

Managing Self-esteem

IN ADOLESCENCE

Lifelong Mental Health Management: Adolescence

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Adolescents most at risk from self-esteem issues

How individuals feel about themselves is important throughout the lifespan, but during adolescence it is especially significant.

Factors that can affect their self-esteem include:

- ◆ physical appearance
- ◆ athletic ability
- ◆ achievement in school
- ◆ relationships with parents
- ◆ support from peers

It is important to confront negative thoughts of self-worth before they lead to additional problems.

Parents can help by discussing self-esteem issues with the adolescent and determining the cause or causes of any critical thoughts. Focusing on those characteristics that the youth is confident about can help improve self-esteem.



For example, recognizing the academic achievements of an adolescent can help alleviate concerns about athletic ability.

Alternatively, direct assistance to an adolescent in an area they are struggling with (math, basketball, social skills) can also boost self-esteem.

Low self-esteem in adolescents can lead to:

- ◆ depression
- ◆ suicide
- ◆ eating disorders
- ◆ delinquency
- ◆ other adjustment problems

How to increase self-esteem in adolescents

- ◆ Emotional support from others can influence an adolescent's self-esteem.
- ◆ Identify the cause of low self-esteem. What part of the adolescent's character are they not happy with?
- ◆ Encourage adolescents to identify and celebrate characteristics that they are happy about.
- ◆ Achievement can improve an adolescent's self-esteem: Teach them new skills; Help them to deal with problems instead of avoiding them.