

Parent Talk

FEBRUARY 2026

Building Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is something many people (adults included) struggle with. As kids transition into pre-teens, teens, and young adults, self-esteem issues can spike as they are going through natural periods of growth and development. Read on for some tips to help your growing kids build self-esteem skills!

Identify Problem Areas

Every person has their own specific things they are self-conscious about. A good first step to building confidence is to identify these areas and try to understand what about them makes someone uncomfortable. Maybe it's speaking in front of a group or there's something about your physical appearance that you dislike. Make a list and then break that down into specific situations or things that impact your self-esteem.

Avoid Negative Thinking

Once you know which specific things impact your self-esteem, try to get into the mindset of changing the negative thoughts you may have around them. If your challenge is speaking in front of others, instead of telling yourself "I'm so horrible at this, I'll never learn", try reframing that to be something more positive like "I'm really struggling with this, but I want to learn how to do it so that others can hear my voice. My voice has value". Even if you're not ready to commit to working on something, you can still develop a positive mentality around it.

Get Outside Your Comfort Zone

Poor self-esteem can often make us feel like we're done before we've even started. Struggles with confidence can make it so we put ourselves out there less and less for fear of rejection. This is a completely understandable feeling, but one you should aim to challenge! Start small by thinking about little ways you can push yourself to do things you wouldn't normally. If we continue to use the example of not being able to speak in front of others, break down that large goal into smaller chunks. Start by talking to yourself in front of a mirror. Then try speaking to just one trusted friend or family member. Then two. Then a smaller group. You'll naturally build your confidence as you slowly hit each milestone.

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Featured Resources



Behavioral Activation for Depression

In this seminar, we will discuss the symptoms of depression for children and adolescents, and the use of behavioral activation to treat depressive symptoms.

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What Behavioral Activation for Depression Treatment Looks Like

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for depression often involves a component of behavioral activation, whether it is the core of the treatment, or if it is used alongside other skills. Behavioral activation aims to intervene in the cycle of depression that keeps people from engaging with the activities that bring enjoyment and meaning to their lives.

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The Science and Theory of Behavioral Activation for Depression

When your child is struggling with depression, it can feel challenging to identify ways to help them manage their emotions and improve distressing symptoms. Many decades of research on interventions for depression has told us that a combination of therapy and medication is often most effective. The best approach for each child or teen may look different, and getting an assessment and specific recommendation from a mental health professional is the ideal way to search for and select treatment. An approach for treating depression, that has a large evidence base, is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Within CBT for depression, treatment often involves an intervention called behavioral activation.

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