



Community Coming Together (CCT)

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

This month's theme: *Self-esteem*

SELF-ESTEEM AT A GLANCE

By Maya Lang



Self-esteem is about accepting yourself and being comfortable with your personal strengths and weakness.

There is a connection between low self-esteem and substance abuse, as someone who struggles with their self-opinion may turn to drugs and alcohol in an attempt to boost their confidence temporarily. Mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety are also significantly impacted by low self-esteem. It is important to find and nurture our strengths and understand and accept our weaknesses.

Here are some tips to boost your self-esteem:

* Stop comparing yourself to others.

YOU ARE UNIQUE!

* Try to turn negative thoughts and comments about yourself into

POSITIVE ones.

* Surround yourself with **POSITIVE**

people.

* Get involved in activities that **INSPIRE** you.

* Solve problems, don't avoid them. This builds **RESILIENCY**.

* Concentrate on the things that you like about yourself.

* Accept **COMPLIMENTS**.

* Take **ACTION**. You will not develop high self-esteem if you sit on the sidelines and avoid challenges. When you take action - regardless of the result, you will feel better about yourself.

As your self-esteem grows the '**REAL YOU**' will emerge. Building self-esteem during your teenage years is vital in shaping the adult you will become. Build a strong foundation now for the person you want to be.

The ABC's of Self-esteem

A - is for **Acceptance** of your child as he is, good or bad, successful or unsuccessful, an "A" or "C" student. An individual's worth is in being a person and cannot be measured by what he/she can or cannot do.

B - is for **Building on** your child's **strengths**. It's okay if your child changes his mind and starts over with something new, but by pointing out your child's traits that are most appreciated and by observing your child's real skills, positive feelings can be built.

C - is for sincere **Compliments** which provide positive feedback, recognizing your child's strengths and demonstrating love and acceptance, for these will help your child to build the ability to assess his own strengths and weaknesses.

D - is for **Decisions** -- Considering your child's age and level of maturity, practice in making decisions helps your child learn good judgment.

E - is for your **Expectations** which must be reasonable so that your child can achieve success.

F - is for **Forgiving** mistakes, especially your own. Let your child see that you too make mistakes and can learn from them.

G - is for **Goals**. Help your child to set goals, advising him on how to meet them, and rewarding and praising him for doing so.

H - is for **Home**, where warmth and empathy foster positive feelings of personal worth and self-acceptance; and for **Humor**, which helps to keep things in perspective.

I - is for your child's **Interests** and activities. Show him that what he does is important to you by attending games, school programs, recitals and ceremonies.

J - is for meaningful, "do-able" **Jobs** for which your child is accountable. Praise him when he carries them out, for this makes your child feel useful and valued.

K - is for **Keeping your word**. Make sure your child can trust you to follow through.

L - is for treating your child **Lovingly**, with respect and courtesy, for in this way your child learns that he is important and worthwhile.

M - is for providing a role **Model**. Let your child know that you feel good about yourself.

N - is for **Nurturing** your child's trust. It begins with parents, widens to playmates, and later extends to friends at school. As these stages are established in childhood, he will then begin to transfer the same feeling toward himself.

O - is for **Other people** with different backgrounds and norms. Help your child to develop tolerance and to look for strengths in others.

P - is for **Praise**, which should be frequent and sincere.

Q - is for **Questions**, which along with your child's ideas, emotions and feelings should be taken seriously.

R - is for the **family Rules** and well defined limits that are fairly and consistently enforced. The purpose of discipline, in addition to giving your child a sense of security should be to teach your child to make good decisions.

S - is for **Stroking** and complimenting your child, for example: "You're neat. I'm glad you're mine."

T - is for **Time** spent working and playing together as a family. Sharing fun and learning activities makes your child feel accepted within your family.

U - is for **Using phrases to build self-esteem**, such as: "Thank you for helping," or "That was an excellent choice." Avoid messages that hurt self-esteem, for example: "I can't trust you with your bike, how will I trust you with the car?"

V - is for teaching your child **Values**: honesty, integrity, love of fellow man and religious beliefs.

W - is for the **Wisdom** you show in giving your child the gift of self-esteem, a foundation on which to build the rest of his life.

X - is for the **Extra love** that you demonstrate with a touch, a kiss or a hug.

Y - is for **Young**, because your child will only be young for a few short years.

Z - is for the **End of the alphabet**, but it is also for the beginning of better communication with your child, and the nurturing of self-esteem, the key to success in school and in life.