
Review of Literature

Communication and self awareness:

Communication is a complex process mediated by emotions, attentiveness, understanding, and empathy. It involves both verbal and nonverbal processes that must be congruent; otherwise, the recipient may misinterpret the message and respond accordingly. Self awareness of people communication styles and patterns and how others perceive us is crucial to understanding themselves. *For instance*, if the client asks, “Why are you so angry today?” and your response is “I am not angry” it is essential for you to assess why the client perceived you as being angry. You may not be angry, but something about your tone of voice, use of words, or nonverbal communication led the client to believe you were angry (Antai-Otong,2007).

The nurse can help the client communicate more effectively by understanding the reasons underlying cognitive, emotional, and behavioral problems associated with maladaptive coping styles. One approach involves assessing these behaviors and using assertive communication skills to role model emotional competence, foster trust, and form therapeutic interactions. This process begins with *self awareness* of how one sees oneself and others, and the competence to navigate in the world through positive and healthy relationships. It is imperative to avoid personalizing negative comments or responses because they reflect a repertoire of experiences and perceptions brought in by the client. (Keltner and Haidt, 2001).

Self –awareness is a guiding force of cultural competence. With maturity and experience, students, novices, and experienced nurses can become proficient in assessing the needs of all clients to ensure culturally sensitive health care across the life span (*Antai-Otong, 2008*). People culture plays an important role in how we determine what will influence them. People are influenced not only by significant others, but by outside forces (*Luke,2008*).

Nurses can understand clients only as much as they understand themselves. The nurse’s culture shapes personal values, beliefs, mores, customs, self esteem, and guides health practices and decision making. Everyone has “blind spots” or subjective lenses that compromise impartiality and hinder healthy nurse – client interactions. Self awareness is critical to cultural competence and requires acknowledging personal differences and their potential impact on nurse – client relationships. *For instance*, while working with a client from a different culture you notice he has a thick accent and you are unable to discern what he is saying. Rather than listening attentively and attempting to understand, you speak loudly and remark “I can’t understand what you are saying. This response conveys a lack of empathy, disrespect, insensitivity, and an unwillingness to take the time to understand the client (*Antai-Otong, 2008*).

Self –awareness includes awareness of verbal and nonverbal means of communication, such as voice intonation, accent, gestures and facial expressions, touch, space, eye contact, and dress. Assessing the individuality of every client’s culture helps the nurse gain a clearer and more accurate understanding of his or her own culture, values, beliefs, mores, and customs. A willingness and ability to embrace the client’s culture and ethnicity show respect toward the client and his or her family.

Nurses must assess clients according to several cultural phenomena to ensure cultural competence: communication styles, time, space, and social organization (*Giger and Davidhizar, 2004; Purnell and Paulanka, 2003*).

Self awareness of non- verbal behaviour: It is also worth remembering that, when People are in contact with a patient, while People are appraising their non verbal behaviour and communication, they are doing the same to other, although this may be less consciously and therefore less purposeful. It is important as a mental health nurse to have an awareness of the messages People are communicating to them patients generally through they appearance and behaviour, and to be conscious of the professional standards required of them. It is particularly important to have an awareness of they non- verbal communication in an interaction with a specific patient as the therapeutic relationship is developed and maintained by the quality of communication between them (*O'Carroll, 2007*).

People with low self-esteem may well communicate less than those with high self-esteem. They will be unwilling to take risks in social encounters and are unlikely to appear confident, persuasive and convincing. They may well speak hesitantly and will often over-use the speech habits of the group which they seek approval from, *for example* frequently injecting 'like' or 'actually' into their speech. People with high self-esteem will speak confidently and fluently and will generally be willing to take the risk of admitting when they're wrong, which can contribute considerably to their persuasiveness (*Rotter, 2009*).

The concepts of self:

Some sociologists, particularly those with a philosophical and qualitative orientation, view the self as a process involving people's internal conversations. Those with a more positivistic and quantitative orientation emphasize more stable aspects of the self. From their point of view, the self-concept refers to all the ways in which people describe themselves (*Sadock and Sadock, 2009*).

According to *Locke, (2007)* personal identity (the self) "depends on consciousness, not on substance" nor on the soul. We are the same person to the extent that we are conscious of our past and future thoughts and actions in the same way as we are conscious of our present thoughts and actions. If consciousness is this "thought" which doubles all thoughts, then personal identity is only founded on the repeated act of consciousness: "This may show us wherein personal identity consists: not in the identity of substance, but in the identity of consciousness". *For example*, one may claim to be a reincarnation of Plato, therefore having the same soul.

The self is the central ingredient in human personality and personal adjustment. *Rogers* described the self as a social product, developing out of interpersonal relationships and striving for consistency. He maintained that there is a basic human need for positive regard both from others and from oneself. He also believed that in every person there is a tendency towards self-actualization and development so long as this is permitted and encouraged by an inviting environment (*Rogers, 2006*).

Self-consciousness is credited only with the development of identity. In an epistemological sense, self-consciousness is a personal understanding of the very core of one's own identity. It is during periods

of self-consciousness that people comes the closest to knowing themselves objectively. Describes self-consciousness as being "non-positional", in that it is not from any location particular (*Sartre, 2007*).

Consciousness certainly is connected with awareness. In fact, some people would say the two terms are synonyms. To be conscious of something is to be aware of it. Conscious mental states are those we are aware of. From these simple platitudes comes the motivation, or intuitive support for theories of consciousness built on the notion of representation, whether it is representation of the conscious states themselves or of their objects (*Levine, 2003*).

Self concept is what a person believes about himself or herself at a given time. Self concept can be reflected in answers to such questions as, who am I? What am I? With in this- view, a person is able to identify definite personality traits, social roles and physical characteristics, such as shyness, motherhood or fatherhood and body image. When self concept is threatened or disrupted, the response is anxiety or defensive behaviour, including social withdrawal, outward aggression and anger, or assertiveness. If defences fail, stress increases and the person may experience personality disorganization, a loss of control and a sense of powerlessness and helplessness (*Basavanthappa, 2007*).

Self concept is how People see themselves. It is important because how People communicate with others is connected closely with this. High self esteem requires People to have a positive self image. A negative self view lowers People self esteem because they will focus on them failings and them insecurity will lead to a low level of self confidence. Self image and body image are closely related to concept of the self (*Perera, 2006*).

