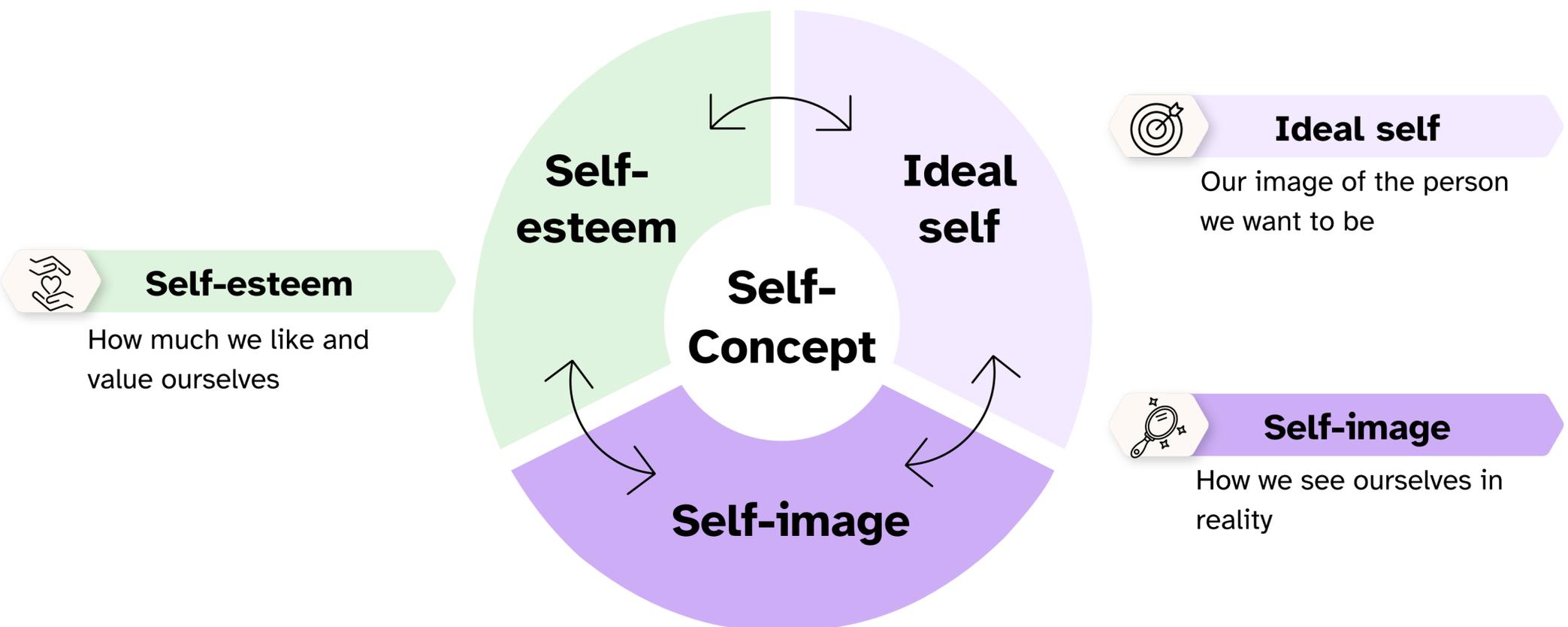# Self-Concept

What is Self-Concept?

- **Self-concept** is the ideas, beliefs, feelings and evaluations we have about ourselves. This includes perceptions of our:

  - **Physical appearance**
  - **Gender identity**
  - **Personality traits**
  - **Personal relationships**
  - **Values**
  - **Skills and abilities**
  - **Societal roles**

- **Self-concept is fluid** and changes as we grow and gain new experiences.

Self-concept is how you would answer the question,

"Who am I?"

Elements of Self-Concept

Self-esteem

Ideal self

Self-Concept

Self-image

Ideal self
Our image of the person we want to be

Self-esteem
How much we like and value ourselves

Self-image
How we see ourselves in reality

Importance of Positive Self-Concept

Motivation

Positive self-concept is associated with greater motivation and higher academic achievement.

Mental health

Positive self-concept is associated with lower rates of anxiety and depression.

Relationships

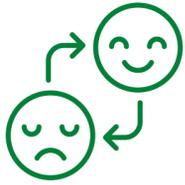Positive self-concept contributes to healthy personal relationships by building confidence and empathy.

Behaviour

Positive self-concept is a protective factor against risky behaviours.

Self-Concept and Substance Use

People with a negative self-concept may use substances to **cope with low mood and anxiety.**

Individuals with a negative self-concept may use substances to try to **fit in with their peers.**

Over time, **substance use can become a part of a person's self-concept**, normalizing ongoing substance use.

Factors Influencing Self-Concept

- Personal experiences
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Family dynamics
- Peer relationships
- Societal and cultural norms
- Personality traits
- Socio-economic status
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Cultural identity
- Neurodiversity
- Mental health

Access the Neurodiversity infographic:
decyde.ca/educational-materials/#tips
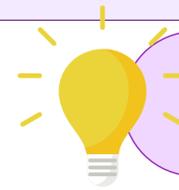
Learn more about ACEs:
decyde.ca/educational-materials/#tips

Self-concept becomes more complex during adolescence, as individuals try to figure out their personal values and identities and how they align with or differ from peer and societal norms.

Developing Positive Self-Concept

- Forming a positive self-concept during school-age years is essential for **healthy development**.
- Students should be encouraged to **explore their self-concept** both in and outside of the classroom.

Tips for Positive Self-Concept

- **Challenge negative thoughts**
- Practice **positive self-talk**
- **Seek out supportive people**
- Set **realistic goals**
- Practice **self-care**

Positive Self-Talk: identifies our strengths and potential while being **realistic** and acknowledging **room for growth.**

"I know I'm going to get 100% on this test!" ❌

"I know I can do great on this test if I study hard!" ✅

Classroom Activities

Journaling: Students write a weekly journal entry, focusing on a recent accomplishment, a personal goal and steps to achieve it, or identifying personal values or strengths.

Strengths-Sharing: In small groups, students take turns listing positive things about each group member, focusing on non-physical characteristics.

Self-Collages: Students compile text and images representing their hobbies, interests, goals, and important people, creating a unique collage, which they add to and update throughout the school year.

To learn more about Self-Care, visit:
decyde.ca/educational-materials/#mental-health

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