or when you shared your thoughts in class. These positive moments can act as reminders that you can do it and that you do matter.

You can also write these positive moments down so you have them to hand when you start to think negatively.

Happy Thoughts

Focus on the positives

Write down your best feature, the last time you received a compliment, or the last time you did something for someone that made you feel good. These might seem like small things, but it is important to recognise all the good things about you, and the reasons why people appreciate you.

Take time to do things you enjoy

Whether it is drawing, taking part in a sport or going for a walk, taking time to do things that make you feel good can help you switch off and relax.

POSITIVE MINDS