

Self-esteem & Trauma:

Impact of bullying, abuse & neglect

START A CONVERSATION THAT MATTERS

What can you do if one of your loved ones is struggling with self-esteem as a result of trauma?

- **Show them that you care.** Be affectionate, listen empathically, or simply spend time with them. Reassure them they have value and you care about them. It is important too that you offer them options as to what they need and not assume.
- **Remind them of positive things.** Challenge their negative self-image by reminding of their good points, such as qualities they have or positive things they have done.
- **Be patient.** Low self-esteem often builds up over many years. Improvements can take a long time and repeated reassurance.
- **Avoid blame.** People with low self-esteem often blame themselves for negative experiences, including mental health problems. Reassure them that this isn't their fault, and avoid telling them to "get over it" or "it could be worse."
- **Let them know that it is okay to feel bad from time to time.** Nobody feels happy and confident all of the time, and it's important they don't feel under pressure to live up to unrealistic expectations.
- **Help them seek appropriate treatment.** If you are concerned low self-esteem is causing a mental health problem, encourage your friend or family member to get help/treatment.



Initiative of FDL Area Women's Fund



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What is self-esteem?

It is what you think about the type of person you are, your abilities, the positive and negative things about you and what you expect for your future.

Low self-esteem: Beliefs about yourself will often be negative. You will tend to focus on your weaknesses or mistakes made, and may find it hard to recognize the positives of your personality. You may also blame yourself for any difficulties or failures that you have.

Low self-esteem is unfortunately all too common in adults, teens or children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

Constant abuse (or exposure to abuse) causes individuals to question what is “wrong” with them as they continue to be hurt by the same people. They experience guilt and low self-worth because their relationships with others are “unsuccessful” and they often blame themselves for that.

WHAT CAN YOU SAY:

“It sounds like you are going through a rough time. Are you looking for advice, a hug, or just someone to listen? Let me know what you need from me.”

“It’s great to see you {insert positive activity}. You are {good quality}.” Or “I love seeing your smile.”

For details, local support, stats & more:

FDLSaysNoMore.org/Talk

FOND DU LAC SAYS
NO MORE
TOGETHER WE CAN END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT