

Building Self-Esteem and Assertiveness

Session 1: Self-Esteem

In the first session we will aim:

- To learn what is meant by self-esteem and why it is important.
- To identify the difference between self-esteem and self-confidence
- To identify the importance of our values and skills to our self-esteem
- To learn about how self-esteem dips and raises

What is Self-esteem?

As human beings, we tend to go through life evaluating ourselves and others according to a scale of worth. The concept of self-esteem is the amount of value that we consider we are worth. These values vary from person to person and whilst some may rate themselves as having little value, others may rate their value much higher.

A person's self-esteem is affected by how an individual views themselves. These include attitudes and beliefs a person has towards themselves e.g. "I am good at sport" or, "I am bad at sport". As children develop, the way that others respond to them play a key part in developing these beliefs and attitudes. These beliefs, whether positive or negative, can change over time and are influenced by internal and external factors, such as changing negative thinking patterns and spending time nurturing relationships that improve self-esteem.

- <https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/esteem.htm>



ACTIVITY

How would you describe self-esteem?

**SELF ESTEEM
VERSUS
SELF CONFIDENCE**

SELF ESTEEM	SELF CONFIDENCE
Overall evaluation (either positive or negative) you have on yourself	Belief in your abilities to succeed
About self-evaluation	Having faith in oneself plays a major role
Doesn't evaluate you based on certain tasks in life	All about task based-evaluation
Directly related to ideologies about yourself	About having confidence to accomplish certain tasks and face certain situations in life
	Visit www.PEDIAA.com

Source: <https://www.healthyplace.com/blogs/buildingselfesteem/2012/05/the-difference-between-self-esteem-and-self-confidence>

Everyone has intelligence

Human beings have become the most successful species (in terms of population and development) on the planet. The primary reason for this is our brains and their vast capabilities (intelligence) across the total collective. In many cultures, however, the vastness of our abilities is often overlooked and cultures, like ours, develop biases towards a select few types of intelligence.

In school settings, student assessments are largely biased towards logical-mathematical intelligences, which can affect a person's belief about themselves i.e. "I was never any good at school", but it may be that the system does not fully support and nurture the wide variety of intelligences that make up the human race.

There have been many studies on how to unlock human potential and, Howard Gardner's (Ph.D., Professor of Education at Harvard University) theory of multiple intelligences is one of them. These intelligences relate to an individual's unique abilities and the theory states that each intelligence type is equal in value to any other. Gardner's theory can be applied to educational settings to help young people feel confident in their abilities and help them to unleash their true potential¹.

Eight of the Core Intelligences:



¹ https://www.niu.edu/facdev/_pdf/guide/learning/howard_gardner_theory_multiple_intelligences.pdf

ACTIVITY

What's your potential type?

___ Word Smart



- ☐ I like to read books.
- ☐ I like to write stories.
- ☐ I like to tell stories and talk to people.
- ☐ I speak more than one language.

___ Picture Smart



- ☐ I have a good visual memory.
- ☐ I enjoy drawing and painting.
- ☐ I am good at video games.
- ☐ I read maps and charts easily.

___ Music Smart



- ☐ I play an instrument.
- ☐ I enjoy singing.
- ☐ I like listening to music and know lots of songs.
- ☐ I remember the melodies of songs.

___ Body Smart



- ☐ I am good at sports.
- ☐ I like building things.
- ☐ I enjoy acting and dancing.
- ☐ I like to learn with my hands.

___ Self Smart



- ☐ I feel good about myself.
- ☐ I have hobbies.
- ☐ I know my likes and dislikes.
- ☐ I sometimes need a quiet place to be alone and think.

___ Logic/Math Smart



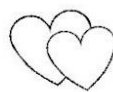
- ☐ I enjoy math and numbers.
- ☐ I am curious about science.
- ☐ I enjoy brain teasers.
- ☐ I like computers and calculators.

___ Nature Smart



- ☐ I enjoy learning about rocks, plants, and animals.
- ☐ I like to spend time outdoors.
- ☐ I hear and see links in nature.
- ☐ I like to write down observations about nature.

___ People Smart



- ☐ I have lots of friends.
- ☐ I enjoy socializing.
- ☐ I have feelings for other people.
- ☐ I problem solve with my friends.

assembled by april guenzler
guwhizteacher.blogspot.com

Core Values

ACTIVITY

What matters most to us helps to build a sense of who we are.

Accomplishment	Determination	Honor	Perfection
Abundance	Discipline	Improvement	Perseverance
Accountability	Discovery	Independence	Persistence
Accuracy	Diversity	Individuality	Personal Growth
Achievement	Education	Initiative	Personal health
Adventure	Efficiency	Inner peace	Pleasure
Approval	Environment	Innovation	Power
Autonomy	Equality	Integrity	Practicality
Balance	Excellence	Intelligence	Preservation
Beauty	Exploration	Intensity	Privacy
Challenge	Fairness	Intimacy	Problem solving
Change	Faith	Intuition	Professionalism
Clarity	Faithfulness	Joy	Progress
Cleanliness/ orderliness	Family	Justice	Prosperity
Collaboration	Flair	Knowledge	Punctuality
Commitment	Flexibility	Leadership	Purpose
Communication	Forgiveness	Learning	Straightforwardness
Community	Freedom	Love	Strength
Compassion	Friendship	Loyalty	Success
Competence	Frugality	Meaning	Systemization
Competition	Fulfillment	Merit	Teamwork
Concern for others	Fun	Moderation	Timeliness
Confidence	Generosity	Modesty	Tolerance
Connection	Genuineness	Money	Tradition
Conservation	Good will	Nature	Tranquility
Content over form	Goodness	Nurturing	Trust
Cooperation	Gratitude	Obedience	Truth
Coordination	Hard work	Open-mindedness	Unity
Creativity	Harmony	Openness	Variety
Credibility	Healing	Optimism	Vitality
Decisiveness	Holistic Living	Patriotism	Wealth
Democracy	Honesty	Peace, Non-violence	Wisdom

