

MODULE 1:
WHY IS IT SO
HARD TO BE
CONFIDENT?

MODULE 1: WHY IT'S SO HARD TO BE CONFIDENT

By learning more about factors that influence our confidence levels and recognizing which ones are holding us back, we can improve our confidence and achieve greater success in life.

In this module, we will explore some of the most common causes, such as:

- Self-Esteem
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Self-Consciousness
- Imposter Syndrome
- Self-Hatred
- Feeling Rejected
- Self-doubt

Module 1: Why It's So Hard To Be Confident

Self-Esteem: Self-esteem is an important component of mental health. It is not only a measure of how much we value ourselves, but how much we like ourselves as well. Self-esteem is a person's attitude toward himself or herself. It can be defined as either a positive or negative evaluation of one's worth.

- We live in a society that places a high value on personal achievement. We want to be successful and we work hard to achieve our goals. When we achieve something, we experience a "feel-good rush." This becomes our baseline for happiness. So, we always want more and more of these good feelings. For example, after buying a new car, we want to buy something even better--a newer model. We keep striving to get higher and higher.
- The problem with tying your self-esteem to achievement is that you will never feel good enough. There are always new goals to achieve and new challenges to overcome, so you will never reach a stable level of positive self-esteem.

MODULE 1: WHY IT'S SO HARD TO BE CONFIDENT

A few various factors that can influence our self-esteem are:

- Genetics
- Personality
- Life experiences
- Age
- Health
- Thoughts
- Social circumstances
- The reactions of others
- Comparing yourself to others

MODULE 1: WHY IT'S SO HARD TO BE CONFIDENT

Low Self-Esteem:

Below are some signs of low self-esteem

- Focusing on failures and perceived weaknesses
- Pessimistic outlook, sees the glass half-full
- Socially withdrawn, unwilling to participate in social activities
- Poor self-image, self-critical
- Follower, not leader
- Indecisive, avoids making decisions
- Poor ability to deal with criticism

MODULE 1: WHY IT'S SO HARD TO BE CONFIDENT

Because self-esteem impacts so many aspects of life, it can be important for people to manage their self-esteem wisely. When people experience successes or setbacks, both personal and professional, these events can influence how they feel about themselves.

The way we feel about ourselves is often established at a young age. A family life fraught with disapproval can follow a person into adulthood. Low self-esteem can affect a person's behavior in a variety of ways. For example, a person may avoid new experiences or shy away from tasks that appear too difficult because he or she feels incapable of success.

MODULE 1: WHY IT'S SO HARD TO BE CONFIDENT: EXERCISE

USING THE ATTACHED WORKBOOK ANSWER THE FOLOWING QUESTIONS AS TRUTHFULLY AS YOU CAN:

1. I WAS REALLY HAPPY WHEN...?
2. SOMETHING THAT MY FRIENDS LIKE ABOUT ME IS...?
3. I AM VERY PROUD OF...?
4. MY FAMILY WAS VERY HAPPY WITH ME WHEN I...?
5. IN SCHOOL/AT WORK I AM VERY GOOD AT...?
6. SOMETHING THAT MAKES ME REALLY UNIQUE IS...?

MODULE 1: WHY IT'S SO HARD TO BE CONFIDENT

Self-Consciousness:

According to those who study self-consciousness, it's human nature to focus on ourselves sometimes and to focus on others sometimes. The extent to which we focus or self-reflect on ourselves is thought to indicate our level of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness can have either negative or positive outcomes. Moderate levels of self-consciousness can be helpful, boosting our motivation and increasing our self-confidence. However, high levels of self-consciousness can result in negative emotions such as shame, embarrassment, jealousy and guilt, making us obsess over every blemish. Over time this can erode our self-confidence.

MODULE 1: WHY IT'S SO HARD TO BE CONFIDENT: EXERCISE: SELF-CONSCIOUS EXPLORATION

Here are some questions you can ask yourself to get a sense of your level of self-consciousness:

1. Do I constantly reflect on myself and my actions?
2. Do I always re-examine all my emotions?
3. Am I always worrying about what other people think of me?
4. Am I threatened easily?
5. Do I seek the approval of others?
6. Do I get intimidated easily?
7. Do my mistakes make me feel guilty or ashamed?
8. Do I experience embarrassment easily?

MODULE 1: WHY IT'S SO HARD TO BE CONFIDENT

Imposter Syndrome

People who feel they are undeserving of their achievements and the high esteem in which they are generally held may have imposter syndrome. This is not an official diagnosis, but it is common among accomplished people who believe that they aren't as competent or intelligent as others might think--and that soon enough, people will discover the truth about them. People who experience imposter syndrome are often reluctant to take credit for their successes, instead attributing them to luck or other external factors.

Module 1: Why It's So Hard To Be Confident

Imposter Syndrome: A variety of factors can contribute to feeling like an imposter. The following are some possible causes of imposter syndrome.

- **Major Transitions or New Chapters** - Such as starting a new job right after graduation, or a major life event, such as the ending of a relationship.
- **Societal or Familial Stressors:** You may have been treated by others in ways that made you feel less than worthy. How you view yourself can be affected by how others treat you.
- **Stereotypes or Prejudices:** Stereotypes can lead members of certain groups to doubt their competence, causing imposter syndrome.
- **Links with Mental Illness:** Imposter Syndrome has been linked to self-doubt and failure, anxiety and depression.

MODULE 1: WHY IT'S SO HARD TO BE CONFIDENT

Research has identified five types of people who experience imposter syndrome. Each type shares the core signs and symptoms of imposter syndrome, but their behavioral patterns vary based on how they evaluate self-competence.

- Perfectionists
- Superhero's
- Experts
- Geniuses
- Soloists

After reading about the various types of imposter syndrome, did any stand out as being especially relevant to your experience? Or do you feel like a blend of two or more types describes you best? I personally feel like both a Genius and a Soloist.