

Increasing Self-Esteem

This workshop will guide you through the topic of self-esteem and empowerment. It will include information and tips for maintaining and increasing your self-esteem.

“I learned from this workshop that there is more work I could be doing on how I see myself”
~Senior Participant



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Introduction

Self-esteem is one of the most important factors in maintaining good mental health. It is influenced by how we value our place in and contribution to society and the relationships we have with others. As we age, this may change and what we value about ourselves may also change. We must work to continue to value our contributions, lives and our bodies.

This workshop will give you some tips to increase or maintain good self-esteem.

Opening Discussion

Engage in discussion with your group by asking them the following question:

How has your self-esteem changed throughout your life?

Good Self-Esteem

DISCUSSION: What is good self-esteem?

Self-esteem is a term we use that reflects our opinion and worth of ourselves. It can change over time, because both internal and external factors can influence our self-esteem.

What does GOOD self-esteem look like?

- **Comfortable both giving and receiving appreciation**~ Good self-esteem allows us to accept our own strengths and recognize them in others.
- **Open to receiving feedback from others**~ Low self-esteem might cause us to avoid criticism, and deny mistakes.
- **Ability to be honest about shortcomings**~ We all have shortcomings. High self-esteem allows us to be able to acknowledge our strengths and shortcomings.
- **You feel loved, respected and listened to**~ Often outside influences can raise our self esteem. It is important that we feel loved.

There are several things that affect self-esteem. The internal factors refer to our own thinking patterns and what we tell ourselves over and over daily. External factors can include how we were raised and what is happening in our lives.

Internal

- Dwelling on criticism and mistakes
- Blaming yourself for things that happen that are not your fault
- Worrying about what others think about you
- Thinking you are not good enough

External

- Being bullied or criticized as a child or adult
- Being neglected or abused
- Major life changes
- Financial worries
- Appearance

Activity: Recognizing our Strengths

Take a moment to reflect on your strengths by answering the following questions:

1. Name 5 of your strengths (i.e. creativity)
2. Name 5 things you are proud of
3. Name 5 of your greatest achievements
4. Name 5 ways you can treat or reward yourself

Taking Care of Ourselves

DISCUSSION: How has low self esteem affected your relationships?

Often low self-esteem can negatively affect our lives. It can affect our body and how we feel. It can also affect our relationships with others in our lives:

- Trouble sleeping, or feeling very tired.
- Feeling dizzy or sweaty when you meet others
- More aware of your body's responses, such as blushing
- Overeating or not having an appetite
- You might try hard to be perfect
- Having difficulty making decisions and holding back from speaking out or sharing your opinion

Activity: How do You Take Care of Yourself?

Give everyone a few moments to fill in the activity below with ways in which they take care of themselves using the four areas within the circle. Let them share ideas with each other, in partners or as a group when completed.

Physical

How do you take care of physical yourself?

Mental

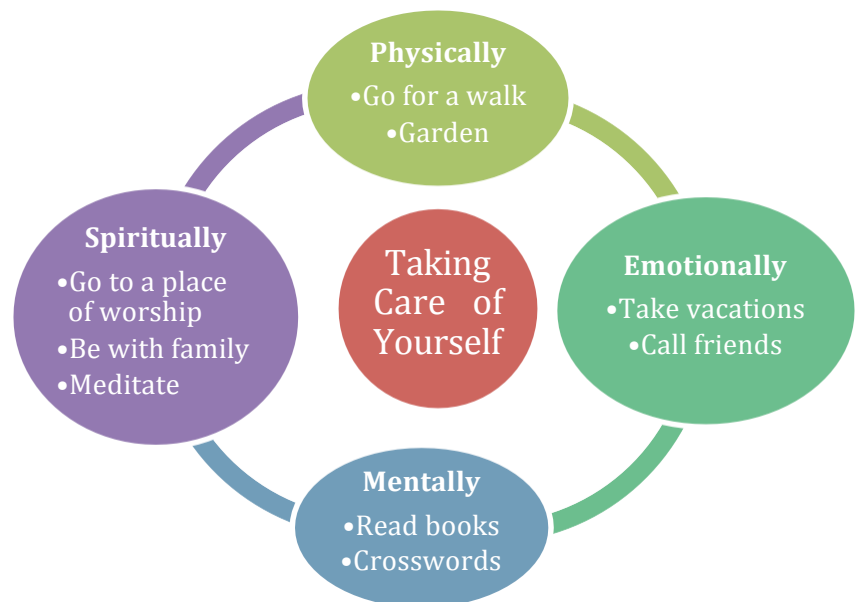
How do you exercise your mind?

Spirituality

How do you connect with your environment spiritually?

Emotional

How do you take care of your emotional health?



Where Can I Find Activities For Seniors?

Older Adult Centres or senior centres provide a diversity of activities and services for older adults. The Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario website provides access to a listings of the locations across the province.

**Older Adult Centres'
Association of Ontario**

1 866 835 7693
www.oacao.org

Tips to Increase Self-Esteem

We all talk to ourselves and sometimes we tend to say negative things that can further lower self-esteem.

Negative Self Talk

- I've never done this
- There is NO Way it will work
- No one bothers to communicate with me
- I'm alone and no one loves me

Positive Self Talk

- It's a new opportunity to learn something new
- I can try to make it work
- I'll see if I can open the channels of communication
- I am excited to find something I love

A general rule when trying to change negative thinking, is to be gentle with yourself, do not say things to yourself you would not say to another person. When you have a negative thought evaluate it rationally and respond with positive affirmations.

Positive Affirmations: These are positive phrases that you can repeat to yourself that describe how you want to be. Place them on cards or post them where they are visible to you every day.

- I feel the love of those who are not physically around me
- I love and approve of myself
- I forgive myself for mistakes I've made
- I am more than good enough

- I matter and what I have to offer this world also matters
- I take pleasure in my own solitude
- I fill this day with hope and face it with joy
- I adopt the mindset to praise myself

Who Do I Call if I Need Help?

ConnexOntario operates three helplines that provide health services information for people experiencing problems with gambling, drugs or alcohol and mental illness. Free and Confidential

Drug and Alcohol Helpline
1 800 565 8603

Mental Health Helpline
1 866 531 2600

Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline
1-888-230-3505