

LEARNER GUIDE

Unit 18 – Building Self Esteem



RSAS Training Strategy Project 2018

Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS)



A message from
our CEO, Sally
Sinclair.

Dear colleague

Welcome to the NESAs Remote School Attendance Strategy Training Project. We recognise the importance of the role that you are doing and we are committed to supporting you throughout this role with a range of training offerings.

We appreciate the positive impact of your role within your local community and the opportunities you create every day by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to engage in school. We also understand that your role will be both rewarding and challenging, and we are confident that the training we are offering will assist you further in your role.

NESAs RSAS Training Strategy Project will involve a blended training approach that includes the following:

- Face-to-face forums with each forum running for three days in your local community
- Online training that will offer short courses that you are able to select
- Individual coaching and mentoring throughout your training
- The option to complete accredited units that will count towards a formal qualification

Our team are here to support you and we are available if you have any questions about this programme or the training you are completing. Our office number is (02) 9119 3090 and our email address is rsas@nesa.com.au. We are available Monday – Friday between 9.00-5.00pm (Sydney time) - please feel free to give us a call or pop us a line; we are more than happy to discuss any questions you may have.

We wish you all the best in this important role and we look forward to working with you throughout this project.

Yours sincerely

Sally Sinclair
CEO

Building Self-esteem

Objectives

This unit covers the techniques required to build self-esteem in yourself and others. It will assist RSAS officers in recognising poor self-esteem in the young people they work with and will help you to respond to situations where self-esteem is a major factor.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, participants will

1. Have explored their own levels of self-esteem
2. Developed core competencies in self-esteem at a personal level
3. Have techniques they can use to help build self-esteem in others
4. Understand how self-esteem is impacted and how it impacts on individuals and groups
5. Have developed an improvement plan

Resources

The resources provided are a Learner Guide, Workbook and Trainer Guide.

This Learner Guide provides a resource to support the activities in the Unit 168 Workbook. It is designed to help trainers, RSAS officers and members of the community better understand how RSAS officers better understand the importance of self-esteem and how to develop it.



This icon represents action when an individual task needs to be completed. You will find instructions on how to complete these tasks in the Unit 18 Workbook



This icon represents action when a task is to be completed as a group. You will find instructions on how to complete these tasks in the Unit 18 Workbook

Part 1: How do you rate your self-esteem?

What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is about believing in yourself; feeling comfortable with yourself; feeling able to cope with most things in life. It is also about respecting yourself and believing you can be happy and have a right to be happy.

People who have high self-esteem are

- Confident
- Good problem-solvers
- Feel comfortable with different emotions

They also

- Have the ability to say no
- Set personal boundaries
- Learn from mistakes
- Are assertive, but not aggressive

On the other hand, people with low self-esteem

- Are self-critical
- Are unable to accept compliments
- Have a lot of negative self-talk
- Blame other people for their circumstances
- Feel anxious
- Feel unloved and unlovable
- Are fearful of being ridiculed
- Feel shame and guilt

Self-esteem is important in being able to have positive conversations and good relationships; in building your resilience; in doing your job. It's important for kids to be happy and successful at school.

So why do some people have high self-esteem and others have low self-esteem?

We are all born with a high level of self-esteem. Think of how assertive babies can be and how unaware they are about what people think of them. They think they are fine. They know if they smile, they'll get lots of attention and hugs. They have huge self-esteem.

It is the things that happen to us along the way to becoming adults, and after becoming adults, that change this. However self-esteem is not something that is fixed. Our self-esteem can change depending on our physical health; our relationships and the things that happen to us.

Our levels of self-esteem can also vary from time to time and in different areas of our lives.

All of us sometimes will suffer from low self-esteem. We might have some areas of high self-esteem and others where our self-esteem is lower. For example someone who has recently split with their life-partner may feel unlovable and their self-esteem may be low in that area, though they may feel confident in other ways.

Whatever our level of self-esteem we can work on building it and we can also help other people build their self-esteem too.



Activity 1: Self- test

The start of building a higher level of self-esteem is to find out what our current level is. Try the simple quiz that you will find in your Workbook.

When you finish it, your trainer will explain what the results mean.

Part 2: Building your self-esteem and helping others to build their self-esteem

Release your happy hormones



It is impossible to feel good and bad at the same time. When we realize this, we can strive to do the simple things that make us and others feel good.

When you studied positive conversations, you will remember learning about oxytocin, the hormone that builds trust, and how it is released with positive words and body language. There are also happy hormones called endorphins and these are released when we smile and laugh and do things we enjoy. Finding more things to smile or laugh about automatically makes you feel better about yourself and the world around you.

Even remembering good things that have happened to us will release happy hormones. When someone is depressed and their esteem is low, they only ever think of the bad stuff. Helping them to remember the good things, and helping them smile, is a first step to building better self-esteem.



Activity 2: Share your happiest memories and take notice of how you feel when you talk about them.

Respect yourself and treat others with respect

When we suffer low self-esteem it can be because just one or two things or a few words have fooled our brain into thinking we are worthless. You will probably remember this is because of the release of that other hormone, the unhappy one that is caused by stress, called cortisol. When this happens we start acting as if we are worthless and that starts a vicious cycle with people treating us as worthless.

Hard as it may seem, we can resist the feelings of worthlessness by acting **as if** we feel confident and everyone respects us, by respecting ourselves. When we are helping kids this might mean:

- Encouraging them to comb their hair and look neat and tidy before leaving for school
- Encouraging them to stand and walk straight
- Helping them take care of their books and pens and pencils
- Speaking respectfully to them

Your body sends messages to your brain. That means if you slump you automatically start to feel bad. If you stand tall, you feel more confident. One of the signs of very low self-esteem in young people is self-harm. Encouraging them to look after their appearance and complimenting them on their appearance helps more than most people realize.

My self-esteem story

We never had much money at home because my father was often on the grog. However my mother had very high self-esteem and she encouraged that in us kids. She always looked good and kept the house clean and tidy. She made sure we were neat and clean when we left for school. She made sure we did our homework. I was a scholarship kid and that made it hard because I travelled two hours to school every day and two hours home. I didn't have a lot of friends at the school because I didn't have the time to hang out with them after school. It often made me feel lonely and unpopular. When that happened my mother reminded me how lucky I was to be in such a good school and told me how proud she was of me.

That stuck with me and I became a teacher.

When I started teaching I had a boy in my class who was a really big kid and taller than me. Because he had bad body odor all the other kids called him Stink. He was very aggressive and known as a trouble maker. He looked pretty frightening too.

His real name was Harold, and though some of the other teachers called him Harry, I called him by his real name, Harold. Calling people by their real name is a sign of respect. My mother always called us kids by our full names.



You only live once

This made a big change in the way Harold treated me and he was always very respectful. Sometimes he would wait for me and help carry my books. I always thanked him and told him how thoughtful he was.

During our talks I found out he had no mother and lived with his father and five brothers. His mother had died in child-birth having him, and he felt a lot of guilt about this. He felt bad about himself a lot of the time. He had very low self-esteem and he got into a lot of fights.

A little bit at a time, I encouraged him to improve his appearance. For example one day he told me I smelt nice and I thanked him for the compliment and told him smelling nice was important to me. From then on, he started washing more often and even asked for advice on deodorants.

After a year, Harold looked and acted like a changed person. His self-esteem had grown and he was happier. He no longer felt he needed to fight to get respect.



Activity 3: When you respect yourself, other people will respect you

- Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- Discuss what respecting yourself means to you.

Build your confidence

We build our confidence when we do new things and succeed. The more things we try to do, the more we succeed and the more confident we feel.

- Making mistakes is normal.
- Failing sometimes is normal.

It is only when we become anxious about making mistakes or failing that we lose our confidence.

We can all learn to do new things. Just think what we have achieved so far. So many of these things we take for granted. Even walking and talking (and sometimes in two languages) are big achievements when you consider how we started life.



Activity 4: Try something new

1. What new things have you tried in the last year?
2. What are three new things you would you like to do in the next year?

When answering these questions you might like to consider such things as learning a new skill, becoming a RSAS officer, doing some study or travelling somewhere you have never been before.

Part 3: More techniques for building self-esteem

While improving self-esteem takes time, there are some simple steps that can be taken that will help. Try these:

1. Take an inventory of your current strengths and weaknesses

If you have completed the unit on resilience, you will already know your strengths. Concentrate on how well you do things. Building on your strengths rather than concentrating on your weaknesses is a first step to building self-esteem. We all have weaknesses but people with high self-esteem rarely think about their weaknesses.



2. Stop negative mind chatter

When you catch yourself saying a negative comment towards yourself, simply say STOP! Out loud.

Say STOP when you catch yourself saying negative comments

3. Be grateful

Gratitude is the number one mood lifter. The rule is to think of three good things that happened to you every day before you go to bed at night and be grateful.



4. Be around positive people.

Just by being around positive people, it can help you to look at situations differently.

5. Set small goals

each day/week and then celebrate when you achieve the goal. As we saw in the unit on resilience, meeting goals is important to our self-esteem and resilience. Celebrations can be simple things like going for a walk after work or visiting an elder in the community for a cup of tea.

6. Don't strive for perfection

It's really great if you want to do things well, but keep in mind that perfection isn't possible.

7. Don't beat yourself up when you make a mistake

Everyone makes mistakes - it's human nature. Why should you be any different? When you stuff up, don't stress, just learn from it and move on.

8. Focus on the things you can change

There's no point wasting all your energy thinking about things that you can't change. Why don't you have a think about some of the things that are in your power to control and see what you can do about those?

9. Do things that you enjoy

If you're doing things that you enjoy you're more likely to be thinking positively. Make time for fun and relaxation every day.

10. Be helpful and considerate

Not only is helping people a great way to boost the moods of others, but you might find that you feel better about yourself after doing something particularly excellent.



Follow your passion

11. Give someone a compliment

While all of the above techniques are a great start, the very best one to help others build their self-esteem (and improve your own at the same time) is to give a heart-felt compliment or an expression of gratitude. We are often bombarded by criticism which can steadily break down our esteem, where a compliment builds it. Most people are not so good at giving or receiving compliments, so it is worthwhile practising.



Activity 5: Giving and receiving compliments

Instructions

- What is the best compliment you have ever received? Share it and write it down on the whiteboard or flip chart. Explain how the compliment made you feel.
- Now stand or sit in a circle, with one person in the middle. Each person is to say one thing they admire about the person in the middle (even if it is simply having the courage to stand in the middle) and the person in the middle is to simply reply 'Thank You'.
- Reflect on how this exercise has made you feel.



Part 4: The effects of low self-esteem

Now you can see the importance of high self-esteem, you won't be surprised to learn that low self-esteem has been shown to be associated with a number of problems. Some of these are:

- Chronic ill- health
- Increased drug use and alcoholism
- Depression
- Violence
- Poor social relationships
- Inability to concentrate
- Low motivation
- Self-destructive behaviours

Worst of all is that one of the symptoms of low self-esteem is that people refuse help. This happens because they deep down feel that they don't deserve to be helped or they don't believe that anyone can help them.

Maintaining your own self-esteem and building self-esteem in our kids is an important job for RSAS officers because this way we build the self-esteem of our communities. It makes them better places for us to live.

Part 5: Making a Plan

Maintaining our own self-esteem and building the self-esteem of the kids and people around us won't happen by accident. We need to plan what we will do.

Creating goals

Creating goals keeps you focused on achieving great outcomes for the RSAS. A goal using the SMART approach can help you keep on track. It can help you to:

- Have a clear understanding of the outcomes to be achieved
- Be challenged and motivated because it has relevance to your needs or the needs of your community
- Commit to achieve the outcomes because it has been negotiated to take into account your individual situation and needs
- Focus on your timeline to complete activities and achieve your goal

You may have studied SMART goals in earlier studies, but it is worthwhile refreshing your memory on what these are.

SMART questionnaire and worksheet

Specific	<p>What specific job goal are you aiming for?</p> <p>What level of support do you need to achieve your goal?</p> <p>What non-vocational activities are to be completed?</p> <p>What qualifications to do they want to achieve?</p>
Measurable	<p>What evidence will show that you have reached the goal?</p> <p>How will your personal life change as a result of the goal?</p> <p>How can you your track progress and outcome?</p> <p>Can the goal be measured?</p>
Achievable	<p>Do you have the ability with assistance to reach your goal?</p> <p>Are there any barriers to achieving your goal?</p> <p>Do you have the resources to achieve your goal?</p> <p>What support can be used to help you achieve the goal?</p>
Realistic	<p>Is the service and support you require available in the community?</p> <p>Are courses available in the local area?</p> <p>Is the goal relevant to RSAS?</p> <p>Is the goal realistic?</p> <p>Can your goal be reached whilst you are working on the RSAS program?</p>
Timeline	<p>Do you have a timeline for achieving your goal?</p> <p>Have you set short-term goals to get to your larger goals?</p> <p>What timelines need to set given you are busy working on the RSAS?</p>

Sample RSAS job related SMART goal:

To ensure that the kids are engaged in creative activities on the bus each day.

Sample RSAS self-esteem related SMART goal:

Be respectful to the kids and insist they show respect to each other, to their teachers and to me starting today.

Making your plan

Once you have a goal, then you need to work on how you are going to achieve it.

Keep in mind that you need a starting date, some actions, and a way of monitoring how you are going towards your goal.

Sample action for the respect goal:

Say hullo to each kid every morning using their name. Tell them I am pleased to see them.

Self-esteem plan

My Professional Goal is:

Date	Action towards goal	Completed/ Comments

My Personal Goal is:

Date	Action towards goal	Completed / Comments

Need help with sticking to your plan?

Ask you RSAS mentor or supervisor to work with you on your plan.

Remember we rarely achieve anything alone. Everybody needs a little help. How about meeting every week and sharing what you have achieved with the team – and celebrate!



Good Luck !



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