

SELF-ESTEEM

SESSION 1 WORKBOOK



HOW IS LIFE JUST NOW?

* EXERCISE 1 *

On the scale below where would you rate your current quality of life?

0 10

Very Poor Fantastic

What is happening in your life that might be contributing to you feeling this way?

HOW WOULD YOU WANT YOUR LIFE TO BE?

On the scale below where would you want your life to be?

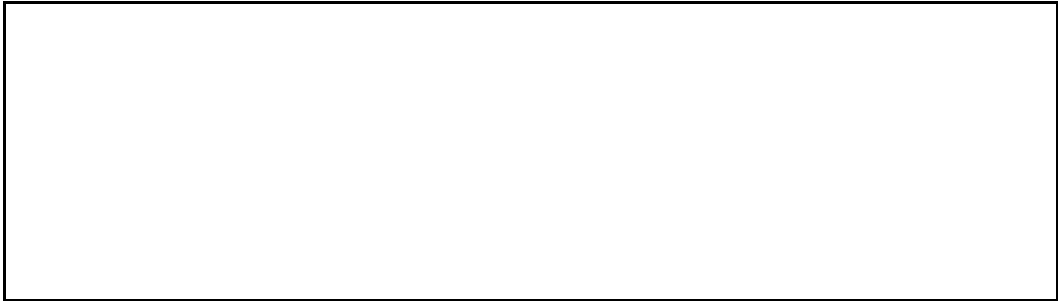
0 10

Very Poor Fantastic

What would you be doing differently that would tell you that you had reached this point?



What would tell people close to you that you had achieved this point?



LONG TERM GOALS

EXERCISE 2

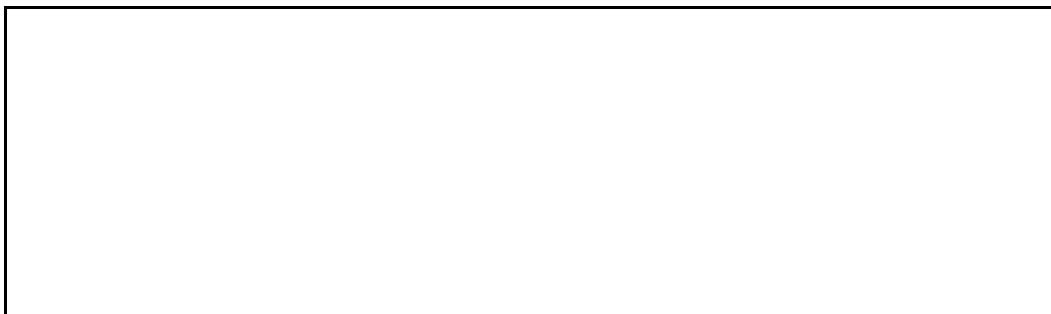
What is your long term goals with regards to your wellbeing and self-esteem?



Why you are working towards this goal? What is the focus of the goal?



What is important about this goal? (Is it in line with your values? Please refer to the values worksheet)



What will goal achievement, make possible?



WHAT IS SELF ESTEEM?

Self-esteem is a person's overall appraisal and self-worth, this is reflected in how we feel, think and act in life. Self-esteem is based on the beliefs and views we hold about ourselves including:

Self-Image - e.g. our appearance, our view of ourselves.

Role - e.g. our job, social role (mother/husband/son).

Qualities - e.g. personal qualities and things we feel confident doing.

WHAT IS POSITIVE SELF ESTEEM?

When self-esteem is positive we can feel confident enough to deal with things in life including difficult events. We can assert ourselves, ask for what we want and feel worthy of happiness as well as the respect of others.

WHAT IS LOW SELF ESTEEM?

Low self-esteem is when we have low opinions of ourselves in relation to our self-image, role in life and our qualities. We view ourselves in a very negative way and tend to be very self-critical. We can also have difficulty in standing up for ourselves and often feel we don't deserve anything better in life.

Healthy self-esteem and low self-esteem can be seen as being on two ends of a spectrum and most of us move up and down this depending on what is going on in our lives. Self-doubt is normal in certain situations (e.g. when going for a job interview) however it is problematic when we feel this way all of the time or in lots of situations. If you constantly feel at the low end of the spectrum then you can suffer from chronic low self-esteem.

Low self-esteem often leads to low mood and can be a cause of depression and anxiety.

HOW DOES LOW SELF ESTEEM/LOW CONFIDENCE AFFECT YOU?

EXERCISE 2

Mark an **X** in the boxes that apply to you:



FEELINGS

Sadness	
Irritable / Angry	
Anxious	
Panicky	
Guilt/Shame	
Insecure	
No motivation	

THOUGHTS

Self-criticism e.g. I am useless	
Self-doubt	
Ignore or discount praise, successes and strengths	
Self-blame	
Focus on weaknesses and mistakes	

BEHAVIOUR

Not looking after yourself e.g. diet, appearance	
Drinking and smoking more	
Difficulty being assertive and speaking out	
Avoid challenges and opportunities	
Hesitant and difficulty making decisions	
Doing too much for others	
Perfectionism and working too hard	
Stop socialising and meeting up with friends	
Give up hobbies	

BODY

Tension	
Sleep problems	
Tiredness	
Heart racing/palpitations	
Poor concentration	

RELATIONSHIPS

Trying too hard to please others	
Worry too much about what others think of you	
Withdraw from others	
Self-consciousness	

All of these things can cause or contribute to low self-esteem!

HOW LOW SELF ESTEEM/LOW CONFIDENCE DEVELOPS

Our sense of self develops partly from the messages we take from others around us and our experiences in life.

As children our self-image is largely formed by what other people tell us and how we are treated. Children can learn in many ways – from direct experience, from their own observations, from the media and from watching and listening to others around them. What you see, hear and experience in childhood with your family, at school, and amongst friends, will influence your thinking and how you see yourselves to the present day. The beliefs that are developed about you from an early age continue to be shaped by experiences as we grow up.

If your experiences have generally been positive – if good things have happened to you, if you've been surrounded by loving family and friends, if you've done well at school and at work, been praised for your successes and your talents – then your beliefs about yourself are likely to be positive too.

If your experiences have been mixed – if for example you weren't the most popular person at school but then blossomed in your first job, if your first

real love let you down but then you met a supportive and loving partner – then you may have a good opinion of yourself in some circumstances, but feel bad about yourself in others.

However if your experiences have generally been negative – at home as you were growing up, at school, at work, in relationships – then you may well have negative beliefs about yourself, leading to low self-esteem.

Low self-esteem can also develop later on in life. Even confident people with a previous positive self can feel put down by things that happen later on in life. Difficult times, relationship breakdowns, hardships or traumatic life events can all have an impact on your confidence and sense of self-worth. These experiences can lead to low self-esteem if you see them as a sign of personal failure rather than unfortunate events that could happen to anyone.

At the bottom of low self-esteem lie your central beliefs about yourself. You may think of these beliefs as facts, reflections of the real truth about you. But beliefs are actually opinions rather than facts – it is important to remember that these opinions can be inaccurate or outdated, and that opinions can be changed.

Below are a few examples of causes of low self-esteem:

In childhood:

- Difficult events – (e.g. neglect, abuse, bullying)
- Traumatic events - (e.g. bereavements, serious illness)
- Excessive criticism or punishments
- Parents having unrealistic expectations
- Lack of affection, warmth, praise or interest
- Feeling like the ‘odd one out’ at school

- Feeling like the 'odd one out' at home
- Belonging to a family or social group that is subject to prejudice
- Being on the receiving end of other people's stress

In adulthood:

- Abusive relationships
- Relationship break up
- Bullying at work
- Facing a loss - death of a loved one, loss of job, loss of role
- Major trauma (e.g. car accident, assault)
- Long term financial hardship
- Ill-health in self or family member
- Belonging to a family or social group that is subject to prejudice
- Being on the receiving end of other people's stress

IDENTIFYING MY BOTTOM LINE BELIEF

What do you say to yourself when you are being self-critical?

What names do you call yourself when you are angry and frustrated?

What messages did you pick up about yourself from your parents, other family members or friends?

If you could express your Bottom line in a single 'I am...', what would it be?

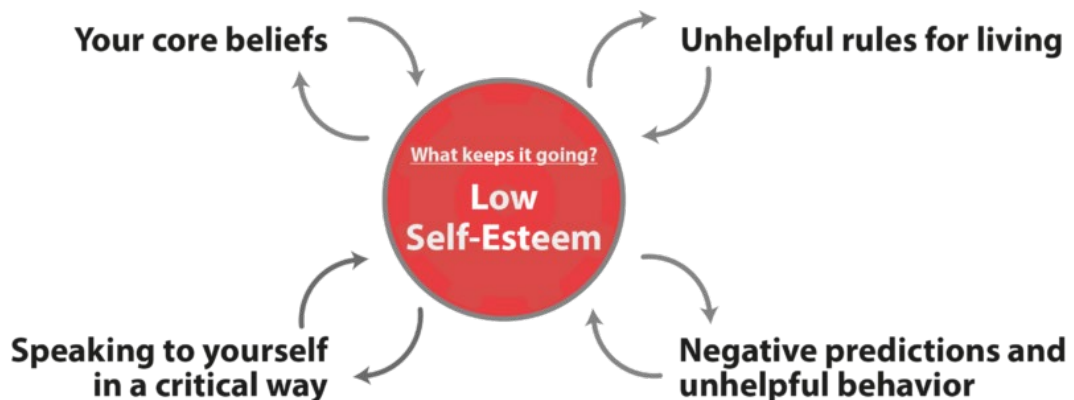
What experiences is this based on? What comes to mind when you think back to the first time you felt this way? Or was there a general atmosphere rather than specific events? Write a brief description

