



Self-esteem and Choice

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What is self-esteem?

- Latin word that means to estimate.
- Levels of self-esteem are determined by how we 'estimate' ourselves.
- Estimation is arrived at through comparison with other people.
- Favourable comparison with others will lead to our self-esteem being high
- Unfavourable comparison with others will lead to our self-esteem being low

Why is self-esteem important?

Esteem can have an impact on:

- the way we think, affecting whether our outlook is positive or negative
- our levels of confidence
- our attitude to attempting tasks and our ability to succeed
- our self image
- our perception of what we deserve
- our happiness

Links with domestic violence

- Low levels of self-esteem increase vulnerability to experiencing domestic violence
- ‘The effects of experiencing domestic violence include low self-esteem’

(Kirkwood, C. (1993) Leaving Abusive Partners, London: Sage)

The situation for young people...

Media and images

- * Images of bodily perfection
- * Rewarded for physical attributes

The impact

- * Levels of self-esteem directly linked to self image
- * **Young women's self esteem linked solely to appearance being approved by men**
- * Girls are becoming detached from their bodies "how do others see me?" rather than 'how do I feel?'

- * Eating disorders are on the rise
- * Increase in number of young women having breast implants
- * Negative impact on physical/mental health and affect capacity to reach potential.
- * Young people more likely to have sex outside a stable relationship and see sex as a physical function devoid of empathy.

The Sexualisation of Young People – Dr Linda Papadopoulous (2009)

The situation for young people...

Why girls have sex...

“It’s to keep the boy happy...to make him like you more and to please him and to stop him from having sex with other girls. Sometimes it hurts but you don’t say anything because then he’ll just leave you for someone that will do all the stuff he wants and please him better.”

The Sexualisation of Young People – Dr Linda Papadopoulous (2009)

Young women in Nottingham

A snapshot

- Violence exists in both healthy (passionate and deserved) and unhealthy relationships (undeserved)
- Boyfriends weren't to blame if they cheated. Men can't control themselves, they have needs, women should know better
 - 'What I don't know, don't hurt me, but what I know will hurt the bitch.'
- 2:1 women to men in Nottingham, therefore women have to fight over men and fight to keep them. (Statistics confirm that the ratio is 50:50)

What impact would raising self-esteem on relationships?

- Alter a young person's reason for being in a relationship
- Increase a young person's appreciation of how people deserve to be treated in a relationship
- Aspire to have a healthy relationship
- Increase the likelihood of the relationship lasting and being healthy

- With increased self esteem young women will put themselves forward for more opportunities and will achieve more, the greater the young person's self-esteem, the greater their aspirations.

(GEM Project 2010)

Increasing self-esteem

Everyone can build their own self-esteem, either by themselves or with support

- Understand what makes us feel good
- Acknowledging what we do well
- Learning something new
- Having goals and achieving them
- Acknowledging the qualities we like about ourselves
- Doing things we enjoy
- Thinking about what we want in a relationship
- Seeing friends
- Having a hobby
- Appreciate that we are all individuals with different strengths

Choice

- Our choices impact everything in our lives, from day to day tasks to huge life decisions.
- Our understanding of the choices we have and the choices we make can have an impact on:
 - The way we think, affecting whether our outlook is positive or negative
 - Our attitude to attempting tasks and our ability to succeed.
 - Our perception of what we deserve and other people deserve
 - Our happiness.

Choice

- Choice process:
 - Presented with more than one option, “The opportunity to choose” (Oxford English Dictionary)
 - gain information about options
 - Develop pros and cons list
 - Make a decision



Links with domestic violence:

Power

+ Control

+ Choice

The situation for young people...

Media and images

- * Highly sexualised images of girls and women
- * Hyper-masculation of boys

The impact

- * Messages are limiting and restricting: Be macho, strong, and don't show your emotions.
- * Predominant message for young boys is to be sexually dominant

- * Eating disorders are on the rise
- * Increase in use of body enhancing substances such as anabolic steroids.
- * Contribution to sexist attitudes and beliefs, sexual harassment and violence against women.

The Sexualisation of Young People – Dr Linda Papadopoulous (2009)

Young men in Nottingham

- Believe they have the right to grope young women.
- Assumed roles of men and women.
- If a girlfriend cheated, wouldn't have a choice but to 'knock her out'.
- Young men who have experienced domestic violence as a child

Increasing understanding about choices

- Help identify the choices that young people do have
- Encourage young people to think about consequences
- Challenge offensive, abusive or stereotypical comments that are made
- Raising self-esteem
- Encourage accountability and responsibility for actions and consequences

Jo goes up to bed but realises there is a film on TV that Jo has been waiting to watch for a long time, It is a school night and Jo needs to make a decision about whether to watch the film or not.

Watches the film and went to bed at
1am



Pressed snooze, this made him late for
school

Doesn't watch the film and goes to bed at
10pm



Got up, made it to school on time

Jo put on trainers to walk to school, Jo tried to put school shoes into the school bag, but there wasn't enough room as the football was in it.

Jo left school shoes behind



Jo got a detention for having
the wrong shoes

Jo grabbed a carrier bag and took them to
school



When Jo was asked by a teacher to put the
school shoes on Jo was able to avoid a
detention

Jo usually enjoys maths as Jo is generally quite good at it. Jo has a maths lesson this afternoon.

On question one – Jo went to bed at
1am



Jo couldn't concentrate, the maths teacher
was angry at Jo's lack of concentration and
shouted at Jo several times

On question one – Jo went to bed at 10pm



Jo was able to do maths at Jo's usual standard
and was praised by the maths teacher

Jo arrives home from school, Jo's mum tells Jo that she has organised for them to go to the cinema on Thursday after school.

On question two Jo didn't take
school shoes



Jo has a detention on Thursday night
and won't be able to go to the cinema

On question two Jo took school shoes



Jo avoided detention so is able to go to the
cinema