



module 3
Self-esteem

adapt



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Montréal Branch



educational activities booklet

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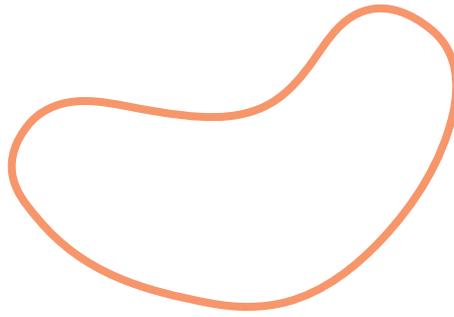
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Foreword

Adap•t is a pedagogical tool specifically designed to equip teenagers aged 12 to 18 years to better understand how important their mental health is in order to better manage and maintain a good personal balance. Intended for teachers and psychosocial service providers, this module proposes educational activities that encourage development of personal and social skills such as **self-esteem**, **stress management** and **problem solving**. The activities also enable students to better understand the notion of mental health and to adopt healthy lifestyle habits.

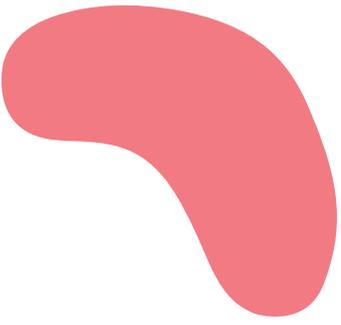
Moreover, this educational material fosters harmonious interpersonal relationships and encourages students to address problems, break down their isolation pattern and ask for help.

a unique tool!

This document uses a **flexible modular approach that is easy to implement**; activities range in duration and can be carried out in class, during lunchtime or on special theme days.

The document's various components can be **coupled with a broader intervention program** or one that is already implemented in your school.

Introduction to mental health



Mental health involves a balance in all aspects of life, which enhances the ability to enjoy life and deal with challenges that arise. This includes learning better in school, working more productively, forming and maintaining positive relationships with other people, contributing to the community and performing practical routine tasks related to personal care, nutrition, physical activity, sleep, recreation and spiritual needs.

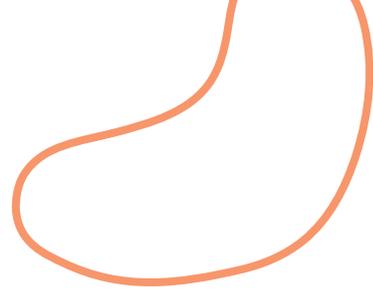
Talking about mental health with young people helps them make connections between daily choices and overall well-being. Teaching teenagers to recognize components of good mental health helps them develop healthy lifestyles and therefore, become equipped to deal with the challenges they will face throughout their lives.

Having good mental health also means being able to think clearly and realistically about yourself and others, and asking for help when needed. Therefore, it can be defined as how a person thinks, acts and feels when faced with life situations.¹

adolescence: a period of transformation and metamorphosis

The process of identity construction is not simple; it involves a large amount of information with which teenagers must learn to cope. In this regard, the influence of family as well as social, educational, cultural and environmental influences exercise a certain amount of pressure on young people, who will tend to question them. Some adults may be bothered by the behaviour of teenagers, who are often only experiencing emotions specific to their state of transition. It is important to understand that when faced with difficulties, young people are not just being lazy or acting out of ill will, as some adults are quick to assume. They may just be finding it difficult to make the transition between adolescence and the adult world. This is why it is important to show empathy and understanding, and to avoid giving in to the temptation of blaming them for their apparent lack of realism, energy or motivation.

1 Adosanté.org. *Santé mentale*, [http://www.adosante.org/Sante_mentale/03.shtml], [page accessed on January 23, 2012].



when to sound the alarm

Everyone experiences feelings of isolation, solitude or emotional distress at one time or another. These reactions are usually normal and last only a short while. The same applies to teenagers. Most of them go through adolescence without encountering major upheavals and start their adult lives feeling calm and satisfied. However, for some youth, the duration and intensity of feelings of insecurity or distress can seriously impair their academic, social, emotional or cognitive functioning, as well as their capacity to enjoy life. Their distress can take many forms: dropping out of school, using drugs and running away, as well as depression, eating disorders and suicidal behaviours are a few examples.

Overall, we should be concerned in the following circumstances: when a teenager no longer wants to

see his or her friends, especially the ones the teen is usually with all the time; finds everyone stupid, starting with himself or herself; loses interest in things that were once a passion; or has poorer grades in school.