ACTIVITY - CASE STUDY

Jamal aged 10

Family

Jamal is adored by his family; he supports with the housework and studies hard. His parents value hard work and helpfulness. Jamal's family are very proud of him and tell him regularly.

Peer group

People around Jamal like him because he is kind, patient and helps other classmates with their homework. Jamal's friends know they can count on him to help them understand topics in class if needed.

Best Friend

Sam and Jamal have been friends since they were 5. Sam's parents love Jamal and always comment positively on how polite and well-mannered he is. Sam loves the imaginative games that Jamal makes up and they are always turning Sam's bedroom into a fortress!

Jamal aged 16

Peer group

Now Jamal is entering his senior year, fewer people seem to value his helpfulness. Jamal knows that some people in his year think he is dull because he always has his head in books. His friends are often invited to social events, but Jamal isn't and he is starting to feel like an outsider. Jamal is becoming self-conscious about how others see him and becomes self-critical about how he looks, behaves and why people don't like him. Jamal wants to fit in, hoping these feelings of worthlessness will go away. He starts to spend more time trying to change himself to fit in and less time studying.

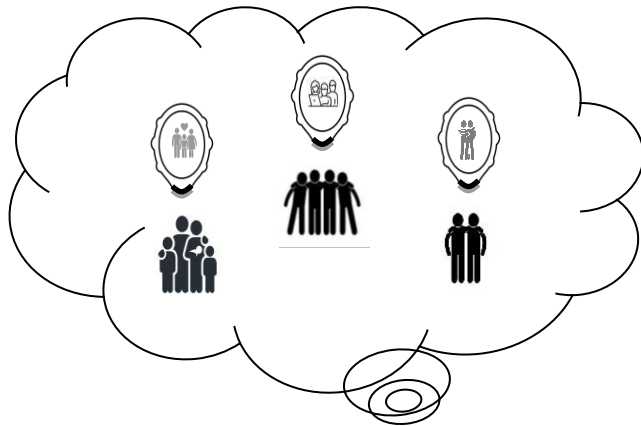
Family

Jamal's grades are dropping and his parents remind him that it's an important year and he must study. There have been an increasing number of disagreements when Jamal wants to go out and his parents think that he should revise more.

Teachers

At Jamal's parent's evening, lots of teachers are saying that Jamal is capable if he just applied himself more. One teacher spoke about how he is always distracted in class and told his parents that his homework is often handed in late and not to the standard she would expect from him.

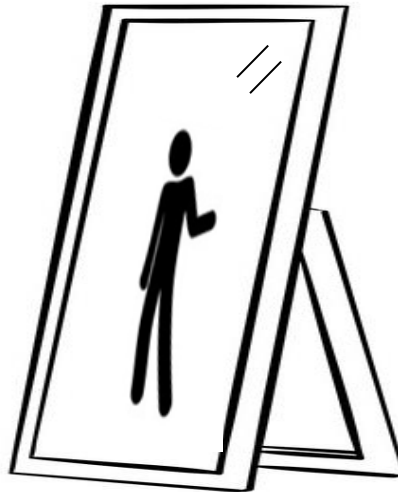
Jamal at 10



"I am....."

I am.....

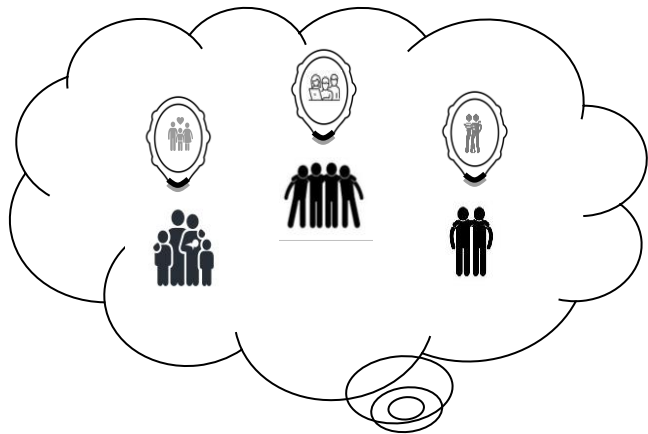
I am....."



What beliefs and attitudes might Jamal develop about himself?

What factors are influencing Jamal's self-esteem?

