

# 4. DON'T LET OTHERS DECIDE YOUR WORTH!

## Coping with social comparison by looking inward



<b>Targeted competency(ies) (ÉKIP, WHO)</b>	SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-ACCEPTANCE
<b>Cross-curricular competencies (QEP)</b>	ACHIEVING THEIR POTENTIAL EXERCISING THEIR CRITICAL JUDGMENT
<b>General workshop objectives</b>	<p>AT THE END OF THE WORKSHOP, THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify some of their own values and qualities</li> <li>• understand the impact of social comparison on self-confidence</li> <li>• use new strategies to get to know themselves better, value themselves, and deal with social comparison</li> </ul>

### Total duration

**60-MINUTE** version, follow all steps

**40-MINUTE** version, DO NOT do the activities marked with the



### Materials and preparation

Print the following worksheets

- *Three wishes* (1 per student)
- *Between me and myself!* (1 per student)

Materials required

- *3-6 balloons*
- *Chalkboard and chalk or interactive digital board (IDB)*

## A. Three wishes... (15 minutes)

1. Give each student the *Three wishes* worksheet.
2. Read the following scenario to the students: "You have the power to make three of your deepest wishes come true. What do you wish for?"
3. Ask everyone to write their three wishes on their worksheet. Ask two or three volunteers to name one of their wishes and write it on the board.
4. Show the class the list of values in the PowerPoint presentation. Ask the students to match the values with the wishes listed on the board.
5. Lead a discussion by asking the following questions:

- **What is a value?**



Values are "our heart's deepest desires for the way we want to interact with and relate to the world, other people, and ourselves. They are leading principles that can guide us and motivate us as we move through life." (Harris, 2009, p. 191).

- **Why is it important to know your values?**



Your values are important because they define who you are as a person. They are the foundation for your actions, the basis for your decisions, and your guidepost on the "best" way to behave (Alloprof, n.d.). They allow you to act in a way that's consistent with who you are. They should be the foundation for your everyday actions and decisions—much more than what other people think, say, or do. They can help you to deal with social comparison.

- **Should your values be the same as other people's? Why?**



Yes... and no! Our values are often rooted in our experiences and the circles we travel in. So, it's possible that you might share some of your values with your peers or your family members, but have different values from your school or society, for example. Our values can also change over time and depending on the situation (Hayes *et al.*, 2012).

6. Finally, ask the students to choose one of their wishes and write down the value or values associated with it (if you have enough time or if some students finish early, you can have them do the same with their other wishes).

## B. Video: Sacha and social comparison - Part 1

## C. Same but different! (20 minutes)

1. Review the social comparison situation that Sacha experienced in the video. Remark that it seems to have affected Sacha's self-confidence. Ask the students how this type of social comparison can negatively affect self-confidence. Take a few answers. As needed, complete with the information in the *Digging deeper* bubble.
2. Show the class a balloon and then blow it up. Ask the class the following questions, inflating or deflating the balloon based on their answers.

- Imagine the balloon I am holding represents self-confidence. What does it mean if I inflate it? What does it mean if I deflate it?



Self-confidence varies. For example, when I'm with friends who I love and feel comfortable with, I feel more confident, I speak my mind, and I feel more relaxed. On the other hand, if I'm standing in front of the class giving an oral presentation and feeling stressed out, I may start to question my ability to succeed.

- What do you think is a "normal" size for the balloon?



The "normal" size of the balloon depends on the initial perception of self-confidence, which is why it can vary significantly from person to person.

3. Ask two volunteers to join you at the front of the class. Give them each a balloon and ask them to wait for your instructions before blowing it up (give clear instructions to avoid over-inflating). Give the following instructions to the whole class.
  - I want you to think how you would rate your self-confidence. Then blow up your balloon accordingly. (The two volunteers can actually inflate their balloons at this point. The other students do not have a balloon. Ask them to represent the size of their balloon with their hands). It's important to keep your balloon the same size for the rest of the exercise.
  - Still without saying anything, take a look around you. What do you see? Did you want to look at the other students' balloons before blowing up your own? Or did you quickly inflate yours before anyone else? How do you feel compared to the others? Take some time to think about it...
  - Now we'll look at how comparisons affect our self-confidence. I'll read you a few scenarios. You'll need to adjust the size of your balloon to reflect your feelings and self-confidence in each situation. For example, your balloon may deflate, inflate some more, or even stay the same, depending on what you're feeling.

### DIGGING DEEPER

#### Self-confidence and social comparison



Self-confidence is believing in one's own potential and abilities. It helps us to make decisions, create relationships, and take action. Self-confidence can be defined as the conviction or degree of certainty that individuals have in their ability to succeed in various situations.

(Vealey, 2001)

For its part, social comparison [...] can create a false view of ourselves or others; this either makes us feel bad or makes others seem inferior. Being aware of how social comparison affects our self-confidence helps to put the comparison into perspective. Self-comparison can sometimes be a good way to measure our progress. We can also take the time to appreciate our strengths and abilities, and work on developing others by trying new experiences.

### TIP FOR FACILITATORS

It's important not to rush the students to come up with an answer; instead, give them time to come to a conclusion on their own. They can close their eyes and maybe even try to notice what's happening inside them as they think about these things. For example, do they notice any specific physical sensations? Are they feeling a particular emotion? If you have enough time, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts.

<b>Scenario 1</b>	<b>KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN</b> You had a very quiet weekend, relaxing at home. When you check your Instagram on Sunday, you see that your friends went into the city on Saturday night and posted pictures of them having a great time. You weren't invited. How does that make you feel? What about your self-confidence? <b>Adjust your balloon.</b>
<b>Scenario 2</b>	<b>CLOSE YOUR EYES AND FOCUS ON YOUR FEELINGS</b> Your teacher announces that you will be working in teams of four students. Four of your friends form a group, and you're left on your own. By the time you start looking around for other classmates to work with, everyone else is already in a group. How does that make you feel? What about your self-confidence? <b>Adjust your balloon.</b>
<b>Scenario 3</b> 	<b>CLOSE YOUR EYES AND FOCUS ON YOUR FEELINGS</b> Your friends are talking about their love lives and sexual encounters. You're not very experienced, and you're actually embarrassed about the whole subject. They ask you how far you've gone. They're all looking at you, waiting for your answer... How does that make you feel? What about your self-confidence? <b>Adjust your balloon.</b>
<b>Scenario 4</b> 	<b>KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN</b> In today's class, you found out how you did on your math test. You studied really hard but only got 73%. The class average is 85%. How does that make you feel? What about your self-confidence? <b>Adjust your balloon.</b>



4. Explain that doing the exercise with their eyes open as opposed to their eyes closed has a different effect on social comparison. Lead a discussion by asking the following questions:
- Did being able to see each other influence what you did with your balloon? Why?
  - How did you feel when you noticed that your balloon didn't look like the others?
  - How important are other people's opinions to you?
  - What do you get from comparing yourself to others? Why compare yourself to others?






As Sacha mentioned in the video, social comparison is a way of figuring out where we fit in socially and defining who we are (by comparing ourselves against others and seeing how our tastes, choices, opinions, and performance measure up). Even though comparing yourself to others can be positive in some situations (by motivating you and pushing you to excel), more often than not, it has the opposite effect on your self-esteem and self-confidence. That's why it's important to pay attention to how comparisons affect you.

## D. Between me and myself! (20 minutes)

1. Give each student the *Between me and myself!* worksheet.
2. Ask the class the first two questions in the PowerPoint presentation. Have the students individually write their answers to the two questions in the space provided on the worksheet. Encourage them to take their time, explore their feelings, and be kind to themselves during this exercise. Depending on how much time you have left, repeat the exercise with the other two questions.

Questions	
• What are some of your good qualities or strengths? Name four.	
• What are some of your faults? Name two.	
• What makes you feel happy or satisfied?	
• What is something that's challenging for you?	

3. Ask the students the following questions, based on the information in the *Digging deeper – Self-knowledge* bubble:
  - What is the point of getting to know yourself better? Can you think of an example where knowing yourself better was important or beneficial?
  - How does knowing yourself better affect your self-confidence? 
  - How do you get to know yourself better? 

4.  Write the strategies named by the students on the board, then end with the following thought.



To get to know yourself better, you need to try new things. Go for it! Allow yourself to make mistakes without judging yourself. Accept that you're not perfect. And try to figure out what's going on inside you, notice how you feel. In this quest to get to know yourself better, try to be patient with yourself. There are no right or wrong answers. They all have value. What's true today may be questionable tomorrow. And that's perfectly normal. Remember that the other teenagers around you are also developing their self-knowledge. So, try to be patient and tolerant with them too (Firestone, Firestone, Catlett and Love, 2002). These tips will help you deal better with social comparison.

## E. Video: Sacha and social comparison - Part 2 and REMINDER: HORS-PISTE challenge

This week, ask the students to be aware of their tendency to compare themselves to others. "Do I do this often? Or only rarely?" Ask them to identify at least one situation in the next few days where they might be tempted to compare themselves to others. Suggest that they ask themselves the following questions: "Why did I feel the need to compare myself to someone else?"; "Did comparing myself to someone else have a positive or a negative effect on me?"; "How did it make me feel?"

Suggest that they become aware of when they are comparing themselves to others and how it makes them feel, and recommend that they apply at least one strategy for getting to know themselves better, improving their self-esteem, and dealing with social comparison.

### DIGGING DEEPER

#### Self-knowledge

Self-knowledge is an understanding of one's own nature, abilities, and limitations (Vazire and Wilson, 2012). It includes "intuition, an awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, the discovery and enrichment of one's talents, an awareness of one's limits, and an understanding of one's personal expectations" (Pruneau, Kerry, Langis and Léger. 2013, p.9). Self-knowledge has several uses. For example, it allows us to make informed decisions based on our strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations (e.g., deciding which college program to register for). Self-knowledge also helps us to better understand our reactions to events (e.g., a conflict) (Martinot, 2001).



Printable worksheet  
*Three wishes*

1

---

---

---

---

My value:

2

---

---

---

---

My value:

3

---

---

---

---

My value:



Printable worksheet  
*Between me and myself!*

**My four good qualities**

1	3
2	4

**My two faults**

1	2
---	---



What makes me feel happy or satisfied:

---

---

---

---

---

---

What I'd like to be able to do:

---

---

---

---

---