

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE

1.1 SELF-CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence is the inner belief that a person has in their own abilities, worth, and potential. It is the trust one places in oneself to perform tasks, face challenges, and make decisions with clarity and courage. A self-confident person does not assume they are perfect; instead, they accept themselves, recognize their strengths, and work on their weaknesses. This quality helps individuals take initiative, express their thoughts openly, and remain resilient when facing difficulties. Self-confidence also shapes how people interact socially—those with higher confidence often communicate effectively, take leadership roles, and handle criticism more positively. Ultimately, self-confidence is a foundation of personal growth, emotional stability, and success in various areas of life.

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

- Helps individuals trust their own abilities and decisions.
- Encourages people to face challenges without fear.
- Improves communication skills and self-expression.
- Builds resilience and helps overcome failures.
- Reduces stress, anxiety, and self-doubt.
- Enhances problem-solving and decision-making abilities.
- Strengthens interpersonal relationships and social interactions.
- Boosts motivation and willingness to take positive risks.
- Increases chances of success in academic and professional life.
- Helps individuals maintain a positive and healthy mind-set.

1.3 FACTORS INFLUENCING SELF-CONFIDENCE

- **Experience in general life:** Everyday life experiences—small successes, unexpected failures, moments of struggle, and achievements—slowly shape a person's belief in themselves. When life offers opportunities to overcome challenges, confidence grows; when life constantly brings setbacks without support, confidence may weaken. These

general life experiences teach individuals how capable, strong, or resilient they feel in facing the world.

- **Relation with parents:** Parents are often the first source of emotional security. Encouraging words, appreciation, warmth, and understanding from parents make a child feel valued and capable. On the other hand, constant criticism, comparison, or emotional neglect can make a person doubt their worth. A healthy parent–child relationship builds a strong foundation for lifelong self-confidence.
- **Experiences during childhood:** Childhood is a sensitive period where early memories shape identity. Praise for small efforts, freedom to explore, and supportive guidance develop a sense of ability and independence. Conversely, harsh punishment, lack of opportunities, or negative early experiences can create fear, hesitation, and low self-belief. Positive childhood experiences help individuals grow into confident adults.
- **Academic achievements:** Success in studies, recognition from teachers, and good performance in school or college give individuals a sense of competence. When academic efforts are appreciated, confidence naturally rises. However, repeated academic failures or lack of encouragement can make a person feel inadequate or incapable, directly affecting overall self-confidence.
- **Social experiences:** Interactions with friends, classmates, colleagues, and society play a major role in shaping confidence. Acceptance, respect, and meaningful friendships strengthen self-esteem. Being heard and valued in social groups helps individuals feel confident. On the other hand, bullying, rejection, or isolation can deeply hurt one's sense of self and lead to low confidence. Social support and positive relationships therefore act as powerful builders of self-confidence.

1.4 SYMPTOMS OF POSITIVE SELF-CONFIDENCE

- Thoughts and opinions are expressed openly, showing a sense of comfort in sharing ideas without the fear of being judged or dismissed.
- Decision-making becomes firm and clear, reflecting trust in personal judgment and the ability to choose the right path even in uncertain situations.
- A calm and steady attitude appears during challenges, indicating emotional stability and the inner strength to handle stress without losing composure.

- Mistakes are accepted with maturity, seen not as failures but as meaningful lessons that contribute to personal and professional improvement.
- New responsibilities and opportunities are approached with enthusiasm, showing a readiness to explore, grow, and step into unfamiliar roles confidently.
- Having versatile interests and activities.
- Natural and stable eye contact is maintained, signalling confidence, sincerity, and presence in communication.
- Speech becomes clear, balanced, and self-assured, reflecting comfort in interacting with others and expressing ideas effectively.
- Constructive criticism is received with openness, without defensiveness, demonstrating a willingness to learn and improve from feedback.
- Goals are set thoughtfully and pursued consistently, showing a belief in personal capability and commitment to long-term growth.
- An inner sense of peace and contentment is felt, supported by self-acceptance, self-respect, and trust in one's own strengths and potential.

1.5 SYMPTOMS OF LOW SELF-CONFIDENCE

- Frequent self-doubt, with constant questioning of personal abilities and decisions.
- Fear of failure, leading to hesitation in trying new tasks or taking opportunities.
- Difficulty expressing opinions, often staying silent even when having something to say.
- Avoidance of challenges, choosing comfort zones due to lack of belief in personal capability.
- Negative self-talk, such as feeling “not good enough” or comparing oneself unfavourably with others.
- Sensitivity to criticism, taking feedback personally and feeling easily hurt.
- Poor eye contact, indicating discomfort or insecurity in social situations.
- Overdependence on others, seeking continuous reassurance for small decisions.
- Lack of assertiveness, struggling to say no or stand up for personal needs.
- Feelings of anxiety or nervousness, especially in social or performance-based situations.

1.6 DEVELOPING SELF-ESTEEM

- Understanding and appreciating one's own strengths helps create a warm and positive sense of identity.
- Accepting flaws and imperfections makes room for self-kindness and reduces harsh self-judgment.
- Speaking to oneself with compassion instead of criticism slowly nurtures inner confidence.
- Setting small, realistic goals offers steady moments of success that build self-belief.
- Celebrating even the tiniest achievements reminds a person that progress matters more than perfection.
- Seeing mistakes as lessons rather than failures encourages a healthy and forgiving attitude toward oneself.
- Staying close to people who offer support, kindness, and encouragement strengthens emotional security.
- Letting go of constant comparison brings peace and allows a person to grow at their own pace.
- Taking ownership of personal choices builds trust in one's own judgment and capabilities.
- Practising self-care—resting, reflecting, and healing—helps nourish a gentle, respectful relationship with oneself.
- Engaging in hobbies or meaningful activities brings joy and helps rediscover personal strengths.
- Setting healthy boundaries protects emotional well-being and reinforces a sense of self-worth.

Reference Books:

1. **Branden, Nathaniel.** *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*. Bantam Books, 1994.
2. **Peale, Norman Vincent.** *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Prentice Hall, 1952.