



## LACK OF SELF-ESTEEM/CONFIDENCE IN YOUNG ADULTS

Change can be a very delicate time for a young adult. Leaving the safety of routine or comfort can have drastic effects on one's self-esteem and confidence. It can often be difficult to have faith in one's abilities and where their future may take them.

At Pacific Quest, we are aware of the positive outcomes Organic Gardening and Horticulture Therapy can have on improving self-esteem, helping individuals to feel less stressed and anxious, reducing the severity of depression and improving perceived attentional capacity.

It is said, the garden will never judge you. It places the student in a caregiving role, and gives them a sense of responsibility and purpose in being able to provide the care, rather than their being the ones that need the caring.

It's true that the Pacific Quest wilderness therapy program is about adventure and journey – both the interior and exterior kind. By transplanting a young adult to the other side of the world, in a foreign environment that is strange to them, demands that they adapt while on their own adventure. Students will find themselves surprised that they are able to succeed in a different place, taking part in activities that are exciting and out of their normal routine, and discovering life skills that give them a purpose and a goal. The simple act of attempting new endeavors and succeeding, or not succeeding can offer young adults that sense of accomplishment and strengthen their self-esteem.

If you feel your child, or another individual's lack of self-esteem or confidence could be strengthened with the help of the Pacific Quest Wilderness Therapy Program, or if you have a question about our therapeutic model, contact us at 808-937-5806 today.

## LACK OF CONFIDENCE

Having confidence helps adolescents in many ways. With confidence they can make safer, better decisions, like avoid people and situations that aren't necessarily right for them and instead find those that are. If a child is confident, he is more likely to be assertive, positive, engaged, enthusiastic and persistent.

Adolescents with a lack of confidence are less likely to join in activities, more likely to hold back in class, and might be more willing to give in to peer pressure. When a child lacks confidence, she usually expects to fail at things or does not try as hard when things get tricky. Confidence is related to self-esteem, which is feeling good about yourself and feeling that you're a worthwhile person, but having high self-esteem doesn't mean a person always feels confident. Poor self-esteem often peaks in early adolescence and then improves during the middle and late teen years as identities gain strength and focus. However, a lack of confidence at any age can be a serious problem.

It is part of the developmental process for adolescents to feel inadequate at times. They have changing bodies and developing minds, and their relationships with friends and family members are in constant and seemingly dramatic flux. Perhaps they are beginning to understand and become aware of (for the first time) their strengths as well as their weaknesses – that they aren't good at everything. Adolescents with low confidence are less likely to join in activities and form friendships, which isolates them further and slows their ability to develop a better self-image. Then when they do make friends, they are more vulnerable to negative peer pressure.

This is why resilience and confidence are closely related: If your adolescent has resilience and learns that she can cope when life is difficult, it will leave her feeling more confident to tackle difficult situations in the future and be able to bounce back from them. It's a positive cycle!

## BUILDING A CHILD'S CONFIDENCE AND RESILIENCE

Parents can do many things to help build a child's confidence and resilience:

- Have patience.
- Building confidence is a process.
- Focus on effort rather than outcomes.
- Praise and encourage your child's efforts, especially if an exam, interview or game doesn't work out the way your child hoped. Praise is meaningful to adolescents when it comes from those they love and count on most—their parents and other important adults in their lives. Praising your child with genuine examples will help them to gain confidence. You may be able to suggest some ideas about what can be done differently next time.
- Give your adolescent opportunities to try new things. New experiences help him get to know what he is good at and what he enjoys. Also, learning that most people do well at some things and not so well at others is an important lesson.
- Provide opportunities for your child to succeed. The best way to instill confidence in someone is to give him or her successful experiences. When set up for success, children can see how powerful they are. Part of confidence is knowing what to do – even when the path isn't fully clear.
- Encourage your child to try again if she fails. Help her understand that everyone makes mistakes and not being able to do something the first time is OK – and normal.
- Model confidence in your own ability.
- Encourage your child to act confident. Suggest he make eye contact with others, be bold, do what he loves, try not to focus on what he can't do, and walk away from situations he knows aren't good. Acting confident can often be a first step to feeling confident.
- Help adolescents feel safe and trust in themselves. Part of that is helping them be better informed. When providing information, distinguish fact from fiction and avoid guessing, exaggerating or overreacting.

## HOW PACIFIC QUEST WILDERNESS THERAPY CAN HELP ADOLESCENTS LACKING CONFIDENCE

Should lack of confidence become a persistent and serious issue that is hindering your child's success, wilderness treatment programs like Pacific Quest can be a source of help.

### **The Pacific Quest Model**

Pacific Quest combines a wilderness experience with other highly effective forms of therapy and treatment. Pacific Quest's unique wilderness therapy program is the most comprehensive approach and is able to help adolescents struggling with a variety of issues, such as lack of confidence. This model incorporates many treatment modes to help adolescents achieve lasting change in terms of both behavior and overall mental, emotional, and physical well-being, each of which factors into confidence levels. Multi-sensory treatments are critical in maximizing growth, balance, and learning potential, which is why Pacific Quest's whole-person, nature-based model is effective. Pacific Quest leverages the power of nature and practices complete wellness with qualified staff working together on every aspect. Pacific Quest works because it is an individualized, comprehensive and neuro-developmentally informed approach.

At Pacific Quest, we design strategies that reach our students and move them through a deep and lasting change process. Students receive several hours of individual and group therapy per week with one of our therapists. Individual therapy focuses on personal struggles, dynamics both at home and at Pacific Quest, as well as strategies and coping skills for sustainable change and growth. Group therapy focuses on group and family dynamics, peer relationships, as well as shared struggles and experiences. Groups may focus on a particular challenge or issue such as lack of confidence, adoption, drug or alcohol use, internet addiction, divorce, and more.

### **Horticultural Therapy**

At Pacific Quest, we create life-changing experiences for struggling adolescents in a unique and powerful backdrop for healing, the big island of Hawaii. Pacific Quest's

Sustainable Growth Model™ utilizes a team of highly experienced and dedicated clinicians, horticultural therapy, experiential education, and natural metaphors to support real change. This model helps students gain a greater sense of awareness about themselves and the world as they begin to make better choices and gain the tools necessary to lead healthy, productive lives long after program completion.

Pacific Quest's innovative Sustainable Growth Model™ incorporates Whole-Person Wellness, individualized clinical care, Rites of Passage, horticultural therapy, and healthy community living in an outdoor, experiential environment. Each aspect contributes something different that helps adolescents understand their struggles then overcome them by building self-esteem and confidence. By learning resilient and successful short-term transitions as well as tools for long-term success, these diverse and adaptable principles facilitate an empowered sense of self and self-confidence; nurture a healthy relationship with family, community, and work; and – most importantly – develop a sense of purpose.