

The Kindness Curriculum Educators notes

Self-acceptance

Self-acceptance is the awareness of and satisfaction with one's strengths and weaknesses, the non-judgemental realistic assessment of one's talents, capabilities, and general worth. It results in an individual's feeling about oneself, that they are of "unique worth". When we're self-accepting, we're able to embrace all facets of ourselves—not just the positive, more "esteem-able." Building capacities to accept oneself is critical to a sense of wellbeing and crucial to mental health.

Benefits of self-acceptance include increased positive emotions, sense of freedom, self-worth, autonomy, and self-esteem. Strong self-acceptance also decreases fear of failure, and self-critique, depressive symptoms and an overwhelming need for approval. People have the capacity to develop self-acceptance - to learn to be more attentive to the thoughts and beliefs - especially judgments we have about ourselves and others and their impact on our relationships and daily lives.

Self-acceptance is kindness to yourself! True self-acceptance is embracing who you are, without any qualifications, conditions, or exceptions (Seltzer, 2008). It is exactly what its name suggests: the state of complete acceptance of oneself - all attributes, positive or negative, strengths and weaknesses. Whilst one can accept character weaknesses or behaviours, self-acceptance also promotes the desire of the individual to change and improve the self. Thus awareness and acknowledgement of habits, traits and personality, and the capacity to critically reflect and change is a key component of self-acceptance. Acceptance of self is the beginning point for improving self and essentially permits oneself to be human. Self-acceptance involves:

- Having compassion for yourself
- Being less judgmental about yourself
- Critically reflecting on weaknesses and challenges
- Awareness and embracing of self
- Self-compassion

Educational settings and schools in conjunction with home environments are of central importance for social and emotional learning. In contemporary times there are many conditions that impact on children and students' confidence and emotional states. Social media and society generate comparison of just about everything often creating unrealistic expectations. Often young people are the least well-equipped to deal with the emotional and mental challenges presented by various social media platforms and therefore developing self-acceptance is key to their successful engagement.



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Self-acceptance provides a way of looking at the world as individuals consider their own value and self-worth. These skills lead to emotional regulation and resilience supporting a growth mindset. Having a high sense of self-acceptance and self-worth is also important in the workplace. Self-awareness is a critical component of being able to present yourself in an authentic way and build genuine connections with peers and co-workers. Realistic appraisal of one's talents, capabilities and worth in the workplace creates reasonable expectations, supports developmental goals and relationships. Some of the benefits of self-acceptance and recognising self-worth in the workplace include:

- Positive mental state
- Increased engagement
- Improved work outcomes and quality
- Higher efficiency
- Increased trust in self and motivation
- Better relationships with team members
- Increased self-confidence and positivity
- Capacity to challenge self for self-improvement

Embracing self and accepting strengths and weaknesses is critical to personal and professional growth.

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