Physical health can also be an important indicator. Too much or not enough sleep, constant fatigue or an eating disorder are telling signs of distress. Sudden hyperactivity and exaggerated or forced euphoria can also camouflage an underlying state of anxiety. Such symptoms should not necessarily be diagnosed as a mental illness, but rather seen as concrete signs of distress. However, when any of these symptoms significantly change a teenager's behaviour, mood, emotions, thought patterns and perceptions, it may be justified to think of these as early signs of mental health problems or symptoms of mental illness.

protective and vulnerability factors

Protective and vulnerability factors enable detection of positive influences that can enhance mental health or, conversely, contribute to poor mental health.

protective factors

- Self-confidence, self-esteem, social skills
- Psychosocial skills (problem solving, critical thinking, communication, empathy, dealing with emotions)
- Stress management
- Harmonious relationships with family and friends, good parental skills
- Positive interpersonal relationships (being part of a positive peer group), solid social and support networks
- Development of personal potential, self-actualization
- Positive school environment
- Appropriate child development, good personal resources
- Physical activity
- Early intervention, mental health education

vulnerability factors

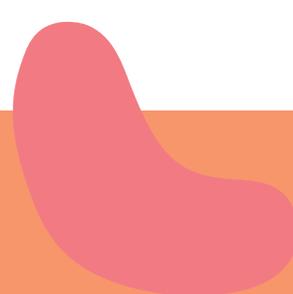
- Use of psychoactive substances (drugs and/or alcohol)
- Stress, illness
- Violence, abuse, conflict
- Major life events (e.g., loss of a loved one, breakup, separation/divorce of parents, repeated failures, assault, multiple foster placements or moves, etc.)
- Racism, sexism, homophobia
- Early independence
- Family breakup, family problems
- Family history of mental illness
- Absence of intergenerational communication
- Absence of significant figures
- Social isolation
- Poverty, income insecurity, unemployed parent



Leading a workshop

planning ahead

- 1 • **Understand the specific concepts** raised in the workshop; prepare for students' reactions and potential questions.
- 2 • **Identify obstacles** related to workshop facilitation (e.g., student passivity, lack of motivation) and **adapt workshop content** to the various cultural, regional and ethnic characteristics of the students. For instance, you can change the first names of the characters in the activities so students can relate to them.
- 3 • **Plan learning activities** to complement the ones proposed in this module to help students grasp the content in a playful way.
- 4 • **Be aware of your own perceptions of mental health:** By being mindful of what touches you, of your fears and insecurities related to the theme of mental health, you will be able to better understand students' reactions and, consequently, to support them as they learn the basic concepts and coping strategies proposed in the modules.



during the workshop

- 1 • **Don't hesitate to rephrase** or explain a concept several ways, and to use expressions more familiar to students.
- 2 • **Use neutral objects, people or activities:** Using a neutral object, person or activity makes it possible to introduce a theme without the facilitator or students feeling directly involved, while still initiating an open discussion on the topic. For instance, consider a film (the behaviours or thoughts of one of the characters can be discussed), an art-related activity (students can be asked to draw an emotion or make a poster that promotes mental health) or a fictitious individual (students can be asked for their opinion on the behaviours or attitudes of this person).
- 3 • **Share:** Students might appreciate the facilitator sharing personal stories with them; this can help normalize the thoughts, emotions, perceptions and behaviours they have in situations they experience. For example, the facilitator could talk about how she or he felt when beginning high school.
- 4 • **Validate students' understanding:** Encourage students to talk about the concepts using their own words. By expressing their own perceptions, they can then more easily make connections between the activities and their own experiences, and thus benefit even more from the methods and strategies proposed.

suggestions for complementary activities

Puzzles, crosswords, criss-crosses, riddles, charades, word association games

Composing rap or slam

Quizzes, contests

Writing or filling in a comic strip (where the dialogue has been removed)

Writing an article or making an illustration for the school paper

Improvising on a given theme

Designing and developing a theme week with students, related to what they have learned

Producing posters for different themes: students can use their own drawings and text, or choose from an image bank

Using the approach, "What would you say to your best friend in this situation?"

Asking drama, art or English teachers, for example, to help with certain themes

Producing a guide with students about the subject of this module

Using students' work for workshops with other students (e.g., students produce a booklet on stress management that is then given out to students in grade 6)

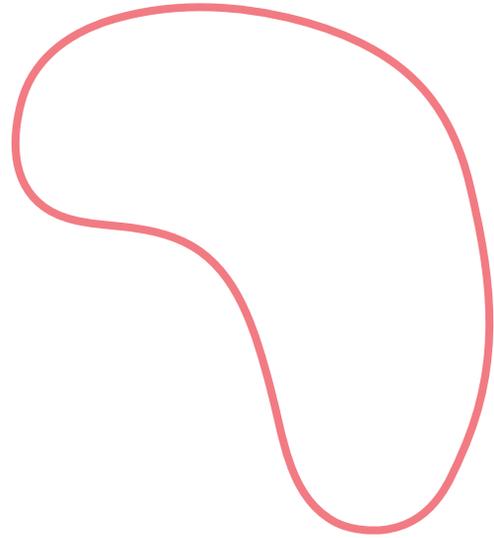
Leading a guided relaxation, making mandalas, producing a stress management kit

Watching short films: "How would you have reacted if you were such-and-such character? What advice would you give?"



module 3

Self-esteem



why talk about it?