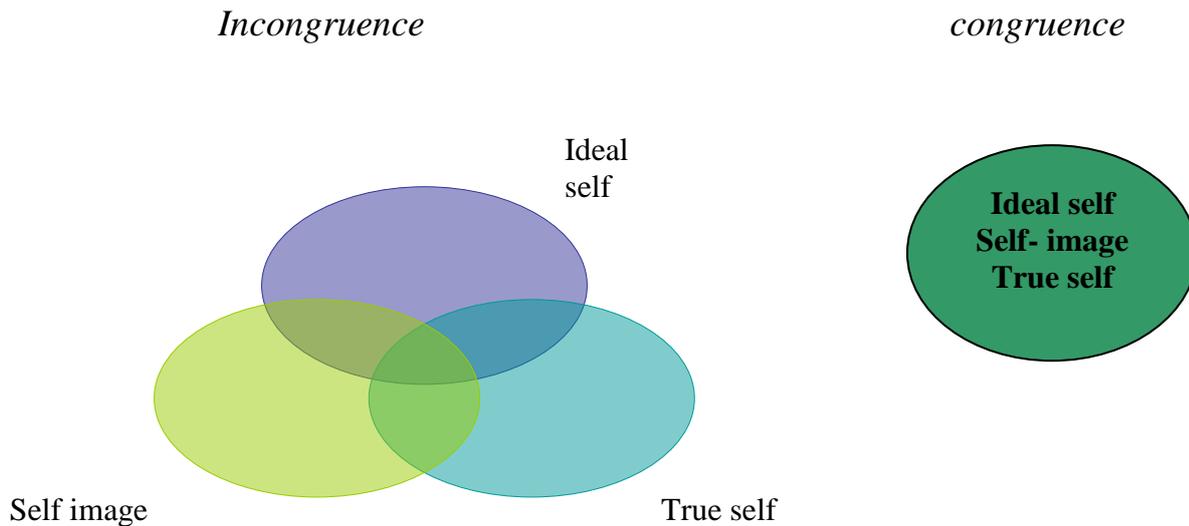


Figure (1): Incongruence occurs when there is a mismatch between any of these three entities. Anxiety and defensiveness are common when the self-image does not match the true self (Coon, 2007).

Self concept consists of the physical self- or body image, the personal self or personal identity, and the self -esteem

Personal identity:

It has been identified that the component of the self concept as the personal self and further divided it into:

- The moral –ethical self is that aspect of the personal identity that functions as observer, standard setter, dreamer, and comparer. This components of the personal self makes judgments that influence and individual self- evaluation
- Self – consistency is the component of the personal identity, that strives to maintain a stage self – image. Even if the self- image is negative, because of the need for stability and self consistency the

individual resists letting go of the image which he or she has achieved a measure of consistency.

- Self – ideal /self – expectancy relates to an individual’s perception of what he or she wants to be, to do, or become. The concept of this ideal self arises only of perceptions one has of the expectations of others. Disturbances in self- concept can occur when individuals are unable to achieve their ideals and expectancies (*Basavanthappa, 2007*).

Self-image is how one perceives himself positively or negatively. Self-image is important because how one feels and thinks about himself affects the way he acts. *For example*, when ten of the spies (who were sent to explore the land of Canaan) perceived themselves as grasshoppers (in comparison to the tall inhabitants of the land) they concluded that they were unable to take possession of the land. Low self-esteem may lead to behavioural problems (*Alan, 2003*).

Body image affects how you feel about yourself. It's an important factor in self esteem for women, men, adolescents and children. The modern world glorifies the perfect body and if you're a woman it's difficult to be positive if you believe you are fat, ugly, too tall (*Perera, 2007*).

Authors know through introspection that there are two kinds of mental experience: awareness and self-awareness, self-awareness is consciousness of being aware. Conscience is a subspecies of self awareness, where the feeling of not having lived up to one’s ethical or moral values results in guilt. This is mature conscience in its familiar form. But even in relatively normal and healthy people an inner voice is often too ready to criticize, blame and accuse the self. In those with a

predisposition to depression it is often as if someone within the individual's mind was judging and observing in a spoiling, superior, sadistic, or overindulgent way (*Gabbard, Beck, and Holmes, 2007*).

Most people have a fairly low level of self-awareness because we see ourselves very differently than other people see us. It's like looking in the mirror. You may take a quick glance to check the hair, but unless you take a closer look, you may miss that little item hanging from your nose. Guess what...other people see it, and they won't necessarily tell you! So heightening your self-awareness is like taking a close look in the mirror and really seeing what others see (*Adrianse, 2004*). Self awareness prompts are presented to encourage you to examine attitudes and feelings toward clients exhibiting various clinical symptoms (*Shives, 2008*).

Awareness--vigilance and alertness in gathering information--is an important ingredient in preventing relationship problems. Partners in good relationships are constantly aware of the health of the relationship, monitoring their interactions and making corrections or adjustments that keep the relationship healthy and strong (Lopper, 2007).

Self-awareness means "being honest with yourself, about yourself". Author thinks of it as a "snapshot of reality". It's about understanding the strengths, limitations, motives, behavior tendencies, thought patterns, and even "what you say when you talk to yourself" (*Adrianse, 2004*).

Self awareness: a personal insight or recognition of one's attitudes, biases, values, and ideas and the impact they have relationships with other (Antai- Otong, 2007). Self awareness involves personal competence, integrity, and awareness of how emotions influence decision

making and interpersonal relationships (*Goleman, Boyatzis, and Mckee, 2003*).

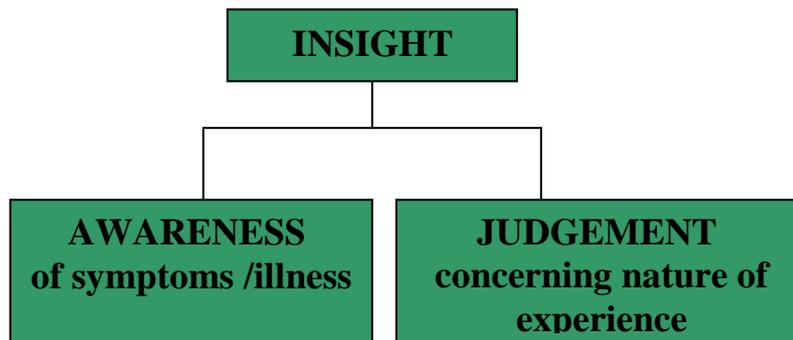


Figure (2): Current model of Insight/Awareness in Clinical Psychiatry (Markova, 2003).

Values are abstract standards that give a person a sense of right and wrong and establish a code of conduct for living. *Sample values* include hard work, honesty, sincerity, cleanliness, and orderliness. To gain insight into oneself and personal values, the values clarification process is helpful. The values clarification process has three steps: choosing, prizing, and acting. *Beliefs* are ideas that one holds to be true, *for example*, “All old people are hard of hearing”. Other beliefs are irrational and may persist, despite these beliefs having no supportive evidence or the existence of contradictory empirical evidence. *For example*, many people harbor irrational beliefs about cultures different from their own that they developed simply from others’ comments or fear of unknown, not from any evidence to support such beliefs. *Attitudes* are general feelings or a frame of reference around which a person organizes knowledge about the world. Such as hopeful, optimistic, pessimistic, positive, and negative, color how we look at the world and people (*Videbeck, 2008*)

Self awareness is the process of understanding one’s own beliefs, thoughts, motivations, biases, and limitations and recognizing how they

affect others. Without self- awareness, nurses will find it impossible to establish and maintain therapeutic relationships with patients. “Know they self” is a basic tenet of psychiatric- mental health nursing (*Boyd, 2008*).

