

Summary of The Times article 25th January 2014

Teenage girls and self esteem-what parents need to know

Recent research shows that girls, particularly those aged 11-14 are facing unprecedented threats to their confidence, both in the appearance and academic spheres, which is intensified by social media.

Research by the Institute of Child Health

One third of girls aged 13 were upset or distressed about their weight.

1 in 10 showed “intense worry”

Elizabeth Hartley-Brewer

“Girls are more prone to social pressure because they are prone to self doubt anyway.”

Advice to parents

Ban diet talk and the “I am so fat” chat

Limit social media

Spending too much time on social networking sites is linked to low self esteem and depression, 2012 University of Essex study found that the happiest 10 to 15 year olds spent no more than one hour a day on social networking sites and chat apps

Spend time as a family

Avoid them spending endless solitary hours in their bedroom

Try and eat together as a family

Find a sport

Being active gives girls more confidence, raises the spirits and helps build resilience

Avoid over scheduling

Allow them to take responsibility-look after younger children, part time job.

Encourage her to have opinions and express them

Be positive about clothes and homework

Research shows that girls aged 11 to 13 feel most confident when parents are supportive and say positive things

Praise her

Girls tend to think their successes are flukes so daughters benefit from positive encouragement.