Adolescence is a time when teens begin constructing their adult identities by reorganizing their thought patterns, values and behaviours. This metamorphosis can be positive when young people have favourable psychological, social and environmental conditions. It is an important period during which they can build and enhance self-esteem.

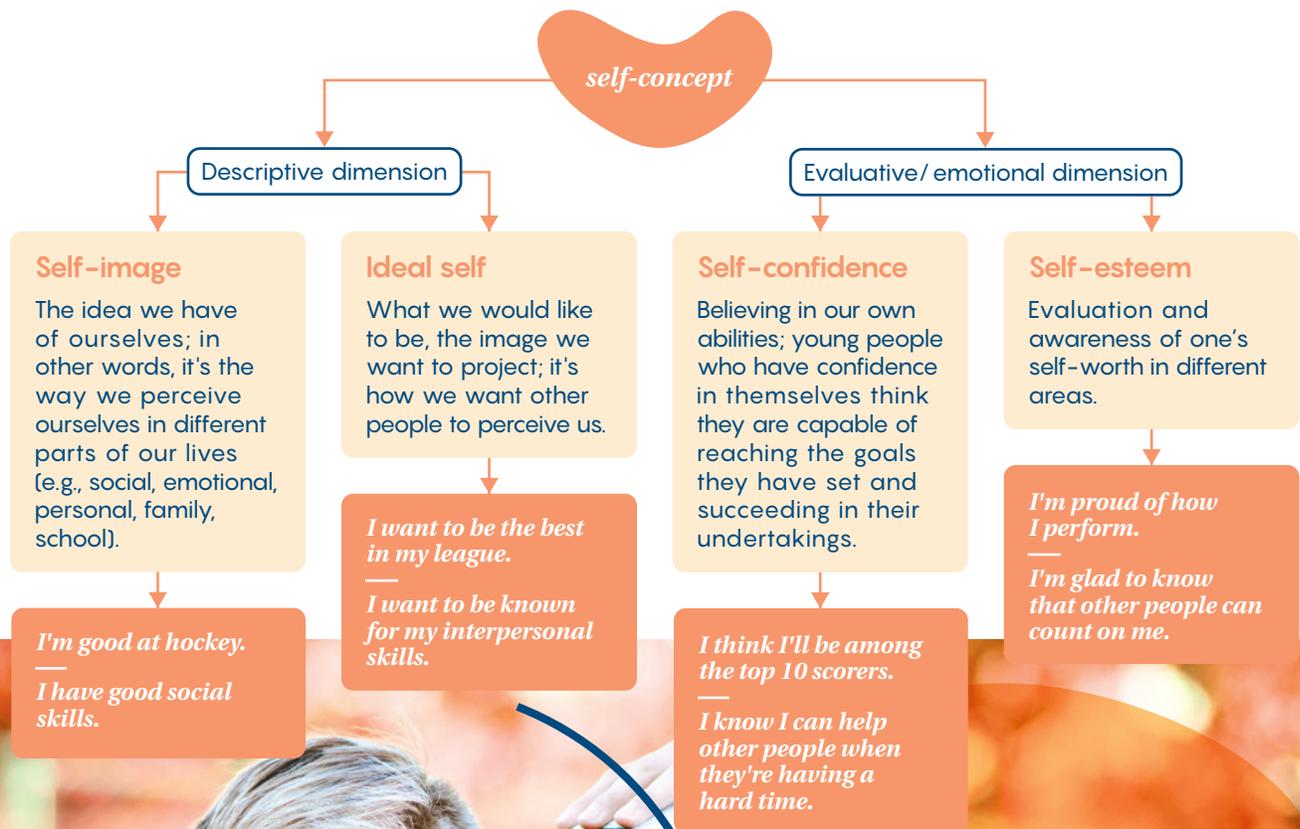
As we saw earlier, self-esteem is a key characteristic of mental health. **If it does not have a solid base, it vacillates according to circumstances, experiences or other people's judgments.** Helping young people to acquire self-esteem is one of the most valuable gifts they can receive. No matter what their experiences were during childhood, when given proper support, teenagers can develop positive self-esteem.

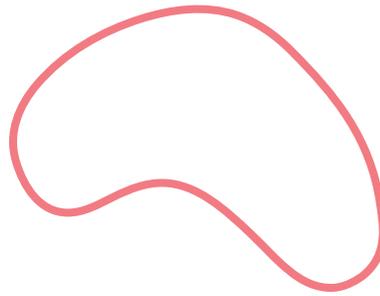
module 3
Self-esteem

[continued]

terms related to self-esteem

We can better understand the rather complex concept of self-esteem if we know the subtle differences in meaning of some terms associated with it.





self-esteem

Self-esteem depends on how we perceive ourselves, the opinion we have of ourselves; **therefore, it is the worth we give ourselves and especially our awareness** of this worth. A person can have great qualities, be talented in many areas and have undeniable skills, but without an awareness of these qualities, talents and skills, he or she may nevertheless have poor self-esteem.

Self-esteem is the level of satisfaction we get from our accomplishments when we put them in perspective with our aspirations.

For example, if a teen perceives herself as not very good in art, this will have minimum impact on her self-esteem if she cares little about the field of art. However, her perception will have considerable impact if she aspires to be the next Picasso!

Note: Self-esteem is not synonymous with narcissism or self-centeredness. When faced with acknowledging their strengths, many people hesitate: "If I acknowledge I have qualities and skills, am I just boasting? Or lacking humility?" On the contrary! Self-esteem is a realistic perception of oneself; it necessarily assumes that a person is aware of personal strengths, but also of his or her difficulties and limits in various aspects of life.



In summary, self-esteem is being able to recognize our strengths and limits:

- 1 • **In the various roles we play** (student/worker, member of a family/group, friend/boyfriend/girlfriend, etc).
- 2 • **On various personal levels:** physical (appearance, health), psychological (knowing ourselves), intellectual (skills at school), social (relationship with parents).



What you need to know about self-esteem:

- 1 • It is based on the perception we have of ourselves, our skills and our uniqueness.
- 2 • It is also influenced by the perceptions others have of us.
- 3 • It is closely linked to self-confidence.
- 4 • It is built progressively, as our personalities develop, and is based on our past and current experiences.
- 5 • It can also change according to personal experiences; it must be nurtured and protected.



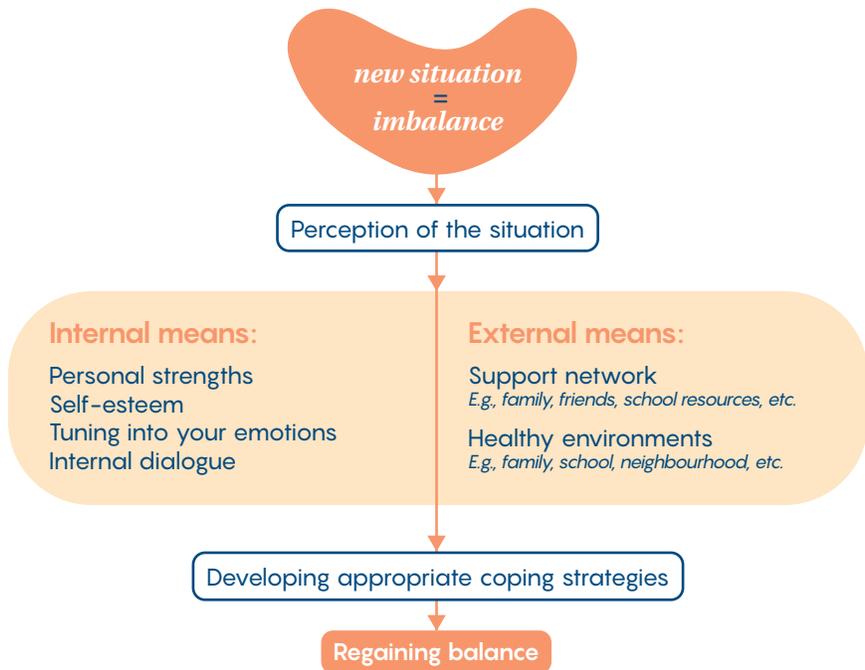
What's the connection between self-esteem and mental health?

Self-esteem is an internal attitude that allows us to appreciate and accept ourselves as we are, with our strengths and weaknesses. Having a realistic and positive self-perception can affect many elements that contribute to mental health: constructive internal dialogue, openness to other people, healthy and positive interpersonal relationships, greater capacity to manage daily stresses and challenges, feeling confident in life, etc.



adaptation process

The following figure illustrates the adaptation process that occurs when dealing with a new situation. This process calls upon internal and external means available to the teenager.



The goal of the **self-esteem** module is to **bolster young people's self-esteem and encourage them to recognize their self-worth**. The proposed activities will also allow them to realize the importance of having high self-esteem.



By the end of the module, students will know:

- 1 • their talents, qualities and self-worth
- 2 • what they can do to preserve high self-esteem
- 3 • the importance of preserving high self-esteem in all aspects of their lives



Students will also know how to:

- 1 • explain what self-esteem is in their own words
- 2 • explain connections between self-esteem and mental health
- 3 • name at least two things that influence self-esteem
- 4 • name at least two effects of high self-esteem on behaviours, feelings and thoughts.

activity 1

What is self-esteem?

time required
40 to 60 minutes

objective

understand what self-esteem is

suggested approach

- 1 • In a large group, ask students what they know about self-esteem. Take time to get them interested in the topic. After writing some of the students' answers on the board, give them the following two examples and ask them which character has high self-esteem.

Examples :

– *Although his boyfriend compliments him frequently on his appearance, Diego refuses to go to the pool because he feels too fat.*

+ *Juliette doesn't think twice about running for president of the student council. She thinks she has the qualities needed to represent her peers well.*

- 2 • Ask students to form teams of three or four, and to come up with a few examples of situations where someone shows **low** self-esteem and others where someone shows **high** self-esteem. Examples can come from situations they've experienced, witnessed or simply made up.

Some answers to expect that can also serve as examples:

– *Jonathan would like to take dance classes but he's too afraid of how his friends will react.*

+ *Emily decides to take an English course during her summer holidays despite her friends telling her that she'll be bored.*

- 3 • Reassemble the large group and ask each team to present their thoughts. After each presentation, the other students are asked for their comments, particularly to shed more light on a situation that may not be perfectly clear.

- 4 • Choose **two positive situations** and **two negative situations**, then ask students these three questions:

*How do the characters see themselves (as human beings) and their actions (appearance)? In other words, **how do they perceive themselves?***

*What do the characters say to themselves? In other words, **what do they hear themselves saying?***

*How do they feel about themselves and what are the results of their actions? In other words, **do they like themselves?***

- 5 • Take a few positive situations and ask students what the characters would have done if they had had low self-esteem and then the opposite, using some of the negative situations.
- 6 • To conclude, ask students what connections they make between self-esteem and mental health.



remember

Self-esteem is being aware of our self-worth in different areas. It isn't our worth per se that is involved here, but rather the awareness we have of it.

Three components can be used to assess self-esteem:²

- 1 • **How I see myself:** How I look at myself (as a human being) and at my actions (appearance). Therefore, **how I perceive myself**.
- 2 • **How I talk to myself:** The internal discourse I have about who I am and what I do. Therefore, **hearing myself**.
- 3 • **How I feel:** The feelings I have about myself and the results of my actions. Therefore, **liking myself**. "Liking myself" means having a positive opinion of myself.



discussion points

Self-esteem is a kind of overview of our strengths and weaknesses.

If it does not have a solid base, self-esteem vacillates according to circumstances, experiences or other people's judgments.

Therefore, it is important that we know ourselves and that we identify and value our personal strengths. In addition, we have to set realistic expectations and attainable objectives for ourselves.

People with high self-esteem can appreciate their own personalities and acknowledge their talents, competencies and skills; they are proud of their successes and accomplishments.

Your thoughts, how you perceive yourself and your attitudes play important roles in self-esteem. **Negative internal discourse** that is denigrating (for instance, if you keep telling yourself that you're not good at anything or if all you can see are your faults) results in low self-esteem; conversely, **positive internal discourse** that is realistic and helpful (for example, "I know that I'm likable, sensitive and empathetic") results in high self-esteem. (Note: Internal discourse will be the topic of module 5.)

² Monbourquette, J., M. Ladouceur and J. Desjardins-Proulx. (1998). *Je suis aimable, je suis capable : Parcours pour l'estime et l'affirmation de soi*, Outremont, Éditions Novalis, 362 p.

activity 2

What I like about myself

time required
40 to 60 minutes

objective

appreciate one's self-worth

suggested approach

- 1 • In a large group, choose one of the characters from the preceding activity's positive scenarios; then, ask students to identify the qualities of this person. Write their answers on the board.

Some answers to expect:

The person is sure of herself and determined; she has leadership skills, knows herself well, knows what she wants and is assertive.

- 2 • The students also have qualities! Hand out the **student worksheet** and ask them to fill it out.
- 3 • In a large group, ask the following questions:
What was easier? Identifying your qualities or what you'd like to improve?
How do you feel, after this exercise? Do you find it difficult to talk about your strengths?
How is self-esteem affected by being able to identify and recognize your strong points and those that need improvement?

discussion points

To have high self-esteem, we must learn to know ourselves well (our likes, needs, abilities) and accept ourselves as we are (with our strengths and our weaknesses), that is, have a positive and realistic perception of ourselves.

We tend to be more aware of our weaknesses and faults; we focus on aspects of ourselves we don't like, to the detriment of our qualities and strong points.

Have you ever felt shy when someone complimented you? Have you ever rejected a compliment or dismissed it as unimportant? Many people tend to ignore very important parts of themselves: their personal strengths and qualities.

Talking about our strong points and being proud of what we've done well are often looked down on; being proud is often confused with being boastful. Being proud of ourselves means being happy about who we are and showing satisfaction with what we have accomplished and our successes; being boastful means excessively showing off a character trait or success, real or imaginary.





activity 2

What I like about myself



- 1 • Circle five to seven qualities from the following list that you think you have. (Don't worry about what other people might think. Just rely on your own perception).

sociable • responsible • positive • respectful • honest • generous • funny • creative • courageous • patient • energetic • determined • fair • optimistic • reliable • good listener • modest • adventurous • nice • smart • hard-working • imaginative • calm • athletic • sensitive • empathetic • loyal to friends • organized • loving • leader • original • assertive • studious • curious • passionate

- 2 • Identify two of your qualities and describe a situation in which these qualities shined. Briefly explain how you felt.

1 st quality:
situation:

2 nd quality:
situation:

- 3 • Among the qualities that you didn't circle, are there any that you'd like to strengthen? Can you imagine a situation where you'd like to have this quality? (For example, being more organized could make preparing for an exam easier.)

- 4 • In your opinion, how is self-esteem affected by being able to identify and recognize your strong points and those that need improvement?

activity 3

Self-esteem: personal assessment

time required
50 to 60 minutes

objective

become aware of the attitudes and behaviours that indicate higher or lower self-esteem

suggested approach

- 1 • Hand out the **student worksheet** and ask participants to complete it on their own; stress that there are no right or wrong answers. Rather, the goal is to think about attitudes and behaviours that can help them determine the level of their own self-esteem.
- 2 • Once the worksheets have been filled out, go over each question again in a large group. Give additional information and examples. For some questions, ask students to share their answers. Ask who is closer to 1, to 10 or to the middle of the scale so they don't feel they have to reveal too much.
- 3 • To conclude, ask students the following questions and, on the board, write the answers that seem pertinent to you:
What did you learn about self-esteem during this activity?
What did you learn about yourself?

discussion points

Self-esteem is built through experiences, successes and failures.

It isn't always easy to adopt behaviours and attitudes that foster self-esteem.

We tend to focus more on what others think of us than on what we think of ourselves. We can turn this around by learning to know ourselves well and by becoming aware of our feelings towards events that we experience.

Other people's opinions are also influenced by the perception we have of ourselves. Imagine people who think they aren't good at anything. How do you think they would act if they were

working with a team? Do you think they would ask the teacher questions in class if they didn't understand the subject matter? How, then, will other people perceive them?

Developing self-esteem requires daily efforts. During your lifetime, you will undoubtedly be in situations or meet people that will influence your self-esteem. You have to learn to develop skills, thoughts, attitudes and feelings that will enable you to overcome difficulties without affecting your self-esteem too much. We'll deal with this topic in Activity 5.

remember

We play a big role in developing our own self-esteem. Of course, our experiences (successes and failures) come into play but our attitudes when facing difficulties, the choices we make and thoughts

we have also play major roles in this process. Cultivating a positive and realistic attitude helps maintain and develop healthy self-esteem.





activity 3

Self-esteem: personal assessment



Here are a few examples of indicators of your own self-esteem. On a scale of 1 to 10, indicate how much you agree with the statement.

1 = I don't agree at all; 10 = I agree completely

1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I know myself well (strengths, qualities, skills, dreams, weaknesses, etc.).
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I have realistic expectations; I set goals that I can attain.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I take action even if I'm afraid; I take risks and step outside my comfort zone.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I only feel responsible for things I have some control over.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I don't turn each mistake I make into a fault; I don't put myself down.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I communicate my needs; I'm learning to say no; I express how I feel.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I accept myself as I am.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I don't keep mulling over my weaknesses, mistakes or faults. It just makes life a drag!
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I treat myself like I would my best friend: with respect and understanding.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I know how I feel in different situations, what emotions they bring out in me.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I give myself the right to make mistakes and I learn from my failures.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I'm proud of my successes, efforts and strengths.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I'm attentive to my own needs and desires.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	When I need help, I ask for it.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I can highlight my good points; I can acknowledge that I'm good at something.
1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • 10	I can acknowledge that I'm worthy of admiration, that I can be loved for who I am, with my strengths and weaknesses.

activity 4

Dominic's advice column

time required
60 to 75 minutes

objective

know how to recognize attitudes and behaviours that act as indicators of self-esteem

suggested approach

- 1 • Instruct students to read the four messages on the **student worksheet A**. Explain that these four messages were written by young people who are having problems and are trying to get help.
- 2 • Ask students to choose the message that inspires or calls to them the most, and to form teams of three or four based on the message chosen. Make sure that each message has been selected by at least one team.
- 3 • Ask them to answer the following questions on the **student worksheet B**:
 - What problems is the teen talking to Dominic about?*
 - What are this teen's personal strengths and/or qualities?*
 - The preceding activity looked at attitudes and behaviours that could indicate low or high self-esteem. What attitudes or behaviours does this teen have that indicate good self-esteem?*
 - What attitude or behaviour should the teen adopt to show higher self-esteem?*

- 4 • Reassemble the large group. Ask the teams to give their answers to the four questions and write them on the board under the following headings:

	<i>desperate</i>	<i>not a real girl</i>	<i>lost</i>
Problems	<i>Doesn't feel respected by her friends</i> <i>Feels torn between what she likes and what her friends like</i>	<i>Feels alone</i> <i>Feels different</i>	<i>Feels different from other teens</i> <i>Is afraid his friends will find him childish</i>
Strengths/Qualities	<i>Open to discovering new things</i> <i>Likes to feel useful</i>	<i>Knows what she wants</i> <i>Passionate</i>	<i>Passionate</i> <i>Knows what he wants to do in the future</i>
Attitude or behaviour showing positive self-esteem	<i>I can highlight my good points; when I'm good at something, I can acknowledge it.</i> <i>When I need help, I ask for it.</i>	<i>I know myself well (strengths, qualities, skills, dreams, weaknesses).</i> <i>When I need help, I ask for it.</i>	<i>I know myself well (strengths, qualities, skills, dreams, weaknesses).</i> <i>When I need help, I ask for it.</i>
Attitude or behaviour to adopt to show higher self-esteem	<i>I'm proud of my successes, efforts and strengths.</i>	<i>I'm attentive to my own needs and desires.</i>	<i>I accept myself as I am.</i>

- 5 • To conclude, hand out the last **student worksheet C** and ask each student to write a short letter of encouragement to one of the characters. Once they have finished, ask those who want to do so to share what they have written.

discussion points

Even if your strengths and interests aren't the same as those of other family members or friends, they are valuable and worthwhile just the same. It is sometimes hard to feel you are different, but you should know that being different never means "not being good," "not being smart" or "not being normal."

Thanks to our personal strengths and interests, we can flourish and feel happy.

Our strengths don't wipe out our weaknesses, right? The opposite is just as true. Our weaknesses don't erase our strong points either. No one is all good or all bad: we are made up of strengths and weaknesses. That's what makes each of us unique!



activity 4

Dominic's advice column



Dominic writes a blog for teenagers. Every week he gets emails from youth telling him about some of their problems, asking questions or looking for help. We have chosen four emails that Dominic received during the year.

Dear Dominic, I have a problem and I hope you can help me.

Last year, my mother asked me to go with her when she was doing volunteer work. She reads to disabled people in a specialized centre. At first, I didn't feel like going with her, but then I really liked it: the people were nice and very happy to see us. Since then, I've gone there with or without my mother about a dozen times. There's one person in particular that I like to read to, Rose-Marie, an 87-year-old grandmother. My friends find it weird that I do volunteer work. Every time I want to talk to them about it, they laugh at me and say hurtful things about older people. Should I stop going? I feel like I'm not normal; no one else at school does this. I don't want to lose my friends, but I really like feeling useful. What do you think I should do?

confused

Dominic, I don't know if you can help me but I need help. I'm 13 and I'm just a regular girl. At least, I thought so. I just moved to a new neighbourhood so I don't know anyone at school. I'm really interested in cars and I want to be a mechanic, like my dad. At my old school, everyone knew this and it didn't bother them at all. But at my new school, people seem to think this is strange. I'm having a hard time making friends, especially with girls. People often tell me that it isn't normal to like cars so much and that I should do "girl things." I feel really lonely and I think no one understands me. Maybe they're right. It's true that at the garage where my dad works, there are no women mechanics. Am I abnormal?

not a real girl

Hi Dominic, I hesitated for a long time before writing to you because I was afraid my friends would find out. But I feel so bad that I decided to do it. I've been feeling really lost for a while now. I feel like I'm not interested in things other people my age are interested in. I'm 14 years old and I still like doing what I did when I was 10 or 11 (building models, drawing plans for a cabin, making dams in the river behind our house...). My friends aren't interested in these types of things anymore and they tell me to grow up. I want to be an engineer and I'd like to get better at it. My parents encourage me to do what I like, but they don't understand that I feel mixed up. I don't have anyone to talk to. Am I too childish? Should I stop doing these things and start doing things other kids my age are doing?

lost

activity 4

Dominic's
advice column



	<i>desperate</i>	<i>not a real girl</i>	<i>lost</i>
Problems			
Strengths/ Qualities			
Attitude or behaviour showing positive self-esteem			
Attitude or behaviour to adopt to show higher self-esteem			

activity 5

What influences self-esteem?

time required
40 to 50 minutes

suggested approach

- 1 • In a large group, open a discussion by asking students whether or not we have a role to play in maintaining or developing our self-esteem. Do we have the power to change things? How? Is there an age limit for improving self-esteem? Are there ways of doing it? Discuss this topic for a few minutes.
- 2 • Hand out the **student worksheet** and ask students to fill it out individually.
- 3 • In a large group, go over each statement and, with a show of hands, count how many students respond correctly. Initiate the discussion. Ask them to explain their answers. Which of these realities can we influence or control?
- 4 • Do they know of any other factors that could influence self-esteem? Ask for a few answers and then ask students what they think of the following factors. Do they have any power over:
 - *Their brothers' and sisters' attitudes*
 - *The city in which they were born*
 - *Their parents' values*
 - *Their height*
 - *The perception other people have of them*
 - *The colour of their eyes*
 - *Other examples*

objective

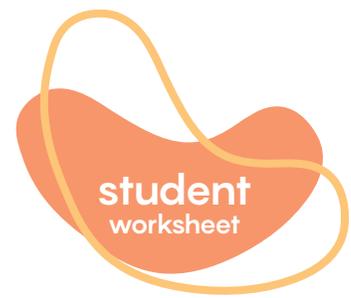
understand what influences self-esteem

discussion points

Many things can influence self-esteem. We have control over some factors and less control over others. The best way of maintaining or developing self-esteem is to focus on the things we can change, that is, over which we hold some power.

activity 5

What influences self-esteem?