Self awareness Paying attention to people’s senses, thoughts, feelings and intuition. Diving deep into peoples’ emotions to tap their sources. Seeing our thinking and how it creates our reality. Discovering people deepest essence. (*Robson, 2007*)

Self-awareness includes recognition of our personality, our strengths and weaknesses, our likes and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others (*Varcarolis, 2006*).

Self-awareness is the explicit understanding that one exists. Furthermore, it includes the concept that one exists as an individual, separate from other people, with private thoughts. It may also include the understanding that other people are similarly self-aware. Self-awareness remains a critical mystery in philosophy, psychology, biology, and artificial intelligence (*Locke, 2007*).

Self-awareness is at the core of professional development. Knowing who you are and what you enjoy doing, and being able to recognise your skills, strengths and weaknesses, as well as your effect on other people, provides a baseline from which to boost your career potential. The more you know, the more effect-evenly you can adapt what you do (*Beagrie, 2005*).

<i>Arena (open)</i> (Known to self and known to others)	<i>Blind Spot</i> (Unknown to self and known to others)
<i>Façade (hidden)</i> (Known to self and unknown to others)	<i>Unknown</i> (Unknown to self and unknown to others)

Figure (3): Johari Window (Brandau, 2008), available at <http://www.domystuff.com>

One model of communication that can help the nurse look at self awareness is the johari window. Each quadrant or windowpane describes one aspect of the self. Known to self and others- Known only to others- known only to self- Known neither to self nor to others. *Quadrant 1* is open quadrant; it includes the behaviours, feelings, and thoughts known to the individual and others. *Quadrant 2* is called the blind quadrant because it includes all the things that others know but the individual does not know. Quadrant 3 is the hidden quadrant; it includes the things about the self that only the individual knows. *Quadrant 4* is the unknown quadrant, containing aspects of the self that are unknown to the self and others. *The three principles which explain how the self functions include:* A change in any one quadrant affects all other quadrants, The smaller quadrant 1, the poorer the communication, Interpersonal learning means that a change has taken place, so quadrant 1 is larger and one or more of the other quadrant is small. *The goal of the increasing self awareness* is to enlarge the area of quadrant 1 while, reducing the other 3 quadrants. To increase self Knowledge, it is necessary to listen to the self .This means

the individual allows genuine emotions to be experienced; identifies and accepts the personal needs; and moves the body in free, joyful and spontaneous ways. It includes exploring personal thoughts, feelings, memories and impulses. *The next step to reduce the size of quadrant 2 by listening to and learning from others. Knowledge of self is not possible alone. As we relate to others, we broaden our perceptions of self, but such learning requires active listening and openness to the feedback others provide. The final step involves reducing the size of quadrant three by self disclosing, or revealing to others important aspects of the self. Self disclosure is both a sign of personality health and a means of achieving healthy personality. (Brandau, 2008)*

People's self-esteem will continually fluctuate and is affected by events and encounters with other people. People are also constantly judging and evaluating themselves, often in comparison with others. Observing themselves in relation to other people can be a helpful source of learning and feedback. Yet all too often comparison slips into competition and others become a yardstick by which people evaluate themselves as good or bad, competent or inadequate (*Ebert, et al., 2008*).

Disorders of self awareness (Ego disorders) these include disturbance of:-

➤ Awareness of self –activity including:

1-De personalization: One feels that one is altered or not real in some way

2-De realization: The surroundings don't seem real

➤ The immediate awareness of self unity

➤ The continuity of self

➤ The boundaries of self

(Basant and Anne, 2004).

Self-esteem is one's own evaluation of characteristics perceived by one. During adolescence, the characteristics perceived are based on belief systems and abstract personality dispositions, as well as other cognitive and emotional factors. Characteristics that are often used to define one's self are traits such as athletic skills, peer acceptance, attractiveness, gender roles, academic skills, morality, social support, life problems, popularity, and ethnic identity. All these characteristics are funneled into the mind and create a discrepancy between the true self and the ideal self *(Taylor and Menon, 2009).*

Self esteem and guilt are related because guilt is a symptom of low self esteem that will now allow you to feel good about yourself. It is a feeling of culpability, from a sense of inadequacy or for imagined offenses. When feeling guilty is persistent is called toxic *(Brinkrant and Carlsen, 2007).*

A healthy self esteem starts with awareness, paying attention about your needs and goals. You are usually encouraged to ignore your own needs because you have to concentrate on living up to other's expectations. When I was a child I learned that other people were more important than me. My parents didn't tell me this with words, but by example. To build a healthy self esteem requires that you listen to your intuition, sensations, and insights *(Valencia, 2009).*

Eight characteristics of a healthy self esteem (I would like to share eight characteristics of a healthy self esteem and how I have learned to apply them in daily life) include:

1-Living Consciously: I have learned to be more conscious every day, through awareness. I do this by listening to me, my own reactions. Watching and observing them, by listening to my body "I am hungry or just eating because I am supposed to do it now?" listening to my intuition.

2-Learning from mistakes: Learning to say, "I made a mistake" and learn from it. We make mistakes and the best way I found to understand this is by learning from them.

3-Listening to other's point of view: Why is hard to listen to other's people point of view? Because the tendency is to be right. I had the truth and I always had to be right

4-Taking care of you physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually: I take care of myself physically by exercising and eating well. Emotionally by clearing negative emotions, mentally by reading, learning new things, spiritually by meditating, being in silence, or praying.

5-Respecting other people differences: We are all different; it took me a long time to understand this I usually felt safe with people that were just like me. Respecting other people differences doesn't mean to agree with them. Is to understand that they have the right to be different and deserve respect as human beings.

6-Taking responsibility for our own life: I was raised in an environment where self-responsibility almost didn't exist. It was always other's people fault or something outside to blame. When I began to take responsibility for my own life and everything started to change.

7-Being able to speak and act from our own convictions: I was so afraid to speak up; I had to be the good girl and a pleasing person. Through the years I have learned that by speaking up, I feel better about myself, because I am being loyal to myself.

8-Having a sense of purpose, a direction in life: For many years I have lived hypnotized, not knowing where to go, without any purpose just living in an automatic. Having a sense of purpose is having a healthy self esteem; you know that what you do is important. You are here for a reason

(Valencia, 2009).

