

Being positive is powerful

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

Recognize that presenting feelings may mask underlying feelings

Identify and use long-term strategies for managing feelings

Affirm personal skill development

- acknowledge that the behaviour of others affects an individual's self-esteem
- realize that negative and positive thought patterns affect self-esteem
- recognize personal strengths and work toward positive life outcomes
- understand that a positive self-esteem promotes a healthy lifestyle

CONTENT AND TIME (45-MINUTE LESSON)

7.1 Opening activity: Actions affect us (10 minutes)

7.2 Strengthening vs. shattering self-esteem (15 minutes)

7.3 Power of the positive (15 minutes)

7.4 Review: Quick quiz (5 minutes)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Lists made during lesson six: (1) Positive qualities and (2) Negative qualities

HANDOUT 2.3: Why do people draw on drugs? (from lesson two)

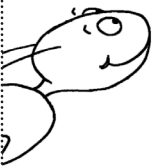
HANDOUT 7.1: Actions affect us

HANDOUT 7.3: Power of the positive

Large sentence strips (for the class bulletin board)

Notebooks

Marshmallows and toothpicks, or cube-a-link blocks



7.1 Opening activity: Actions affect us

(10 minutes)

Explain that the last two lessons have explored how positive and negative influences from others affect our thought processes and behaviour. Today's lesson focuses on self-esteem. We must all take responsibility for our own feelings of worth, but we need to realize how people around us also affect this. The comments they make and their actions toward us can either help to enhance or diminish the positive feelings we have about ourselves. Just as we have a tendency to believe the media, whether or not we are hearing the truth, we often trust what others tell us, even if we know that information is not true.

Have the class review the lists from lesson six — about Positive and Negative Qualities. Give specific examples of behaviour we might see from a person with a particular quality. Ask the students to think about how these behaviours might affect our feelings. The following are examples for consideration:

Personal Quality	Behaviour A PERSON:	Feelings YOU FEEL:
Thoughtlessness	makes fun of you	embarrassed
Fairness	trusts you	trusted
Positive outlook	believes in you	confident
Rudeness	calls you names	hurt
Considerateness	listens to you	significant
Humorousness	laughs with you	cheerful
Selfishness	leaves you out of the game	unworthy
Kindness	invites you to his or her house	accepted

This categorization enables the students to make connections between personality traits, behaviours and self-esteem. It encourages them to think about how we are all affected by the comments and actions that others direct toward us.

Once you have completed this activity, show HANDOUT 7.1: Actions affect us. Discuss the illustrations and the definition of self-esteem provided. Have the students record this definition in their notebooks.

7.2 Strengthening vs. shattering self-esteem

(15 minutes)

For this demonstration you can have the students remain at their desks and invite volunteers to the front of the class, or if you prefer and you have the space, you can ask the students to sit in a large circle on the floor and invite volunteers into the center. Explain to the students that you will be building a self-esteem structure together. This is a structure that grows and strengthens when the person building it feels self-confident, and one that shrinks and weakens when the builder experiences feelings of insecurity. To achieve this, you will provide for the class comments or actions that either encourage a person to feel good or bad about him or herself.

When you make a positive statement, a classroom volunteer will build up a structure using the marshmallows and toothpicks (or you may prefer to use classroom materials readily available, such as cube-a-link blocks). To speed the game along, you can allow each volunteer to use four marshmallows and four toothpicks for each turn (as opposed to just one of each). You will also want to demonstrate how to begin building a successful structure using marshmallows and toothpicks (i.e. creating a wide base).

To begin, provide only positive statements so that the structure can be built up. After a few teacher examples, ask student volunteers to add their ideas as well. Have them refer to the chart posted on Positive Qualities, in order to think of appropriate examples. Once you have a good-sized structure, begin to introduce negative statements. At this time, classroom volunteers will take turns tearing down the structure by removing four marshmallows and four toothpicks for each negative statement. Again, give examples to begin and then ask student volunteers to contribute ideas. Have the students refer to the chart posted on Negative Qualities.

