

Self-Identity & Sex Role Development

Overview

The question "who am I " is asked continually throughout our lifetimes. Self-identity is a process which begins in infancy. The child gradually comes to see him or herself as a separate person who has certain characteristics which are or are not valued by the family, culture, and society. If the child feels valued and loved, a high or positive self-esteem will result.

Children incorporate into their sense of self their gender identity. Depending on societal and familial expectations children learn what is considered appropriate behavior for boys and girls.

Parents socialize their sons and daughters into typical or non-typical sex role behaviors by modeling the roles and reinforcing the desired behaviors.

Questions To Consider

1. What factors constitute self-identity?
2. What is meant by cultural identity?
3. How do children learn who they are?
4. In what ways do family and society influence the child's developing self-esteem?
5. In what ways do parents encourage less stereotypical behaviors in boys and girls?
6. How do children learn the behaviors which their family and society consider appropriate for boys or girls?

Vocabulary

Read these terms with their definitions before viewing the program.

Attachment An affectional tie between two people with a consistent desire for contact and closeness.

Cultural identity Knowing one's roots, recognizing and accepting group name.

Gender identity The knowledge that one is a boy or a girl.

Personal power The child has a sense that he or she can make things happen.

Reinforcement The process whereby a particular behavior is rewarded, thus ensuring its repetition.

Self-esteem A person's evaluation of his or her own qualities that becomes a global judgment of self-worth.

Self-identity A person's sense of him or herself as a separate person, with particular characteristics.

Instructional Objectives

When you have successfully completed this module, you will be able to:

1. Define self-identity and cultural identity.
2. Discuss the development of self-identity from birth through the school-age years.
3. Discuss the influences on self-esteem during the childhood years.
4. Describe sex role behavior seen in play.
5. Identify familial and societal influences on sex role concepts and behavior.

Self-Test

After studying the objectives and watching the video take the self-test to check your progress.

Select the phrase which best completes the following statements.

1. Self-identity refers to:

- a. a person's sense of her or himself.
- b. how one identifies oneself as male or female.
- c. how one characterizes him or herself socially or ethnically.
- d. all of the above.

2. Recognizing one's roots and accepting the group name is known as:

- a. gender identity
- b. cultural identity
- c. self-esteem
- d. all of the above

3. Place in order the following descriptions of the development of self-identity:

- ___ a. the child knows own strengths and weaknesses
- ___ b. the child defines the boundaries between self and rest of world.
- ___ c. the child sees self as a separate individual.
- ___ d. the child observes self as a member of a particular racial and ethnic group

4. Using the words in list below, fill in the blanks to complete the statement.

- a. Children who feel _____ and _____ have high self-esteem.
- b. Success at problem solving _____ self-esteem.
- c. High self-esteem is linked to overall _____, _____, and _____.
- d. A sense of personal _____ leads to _____ self-esteem.
- e. Helping children achieve _____ enhances self-esteem.
- f. A good sense of _____ is an important ingredient in developing self-esteem.
- g. Children are _____ participants in the development of their sense of self.

achievement	growth patterns
active	high
attachment	loved
behavior	power
boosts	success
valued	

5. Place "true" or "false" next to each statement.

- ___ a. Boys naturally prefer block play while girls play with dolls.
- ___ b. Children engage in stereotypical play if this behavior is modeled or reinforced by the parents.
- ___ c. Teaching new non-sexist terms broadens children's view of the roles of women and men
- ___ d. Observing adults sharing household tasks has no bearing on sex role behavior.
- ___ e. Books and television have little influence on the behavior of girls and boys.
- ___ f. Sex role behaviors are shaped by the ways parents socialize their sons and daughters from infancy.