

INCREASING YOUR TEENAGER'S CONFIDENCE

Summary

Confidence can be an issue for many teenagers. Not only are they at an age when they are dealing with physical and emotional changes; they also have to think about how best to choose the right subjects, courses and possible careers for the future. For many the intensity they feel and the expectations they perceive (from themselves and others) can seriously affect their self confidence. This fact sheet outlines ways parents and carers can practically support their teenager and boost their confidence.

Introduction

The emotional well-being of teenagers is important as it can affect the way they behave and influence their learning. Increasing their confidence will make them believe in themselves more and feel they are worthwhile. With teenagers particularly, words need to be chosen carefully so they are not perceived as negative. They can very quickly believe that they are 'no good' at anything if you don't regularly point out the good and extraordinary things they frequently achieve and the effort they put in to do this. A positive comment needs a lot of reinforcement to be believed; a negative comment only has to be said once and it will be remembered!

Eight ways to build self-esteem in your teenager:

Praise

Find things to praise your child for as often as possible. Think about a 4:1 ratio – four positive comments for every negative one. Don't take the positive things for granted – make sure they know you recognise them and say so.

Avoid negative labels

Don't call your child stupid. It is so much better to focus on the behaviour and not the child. You could instead say: "That was a daft thing to do".

Avoid comparisons

Try not to compare your child to other children, especially brothers and sisters. They often do this themselves and it can seriously undermine their self-confidence! We are all unique, so focus on the child doing his/her personal best.

Assist with understanding

Teach your child that making mistakes is an essential part of the learning process and we all make mistakes, even adults. There is an argument that if we aren't making mistakes, then we can do everything and are not being challenged or learning anything new. Try and think of some practical examples where you have made mistakes and learnt from them; then applied that understanding to do it better next time.

Divide tasks into chunks

Help your child to break down tasks and learning into smaller and more manageable chunks – this can make learning much less daunting. If possible, give practical examples of how you do this e.g. doing a bit of ironing once or twice a week rather than leaving it all to pile up for a month and become outfacing. If getting started on a piece of work is an issue, it can help to skip the introduction, get on with the main body of the work and then come back to the introduction later. Mind mapping and essay plans all help to structure thoughts. Some examples are given at the end of this fact sheet.

INCREASING YOUR TEENAGER'S CONFIDENCE

Celebrate success

At every opportunity remind your child of all the things they can do and what they have achieved, both academically and practically, but also.....

Praise effort

There is some evidence that only praising achievement can make young people complacent. Much success is the product of hard work as well as raw ability. David Beckham had natural ability, but he was also the last person to leave the training sessions. Most people have to work at things in order to improve. Find examples that your child can relate to.

Positive thinking

Help your child to think positively and have a positive attitude to their learning. Teach your child to turn "I can't" thoughts into "I can" by building their self-esteem, acknowledging what they have already achieved and how they can learn from any mistakes they have made in the past.

Further Information

Parent Voice

"I've gained some fantastic tips about how to help my daughter have the confidence she needs to succeed. I can't wait to put some of them into practice!"

Mother of Penny, aged 14

Log On

P52 Social and Emotional Development Advice, NAGC Fact Sheet on social and emotional development of gifted children and young people www.nagcbrtain.org.uk/parents.php?id=92

Youngminds is a charity concerned with mental health of young people, has a free parent helpline. Produces information and support booklets for children and adults.

www.youngminds.org.uk

Got A Teenager is an online support community run by the charity Family Lives (formerly Parentline plus) and is for anyone with a teenager in their lives www.gotateenager.org.uk

Read On

Self Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality and Development by Carol S Dweck

Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell

The Buzz: A Practical Confidence Builder for Teenagers by David Hodgson

Confident Teens: How to Raise a Positive, Confident and Happy Teenager by Gael Lindenfield

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers by Sean Covey

How to Talk so Teens will Listen and Listen so Teens will Talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Many books can be ordered from via our website shop: www.nagcbrtain.org.uk/shop.php

INCREASING YOUR TEENAGER'S CONFIDENCE

Reflect

- Which of the 8 ideas to increase confidence would be most effective for your teenager?
- Robert Collier said, "Your chances of success in any undertaking can always be measured by your belief in yourself." What can you do to help your child to believe in him/herself?

Examples of Mind Maps