It is very important to emphasize that the comments being made are generalized and are not about a specific person.

7.3 Power of the positive

(15 minutes)

Although other people's behaviour can affect our self-esteem, we are often our own worst critics. We are all guilty of thinking negative thoughts about ourselves. When this becomes a pattern, we start to believe in the negativity, we lose confidence and we feel defeated. In order to change this, we must make an active effort to replace our pessimistic thoughts by saturating the brain with optimism. Read through the first part of HANDOUT 7.3: Power of the Positive with the students, in order to clarify this concept. Have the students complete the second part independently. Emphasize that ideas will not be shared, unless volunteered.

Upon completion, discuss the relation between self-esteem and addiction. Ask the students to think back to the reasons why people use alcohol, drugs or gambling. You may also want to refer to HANDOUT 2.3: Why Do People Draw on Drugs? A person who is struggling with a low self-esteem may be at greater risk for:

- Wanting to deal with problems and negative feelings
- Seeking a new experience out of curiosity
- Creating a personal image
- Being rebellious
- Being influenced by others to fit in



7.4 Review: Quick quiz

(5 minutes)

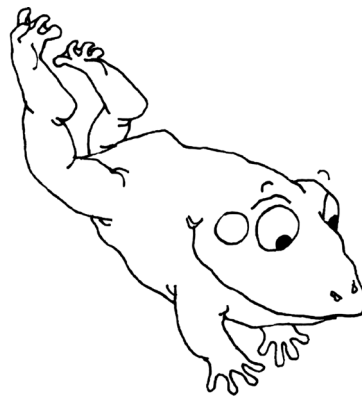
To review the concepts explored in lesson seven, you can ask the students a series of questions (refer to the suggestions given below). To answer yes, they can provide two thumbs up, to answer no they can provide two thumbs down, and to answer maybe, one thumb up and one thumb down. You may want to discuss briefly some of the more difficult questions.

1. Can another person's negative comments to you make you question your abilities? YES
2. If an older brother or sister treats you with kindness, do you feel good about yourself? YES

