

Printed copies of this text are not controlled. Always check the CIT website - cit.edu.au to ensure this information is correct.

Tips for Wellbeing No 8

Self-esteem

Improving how you feel about yourself

What is the problem?

We all have thoughts and feelings about ourselves, whether conscious or unconscious. If we have a habit of thinking negatively about ourselves, putting ourselves down and comparing ourselves to others, this can lead to low mood, anxiety, lack of confidence and problems in relationships with others.

What can be done about it?

It is possible to build your self-esteem up over time and change the way you think and feel. Here are some strategies which others have found helpful:

- > Challenge your thinking; is it based on real evidence in your life? Are there any positive things you might be ignoring?
- > If you can't see any positives, ask yourself: what would my friend or fond family member say about me? What would I say to my friend or child to encourage them if they were in this situation?
- > Try to set realistic expectations. Are you comparing yourself to others or yourself?
- > Do you avoid situations you feel unconfident about? Try gently moving out of this safety zone and little by little set small goals to build and add to your positive experiences.
- > Watch your self-talk: if you keep noticing the negatives make sure you come up with achievements, skills, positive aspects that relate to the same issue/event
- > List your strengths, talents, achievements: make a list of personal qualities and achievements and keep adding new ones regularly. If this is difficult, a friend or a counsellor may be able to help you uncover what you have achieved.
- > Do some exercise. Fitness is a great energy booster and also makes us feel better. It releases chemicals into your brain which help make us feel more cheerful.
- > How well do you look after your body? Can you improve on eating healthy food, on personal hygiene, the way you dress?
- > Try to engage in activities that make you feel better about yourself, which also fit in with your goals and values.

- > List your strengths, talents, achievements: make a list of personal qualities and achievements and keep adding new ones regularly. If this is difficult, a friend or a counsellor may be able to help you uncover what you have achieved.
- > Do some exercise. Fitness is a great energy booster and also makes us feel better. It releases chemicals into your brain which help make us feel more cheerful.
- > How well do you look after your body? Can you improve on eating healthy food, on personal hygiene, the way you dress?
- > Try to engage in activities that make you feel better about yourself, which also fit in with your goals and values.
- > Act 'as if'. Some people find it helpful to act as if they had more confidence even when that's not how they feel inside. For instance, walk straight and tall through the shopping centre, even though you feel like hiding. Wash your hair even though you feel you don't care about how you look. Changing your behaviour can lead to your feelings also changing, as they catch up with what you do.
- > Treat yourself. Looking after yourself, such as having a haircut, a massage, spending time doing that hobby you like, can all lead to a boost in self-esteem, as they are actions of self-respect.
- > Learn how to be more assertive, if communicating with others is difficult for you. A counsellor can help you with this, or there are books which can assist, such as those in the list below.

For further reference:

Websites:

- > *Confidence and Self Esteem* - au.reachout.com/wellbeing/mental-fitness/confidence
- > *Better Health Channel, Self Esteem* - betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/HealthyLiving/self-esteem
- > *What is low self-esteem?* cci.health.wa.gov.au
- > *Overcoming biased expectations* - cci.health.wa.gov.au/

Books:

- > *Change Your Thinking* by Sarah Edelman, ABC Books (2006).
- > *Beating the Blues* by Susan Tanner and Jillian Ball, (1991).
- > *Happiness It's Up to You: Easy Steps to Self Acceptance and Good Relationships* by Sabine Beecher, Boolarong Press, (2003).

Want to make an appointment with CIT Student Support staff? Call our reception on **(02) 6207 3290**.

Find more helpful CIT Student Support information on **eLearn** :

Click **Student Links** tab then **Student Services and Support** option at the top of any eLearn page.

Studiosity – 24/7, 365 days a year, online help with assignments and written work:

Click the **Study HELP** tab at the top of any eLearn page.