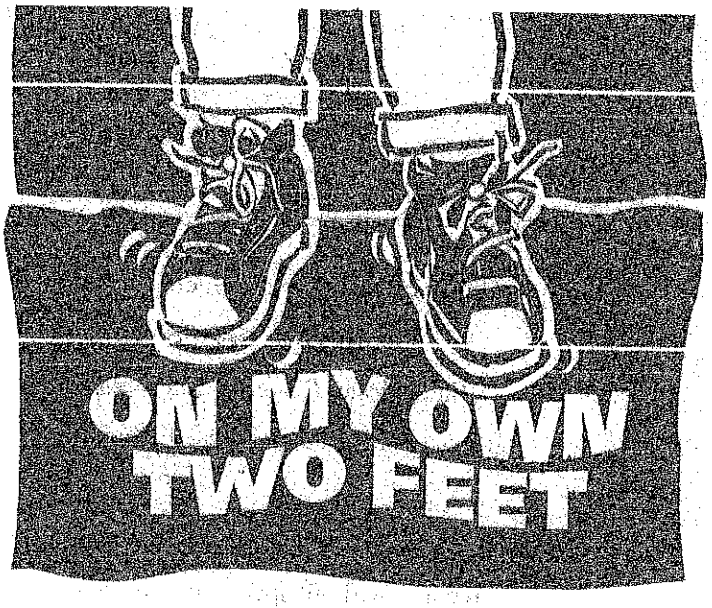

Angie Davis

IDENTITY AND SELF ESTEEM

This book is one of seven constituting
"On My Own Two Feet"
Educational Resource Materials
for use in Substance Abuse Education

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IDENTITY AND SELF ESTEEM

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

SELF ESTEEM is a concept used to convey the positive regard you have for yourself. It is based on your judgement of your own worth and importance. One's **self-picture** or **self-image** is influenced by one's interaction with others. It reflects the messages received and **taken in** about oneself from 'significant others' whether these messages are explicit or implicit, verbal or non-verbal, valid or invalid. It is important to realise that small children tend to accept without question most of what they're told about themselves. At that stage of development, children are unable to discriminate between valid and invalid criticism and believe many of the negative messages they receive.

If people can gain an understanding of how they can build and support their own self worth it will help considerably in the primary prevention of substance abuse. This understanding will also support preventive work in relation to many personal and interpersonal problems. Teachers who piloted these materials emphasised the need for repeated attention to this area of self esteem, especially for students with a poor self image.

One stage in developing self esteem is receiving validation for just being yourself. In order to develop a sense of well being in oneself and to go out into the world with confidence, to try out what one has learned, it is important that the child or young person receives certain messages from others. Parents are the ideal source of these messages, but any significant adult can give the child these messages – grandparents, other relations, child-minders, youth leaders and teachers.

Children need to know that they are loved and wanted. They need to experience consistency and trust and they need to have clear limits set for them.

It is natural to want to be accepted, but if your view of yourself depends excessively on how others rate you, it will be very hard to act autonomously, to make a stand against peer pressure, to take risks, to defend a position and especially to handle criticism and rejection. A goal of identity education must be to help people understand how they have come to have their current self image and to appreciate their own uniqueness and value even when other don't. This work on identity is therefore at the heart of healthy growth and development and will contribute to many areas of the child's life.

LOW SELF ESTEEM

While low self esteem my not have a major part to play in the early stages of drug use, especially in relation to legal drugs, it is an important factor in the progression to abuse of drugs. Any effective work done in building self esteem in school can contribute in a very important way to the prevention of drug abuse in later life. It is crucial for responsible behaviour. Students with low self esteem are very vulnerable in interpersonal relationships; they assume that others do not like them and they feel relatively isolated and lonely. Rosenberg (1965) found adolescents with low self esteem to be awkward in social relationships; they maintained a defensive front; they indulged in boasting with a consequent fear of exposure; they were unable to maintain relationships in a consistent way; and they felt misunderstood and suspicious of others.

Low self esteem is manifested in

- Extreme concern with what other people think.
- A lack of autonomy and individuality.
- Boasting or wanting to impress in order to disguise low self esteem.

Low self esteem comes from such growing up experiences as:

- Absence of affection, encouragement, challenge.
- Conditional love and acceptance.
- Criticism, ridicule, sarcasm, cynicism.
- Physical beatings and abuse.
- Absence of recognition and praise for achievements.
- Uniqueness not being reinforced.

It is reinforced within certain kinds of family and school systems.

Troubled systems which foster low self esteem are characterised by:

- Criticism for being different.
- Punishment for mistakes.
- Distorted communication.
- Inflexible rules.

HIGH SELF ESTEEM

What does high self esteem do for you?

Having a strong rooted sense of self worth enables one to cope with both failure and success, to survive mistakes, disappointments and even rejection by others. It is built through the experience of being accepted by others but does not depend excessively on it.

A person with high self esteem feels good about all aspects of him/herself and accepts his/her limitations. People with high self esteem show less anxiety and less stress under failure. They are more socially effective, confident and ambitious. They look and feel good, they are effective and productive and they respond to other people and themselves in healthy, positive ways. They make better relationships, are less defensive, are able to handle criticism and don't brag and boast so much. People with self confidence and high self esteem are less likely to abuse drugs.

HOW IS HIGH SELF ESTEEM DEVELOPED?

Coopersmith (1967) related it to:

1. Almost TOTAL acceptance of the child by his/her parents i.e. unconditional love.
2. Clearly defined and enforced limits of behaviour.
3. Respect for and latitude for individual action within defined limits.
4. High parental self esteem.

SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF ESTEEM

High self esteem is very important in all areas of school performance. If the school wishes to compensate as far as possible for some of the effects of society's shortcomings in its treatment of children, then we must ask how the school enhances or erodes the self esteem of students.

This means that we must evaluate the signals sent to students about themselves. A sense of belonging is very unlikely to occur in a system which defines one as useless or as a troublemaker. Such policy areas as whether to opt for streaming, banding or mixed ability, and whether to withdraw

students for extra help or commit resources to team-teaching for weaker classes can have serious implications for how students define themselves.

We must also find ways of building up self respect in those we teach and of raising awareness among all members of the school about how supportive, sensitive and positive behaviour towards each other can nurture self esteem.

In nurturing systems:

- individual differences are appreciated;
- mistakes are not only tolerated but are seen as an opportunity for learning;
- communication is open;
- rules are flexible.

These features of nurturing systems apply, of course, just as much to the staff room as to the classroom. Indeed, staff development work which includes attention to developing positive interpersonal relationships, building up teacher's own self esteem and which offers opportunities to teachers for support and renewal, will all contribute to the development of a climate supportive of each individual in the school.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN USING IDENTITY AND SELF ESTEEM MATERIALS

In this section, attention is paid to defining who we are as individuals. An important part of this is our sense of family identity. With changing patterns in the 'traditional' family constellation of mother, father and children, it is inevitable that there will be children in differing situations. It is important to be sensitive to the particular background of students and to recognise and acknowledge a number of possible family scenarios.

In addition the issue of adoption can be a difficult one for adolescents. The teacher needs to be alert to other situations, which differ from the 'norm', and to help students feel that they are part of a world in which there is a variety of personal situations.

OVERVIEW OF THE MATERIAL

The materials in this section focus on building a strong sense of one's identity or sense of self and on exploring how self esteem can be nurtured and developed.

The section begins in Lessons 1, 2 and 3 with some basic group building and listening exercises. An ability to listen is a sound basis for all healthy and supportive relationships and merits more attention than given here, but excellent materials are available in some of the programmes referenced in the resource section of the School Handbook.

Exercises 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 help students explore who they are – their likes, dislikes and opinions, how they see themselves, the changes they are experiencing, their hopes for the future and the importance of family identity as part of their individual identity.

Lessons 10 and 11 involve looking at how we build this picture of ourselves through the messages we've received from others.

We then go on in Lessons 12, 13 and 16 to provide experiences of positive feedback and techniques for self support.

There are two exercises on body image and sex roles, as body image is crucial to one's overall image and self esteem and because during the pilot phase it emerged as a major preoccupation for some students. Society's expectation of how we 'should' be is examined in both Lessons 14 and 15.

LAYOUT OF THE MATERIALS

The Grid

A grid outlining the materials in this book is provided overleaf. The lessons identified, as *core* material should be given priority in planning a programme. Lessons identified as *optional* or reinforcer may be used to meet the needs of particular groups for a different approach or to revisit a topic.

The lesson plans are a guide. Individual teachers are encouraged to adapt them to take account of the particular needs of their class and their own teaching style.

In most lesson plans additional material is provided. Pages labelled 'Handout' are to be copied for distribution to students. Other material is for teacher reference. References for additional materials on the area addressed in this book can be found in the School Handbook.

