

Module - 3

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is your overall opinion of yourself — how you feel about your abilities and limitations. When you have healthy self-esteem, you feel good about yourself and see yourself as deserving the respect of others. When you have low self-esteem, you put little value on your opinions and ideas.

What Is Self-Esteem?

In psychology, the term self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall subjective sense of personal worth or value. In other words, self-esteem may be defined as how much you appreciate and like yourself regardless of the circumstances. Your self-esteem is defined by many factors including:

- Self-confidence
- Feeling of security
- Identity
- Sense of belonging
- Feeling of competence

Other terms that are often used interchangeably with self-esteem include self-worth, self-regard, and self-respect.

Self-esteem tends to be lowest in childhood and increases during adolescence, as well as adulthood, eventually reaching a fairly stable and enduring level. This makes self-esteem similar to the stability of personality traits over time.

Why Self-Esteem Is Important

Self-esteem impacts your decision-making process, your relationships, your emotional health, and your overall well-being. It also influences motivation, as people with a healthy, positive view of themselves understand their potential and may feel inspired to take on new challenges. People with healthy self-esteem:

- Have a firm understanding of their skills
- Are able to maintain healthy relationships with others because they have a healthy relationship with themselves
- Have realistic and appropriate expectations of themselves and their abilities
- Understand their needs and are able to express them

Factors That Affect Self-Esteem

There are many factors that can influence self-esteem. Your self-esteem may be impacted by:

- Age
- Disability
- Genetics
- Illness
- Physical abilities
- Socioeconomic status
- Thought patterns

Racism and discrimination have also been shown to have negative effects on self-esteem. Additionally, genetic factors that help shape a person's personality can play a role, but life experiences are thought to be the most important factor.

Healthy Self-Esteem

There are some simple ways to tell if you have healthy self-esteem. You probably have healthy self-esteem if you:

- Avoid dwelling on past negative experiences
- Believe you are equal to everyone else, no better and no worse
- Express your needs
- Feel confident
- Have a positive outlook on life
- Say no when you want to
- See your overall strengths and weaknesses and accept them

Having healthy self-esteem can help motivate you to reach your goals, because you are able to navigate life knowing that you are capable of accomplishing what you set your mind to. Additionally, when you have healthy self-esteem, you are able to set appropriate boundaries in relationships and maintain a healthy relationship with yourself and others.

Low Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem may manifest in a variety of ways. If you have low self-esteem:

- You may believe that others are better than you.
- You may find expressing your needs difficult.
- You may focus on your weaknesses.
- You may frequently experience fear, self-doubt, and worry.
- You may have a negative outlook on life and feel a lack of control.
- You may have an intense fear of failure.
- You may have trouble accepting positive feedback.
- You may have trouble saying no and setting boundaries.
- You may put other people's needs before your own.
- You may struggle with confidence.

Low self-esteem has the potential to lead to a variety of mental health disorders, including anxiety disorders and depressive disorders. You may also find it difficult to pursue your goals and maintain healthy relationships. Having low self-esteem can seriously impact your quality of life and increases your risk for experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Excessive Self-Esteem

Overly high self-esteem is often mislabelled as narcissism, however there are some distinct traits that differentiate these terms. Individuals with narcissistic traits may appear to have high self-esteem, but their self-esteem may be high or low and is unstable, constantly shifting depending on the given situation. Those with excessive self-esteem:

- May be preoccupied with being perfect
- May focus on always being right
- May believe they cannot fail
- May believe they are more skilled or better than others
- May express grandiose ideas
- May grossly overestimate their skills and abilities

When self-esteem is too high, it can result in relationship problems, difficulty with social situations, and an inability to accept criticism.

How to Improve Self-Esteem

Fortunately, there are steps that you can take to address problems with self-esteem. Some actions that you can take to help improve your self-esteem include:

- Become more aware of negative thoughts. Learn to identify the distorted thoughts that are impacting your self-worth.
- Challenge negative thinking patterns. When you find yourself engaging in negative thinking, try countering those thoughts with more realistic and/or positive ones.
- Use positive self-talk. Practice reciting positive affirmations to yourself.
- Practice self-compassion. Practice forgiving yourself for past mistakes and move forward by accepting all parts of yourself.

Low self-esteem can contribute to or be a symptom of mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression. Consider speaking with a doctor or therapist about available treatment options, which may include psychotherapy (in-person or online), medications, or a combination of both. Advantages or Benefits of Self-Esteem

- Being Authentically Yourself
 - Having a Sense of Purpose
 - Clarity in Decision Making
 - Being Realistic
 - Understanding Your Value
 - Having Good Communication Skills
 - Having the Drive to Succeed
 - The Ability to Form Good, Healthy Relationships
 - Being Ready and Willing to Help Others
 - Embracing New Challenges
 - Being Unafraid of Uncertainty or the Unknown
 - Resilience
 - Acceptance
 - Having High Motivation
 - Good Mental Health
 - Good Physical Health
 - The Ability to Live Life Fully
- How to Boost Self-Esteem
- Mentally check in with yourself – based on this article, are there any of the 17 areas you think you fall short in? Once identified look at ways to tackle these areas

- Work your way up the emotional scale and stay there – in simple terms, be positive and optimistic as often as you can (it will become second nature eventually)
- Look around you – take stock of what you DO have, not what you DON'T – appreciate what you have! Try a writing a gratitude journal
- Set goals – personal and professional
- Learn something new – it stimulates the grey matter and gives you a chance to be 'good' at more things
- Help someone
- Push your comfort zone (challenge yourself)
- Do something creative
- Make a list of your accomplishments
- Set some personal boundaries and maybe remove negative people from your life
- Stop worrying what anybody else thinks!
- Read inspirational and motivational books and spend as much time as you can with positive and uplifting people
- Meditate, do yoga or tai chi, practice mindfulness. Allow yourself to relax and your mind to calm
- Visualise yourself and your life as you really want it to be

The Do's and Don'ts of Boosting Your Self-Esteem

The Do's of Boosting Your Self-Esteem

- Identify and Challenge Your Negative Beliefs
- Identify the Positive About Yourself
- Build Positive Relationships—and Avoid Negative Ones
- Give Yourself a Break
- Become More Assertive and Learn to Say No
- Improve Your Physical Health
- Take On Challenges

Don'ts of Boosting Your Self-Esteem

- DON'T be mean to yourself
- DON'T listen to others if they don't believe in you
- DON'T expect to be successful your first time
- DON'T be afraid to seek help
- Compare Yourself to Others

- Let Imperfection Ruin Your Day
- Dwell on Failure
- Devalue Your Self-Esteem
- Try to Please Others
- Shy Away from Risks
- Be Lazy
- Gossip

Symptoms of Low Self Esteem

- Poor Confidence
- Lack of Control
- Negative Social Comparison
- Problems Asking for What You Need
- Worry and Self-Doubt
- Trouble Accepting Positive Feedback
- Negative Self-Talk
- Fear of Failure
- Poor Outlook
- Lack of Boundaries
- Trying to Please Others

Self-esteem refers to the positive (high self-esteem) or negative (low self-esteem) feelings that we have about ourselves. We experience the positive feelings of high self-esteem when we believe that we are good and worthy and that others view us positively.

People with a positive self-esteem exhibit the following qualities –

- Confidence
- Problem-solving
- A friendly and cooperative nature
- No blaming others for their failures
- Being trustworthy and trusting others too
- Know and control the direction of their life
- The ability to say 'no' to something they don't like
- An awareness of strengths and areas of improvement

- Understanding when others make mistakes and accepting
- Knowing personal boundaries and respecting those of others
- Acknowledging a mistake and learning how not to repeat them

Defining the interpersonal relationship

Interpersonal relationships are the strong connections we feel with those closest to us. This could be:

- friends
- colleagues
- family members
- romantic partners

They're built on mutual respect, trust, and loyalty and they can provide us with support, care, and even love.
Comparing Behaviours

Difference between aggressive, submissive and assertive behaviour

Attribute	Aggressive	Submissive	Assertive
Respect for others	Low	High	High
Respect for self	High (usually)	Low	High
Key actions	Attack others Me first Hide weaknesses Exaggerate strengths Do not concede	Submit to others Me last Visible weaknesses Downplay strengths Always concede	Respect others Me and you equal Open about weaknesses and strengths Fair exchange
Perceived benefits	Get what I want Won't get harmed Will be respected	Won't get harmed Low personal risk Will be liked	Get much of what I want Will be respected Fair relationships
Likely costs	Poor relationships Subtle revenge Lost communication	Do not get what I want Low social status People take advantage	Do not get everything I want Confusion/envy of others

1 Submissive

I'm sure you are familiar with "fight or flight" responses. These are in-built programmes to help you survive and deal with different situations. We all use them. Submissive behaviour is the flight response. It is natural behaviour, and depending on your upbringing, you may develop it throughout your life. People who are submissive tend to:

- Avoid stating their needs and feelings;
- Communicate their needs and feelings in an apologetic way; and
- Give others rights that they don't claim for themselves

Submissive behaviour sounds like this:

"I'm really sorry. I just don't have the time to go through those reports with you now. I've got to get all these accounts finished before lunch time. My boss is a real Self Esteem BCA I Sem Rajshekhar Shindhe Page 8 pain, asking me to do this today. I'd really like to help you. I'll look at it later if that's okay?"

2 Aggressive

Aggressive behaviour is the fight response. Again, this is an in-built programme that can be developed throughout your life. If you learn that you can achieve things by using aggressive behaviour, you continue to develop it. Naturally, this is to the detriment of our relationships with other people.

People who are aggressive tend to:

- Encourage others to do things by flattery or manipulation;
- Ignore the needs and feelings of others, either intentionally or by default; and
- Take rights for themselves that they don't give to others.

Aggressive behaviour sounds like this:

"Do you think I've nothing better to do than check those reports?"

3 Assertive

This is logical, thinking behaviour. It is not driven by your emotions. And although it may be natural for a few people, it tends to be learned behaviour. It is about:

- Being clear and direct in what you say;
- Stating your needs and feelings in a straightforward way; and
- Standing up for your rights without violating the rights of others.

Assertive behaviour sounds like this:

"I'm unable to help you with those reports this morning. I am doing accounts at the moment, and I'll be pleased to help you this afternoon. What time suits you?"

What's best?

None of this is necessarily good or bad, but if you want to be better at managing difficult people, you need to ensure that:

- You don't use submissive or aggressive behaviour.
- You recognise submissive or aggressive behaviour in others.
- You learn and use assertive techniques with difficult people

Assertiveness is a very positive response in any interaction. It makes it clear to the other person what you are unhappy about and allows you to calmly state your case without violating their rights.

Are You Aggressive, Submissive Or Assertive?

Stating your needs and requirements

We all know what an aggressive character does in this scenario. They demand - and put themselves first. This obviously gets some results some of the time, but more than likely it will just alienate people and they won't particularly like you (and what use is that in the long term, at work?). However it must seem effective to the aggressive person - we've all known people who take this tactic a bit too far. The submissive person doesn't actually state their needs, most of the time. They rely on others for cues on how they should proceed, and consider their own needs to play second-fiddle to theirs, even if the person is below them in rank or is a subordinate or in an assistive role at work. If you find yourself lapsing into a submissive role, then remember that your own needs count and sometimes you have to ask that they be met - not in an aggressive way, but with assertiveness - which brings us on to how the assertive person acts. An assertive personality will state their needs in a non-demanding way that shows that they have a sense of self-respect, but not a sense of being better than anyone else. It's a hard balance to find, but this is the stance you should strive for when asking for what you want.

Respecting the opinions of others

A submissive person doesn't respect the opinions of others - they acquire them as their own. This isn't disrespect, but it's sometimes not a positive thing. For example, you couldn't have a brainstorm or an ideas session with a very submissive character as they will automatically agree with others rather than put their own views forward. Of course, the aggressive personality is the opposite - ignoring the opinions of others and bulldozing theirs through without much consideration. Maybe they are just a bad listener, or maybe they're not used to working in a team - but it's not a good style at work.

The assertive person both respects, listens to and acts on the opinions of others, while maintaining their own. Like other assertive stances described here, it's actually a lot harder than it sounds, especially under stress. However, bearing these three common work themes in mind - you'll be able to recognise when you're being assertive, aggressive, or submissive - and help to train yourself otherwise accordingly.

Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior can cause physical or emotional harm to others. It may range from verbal abuse to physical abuse. It can also involve harming personal property. Aggressive behavior violates social boundaries.

Submissive Behavior

When animals live in packs, one animal is usually the dominant leader, while the others fall into more submissive roles. To be submissive is to obey or yield to someone else.

submissive (or passive) behavior means shying away from saying what you really mean and not seeking to achieve your needs, particularly when someone else has conflicting needs. A submissive person is a shrinking violet, avoiding upsetting others either because they fear them or they fear to hurt their feelings.

Assertive Behaviour

Being assertive means communicating with others in a direct and honest manner without intentionally hurting anyone's feelings. Direct communication can reduce conflict, build self-confidence and enhance personal and work relationships. Assertiveness is a skill that anyone can learn. Being assertive means having the ability to express your needs and feelings clearly and firmly without disrespecting or undermining others.

Lateral Thinking

The solving of problems by an indirect and creative approach, typically through viewing the problem in a new and unusual light.

It essentially means being able to think creatively or "outside the box" in order to solve a problem.

Usually, logical thinking is used to solve problems in a direct, straightforward way (also known as vertical thinking). Lateral thinking however, looks at things from a sideways perspective (also known as horizontal thinking), in order to find answers that aren't immediately apparent