

How to support your own self-esteem and confidence



Self-esteem is how we value and perceive ourselves. It's based on our opinions and beliefs about ourselves, which can sometimes feel really difficult to change. Our self-esteem can change as we become parents, and as well as looking after our own, we also start looking to protect our children's self-esteem.

What can affect your self-esteem?

The things that affect our self-esteem can differ for everyone. Your self-esteem might change suddenly, or you might have had low self-esteem for a while – this can make it hard to recognise how you feel and make changes.

Often, difficult or stressful life experiences can be a factor, such as:

- experiencing abuse, prejudice, discrimination or stigma
- relationship problems, separation or divorce
- physical or mental health problems
- bereavement
- problems with employment, money or housing
- worries about your appearance and body image
- trying to meet high expectations, either from yourself or other people.

You may have experienced one or more of these difficulties, or had other experiences that aren't listed here - or there might not be one particular cause.



How to improve your self-esteem

Being a parent can be a great and really rewarding experience but it can also be hard at times and you might feel like your confidence gets knocked. If this happens, it could help to:

Avoid comparing yourself to other parents Try to remember that what other people choose to share about themselves isn't always the full picture, and comparing ourselves is unrealistic.

Try to challenge unkind thoughts about yourself It can be easy to put yourself down but if you find yourself doing this, it can help to ask: "Would I talk to, or think about, a friend in this way?"

Practice being assertive Try to learn how to stop for a second, and breathe before automatically agreeing to something you don't want to. This may get easier the more you do it, and can help maintain your energy and wellbeing.

Try to notice the good things Try to celebrate your successes, no matter how small they may seem. Take time to praise yourself and notice the things you do well.

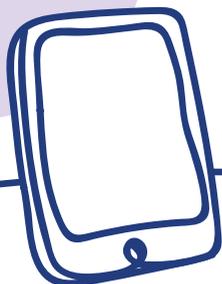


Build a support network Having support from the people around you can really help. Try spending time with the people you care about or connecting with other parents going through similar experiences.

Look after yourself Taking time for you can sometimes be really hard when you're a busy parent but it's really important to set aside some time to relax, get enough sleep, and do something you enjoy like watching a new TV series or going for a walk.

You may find these ideas helpful, but remember that different things work for different people at different times. Only try what feels comfortable and useful for you at the time.

For more tips on looking after your self-esteem or for other mental health information, visit the Mind website at mind.org.uk



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