Some examples of bottom line beliefs:

- I am bad
- I am not good enough
- I am fat and ugly
- I am unacceptable
- I am worthless
- I am unlovable
- I am not important; I am inferior
- I am stupid
- I am pathetic
- I am useless

When identifying your Rules for Living, ask yourself:

- What do I expect of myself when I am at work or school?
- What standards do I expect myself to meet? What would I accept and not accept?
- What do I expect of myself when I am socialising?
- What do I expect of myself in my various roles – child, friend, partner, parent, staff member/supervisor?
- What do I expect of myself regarding leisure or fun activities, and self-care?



Rules for Living can be in the form of statements such as:

“I must/should/have to alwaysor else ...,”

E.g., “I must always be the best at everything,”

“I have to always keep it together and control my emotions.”

“I must/should never ...,”

E.g., “I must never show any sign of weakness or back away from a challenge,” “I should never ask for something that I need.”

“If, then ...,”

E.g., “If I let people know the real me, they will think I’m a total loser,” “If I ask someone out, I will look like I’m desperate for a partner.”

“If I don’t, then ...,”

E.g., “If I don’t work as hard as I possibly can, then I will not gain recognition from my boss,” or “If I don’t do whatever it takes to stay slim, I will never have any friends.”

My Rules for Living are:

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What are your short term goals for the next week?

It is important that your short term goals are SMART goals.



HOME PRACTICE

On this page, keep a record of times when you notice your low self-esteem.
What is the situation and how does it impact on the following areas?

What is the situation? (Time, date, where are you, who are you with?)	
What are you FEELING? E.g. sad, low, angry.	
What are your THOUGHTS?	
What are the things you are saying about yourself or others? What is the "I am" statement?	

What did you do? How did you BEHAVE? Did it help the situation?	
What did you notice about your BODY STATE?	
What were others doing, did this have an impact on your RELATIONSHIPS?	

Home Practice

Watch clip on you tube - Cultivating Unconditional Self-Worth (Adia Gooden)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EirlZ7fy3bE>

Complete workbook and values sheet (attached below)

Values

Values are important. When we have a clear picture of our values, we develop a clear sense of self, who we are and what's important to us. We can make decisions aligned with our authentic self rather than living up to the expectations of others and living through their values. This self-awareness of what is important to us, can be hugely motivating, and can help us be self-directed and self-reliance, all key in developing self-esteem. When you know what your personal values are, you trust yourself more.

Everybody's values are different, and they can change over time. They determine how we want to engage with the world, with the people around us, and with ourselves. Values are different from goals. Goals can be achieved whereas values are more like directions that we want to head in.

Now consider, if your low self-esteem has an impact on your values.

Does your rules for living dictate how much emphasis you put on your values? E.g., "I must not join the local choir club as I am boring and people will not like me", "I would like to go to college, but what's the point, I am not clever enough. It's better not to try than to fail", "I must not get romantically involved with another person, if I allow anyone to get close to me they will hurt me".

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question above.

VALUE DOMAINS

	Family	<i>What kind of relationships do you want to have with your family? What sort of brother / sister / mother / father / aunt / uncle / niece / nephew do you want to be? How do you want to be in those relationships?</i>
	Marriage / Couple / Intimacy	<i>What kind of husband / wife / partner do you want to be? What kind of relationship do you want to be a part of? What sort of partnership do you want to build? What kind of person do you want to be in a relationship?</i>
	Parenting	<i>What sort of parent do you want to be? What qualities do you want your children to see in you? What kind of relationships do you want to build with them?</i>
	Friendships / Social life	<i>What sort of friend do you want to be? What friendships is it important to cultivate? How would you like to act towards your friends? What kind of social life matters to you?</i>
	Career / Employment	<i>What kind of work is valuable to you? What qualities do you want to bring as an employee? What kind of work relationships would you like to build? What kind of work matters to you?</i>
	Education / Personal growth & development	<i>How would you like to grow as a person? What kind of skills would you like to develop? What matters to you about education and learning? What would you like to know more about?</i>
	Recreation / Fun / Leisure	<i>How would you like to enjoy yourself? What relaxes you? When are you most playful?</i>
	Spirituality	<i>What kind of relationship do you want with God / nature / the Earth?</i>
	Citizenship / Environment / Community	<i>What kind of environment do you want to be a part of? How do you want to contribute to your community? What kind of citizen would you like to be?</i>
	Health / Physical wellbeing	<i>What kind of values do you have regarding your physical wellbeing? How important to you is your health? How do you want to look after yourself?</i>

