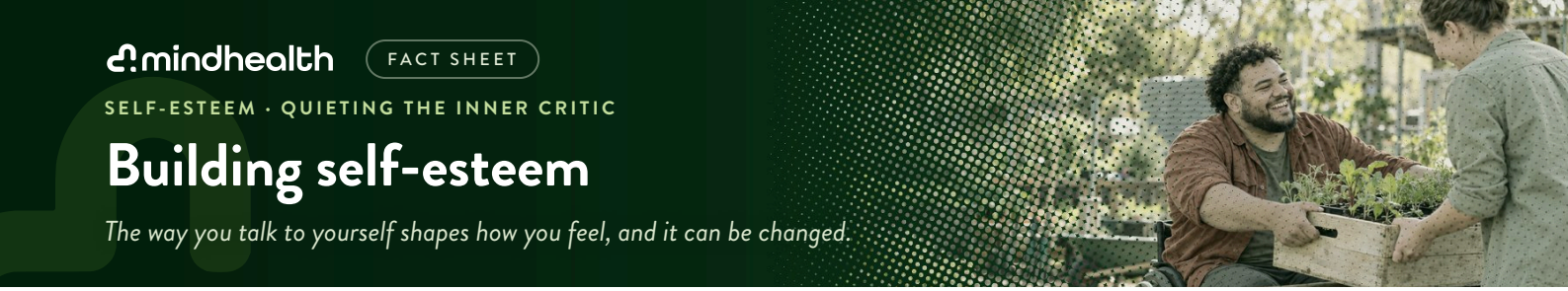
mindhealth FACT SHEET

SELF-ESTEEM · QUIETING THE INNER CRITIC

Building self-esteem

The way you talk to yourself shapes how you feel, and it can be changed.



A harsh inner voice
Quick to blame, slow to credit

Bracing for judgement
Fearing you'll be "found out"

Holding back
Not trying, in case you fail

01 Where it comes from

Self-esteem is the running story we hold about our own worth. When that story is harsh (often learned early, from criticism, comparison or hard experiences), we filter life through it: discounting what goes well, magnifying what goes wrong, and treating a critical inner voice as if it were simply telling the truth.

02 Why it sticks, and shifts

Low self-esteem is self-confirming. Expecting to fail, we avoid or hold back, so we never gather evidence to the contrary, and the belief stands. It shifts when we begin to speak to ourselves as we would to a good friend, and when we let ourselves act, take small risks, and notice what actually happens rather than what we feared.

03 What genuinely helps

- Catching the inner critic and answering it fairly
- Speaking to yourself as you would to a friend
- Collecting evidence that challenges the old story
- Small steps that slowly build a track record
- Therapy to reach the roots, when it runs deep

A PRACTICAL STORY

From a harsh inner critic to a fairer coach



THE SHIFT

Critic to coach

THE INNER CRITIC
"You always mess this up."

reframe

THE INNER COACH
"That was hard. What can I try next?"

The same moment, two voices. A kinder, fairer inner coach is a skill you can practise.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

Be your own coach

1. Catch the harsh thought
2. Ask: would I say this to a friend?
3. Offer yourself the kinder, truer line

Kind is not the same as untrue.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If low self-worth is holding back your relationships, work or happiness, a psychologist can help. Ask your GP about a Mental Health Treatment Plan for Medicare rebates.

DID YOU KNOW?

Morris Rosenberg's ten-question self-esteem scale was published in 1965 and is still widely used in research today.

Rosenberg, Society and the Adolescent Self-Image, 1965

THE KEY TAKEAWAY

You don't have to earn the right to be kind to yourself. You can start today.

Need support right now? Lifeline **13 11 14** · Emergency **000** — available 24/7. More options: **mindhealth.com.au/urgent-help**

TALK TO US WHEN YOU'RE READY

Parramatta and online, Australia-wide · **Book at mindhealth.com.au**

1300 084 200

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