

Self-esteem through a trauma lens

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Support for Success



The Art of Individuality



Outline



Introduce Support for Success



Self-esteem – what is it? What supports good self-esteem



Theories on self-esteem



Trauma-informed practice



How to integrate trauma informed principles and self care into work

Welcome...

We'd love you to participate but please use the 'raise hand' facility to ask questions and contribute when others are talking.

Please be considerate to others – this should be a safe, open and reflective space to learn.

If you need live captions, click on the 3 dots at the top of your screen.

Please do take 2 minutes to provide us with some feedback – we love to hear what you think. The QR code and link will be provided later.

Some of these Practice Week sessions are being recorded for learning purposes. Your presenter will let you know at the start.

Thank you!



Self care planning

Support for Success

- Who are we? Support for Success began in 2021 – we offer community based therapeutic interventions for young people in care and young people who have left care.
- We offer support around emotional resilience; reunification; placement stabilisation
- We utilise an integrative approach, workers from a range of backgrounds from education; social work; psychology; psychotherapy.

What is self-esteem?

- Our perceptions and evaluation of ourselves in relation to our worth, abilities, value
- Fundamental to our sense of identity
- Beliefs we hold about ourselves
- Impacts our thoughts, feelings, behaviours
- Ability to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses



Masking



autistic masking can look like ...

Izzy @autieselfcare

Pretending to be interested in a topic

Using a different voice tone

Copying the ways other people dress

Forcing myself to pay attention & focus on a conversation but zoning out

Constantly monitoring myself

Hiding my distress towards certain sensory stimuli, eg. loud noises

Reading off a pre prepared social script

Bottling up my thoughts & feelings

Socialising when I don't want to

Practicing conversations & facial expressions

Cancelling plans last minute

Putting on an act - feeling overwhelmed & anxious but hiding it to appear calm & at ease

Not using fidget toys when out in public

Copying others' body language & facial expressions

Talking more or less than I'd like to

Taking on the persona of another person. Eg. YouTubers/ a fictional character

Leaving early or going to the bathroom to avoid a meltdown

Hiding my stims

Trying to go unnoticed

Hiding special interests

Trying to be 'normal'

Forcing myself to make more/less eye contact

Overthinking about how I appeared in past conversations

Hiding behaviour that is "socially unacceptable"

Know The Difference

Self-Esteem

Low Self-Esteem

- Self-criticism
- Difficulty accepting compliments
- Perfectionism
- Avoidance of social situations
- Trouble setting boundaries
- Feeling undeserving of happiness
- Feeling inadequate
- Difficulty making decisions



High Self-Esteem

- Confidence
- Embracing unique qualities
- Resilience
- Maintaining healthy boundaries
- Willingness to try new things
- Ability to accept compliments
- Empathy and compassion towards themselves

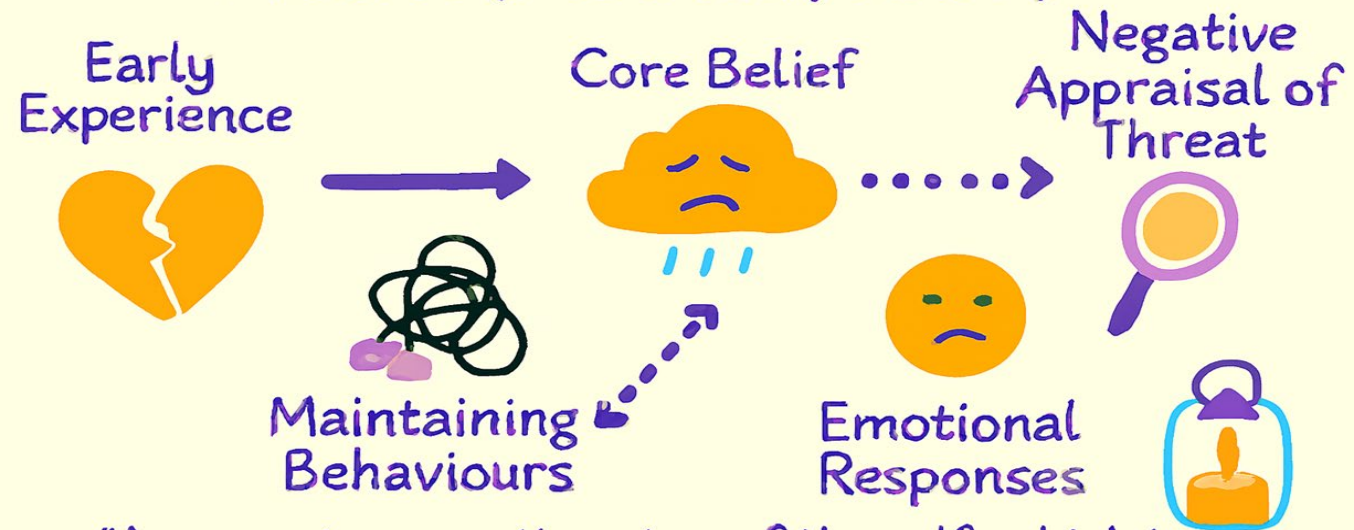
Self-esteem

- Activity:
- What supports your self-esteem personally? Either historically or in present life
- Feel free to put anything that you feel comfortable sharing within the chat



CBT approach

Low Self-Esteem Core Belief Model (Fennell, 1997)



"A pervasive negative view of the self, which is maintained by biased thinking and unhelpful strategies."

Core beliefs

- What are your own core beliefs? Spend 2 minutes thinking about this



Psychodynamic

- Importance of early relational experiences and memories
- Emotional availability and validation as key
- Feeling safe, seen, valued
- Internalised messages from caregivers
- Creates self-image
- Unconscious scripts and patterns result from this



Attachment theory

- Self-esteem strongly linked with early relationships with caregivers
- Secure attachment (consistent, responsive caregivers) = higher self esteem and more positive self-concept
- Insecure attachment (inconsistent, or neglectful caregiver responses) = lower self esteem
- Creates internal working models of ourselves and others, which then influences perception and expectations



Adding a trauma-informed lens

- If we think about the young people we are supporting; the things that we know about self-esteem and what impacts it....how do we think this will impact our young people's views of themselves?
- Think of two young people – one with secure attachment, consistent parenting and positive early relational experiences, one without – how might this look different?



Impact of trauma upon self-esteem

- **Before trauma (often):**

- “I am safe/”
- “I matter”
- “Adults can be trusted”
- “The world is a safe place”

- **After trauma (may become):**

- “I’m not safe”
- “It’s my fault”
- “People will hurt or leave”
- “The world is a dangerous place”



What Others See

- Self-criticism
- Low confidence
- Relationship anxiety
- Perfectionism
- Avoidance

