



Lines open Mon - Fri 10am - 6pm

0808 801 0338

Free to call from all landlines and mobiles

Body Image and Self Esteem

We all have a picture in our mind of how we look to others – our shape, size and general appearance.

Having either a positive or negative body image is really nothing to do with how you look or what shape you're in – it's all to do with how you feel about yourself.

Feel confident and good about yourself and you will have a positive body image. Conversely, if you have low self-esteem, you'll have a poor body image.

Pressure

Much is written about the pressure on young men and women to conform to the media-generated 'perfect' body or face. Daily doses of beautiful celebs and models in magazines and adverts do little for the average teenager's self-esteem.

But there is a bit of a fight back happening, with the emphasis on being happy in your own skin and making the best of your body as it is. The Dove campaign featuring 'real' people as opposed to models was one example, while shows like Gok Wan's show how anyone can look good on a budget.

Healthy is the new 'perfect' – if you feel good, you'll look good, then you'll feel good.....it's an upward spiral.

Self-esteem

This is about valuing yourself. It's not about feeling better than others or being smug. It's being kind to yourself and feeling good in your skin.

Good self-esteem is one of the building blocks of life. You should be able to hold your head high and feel proud of yourself, your ambitions and your achievements – whatever they may be.

And, if you respect yourself, you will be more likely to respect others. So having good self-esteem is not only good for you but good for those around you too.

What leads to low self-esteem?

Everyone can suffer from low self-esteem at some point in their lives. This could be down to lots of difficult things happening at once eg. breaking up with someone, failing an exam, getting ill.... It's not your fault. Don't be hard on yourself. No one is good at everything but we are all good at something. Sometimes problems with low self-esteem can run a bit deeper than that. Talking to someone such as a counsellor can really help with this.



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What raises self esteem?

Top Tips

- Take care of yourself and your health
- Eat well, get enough sleep, take exercise
- Respect yourself and others
- Be fair on yourself
- Accept and value the things you cannot change
- Set yourself a challenge or goal
- Be positive
- Stand up for what you believe in

Sometimes low self-esteem isn't something you can change all by yourself and you need someone else to help you. Seeing a counsellor can help you work out why you have low self-esteem and help you change that.

For more info....

If you worry about your weight to excess and have issues about your weight and food, download the factsheet on Eating Disorders or visit www.b-eat.co.uk

The BBC has some good information about self esteem, visit www.bbc.co.uk/health/conditions/mental_health/emotion_esteem.shtml

www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk is a website from the British Association of counsellors and psychotherapists. It has information about counselling, what it is and what to expect and you can search for counselling services in your local area.

Last updated April 2012