Enhancing Self-Esteem – Lesson Plan

Introduction:

Middle School is a rollercoaster of emotions. One day you are best friends with someone and the next they are your worst enemy. It is easy to see that some teenagers physically develop quicker then others, but we often forget that we also develop emotionally and socially at different rates. Self-esteem is an important characteristic for the development of any teenager, and while you may feel low some days and high others, understand that everyone is going through that same rollercoaster as you. The way we feel about ourselves has a huge effect on the way we treat ourselves and others, and on the kinds of choices we make. Here are some things you can do to protect, raise, or reinforce your self-esteem. Spend time with people who like you and care about you. Ignore and stay away from people who put you down or treat you badly. Do things that you enjoy or that make you feel good. Do things you are good at. Reward yourself for your successes. Develop your talents. Take responsibility for yourself, your choices, and your actions. Always do what you believe is right. Be true to yourself and your values. Respect other people and treat them right**.** Set goals and work to achieve them.

Discussion – We hear a lot of talk these days about self-esteem. Self-esteem has been compared to a bucket of water. It starts out full when we're born, but whenever we develop negative beliefs about ourselves, it's like poking little holes in that bucket and our self-esteem drips out.*   Achieving a positive self-concept and healthy self-esteem can be a struggle. It is often difficult to think about the positive aspects of our lives because we often think about the negative. By focusing on the difficulties, it is hard to realize personal success and potential. Due to struggles with self-esteem, individuals often have unrealistic expectations of themselves and are therefore afraid to try new things. Self-esteem, those positive feelings that we have about ourselves, is different from smugness or conceit where someone has an excessive high opinion of him/herself.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think you have to "prove yourself" in some way in order to deserve high self-esteem?
2. Do you have to be great at something?
3. Do you have to be super-popular or part of the "in-crowd?"
4. Do you have to be terrifically good-looking?
5. Is there any reason why someone should not be entitled to have good self-esteem?

 Activity:

Eleanor Roosevelt said "Nobody can make you feel inferior without your permission." Have a group discussion about this quote. What does it mean? How true is it? Can you think of cases where it might not be true? In what kinds of situations would this quote be most useful to remember?

Conclusion:

It has been said that if people put you down enough you can start to believe it. This statement only becomes true when we become too critical of ourselves. We often feel bad when we compare ourselves to others.   What we believe about ourselves is usually reflected in our level of self-esteem. Positive personal beliefs make us feel good about ourselves and raise our self-esteem. Negative personal beliefs make us feel bad about ourselves and lower our self-esteem. Having high self-esteem means that you value yourself and your ability to make good choices, but also accepting the fact that no is perfect and we sometimes make really bad choices.