

Self-Determination Skills

We kept the self-determination checklist brief, primarily because the associated skills and activities are embedded throughout the other life domain worksheets. This is not intended to lessen the importance of the self-determination skills - rather we felt that it was important to embed the skills throughout the resource as well as include self-determination as a separate worksheet to further emphasise how important these skills are.

All individuals need to make their own decisions as well as have influence over the things that happen to them and around them. It keeps us motivated and energised. Failure to provide adequate opportunities for young people to make real-life decisions and choices (including taking responsibility for their actions and learning from their mistakes) can diminish their capacity to live an active life as an adult out and about in the community.

Scary Questions

By the time _____ is _____ I/he/she will be:

1. Maintaining a positive self-image (self-esteem, self-confidence, resilience)
2. Solving problems, making informed decisions and taking responsibility for their actions
3. Making assertive requests on own behalf (self-advocacy)
4. Identifying and achieving personal goals (including implementing plans to achieve goals)
5. Making plans for lifelong learning



Functional Skills Checklist

Goal	Current Skill Level*	Priority	Plan to start by	Notes (including target dates)
Self- Advocacy	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies rights and responsibilities in relation to the law	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Describes own disability in clear and concise manner	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies and communicates own strengths, needs, interests, values, preferences and aspirations	1 2 3 4 5 6			

* Skill Level

1 Cooperating: Accepting assistance

3 Consolidating: Practicing a skill

5 Transferred: Use a skill across situations

2 Beginning: Attempting a skill

4 Established: Consistently demonstrate a skill

6 Full Responsibility for using and maintaining an activity/ sequence

Self-Determination Skills

Goal	Current Skill Level*	Priority	Plan to start by	Notes (including target dates)
<input type="checkbox"/> Manages emotions and social challenges	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Asks for help or assistance, when needed	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Develops strategies for preventing and responding to harassment, intimidation, bullying and discrimination	1 2 3 4 5 6			
Time Management	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Decides what to do and when to do it	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Acts upon a plan	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Prioritises activities	1 2 3 4 5 6			
<input type="checkbox"/> Manages personal schedule	1 2 3 4 5 6			
Other	1 2 3 4 5 6			
	1 2 3 4 5 6			
	1 2 3 4 5 6			
	1 2 3 4 5 6			
	1 2 3 4 5 6			

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Financial Independence / Money Management

Self-Determination ¹

There are some key things we can teach young people to help them feel empowered and able to deal with different people and different situations.

Teach them to respect themselves and their bodies and other people.

We live in a society that places a high value on physical perfection and values people based upon how they look and their ability to achieve. This can make it difficult for a young person with a disability to acquire a healthy level of self-esteem.

We judge ourselves by the way others treat us. Encouraging the achievements of young people, no matter how small, and promoting their interests and what they do well can help them to see themselves in a positive light. Providing opportunities where young people can achieve and find personal satisfaction is therefore very important in developing self confidence and a better self-esteem.

Teach them about their rights.

Teaching young people to understand they have rights in relation to employment, the police, public places, health and medical issues, and their bodies provides them with the information to know when their rights are being violated. It can also give young people the confidence to say 'no' and feel less powerless; particularly in situations with adults and people in authority.

Some of the important age-related rights are listed in the poster that accompanies this resource. Review this information and think about ways you can support your teenager to make informed age-appropriate choices and decisions as they relate to these rights.

Teach them how to communicate their feelings and that it is alright to speak about things that are bothering them.

Understanding their feelings and having the vocabulary or symbols (if they can't vocalise their thoughts) to tell others is an essential tool.

Ask your teenager to identify who they feel safe and comfortable speaking with.

Teach your teenager the difference between good secrets and bad ones.

Saying 'no' can be difficult for lots of people. Teach your teenager to say 'no' by practicing it out loud and discuss with them the different ways we say 'no' and when each one is appropriate.

Young people also need to know they will be listened to. Parents and carers need to demonstrate to teenagers that they are willing to listen. It can help to practice our listening and communication skills.



Building Self-Esteem

Having a positive self-esteem is important to how we go out into the world. How we feel about ourselves determines our effectiveness as people. If a person feels they are not of value it can stop them achieving their full potential.

Assertiveness is also part of self-esteem. It does not mean being aggressive or bullying. It means being able to tell people how we feel and what we want or need. To be assertive is to show others that we respect ourselves and them and that we expect equality.

Parents and carers can play an important role in helping young people to build a positive self-esteem by:

¹ Adapted from **Transitions: Moving forward with your teenage child**, Western Australia Disability Services Commission 2004, accessed 19 November 2007, www.kalparrin.org.au/transitions/index.html. Used with permission.

* Skill Level

1 Cooperating: Accepting assistance Transferred: Use a skill across situations	3 Consolidating: Practicing a skill	5
2 Beginning: Attempting a skill Responsibility for using and maintaining an activity/ sequence	4 Established: Consistently demonstrate a skill	6 Full

Self-Determination Skills

- Encouraging them and celebrating their successes.
- Focussing on the things they do well.
- Teaching them to care for themselves.
- Teaching them how to say 'no' so that they look like they mean it through the words they use and their body language. This also means teaching them how to say 'no' in different situations. You could use stories about different situations to practice saying 'no'. For example saying no to a shop assistant and saying no to peers who may want them to do something they don't want to do.
- Helping them to focus on the positive things about themselves and showing them that you see and value their positive qualities.
- Helping them to find supportive people to spend time with.
- Working with them on projects that bring them success. That might mean breaking bigger projects into smaller do-able tasks.
- Only offering constructive criticism that includes positive statements as well as suggestions for improvement.
- Finding mentors or positive role models who that they can admire.

Parents and carers can also assist young people to develop a set of personal rules or a set of rights. This can help young people to think about how they want to be treated by others and what's important to them. The kinds of things they might include in their set of rules or rights are:

- I will not accept anybody embarrassing me in front of other people.
- I want people to be respectful to me.
- I want to be listened to when I'm speaking.
- I will not accept people taking advantage of me.
- I will not accept people calling me names.
- I expect equality.
- I have the right to say 'no'.
- I have the right to ask for what I need.

Each person's set of rules can be different and appropriate to them. Young people need to say it in their words so they understand what they mean.

Teenagers need to bounce ideas off others or test their opinions to work out what they really think. Having family and friends who are good listeners and who are non-judgemental helps keep communication open.

Show interest in what they are saying and open the way for them to talk on, by using phrases such as:

- How come?
- You must have felt ...
- That sounds exciting or scary ...

Many disagreements with teenagers stem from parents nagging. Learning to tolerate minor irritations and stand firm on serious issues can improve relationships. Sometimes the temptation to nag is lessened by asking:

- "Is this for my teenager's good or mine?" and
- "What harm is done if I let it go?"