What’s the Difference?

There are a lot of buzz words that float around conversations that focus on confidence. Some are confusing and some may sound like the same thing as the next. You might find yourself wondering, “What is the difference between all of these terms and how is each uniquely important?” Here are some important terms to know when building your confidence:

**Self-efficacy** refers to your belief in your ability to accomplish specific tasks without becoming overwhelmed.

Ex: If you believe you’re capable of completing a project like cooking dinner, you likely have high self-efficacy, however, if you don’t believe you’re capable – you likely have lower self-efficacy.

**Self-confidence** is a more broad term that describes a specific level of trust in one’s abilities. This can be positive or negative.

Ex: When you practice cooking a dish, you might say “I am confident I can make this taste good” or “I am confident this will not taste good.” One’s level of confidence may be based on past experiences of success or failure.

**Self-Esteem** refers to a belief in your overall worth.

Ex: “I’m a good person” or blanket statements about yourself may fall into this category.
Boosting Beliefs and Values

Now that we understand the terms better, here’s how you can improve yourself in these areas. Start building an overall positive sense of self and obtain goals through Beliefs and Values by following these steps:

1. **Slowly stretch your comfort zone.** We’re not talking about large, drastic changes, but using smaller steps in areas you may tend to avoid. Strike up a conversation, try a new food, or visit a small business you’ve never been to.
2. **Try a new look.** Our clothes can impact how others perceive us but they can also impact how we perceive ourselves. Put something on that makes you feel like you can conquer your day!
3. **Adjust your posture.** According to a study by Ohio State University, having good posture increases your confidence in your own thoughts.
4. **Explore and acknowledge your values and how they impact your decisions and actions.** One way might be to try out this values identification exercise to explore what’s important to you.

Imposter Syndrome

Ever feel like you’re fooling everyone into believing you know what you’re doing? Do you feel afraid that you might say or do something, and then everyone will know that you’re a fraud? That is imposter syndrome, and it’s a feeling that most people have at some point in their lives. Here are a few ways to fight against imposter syndrome:

- **Acknowledge your feelings and communicate openly:** It might sound scary, but if you have a question, ask it! You might be surprised by how people don’t mind helping or how supportive of a response you get.
- **Evaluate your expectations.** Perfectionism often goes hand-in-hand with imposter syndrome. Ask yourself; is someone in my position really supposed to be an expert on all these tasks and topics? Am I being fair to myself?
- **Share your self-doubt** with trusted coworkers or friends. Someone with more experience will be able to share how they gained confidence over time, or they might reveal that they still doubt themselves too!
- **Practice self-compassion.** Try to be warm and understanding toward yourself when you struggle, just as you would for a dear friend. Allow yourself to acknowledge and experience these normal and difficult emotions without pushing them away or wallowing in them for too long.
- **Remind yourself that the more you practice something, the better you’ll get at it.** That goes for everything from complicated tasks at work to being kinder toward yourself.

Remember, everyone feels self-doubt at times, but it’s up to you to decide what actions you take next.
Tips for Talking to Our Kids and Students about Racism and Racial Injustice

The one year anniversary of the death of George Floyd is approaching, but to many, this feels like it was just yesterday. While the topic of Race/Racism/Injustice continues to be discussed, it begins to dissipate with time and the memories of the last major incident are fading.

Our children and students may have feelings or questions that they’d like to discuss. As this topic is so important – no matter what is happening – we wanted to include some information to help keep this conversation going. Here are a few tips* for talking with students:

- **Don’t avoid it.** It may be tempting to ignore or downplay the issues because it’s uncomfortable, but if you aren’t the one discussing the topic with them, they’ll find someone or somewhere else. It’s okay not to have all the answers and it’s okay to tell students that. The goal is not telling students what to think, just give them space to share their thoughts and feelings.

- **Be clear, direct, and factual.** Even with younger children, it is important not to be vague and expect students to “read between the lines.” This can result in the message being missed.

- **Ask open-ended questions.** This is a complex and layered topic and questions can’t simply be answered with a yes or no. It is important to ask more open questions to help yourself and the students process the information they are getting. Some topics you may want to ask about include what they’re seeing in the news, how they feel about that information, what their friends are saying, what they care about most with the situation, etc.

- **Normalize emotions (even your own).** It may be helpful for students to hear reminders that they are allowed to feel however they feel about the situation. It’s okay if they are feeling sad, angry, or frustrated. It’s okay if they are having an off day because of it – learning to accept and cope with our feelings is a difficult but valuable process. Though it is best for you to try to be calm when helping students talk about the issue, it can help to normalize feelings if you also share your feelings about it as well.

- **Keep the conversation going.** This is not a “one and done” kind of talk. It is important to continue discussing Race/Racism and all the layers that come with it on a continuing basis.

- **Explore Resources.** This topic is ongoing and there are a lot of good resources out there to help.

*This information was taken from two great articles; One, written by Haig Chahinian for *The New York Times*, and the other was obtained from the *Child Mind Institute*. 