

Healthy Minds Lincolnshire

Exploring Self-Esteem

An information and education pack for young people

What is self-esteem?

Self esteem is how we see ourselves and the value we place on our abilities. When we have good self esteem we feel happy and have confidence and belief in ourselves. But when we have low self esteem we may feel sad or unhappy about ourselves. Somebody with low self-esteem tends to forget about their strengths and the things that they are good at and focus on mistakes that they have made.



It can be difficult for somebody with low self-esteem to recognise what they are good at and identify what they like about themselves.

Do you experience any of the following?	Please tick
I often think negative things about myself	
I compare myself to others	
I often blame myself for things	
I find it difficult to make decisions	
I take things very personally even if they are not intended that way	
I find it difficult to accept compliments or praise from others	
I am very critical of myself or things I do	
I find it difficult to see the positives or good in myself or things I do	
I put others and/or their feelings before my own	
I don't like to try new things, or join in certain activities in case I get it wrong or don't perform well	

If you ticked any of the above boxes then this could be a sign that you need to work on improving your self-esteem.

What causes low self-esteem?

There are lots of things that can cause low self-esteem and impact how we feel about ourselves, such as:

- Stressful life events
- Comparing yourself to others
- How others respond to you, e.g. they may make hurtful comments about the way you look or act
- Being bullied or teased
- Family break ups
- Arguing with friends
- Physical health problems
- Concerns about our body image or how we look
- Not being listened to



Social media can also have an impact on our self-esteem. We can compare ourselves to others in appearance and lifestyle and often believe what is portrayed as reality when often it can be far from it. Take some time to think about how you use social media and whether you feel it effects how you feel about yourself.

When we have negative or hurtful experiences, the thoughts and feelings can tend to stick. These experiences can then become beliefs (or what we call 'core beliefs') that we have about ourselves. These beliefs might include statements such as 'I'm stupid', 'I'm ugly', 'I'm not good enough'.

What we tell ourselves is important and will impact the way we feel and act.

What are some of the beliefs that you hold about yourself ? Write them here...

Here are some examples if you are finding this difficult:

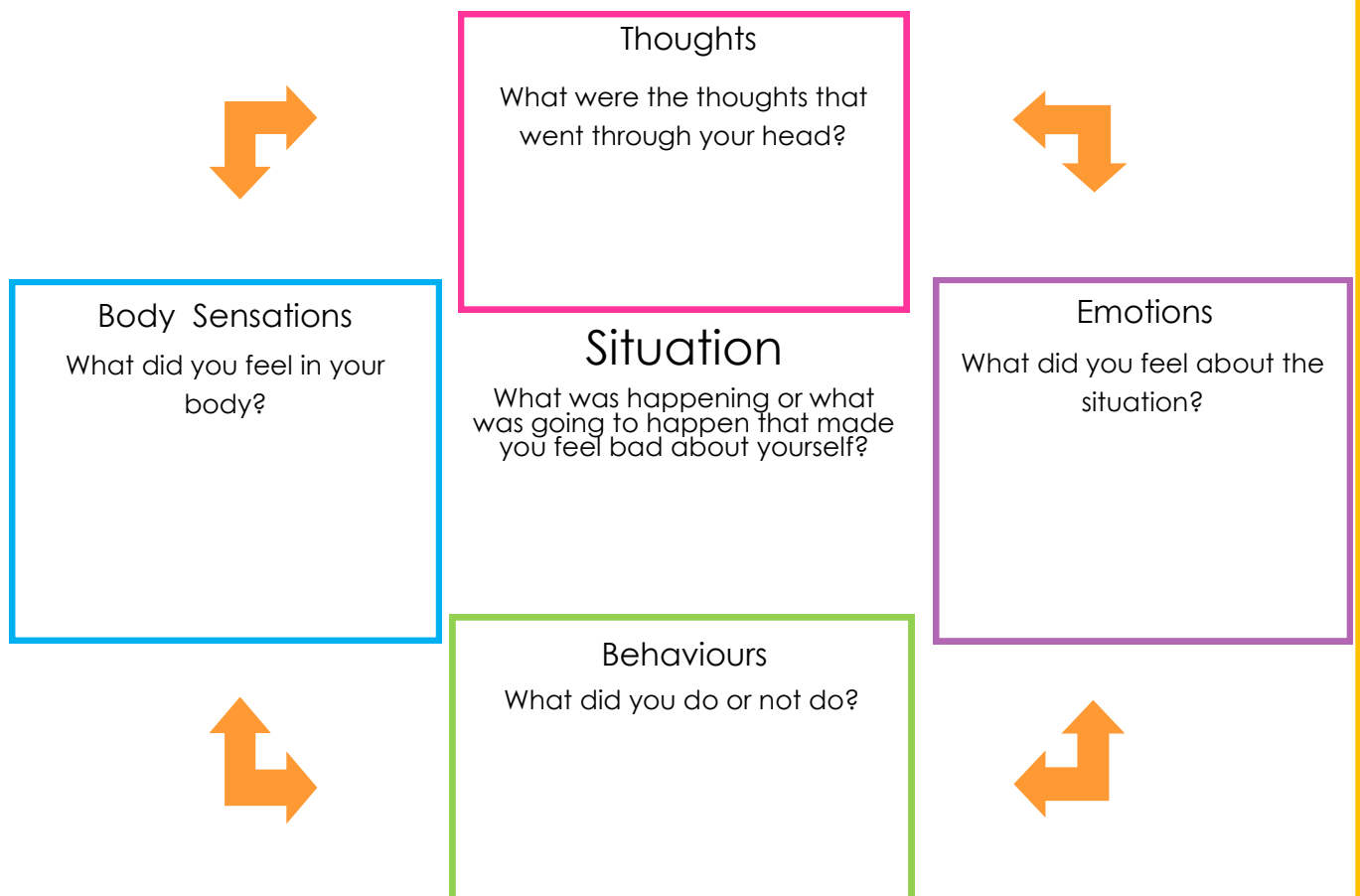
Nobody likes me	I can't do it	I am going to fail	I'm not good enough
I'm stupid	I'm ugly	I am unlovable	I always get it wrong

The 5 Areas

Our beliefs can become stronger over time. Through exploring situations that trigger our thoughts, feelings, behaviour and physical sensations we can explore what keeps our core beliefs going.



Now think about a situation that reinforces one of your core beliefs and fill in your own 5 area model below. You can do this as many times as you like using different situations...



So what do I do about it?

Without realising we are doing it, we can keep giving ourselves unhelpful messages that make us feel bad about ourselves and keep our low self-esteem going.

For example, avoiding situations where we think we will make ourselves look stupid might make us feel better straight away but it actually keeps the negative core beliefs going longer term as we never learn to challenge the belief.

Now you have explored one or more situations that make you feel bad about yourself, take a closer look at the thoughts and behaviours you have noted.

Do any of these seem unhelpful?



Are any of your thoughts negative? If so, try and challenge these thoughts - can you come up with some different thoughts that are more positive or more realistic for the situation? If so, make a note of them.



Do you think any of your behaviours are keeping the negative core beliefs going?

Are any them 'avoiding' behaviours? If so, think about what you could do differently next time. E.g. try deep breathing or 'feel the fear and do it anyway.'



Wonderful you!

It is important that you start to recognise what is good about being you! Use the ideas below as the start of a daily journal for yourself.

If you are finding this difficult then you can ask somebody who you trust to help you or think about seeing yourself through their eyes.

Five things I am thankful for...

Two compliments
to myself...



One amazing thing that happened today...

Kintsugi

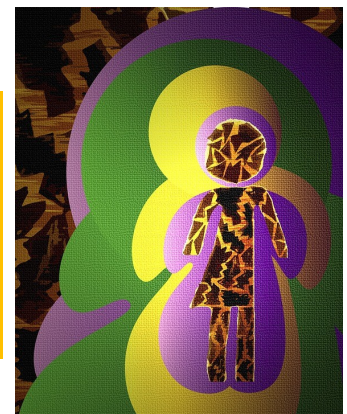
A teaching from Japan:

The Japanese use a technique called 'Kintsugi'. This refers to putting broken pottery pieces back together with gold in order to highlight the uniqueness of each break.

This art form is used to symbolise the embracing of flaws and imperfections to make an even stronger and more beautiful piece of art, just as those who have faced difficult times can heal and create a more unique, resilient and beautiful version of themselves, imperfections and all!

Think about the gold that would adorn the cracks in your life. Consider what have you learnt about yourself? What qualities you have gained a result of having struggles?

Enjoy creative activities? Try representing the principle of Kintsugi in a picture, painting or a paper mosaic.



Other helpful tips:

- ◆ Notice how you feel after spending time with others (physically or online). Spend more time with people that make you feel good and less time with people who don't boost you.
- ◆ Get active. Move your body in ways that you enjoy. Whether it be walking, yoga, team sports or running, exercise release those feel good hormones that lead to long term mental benefits as well as physical.



- ◆ Talk. Tell somebody about how you are feeling. Talking to the right person can be the most helpful thing you can do to help yourself. This can be anybody that you trust or it could be a professional, such as a GP, teacher or somebody from one of the services listed on the last page.

More Strategies

The Healthy Minds practitioner you or your parent/carer have spoken to may have sent some more specific strategies that can help you to manage low self-esteem. Start using these now. Ask someone to help you if you need to. And remember, it is ok to have set backs and forget to use strategies at times. Be kind to yourself and keep going!

Don't forget to check out our website, for lots of other useful information; such as our relaxation videos and our useful apps booklet!

<https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people>



Useful Websites & Numbers

Websites:

- **Dove Self-Esteem Project**—<https://www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project.html>
- **Get self-help**—www.getselfhelp.co.uk
- **Young Minds**—www.youngminds.org.uk
- **KOOTH** - www.kooth.com
- **LCC Emotional Wellbeing Pathway**—<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/emotionalwellbeing>
- **Mood Juice**—<http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/>

Numbers:

- **Here4You Advice Line:** 0800 234 63 42
(Healthy Minds & CAMHS)
- **ChildLine:** 0800 1111
- **Samaritans:** 116 123
- **Young Minds Crisis Messenger (Shout);** SHOUT to 85258



shout

for support in a crisis

CRISIS TEXT LINE