

Let's Focus on Self-esteem

GROUP LEADER PREPARATION FOR SESSION 2

Session

2



Remember to spend some time individually with each of the participants, and check that they understand the concepts presented throughout the program.

▼ Objectives

The primary aim of this session is to focus on self-esteem. This session involves enhancing participants self-esteem through recognition of their strengths, identifying self-esteem 'assassins', and developing awareness of how participants can boost the self-esteem of others.

▼ Agenda

- 1 Warm-up Activity: *A Gift for Me!*
- 2 Review Session 1 and Home Activity
- 3 Introduction to Self-esteem
- 4 Activity One: *Self-esteem Assassins*
- 5 Activity Two: *A Time to Talk Big* — Parts A & B
- 6 Activity Three: *Safety Cues*
- 7 Let's Reflect on Session 2: Home Activity 2
- 8 Let's Build on What We Learn
- 9 Group Closure

▼ Materials

- *FRIENDS for Youth Workbook* (one for each participant)
- Whiteboard markers or chalk

▼ Major Learnings

The major learnings for participants in this session are to recognise the benefits of having a high self-esteem, to understand how they can build their own self-esteem, and to understand the social constraints that often interfere with people accepting compliments.

GROUP LEADER GUIDELINES FOR SESSION 2

1 Warm-up Activity

5–10 MINUTES

(See page 6 of participants' workbooks)

A GIFT FOR ME!

AIM

This activity aims to help participants explore images that represent the best things about themselves.

Encourage participants to find a space on the floor where they are free to lie down, relax, and close their eyes (alternatively participants may remain in a comfortable position in their seats with their eyes closed). The Group Leader should read the following script aloud, and slowly, to the participants:

Imagine that you are very, very wealthy. In fact, you are well on the way to being the wealthiest person in the world! You are so rich that you could buy absolutely anything that you've ever dreamed of. Today, you are going to buy a very special gift for yourself. You step out of the door with your pockets full of thousand dollar bills! You also carry your limitless gold-plated credit card in case your gift cannot be bought with cash. The gift you buy is going to be the best of the best. It will be of the finest quality. Everything about the gift will be precious. After arriving by private jet in the city of your choice, you are chauffeur-driven to the world's finest store. As you are travelling, you sip on your favourite drink and you think about the gift that you are going to buy. The limousine pulls up outside your store. The door-man opens the door for you and greets you warmly. You go inside. What sort of shop is it? What do you see on each of the shelves? As you are going to be buying yourself a very expensive gift, check that you are feeling good about buying something special for yourself. You deserve it! You've found the gift that you want. It's the best of the best. What is it? Slowly open your eyes, but hold on to the image of your gift. Now draw it!

The Group Leader should give participants a few minutes to complete their drawings on page 6 of their workbook. Ask participants to form pairs with the person sitting next to them. Encourage participants to show their drawings to their partner, and to talk about why it is special, and why they deserve it.

2 Review Session 1 and Home Activity

5 MINUTES

The Group Leader should review Session 1 by encouraging participants to remember what was covered last week. The Group Leader should praise and shape participants' responses to reflect the major learnings from the previous session: *appreciating differences in others* and *team building*. The Group Leader should also provide positive reinforcement to those participants who have bought their completed *Let's Build on What We Learn* activity to the session. Ask if any participants would like to share their ideas about what they could do to prevent themselves from making judgements or assumptions about other people who think, act, look, and feel differently. As this information can be quite personal, the Group Leader should respect the choice of participants who do not feel comfortable to share their responses. If no one volunteers to share, the Group Leader may like to provide an example of their own, and may like to walk around and talk to participants individually about their ideas.

3 Introduction to Self-esteem

5–10 MINUTES

(See page 7 of participants' workbooks)

The Group Leader should encourage participants to write in their workbooks on page 7 what they think of when they hear the words self-esteem? What does self-esteem mean for them? Why is self-esteem so important? Encourage participants to share their ideas with the group. Some points to highlight are included below.

IDEAS

- Self-esteem is the belief you place in your worth as an individual.
- Self-esteem represents self-confidence and pride.
- High self-esteem helps you to cope with whatever comes your way, for example if someone teases you about your braces. If you have high self-esteem and feel good about yourself, that person's comments aren't going to bother or upset you much. However if your self-esteem is a bit low, you might not want to ever show your teeth.