1. For each of the domains above write a brief description of your values (e.g. *to be a caring partner* [marriage], *to never stop learning* [personal development], *to deepen my relationship with nature* [spirituality]).
2. Then rate each domain according to how important it is to you (0 = not important, 10 = very important).
3. Finally, give each domain a rating according to how successfully you have lived your life in accordance with this value in the past month (0 = not at all well, 10 = very well).

	DESCRIPTION OF YOUR VALUES	IMPORTANCE	SUCCESS
FAMILY			
MARRIAGE / COUPLE / INTIMACY			
PARENTING			
FRIENDSHIPS			
SOCIAL LIFE			
CAREER / EMPLOYMENT			

EDUCATION / PERSONAL GROWTH / DEVELOPMENT			
FUN / LEISURE			
SPIRITUALITY			
ENVIRONMENT / COMMUNITY			
HEALTH / PHYSICAL WELLBEING			

Leaving aside any obstacles for the moment, think about what is important to you, and what you think makes for a meaningful life that you could value.

Family relations

*What kind of relationships do you want with your family?
What kind of mother/father/brother/sister/uncle/aunt do you want to be?*

Physical wellbeing

What kind of values do you have regarding your physical wellbeing? How do you want to look after yourself?

Marriage / couple / intimate relations

*What kind of husband/wife/partner do you want to be?
What quality of relationship do you want to be a part of?*

Citizenship / community

What kind of environment do you want to be a part of? How do you want to contribute to your community?

Parenting

*What sort of parent do you want to be?
What qualities do you want your children to see in you?*

Spirituality

What kind of relationship do you want with God / nature / the Earth?

Friendships / social relationships

*What sort of friend do you want to be?
What friendships is it important to cultivate?
How would you like to act towards your friends?*

Recreation

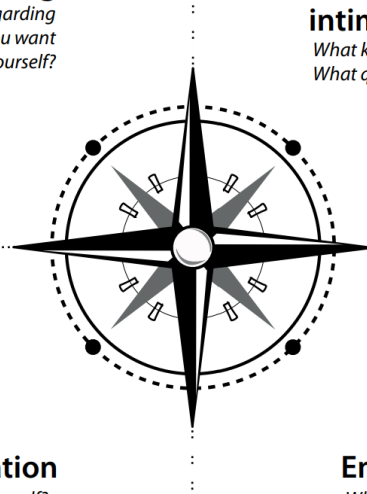
*How would you like to enjoy yourself?
What relaxes you? When are you most playful?*

Employment

*What kind of work is valuable to you?
What qualities do you want to bring as an employee?
What kind of work relationships would you like to build?*

Education / training / personal growth

*How would you like to grow?
What kind of skills would you like to develop?
What would you like to know more about?*



For each of these domains write a quick summary of your values, for example *“to live a healthy life and take care of my body”* (physical wellbeing), or *“to be a good friend to people who need me, and to enjoy my time with the people I love”* (friendships).

Rate each domain for how important it is to you from 0-10 (0 = not important).

Physical wellbeing

**Marriage / couple /
intimate relations**

**Citizenship /
community**

Parenting

Spirituality

**Friendships / social
relationships**

Recreation

Employment

Family relations

Education / training /
personal growth

FURTHER READING LIST

- [How Low Self Esteem Develops \(Centre for Clinical Interventions\)](#)
- (press ctrl and click for direct access)
- **Fennell, M (1999)** *Overcoming low self-esteem: A self help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques*. Robinson: London
- **Burns, D (2000)** *Feeling good: the new mood therapy*. Plume Books
- **Greenberger, D & Padesky, C (1995)** *Mind over Mood*. Guilford

Urgent help contact numbers

- In a crisis you can call your own **GP surgery**
- **NHS 24 - 111**
- **Samaritans - 116 123 (24hrs) Free to call**
Samaritans provide confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.
- www.samaritans.org
- **Breathing Space - 0800 83 85 87 Free to call**
(Mon-Thurs 6pm-2am and weekends 24hrs)
Breathing Space is a free and confidential phone-line service for any individual who is experiencing low mood or depression, or who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to. A BSL service is also available via the website:
www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk