

MENTAL HEALTH Bulletin

5th July 2021

Hello Everyone,

Last week, Dr Bartlett led assemblies on how far we have all come as an academy and what a huge part our students have played on our journey. Three years ago, when Dr Bartlett became headteacher, she showed all students a video clip about a 61-year-old man who, in 1983, won the Australian Ultramarathon, a 544-mile running race. What was most remarkable about Cliff, was not that at 61 he was the oldest runner but the fact that, unlike all the other athletes who spent months preparing for the race, Cliff was a potato farmer with no preparation, no high-profile sponsors and no expensive running shoes. As he stood at the starting line everyone laughed at him and initially, the other runners left him way behind. However, after 18 hours of running, the other athletes stopped to sleep while Cliff kept on going, running all night every night for five days. He won the race and broke the previous record by two days.

When asked why he hadn't stopped to sleep, Cliff said that he didn't know that he was expected to do so. On the farm, he would often have to spend two or three days and nights rounding up about 2,000 sheep and cattle so, he was used to running without sleep. When it came to the race, Cliff applied the same attitude and ran through the night while the others slept. His shuffling run later became adopted as a style of running by the world's best athletes.

Three years ago, Shenley Academy was not in a good place. An inspection by Ofsted had ranked the academy inadequate. We were the 'Cliff Young' of schools in the area. But that was three years ago, and just like Cliff, everyone at Shenley has kept on going, kept working away at improving and kept believing we would one day be 'good' again.

Our students have led the way with the continued improvements: the presentation in books is excellent; students are polite and kind; they show respect to staff and each other. It is for this reason, as we approach the finish line, that we all believe, 'We are good'!

Believe in Yourself, Be Yourself

Cliff believed he could run the race and despite all the negativity around him he kept going, dug deep, and kept running. Self-belief and self-esteem are essential for good mental health, and our wellbeing thrives on a 'positive mental attitude'.

Self-esteem is feeling good about oneself. People with self-esteem:

- feel liked and accepted.
- are proud of what they do.
- believe in themselves.

Having good self-esteem takes time and effort so here are some tips to help.

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Tips for students

- 1) Change the voice in your head.
Instead of 'I'm such a loser' change to 'Ok I lost this time but maybe I will win next time'.
- 2) Learn something new.
Learning a new skill helps us feel good about our achievement and wellbeing. Consider joining one of the after-school clubs.
- 3) Be around people who make you feel good.
Choose friends you can be yourself with. Ones who are supportive and celebrate in your success.
- 4) Accept what's not perfect.
We can't all be good at everything. Recognise your strengths and accept that your best IS good enough.
- 5) Set goals and work towards them.
Set realistic goals and make a plan to achieve them. E.g., to eat healthier, complete homework on the day it is set.
- 6) Focus on what went well.
At the end of each day, think of three things that went well or made you feel good.
- 7) Give and help.
Being supportive of others and helping someone by boosting their self-esteem makes us feel good too. Be a positive role model to others.

Tips for parents

- 1) Let your child know how pleased you are when they do something good. Children remember the positive statements we give them.
- 2) When your child has tried their best, praise and reassure them and tell them that you are proud of their achievements.
- 3) Spend time with your child. Talk to them about their day and be interested in what they have done. If they are feeling low because they didn't achieve their goal, talk to them about how proud you are of their accomplishments and work with them to come up with a plan to help them achieve their goal next time.
- 4) Talk to your child about decision making and recognise when they make a positive decision.
- 5) Teach your child to practise making positive statements about themselves. What we think, determines how we feel and act.
- 6) Be a good role model. Set positive statements for yourself and share this with your child.

I hope you find these tips useful. Let's really focus this week on building up our own self-esteem and that of others.

If we believe we can do it, we will succeed.

Have a good week everyone and stay safe and well,

Ms Corbett-Lees
Mental Health Lead

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