- High self-esteem gives you the ability to face what ever happens in your life with confidence.
- High self-esteem gives you confidence and the motivation to try new things. A person with high self-esteem is usually willing to have a go at something new. People with low self-esteem are sometimes afraid of failing and are reluctant to try new things.
- High self-esteem allows you to make good judgements and decisions. The older you get, the greater the number of choices you'll be faced with. Your parents may be wanting to you to do one thing, and your peers might want you to do something completely different. People with high self-esteem have confidence in making the right decision for *themselves*. They don't worry about what other people might think about them.

4 Activity One

5–10 MINUTES

SELF-ESTEEM ASSASSINS

AIM

This activity aims to develop participants' awareness of self-esteem 'assassins', and encourages them to let go of some of their own 'assassinating statements' in a way that is not harmful to other participants.

MATERIALS

- Whiteboard marker or chalk

The Group Leader should encourage participants to think about a time when they really wanted to share something special with others, but were afraid to do so. They may have wanted to share, for example, an idea, feeling, achievement, or something they had written, made, or done. The Group Leader should generate a class discussion about some of the things that prevented them from sharing, and write these ideas from the board. An example of how the Group Leader may introduce this activity is:

All of us have many ideas, feelings, and stories that we would like to share with the group. However, sometimes these special things are not shared. Instead they are 'assassinated' by other people's negative comments or gestures, or by our own fear of what others may say, think, or do. Let's think about some of the things that people say or do, or some of our own fears that have stopped us from sharing in the past.

IDEAS

- Lack of interest and/or eye-contact from others.
- Noises or grunts from others.
- Gestures like shaking heads or rolling eyes.
- Having others look at their watch while you are speaking.
- People who simply continue talking without stopping to listen.
- Comments such as: *As if*, or *That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard!*
- Disbelief statements such as: *Are you serious?* or *Are you crazy, man?*
- Fear of others laughing.
- Fear of others thinking your ideas or experiences are childish or silly.
- Fear that others will perceive you as not good enough.
- People saying: *We don't have time for that now.*
- Name calling.

After generating a list of ideas, the Group Leader should prompt participants to realise that everyone is guilty of self-esteem ‘assassination’. The Group Leader should normalise this by offering an example of when they themselves used a ‘assassinating’ statement or gesture. The Group Leader may then like to ask participants to think of a time when they have used one of these assassinating statements or gestures, and perhaps share some of these stories.

The Group Leader should then explain to participants that they are going to have an opportunity to let go of some of their own ‘assassinating statements’. Ask all participants to stand up. Explain to participants that when you say “GO”, they are to say or shout out as many of their own assassinating statements, or as many statements that were generated by the class discussion as they can. Participants are free to use as many statements, gestures, or sounds as they want to. They can shout to the air, the desk, the chair, the floor, or whatever feels comfortable for them. They are **not** permitted to direct their statements or gestures toward any other participant. The Group Leader should allow 1–2 minutes for this exercise.

Following this exercise, the Group Leader should discuss with participants how they felt when letting go of these assassinating statements? Encourage participants to consider how assassinating statements can sometimes serve them.

IDEAS

- To cover their own jealousy of another’s achievements e.g., *Who cares about tennis?, The colour of that dress/shirt doesn’t really suit you?*
- To put others down to make themselves feel better e.g., *Anyone who gets straight A’s on their report is a nerd.*
- To avoid having attention directed toward them or their behaviour e.g., *What about what you did at the party? You looked like an idiot!*
- To avoid saying something that you’d really like to e.g., *Gee, you’re an idiot, instead of I really like you.*

5 Activity Two

25 MINUTES

(See pages 7–9 of participants’ workbooks)

A TIME TO TALK BIG



Depending on the size of the group and the amount of time available, the Group Leader may like to select either Part A or Part B to complete during this session.

AIM

This activity aims to help participants to boost their own self-esteem.

PART A

The Group Leader should have participants form small groups of three to four members. The groups should preferably comprise participants who feel comfortable with each other. The Group Leader should encourage participants to spend a minute thinking about an achievement or accomplishment in their life — something they feel really proud of. This may be something that has occurred within the past week, within the past year, or when they were a child. Members are then required to take turns in “talking big” about their accomplishment. Each individual **must** talk for 3–4 minutes, and all group members **must** have a turn. The Group Leader should encourage participants to really boast about their success. Participants with low self-esteem may report that they have not had an achievement worthy of boasting about. If this occurs, the

Group Leader and the participant's friends should help the participant with questions such as *What about when you learned to ride your bike? Didn't you feel good about that achievement?*, etc.