Self Esteem is how you feel about yourself. Image is about how you see yourself and how you believe others see you. They are closely connected because if you have a poor opinion of yourself your self esteem will be low *(Perera, 2008).*

Self-Esteem is the evaluative component of self-concept. Theories of self esteem explain how interactions with particular others in our circle of interpersonal relationships as well as our interactions with our society at large can affect how we form self esteem *(Terrence ,2008).*

Self-esteem is all about how much people value themselves, the pride they feel in themselves, and how worthwhile they feel. Self-esteem is important because feeling good about yourself can affect how you act. A person who has high self-esteem will make friends easily, is more in control of his or her behavior, and will enjoy life more. Body image is how a person feels about his or her own physical appearance. For many people, especially people in their early teens, body image can be closely

linked to self-esteem. That's because as kids develop into teens, they care more about how others see them (*Barbara and Homeier 2006*).

According to *Grinfeld, (2008)* Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves, and our behavior clearly reflects those feelings. *For example*, a child or teen with high self-esteem will be able to: Act independently, Assume responsibility, Take pride in his accomplishments, Tolerate frustration, Attempt new tasks and challenges, Handle positive and negative emotions, and Offer assistance to others. On the other hand, a child with low self-esteem will: Avoid trying new things, Feel unloved and unwanted, Blame others for his own shortcomings, Feel or pretend to feel, emotionally indifferent, Be unable to tolerate a normal level of frustration, Put down his own talents and abilities, and Be easily influenced.

Self – esteem involves two components: the cognitive judgment of one's abilities or appearance and the emotional reaction to that judgment. People with high self-esteem have more positive evaluations of themselves, whereas those who have low self-esteem have more negative self- evaluation. Before the age of 6 to 7 years, young children are not able to accurately rate their own abilities. *For example*, young children will say they are very capable of doing almost any activity you can name. After age 6 to 7 years, children become more aware of their abilities and rate themselves in terms of academic performance, physical abilities, physical appearance, and social relationships. A person's self esteem becomes fairly well established by middle childhood (*Fontaine, 2009*).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
(original five-stage model)

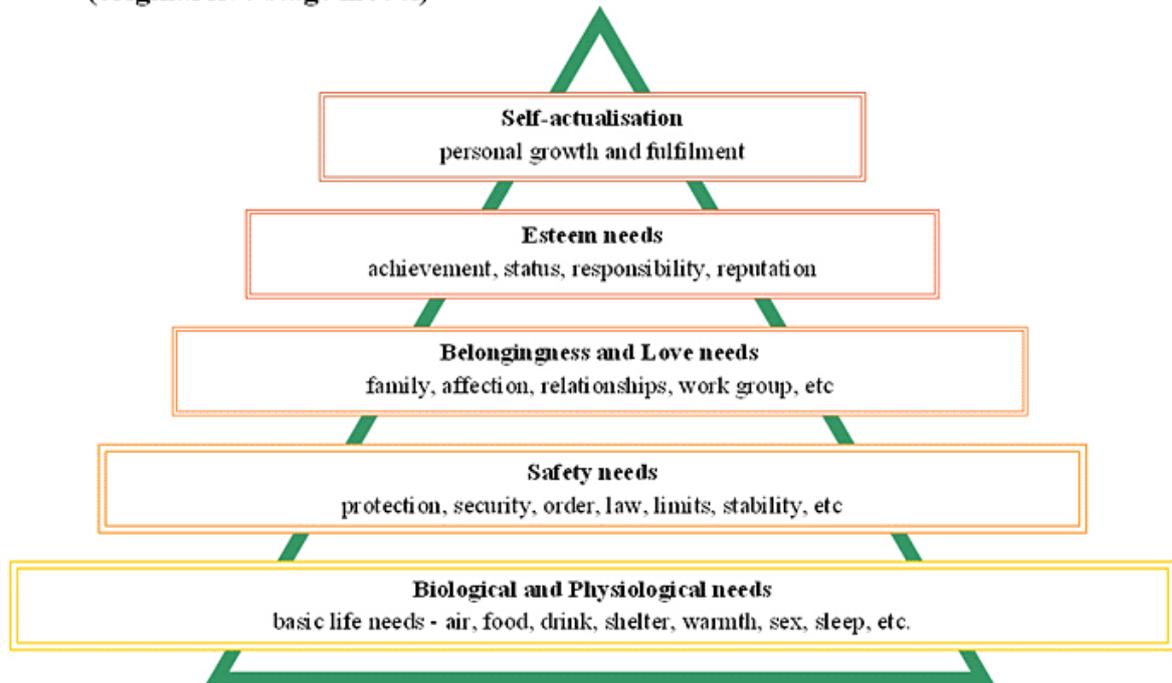


Figure (4): Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (Chapman, 2004), available at www.businessballs.com

According to Abraham Maslow the esteem needs. We begin to look for a little self-esteem. Maslow noted two versions of esteem needs, a lower one and a higher one. The lower one is the need for the respect of others, the need for status, fame, glory, recognition, attention, reputation, appreciation, dignity, even dominance. The higher form involves the need for self-respect, including such feelings as confidence, competence, achievement, mastery, independence, and freedom. Note that this is the “higher” form because, unlike the respect of others, once you have self-respect, it's a lot harder to lose! (Boeree, 2006).

Self-Actualization needs - realising personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences (Chapman, 2004). According to Maslow, mentally healthy people who achieve self-actualization are able to: Have positive self concepts and relate well to

people and their environment, form close relationships with others, make decision pertaining to reality rather than fantasy, be optimistic and appreciate and enjoy life, be independent or autonomous in thought and action, relying on personal standards of behavior and values, and be creative, using a variety of approaches as they perform tasks or solve problems (*Shives, 2008*).

Development of self concept:

The self- concept is developed primarily through our communication with others. Because humans are social, we develop an understanding of ourselves as a result of our relationships with others (*Luke, 2008*). The development of self- awareness requires a willingness to be introspective and to examine personal beliefs, attitudes, and motivations (*Boyd, 2008*).

The development of self is the most important result of the socialisation process is the development of self. It has already been seen how person perception arises in the second half of the first year. The infant is able to perceive other persons and gradually learns to differentiate the familiar persons from the unfamiliar persons towards the end of the first year. The next step in the process is the perception of self. But this is one of the most difficult achievements of man (*Basavanthappa, 2007*).

Developing self-awareness is a lifelong process that requires continual work. It necessitates disciplined attention to one's own needs, as well as insight about how to meet them. Nurses also go through ups and downs, rendering them more or less able to respond flexibly and easily to others' demands. Knowing one's own limits, detecting signs of becoming exhausted or less tolerant, and being able to nourish oneself

physically, mentally, and spiritually is essential to becoming a therapeutic agent for others. For some nurses, being critical or defensive with clients is a warning signal that it is time to take a rest or seek support (*Wanda, 2009*).