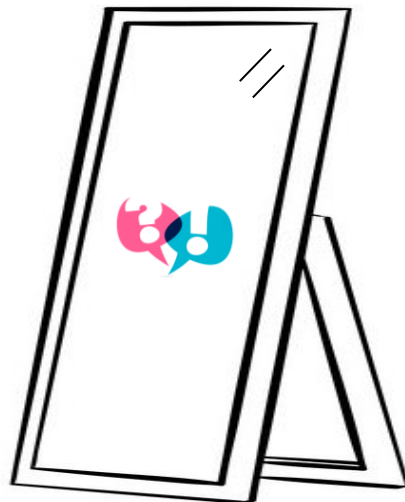
Jamal at 16



"I am.....

I am.....

I am.....



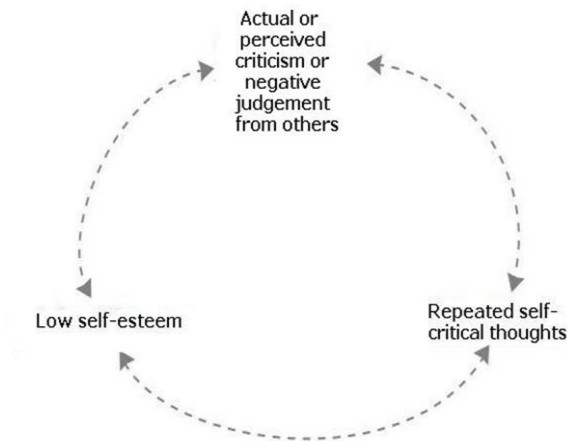
What are the signs that Jamal's self-esteem is dipping?

What might be the causes of this change?

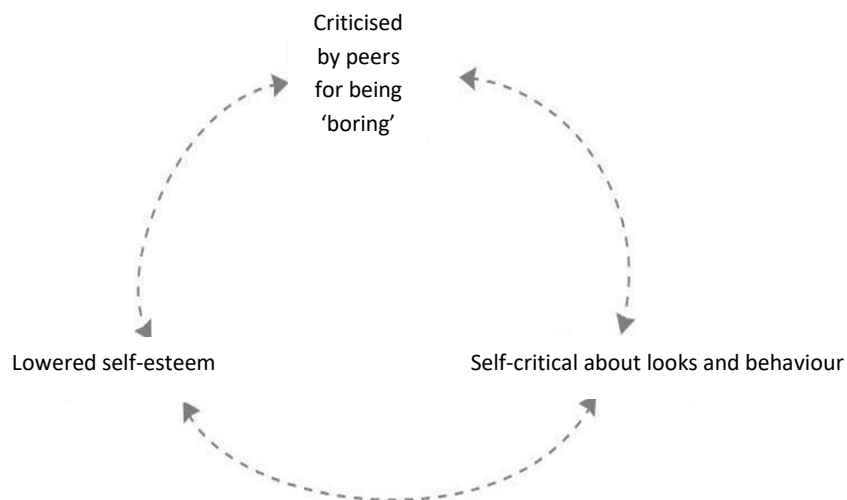
How does dipped self-esteem come about?

Dipped self-esteem can be a result of negative life experiences. A cycle of dipped self-esteem can continue to remain low if the environment resulting in low self-esteem remains e.g. regularly being amongst people who don't value you and when self-critical thoughts reaffirm the perceived criticism.

Cycle of low self-esteem



In the example of Jamal's case:



Jamal in his 30s

When Jamal left school, he originally perused a career in banking thinking it would make his parents proud. It would allow him to earn enough money for the lifestyle he thought he wanted; all the latest mod cons like everyone else seemed to have. However, when he realised this didn't make him feel satisfied either, he spent time reevaluating what was right for him.

Using the techniques explored so far in this course, it's easier to see how becoming more self-aware can help us to lead lives that are attuned to what's important to us and where our capabilities lie. This in turn leads to increased life satisfaction and improved self-esteem.

About Me

Intelligence/ability types:

Main two-

Picture smart

-I'm always drawing and creating

-When I have new ideas, I draw them

Visual smart

-I think visually

Third ability-

Nature smart

-I think about the impact of nature on us and us on nature

Banking- math/logical and people smart

What I value most

Balance

Community

Creativity

Environment

Most important to me:

Contentment in the long term

Self-enquiry

I'm unhappy in my job

The pursuit of new things doesn't satisfy me long term

Stress most of the time

Low mood from time to time

I'm not suited to the banking industry

I want to be true to what I want

What changes need to happen to live more closely aligned with my values?

Learn how to be me- use self-enquiry daily

Find a new career path- something to do with being creative and nature- landscaping, environmental conservationist, creating green spaces in communities ???

Leave banking, it's not for me!

Signs of Dipped or Raised Self-Esteem

	Raised self-esteem	Dipped self esteem
Beliefs	Knows what they value and believe.	Beliefs and values are easily changeable based on what others think as they value others over themselves
	Has belief that they can achieve their goals and aspirations.	Has low belief in them which may result in not striving towards goals or giving up when faced with challenges.
	Has a strong self-concept.	Believes what others think of them and has a biased towards negative feedback.
Thoughts	Compassionate internal voice.	Critical internal voice.
	Accepts that mistakes are a normal part of the human experience and can recover within a reasonable time.	Has a tendency to over magnify errors and continues to ruminate over them.
	Recognises achievement.	Overlooks positives.
	Able to rationalise thoughts.	Overly negative thoughts that cause distress.
Behaviour	Learn from mistakes- see's mistakes as opportunities for self-improvement.	Avoid making mistakes for fear of consequences (this can show in the form of perfectionism, avoiding trying new things, procrastination etc.).
	Clear communication skills because they value their thoughts and opinions and expect others to do the same.	Poor communication skills for a variety of reasons; overly focussed on how someone might receive the information, anxiety about being judged, abandoned, feeling embarrassed...
	Behaves in a way that is true to beliefs and values.	Needs assurance from others to feel valued so behaves in a way that is believed to please the people around them and to avoid upsetting anyone.
Feelings	Self-assured from within.	Feelings of intense anxiety that they are not valued by others.
	Feels secure in themselves and relationships around them.	Feels unwanted, unloved, and less valuable than others.
	Is concerned for others but won't put them in a situation where their feelings are at risk.	Overly focussed on how others are feeling and likely to neglect their own.

Relationships	True to self and values.	Tries to prove self to others in order to feel accepted.
	Comfortable to express self in relationships.	Alters personality to fit what others find pleasing.
	Sets healthy boundaries in relationships.	Have chaotic or toxic relationships in their lives.

It may seem daunting to begin the process of raising our self-esteem, so it can be helpful to remember that -

“A Journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”

Session 2: Self Esteem

This week we will be covering tools for Improving Self Esteem

- Self-acceptance
- Becoming your own friend
- Developing compassionate self-talk
- Choosing inner compassion over inner critic self-talk
- Affirmations
- Body Language

Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance according to University Professor and Researcher, Lorrie Shepard, means to be 'happy or satisfied with yourself' and this is understood to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. Professor Shepard goes on to describe how self-acceptance involves self-understanding and a realistic awareness of strengths and weaknesses, which results in feelings of worth that is individual to that person; a "unique worthiness"².

When we accept ourselves for who we are, it also helps us to accept any uncomfortable feelings that we may observe within ourselves. By practicing a mindset of self-acceptance we can better accept the presence of anxiety, anger or sadness, which can make it easier to let these feelings come and go.

ACTIVITY

What is self-acceptance?

What are the benefits of self-acceptance?

² Shepard, Lorrie A. (1978). "Self-Acceptance: The Evaluative Component of the Self-Concept Construct". *American Educational Research Journal*. **16** (2): 139–160.

Developing Compassionate Self-talk

The critical talk a person's mind is usually negative, harsh, berating and judgmental about them and others, affecting a person's self-esteem. The critical talk may always be there to some degree but how a person responds to it can change the impact it has.

Developing compassionate self-talk is one way to reduce the negative effects of the internal critic. It can be difficult for some people to start developing this compassionate language and imagining this voice is a truly good inner friend can be helpful. It is the kind of language often used when speaking to loved ones and may be caring, compassionate, understanding, accepting, encouraging and patient. The compassionate self-talk remains the same whatever happens.

ACTIVITY

If you were being a compassionate friend to yourself,

1. How would you like to talk to yourself?

2. In what way would you like to talk to yourself?

3. What sort of things would you say?

4. How would this make you feel about yourself?

Compassionate Self Talk

ACTIVITY

Critical	Compassionate
"Now look what you've gone and done!"	"I worked hard on this and I tried my best."
"People don't like me"	"I cannot possibly be liked by everyone. I don't like everyone I meet either. It is ok. I will be ok."
"I can't do anything right."	"I try my best to be a good person. I'm allowed to give myself space to grow."
"I look stupid."	"I am allowed to feel bad sometimes but it doesn't make it true."
"I won't bother trying again."	"I can't expect myself to do things perfectly."
"I won't say anything because nobody will listen to me"	"Everyone should be able to say how they feel. Even though I don't quite believe it, this includes me."
"I don't deserve to be in this job."	"I worked hard to get to where I am. Everyone has self-doubt. It doesn't make the thoughts true."
"I shouldn't feel upset. I'm so weak."	"It's okay to feel upset. It won't last. I have survived harder things than this."
"I should be better."	"I am enough. Even if I don't always believe it, I am enough."
"I wish I was someone else."	"Other people have made me feel like that. It doesn't make it a fact."

Affirmations

Affirmations are positive self-statements that can help change the way a person thinks and feels about themselves. They are the kind of words that the inner friend would say and using them repeatedly helps to develop and strengthen that language.

ACTIVITY My Affirmations

Examples:



Body Language

Professor Amy Cuddy is a leading body language expert whose research has explored the influence of posture poses and how people view us and how we view ourselves. The interest in this topic resulted from an accident that left Cuddy feeling helpless lowering her confidence levels. The impact this had on her behaviour, particularly her body language became a key topic in her research as she searched for ways to regain her confidence.