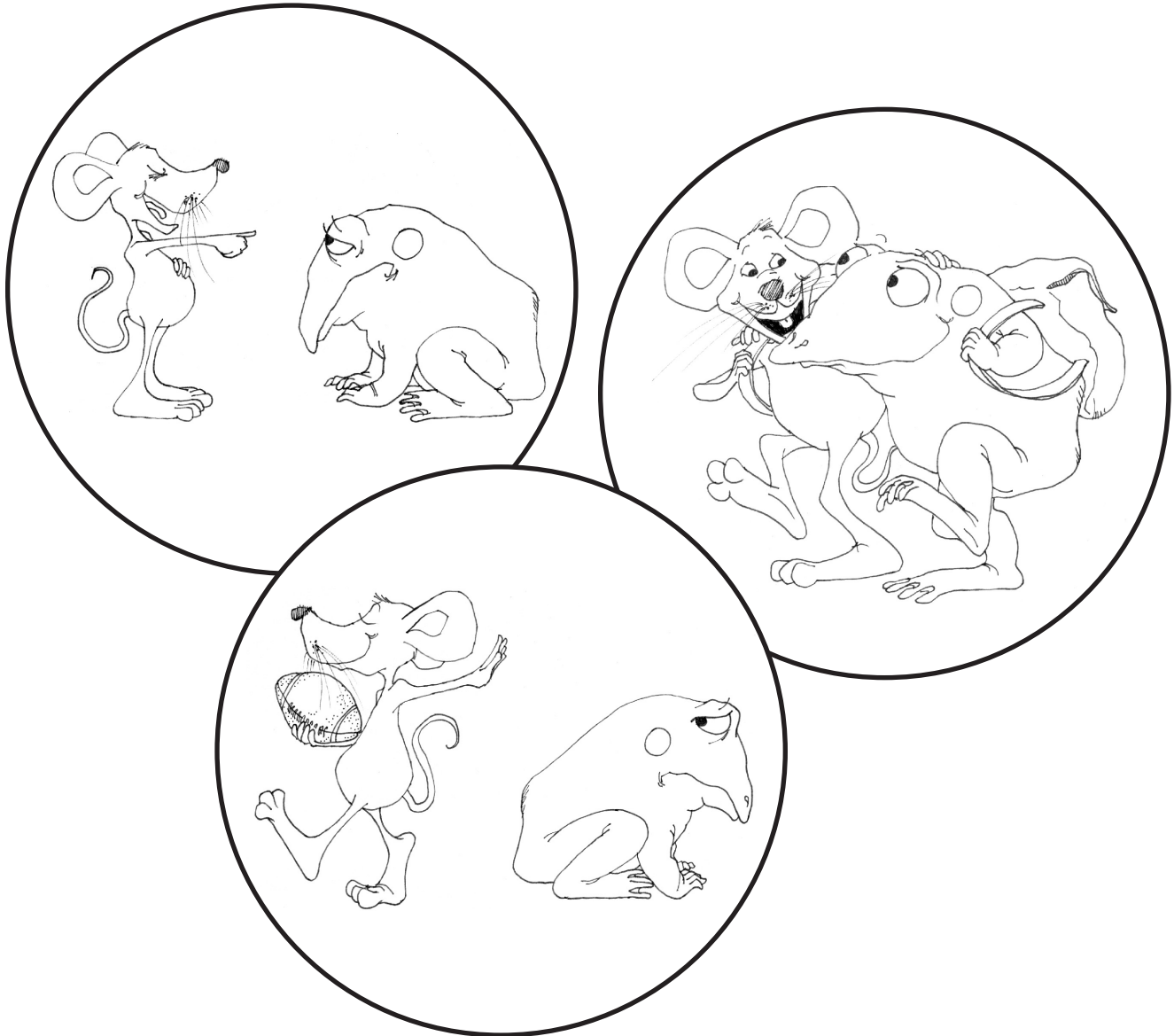
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| 3. | Will you help yourself improve in an area if you say to yourself, "I am going to fail"? | NO |
| 4. | If you have a high self-esteem, are you better able to feel confident in making difficult decisions? | YES |
| 5. | If you believe in your ability to make good decisions, will you do ANYTHING to fit in with the 'cool' crowd? | NO |
| 6. | If you believe positive thoughts about yourself, are you wasting your time and energy? | NO |
| 7. | If you feel defeated and lonely, would you be willing to do what an older kid suggests, even if you think it is an unwise choice? | YES |
| 8. | Is it effective to work on positive self-talk for a few days and then stop when you feel better? | NO |
| 9. | When you constantly say negative statements to yourself, you begin to believe in them; do you change this by replacing the old thoughts with new, encouraging ones? | YES |
| 10. | If you hang around with negative people, is there a good chance that you will be negative as well? | YES |

If time permits, have a couple volunteers write statements like these on sentence strips and post them on the unit bulletin board.

Check the class envelope and respond to any questions asked. Remind the students to continue collecting media samples and to have their ideas ready for lesson eight.



Actions affect us

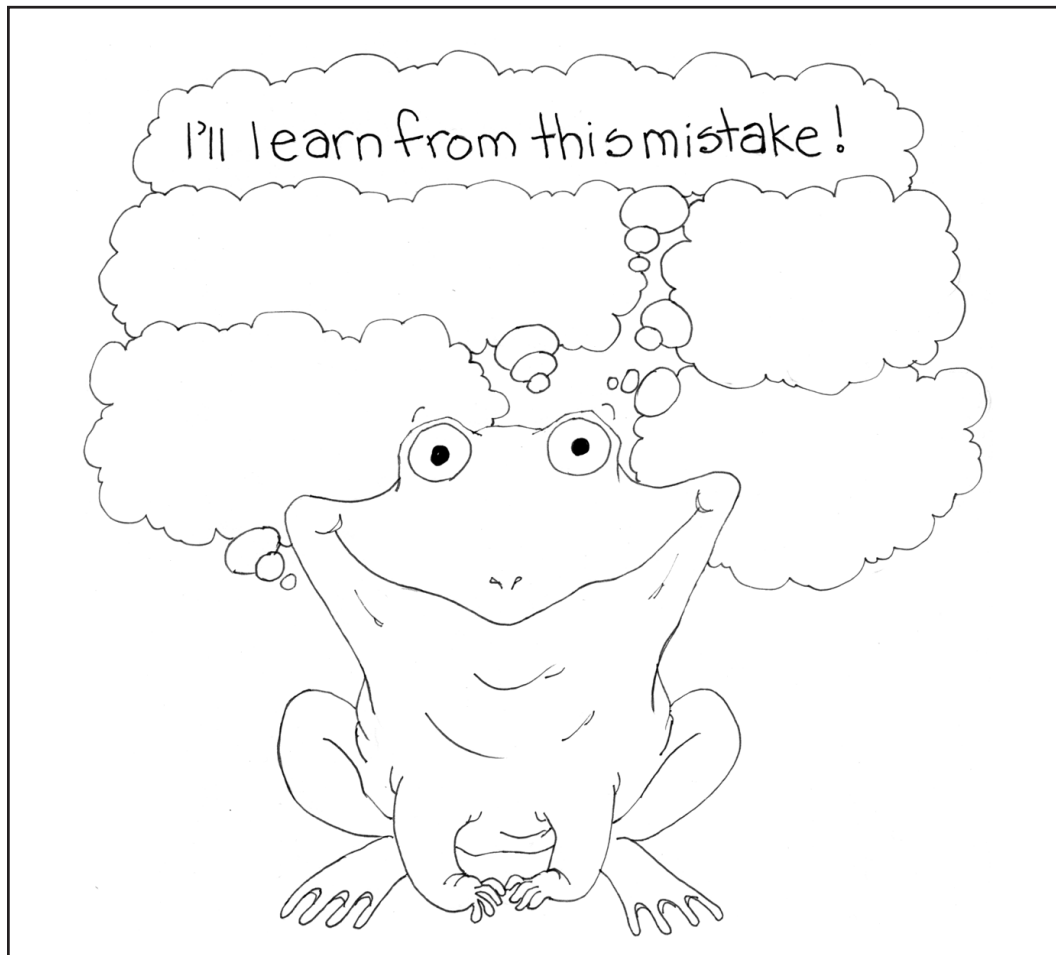
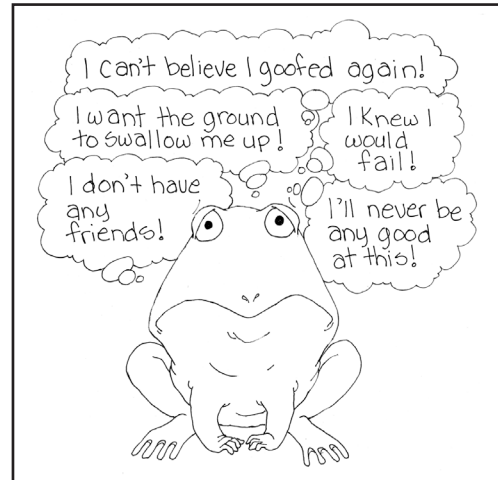


Self-esteem is:

- Being happy about who you are
- Having confidence in your abilities
- Respecting the decisions you make
- Valuing yourself

The Power of the positive

Franky the Frog feels defeated because he is thinking negative thoughts about himself. Help him to think positively by writing four encouraging statements he could say to himself.



Rating a role model

It is time to get rid of the 'put downs' and bombard your brain with positive self-talk. Try this for a week and you will notice a boost in your self-confidence and have a clearer picture of who you really are.

In the first column, write three negative comments you have said about yourself. In the second column, write three positive comments you will say about yourself. A few examples have been given.

PERSONAL PUT DOWNS

I can't play sports

I always fail

*Here we go,
arguing again*

SPEAK SENSIBLY ABOUT YOURSELF!

*I work hard to improve
my abilities*

*I don't believe in failure,
only success*

*I am a GREAT friend and we
will work this out*

