

1.2 Full Esteem Ahead!

Grade Band: 3-5

Objectives:

Students will:

- Analyze their personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Create an art project that illustrates their unique physical and non-physical characteristics.
- Set personal goals.
- Draw conclusions about why it's important to like yourself.

Materials:

- "Self Inventory" student activity sheet – one for each student
- Paper and pencils
- Art materials
- Cameras, video cameras, access to Power Point - optional

Time Frame: 1-2 class periods

Instant Expert:

Self-esteem is the collection of beliefs we have about ourselves, and having good self-esteem is an important part of health. Kids who feel good about themselves tend to have an easier time making decisions, handling conflict, working toward goals, and resisting negative pressures. Self-esteem gives kids the courage to trust and value themselves enough to want to care for and protect themselves. They are less likely to give into peer pressure or to make decisions that are harmful or unhealthy.

Although building self-esteem is a lifelong process, the foundation of self-esteem is established in childhood. That foundation can do much to help a child deal with difficult life issues as they are encountered. As we teach kids the importance of Energy Balance, it's important to make sure they feel good enough about who they are to *want* to make sensible, balanced food choices and stay active.

Having self-esteem doesn't mean liking everything about ourselves all the time. It's okay to like some things and want to change others. However, what is important is that we encourage students to accept themselves and try to improve their lifestyle in a healthy, realistic way.

As part of this activity, students are asked to complete a "Self Inventory" that asks them to evaluate and reflect upon their own lifestyle and related choices. In one set of questions, students are asked to reflect upon a decision they make that is good for their health and a decision they make that is not good for their health. While any health-related answer is acceptable, it may be easy or natural for students to relate food choices as "good" or "bad" in this exercise. You will want to ensure that students understand

that no foods are "good," or "bad," and that all can fit into a sensible, balanced diet using moderation! Nutrition-related answers could include not hydrating properly, not eating breakfast, or not eating a balanced diet from all food groups.

Procedure:

1. Read the following letter from the advice column in a newspaper to students:

Dear Helpful Helen,

Help! I really don't like myself. I don't like the way I look. I don't think I do anything good. I try but nothing I do is right. I'm not very smart or athletic or funny. I don't have any friends. What should I do?

Your sad friend, Chris

2. Divide students into pairs or groups and have them write a sentence or paragraph from "Helpful Helen" back to Chris. Have students share their responses.
3. Put the word, "self-esteem" on the board or a flip chart. Ask students to read the word and share what they think it means.
4. Ask:
 - Do they think Chris has high self esteem? Why or why not?
 - Do they know anyone with high self-esteem? How do they know this person has high self-esteem? What are some of the benefits of having high self-esteem?
 - Do students know anyone with low self-esteem? How do they know this person has low self-esteem? How could they help someone with low self-esteem?
 - Why is it important to have high self-esteem?
 - Does self-esteem mean liking everything about yourself? (No).
 - If there are things you don't like about yourself, what can you do? (Set healthy, realistic goals to change or improve them).
5. Tell students that an important first step in building self-esteem is taking a realistic look at their strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes. This helps them know what goals are realistic to pursue, and what they could improve without worrying about what others think. Distribute the "Self Inventory" student activity sheet to students.
6. Give students ample time to complete the sentences on the activity sheet.

7. Then ask students to use the information on the sheet to create a “ME” product or project that illustrates “who” they are. It can be a drawing, collage, paragraph, Power Point presentation, photographic essay, video, blog, paragraph, or even a commercial!
8. Have students present their projects to the class and ask them to share what they learned about themselves and how they can apply this information in their lives. How can it help them set healthy and realistic goals for themselves? Encourage students to set at least one goal for themselves that they can achieve in a healthy way.
9. Conclude the lesson by asking students what role they think self-esteem has in a healthy lifestyle. If they feel good about themselves, are they more likely to take care of themselves and make healthy decisions? Why or why not?

Extensions:

- Have students write letters to each other sharing all of the qualities they like about each other.
- Have students create a class exhibit or museum that displays their “ME” projects.

Family Connection:

One of the most important sources of self-esteem for young children is within their family. Challenge students to share their “ME” projects with their family members and create a FAMILY project that tells the story of their family.

Community Connection:

Sometimes we feel best about ourselves when we have an opportunity to help others. Encourage students to share ways they help others in the community, or come up with a way that the class can visit a nursing home or animal shelter to volunteer their time.

Standards Connections:

National Health Education Standards

- Standard 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Standard 6: Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

National Reading/Language Arts Standards:

- Standard 5: Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Standard 12: Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).