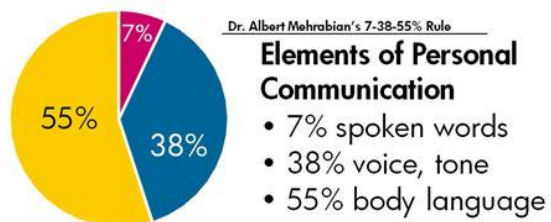
Cuddy chose to research powerful leaders as these were people who embodied confidence. The research aimed to identify what made these people feel and appear confident. The results showed that men and women tended to have more testosterone (a male sex hormone that plays a part in risk taking and confidence) and less cortisol (the stress hormone). An interesting finding was that this hormone profile altered from person to person and from hour to hour. It was discovered that how people behave effects the levels of testosterone and cortisol and Cuddy promotes body language that helps others to feels more confident. This in turn raises self-esteem. Although her research is viewed as controversial by some, here are strategies that are widely accepted to impact self-esteem:

Slowing body movements and breathing

There is a mind-body connection that means how we behave influences how we feel or think e.g. fidgeting and shallow breathing is a nervous response which can lead to further cortisol being released. Slowing the body movements down has a calming influence and reduces the levels of cortisol.

The effects of standing or sitting straight

Anxiety and low self-esteem can lead to protective body language. Postures such as slouching, folding arms and shrinking into chairs or standing in the corner can keep self-esteem low. Taking up space, standing tall can increase testosterone levels leading to increased confidence.



Making eye contact. Looking away and avoiding eye contact can come from feelings of inferiority. Averting eyes reinforces internal beliefs that others are more important and can maintain low self-esteem. Although it's likely to feel uncomfortable at first, practicing eye contact sends a message to yourself that you are equally as important as others and deserve to be seen.

The Power Poses



Self-esteem is the ability to
see yourself as a flawed
individual and still hold
yourself in high regard.

Esther Perel

Inspiring Quotes about Self-Discovery

WWW.THIRTEENTHOUGHTS.COM

"When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it."

~Henry Ford

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all."

~Dale Carnegie

"Tough times never last, but tough people do."

~Robert H. Schuller

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." ~Thomas Edison

"Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it."

~ Michael Jordan

"As long as you keep fighting, you are a winner."

~Unknown

"The best way out is always through."

~Robert Frost

"Never give up on something you can't go a day without thinking about" ~Unknown

"I learned there are troubles of more than one kind. Some come from ahead, others come from behind. But I've bought a big bat. I'm all ready, you see. Now my troubles are going to have trouble with me."

~Dr. Seuss

"Courage is not having the strength to go on; it is going on when you don't have the strength."

~Theodore Roosevelt

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do, so throw off the bowlines, sail away from safe harbor, catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore, Dream, Discover."

~Mark Twain

"Rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life."

~J.K. Rowling

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up.
The most certain way to succeed is always to try
just one more time."
~Thomas Edison

"It is during our darkest moments that we must focus
to see the light."
~Aristotle Onassis

"Be strong, things will get better. It might be stormy now,
but rain doesn't last forever."
~Unknown

"It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless
you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all,
in which case you have failed by default."
~J.K. Rowling

"Everything you want is on the other side of fear."
~Jack Canfield

"Great people do things before they're ready. They do things
before they know they can do it. Doing what you're
afraid of, getting out of your comfort zone, taking risks like
that – that is what life is. You might be really good.
You might find out something about yourself that's really
special and if you're not good, who cares? You tried something.
Now you know something about yourself."
~Amy Poehler

"When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you,
till it seems as though you could not hang on a minute longer,
never give up then, for that is just the place and time
that the tide will turn."
~Harriet Beecher Stowe

"Most great people have attained their greatest success
one step beyond their greatest failure."
~Napoleon Hill

"We all want things to stay the same. Settle for living in
misery because we are afraid of change, of things crumbling
to ruins. Ruin is a gift. Ruin is the road to transformation."
~Elizabeth Gilbert

"What matters most is how well you walk through the fire."
~Charles Bukowski

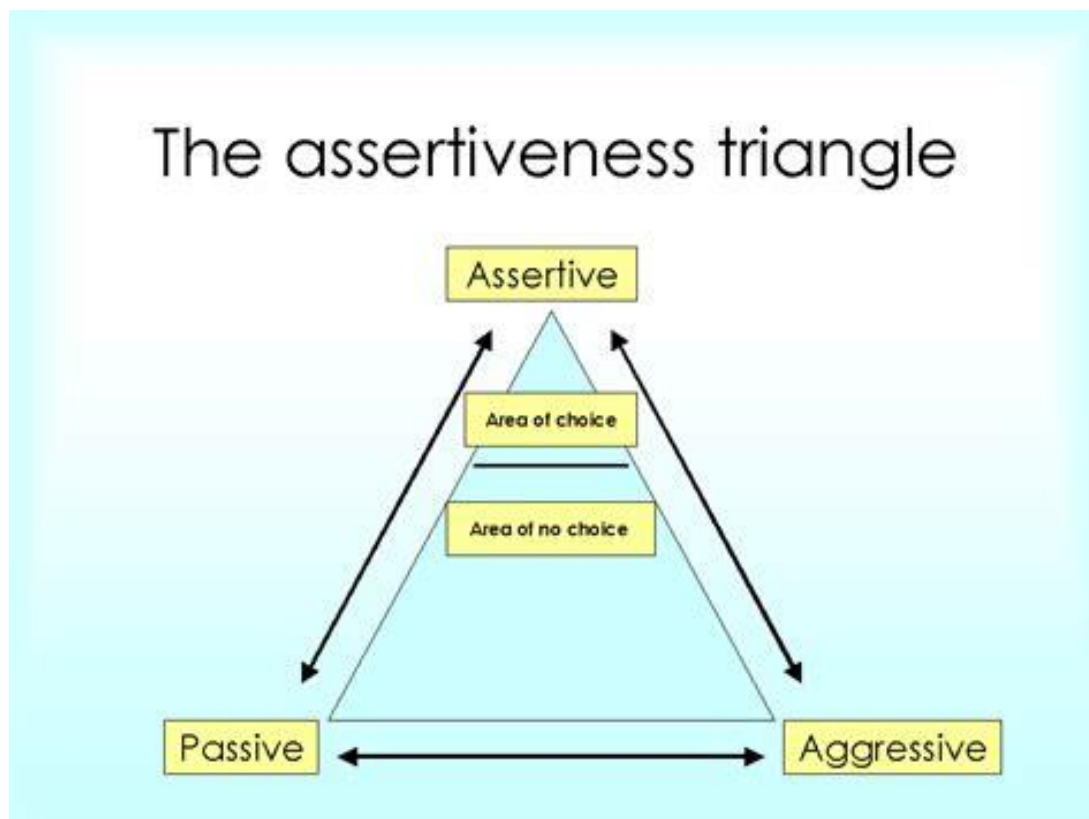
"New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings."
~Lao Tzu

