

SELF ESTEEM – A DIAMOND RANKING

This is an introductory exercise for working with young people to discuss self esteem and focus on what it means for them in their lives. Its aim is to stimulate discussion and, if possible, to find some consensus within the group on which to base further work

The Task:

Take the nine statements about self-esteem below (or make up your own – or use a mixture of these and your own to reflect the level and needs of the group) – and write each one on a post-it note

- ***Taking the best possible care of myself***
- ***A positive belief in my own value as an individual***
- ***Feeling in control of my life and my choices***
- ***Liking and knowing myself and my capabilities***
- ***Believing I deserve to be treated well by others***
- ***Feeling confident enough to cope with life's pressures and changes***
- ***Having high expectations for myself***
- ***Knowing I have rights and deserve love and respect***
- ***Feeling secure in myself***
- ***Being to negotiate what I do and don't want***
- ***Feeling worthy of my own happiness***

Break the group into smaller groups of 3 or 4 – and give each group a set of the 9 post-it statements you've prepared. Ask them to discuss these and decide which are the most important to them.

Their task is to rank the 9 statements in terms of their importance, putting the ones they think best describe what self-esteem is at the top of the diamond, and the ones they think are least relevant and important last.

At the end, the arrangement of their statements should resemble a diamond like this

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      X
     X  X
    X  X  X
     X  X
      X
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It helps people to be clear about what they're expected to do if you mark a piece of flipchart paper out for each group with the "Xs" in advance to show where to place their statements to make up the diamond.

Stress that there's no right answer – you don't have a crib sheet hidden away somewhere with the ideal Diamond on it! This is simply a way of helping them come to a working agreement about what constitutes self-esteem, offering an opportunity to explore its key elements and multi-faceted meanings.

Also, give each group 2 blank post-its so they can put statements they think up for themselves on these if they want to add them on. Make sure they do at least 7 of yours though, as you need to set the agenda to some extent as to what self-esteem does mean.

Unpacking the learning:

To take the feedback from this, some of the questions to stimulate discussion could be:

Which statements and aspects of self-esteem did you have most discussion over? Which was hardest to agree about, and why?

What was your reason for choosing the one which came top?

Which ones did you add on your blank post-its and why?

What interested you in particular about the discussion?

Was there any new learning for you about self-esteem from doing the Diamond?

At the end of the exercise and the discussion – you may want to come up with a composite statement on self-esteem which you agree as a group is going to be your basic shared definition

You might be interested to know that the California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem in 1990 described it as:

"Appreciating my own worth and importance...being accountable for myself and responsible towards others"

which is probably as good a definition as any.

And in Revolution from Within, Gloria Steinem wrote:

***"It's not that self-esteem is everything.
It's just that there's nothing without it."***