

Self-Esteem and Confidence

Building a kinder relationship with yourself

Self-esteem is the way we understand our worth; confidence is our belief that we can manage a particular situation. Both can be affected by criticism, rejection, trauma, discrimination, masking, comparison or repeated experiences of feeling different. Low self-esteem is learned, which means a kinder relationship with yourself can also be learned.

You do not need to become someone else to be worthy. Confidence can grow from treating yourself as someone who matters.

Notice the critical voice

Self-criticism often sounds like fact: 'I always fail' or 'Everyone else copes better.' Try writing the thought down and asking whose standard it represents, what evidence is missing and whether you would speak this way to someone you love. The goal is not forced positivity; it is a fairer and more complete view.

Separate worth from performance

Your value is not determined by productivity, appearance, income, relationship status or how useful you are to others. Mistakes provide information but do not define your identity. Practise language such as, 'That did not go as I hoped, and I am still worthy of care.'

Build confidence through evidence

Confidence often follows action rather than arriving first. Choose a step small enough to complete: ask one question, practise for five minutes, attend briefly or request help. Afterwards, record what you did, what helped and what you learned. Repeated believable evidence is stronger than demanding that you simply feel confident.

Protect what shapes your self-view

Notice relationships, accounts and environments that leave you feeling smaller. Increase contact with people who are consistent, respectful and able to celebrate you without competition. Boundaries can protect self-respect. You are allowed to limit criticism, comparison and access to you.

Practise compassionate accuracy

Self-compassion is not pretending everything is fine. It is responding to difficulty without adding cruelty. Name what is hard, remember that struggle is part of being human and ask what support would be useful. If shame or self-hatred is persistent, therapy can help explore its roots safely.

A gentle reflection

What feels most important for me to remember from this resource? What is one small, realistic form of support I could offer myself today?

This resource offers general information and is not a diagnosis or a substitute for personalised medical or mental health care. If you are in immediate danger or unable to keep yourself safe, contact emergency services or an urgent crisis service where you live.