IDENTITY AND SELF ESTEEM – AT A GLANCE

STAGE	TITLE	TOPIC	METHODOLOGY	LINKS WITH	CORE OR REINFORCER	SUITABLE FOR	DRUG CONTENT
Establishing safety and belonging in a group	1 Getting to Know You	Introductions. Ground rules.	Game. Work in pairs. Large group.	ID 2 'Learning to Listen'.	Core	AG	
	2 Learning to Listen	Listening skills.	Pairs. Class discussion.	ID 1 'Getting to Know You'. ID 3 'Group Building'.	Core	AG	
	3 Group Building	Drawing up a group contract.	Teacher input. Brainstorming.		Core	JAG	
Exploring personal identity 'Who Am I?'	4 I.D. Cards	Building a sense of personal identity.	Games. Small groups. Class discussion		Core	JLV	
	5 This is Me	Building a sense of personal identity.	Collage, small groups. Class discussion.	ID 4 'I.D. Cards'.	Reinforcer	JAG	
	6 Lifeline	Building of personal identity and group trust.	Drawing a lifeline. Small groups. Class discussion.	ID 4 'I.D. Cards'. ID 5 'This is Me'. ID 10 'That's Life!'	Core	AG	
	7 Changes	Growth and development in adolescence	Guided fantasy. Drawing. Pairs/fours. Class discussion.	ID 6 'Lifeline'.	Core	JAG	
	8 My Hopes	Hopes and dreams for the future.	Collage. Pairs. Display. Class discussion.	ID 5 'This Is Me'.	Reinforcer	JLV	
	9 Family Crest	Developing personal identity through family identity.	Drawing/worksheet. Small groups. Class discussion.		Reinforcer	JAG	

J = Junior Cycle, **S** = Senior Cycle, **V** = Verbal, **LV** = Less Verbal, **AG** = All Groups
In General exercises for JLV will work with older, brighter groups, but those marked S or V will not work with younger or less verbal groups

IDENTITY AND SELF ESTEEM – AT A GLANCE

STAGE	TITLE	TOPIC	METHODOLOGY	LINKS WITH	CORE OR REINFORCER	SUITABLE FOR	DRUG CONTENT
The influence of positive and negative messages on one's self picture	10 That's Life!	Effects of positive and negative messages.	Picture story. Colouring. Small groups. Brainstorming.	**AC** 15 'Criticism'.	Core	JAG	
	11 Sunshine	Effects of positive and negative messages.	Guided fantasy/music. Worksheets. Small groups.	**ID** 10 'That's Life!' **FE** 9 'Feeling Thermometer'. **FE** 10 'Expressing your Feelings'. **AC** 14 'Positive Self-Talk'.	Core Select one of the following: 11, 12A or 12B	AG	
	12 Option A: Feedback Circle	Building self esteem through experience of positive feedback.	Drawing. Feedback circle. Large group discussion. Pairs.	**ID** 10 'That's Life!' **ID** 11 'Sunshine'	Core Select one of the following: 11, 12A or 12B	AG	
	12 Option B: Positive posters	Receiving positive messages from members of the group.	Small groups. Drawing/poster work. Class discussion.	**ID** 10 'That's Life!' **ID** 11 'Sunshine' **AC** 14 'Positive Self Talk'.	Core Select one of the following: 11, 12A or 12B	AG	
Self Support Strategies	13 Think Positive	Things you can do when feeling down.	List positive actions. Write/draw strengths. Thought stopping.	**ID** 12A 'Feedback Circle'. **ID** 12B 'Positive Posters'. **AC** 14 'Positive Self Talk'	Optional	AG	
Stereotyping and Body Image	14 Sex Roles	Exploring stereotypes.	Collage. Display. Class discussion or questionnaire.	**ID** 7 'Changes'. **ID** 15 'Nobody's perfect'.	Core	AG	
	15 Nobody's Perfect (2 parts)	Body Image.	1) Case study/questionnaire. Small group. Class discussion. 2) Worksheet. Small groups. Design an ad. Positive feedback.	**ID** 12B 'Positive Posters'. **ID** 16 'Accepting Positives' **AC** 14 'Positive Self Talk'	Core	AG	
Self Support	16 Accepting Positives	Accepting positive things about ourselves	Guided fantasy. Small groups. Class discussion.	**ID** 10 'That's Life!' **ID** 11 'Sunshine' **ID** 12B 'Positive Posters'. **ID** 13 'Think Positive'.	Reinforcer	AG	

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ID Lesson 1
Core
AG

CORE CONCEPT: ***Familiarity with each other is essential to group bonding.***

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

PURPOSE

To initiate bonding within the group by helping the members to get to know each other.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This exercise is suitable for a group of any size where members don't all know each other. It will work with all age and ability levels. Sensitivity is required for students who may be living in single parent families, who are adopted or who are in care.

Links with: ID 2 'Learning to Listen'

Materials

A bean bag or sponge ball if using alternative games

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Name game
2. Introduction to pairs

3. Feedback to large group

Detailed Procedure

1. Name game

Students are seated in a circle facing the centre. The teacher says his/her name, the next person repeats the teacher's name, and her/his own name – "I am X and this is Y". The next person says, "I am X and this is Y and this is Z..." and so on until the last person has to introduce the whole class.

An alternative is to have the class stand in a circle; one person has a beanbag or sponge ball. S/he throws it to another person who must say his/her own name when catching it. This can go on for a while, and then the rule changes and you now must say the name of the person you're throwing to.

2. Introduction to pairs

The students introduce themselves to each other in pairs, A and B: e.g., where they were born, number of brothers and sisters in the family, where they live now, hobbies, hopes for the future, any special achievements.

Take about 3 minutes each.

3. Feedback to large group

A then introduces B to the whole class and vice-versa until everybody has been introduced. Give partners a chance to clarify any misinformation/ omissions.

ID Lesson 2
Core
AG

CORE CONCEPT: ***The ability to listen and the experience of being really listened to are at the heart of good relationships.***

LEARNING TO LISTEN

PURPOSE

To provide practice in better listening.
To help participants get to know each other.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This exercise is included to pinpoint the value of listening before going on to Lesson 3 where a contract or guidelines for helpful behaviour is drawn up. Listening is a skill which can take a lot of time to develop and could merit several sessions. Good material is available from many sources.

Links with: **ID** 1 'Getting to Know You', **ID** 3 'Group Building', and all exercises involving interpersonal communication.

Materials

Copies of Handout 1 – 'Learning to Listen'

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Pairs – brainstorm blocks and channels
2. Pairs practise listening
3. Discussion
4. Homework

Detailed Procedure

1. Pairs – brainstorm blocks and channels

Ask the group to move around and choose a partner whom they do not know very well. It should not be the same person they met in Exercise 1 – 'Getting to Know You'.

Each pair sits together.

Tell the class that the purpose of today's lesson is to help us appreciate the value of listening in relationships.

Ask pairs to make a list of some of the things people do that tell you they are not really listening (blocks to listening).

Take feedback and list on the blackboard.

Now ask pairs to make a list of some of the things people do that make it easier to talk to them (channels).

Take feedback and list.

2. Pairs practise listening

Now get pairs to do another 'getting to know you' exercise concentrating on putting into practice some of the things that help communication/listening. Distribute Handout 1 'Learning to Listen' to the pairs and explain the procedure.

3. Discussion

- *How did it feel to be listened to?*
- *How did it feel to listen?*
- *What can we learn from this exercise?*

4. Homework

Teacher suggests to group: the next time you get into an argument with family or friends try stopping the discussion and agreeing on this rule: each person can speak only after s/he has first re-stated the ideas the other person has expressed.

LEARNING TO LISTEN

Pick someone you do not know well.

Steps:

1. One person listens to the other for five minutes.

2. The speaker uses the time to describe the kind of person s/he is, their likes and dislikes, interest, interesting things which they've done.

3. The listener summarises what the speaker has said at the end of the five minutes.

4. The speaker corrects any misunderstandings in what the listener says and gives the listener some feedback on what s/he did well as a listener.

5. The first listener then takes her/his turn to be listened to for five minutes.

6. The new listener summarises what this speaker has said at the end of five minutes and gets feedback on any misunderstandings and on how well s/he listened.

CORE CONCEPT: ***A safe atmosphere is needed to facilitate group work.***

GROUP BUILDING

PURPOSE

To establish group identity by introducing the concept of working as a team/group.

To explain the practical issues involved in working as a group.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Suitable for all junior cycle groups of any size.

Materials

Blackboard/chalk

Copies of Handout 1 'Contract'

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Brainstorming group rules
3. Exploration of rules and drawing up contract

Detailed Procedure

1. Introduction

Present the concept of how a team works together, plays together, etc. Give examples of different 'team' groups – football teams, pop groups, dance teams, school teams. There are certain elements necessary to make the team work, i.e., a leader, commitment from everybody, rules so that people play the same game and most of all a reason for being there. If the rules are constantly broken the game is spoiled. The purpose of this class is to allow people to speak, to be heard, to help them to think about their development as a person. Since activities are different from other classes we need special rules to make this class work.

2. Brainstorming group rules

Brainstorm possible rules for the Social, Personal and Health Education classes. List suggestions on the blackboard. The following core rules need to come out:

- Honesty
- Confidentiality
- Listening closely to each other
- No put downs
- Follow instructions

3. Exploration of rules and drawing up of contract

Decide on a few simple clear rules which will help people feel good about speaking up in this class.

Draw up a contract in agreement with the students.

Display on the board. Each student copies the contract onto Handout 1 – 'Contract' and keeps their own contract in their folder.

VARIATIONS

Renaming of group. The teacher introduces the idea of choosing a new name for the class such as sports, pop bands, political parties - choose names.

Brainstorm possible names, e.g., 'United we Stand' and choose one.

CONTRACT

I _____ *(name)*

agree to play my part in making

_____ *(name class/group)* a great group/team.

The rules of this team are:

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

4. _____

_____

_____

5. _____

_____

_____

CORE CONCEPT: ***Sharing self-statements and opinions and having them accepted by others helps to foster one's sense of identity.***

I.D. CARDS

PURPOSE

To enhance students' sense of identity by giving them an opportunity to make statements about themselves, their likes and dislikes.

To develop group cohesion through sharing and self-disclosure.

To create an opportunity for every member of the group to take time to speak out in the large group (especially important for reticent members).

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This exercise is suitable for less verbal students. Have students sit in a circle if possible. Give encouragement to 'have a go' but allow participants to 'pass' if they really wish to. As the group progresses, encourage a little more sharing. Cards are allocated stars according to difficulty – more stars indicate more challenging cards.

Photocopy Handout 1 back-to-back.

Materials

A soft ball

ID cards from pack

Copies of Handout 1 'Me'

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Warm up game

2. Sharing opinions and views, using cards
3. Small group discussion
4. Report back to large group
5. Small group discussion on difficulties of sharing
6. Large group discussion
7. Homework

Detailed Procedure

1. Warm up game

Use a soft ball – students throw it to each other and the person holding it tells something about themselves, e.g., "I like…" "My favourite food is…" S/he then throws it to someone else.

2. Sharing opinions and views, using cards

Seat students in a circle: give the 'pack' of cards to the first person.

Tell the students you are going to play a card game in which you will take turns to tell the group something about yourself or your opinions about some things. Each person will turn over a card in turn, read it and decide if they want to finish the statement. ***There must be no pressure on anyone to share if they do not wish to.*** If a student doesn't want to share just say, "If you do not wish to share just put the card on the bottom of the pack and pass it on". It is then the next person's turn. If they do share, they must agree to make honest statements. After each person makes a statement, other people can comment, ask questions, or share their own response to the statement. It is important that time is given for this sharing and that it is not simply a question of rushing through the cards.

3. Small group discussion

When the cards are finished, ask students to get into groups of three or four and share reactions to the exercise.

- *How did it feel when you are going to pick up a card?*
- *What sorts of things are easy for you to share?*
- *What sorts of things are difficult to share?*

4. Report back to large group

Report to large group and discuss.

5. Small group discussion on difficulties of sharing

In small groups again, discuss,

- *Did you think other people were interest in hearing your statement?*
- *How could you tell?*
- *Is it hard for anyone to speak out in the group?*
- *What makes it hard?*
- *How well were people listening?*
- *What would make it easier for you to speak in the large group? Is there anything the rest of the group could do to help?*

6. Large group discussion

Report to large group and discuss.

7. Homework

Homework: Give each student a copy of Handout 1 'Me' and ask them to complete it for homework. It should then be kept in their folders as part of their work on identity. It may also be useful in later work on social skills – especially starting and maintaining a conversation.

VARIATIONS

- Withdraw some cards or add in others to suit your group.
- Arrange cards in order of difficulty. See Handout 1 'Me' – one asterisk indicates 'easy to share' cards, three asterisks indicate 'most difficult'.
- Get students to "Write ten complete sentences you would use to describe yourself to someone who doesn't know you."
- Get students to write their own cards.

ME

* My birthday is on _____ I am _____ years old

* If I could have any name I liked, I would choose _____

* When I get a headache I _____

** My favourite person outside my family is _____

* A funny thing that happened to me was _____

* A silly thing I once did was _____

** The worst thing about school is _____

** People who sniff glue _____

* A kind thing I once did was _____

** My favourite person in the family is _____

* When I grow up I will _____

* I have _____ eyes and _____ hair

* My favourite television programme is _____

** I hate _____

** I am good at _____

** People who get drunk _____

*** I have a problem with _____

** I have no problems with _____

* The best thing about school is _____

* Cigarette smoking _____

* I think friends should _____

*** When people are really afraid of something _____

*** The scariest thing that ever happened to me was _____

* I really want to _____

** The person who was kindest to my in my whole life was _____

** I love _____

* My favourite food is _____

* My favourite drink is _____

* I like people who _____

** I think a good teacher _____

** A brave thing I did once was _____

** A person who has been a good friend to me _____

*** I was upset when _____

* The most interesting thing about school is _____

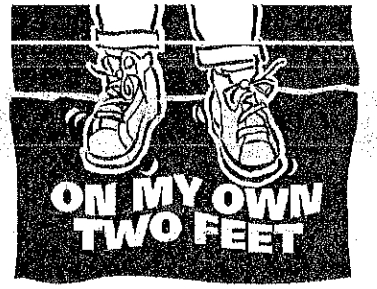
** The thing which made me most nervous was _____

** I wish _____

*** When I'm worried about something I _____

* If I had €5,000 I would _____

* My favourite possession is _____



ID Lesson 5
Reinforcer
JAG

CORE CONCEPT: ***Having a clear self-picture helps to foster one's sense of identity and is important in social interactions.***

THIS IS ME

PURPOSE

To help students develop a clear self-picture.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This is most suitable for smaller groups but with very good organisation and a double period it can work with larger classes. A double period is ideal, but it can be done in two separate sessions. It can be noisy.

You need to build up a stock of magazines/papers to ensure a good selection and variety of material as a limited choice of materials inevitably limits the scope. Ask students to bring a photo of themselves to school and to collect magazines as they are going to make a poster that tells about themselves.

Links with: **ID** 4 'ID Cards'

Materials

Photos, magazines, crayons, newsprint, glue, scissors

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Distribute materials
2. Collage
3. Small groups sharing
4. Large group discussion
5. Display work

Detailed Procedure

1. Distribute materials

Provide each student with paper for a poster and have a collection of magazines, crayons and glue available.

2. Collage

Ask students to put a photo of themselves on the poster (in the centre of the page, perhaps) and to select pictures that describe them. Ask them to illustrate some of the following areas on their posters:

- Likes and dislikes
- Hobbies
- People who are important to me
- Things that concern me (e.g., poverty, hunger, etc.)
- Special abilities
- Qualities (e.g., considerate, energetic, etc.)
- How I want to be (e.g., type of person, what I want to do)

Tell the student that they may use colours, shapes, and scenes to represent something. It is not important that someone else understand it when they look at it. It will make sense to the person who makes it and that is all that matters. Ask the students to paste the pictures, words and symbols onto their poster paper to make a poster.

NOTE: For weaker students, limit the number of areas to be illustrated and keep ideas concrete.

3. Small groups sharing

When students have made the posters, ask them to join up with three or four other students to share/talk to each other about some of what they have on their posters and get reactions. Point out that there are times when we want to keep some things to ourselves and do not want to tell anyone else. They should therefore, share only what they want to. Everyone has this right and it should be respected.

4. Large group discussion

Pointers for discussion:

- *How did you feel doing the exercise?*
- *What was it like talking about yourself in the group?*
- *What is special/different about you?*

5. Display work

Display posters in the classroom. Note for the class that all the posters are somewhat different – unique - just as each person is unique.

If pictures seem stereotyped, raise this as a discussion point.

VARIATIONS

- Share pictures in pairs
- Do the collage at home

ID Lesson 6
Core
AG

CORE CONCEPT: ***Having a clear picture of one's own story helps to foster a sense of identity.***

LIFELINE

PURPOSE

To enhance each student's sense of identity through looking at him/herself in a new way.

To facilitate personal sharing and hence develop a climate of trust in the group.

To provide a basis for the introduction of drugs (in the context of growth and development) later in the work.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This exercise is suitable for all groups. There is always a need for sensitivity to students whose history or circumstances do not fit the norm. For older/brighter students the instructions do not need to be so concrete. The 'Lifeline' questionnaire (Handout 1) can be used as an aid.

NOTE: Children who are, or who have been, in care or who are adopted may not know some of their own story. It is, therefore, important to know the background of your students before doing this exercise so that you can help them and be sensitive to this. If there are large gaps in their knowledge it would be useful to see whether they can get some help in answering the questions they may have, since knowing one's own story is so important to the development of a strong sense of identity. Contact with adoptive parents, foster parents, social worker through the school counsellor, will facilitate this.

Links with: **ID** 4 'ID Cards', **ID** 5 'This is Me', **ID 10** 'That's Life!'

Materials

Newsprint, a good supply of crayons and felt pens, masking tape

For Senior Cycle: Copies of Handout 1 – 'Lifeline'

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Distribute materials
3. Instruction for Lifeline
4. Sharing in small groups
5. Large group discussion
6. Display lifelines
7. Closing

Detailed Procedure

1. Introduction

Do a warm-up game if desired.

Introduction: Many people and events influence the kind of people we become, in good ways and sometimes in bad ways. We're going to look at some of these in today's class and get to know each other at the same time.

2. Distribute materials

Ask each person to take a sheet of newsprint and a supply of felt pens or crayons. People can easily work from a common supply.

3. Instruction for Lifeline

Vary the following instructions according to the age/ability level of the group. Instructions in brackets are optional.

- You are going to draw a picture that represents your life up to now. This picture will be in the shape of a line. We will call it your Lifeline. Your **lifeline** can be any shape, and can go in any direction. It can be a road, or a river or a path.
  (It is very useful with slower students to draw a simplified version of your own lifeline to demonstrate).
- Place a mark near the beginning of your lifeline for your date of birth and write in when you were born. Write the age you are now at the other end and show your life continuing on past today's date... If you like, you can now divide your line into the number of years that have passed.

(1) **EVENTS**

Now fill in on your lifeline some of the following EVENTS from your past. (These can be written on a big chart and displayed for reference). You can use drawings, cartoons, labels, or signs (e.g., the sun to show happiness; a monster to show someone who reminds you of a monster). Use different colours to show your different feelings. Write words too, if you want to. Do not worry about whether you are any good at drawing. Anyone can draw a line and it is not a competition.

Select a limited number of ideas for younger/weaker classes.

- The date you were born
- Your first day at playgroup or pre-school
- Your first day at primary school
- Your first Communion and Confirmation
- Some happy events
- Some unhappy or sad events that happened to you
- Something that made you mad
- Some success you had
- The most exciting thing that ever happened to you

(2) **PEOPLE**

Now put in some PEOPLE who have had a very important influence on you at different stages. Some suggestions:

- Who took care of you or helped you at the different stages? You can put in several different people, but be sure to include those who meant most to you.

Parents	Nurses	Doctors
Childminders	Babysitters	Grandparents
Sisters	Brothers	Teachers

- Which friends were most important to you? Show whether they were a good influence or a bad influence by using some sign.

NOTE: Give as much time as needed for this stage. Keep an eye out for students who are having difficulty and help them to fill in the line. Be careful not to push as some students may be remembering unhappy experiences. Help them to fill in easier ones e.g., first day at school.

4. Sharing in small groups

When you have completed your lifeline, get into groups of three and share some of it with your partners. Instructions in brackets are optional.

- *What were the most important events?*
- *Who were the most important people in your life up to now?*
- *What is the most interesting bit? Why?*
- *(What are the parts you like to think about? Why?)*
- *(What are the parts you don't like? Why?)*

Listen carefully and ask each other questions.

The teacher should circulate round groups to help if needed.

5. Large group discussion

Feed back to large group and share for a few moments.

Keep discussion brief and simple for less able classes and finish with happy events.

- *Who was the most important person for most people?*
- *What was the most interesting thing you learned about the others in your sub-group?*
- *What differences did you notice between people – their likes and dislikes – what makes them happy or sad?*
- *What were some of the happy events?*

6. Display lifelines

Ask students to put their initials on the back and if there is time they can post their lifelines around the room for sharing and discussion. Keep them for the class in a large art folder for future reference, as they will not fit into their folders.

7. Closing

In small groups ask them to tell each other one thing they enjoyed about this exercise.

VARIATIONS

- Introduce with a guided fantasy as in **ID** 11 'Sunshine'
- Break into two stages – one for events, one for people/influences.
- Use a straight line marked off into years and colour in each segment according to the feelings you have about that part of your life.

LIFELINE

Some aids in constructing your lifeline:

1. Who have been the most influential people in your life and in what way have they been influential?

2. What were the major interests in your early life?

3. What were the most critical things that have happened that made you what you are? (They may be positive or negative).

4. What were the most important successes and failures in your life?

5. What have been the most significant decisions of your life?

ID Lesson 7
Core
JAG

CORE CONCEPT: ***One of the main tasks of adolescence is to cope with change.***

CHANGES

PURPOSE

To explore changes associated with adolescence.

To explore feelings about these changes.

To reassure students about individual differences in growth and development.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Suitable for all groups at junior cycle but especially 1st years. It may take two classes.

The introduction to this exercise refers back to the 'Lifeline'. If that has not been already included it could be included here. If not, the introduction needs to be changed.

When beginning the guided fantasy, take time to make sure everyone is sitting comfortably, in good contact with the chair. Invite them to shift about, loosen tense areas and take some deep breaths. Speak quietly and slowly when giving directions.

Links with: ID 6 'Lifeline'.

Materials

Copies of Handout 1 'How I am Now'

Copies of Handout 2 'Sample Agenda for Enquiry with Parents'

Paper, crayons

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Introduction

2. Short guided fantasy
3. Drawing
4. Discuss in pairs
5. Questionnaire 'How I Am Now'
6. Discussion – small groups
7. Large group discussion

Detailed Procedure

1. Introduction

Distribute crayons and paper before beginning.

Ideas for introduction: when we drew our lifelines we looked at different stages in our life, different influences, things that happened to us. We saw some of the different things we did at each stage and how we were changing. A lot of changes have happened since we were born – walking, talking, going to school, getting taller, learning to cycle, having friends. We have had to learn things all the time. Now as a teenager you are changing in many ways and have more responsibility for your life. Let us look at how you have changed since you were ten years old.

2. Short guided fantasy

I want you to close your eyes and relax. Breathe in and out in your usual way. Notice if your breathing is shallow or deep, slow or swift. Can you gradually establish a pattern of smooth, deep, slow breathing? Breathe in – breathe out slowly.

Now I want you to think of yourself when you were ten years old. What class were you in at school? What did the classroom look like? Where did you sit? Who were your friends? What did you look like? How tall were you? How had you your hair? What sort of clothes did you wear? What did you like to do? What was your favourite TV programme? What sort of child were you – were you lively, quiet, considerate, shy, or confident? What were you like?

3. Drawing

When you are ready, I want you to open your eyes and draw a picture of yourself as a 10-year old. Put some of the things that you've been thinking about in the picture. Use colours, words, or scenes to illustrate what you were like as a 10-year-old.

4. Discuss in pairs

In pairs, describe your picture to your partner and explain what you remember about yourself as a 10-year-old.

5. Questionnaire 'How I Am Now'

Now we are going to look at how you have changed since you were 10 years old.

Distribute Handout 1 'How I Am Now?' and ask students to complete the questionnaire individually.

Alternatively: ask students to list ways in which they've changed as individuals since they were 10. Include changes in body, feelings, thinking, and behaviour.

6. Discussion – small groups

When they have completed Handout 1 or listing, ask them to form small groups of 4/5 of same sex and to compare similarities and differences. It is important to stress that differences are normal – physical changes happen at different times for different people. Remember to point out that no one should be pressurised to talk about things that they do not want to talk about.

7. Large group discussion

Take feedback and discuss the changes and feelings about those changes; what they like and dislike about being a teenager. Compare the findings of different sex groups.

8. Optional – if time allows

Ask students to list some situations in which they have to make choices/decisions now or within the next year. These are situations that they didn't meet up until now. List the situations on chart/blackboard.

Select the situations that were identified most frequently and ask the students to identify the various options appropriate for these situations.

ADDITIONAL WORK: ***Enquiry with parents of class***

Project Work: ask students to talk to their own parents or other parents about their teenage years. In class prepare an agenda/questionnaire to be used with parents. See Handout 2 'Sample Agenda for Enquiry with Parents.' Role play asking parents to participate in the project. When the enquiry is completed, discuss the experience and review the information obtained.

HOW I AM NOW

Below are some statements about how you may have changed since you were 10 years old. If you agree with the statement put a tick ✔ in the box. If you disagree with the statement put a cross ✘ in the box. If you are not sure, leave the box blank. There are no right or wrong answers. We are all different, even though we have many similarities.

Compared to what I was like when I was 10 years old:

I am taller	☐	I have more secrets	☐
I am heavier	☐	I fight more with my parents	☐
My body is more hairy	☐	I am more interested in the opposite sex	☐
I get more spots now	☐	I want to get my own way more	☐
My hair is more greasy	☐	I make more decisions	☐
I sweat more	☐	I am more concerned about other people	☐
I have stronger muscles	☐	I notice things that are not fair and just in the world	☐
The shape of my body has changed	☐	I smoke	☐
My voice has changed	☐	I drink alcohol	☐
My moods change often	☐	I want to be accepted by my own age group	☐
I am more easily annoyed	☐	I don't want to be different from my friends	☐
I get embarrassed more easily	☐		☐

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR ENQUIRY WITH PARENTS

What was there to do outside of home when you were a teenager? _____

_____

_____

What did you do outside of home? _____

_____

_____

How were you expected to behave: – at home? _____

_____

- outside of home? _____

_____

What did you like and dislike about being a teenager at that time? _____

_____

_____

What sort of picture of yourself did you try to give others? _____

_____

_____

Did you smoke? _____ Did many young people smoke? _____

Did you drink? _____ Did many young people drink? _____

CORE CONCEPT: ***Increased self-awareness enhances one's ability to make responsible choices.***

MY HOPES

PURPOSE

To increase self awareness

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This is more suitable for smaller groups but with very good organisation and a double period it can work with larger classes. A double period is ideal, but it can be done in two separate sessions. It can be noisy.

You need to build up a stock of magazines/papers to ensure a good selection and variety of material as a limited choice of materials inevitably limits the scope. Ask students to bring a photo of themselves to school and to collect magazines as they are going to make a poster that tells about themselves.

When considering things students would like to try, it is important to keep in mind the fact that we are all curious beings and that teenagers, in particular, wish to experiment in some areas of their lives. Students may include activities that we would consider dangerous, but wanting to try does not necessarily imply that they will try. The issues arising should be discussed, however.

Links with: **ID** 5 'This Is Me'

Materials

Sheets of paper, selection of magazines, scissors, glue, crayons and markers

Blue-tack or masking tape

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Collage
2. Discussion in pairs
3. Display
4. Large group discussion

Detailed Procedure

1. Collage

Ask the students to make a collage that illustrates how they'd like to be, their hopes and dreams for the future, by selecting pictures and words form the magazines and by writing and drawing.

Some areas that may be included are:

- things I'd like to have
- how I'd like to be
- things I'd like to try
- new experiences I'd like to have
- the sort of lifestyle I'd like to have

(If you have made a poster of 'This Is Me' in Lesson 5 already, refer back to it – this one is now looking to the future).

2. Discussion in pairs

When the students have completed the collage ask them to choose a partner and to share aspects of the collage. They should feel free to share only what they want to.

3. Display

Display collages on the wall or place on the floor in front of each person.

4. Large group discussion

Large group feedback and discussion. Encourage description of collages by a number of people before moving on to more abstract questions.

- *Would anyone describe their collage and why they included certain things?*
- *Did your collage tell you anything about yourself?*
- *Did your partner's collage tell you anything about him/her?*
- *Are there trends emerging of how people would like to be, or of what they'd like to try?*
- *Are there differences between boys and girls?*

CORE CONCEPT: One's family identity is a central part of one's personal identity.

FAMILY CREST

PURPOSE

To help students to get to know each other through sharing information about their families.
To increase students' awareness of the importance of family identity as part of our individual identity.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The exercise is suitable for junior classes of any size and level of ability.

This could be the first of a series of exercises on families. It is a fairly easy exercise for most students and discussion can be kept at a concrete level, especially if dealing with less able students. Please note that this exercise may be difficult for students who do not have a 'conventional' family. Be sensitive to this and help the students involved to identify those who have acted as 'family' to them. This could be a grandparent, foster parent, housemother, aunt, uncle, etc. These people play as vital a role for some students as biological parents.

It would be a good example of openness and sharing if you demonstrated by briefly sharing your own Family Crest.

Materials

Copies of Handout 1 'Family Crest'
Coloured pencils/crayons and newsprint/poster paper for each student

Your own Family Crest, if you are going to share it out.

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Drawing of Family Crest
2. Small group – sharing of drawings and discussion
3. Large group discussion
4. Homework

Detailed Procedure

1. Drawing of Family Crest

Distribute a blank copy of Handout 1 'Family Crest' or get students to draw their own. Ask each student to make a coat of arms representing their family and to draw a picture in each segment showing the following elements.

- The number of people in your immediate family.
- A happy occasion in your family.
- The person in your family who makes you feel good about yourself.
- The person in your family your fight with most.
- An achievement or success in your family.
- A sad occasion in your family.

Many other ideas could be used to fill the sections of the shield. Devise your own to suit your students. If you are uncomfortable with any, substitute something else.

Other possibilities:

- The quietest person in your family.
- The most generous person in your family.
- The best outing/holiday you ever had in your family.

2. Small group – sharing of drawings and discussion

Ask students to from groups of three or four and to describe their drawings to each other. Ask them to discuss the following questions:

- What similarities are there in your families? How are your families the same?
- What makes your family special? How are your families different?
- What do you like best about your family?
- What do you like least about your family?

3. Large group discussion

- What did you learn from this exercise?
- Was it easy or hard to do? What made it easy/hard?
- Does anyone want to say anything else about families?

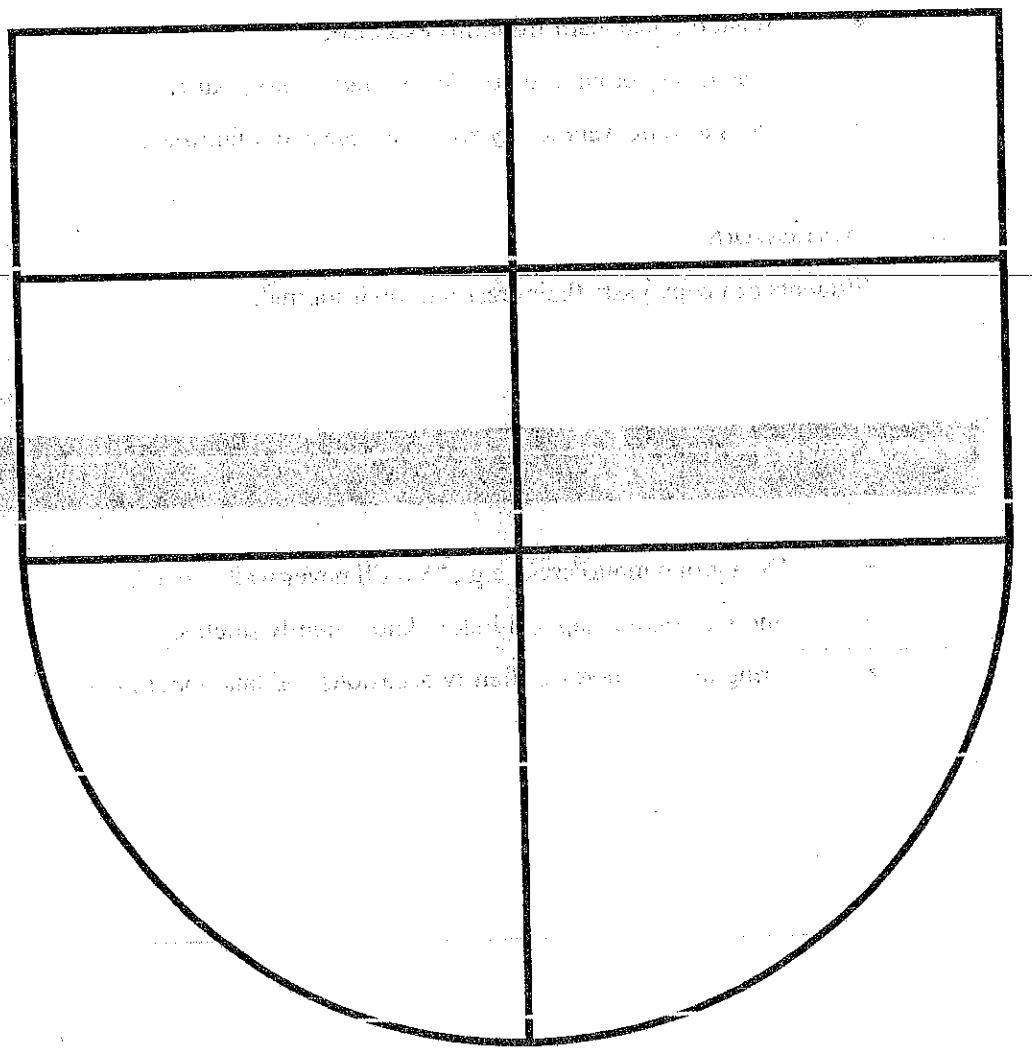
4. Homework

Students can copy/paste their crest into their journal.

VARIATIONS

- Do a group motto/crest, e.g., "You'll never walk alone".
- Show Heraldic map and link to know family shields.
- Bring in two photos of family occasions and talk about them.

FAMILY CREST



CORE CONCEPT: ***Self concept and self esteem are built up through the messages, both positive and negative, verbal and non-verbal, that we receive from others.***

THAT'S LIFE

PURPOSE

To help students to identify and understand the effects of negative and positive messages.
To help students to identify positive and negative messages they have recently received.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This exercise is suitable for junior cycle students of all ability levels. In this exercise a lot of the work is done in small groups with the teacher keeping it moving by taking feedback at intervals and setting new tasks.

The words 'bad' and 'good' are used for ease of understanding by weaker students. Substitute positive/negative if appropriate for your class.

Links with: AC 15 'Criticism'.

Materials

Copies of Handout 1 'A Day in the life of Seán Maguire'
Crayons/colouring pencils

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Explore the picture story for feelings using colouring/discussion
3. Listing good and bad messages received, sharing
4. Identifying someone who gives you good comments and someone to whom you would like to give a good comment
5. Homework

Detailed Procedure

1. Introduction

Introduce the exercise by saying that we're going to look at how we are affected by the way other people treat us.

If a number of people gave you good comments all day, how would you feel? You would probably remember, and as you get more and more you save them up and you feel good. If you have been getting good comments from people all day you will be more likely to give a good comment to someone else.

The same thing happens with bad comments. If people have been giving you bad comments all day, you may go home feeling bad and the first thing anyone says can set you off and get you mad at them.

2. Explore the picture story for feelings using colouring/discussion

Distribute Handout 1 'A Day in the Life of Seán Maguire' and ask students to look at it.

Taking once scene at a time, ask students to colour the pictures, picking colours that show how each person in the picture is feeling. Ask them to share in groups of three.

Take feedback from the groups and discuss the feelings of the different people in each scene.

Ask groups to look at the scenes again and to pick out the good and bad comments and note who they came from. How important are these people to us?

How do you think Seán was feeling at the end of the day?

3. Listing good and bad messages received, sharing

In groups, ask the class to list good comments and bad comments they have received in the past 24 hours and note them on a sheet of paper. Discuss how you felt and how the other person's tone or manner influenced you.

Take feedback from the small groups and write up briefly on the blackboard under headings:

(1) Verbal Message.
(2) Tone of Voice/Manner.
(3) How you felt?

Remind the class, if necessary, of the non-verbal 'messages' they may also have received and ask for some examples (being ignored, included, pushed, etc.).

Ask the class to brainstorm what colours/words would describe the feelings they themselves have when receiving each kind of message – hot, cold, warm, sad, delighted, small, etc. (Students may need help with feelings words – see section on Feelings.) Add these under the third column.

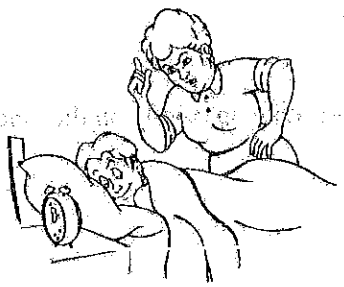
4. Identifying someone who gives you good comments

In small groups ask students to share with each other who, in their lives, is the person from whom they get the most good messages or comments and how they feel about that person. How does that person influence how you feel about yourself?

5. Homework

Ask students to identify at least one person to whom they would like to give a positive message before the next session and if they wish to share this with their small group. A goal sheet, as used in the Assertive Communication section, can be used to record success.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF SEÁN MAGUIRE

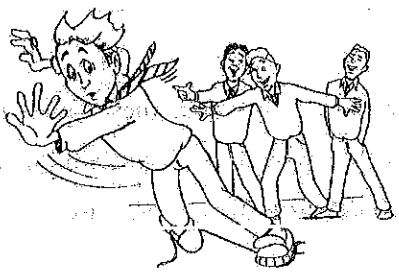


1. *Mother:* Get up Seán, you'll be late. The others are up ages ago. As usual, you are the lazy one!

2. *Teacher:* That was a very good essay, Seán. You had good ideas and you put them together well. Well done!

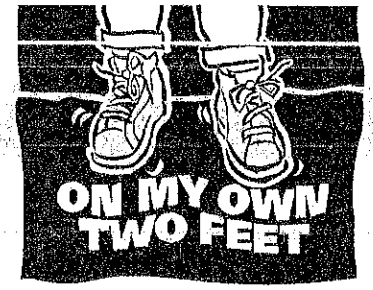
3. *Teacher:* I can't believe it, Seán. I think you didn't even try. You will fail your exams if you go on like this. It just isn't good enough.

4. *Another boy:* That was a good game you played, Seán.



5. Seán trips. Some others laugh.

6. *Father:* Thanks for helping, Seán



ID Lesson 11
Core
AG

CORE CONCEPT: ***The way we feel about ourselves is determined by the messages – both positive and negative, verbal and non-verbal that we receive from others.***

SUNSHINE

PURPOSE

To help students to identify and understand the effects of positive and negative messages they receive in their lives.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When beginning the guided fantasy, take time to make sure everyone is sitting comfortably, in good contact with the chair. Invite them to shift about, loosen tense areas and take some deep breaths. Speak quietly and slowly when giving directions.

Links with: **ID** 10 'That's Life!', **FE** 9 'Feeling Thermometer', **FE** 10 'Expressing your Feelings', AC 14 'Positive Self-Talk'.

Materials

Copies of Handout 1 'Sunshine'

Crayons, colouring pencils, reflective music

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Guided fantasy with music in background
3. Handout 1 'Sunshine'
4. Small groups sharing
5. Concluding activity

Detailed Procedure

1. Introduction

Whether we are aware of it or not, the way we are has, to a large extent, been shaped by the positive and negative messages received from the people around us.

2. Guided fantasy with music in background

Switch on music.

"Make yourself as comfortable as possible and close your eyes. In your relaxed state, imagine that you are walking along a path through a leafy green forest. The sun is shining, the birds are singing and the leaves are rustling in the gentle breeze. A little river gurgles merrily nearly. (Pause). You come upon a deserted cottage and you find yourself pushing open the door. (Pause). As you explore the dusty dark interior you find a large box. With interest you open the box to find, to your surprise, a number of family photos. (Pause). Sorting through the photographs you find many which bring back situations from your past. Some are happy situations, others are sad. Take a moment to look at the pictures. (Pause).

Now choose one happy situation where you felt good about yourself. Study this photograph carefully. Who is in the photograph with you? Where are you? How are you feeling in the situation? What is it about the situation that makes you happy? (Pause).

Reflect on these questions and when you are ready, leave the cottage and retrace your steps through the forest and back into this room, bringing your photograph with you."

3. Handout 1 'Sunshine'

Distribute Handout 1 'Sunshine'. NOTE: It would be useful to demonstrate how to fill it in, using a couple of your own situations.

- Use the happy photograph to help trigger your memory of happy occasions and positive messages and who gave them to you. Fill in as many positive memories as you can, putting the message in the sunrays and the person who gave them to you across the top of the sunray. Remember that sometimes the messages are 'non-verbal', that is, they could be a smile or a kind deed or a hug.

  In the middle circle, write words to describe how these messages make you feel.

4. Small groups sharing

We are all aware of situations where we have not felt so good about ourselves, where the message we receive from others are negative, but in this exercise we're concentrating on the positive.

Get the class to form groups of three and share:

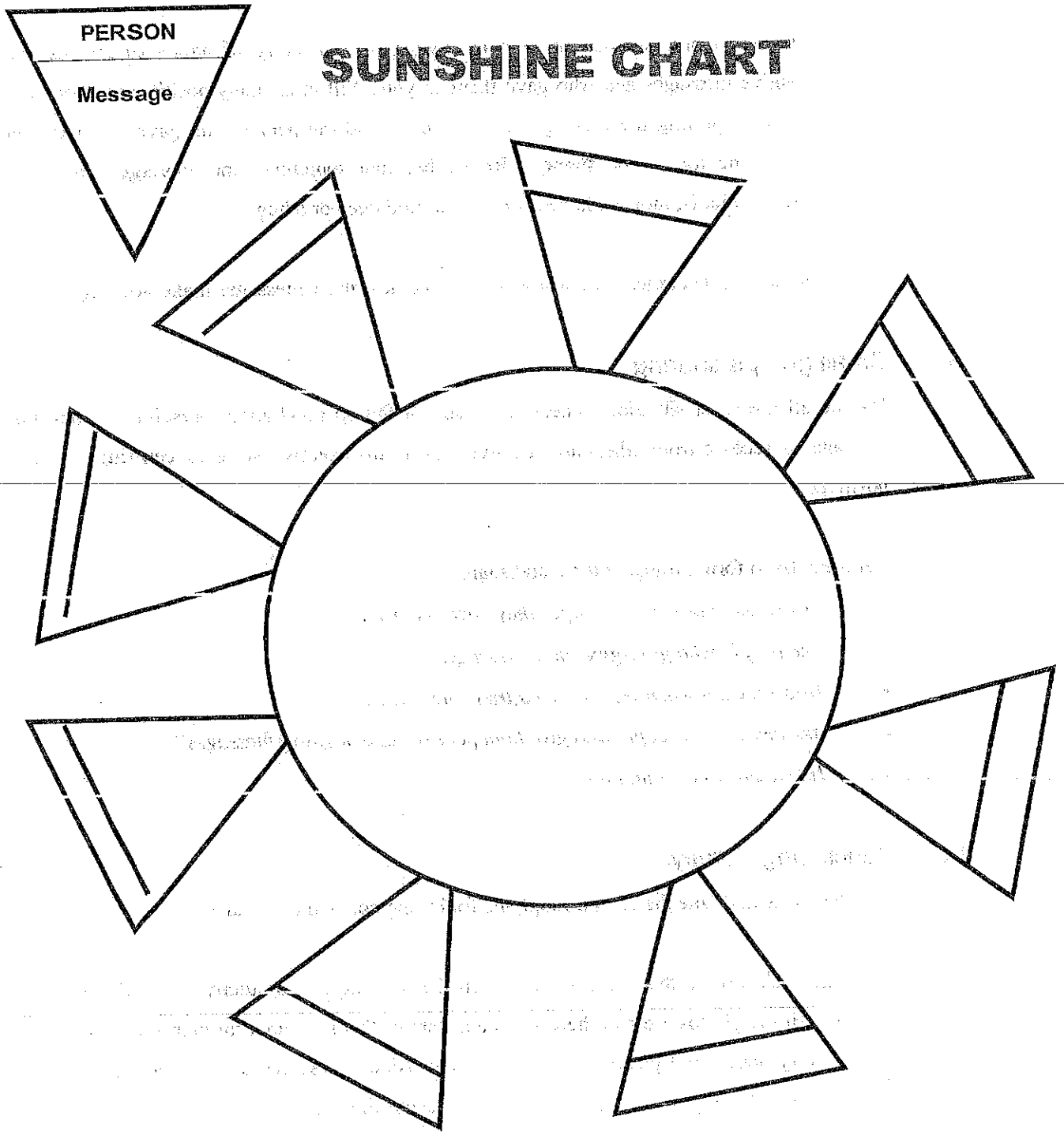
- *The types of positive messages they have received.*
- *The people who gave/give these messages.*
- *How they felt when they received these messages.*
- *Are there some people who give both positive and negative messages?*
- *How can you explain this?*

5. Concluding activity

Play the music and take the class through the following concluding fantasy.

"Let's go back now to that old cottage. Open the door again, go quietly up to the box and open it. All the photos are still there - lots and lots of them. Search through them and pick out two very happy and positive ones. Put them aside and search around for another two positive ones. Now you have got four. Lying beside the box is an old gold picture frame. Arrange your four photos into that frame and carry it all the way out of the cottage and all the way home. Put it somewhere in your room where you will be able to see it whenever you need a reminder of happy experiences."

SUNSHINE CHART



Lesson 12
Option A
Core
AG

CORE CONCEPT: ***Self esteem is developed by receiving affirmation and nurturing from others.***

We all have the power to nurture the self esteem of ourselves and others.

FEEDBACK CIRCLE

When we are very young we need attention from other people if we are to grow healthy. We need to be held, cuddled, stroked, talked to and listened to. If we get plenty of good, loving attention, combined with firm discipline, we grow emotionally healthy. Childhood experience of criticism may lead to difficulty in hearing positive messages. You may notice that some students have difficulty and close themselves to the positive. Look out for it!

PURPOSE

To give each group member an experience of giving and receiving positive statements – including giving one to him/herself.

To strengthen self esteem.

To raise participants' awareness that each one of us has it in our power to enhance others' sense of well being.

To enhance communication skills.

To build group cohesion.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This is an exercise for groups of 12 at most, with at least a double period available. Otherwise use 'Positive Posters' – see also note in Procedure Step 2.

Links with: **ID** 10 'That's Life!', **ID** 11 'Sunshine'.

Materials

Drawing paper and colour materials, an extra chair, a camera – if possible, and a large index card for each student.

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Drawing of positive situation
2. Positive feedback experience with reporter and photo
3. Large group discussion
4. Pairs
5. Homework

Detailed Procedure

1. Drawing of positive situation

Ask each person if they can recall one good thing they did for themselves or for others in the past while; something they learned well; something they made; a kind act; a success – anything! Give a moment or two for reflection.

Ask them to make a picture representing the event as quickly as possible. There is no need to be perfect.

2. Positive feedback experience with reporter and photo

Now each person takes his/her place in the 'hot-seat' (extra chair). They tell the group briefly about their picture and why they are proud of that they did. They then listen to a round of honest, positive and specific statements about themselves from the other group members.

Before this part of the exercise, stress there is *always* something we can appreciate about anyone, even if we do not get along too well with that person. Your statement must be honest or the exercise will not be worthwhile. People are very quick to dismiss positives and tell

themselves "it is not true", so it is vital to be honest and to be able to back up your statement with specific examples of the behaviour or characteristic you like in that person.

While each person is receiving their compliments, another group member should record the statements on a large index card. Be sure to get the 'receiver' to identify their 'reporter' before the round starts.

NOTE: Sometimes you can see that a student is becoming overwhelmed – they look down or stop breathing properly or try to stop it with a joke. A gentle reminder to stay open to the feedback, to keep breathing, to relax the shoulders, to maintain eye contact with the giver (if possible), usually overcomes this. Even if someone cries, this can provide the perfect opportunity to point out to the group just how little many people think of themselves and how strange and difficult it is for most people to listen to positives.

If possible, it is nice to take a photo of the (usually glowing) participant before they leave the 'hot-seat'. This can be used in follow-up work on self image or entered into the journal.

3. Large group discussion

When everyone has had a turn (including the leader), a discussion may follow:

- *What was it like to sit in the 'hot-seat'? Did you like it?*
- *How were you feeling while receiving the compliments?*
- *What did it do for you?*
- *Was it hard to believe all those good things people see in you?*
- *What three things did you like the best? Why?*

4. Pairs

Ask them to discuss – in pairs – who there is in their lives that they would like to state appreciation to in the next week. Ask them to decide if they are going to and contract with their partner to report back as soon as they have done it.

5. Homework

Copy your compliments into your journal.

Notice whether you want to show your appreciation of people more during the next week and note any occasions when you do so in your journal.

Lesson 12
Option B
Core
AG

CORE CONCEPT: ***Self esteem is developed through affirmation and we have the power to nurture our own self esteem and that of others.***

POSITIVE POSTERS

PURPOSE

To enhance self esteem.

To develop students' ability to validate themselves and others.

To develop a cohesive and trusting group.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This is an alternative to the feedback circle. It takes a lot less time. See that exercise for discussion.

It is suitable for any group size or level. The teacher should participate.

Links with: **ID** 10 'That's Life!', **ID 11** 'Sunshine', **AC** 14 'Positive Self-Talk'.

Materials

A sheet of poster paper for each student - one for yourself too!

Different coloured felt tip pens and markers

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Individual work
2. Feedback and listing of ideas on blackboard
3. Groups of 6: positive messages
4. Discussion in same groups
5. Large group discussion
6. Concluding statement
7. Homework

Detailed Procedure

1. Individual work

   Look around the classroom and think about the qualities you like in different people. Write down two or three things you really value in people.

2. Feedback and listing of ideas on blackboard

   Take feedback and list the ideas on the board. This is to help people who may have difficulty identifying/articulating such ideas.