Self awareness is a professional obligation when caring for the ill because it may mitigate distress, burnout, and poor clinical judgment. Self awareness is an internal evaluation of yourself and your reaction to intense emotional situations, people, and places. It helps the nurse recognize how her or his attitudes, perceptions, past and present experiences, and relationships frame or distort interactions with others and their potential impact on interpersonal relationships. Recognizing these issues is crucial to reducing biases, stereotyping, and inappropriate or negative reactions (*Meier and her colleagues, 2001 and Antai- Otong and Wasserman, 2003*).

Early on in development, children tend to have a vague, general concept of themselves, which gradually diversifies into concepts about themselves as students at school, in relation to peers, in relation to family, emotionally, physically, and so on. It is unclear whether self-concepts are formed top-down (specific beliefs flow from general beliefs) or bottom-up (general beliefs flow from specific beliefs). *Gender differences in self-constructs*. Males tend to report higher levels of self-esteem and self-confidence than do females. More specifically, females rate their Verbal self-concept higher, whereas males tend to rate their Mathematical self-concept higher. Females tend to report greater increases in self-constructs as a result of interventions. This could be because: Females tend to start lower (therefore they have more "room for growth") and females tend to

be more open to verbal processing of experience and expression of feelings (*Campbell, 2005*).

Self-awareness is developed in many ways. You may think of a certain situation and reflect on your feelings and behaviors and think about how your responses to that particular situation affected you and other people. You may maintain a journal and express your thoughts and feelings freely. You may ask significant others as to how they see you and reflect on their responses in relation to how you see yourself (*Freelancer and Strategist, 2009*).

Therapeutic use of self:

By developing self- awareness and beginning to understand his or her attitudes, the nurse can begin to use aspects of his or her personality , experiences, values, feelings, intelligence, needs, coping skills and perceptions to establish relationships with clients. Nurses use themselves as a therapeutic tool to establish therapeutic relationships with clients and to help clients grow, change, and heal. Nurses must clearly understand themselves to promote their clients’ growth and to avoid limiting clients’ choices to those that nurses value (*Videbeck, 2008*).

In these conceptualizations, at the heart of being a mental health nurse is the therapeutic use of self. One of the most important roles that the mental health nurse has, and perhaps the most difficult, is the ability to ‘be with’ patients and service users. Often, this may mean being with someone during periods of considerable distress. The impact of this on both parties should not be underestimated, and it is for this reason that nursing has described as ‘emotional labour’ (*O’Carroll, 2007*).

Therapeutic use of self- is the ability to be aware of oneself and the client and be in command of what is communicated. To help another person's healing and to develop an effective therapeutic relationship the occupational therapist must have self-awareness. This means one knows their own true nature including behaviors, emotional responses, and their effect on others. Knowing yourself is a complex and lifelong learning process. It is essential to have self – knowledge before using yourself as a therapeutic tool to help others. This awareness includes three awareness of self:

- Ideal self- what the person would like to be if free of demands of reality.
- Perceived self- the aspect of oneself that others see.
- Real self- is the blending of internal and external worlds. The real self includes feelings, strengths and limitations as well as the environment in which the individual exists (*Fortinash, 2008*).

Therapeutic Use of Self includes: The use of oneself in such a way as one becomes an effective tool in the evaluation and intervention process, planned interaction with another person to alleviate fear or anxiety, provide reassurance, and obtain necessary information, interaction to promote growth and development, improve and maintain function, foster greater ability to cope with the stresses of life ,conscious use of self different to spontaneous response that is typical in our daily interactions, and different from rapport (*Bartholomai, 2009*).

Therapeutic use of self is an intricate part of therapy; because the most important tool an occupational therapist has is their own experiences. Knowing and understanding one's self is a basic principle of

occupational therapy. Having self-awareness allows therapists to be aware of their own personal beliefs, attitudes, strengths, motivations, and limitations. By knowing one's self it makes it easier to understand where other individuals, like the client, are coming from. Self-perception is crucial because the occupational therapist's self image really influences the therapy the client will receive (*Edwards, 2008*).

Factors affect self awareness and self esteem:

Long – standing negative self-evaluation/feelings about self or self –capabilities related to: Disturbances in development of self –concept formation, disturbed relationship with parent/ caregiver (lack of trust, abuse, neglect, conflicts, inadequate role models, disorganized family system), negative feedback for failure to perform expected roles (academic, work – related, interpersonal) or achieve desired skills, Being targeted by peers for rejection or abuse (*Varcariolis, 2004*).

When people understand these beliefs they can then appreciate how they influence the results they get in life. People can be aware of how they impact upon them day-to-day lives. However, there are many times that they have blind spots. People are unaware of beliefs, thoughts and feelings that reduce the quality of our lives. People are highly adept at seeing other people's blind spots but are very poor at recognizing them own blind spots (*Mayer, 2008*).

Self –awareness is one of the fundamental attributes of a critical thinker, as we have noted, and it is important to take every opportunity to heighten that sense of awareness. Too often, authors find that nurses deny themselves the time or occasion to consider personal impact and effectiveness. Author would suggest that people consider both personal and organizational or situational factors that are part of the practice of

nursing and see what kind of list people generate. Certainly time constraints, resources, personal health, and emotional state (e.g., tired, excited, stressed) will make the list (*Jackson, Ignatavicius, and Case, 2006*).

The social participation and appearance management had direct effects on self-esteem, whereas fashion involvement had no direct effect on self-esteem. However, both appearance management and fashion involvement had positive indirect effects on self-esteem via social participation (*Joung and Miller, 2006*).

Self awareness in nursing

The importance of self-awareness:

Being self aware will mean that you will be better able to choose a suitable career which will satisfy you. Self awareness can enrich your life because you can then move closer to living your values and realizing your dreams. Also, when you have identified the thing that makes you happy or motivate you can bring more of those things into your life and make priorities based on that which is important to you (*Perera , 2006*).

The better you understand yourself, the better you are able to accept or change who you are. Being in the dark about yourself means that you will continue to get caught up in your own internal struggles and allowed outside forces to mould and shape you(*Alan,2003*).

By becoming more self-aware we have more to work with (information about ourselves), and most importantly, we have the power to make different choices. At work, that translates to stronger business relationships, using better judgment, making better decisions,

communicating more effectively, and adding more value to the company! Whew! That's pretty significant (*Adrianse, 2004*).

By understanding ourselves better we can: Gain more control, be more flexible and confident in our approach, help ourselves deal with challenges in a more positive and less anxious way, interact better, communicate more effectively, and understand our relationships with others more fully, make better decisions, reduce our stress levels, and get more out of life (*Joseph, 2009*).

