

Self Esteem and Young People

“Healthy self-esteem means feeling positive about yourself...”

Personal development skills are often overlooked in children and young people. It is the means by which all young people are supported in their moral, physical, emotional, cultural and intellectual development according to their needs, and regardless of their social and/or economic backgrounds. It promotes their wellbeing and enables them to develop their potential as healthy, enterprising and responsible citizens in our society.

The personal, learning and thinking skills are also integral to the personal development of young people and the roles they take on in life – as family member, friend, neighbour, partner, parent, employee, employer, citizen and member of communities. The first stage of personal development is self confidence/esteem.

Self esteem is basically how we feel about ourselves and the problem is that how we feel about ourselves often times affects the way we relate to others. Self esteem is a healthy thing and it influences everything in a young person's life. Low self-esteem is a serious issue that needs to be addressed because if not dealt with, it can lead to things like drugs, crime, self harm and even suicide attempts.

There are a range of factors that can cause a young person to have low self esteem and while society and the media play a major part in how young people perceive and value themselves, there are other determining factors more closely related to the home environment, and the child's upbringing that needs to be taken into account such as peer pressure, family life and bullying.

Since we live in an imperfect world, some young people do not value themselves because of the experiences they have been through in life. Some researchers have even argued that girls as a group generally focus on their looks – especially on what they don't like about themselves. A 2000/2001 research commissioned by the Samaritans and carried out by the Centre for Suicide Research, University of Oxford suggest that four times more girls self harm than boys and that 10 per cent of teenagers aged 15 and 16 years old have deliberately self-harmed - seven per cent in the previous year.

It is sad that many teenagers are hurting and need someone to reach out to. It is also sad that some believe that they need to be someone other than who they really are and have fallen into the trap of comparing themselves to others; the media do not help as well.

Teenagers with low self esteem will have low self confidence, they will not believe in themselves or their abilities to achieve success. This will affect the way they relate to others, the choices they make and how they view themselves. For example, a young person with low self esteem is likely to isolate themselves from others and could be prone to depression. Young people with low self esteem are likely to be affected by peer pressure because they want to please everybody or be liked by everyone. We

all want to be liked but when the need to be liked affects our judgment, it can be detrimental to our emotional well being.

Project Outline

It is essential that we develop the self esteem/confidence of teenagers because a healthy self esteem is the beginning of personal development. When they believe in themselves they can now start to develop themselves positively. It can be hard to convince other people to believe in your abilities, if you don't believe in yourself.

Our mentoring sessions will enhance young people's self confidence and build motivation. It will create an environment where their uniqueness, achievements and passions are encouraged.

Project Aim

- To encourage the young people to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing.
- To empower young people with the training and skills needed to develop their full abilities so they can become responsible members of society and so that their life conditions can be improved.
- To empower young people so that they can benefit their community and grow up to be responsible members of society.
- To reinforce self-confidence through individual and group recognition of their unique qualities.
- To develop the skill of speaking in public and to link that skill with the young person's capability of actively learning at school, leadership and active citizenship.

Outcome

Our programs will help young people to approach, confront and overcome a negative sense of self which might prevent them from realising their potential. These will be achieved through a series of sessions aimed at building self esteem, developing good social skills, understanding and managing feelings and making right choices in life. It will create opportunities for young people to develop skills that will help them to realise their potential.

- The overall outcome will be improved self-confidence which will lead to improved motivation and realisation of potentials. As young people learn to value themselves their self-esteem will be reinforced and they will recognise their unique qualities.
- They will develop public speaking skills and have increased confidence.
- Their motivation will be renewed and they will be encouraged to develop and use their gifts and talents.

Dupe Makinde
Director, God's Grace Foundation
www.Godsgracefoundation.org