



Feeling Good About Yourself

About This Kit

How you evaluate your abilities, strengths, and weaknesses is called your self-estimate or self-esteem. Your self-esteem evolves and changes over time and is a learned behavior. Children develop their self-esteem through the praises and criticisms of parents, teachers, and others. Supportive, encouraging adults can foster high self-esteem in a child as the child acts out positive statements such as “You can do it” or “You are a good boy/girl.”

As an adult, you continue to evaluate yourself and develop your self-esteem. One of the primary ways you evaluate yourself is through your “self-talk” or the inner dialogues you continually have with yourself. Using positive “self-talk” or affirmations can help you feel empowered, improve your self-esteem, and help you feel more confident. Having negative thoughts about your appearance and your body can contribute to a poor self-image and low self-esteem, and sabotage your efforts to make changes in your health and lifestyle. In this kit you will:

- Step 1.** Practice positive “self-talk”
- Step 2.** Build a better body image
- Step 3.** Learn ways to feel more confident

Step 1

Practice Positive “Self-Talk”

You talk to yourself all the time, whether you are aware of it or not. What you say to yourself plays an important role in determining how you feel about yourself and how you act.

For example, if you tell yourself “I can’t possibly fit exercise into my schedule while I’m on vacation,” then the likelihood that you will be active is minimal. But if you say, “I really enjoy walking and I will find ways to be active while on vacation,” then you are empowering yourself to stay active. Your self-confidence will be high and you will feel good about yourself.

**Your Thoughts-----→ Your Feelings and Behaviors
(Self-Talk)**

<i>“I can’t possibly fit exercise into my schedule while I’m on vacation.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discouraged</i> • <i>Remain sedentary</i>
<i>“I really enjoy walking for sightseeing.” “I will find ways to be active while on vacation.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Enhanced self-esteem</i> • <i>Happy and confident</i> • <i>Daily walks for a week</i>

You have learned how your thoughts (your self-talk) can determine your feelings and behaviors. You can also match feelings and behaviors that have already occurred with self-talk to perpetuate the feelings and behaviors you desire in the future.

**Your Feelings and-----→ Your Thoughts-----→ Your Feelings and
Behaviors (Self-Talk) Behaviors**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Happy and confident</i> • <i>Daily walks for a week</i> 	<i>“I enjoy walking each day. Otherwise I wouldn’t be doing this.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Happy and confident</i> • <i>Daily walks</i>
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Here are some suggestions to help you make your self-talk more positive.

- *Be aware of your negative, self-defeating thoughts.* Reflect on your thoughts before, during, and after a difficult situation.
- *Analyze and challenge your thoughts.* Ask yourself if your thoughts are true and accurate. Are you thinking rationally or irrationally? For example, if you are tempted to overeat, ask yourself “Am I really hungry? Am I really going to feel better if I eat? Is something else bothering me?”

- *Substitute more positive, helpful self-statements.* For the example given above, say “I’m not really hungry. I can wait until dinner to eat. If I wait five minutes, the hunger will pass. Eating will not make me feel happy. I will take a short walk before dinner.”
- *Don’t create negative self-fulfilling prophecies.* Remember, you are likely to do what you think. You will take your own advice.

Practice Daily Affirmations

Affirmations are positive, motivating statements that you say to yourself regularly. For best results, say affirmations out loud to yourself at least five times while looking in the mirror. Repeat affirmations with real commitment. A good time to practice affirmations is while standing in front of the mirror after you brush your teeth in the morning or before going to bed.

Write your affirmation on an index card and carry them with you. Use “I am,” “I can,” or “I will” rather than “I am not” statements. After repeating the affirmation, use visualizations to create a picture in your mind of the way you want to be.

Here are some affirmations that may help you with your program. Write others that are likely to work for you.

Nutrition and Weight Management Affirmations

- I am enjoying the taste of healthy foods.
- I can find time to make healthy food choices.
- I will learn to prepare healthier foods.
- I can control the amount of food I eat.
- I am recording the foods I eat in my Food Diary.
- I will eat less than ___ grams of fat each day.
- I am pleased about the weight I have lost.
- I am confident I can keep the weight off.
- I am improving my health by eating healthier and managing my weight.
- I am feeling better about myself

Physical Activity and Exercise Affirmations

- I can be more active than I am now.
- I am enjoying being more active.
- I am healthier because I am active.
- I am feeling better because I am active.
- I will look better when I’m active.
- I am confident I can stay active.
- I am feeling more relaxed.
- I am feeling more energetic.
- I will always be an active person.

