

Help boost your child's self-esteem

The journey from self-esteem to self-management

For parents of middle school students



What is self-management?

Self-management is making the adjustments necessary to maintain harmony within yourself and others.

What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is a component of self-management. To esteem something is to value it. If we value ourselves, we feel we are ready for life and its requirements. Self-esteem includes confidence in our ability to overcome obstacles and manage challenges.

Why do we need self-esteem?

Self-esteem is essential to normal and healthy development. A child who grows up in a family where he is respected, valued, supported and held to reasonable expectations and limits has an enormous advantage over a child who does not.

If you have self-esteem can you self- manage?

If feeling good about yourself includes a belief in your ability to impact the world and act appropriately in your own best interests, you can self-manage.

Where do you get the skills to self manage?

From families who can provide:

- total acceptance of thoughts feelings and 'value of person'
- clearly defined, reasonable and enforced limits
- freedom from humiliation or violence
- a consistent model of behaviours of self control, the ability to tolerate frustration and delay gratification

How can parents help their children learn to self manage?

- Be visible. The strongest message you can give about your child's self-worth is your interest in being with that child.
- Respond to your child in a way that makes sense to her, e.g. if your child says "I didn't get the part in the play," say "that must hurt" rather than "it's only a school play, nothing major."
- Use praise that helps create self-reliance and self-control as well as self-esteem For example, "You played your position well" rather than "You're the best." And "Your enthusiasm made this more fun" rather than "You go girl."
- Challenge your child's behaviour specifically. Say "I'm sad to see you tease your sister so cruelly," rather than humiliating him with "You're a bad boy."
- Learn to tolerate your child's normal developmental distress. Your child needs to experience normal frustration, disappointment and anger. She must learn the ability to reach inside herself to work through difficult problems.

*This tip sheet was prepared by Penny Smith,
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