

## Self-Esteem

**What is self-esteem?** Self-esteem is how we value ourselves; it is how we perceive our value to the world and how valuable we think we are to others. Self-esteem affects our trust in others, our relationships, our work – nearly every part of our lives. Positive self-esteem gives us the strength and flexibility to take charge of our lives and grow from our mistakes without the fear of rejection.

Following are some outward signs of positive self-esteem:

- Confidence
- Self-direction
- Non-blaming behavior
- An awareness of personal strengths
- An ability to make mistakes and learn from them
- An ability to accept mistakes from others
- Optimism
- An ability to solve problems
- An independent and cooperative attitude
- Feeling comfortable with a wide range of emotions
- An ability to trust others
- A good sense of personal limitations
- Good self-care
- The ability to say no

**What is low self-esteem?** Low self-esteem is a debilitating condition that keeps individuals from realizing their full potential. A person with low self-esteem feels unworthy, incapable, and incompetent. In fact, because the person with low self-esteem feels so poorly about him or herself, these feelings may actually cause the person's continued low self-esteem.

Here are some signs of low self-esteem:

- Negative view of life
- Perfectionist attitude
- Mistrusting others – even those who show signs of affection
- Blaming behavior
- Fear of taking risks
- Feelings of being unloved and unlovable
- Dependence – letting others make decisions
- Fear of being ridiculed

## How can you raise low self-esteem?

Feelings of low self-esteem often build up over a lifetime, and letting go of ingrained feelings and behaviors is not an easy task. It may take time, hard work, and it may require professional counseling. But there are some simple, positive thinking techniques that can be used to help improve self-esteem. These are called affirmations.

Using affirmations to stop negative self-talk is a simple, positive way to help increase self-esteem. Affirmations are encouraging messages we can give ourselves every day until they become part of our feelings and beliefs. Affirmations work best when a person is relaxed. But since people are often upset when they are giving themselves negative self-messages, they may need to counter negative messages with positive ones.

For example, replace the message "I made a stupid mistake, and I am no good at this job," with "Yes, I made a mistake but I have learned from it, and now I can do a better job." Begin each day by looking in the mirror and giving yourself a positive message. The following affirmations can help you to work toward a positive self-image:

- I respect myself and others
- I am lovable and likable
- I am confident, and it shows
- I care about myself
- I am creating loving, healthy relationships
- I am a good friend to myself and others
- I accept myself just as I am
- I look great
- Life is good, and I like being a part of it

Site: [www.PRPonline.net](http://www.PRPonline.net)

**ASAP offers confidential, cost-free assessment, counseling, consultation and referral services to all UCDHS faculty, staff, and their family members. Whether the problem is work-related, personal, career or relationship focused, ASAP can assist you in evaluating and resolving the problem.**

**You can call ASAP at 916-734-2727 for an appointment.**