Many things can influence self-esteem.

Check off the ones that you think can influence it.

- My ability to express my needs and desires
- A positive group of friends who value me
- Self-confidence
- A feeling that I have control over my life
- My successes
- A positive way of talking to myself
- The ability to set realistic objectives
- The ability to overcome difficulties and learn from my mistakes
- The ability to recognize my strengths and qualities, that is, to know myself well
- The capacity to feel proud of myself
- Good coping skills
- A positive attitude toward life
- Realistic expectations of myself
- A feeling that I can take risks and try new things while giving myself the right to make mistakes
- Anything else?

activity 6

Self-esteem: what's it for?

time required
40 to 50 minutes

objective

*shed light on the advantages
of having good self-esteem*

suggested approach

- 1 • Ask students why they think it is important to develop healthy self-esteem. Discuss this issue for a few minutes and then confirm that there are many advantages and that they have an impact at various levels (physical, social, mental, emotional and school).
- 2 • Ask students to complete the **student worksheet**.
- 3 • In a large group, ask them to give their answers, after you've read out each statement. Are they aware of any other beneficial effects of high self-esteem?

discussion points

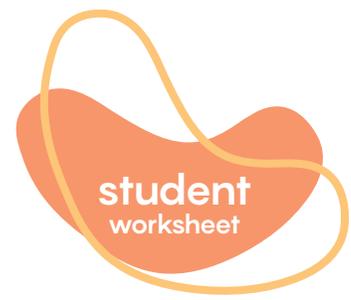
Maintaining and developing self-esteem requires constant personal effort. We have an important role to play in the way we see ourselves.

Developing higher self-esteem allows us to:

- *Make choices that are consistent with our values and respect who we are*
- *Believe in ourselves*
- *Take care of ourselves (e.g., healthy habits, stress management)*
- *Find our place within a group*
- *Assert ourselves, say what we think*
- *And more*

activity 6

Self-esteem: what's it for?



Which of the following statements can be considered beneficial effects of self-esteem?

- Feeling good about yourself
- Having self-worth and feeling useful
- Having confidence in yourself
- Being able to better connect with others
- Greater self-respect
- A sense of belonging
- Emotional stability, which is linked to self-acceptance
- Better self-awareness
- A more positive perception of life in general
- More tolerance for difficulties because you've developed good coping skills
- A more realistic perception of your strengths, skills, qualities and weaknesses (sense of competence)

module 3

Conclusion and wrap-up

The conclusion and wrap-up can be done at the end of each module or later on, when reviewing the notions discussed throughout the program.

time required
15 minutes

objective

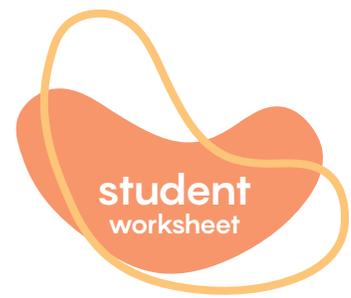
review the most important points of module 3

suggested approach

- 1 • In a group, ask students to state what they have learned or taken away from the activities of Module 3.
- 2 • Hand out the **student worksheet** and ask students to fill it out individually.
- 3 • In a group, ask students to share their answers.



conclusion and wrap-up



Self-esteem

what is self-esteem?



- 1 • During the module, you were asked to think about your personality. Which of your strengths or qualities do you particularly appreciate? Name two.

- 2 • Many things can influence self-esteem. Name two.

what influences self-esteem?

Things I have power over:

- My capacity to overcome difficulties and learn from my mistakes
- My successful experiences
- Realistic expectations of myself
- My ability to recognize my strengths and my qualities
- Good coping skills
- Other.

Things I don't have power over:

The perception others have of me, my height, the place where I was born, etc.

what does having high self-esteem change?

- *I feel more comfortable approaching other people.*
- *I have greater self-respect.*
- *I can assert myself, say what I think.*
- *I have more confidence in myself.*
- *I feel valued, useful, appreciated, etc.*
- *I have more confidence in life.*
- *I have more tolerance for difficulties since I know how to adapt.*
- *I take care of myself.*

Don't forget! Your strengths don't wipe out your weaknesses, right? So your weaknesses don't wipe out your strengths either. You're neither perfect nor useless: you're a combination of strengths and weaknesses. That's what makes you unique!



adapt



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Montréal Branch