

Connecting with yourself

This article was written by a Kooth writer and contains mentions of: self-esteem, self-care.

Although we usually think of connections with other people, one of the most important connections is how we connect with ourselves. Learning to connect with ourselves is a valuable skill, and it comes down to recognising and understanding your own thoughts and feelings.

This can help increase your confidence and self-esteem by encouraging you to understand and better listen to your needs. These might be physical needs, for your body, emotional needs, for your mental health and wellbeing, or social needs, for your sense of connection. We've put together three of our best tips on how to develop your relationship with yourself.



1. Think about the way you speak to yourself

It can be helpful to try to speak to yourself kindly, and not be so harsh on yourself. As you go through your day to day life, you might notice the way you talk to yourself. Depending on how you feel at the time, it might be a kind and supportive voice, or it might be a critical voice. For example, if you don't do as well on a test as you'd hoped, you might say to yourself "I should have done better,

I am a failure." This will probably make you feel quite bad. Instead, it may be helpful if you say to yourself, "This wasn't what I had hoped for, but my grades don't define me, and if I ask for help and work hard, I can do better next time." Try speaking to yourself in a kinder way, and notice the difference. It can be difficult to practise positive self talk, but the more we try it out, the easier it becomes.

2. Spend some time with yourself

In our hectic world, we're almost always surrounded by people, or we have them within easy reach thanks to the internet and social media. When we're not, it can be quite easy to see this as a bad thing. However, when we spend time on our own, it gives us a chance to check in with our feelings, to rest, and to practise self-care. So whether you're a social butterfly or you prefer peace and quiet, it's good to take time for yourself. This might mean taking time to ask yourself how you're feeling at the moment; what's going well for you right now? What isn't going so well? What do I need? What do I want? These starting questions can help us to start feeling more connected with ourselves and more in tune with our own needs.

3. Practise self-care as much as you can

We talk about self-care a lot, but what does it really mean? Maybe you're imagining bubble baths and scented candles, or a social media influencer talking about the latest "essential" self-care product. These things can be a part of self-care, but at its most basic, self-care is anything you do that helps you feel refreshed, taken care of, or rested. It's important to take care of ourselves. Some days, that might just mean having a shower, or wearing our favourite comfy PJs. Other days, it might be doing our favourite hobby, playing sport, or spending time with friends.

If self-care is something you struggle with, try writing down a few activities you enjoy on scraps of paper and putting them in a jar. The next time you feel the need for a bit of refreshment, grab an idea and try it. The more you practise self-care, the easier it will become, and it likely won't be long before you start feeling the benefit!

If you want to try connecting with yourself but are a little bit unsure of how to get started, why not have a go at using the Kooth online journal? You can write about things like what's gone well this week, what hasn't gone so well, and what you'd like to achieve in the coming week.

*All names are pseudonyms used to protect anonymity.

Would you like a safe space to explore the issues raised in this article?

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