YOU BE THE JUDGE
Background

This session focuses on the sense of self-worth, and on the skills and attributes that contribute to a positive sense of self-worth. Self-worth is influenced by our performance in different enterprises, our environment, and things that others may say to us and how they respond to us. A key component of self-worth is how we regard and what we say to ourselves. Although receiving positive reinforcement and regard from others when we do a good job or perform well in something can boost our sense of self, our own inner voice is a vital component in our sense of self-worth. Saying negative and critical comments to yourself is the same as having a friend or someone important being harsh and critical.

We need to encourage students to value themselves for their intrinsic worth as a unique individual and not just because they might be good at something. Similarly, we need to encourage students to value the contribution that others can make and the value that they have because of their own unique characteristics. Valuing diversity and difference is also a key component of perspective taking.

This session examines the characteristics of self-worth, assesses the judges’ ratings of the contestants’ self-worth, and allows students the opportunity to discuss whether they agree with these ratings. This activity encourages students to examine the behaviour of others using a range of verbal and non-verbal cues. It also shows that, as individuals, we may interpret the behaviours and actions of others in different ways and this will influence our impressions of others. It is important to note that the judges are not experts in the six senses and their characteristics and their ratings may not necessarily be based on an objective assessment of the skills and characteristics that research shows are important in contributing to positive senses and good emotional wellbeing.

Students will be asked to undertake an activity in which they examine thoughts (self-talk) that might decrease their sense of self-worth, to challenge those thoughts, and to generate more helpful thoughts that might improve their self-worth. Students will also be encouraged to determine whether there is any evidence for these negative thoughts. This process assists in developing realistic thinking about oneself, the world, and one’s future.

Learning outcomes

In this session students:

- Identify the important role that self-talk plays in influencing feelings of self-worth
- Take others’ perspectives on a range of issues or situations
- Use a problem-solving approach to evaluate the evidence for beliefs about self-worth
- Practise challenging negative self-talk and developing more helpful thoughts
**Key messages**

- *Having a good sense of self-worth helps you to deal with life challenges and is protective against developing mental health problems.*

- *Having a good sense of self-worth means that you value yourself for who you are, not for what you do or what others think of you.*

- *Sense of self-worth is influenced by external events, other people, and most importantly by one’s own inner voice.*

- *Saying negative and critical comments to yourself is the same as having a friend or someone important to you being harsh or critical.*

- *You can build self-worth by challenging unhelpful negative self-talk.*

*Skills: helpful thinking, challenging negative thoughts, problem solving, emotional regulation*

**Session outline**

2.1 **Video** – Episode 2 of Strongbbox  
2.2 **Brainstorm**  
2.3 **Activity** – Robbing and building self-worth  
2.4 **Activity** – What’s the verdict?  
2.5 **Out of class activity** – The hidden observer

**Materials**

- Video set at Episode 2  
- OHT of Resource 2.1 [or write on board]  
- OHT of Resource 2.2  
- Photocopies of Resource 2.3
Session Plan

2.1 Video – Episode 2 of Strongbbox    17 mins
What's happening this week? The contestants meet their first challenge and the house leader for the week is selected. The judges rate the contestants’ sense of self-worth.

2.2 Brainstorm    10 mins
Learning environment Whole class
Preparation/materials
• OHT of Resource 2.1 – Judges’ ratings [or write on board]
Procedure
1. Brainstorm what students think are the characteristics of self-worth and write their suggestions on the board. Prompt by asking: How can you tell if someone has good self-worth? What do they look like, act like, talk like, think like, and feel like?
2. Ask students to rate the contestants’ self-worth, as low, medium or high, using the list on the board to help them. Ask students to note 2 skills or characteristics that each contestant displayed that influenced their rating. Students can write their answers in their books on page 8.
4. Discuss students’ ratings and compare with the judges’ ratings. You might like to ask for a quick show of hands. Identify any differences and discuss reasons for this. You could use some of the judges’ comments here, e.g.:
   • “At first glance Rona’s pretty confident.”
   • “I think her [Erin] self-worth could really improve.”
   • “She [Erin] seems to be really afraid of people disliking her.”
   • “Too high. He’s [Adam] missing some cues from the others isn’t he?”
5. Remind students that the judges are not necessarily expert in identifying the skills and characteristics that contribute to the senses and they may miss important cues or look for different characteristics.
6. Conclude with the comment that self-worth is how you think about and value yourself. Self-worth is influenced by many factors but the most important is how you regard yourself and the things you say to yourself.

2.3 Activity – Robbing and building self-worth    5 mins
Learning environment Whole class
Preparation/materials
• OHT of Resource 2.2 – Robbers and builders scenario
Procedure

1. **Discuss** the concept of robber statements and builder statements, i.e. those things that people say to themselves that make them feel good about themselves or not. These statements are based on how we view ourselves and our world. **Highlight** that it is not necessarily the things that people say to you that rob or build your self-worth, but it is how you interpret what others say and the things you say to yourself that are the most important.

2. **Brainstorm** some things that people might say about themselves or their world that might affect their sense of self-worth, e.g. “I can’t do anything right”; “I’ll look stupid if I make a mistake”; “Everyone must like me or I am no good”; “Life is so unfair”; “I did ok”; “Well at least I had a go!”

3. **Show** OHT of the scenario (Resource 2.2) and ask students for examples of possible initial thoughts in that situation. Write them on the board. Discuss whether they are robber or builder thoughts and put under the robber or builder column. **Ask** how these thoughts might make a person feel and write them on the board.

**NOTE:**

- This is just a quick introductory activity, so only a couple of examples under each heading are required.
- If students only generate robber thoughts, prompt for some builder thoughts.

### Scenario:

You have been asked to stand up at assembly next week and talk about a school dance that you are helping to organise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Robber thoughts</th>
<th>Builder thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td>e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I won’t be able to think of anything to say”</td>
<td>“I might be bit embarrassed but it was pretty cool they asked me to do it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’ll look like a fool standing up there”</td>
<td>“I know this stuff inside out — I’ll make some notes and I’ll be fine”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How might the robber thoughts make you feel?**

- e.g. anxious
- fearful
- embarrassed

**How might the builder thoughts make you feel?**

- e.g. proud
- confident
- pleased
2.4 Activity – What’s the verdict?

Learning environment
Divide class into 3 groups

Preparation/materials
- Photocopy of Resource 2.3 – The scenario [choose 1 of the scenarios offered with 1 copy for each of the 3 groups]

Procedure
1. **Provide** each group with the scenario (Resource 2.3) and refer students to page 9 of their books.
2. **Assign** each group to *builders*, *robbers* and *jury*.
   - Builders – generate helpful thoughts for the scenario
   - Robbers – generate unhelpful thoughts for the scenario
   - Jury – listen to both sides of the argument and evaluate the soundness of the arguments
   - Judge – the judge usually gets the final word and can bring meaning to the session [teacher role]
3. **Ask** the builders and robbers groups to generate as many thoughts as they can from the perspective of their group and then to prepare their case. They will need to find and test the evidence for each thought and develop statements in support of their position. **Refer** students to page 10 of their books for an example of how to find and test evidence. Allow time for them to discuss and prepare points that support their position.
4. **Ask** the jury group to discuss arguments for and against, and develop some evidence that will help them make a judgement (time limits can be imposed). Their task will be to decide the winning position judged on how persuasive each of the groups is.

**NOTE:** You may need to provide some questions to get things started, e.g.
- What might the person’s initial thoughts be in that situation? What further thoughts might they have? What evidence is there to support the thoughts you have generated i.e. "how do you know?" Is it believable? How strong is your evidence?
- If students are reluctant to contribute, the teacher could start the discussion by talking about walking into their first class – what they were thinking, how they felt, and whether they had robber or builder thoughts.
5. **Ask** the 2 groups to present their arguments to the jury. Allow time for the jury to briefly discuss and present their decision.

6. **Sum up** the proceedings (as judge):
   - If the *builders* group wins, discuss how presenting the case for and against different thoughts is a good way to use evidence to develop more realistic thinking and make more helpful decisions about yourself. We need to remember to do this when we catch ourselves using negative, critical self-talk.
   - If the *robbers* group wins, discuss how persuasive negative thoughts can be and highlight that this will decrease self-worth and can stop us doing things because we think we will perform badly or that we will embarrass ourselves. Sometimes we may need to work hard to change robber thoughts to builder thoughts so we need to look for evidence that can tip the scales in favour of the builders.

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**Alternative Procedure 1.**

1. **Present** the scenario with one possible robber thought (e.g. “I won’t be able to do this”) and ask students to place themselves on a continuum for that thought from strongly agree (robber) to strongly disagree (builder). The spread of students should make it possible to form 3 teams, 1 for and 1 against and an undecided for the jury. The for’s and against’s sit with the same position group and discuss and record the arguments supporting their position while the jury debates both sides within their group.

2. **Bring** opposing sides together to present their case for a given time, ask the jury for their decision and finish with class discussion.

**Alternative Procedure 2.**

1. **Ask** students to work in small groups and discuss and debate the evidence for and against the thoughts and to decide which position is more compelling. Each group reports back to the whole class.

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**NOTE:** Alternative procedure 2 will be quicker if time is short.
2.5 Out of class activity – The hidden observer 1 min

1. **Refer** students to page 11 of their books.

2. **Instructions:**

   Throughout the day, observe the people you know (family, friends, people at school, etc.) and listen for any negative or unhelpful self-talk (robber statements). Record these on page 11 of your book.

   Next, choose another day and observe yourself, looking out for any negative statements you may make about yourself either out loud to other people or to yourself inside your head. If you make any negative statements, you need to challenge those statements by generating evidence against them and finding a more helpful statement. Record these on page 11 of your book.