Being self aware knows: What you want in your life, your strengths and weaknesses, what motivates you and makes you happy, what you want to change about yourself or about your life, your achievements so far, how you relate to others, you need to improve as a person, your most important beliefs and values, and how you see yourself as a person (*Perera, 2006*).

By developing your level of self-awareness you will be able to: Get what you really want out of your career, get more out of the people you work with - clients, boss, peers, suppliers, and staff ,communicate more effectively - by tailoring your message to the deeply held concerns of your listener, make better decisions - from a place of greater objectivity, reduce your level of stress - through improved truer relationships ,increase your level of self-confidence - through greater self-acceptance, and increase your prospects for career advancement - by improving your leadership skills (*Zuboff, 2008*).

Discover the power of Awareness and what it can bring into your life. Building Self Awareness can and does: save time, avoid effort, find comfort, gain praise, heal & prevent illness, reduce

stress, induce relaxation, soothe anxiety, nourish trust, rebuild relationships, defuse anger, relieve pain, increase energy, rejuvenate your mind, promote focus, bring clarity, decrease frustration, build confidence, encourage commitment, provide understanding, develop patience, and define boundaries (*Becky, 2009*).

It's easy to see how pretending to know everything when you don't can create situations that can be problematic for your entire organization. On the other hand, when you take responsibility for what you don't know, you benefit both yourself and your organization. On an interpersonal level, self-awareness of your strengths and weaknesses can get you the trust of others and increase your credibility - both of which will increase your leadership effectiveness. On an organizational level, the benefits are even greater. (*Musse/White's Bio, 2008*).

When you become self aware you grow as a person. You develop self-acceptance and this in turn makes you more accepting of others. You become more self reliant and self motivated. These are the qualities that help you to continue growing as a person and to be successful in your chosen field (*Sinclair, 2009*).

The importance of self-awareness in psychiatric nursing:-

One area in which self awareness is especially important is working with clients who are seriously ill or who have end-of-life conditions. Strong client emotions can impede nurse-client communication. Predictably, a client's emotional reactions tend to generate similar emotions in the nurse. Moreover, the nurse's past experiences with death and dying; his or her coping skills, values, beliefs,

and health practices; and the nature of his or her relationship with the client govern the nurse's emotional and behavioral responses to given situations. Self awareness can guide internal self –monitoring and help the nurse appraise how feelings and strong emotions govern the way he or she listens, perceives, and reacts to the client and others. Self awareness also expands personal strengths and provides insight regarding personal limitations. (*Antai- Otong, 2007*).

Self-awareness helps a student nurse develop a therapeutic relationship with her clients. By understanding her own limitations and analyzing her feelings, emotions, and behaviors, she is able to respond to her client more effectively and in effect, render improved quality of care (*Freelancer and Strategist, 2009*).

The heart of psychiatric nursing is the therapeutic use of self. Therapeutic use of self refers to forming a trusting relationship that provides comfort, safety, and acceptance to the client. Self-awareness, maturity are elements of this concept (*Krikovian and Paulanka, 1982*).

Psychiatric nurses need to identify the meaning of their own stress and develop strategies that increase personal and professional growth. Increased client demands and work place couple with the persistent nursing shortage and uncertainty about health care delivery systems increase stress in psychiatric nurses. Increased stress often generates feelings of powerlessness and apathy. Suggested strategies include nurse support or supervision groups that create climates of empathy, caring, and opportunities to explore the meaning of specific reactions to clients and various clinical situations, and also learning how care of themselves by

attending to their biological and psychosocial needs, both personal and professional (*Watkins, 2001*).

Self- awareness is the foundation of exploring nurses' reactions to specific clients and clinical situation. Nurses need to be aware of them selves in relation to others. Self-awareness offer opportunities for personal and professional growth (*Compe, 1986*).

Methods of increase self-awareness and self esteem:-

To come to self awareness, nurses can carry out self – examination, which can provoke anxiety and is rarely comfortable, either alone or with help from others. Self- examination without the benefit of another’s perspective can lead to a biased view of self. Conducting self-examinations with a trusted individual who can give objective but realistic feedback is best (*Boyd, 2008*).

I believe that the problems you face in life are there to help you develop as a person and make you more aware of whom you are so that you can improve physically, mentally and spiritually. Becoming self aware is an ongoing process you can devote time to and I think it is time well spent. Make it your priority to invest time everyday, (if only a short time), to get to know yourself, your dreams, achievements, strengths and weaknesses(*Perera, 2006*).

Some steps to gaining self awareness include:

- Talk to friends and other people whose opinions we value.
- Make a list of our strengths and weaknesses: knowing more about ourselves including our weaknesses, can often allow us to turn them into strengths.

- Listing our strengths can help us feel good about ourselves!
- Start recognizing different ‘parts of yourself’: we are made up of many different feelings, thoughts and behaviours depending upon the situation; it can be helpful to think, beforehand, about the way we might respond to a given situation. Also it can be valuable to reflect, or think about our responses, after a situation.
- It can be useful if we can put ourselves in another person’s shoes and try to look at what is happening from their point of view. This can help us try to understand how the other person might be viewing something, and help us when we communicate with them.
- Think about body language and those other subtle messages we send and pick up. If we are with someone, what are we communicating by the way we are: do we try too hard; are we a bit diffident or uninterested; or do we appear confident and comfortable?
(Joseph, 2009).

To solidify and strengthen your awareness process, try these affirmations: I am sensitive and aware of what I say and how I say it, as well as being sensitive and aware of how I'm feeling about the overall communication, and I listen carefully and thoughtfully, absorbing what others say, how they speak, their body language, the emotions underlying their communication, and I'm observant of what is not being said
(Landry, 2009)

Interacting with clients in emotional pain requires maturity and self- awareness *(Eckroth- Bucher, 2001)*. Psychiatric nurses consider self- awareness a precondition for establishing therapeutic relationships *(Leenerts, 2003)*. Nurses must be able to monitor and contain their own anxiety when clients discuss frightening incidents or relate tragic events that generate feelings of hopelessness and despair. Listening to clients

without mentally or physically fleeing from the situation or offering impersonal platitudes is key to the therapeutic relationship. Clients must feel safe with the nurse. They must be able to sense that the nurse can handle what they are saying without becoming overwhelmed by the nurse's reactions. One study of nursing students' first professional encounter with clients on a psychiatric unit found that students preoccupied with their own needs felt more helpless and were more rejecting than their peers. In this instance, lack of willingness by clients to engage in a therapeutic relationship met the students' own negative expectations (*Granskar, Edberg, and Fridlund, 2001*). In contrast, students who could put aside their own anxieties and focus on client needs were more confident, more able to see each client as a unique person, and ultimately proud when clients wanted to establish a relationship with them. For this reason, nurses must appreciate the importance of taking care of their own mental health (*Wanda, 2009*).

By knowing our clients can we fully comprehend the meaning of their experiences and appropriately respond to their needs. Factors associated with knowing the client include empathy, trust, respect, and understanding. Self awareness also is a critical element of valuing the needs of others as well as yourself. Nurses must be considerate and benevolent in caring for clients. Caring requires genuine interest in the client as an individual within the social context of humanity and moral consciousness that preserves dignity and respect (*Eriksson, 2002*).

One way of achieving self awareness is to take the time to think things through. So often in today's world everything carries on at such a pace that it is much easier to say I haven't the time or I can't be bothered. If we stop to reflect on things we recognize that it is not time that is the problem but the way we view it and use it. The problem is that we get so

caught up in the everyday happenings of our lives that we just don't take the time to reflect. When you reflect you look back over the happenings of your life in an attempt to discover how you have become the person you are. Unless we develop self awareness then we cannot change things and develop our full potential (*Sinclair, 2009*).

How, though, can you increase self awareness? Here are just a few tips:

1. Embrace Silence

Many people in the modern world grow to dislike, even fear, silence. Yet silence is beneficial to your overall health and well being; silence is a perfect medium for stimulating self awareness. Running away from silence is running away from yourself. Learning to embrace silence as a natural, peaceful, and even beautiful, essential daily life, can be a vital step on the road to self awareness.

2. Learn to Meditate

Learning to meditate, even for a short period each day or on as many days as possible, will automatically increase your own self awareness. Meditation will start to bring you into contact with your subconscious, and as you start to appreciate the benefits you will feel, you will be encouraged to develop your meditation skills further. Furthermore, basic meditation is not difficult.

3. Make Better Use of Travel Time

If you commute to and from work on public transport, and are able to sit down during the journey, do not always be tempted to read or sleep. Instead, close your eyes, but stop yourself sleeping. Try to clear your mind of the noises around you, and focus on your breathing, through the

nose. Other people will think you are sleeping, so do not be concerned about what they think. Rather than think about work or other aspects for your day, try to clear your mind also of all those and other thoughts. Such a practice is like a meditation in transit. It will allow you to increase self awareness, and you may get home feeling much more refreshed than if your head had been filled with work and domestic matters, or if you had fallen asleep.

4. Do Something Different

It is very easy to go through life day after day without really even consciously thinking what you are doing. By deliberately doing something different to your normal routine, you will not only add a bit of variety to your life, but increase your awareness of yourself and help you be alert to the trap of a repetitive, unthinking existence. While this may require conscious thought, it is also step towards a level of self awareness that can give you the confidence to explore your inner self, the essence of self awareness.

5. Debate With and Question Yourself

If your day runs on autopilot, then it will just pass you by without the “real you” having any say in what is going on. It will be a non-day as far as self awareness and self development go. You can shake yourself out of that habit by frequently questioning yourself about what you are doing and why. Not just in a general way, but on specific things that you have to do, as a matter of course, as the day goes on. This will encourage you to seek a better way to do things, and to make changes for the better. By constantly having this debate with yourself, you will inevitably become more self aware, rather than just accept every part of

your life as a given and unchangeable (*Thomsitt, 2005*).

Self-awareness helps managers identify gaps in their management skills, which promotes skill development. But self-awareness also helps managers find situations in which they will be most effective, assists with intuitive decision making, and aids stress management and motivation of oneself and others (*Grover, 2003*).

The Building Self Awareness ecourse is a three step experiential learning technique for incorporating change, infusing positivity, and developing good habits in your life. It is a proven method of personal growth that requires only two things: trust (in your Self and the world) and commitment to follow through. The best part is you can do this from your own home. By developing your understanding of awareness in conjunction with communication, the *Building Self Awareness Methods* will start you on your journey to achieving freedom from stress and worries, and enjoying positive, conscious living. More happiness for less effort. You will very quickly begin to experience the results of better interaction and understanding with both people and animals, not to mention the world at large *includes the following*:

➤ **Stop Being a Victim!**

Begins with introducing you to your own inner guidance system. It is a very basic first step but, as with most lessons, the first steps are the most crucial. Infusing positivity and good habits into your thought processes, physical body, and outward projections is a learned skill that anyone can master with practice and patience.

➤ **Feel Your Power!**

Guides you to broaden your awareness, and practice responsibility for and focusing of your personal energy. This is self empowerment. Identifying where energies are coming from and what they encompass gives you power over your vulnerabilities. Tap into your internal resources and feel the power you hold within your Self.

➤ **Allow & Let Go ... There You Will Find Your Freedom!**

Solidifies your confidence and productivity by building your awareness of and learning to navigate personal boundaries in life. Actively living this Method effectively lessens and prevents problems as debilitating as codependence, enabling, self sabotage, and enmeshment, and as seemingly small as simple misunderstandings, angry outbursts, and unidentified stress (Becky, 2009).

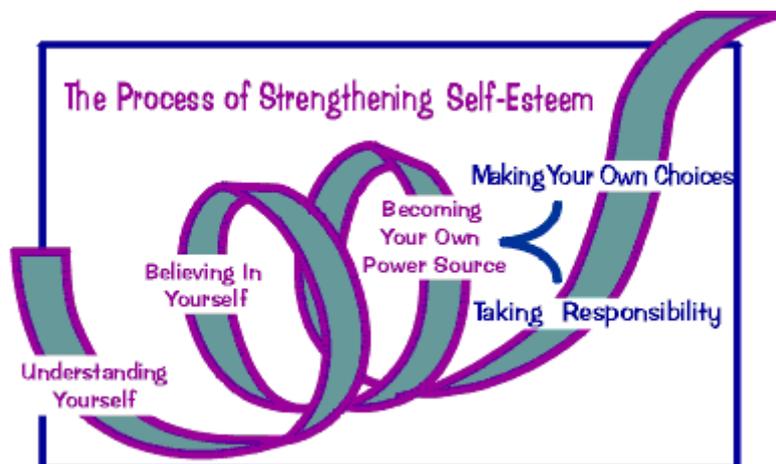


Figure (5): Self Esteem: The Process of Strengthening Self-Esteem (Kolb, 2007) available at <http://www.region.peel.on.ca/heath.html>

This kind of learning is not a quick fix, but an ongoing process of personal growth. This ribbon graphic guides you through the process of

strengthening self-esteem in manageable steps. The ribbon helps you see that the knowledge and skills gained in one phase will also apply in the others *include*

Self Esteem: Understanding Yourself - Self-Awareness – Emotions:

Many people are uncomfortable with, or haven't had the opportunity to learn positive ways to recognize and manage their emotions. Sometimes, they cope by denying their feelings or shutting them down. They may block them with their intellect, with eating or not eating, with drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes, or other habits that can lead to difficulty. Sometimes they act on their emotions without thinking of the consequences, saying and doing things that they later regret. You cannot always control what happens to you. You can learn to interpret and manage your feelings. You can control the conclusions you draw from experiences about your own sense of self-worth, your thoughts, and how you will respond - your actions.