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience
in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able
to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next
thing that comes along'.
~Eleanor Roosevelt

Session 3 Assertiveness

This week's aims are:

- To learn about communication styles
- To learn what assertiveness means
- To understand the difference between passive, passive aggressive, aggressive and assertive roles
- To look at balancing our needs with those of others
- Explore obstacles to assertiveness



Communications styles

Passive, aggressive and assertive are all types of communication styles that share common characteristics under each title. How a person communicates is not fixed, for example, a person may be assertive with a close friend but be passive with strangers. Use the following exercise to explore the differences.

ACTIVITY

PASSIVE

Behaviour

Body language

Communication

Emotions

AGGRESSIVE

Behaviour

Body language

Communication

Emotions



Signs of assertiveness

Body Language

Communication



Behaviour

Emotions

ASSERTIVENESS

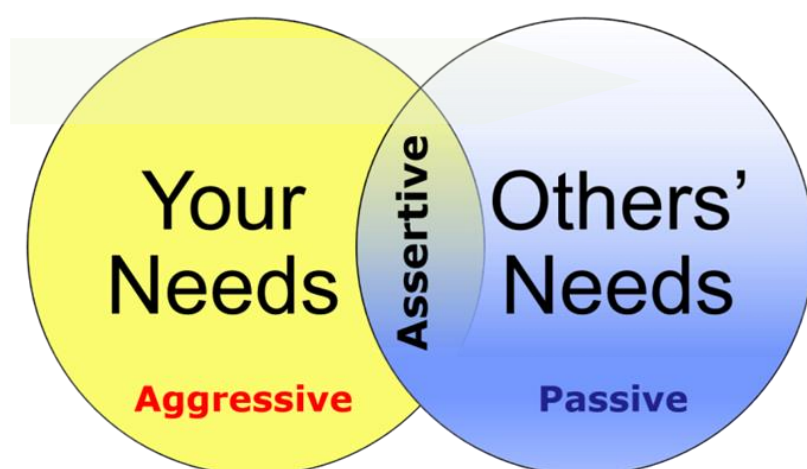
	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Basic belief of worthiness	<p>"I am not worthy."</p> <p>"Other people are more important than me"</p>	<p>"We are both worthy"</p> <p>"We are equally as important as each other"</p>	<p>"You are not worthy."</p> <p>"I'm more important than others"</p>
Body language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quiet tone • eyes pointing downward or away • shoulders hunched together • fidgeting feet and hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • firm but respectful tone • relaxed appearance • appropriate eye contact • appropriate gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loud or angry tone • staring or overly direct eye contact • pointing, clenched fist, dramatic movements
Communication/ Language style	Apologetic, submissive, vague, self-deprecating.	Confident, relaxed, firm, polite, respectful.	Insulting, sarcastic, patronising, and disrespectful.
Emotions and feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feel taken advantage of • feel unheard • Fear of rejection • Helplessness • Resentment towards those who 'use' them • Reduced self-respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feelings of confidence • Feelings of positivity about yourself and towards others • A healthy sense of self respect • Self-esteem rises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerful when there is a perceived 'win' even at the expense of others • Potential feelings of guilt or remorse after hurting others in the pursuit of a 'win' • feels angry

³ <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/passive-aggressive-and-assertive-communication.pdf>

Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep quite • Don't say what you think or feel for reasons such as fear of embarrassment, conflict or being judged • Put yourself down frequently • Agree with what others say even if you disagree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express your feelings, wants and needs directly and honestly • Don't assume you are correct and that everyone thinks the same way • Allows others to share their views without dismissing or insulting them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express your views and wants as if everyone else's are unreasonable or stupid • Ignore, insult or dismiss the views of others • Act in a bullying manner to gain power over others
------------------	---	---	--

Assertiveness is a communication style. It is being able to express your feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and opinions in an open manner that doesn't violate the rights of others."

