

Empower Positive Self Image

What can you do to build positive self-esteem:

- * Limit the influence of harmful media
- * Talk about positive successful people
- * Talk about the problems of celebrity culture
- * Focus on strengths, growth and improvement
- * Remove confidence busters! (Watch the messages in MUSIC)
- * Practice positive self-talk (and avoid judging people on how they look)
- * Knowledge is POWER! Inform yourself about health, nutrition and lifestyle.
- * Spend time with others who are positive and help you feel good
- * Spend time on activities & interests that make you feel good
- * Appreciate and respect your body and what it can do
- * Set life-enhancing goals

"If they hadn't told me I was ugly, I never would have searched for my beauty. If they hadn't tried to break me down, I wouldn't know that I'm unbreakable" Gabourey Sidibe from the 2009 movie "Precious"



What promotes body image resilience during adolescence?

Studies have identified five protective factors which promote resilience. These factors help to protect young people with body image issues and also other adolescent challenges such as smoking, taking drugs, as well as under age drinking and sexual activity.[12]

1. Family and peer support - first impressions and early learning influences values and ways of doing things, and how young people see the world.

2. Gender role satisfaction - some studies have suggested that for young women and girls the mixed messages they receive lead to confusion and despair. These messages include being relationship focused, family based and responsible for the care of others. This is in conflict with other goals of strength, independence and self reliance, whilst achieving high academic and work success, and attaining thinness. For some this leads to great confusion, which young women need to voice and discuss.

3. Physical self-esteem - In adolescence, body image becomes the most important aspect of girls' global self-esteem. It is interesting to note that African American girls have higher levels of self-esteem than Caucasian American girls do, partly because their self-esteem is not based on such narrow definitions regarding what is considered attractive. Taking part in physical activity is also a central feature of physical self-esteem. When girls and boys exercise to improve their overall fitness or health (as opposed to working out to burn excess calories or build muscle) they are more likely to feel good about themselves. In addition physical activity can lead to body satisfaction which increases the feeling of well being when they develop an appreciation for what their bodies can do, rather than how they appear to others.[8]

4. Coping strategies and critical thinking skills - A life skills approach can broaden and develop how the young person thinks about their environment. In time they can learn to make their own assessment and consider different inputs whilst developing some skills to actively resist, challenge, and create alternatives to the messages they see or experience around them. Education about body changes and media literacy which explores media messages can help kids to have a broader picture of what influences them. Critical thinking can help young people to more actively interpret the images they see around them so they are not passive observers or receivers[12] and can then relate this to their own family and experience.

5. Holistic wellness and life balance - there are many ways that young people can define themselves including interests, sport, spirituality, relationship building, values, creative ideas, talents and attitude to study.

Referral

- Each Residence/school will have their own processes
- School psychologist often works collaboratively with School chaplains (more general support)
- Any concerns - grey areas - err on the side of caution - talk to the psychologist
- Students can self-refer
- Need Residence guardian and/or parent/guardian permission
- Usually get parent permission unless is a source of distress to the student - work toward it

Refer if:

- Significant change in a student
- On-going concern - no improvement
- Withdrawal and isolation
- Any request to get help

School psychologists provide support in three main areas:

1. Behaviour - work with students, parents and their schools to identify and change target behaviours.
2. Learning - conduct assessments of students experiencing learning difficulties/disabilities and support schools to enhance their learning outcomes.
3. Mental Health and Well-being - provide direct support for students experiencing mental health and wellbeing difficulties, and assist schools and

Viola Davis, got rid of the wig and embraced her short afro at this year's Oscars, "I feel more powerful every day, more secure in who I am, and I've waited so long for that. ... It feels divine."

Ellen DeGeneres (CoverGirl) "Beauty is about being comfortable in your own skin. It's about knowing and accepting who you are."

Tina Fey - vocal in her beliefs about everything—including beauty. "If you retain nothing else, always remember the most important rule of beauty, which is: who cares?" . She has never tried to hide the scar she got when she was the victim of a knife attack, nor plump her lips or laser away other scars.

Kate Winslet is the first to admit she doesn't actually look like the airbrushed version of herself

Ashley Judd "This abnormal obsession with women's faces and bodies ... The insanity has to stop."

Spend time with positive others

Research shows people with high self-esteem focus on strengths, growth & improvement

A focus on language

Focus on the language about body image which is used in your residence. Use these questions to help your thinking.

- ☐ How do you tell the child(ren) in your care that you value their unique identity as a person and the things which make them different to others?
- ☐ How do you speak about the issues of bullying and cyberbullying?
- ☐ How do you describe the child(ren) in your care in front of them and to other people?
- ☐ How do you support the child(ren) in your care through positive and constructive feedback?

Brainstorm with the group useful sentence starters which may help you improve or change the way the people in your family and community can demonstrate the values of respect, empathy and honesty.

I like the way you

I am pleased to see that you

I admire you because

I feel because

I can see that you

I am concerned that

I am proud of your ability to

Be mindful of providing positive feedback and telling the child(ren) in your care what they do well. Refrain from commenting negatively on the appearance of others

- 👤 experts say that 'attentive parents, strong teachers and nice friends are an excellent counterbalance to pop culture garbage'. (Newsweek, 2007)
- 👤 young women need to see males that treat females with respect
- 👤 Meet Yourself: A User's Guide to Building Self Esteem Niko Everett TED X talk
- 👤 give praise on hard work & effort not on looks and intelligence

Suggestion for parents to consider:

From an early age, be aware of your own conversations and feelings about weight and the 'ideal figure'. Be conscious of your own 'diet' talk and 'appearance conversations'. What impression are you giving to young children and other family members? How accepting are you of your own appearance? Research has shown that what parents model to their children and how they talk about body image themselves will have a strong influence on how the child's own resilience develops in this area.[8]

Give affirming messages about your teenager - focus on a range of things such as how they assist you or others and what they do well or are good at, including interests, talents or skills.

Talk about good eating habits, make sure that there is a variety of food on the table.

Engage children and teenagers in conversation about the images we see around us, how these images are created, what feelings are generated when they see them and what they like and dislike.

Generate conversation which reinforces positive, healthy messages around body image and is open, honest and engaging. This sort of conversation needs to take place more than once. Talking in an age appropriate way at different stages is better than talking just once at adolescence.

Take part in family meals, so that teenagers are eating with you in a relaxed environment.

Emphasise your child's positive resources and strengths. Encourage the young person to appreciate other strengths and interests that they have. Help them to appreciate and see themselves in their wholeness, not just from their appearance.

Avoid teasing - this can be taken more seriously than you mean it.

Help your teenager to learn how to minimise the impact when others make unhelpful comments either to them or their friends. Talk with them about how to respond.

Knowledge is Power - inform yourself

- TED X Youth talks
- Meet Yourself: A User's Guide to Building Self Esteem Niko Everett
- What Disney Doesn't Tell us Benya Kraus
- Insight into the Teenage Brain Adriana Galvan
- TED talk : Looks Aren't Everything. Believe Me I'm a Model Cameron Russell
- TED X Toronto - Why We Choose Suicide -Mark Henick
- How Do YOU Define Yourself? Lizzie Velasquez