Stress Management Affirmations

- I can cope with _____.
- I can relax.
- I can control what I think.
- I can control how I feel.
- I can control my actions.
- I can make positive changes to my lifestyle.
- I can learn from a slip.
- I can get back on track quickly.
- I will try again.
- I can do it.

Your affirmations will change as you progress through the program. For example, if you are just getting started with exercise, “I will be healthier if I am active” may be an appropriate affirmation for you. After you have been exercising regularly for more than six months, “I am very confident that I can stay active” would better match where you are in the process of change.

Practice affirmation for at least one month and evaluate the results.

- Are affirmations helping you achieve your goals?
- Are affirmations helping you feel better about yourself?
- Are affirmations helping you follow your Heart Institute Prevention and Rehabilitation Centre (HIPRC) plans?

Step 2

Build a Better Body Image

Most people are constantly observing and evaluating themselves. They draw conclusions about who they are and attach labels to themselves. Often the labels are related to appearance and determine “body image.” Body image is the way you see yourself in your mind’s eye. What labels do you give yourself related to your appearance and your body?

If you find that you have a poor body image, you may need to work to develop more positive attitudes about the way you look. Your poor body image may be sabotaging your efforts to make positive changes to your lifestyle. For example, if you label yourself as uncoordinated and unathletic, you will resist physical activity. If you label yourself as overweight and unattractive, you will feel depressed and support that belief by overeating. You may resist wearing stylish clothes that fit you nicely.

Building a positive body image is a very important part of lifestyle management, especially weight management. Some people who are overweight focus on the time when they will be thin. Focus on the present. Don’t wait until you have lost weight to start feeling good about yourself and enjoying yourself. It may be unrealistic for you to be as thin as you desire. But, you can lose weight, attain your healthier weight goal, and improve your health. If you like and care about yourself, you will be more likely to follow your meal plans, stay active, and manage your stress.

Tips for Building a Better Body Image

- Think of yourself as an attractive person. Get a flattering haircut, manicure, or facial to reinforce your attractive self-image.
- Buy stylish clothes that fit you comfortably. Baggy clothes won’t cover up your weight problem and clothes that fit too tightly won’t motivate you to lose weight. You deserve to look nice.
- Focus on your strengths every day. Build new strengths. Remind yourself of your accomplishments with positive self-talk and affirmations.
- Be nice to yourself. Do things you enjoy. As you start to make positive changes, try new activities you always told yourself you couldn’t do before. Take dancing lessons, learn to play tennis, or go snow skiing.
- Treat yourself like a beloved friend. Imagine a very special guest is visiting your home. How would you treat this person? You are just as important. There is no one else as important or deserving as you.

- Try to be more outgoing in social situations. Learn to feel comfortable talking with others and sharing information about yourself. Learn to listen for and accept compliments.
- Give yourself time to see the “new you.” Your body image may not immediately reflect the new, active, thinner, healthier you. You may not see yourself as others see you. It will take time to realize that you have really changed.
- Keep your body image accurate and current as you become active and lose weight. Look in mirrors or catch your reflection in windows. Take photos of yourself as you slim down. Try on clothes in new, smaller sizes. Take your measurements.

I will do the following to build my body image:

Step 3

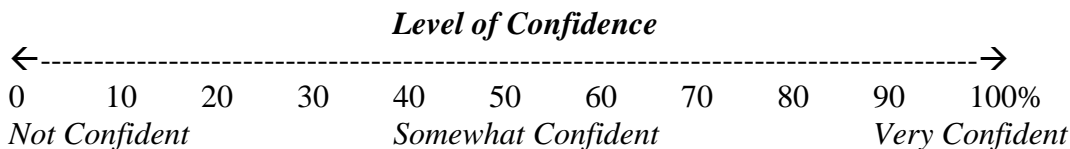
Learn Ways to Feel More Confident

Your level of confidence is called your “self-efficacy.” Self-efficacy is a concept defined by Dr. Albert Bandura in his research on the process of behavior change.

Your level of confidence about your ability to manage a certain situation is a very strong predictor of how likely you are to be able to do it. It is even a better predictor than how you have acted in the past. If you think you can act in a positive way, then it is likely that you will. If you think you can't, then you will need to try to change your attitudes to increase your self-efficacy.

Assess Your Self-efficacy

Below are some potentially risky situations. Read each statement and indicate whether this situation would be a problem for you. If you answer “yes,” then indicate how confident you are that you could cope or manage in the situation. Use the scale below to rate your confidence level.