Figure (6): Correlation between thoughts, feelings and action (Kolb, 2007)
available at <http://www.region.peel.on.ca/heath.html>

- Believing In Yourself
- Becoming your Own Power Source: Self-reliance is drawing on the power within yourself and the power you share with others. It is not power over others.

➤ The Process :

1. This process of strengthening self-esteem provides a framework for building and maintaining a sense of worth and personal power.
2. If you have experienced the self-esteem roller coaster, you may want to set a goal to level out the fluctuations that occur in your sense of worth when events are in your favour for a while and then seem to come crashing down on you.
3. Strengthening self-esteem through: Understanding, Reflection, and Practice
(Kolb, 2007).

Improving Self- Esteem: Some but not all children can use help to improve their self- esteem. For example, children with conduct disorders often manifest high self esteem. However, children whom peer perceive as being delayed in some areas or “different” frequently endure emotional attacks that can damage their self- esteem. They internalize opinions from others and from similar opinions of themselves, leading to negative self- assessments and poor self- esteem. Additionally, all the problems discussed previously- disruptive behavior, lack of social skills, poor academic performance- exacerbate feelings of inferiority. Implementing a behavioral program that helps children gain self control and skills, uses energy productively, and garner praise and rewards will help them mold a more positive self image. Determining strengths, perhaps in sports or creative arts, and focusing on skills and accomplishments in that arena provide another source of self- pride *(Wanda, 2009).*

Building self esteem: A person with adequate or high self esteem may be better able to deal with emotional difficulties. Thus, an essential part of a client’s care is helping to build the client’s self esteem.

However, because each client retains the responsibility for his or her own feelings, and one person cannot make another person feel a certain way, the nurse cannot increase the client's self esteem directly. Strategies to help build or enhance self esteem must be individualized and built on honesty and on the client's strengths. Some general suggestions are: Build a trust relationship with the client, Set and maintain limits, Accept the client as a person, Be nonjudgmental at all times, Provide structure(time and activities), Have realistic expectations of the client and make them clear to the client, Provide the client with tasks, responsibilities, and activities that can be easily accomplished ,advanced the client to more difficult tasks as he or she progresses, Allow the client to make his or her own decisions (*Schultz and Videbeck,2002*).

To maintain self-esteem in old age, individuals should be encouraged to participate in social activities and appearance management activities. The fashion and personal care industry should have an awareness of older female consumers' needs and develop and provide age-related products and services (*Joung and Miller, 2006*).

Building your self-esteem is the most important shortcut of all to success. It will change your entire approach to life when your self-esteem is high; you face problems by solving them instead of placing blame. A high self-esteem means putting yourself out there instead of hanging back and wondering. It means when you fall, you learn from it and try again and again until you succeed. With a healthy self-esteem, you'll find more meaning in your life. You will face your day-to-day challenges with confidence. Also, the better you feel about yourself, the better other people feel about you. You will have more confidence to meet new people and deal more effectively with the negative-thinking people in your life. You have influence over a low self-esteem. (*Vergheese, 2009*).

Things you can do right away every day to raise your self-esteem include:

➤ **Pay attention to your own needs and wants.**

Listen to what your body, your mind, and your heart are telling you. *For instance*, if your body is telling you that you have been sitting down too long, stand up and stretch. If your heart is longing to spend more time with a special friend, do it. If your mind is telling you to clean up your basement, listen to your favorite music, or stop thinking bad thoughts about yourself, take those thoughts seriously.

➤ **Take very good care of yourself.**

As you were growing up you may not have learned how to take good care of yourself. In fact, much of your attention may have been on taking care of others, on just getting by, or on "behaving well." Begin today to take good care of yourself. Treat yourself as a wonderful parent would treat a small child or as one very best friend might treat another. If you work at taking good care of yourself, you will find that you feel better about yourself

➤ **Take time to do things you enjoy.**

You may be so busy, or feel so badly about yourself, that you spend little or no time doing things you enjoy--things like playing a musical instrument, doing a craft project, flying a kite, or going fishing. Make a list of things you enjoy doing. Then do something from that list every day. Add to the list anything new that you discover you enjoy doing.

- **Get something done that you have been putting off.** Clean out that drawer. Wash that window. Write that letter. Pay that bill, and *do things that make use of your own special talents and abilities*. For instance, if you are good with your hands, then make things for yourself, family, and friends. If you like animals, consider having a pet or at least playing with friends' pets.

- **Dress in clothes that make you feel good about yourself.** If you have little money to spend on new clothes, check out thrift stores in your area, *give yourself rewards*—you are a great person. Listen to a CD or tape, and *spend time with people* who make you feel good about yourself—people who treat you well. Avoid people who treat you badly.

- **Make your living space a place that honors the person you are.**

Whether you live in a single room, a small apartment, or a large home, make that space comfortable and attractive for you. If you share your living space with others, have some space that is just for you--a place where you can keep your things and know that they will not be disturbed and that you can decorate any way you choose.

- **Display items that you find attractive**

That reminds you of your achievements or of special times or people in your life. If cost is a factor, use your creativity to think of inexpensive or free ways that you can add to the comfort and enjoyment of your space.

➤ **Make your meals a special time.**

Turn off the television, radio, and stereo. Set the table, even if you are eating alone. Light a candle or put some flowers or an attractive object in the center of the table. Arrange your food in an attractive way on your plate. If you eat with others, encourage discussion of pleasant topics. Avoid discussing difficult issues at meals.

➤ Take advantage of opportunities to **learn something new or improve your skills**. Take a class or go to a seminar. Many adult education programs are free or very inexpensive. For those that are more costly, ask about a possible scholarship or fee reduction.

➤ **Begin doing those things that you know will make you feel better about yourself**—like going on a diet, beginning an exercise program or keeping your living space clean, *do something nice for another person*. Smile at someone who looks sad. Say a few kind words to the check-out cashier. Help your spouse with an unpleasant chore. Take a meal to a friend who is sick. Send a card to an acquaintance. Volunteer for a worthy organization, and *make it a point to treat yourself well every day*. Before you go to bed each night, write about how you treated yourself well during the day (*Copeland, 2009*).

Increase self esteem for all by: Be patient, kind, and understanding with yourself, acknowledge your strengths, accept compliments, don't accept put-downs, set achievable realistic goals and work to accomplish them, visualize change. Imagine the person you want to become 6 months from now, take time to be pleased when you achieve something good. Reward yourself for your successes, don't blame yourself out of all

proportion if something doesn't go the way you had planned, take up a new hobby or interest, join a new group, or try volunteering, counteract negative thoughts with positive thoughts, and think of yourself as a lovable and capable person (*Founder, 2009*).