-Centre for Clinical Interventions



The Ok Corral

Passive- I'm not OK, you're OK means my needs aren't being met and yours are

Aggressive- I'm OK, you're not OK, my needs are being met but yours are less important

Assertive- I'm OK, you're OK, the balance of both needs being valuable and fulfilled

Passive Aggressive- I'm not OK, you're not OK. I'm going to pretend I'm OK and covertly let you know I'm not OK. Passive-aggressive behaviour is when you express negative feelings indirectly instead of openly talking about them e.g. sarcasm. (The four life positions – Berne 1962)

Obstacles to Assertiveness

Session 4: Assertiveness Techniques

This week we will be covering:

- The Stuck/broken record technique
- The Fogging technique
- Authenticity
- Creating healthy boundaries

The Benefits of using Assertiveness Techniques

- ❖ They are helpful to draw on when we find ourselves in difficult situations
- ❖ Help us maintain an assertive stance
- ❖ Easy to remember if you're caught off guard
- ❖ Help us build our confidence with becoming more assertive
- ❖ They can help us to preserve our self-esteem

Assertive approaches

Stuck Record

Technique



Also known as the broken record technique, it is a verbal response that is firm and conveys a clear message. It can work well in situations where the other person wants to argue, refuses to listen or is disorganised. It employs the skill of calm persistence. The technique involves repeating what you want over and over again, without raising the tone of your voice, becoming irritated or drawn into the issue. Continual repetition ensures the discussion doesn't get side tracked into an argument. The key is to stay calm, be clear about what you want and stick to the point.⁵

Fogging



Fogging is a useful technique to deal with someone who may be behaving in an aggressive or manipulative manner. It can prevent the conversation from escalating through agreement rather than disagreement. Rather than arguing back, fogging gives a minimal response using calm language that is neither defensive nor passive to demands being made. It involves agreeing with any truths that are said, even if they are critical. By not responding in the expected way (defensive or argumentative) the other person will cease confrontation, as the desired effect isn't being achieved. It is called fogging because you act like a 'wall of fog' into which arguments are thrown but not returned (Extracts from www.skillsyouneed.com)

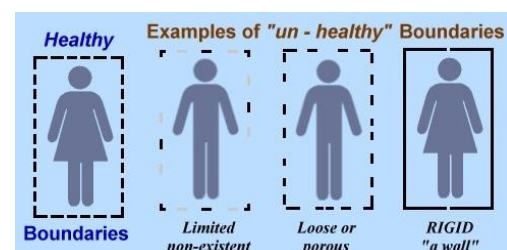
Authenticity



Psychology today says "Individuals considered authentic are those who generally strive to align their actions with their core values and beliefs with the hope of discovering, and then acting in sync with, their "true selves." Being

Authentic means to be true to yourself, your feelings and your beliefs. However, there are times where you wouldn't reveal all that you are thinking and feeling. Being authentic involves giving an honest genuine response when it's appropriate and not going against your beliefs when it's not. For example, if a friend is distressed and sharing some criticism that they have received, which you know is true, we may question whether giving an honest response is appropriate in that moment. On the whole, authentic behaviour is consistent with how you truly feel and this reflects healthy self-esteem.

Truthful and thoughtful communication isn't always the easiest option; it often takes courage to be vulnerable, which in turn takes practice. The ability to express emotions freely, clearly and with clear intentions helps to uphold healthy personal boundaries. This is essential for developing healthy self-esteem.



Healthy Boundaries

Understanding what our limits are in relationships and setting boundaries is a skill that isn't often taught in any formal setting. Using the self-awareness techniques from session 1, anyone can learn what is right for them and where their limits lie. Everyone can relate to the experience of having their personal boundaries crossed. If this happens often, it can lead to negative thoughts and feelings about ourselves and others, lowering self-esteem.

ACTIVITY Personal Boundaries

Personal boundaries are limits that we set for ourselves within relationships. They are acceptable ways for ourselves and others to behave that respects our own values and those of others. What feels acceptable will vary from person to person so there is no right or wrong answers.

The following items are types of behaviours that you may encounter in daily interactions with others:

Holding Hands	Text	Share stories from your life
Giving a hug	Shaking Hands	Discuss your health
Sharing personal problems	Tell secrets	Give your phone number
Phoning for a chat	Say hello to	Chat on the computer
Entering their home	Share food with	Stand close to them
Have a joke with them	Doing a favour for them	Trust them

List behaviours that feel acceptable to you in the spaces below:

Family
Friends
Work Colleagues
Acquaintances
Strangers

Personal Boundaries continued...

Place a tick in the box for each row to show where your boundaries lie for each set of people.

Personal boundaries are limits that we set for ourselves within relationships. Our boundaries can be tight or loose or healthy. Our boundaries can vary depending on who we are with and what culture we live in.

Tight

Avoids close relationships, unlikely to ask for help, protective of personal information, detached, avoids other through fear of possible rejection.

Loose

Overshares personal information with others, difficulty saying no to the requests of others, overinvolved with others problems, dependent on the opinions of others, accepting of mistreatment, fear of rejection if don't comply.

Healthy

Values others opinions, doesn't compromise needs for others, shares personal information appropriately, knows personal needs and can communicate them, can say no and accept when others say no.

	Tight	Loose	Healthy
Family			
Partner			
Friends			
Work Colleagues			
Acquaintances			
Strangers			

- Adapted from Therapistaid.com

⁵ Extracts from www.skillsyouneed.com

Signs of Healthy Boundaries

- Saying "no" without guilt
- Asking for what you want or need
- Taking care of yourself
- Saying "yes" because you want to, not out of obligation or to please others
- Behaving according to your own values and beliefs
- Feeling safe to express difficult emotions and have disagreements
- Feeling supported to pursue your own goals
- Being treated as an equal
- Taking responsibility for your own happiness and
- Not feeling responsible for someone else's happiness
- Being in tune with your own feelings
- Knowing who you are, what you believe, what you like

Pick one sign of healthy boundaries to work towards...

Healthier Boundaries

A person with healthy boundaries can say 'no' to others when they want to but they are also comfortable opening themselves up to relationships with others.

Some helpful Tips...

Know your limits - the previous exercise will help you identify where your limits lie with different groups of people. Your boundary limits are unique to you. Knowing them before you enter a situation will help you to prevent anything which you're not comfortable with.

Know your values- the values you identified in week 1 will help you to prioritise these over others demands asked of you. Your values are the things that are most important to you and these shape your boundaries.

Listen to your Emotions-if you experience feelings of discomfort or resentment, these can be signs that your boundaries are being pushed beyond healthy limits for you.

Self-Respect-reflect on whether you give more respect to the needs of others than you do to your own needs. There are times when it is important to balance your own needs with those of others.

Flexibility-try to balance the amount of giving and receiving. Some days you may give more than you receive and vice versa. Make sure your relationships are two way rather than one way.



When asserting your needs and wants express them clearly with language such as:

"I hear what you are saying but I would prefer to..."

"Can we compromise?"

"I'm not available at that time but I can meet you another time"

"I would like to see you but I need to rest today"

"I'm sorry I can't do that for you right now"

"Can we find a solution that works for both of us?"

"I would appreciate it if..."

"That doesn't work for me, how about this?"

Opportunities to Practice

Pause for thought: Poem

Remember what is most important

by Vickie Worsham

It's not having everything go right

It's facing whatever goes wrong

It's not being without fear

**It's having the determination to go
on in spite of it**

Remember that every day ends

and brings a new tomorrow

Love what you do

do the best you can

and always Remember

how much you are loved.

Take Away Tips and Video Links.....

Assertiveness take-away tips

Using Confident Body Language

Face the other person, make eye contact and use a calm steady tone of voice.

Be Respectful

Avoid yelling, using put downs or giving the silent treatment. Say “no” respectfully and clearly and fairly. Your message will be better received if you are respectful.

Compromise

It is possible to compromise sometimes whilst still respecting your own boundaries. This is a good way to soften the “no” whilst respecting the other person. Listen to the needs of the other person.

Plan Ahead

Think about what you want to say and how you want to say it before entering a difficult discussion.

(Source- Therapist Aid)

Video Clips from the course



Amy Cuddy: Psychologist, Researcher and Speaker.

‘Your body language may shape who you are’

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-_Mh1QhMc



‘8 Intelligences - Theory of Multiple Intelligences Explained - Dr. Howard Gardner’.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2EdujrM0vA>

‘How to be a friend to yourself’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFUxiljp-Nk>



‘Communication Styles- Assertive Passive Aggressive’



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMc8AP9KhEM>

Fogging

<https://www.sophia.org/tutorials/assertive-communication--3>

Broken record technique

<https://youtu.be/TGVIDKU5IkY>

Recommended Reading

Self Esteem

Overcoming Low Self Esteem, 2nd Edition: A self help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques. By Dr Melanie Fennell. Robinson 2016

Six Pillars of Self-Esteem. By Nathaniel Branden. Random House 1995

Self-Awareness: Getting to know the real you. By Janelle Conena. 2016

The Self-Acceptance Project: How to be kind and compassionate towards yourself in any situation. By Tami Simon. 2016. Sounds True

Self-Acceptance. By Dr Harry Barry. 2019. Orion Spring.

Assertiveness

Assertiveness step by step. By Dr Windy Dryden and Daniel Constantinou. Sheldon Press 2004

The Assertiveness Workbook: How to express your ideas and stand up for yourself at work and in relationships. By Randy Paterson. New Harbinger

Assertiveness Workbook: A practical guide to developing confidence and greater self-esteem (Teach Yourself: Relationships & Self-Help) 2013. By Dena Michelli

Grow your confidence, assertiveness and self-esteem by Michelle Gates. 2017 Audiobook.

Support Organisations

If you'd like to explore your self-esteem with someone on a one-to-one basis there are many organisations who can help.

Covering Staffordshire and Shropshire:

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

www.bacp.co.uk

Mid Staffs Mind

www.mind.org.uk 01543 496876

Telford Mind

www.telford-mind.co.uk 07434 869248

Staffordshire NHS Wellbeing Service (IAPT)

www.staffsandstokewellbeing.nhs.uk 0300 303 0923

Shropshire NHS Wellbeing Service (IAPT)

www.shropshireiapt.mpft.nhs.uk 0300 123 6020

www.mpft.nhs.uk **Self-help guides**