PART B

Participants should remain in their small groups. The Group Leader should ask participants to turn to pages 7–9 of their workbook. Participants are required to think about each of the categories listed in their workbook, and to briefly write down something they have achieved within each of these categories that they are proud of. Members are then required to take turns in “talking big” about their proudest achievements within each category. Each individual **must** say something about each category, and all group members **must** have a turn. The Group Leader should emphasise that no accomplishment is too small. Even trying a new activity for the first time is an accomplishment to be proud of!

IDEAS

- Family — *I'm proud that I have always met my younger sister at the bus after school.*
- Sport — *I'm proud that I tried out for the school netball/football team.*
- Friendship — *I'm proud that I can keep a secret.*

6 Activity Three

10–15 MINUTES

(See page 14 of participants' workbooks)

SAFETY CUES

Safety cues are things we use (e.g., a lucky pen, or good-luck pants) or things we do (e.g., focus on something other than the situation we are in) to help us cope with difficult situations.

AIM

This activity aims to help participants learn about safety cues, and to help them become aware of the safety cues that they use. When we rely on safety cues, we do not give ourselves credit for personal achievements. When we do not recognise our own achievements, our self-esteem suffers as a result.

The Group Leader should have participants turn to page 9 of their workbook, and read through the safety cues activity. After reading through the example provided in the workbook, the Group Leader should check that each student fully understands what a safety cue is. As the concept of safety cues can be difficult for adolescents to understand, the Group Leader should draw on their own experience to provide additional examples of safety cues. Ask participants to individually complete the activity on page 10 of their workbook by thinking about their own safety cues, and by reflecting on the personal qualities which really do help them cope with difficult situations. The Group Leader should then generate a large group discussion by asking participants share some of their examples with the larger group.

The Group Leader should highlight to participants that when we attribute success in difficult situations to safety cues, we fail to recognise our own achievements and our personal qualities. Our self-esteem suffers as a result. In order to feel good about ourselves, it is important that we learn to attribute success to our own achievements and efforts, NOT to the presence of a safety cue!

7 Let's Reflect on Session 2

5–10 MINUTES

(See page 11 of participants' workbooks)

Session

2

AIM

The Group Leader should prompt participants to consider what the major learnings were from today's session.

The Group Leader should shape participants' responses to reflect the importance of building our self-esteem and acknowledging our strengths. The discussion may also focus on the social norms and taboos which may prevent people from feeling comfortable about sharing their positive qualities and strengths with others. For example:

It is important for us to receive recognition, praise and acknowledgement for the positive qualities we have, and the good things that we do. Exercises such as the ones we have covered today provide a great opportunity for sharing our strengths in a safe environment and receiving acknowledgement for them. Does anybody have any ideas about why we do not spontaneously share these things with other people? When someone offers us a compliment, why do we feel that we must dismiss it?

IDEAS

- Bragging about ourselves is not considered socially acceptable.
- Bragging is thought of as a sign of arrogance.
- Bragging is often used in the context of putting someone else down.
- People fear they may be perceived by others as too self-centered and therefore may be rejected by others.
- We reject compliments because we might be embarrassed, or because people may think we're 'stuck-up'.
- We reject compliments because we don't feel as though we deserve it.
- Sometimes we think that compliments are insincere.

What do you think we may lose from not sharing positive things about ourselves with others?

IDEAS

- We often fail to acknowledge our own good work.
- We lose an opportunity to boost our own self-esteem.
- We lose confidence in ourselves because we forget about the positive qualities we have.

Remember that no one can make you feel low unless you allow them to — no matter what they say or do. Spread more self-esteem boosters to others instead of self-esteem assassins. Learn to appreciate your strengths and appreciate compliments from other people gratefully.

The Group Leader should then give participants some individual time to reflect on the session and complete page 11 of their workbooks. As participants' learnings may be very personal, there is no need to discuss their responses with the larger group.

8 Let's Build on What We Learn

5 MINUTES

(See page 12 of participants' workbooks)

The Group Leader should explain again to participants the importance of building on what they have learned in the session. After all, life-skills cannot be learned in only 10 sessions. They must be practised until they can be easily incorporated into everyday life.