

## Healthy Self Esteem

### What is Self-Esteem?

As human beings, we tend to place a value or a measure of worth to ourselves or aspects of ourselves. So, self-esteem usually refers to how we view and think about ourselves and the value that we place on ourselves as a person.

Many people struggle with low self-esteem, so it is important to understand what healthy self-esteem looks like. If you are struggling with low self-esteem, this information sheet may give you an idea of what to aim for. If you have already been working to improve your self-esteem, this will help you to summarise your progress, in conjunction with the Healthy Self-Esteem worksheet.

### Healthy Self-Esteem

Healthy self-esteem is about thinking about ourselves and our worth in a BALANCED way. It is absolutely okay and appropriate that we recognise our weaknesses. What we need to do is accept that we all have weaknesses and make a decision about whether or not we want to improve on them. We also need to recognise, acknowledge, and celebrate our strengths and successes. Also, don't forget any skills

and abilities that might be neutral. Remember, it's all about being balanced!

### Coping with At-Risk Situations

Having healthy self-esteem doesn't mean that you will never encounter an at-risk situation again, that is, a situation where you might be reminded of that old negative view of yourself. It also doesn't mean that you will never again think of yourself in a negative light.

If you have done some work on your self-esteem, then the situations that are risky for you will be less frequent than before, as the threshold for activating a negative view of yourself will now be higher. That means it will take a lot more to 'set off' your low self-esteem than before.

Everyone might think of themselves in a negative way or get down on themselves at times. The important thing to remember is not to do it too often. So even after improving your self-esteem, you will still encounter at-risk situations in which the rules and assumptions you have for living are broken or threatened to be broken. But you can handle them differently, cope differently, respond differently.

*Creating*  
**LIFE**  
**BALANCE**

Remembers that the effect of your past experiences on how you see yourself today can be worn down by practicing new ways of thinking & behaving day-to-day.

### A Model of Healthy Self-Esteem

Use thought diaries to develop realistic expectations of yourself and the situation  
Develop more balanced self-evaluations, using thought diaries & listing positive qualities

Approach challenges with an open mind

Stop avoidance, escaping & safety behaviours

Treat yourself well

Engage in life

No withdrawal, isolation or self-neglect

Adjust negative core beliefs by looking at the evidence, developing new more balanced core beliefs, and then behaving in ways that support this new core belief.

Adjust unhelpful rules & assumptions, by questioning their helpfulness, looking at the pros and cons of these rules, and devising new helpful rules & assumptions, and putting them into practice.

Change unhelpful behaviours: Put your new beliefs, rules and assumptions into practice

Possible consequences: Opportunities for new experiences and new learning

The possibility of adjustments or more flexibility in your rules, assumptions and core beliefs.

