

Self-esteem and belonging

Profile: Learners with WS, regardless of educational placement, claim to be happy at school, to feel their teacher likes them and to feel they have friends at school. However, as they get older they may feel a sense of difference. With a borderline or mild general learning difficulty there is usually a self-awareness that can be difficult for the learner. She sees her limitations and her challenges, she sees the way others exclude her or tease her. Healthy levels of self-esteem are essential for positive mental health and for the confidence to engage in school activities.

Strategies:

- All pupils should be taught to appreciate difference, to be compassionate and tolerant.
- All pupils should be given strategies for coping with different emotions.
- Celebration of successes, both individual and class, give a sense of belonging.
- Regular collaborative work in the classroom also develops a sense of belonging.
- Issues with peer socialisation should be dealt with expediently.
- Learner anxiety should also be dealt with efficiently.
- Regular use of praise, encouragement and support will help the learner's self-esteem.
- Having work appropriately differentiated will enable the learner to feel a sense of achievement.