3. Groups of 6: positive messages

   Students form groups of six. Each person takes a sheet of poster paper, picks a colour they like and writes his/her name in large writing in the middle of the page. Each person should place his/her poster in the middle of the group and everyone writes on each person's poster the things they like about him/her.

4. Discussion in same groups

   Discuss what it was like.

   - *How did you feel while people were writing on your poster?*
   - *Do you accept those statements?*

5. Large group discussion

Take brief feedback from the small groups.

This would be a lovely thing to hang in your room.

Discuss:

- *How would you feel about that?*
- *What fears would you have?*

VARIATION

HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

Break class into groups of six.

Hand each student a blank sheet of paper and ask them to draw an outline of their hand on it. See Handout 4, ID Lesson 15. They should write their name across the bottom of the page.

They should then pass their sheet to the left and every other person in the group writes one genuine positive message on a finger.

Discussion as in 'Positive Posters'.

6. Concluding statement

Finish by having each person say one word describing how they feel.

7. Homework

Do some – or all – of the following:

- Share it with someone close to you – friend, mother, father or other family member.
- Hang it in your room.
- Copy the statements into your journal.

ID Lesson 13
Optional
AG

CORE CONCEPT: ***Self esteem is enhanced by positive strategies for self support.***

THINK POSITIVE

PURPOSE

To help students identify things they can do when they feel down.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Suitable for all age and ability levels. This exercise covers three strategies for self support. The third one is explored in more detail in **AC** 14 'Positive Self Talk'

Links with: **ID** 12A 'Feedback Circle', **ID** 12B 'Positive Posters', **AC** 14 'Positive Self-Talk.

Materials

Paper, pencil and ruler

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Introduction
2. List 10 activities you *like* to do
3. Discussion
4. List 10 things you are good at
5. Pairs work on 'Thought Stopping'
6. Feedback and discussion
7. Homework

Detailed Procedure

1. Introduction

It is important to like yourself and be your own good friend. When you are feeling down, do something nice for yourself like dancing, playing a game, meeting friends, listening to music, etc.

2. List 10 activities you *like* to do

Ask students to draw 4 columns on a page and in the left hand column ask them to list ten things they like to do. When they have the list complete, ask them to note in column 2 whether it is something they like to do alone or with others: 'A' = alone; 'T' = together. In another column note the cost of the activity and in the third column note when they last did this.

Give example to illustrate.

ACTIVITY	A/T	COST	LAST TIME
Going for a walk	T	Nil	Last week
Going to the cinema	T	€6	2 months ago

Alternative: Draw favourite things to do

3. Discussion

On completion of the exercise, discuss the types of things that students like to do; if they mainly like to do things by themselves or with others; how much the things they like to do cost and if they do these things regularly. What low-cost or free things are available locally?

It is important to do things you like to do.

4. List 10 things you are good at

Being a good friend to yourself also means that it is OK to think about the things you are good at. We often think of the things we cannot do and think badly of ourselves. We need to think of all the things that we CAN do.

Write down/draw ten things you can do. Include special skills, talents or abilities. *Remember some of the things said to you in the Feedback Circle.*

NOTE: Students may need help in identifying positive things.

Keep this list for yourself and look at it when you are feeling down.

5. Pairs work on 'Thought Stopping'

When you hear yourself saying negative things to yourself, say 'Stop' to yourself and change the negative thought to a positive one. Often it is not what happens to us that makes us feel down, but what we choose think about what happens.

Present situations to the class and have them work out in pairs what they could say to themselves to make themselves feel OK.

Sample situations:

A. Somebody you know has called you names, e.g., *'fatso', long legs', 'bugs bunny'.*
Negative thought – "I must look awful".

Positive thought - _____

B. You failed an exam.
Negative thought – "I'm stupid ".

Positive thought - _____

C. A friend does not think much of your new dress/jacket.
Negative thought – "This mustn't suit me. I look awful. I shouldn't have bought this".

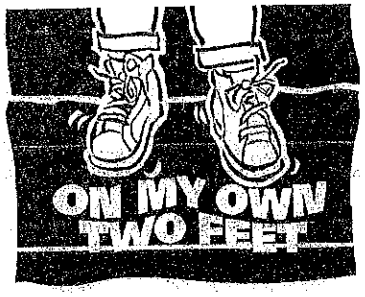
Positive thought - _____

6. Feedback and discussion

Take feedback from the pairs and discuss.

7. Homework

During the next week, do something each day that you like doing that is good for you and that makes you feel good.



ID Lesson 14
Core
AG

CORE CONCEPT: Recognising our sexuality (in the broad sense) contributes to a healthy self concept.

SEX ROLES

A healthy self concept reflects recognition of our maleness and femaleness. The formation of our identity as a male or a female is a process that goes on from birth. Awareness of one's gender is heightened during adolescence. Our culture exaggerates the differences between the sexes.

It is important to challenge the stereotypes, to engage the class in constructive exploration of how to overcome the limitations such stereotypes put on both men and women.

PURPOSE

To explore sex roles – expected ways of being for boys and girls.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This is more suitable for smaller groups. A double period is needed, but it can be done in two separate sessions. It can be noisy.

You need to build up a stock of magazines/papers to ensure a good selection and variety of material as a limited choice of materials inevitably limits the scope. Ask students in advance to bring in magazines/newspapers.

Links with: **ID** 7 'Changes', **ID** 15 'Nobody's Perfect'.

Materials

Magazines, photos, crayons, newsprint, glue

Copies of Handout 1 'Sex Roles'

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Collage
2. Display and discuss

Alternative or Additional Activity – Handout 1 'Sex Roles'

1. Handout 1 – 'Sex Roles'
2. Small group discussion on questionnaire (mixed sex sub-groups)
3. Small group discussion (same sex sub-groups)
4. Summarise and discuss responses in large group

Detailed Procedure

1. Collage

Tell students they are going to make a collage of how society and the media say we should be as women and men (girls and boys).

Divide the class into groups of 4 and ask them to select pictures, words, phrases that tell how we should be as men and women, e.g., what we should look like, how we should dress, what we should think, what we should like to do, how we should behave, what work we'd like to do, what we should drink.

Ask students to paste the pictures and words onto a page, putting the ones for women (girls) in one area and the ones for men (boys) in another area.

2. Display and discuss

Hang collages on the wall so that everyone can see them and discuss.

Possible questions for discussion:

- *What did you learn from the exercise?*
- *Were you surprised at any of the messages we get?*
- *How are women/girls expected to be?*
- *How are men/boys expected to be?*
- *How do you feel about these messages?*
- *Do they do justice to each sex?*

- *How do they limit us?*

Alternative or Additional Activity – Handout 1 'Sex Roles'

1. Handout 1 – 'Sex Roles'

Distribute Handout 1 – 'Sex Roles' and ask students to complete the questionnaire individually.

2. Small group discussion on questionnaire (mixed sex sub-groups)

Then ask them to discuss their responses in small groups (mixed sexes ideally)

3. Small group discussion (same sex sub-groups)

Following their discussion on the questionnaire, ask them to consider the following issues in their group. If the class is mixed, it would be useful to have same sex groups for this part.

Boys think girls should be...

Girls think girls should be...

Girls think boys should be...

Boys think boys should be...

As a man I'm supposed to be...

As a woman I'm supposed to be...

As home, men/boys are expected to...

At home, women/girls are expected to...

4. Summarise and discuss responses in large group

Summarise response on chart or board and discuss qualities, which students consider to be typically male and female, and what boys and girls expect of each other.

Discuss:

What effects do these expectations have on boys?

What effects do these expectations have on girls?

How could we challenge these expectations?

SEX ROLES

Complete the following sentences:

A boy should be...

A girl should be...

I would only fall in love with someone who...

What I like most about the way girls are...

What I like most about the way boys are...

The most confusing thing about girls is...

The most confusing thing about boys is...

*Because I a boy/girl (*delete as appropriate*) I have to...*

*If I were a boy/girl (*delete as appropriate*) I could...*

CORE CONCEPT: ***Acknowledgement and acceptance of one's unique worth, regardless of pressures to conform to an ideal body image is necessary for high self esteem.***

NOBODY'S PERFECT

A common experience among people in many parts of the world is a lack of self esteem based on concerns about physical appearance. Early in life most of us are aware of the importance and significance of our appearance. It is important, however, to remember that what is considered attractive varies from culture to culture and changes with the passage of time. The media often make it seem that physical beauty is the powerful magnet, which draws people to each other and is the passport to success. It is important to raise awareness about the harmful effects that this pressure can have on the individual.

PURPOSE

To increase awareness of the pressure on both girls and boys to conform to an 'ideal' body image.
To increase awareness of the influence the media has on our attitudes.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Two forty-minute lessons are needed for this exercise. It is suitable for all ages but for less able students, simplify or limit the discussion questions. It addresses areas which are of great concern to many young men and women. If the question of eating disorders arises, stress the importance of getting professional help. (See Resource Section in School Handbook).

Links with: **ID** 12B 'Positive Posters', **ID** 14 'Sex Roles', **ID** 16 'Accepting Positives', **AC** 14 'Positive Self-Talk.

Materials

Part 1: Copies of Handout 1 – 'Sharon and Ken' story and Handout 2 – 'Sharon and Ken' questionnaire

Part 2: Copies of Handout 3 – 'Nobody's Perfect'
Pencils

PROCEDURE

Outline

Part 1

1. Read Handout 1 – 'Sharon and Ken' story
2. Compete Handout 2 – 'Sharon and Ken' individually or in pairs
3. Small group discussion
4. Feedback to large group

Part 2

1. Small group discussion. Handout 3 – 'Nobody's Perfect'
2. Feedback to large group
3. Design advertisements. Teacher input
4. 'Hand of Friendship'

Detailed Procedure

Part 1

1. Handout 1 – 'Sharon and Ken' story

   The teacher distributes Handout 1 – 'Sharon and Ken' story and reads it with students.

2. Compete Handout 2 – 'Sharon and Ken' individually or in pairs

   Students complete Handout 2 – 'Sharon and Ken' questionnaire on the story individually or in pairs.