Only a small part of the story

Tip of the Iceberg

Below the Surface

I'm not good enough
I'm unlovable
The world is unsafe

Shame Fear &
Hypervigilance
Emotional numbness

What's Happening Inside

Safety
Validation
Connection

At the Base

- Avoidance
- People-pleasing
- Emotional shutdown
- Control/over-functioning

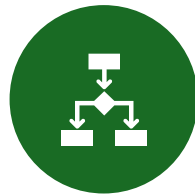
These responses helped them survive



Trauma-informed practice



Safety



Choice



Collaboration



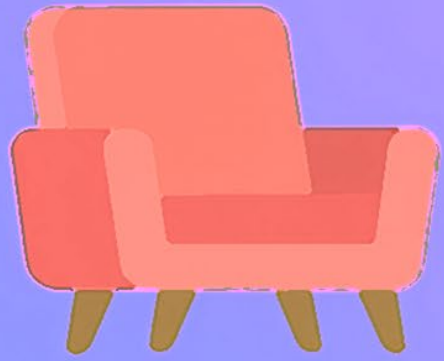
Empowerment



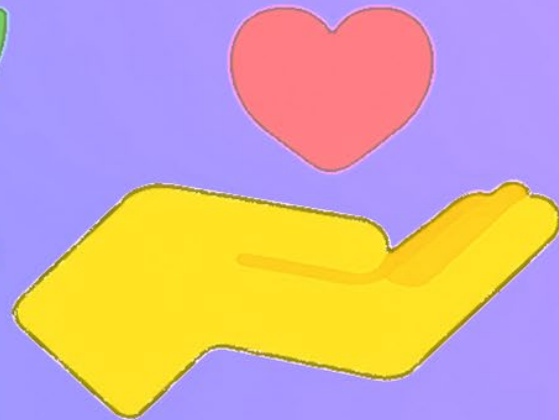
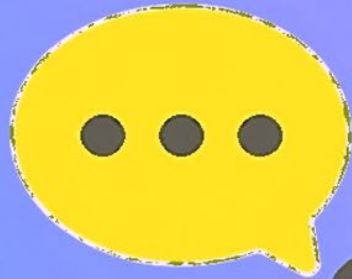
Cultural
consideration



Trustworthiness



INTERVENTIONS



Trauma informed practice to support self-esteem

- Be specific
- Praise effort not outcome
- Be sincere and genuine
- Praise immediately
- Focus on Improvement
- Use non-verbal cues
- Avoid mixed messages

GROWTH MINDSET AND SPECIFIC PRAISE

Nurturing self-esteem through a trauma lens



Generic Praise
Emphasizes fixed traits rather than growth

Specific Praise
Recognizes and encourages effort and persistence

Growth Mindset
Highlighting a child's process and resilience helps build confidence and a belief in their ability to learn and improve.



“Well done, you’re so smart!”

“I can see how hard you worked!”

Highlighting a child's process and resilience helps build confidence and a belief in their ability to

PARENT'S GUIDE TO A GROWTH MINDSET

Big Life Journal

www.biglifejournal.com

PRAISE

FOR:
EFFORT
STRATEGIES
PROGRESS
HARD WORK
PERSISTENCE
RISING TO A CHALLENGE
LEARNING FROM A MISTAKE

NOT FOR:
BEING SMART
BORN GIFTED
TALENT
FIXED ABILITIES
NOT MAKING MISTAKES

SAY:
"YOU TRIED VERY HARD AND YOU USED THE RIGHT STRATEGY!"
"WHAT A CREATIVE WAY TO SOLVE THAT PROBLEM."

THE POWER OF "NOT YET"

SAY:
"YOU CAN'T DO IT YET."
"YOU DON'T KNOW IT YET."
"BUT IF YOU LEARN AND PRACTICE, YOU WILL!"

GROWTH MINDSET
YOU CAN GROW YOUR INTELLIGENCE

VS

FIXED MINDSET
YOU CAN'T IMPROVE NATURAL ABILITIES YOU WERE BORN WITH

BRAIN CAN GROW

SAY:
"YOUR BRAIN IS LIKE A MUSCLE. WHEN YOU LEARN, YOUR BRAIN GROWS. THE FEELING OF THIS BEING HARD IS THE FEELING OF YOUR BRAIN GROWING!"

FAILURES AND MISTAKES = LEARNING

SAY:
"YOU CAN LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES."
"MISTAKES HELP YOU IMPROVE."
"LET'S SEE WHAT OTHER STRATEGIES YOU CAN TRY."

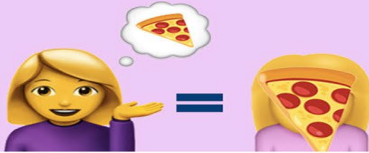
ASK

"WHAT DID YOU DO TODAY THAT MADE YOU THINK HARD?"
"WHAT NEW STRATEGIES DID YOU TRY?"
"WHAT MISTAKE DID YOU MAKE THAT TAUGHT YOU SOMETHING?"
"WHAT DID YOU TRY HARD AT TODAY?"

RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN MINDSET
BE MINDFUL OF YOUR OWN THINKING AND OF THE MESSAGES YOU SEND WITH YOUR WORDS AND ACTIONS.

EMOTIONAL REASONING

assuming that because we feel a certain way, that we think must be true



OVERGENERALIZING

seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw



LABELLING

assigning labels to ourselves or other people



JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

IMAGINING WE KNOW WHAT OTHERS ARE THINKING OR PREDICTING THE FUTURE



MAGNIFICATION (CATASTROPHISING) & MINIMIZATION

blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important



"DON'T MAKE A MOUNTAIN OUT OF A MOLEHILL"

UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES



BALANCE
eating disorder treatment center™

MENTAL FILTER

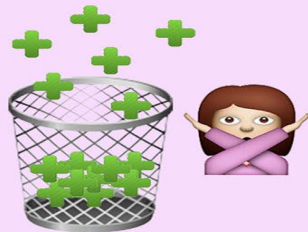
ONLY PAYING ATTENTION TO CERTAIN TYPES OF EVIDENCE. NOTICING OUR FAILURES BUT NOT SEEING OUR SUCCESSES



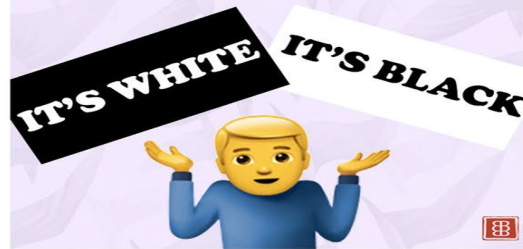
"I AM A FAILURE"

DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE

DISCOUNTING THE GOOD THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED OR THAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR SOME REASON OR ANOTHER

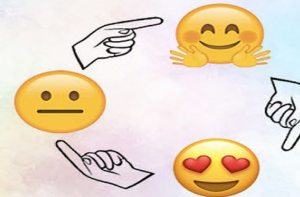


ALL OR NOTHING THINKING



PERSONALIZATION

blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.



SHOULD/MUST

using critical words like 'should,' 'must,' or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed. If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is frustration.

"DON'T SHOULD ON YOURSELF OR OTHERS"



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What we know can help

- Find the source of the beliefs about oneself – early experiences; recent or long standing; lack of support systems
- Discover who you are – values, beliefs, boundaries
- Positive data log
- Re-write your story – affirmations, journalling, small achievable goals
- Build support systems
- Practice self-compassion
- Self-reflection and self-awareness
- Work to build healthy boundaries

Rebuilding Self-Esteem After Trauma

- **Therapeutic Support:** Engaging in therapy (e.g., CBT, EMDR) to process traumatic memories and challenge negative self-beliefs.
- **Self-Compassion:** Practicing self-care and developing self-compassion to counteract self-blame.
- **Setting Small Goals:** Achieving small, measurable tasks to rebuild a sense of competence and confidence.
- **Building a Support System:** Connecting with supportive friends, family, or support groups to break the cycle of isolation.

Signposting and resources

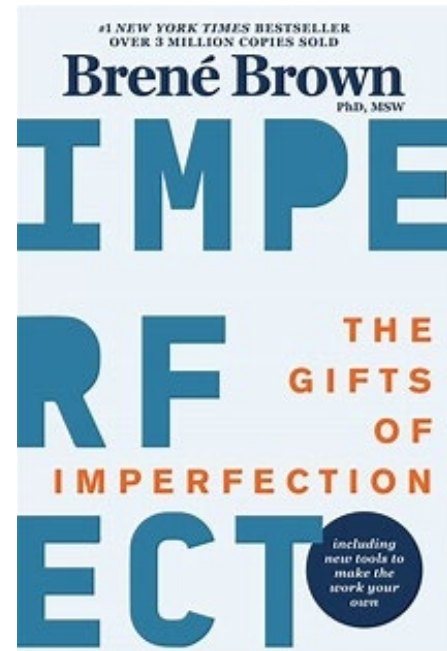
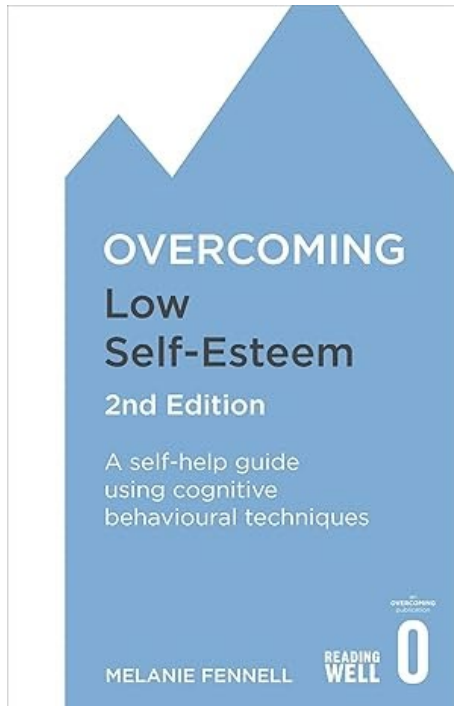
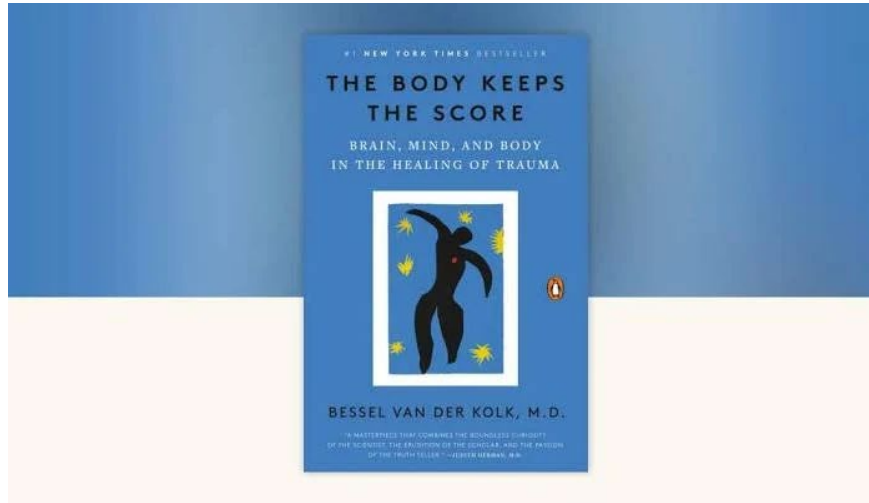
- [Social Workers Toolbox](#)
- [A Neurodivergent Teen's Guide to Identity and Belonging](#)
- [Twinkl-Self Esteem Activities](#)
- [Childrens Guide to understanding trauma](#)
- [Relax Kids Self-Esteem Toolkit](#)
- [Self-Compassion by Kristin Neff](#)
- [CBT Worksheets for Low Self-Esteem | Fennell Model](#)
- [Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK](#)



A guide to understanding and managing trauma



Involving the Black Diaspora in Trauma Informed Practice | NHS Region



Importance of self-care

- Bucket analogy – think about what adds into this
- What are the small moments that bring you joy
- What can you do in 5 minutes – go for a walk; meditation; get outside;



Takeaways

- Self Esteem is shaped by our early experiences
- Self-esteem looks different in everyone
- Relationships are key in supporting self-esteem
- Self esteem is not fixed
- Remember your trauma-informed lens - do with not do to
- Remain curious
- Hold in mind what you received/need & what you would have liked to have received/needed to hear at that time
- It takes a long time to build self-esteem - perseverance & consistency



Feedback