Maintaining Healthy Eating Habits

- When driving by a fast food restaurant
- At a sporting event
- When feeling depressed
- When everyone around you is eating
- When you feel bored
- At a party or celebration
- When you feel tense and rushed
- When the buffet is “all you can eat”
- At “happy hour” with friends
- When feeling lonely

Problem?

Rating of Confidence

Maintaining Physical Activity

- After an illness or injury
- In rainy weather
- In cold weather
- When you need new walking shoes
- On vacation with the family

- On a business trip
- During the holidays
- When work demands are high
- When children are ill
- When it's hot and humid
- When you don't have an exercise partner

Managing Life Stressors

- While thinking about someone who has hurt you in the past
- If you have taken on more than you are able to do
- When you are stuck in heavy traffic
- When a family member is very ill
- After a disagreement with someone important to you
- When work demands are high
- If you are constantly interrupted
- When performing a boring task
- When performing a tedious task
- If you are feeling lonely
- When others ask you to do more than you can
- When you are standing in a line that is moving slowly

List other situations that may be difficult for you to manage (less than 50% confidence level).

Tips for Building Self-Confidence

- Fulfill your needs first. Are you using the excuse of having to care for others to neglect yourself?
- Recognize your own true worth as a person. You are a truly unique and special individual.
- Know and accept yourself. Learn to understand why you think, feel, and behave as you do. Learn to love and accept yourself and take responsibility for your actions. You are not what you do. Your actions may be wise or unwise, but that doesn't mean you are a "good" or "bad" person.
- Become self-reliant. Self-reliance means you believe you can handle things and be successful. Set goals and make plans that are not dependent on others' moods or actions.
- Give up trying to solve other people's problems, make them happy, or save them from the consequences of their behaviors.

- Embrace change. Everything and everyone is going to change, so don't fight it. Be willing to give up things the way they are to have them the way they can be. Learn to live with change and enjoy it. Look for opportunities to change for the better.
- Give yourself a pep talk. Practice positive thinking and affirmations. Tell yourself "I can do it!" and you will.
- Keep company with positive people. Negative people sap your energy and creativity with their putdowns, complaints, and self-defeating thoughts. Seek out people who can inspire and support you to reach your maximum potential.
- Reward yourself. When you do something right or well, compliment yourself or give yourself a reward. Keep a list of your accomplishments and review them frequently.
- Stand tall and smile. Your body language communicates a great deal about how confident you feel. People who feel good about themselves hold their bodies erect with their heads up and smile. A smile is the most telling sign of approachability and warmth.

I will do the following to improve my self-confidence:

Feeling Good About Yourself

Before Your Next Visit

In the time between your visits with your mentor, you should read and complete your educational kits. Use this sheet to record your work. Think of this as “homework.”

- Write three affirmations that are likely to help you with each of these areas of your lifestyle:
 - Nutrition and Weight Management
 - “I
 - “I
 - “I
 - Physical Activity and Exercise
 - “I
 - “I
 - “I
 - Stress Management
 - “I
 - “I
 - “I
- Practice affirmation for at least one month and evaluate the results.
 - *Are affirmations helping you achieve your goals?*
 - *Are affirmations helping you feel better about yourself?*
 - *Are affirmations helping you follow your HIPRC plans?*
- List ways you can build your body image.
I will do the following to build my body image:
- List situations that you feel very confident you can manage (over 70% confidence level).
- List situations that may be difficult for you to manage (less than 50% confidence level).

- List ways you can improve your self-confidence.
I will do the following to improve my self-confidence:

- Complete the statements in “Check Yourself” to be sure you understand the key concepts in this kit.

Check Yourself

1. You can match feelings and behaviors that have already occurred with _____ to perpetuate the feelings and behaviors you desire in the future.
2. Don't create negative, self-fulfilling _____.
3. _____ are positive, motivating statements that you say to yourself regularly.
4. After repeating affirmations, use _____ to create a picture in your mind of the way you want to be.
5. Body _____ is the way you see yourself in your mind's eye.
6. Poor body image may _____ efforts to make positive lifestyle changes.
7. Your level of confidence is called your self-_____.
8. If you _____ you can act in a positive way, then it is likely that you will.

Answers: 1) self-talk; 2) prophecies; 3) Affirmations; 4) visualizations; 5) image; 6) sabotage; 7) efficacy; 8) think

Write questions for your mentor here.