3. Small group discussion

   In groups of 3 – 4, students discuss their answers.

4. Feedback to large group

   Report back to large group.

VARIATION

- Bring in magazines and pictures to depict how people's ideas about size and shape vary from country to country and from age to age.

Part 2

1. Small group discussion. Handout 3 – 'Nobody's Perfect'

Teacher distributes handout 3 – 'Nobody's Perfect' and ask students to look at it in groups of four.

Discuss the following:

- *What messages are being given about how people should look? Look closely at the advertisements, and see what is being said or suggested about the kind of legs, nose, lips, ears, figure, hair, knees, skin and feet we are meant to have.*
- *Is it possible to change any of those things?*
- *Is it desirable? What do you think?*

2. Feedback to large group

Take feedback from the groups and discuss.

3. Design advertisements. Teacher input

Then ask groups to design another couple of advertisements that you might see in today's magazines and put them in the blank spaces.

Take feedback.

Teacher input: Whatever the period, whether the 30's, 40's or 90's, people dream about being 'beautiful', but our idea of 'beauty' changes with fashion. For example, in the nineteenth century, painters used models who were considerably larger and rounder than those used today. In some countries, having a fat wife is a status symbol – it shows you're rich enough to feed her well.

4. 'Hand of Friendship'

Ask students to turn over the sheet and do a 'Hand of Friendship', as in ID 12B 'Positive Posters' with members of your small group filling in things they like about you. It can include something to do with your appearance but doesn't have to.

Share something that surprised you or that you enjoyed hearing.

SHARON AND KEN

Sharon came out of her house and could not see her friends around. "They probably got fed up waiting for me and have gone on ahead without me," she thought. Recently she had felt a bit of an outsider in the group. Nobody seemed to notice whether she was there or not. The girls had always lots to talk about and she often found it difficult to think of something amusing and interesting to say.

Sharon heard someone calling her and saw Ken heading in her direction. "Oh no," she thought. "I look brutal today. Why didn't I wash my hair? Not that it would make much difference; he's probably looking for Elaine anyway. Elaine always look great – great body, great face, great hair – how could you compete with that?"

Ken quickened his pace to catch up with Sharon and hoped he didn't look too eager to be with her. He rarely got a chance to speak to her on her own and hoped he wouldn't mess up this opportunity. His friend, Jim, fancied Elaine. He couldn't understand how they could have such different taste in girls. He wouldn't like to compete with Jim, being a great footballer and all. He decided to act 'cool'. "I'm heading for the disco," he said. "Are you going my way, Sharon?"

Sharon thought, "He must feel sorry for me". She silently cursed herself for not wearing her black gear – at least it made her feel good. "The girls seem to have gone on without me so I might as well walk up with you".

Ken started talking about the upcoming school tour. He could kick himself for his nervous rambling and hoped that he wasn't boring her.

Sharon wished her friends were there. Once again she couldn't think of anything to say. Why did she always get tongue-tied around people she liked? Anyway why bother? Ken would probably ask Elaine out.

"Why isn't she joining in the conversation?" Ken wondered nervously. "Maybe she's embarrassed to be seen with me. Why didn't I wear my Levi's?"

Elaine spotted Sharon and Ken walking towards the disco. "They must have got off together," she thought. She envied the ease that Sharon seemed to have with fellas. "What was she doing with that idiot! With her great looks and all, even Jim probably fancied her. If only I could be more like her!"

SHARON AND KEN

Questions:

1. What does Sharon think about herself?

2. Why does she find it difficult to talk to Ken?

3. What does Ken think of himself?

4. How do you think he feels when Sharon won't talk to him?

5. What do they have in common in how they think and feel about themselves?

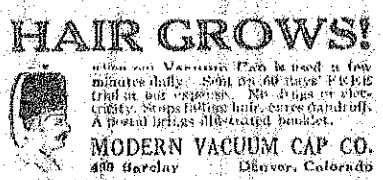
6. What confuses Ken about Jim?

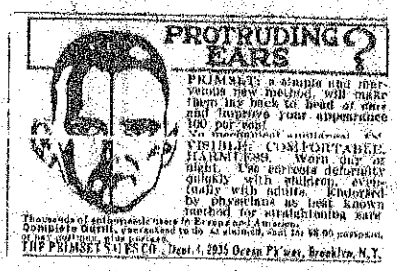
7. What does this story tell us about beauty, attraction and relationships?

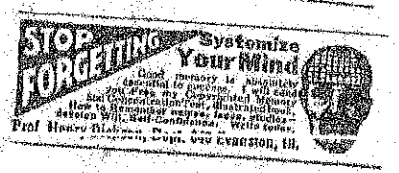
8. How does Elaine feel about herself?

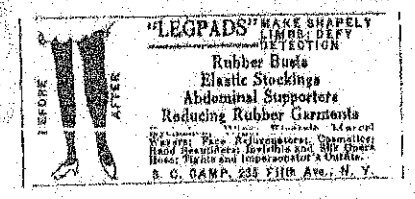
9. What lessons can be learned from this story?

'NOBODY'S PERFECT'

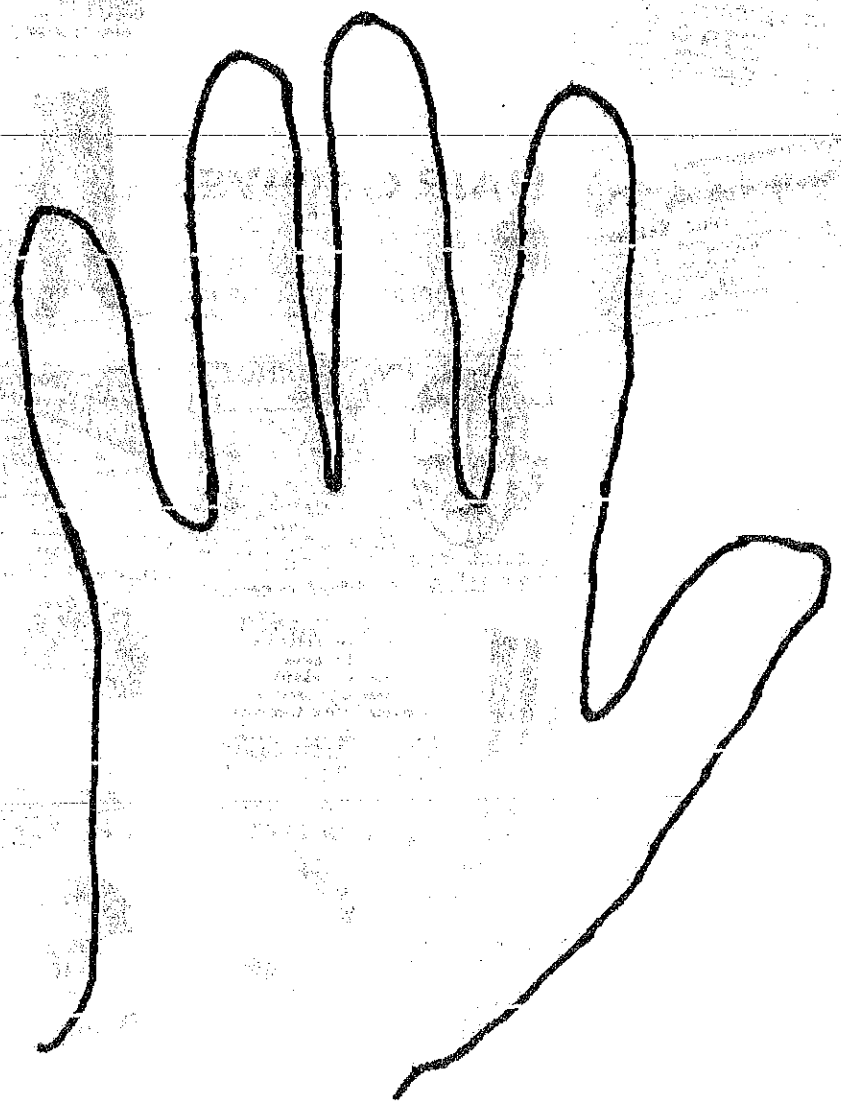








NOBODY'S PERFECT – BUT I'M PRETTY CLOSE...



ID Lesson 16
Reinforcer
AG

CORE CONCEPT: ***The ability to nurture ourselves through positive self talk helps maintain self worth.***

ACCEPTING POSITIVES

PURPOSE

To help the students to identify positive things about themselves for themselves.

To develop an awareness of the necessity of thinking good things about ourselves and not always dwelling on our faults.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This exercise is suitable for all groups of any size. Gentle background music could be played during this exercise.

Links with: **ID** 10 'That's Life', **ID** 11 'Sunshine', **ID** 12B 'Positive Posters', **ID** 13 'Think Positive'.

Materials

Blackboard and chalk

PROCEDURE

Outline

1. Guided Fantasy

2. Students record positives
3. Small groups
4. Large group discussion
5. Homework

Detailed Procedure

1. Guided Fantasy

Close your eyes, relax and imagine that you are walking alone on a hot sunny beach – there's nobody else around as you stroll happily. At the end of the beach two people are fishing. They are talking about you and seem to know you very well and for a long, long time. One makes a nice comment about you and what you are like – listen to the words they are saying. *(Pause)* The other responds by mentioning something good you have done recently – something you may have achieved. What are they saying? *(Pause)* Now they are remembering a nice comment you made to somebody. They go on to talk about the three qualities that they really like about you – what are these qualities? *(Pause)* As they finish speaking you realise that it's time to turn back and walk home. *(Pause)* Slowly say goodbye to this scene.

2. Students record positives

Slowly open your eyes – take out your pen and paper and write down all the nice things these people said about you and if you think they are true.

3. Small groups

In groups of three, share what it was like. Discuss how it felt hearing them. Was it easy to write them? Is it easy or difficult to own them for yourself?

4. Large group discussion

Follow with feedback to the large group. Discuss the difficulties of owning positive self statements. What are we used to giving ourselves. How does it make us feel telling ourselves our positives? How can we continue this?

5. Homework

Each morning for a week when you wake up tell yourself one thing you like about yourself.