

**3.1 Introduction****3.2 Dimensions of Self concept****3.3 Definition****3.4 Self and the Life cycle****3.5 Gender Identity and Gender Role****3.6 Aspects of Self****3.7 Self regulation****3.8 Carl Rogers theory of self****Learning objectives**

This chapter aims at facilitating students to

1. develop an understanding about the concept of Self.
2. understand how does the concept of one's self develop.
3. know the significance of self awareness, self image, self efficacy and self esteem.
4. identify the ways of self regulation.
5. understand Rogers theory of self.

**Activity 1 :**

Complete the following sentences

Who are you?

My favourite activity is...

I am good at....

I would like to be .....

The most important thing about me is .....

I am.....

**3.1 Introduction**

While answering the first activity, we all will be aware of the fact that we all are part of most complicated world. We play many roles as a son, daughter, student, teacher, friend, pal. We could answer these questions in many ways. The sum total of these answers could define our uniqueness. **This is called as self concept.** It includes our thoughts and feelings about ourselves and others, our behavioural patterns, our beliefs, our emotional make-up and so on. Our self concept develops rapidly during early childhood and adolescence, it continues to form and change throughout our life span as we change.

**3.2 Dimensions of self concept**

Your answers to specific questions related to self concept can be unique and different but the overall organization of self concept is common for all. When Rentsch and Heffener (1994) asked 20 questions to 200 university students, they found that there were eight categories by which the participants defined themselves. Some of the categories are concerned with personal attributes, such as interpersonal characteristics ('I am a student' or 'I am the team leader of my class'), interest ('I like psychology', or 'I like dancing'), personal beliefs ('I am against honour killing' or 'I am against child abuse') and self awareness ('I am a good person' or 'I don't get angry without valid reason'). Others referred to our social environment such as ascribed characteristics ('I am a citizen of India') or social differentiation that is how we differ from others ('I am from another country' or 'I am from another part of India'). The point here is that 'who am I?' has many meanings for us.



### Activity 2 :

- (1) Make statements about yourself by using categories of Rentsch and Heffener model.
- (2) Tally these statements with your parents, teachers and friends.
- (3) Find out whether their thinking matches with the statements about yourself.
- (4) If there is discrepancy between their opinion and your self image, would you like to do anything about it?

### 3.3 Definition

The self concept is our total image of us. It is our total picture of our abilities and traits. It is basically cognitive construct which determines how we feel about ourselves and guides our actions (Harter, 1996).

**Self concept is defined as the totality of perceptions each person has of themselves.** OR The totality of complex organized and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence (Purkey, 1988).

According to Symonds (1957) It is the way individual reacts to himself. There are four aspects. (1) How a person perceives himself. (2) what he thinks about himself. (3) How he values himself. (4) How he enhances or defends himself.

### Activity 3 :

- (1) Make a list of your strength and weaknesses.
- (2) Chart a plan about how and where you can use your strengths and how you can overcome your weaknesses.
- (3) If someone criticizes you, how will you react to the situation? Say for example, off hand comment on your dressing sense or your presentation in the class.
- (4) How can you avoid a clash while expressing your opinion about it?

### 3.4 Self and the life cycle

On an average, till the age of six months the child is unaware of himself. As the child grows, he starts making distinction between his own body and everything else. He develops distinction between 'me' and 'what is not me'. Slowly, he realizes that he is different from the rest of the world.

When psychologists conducted a simple experiment of recognizing oneself in mirror with a simple technique of placing a mark which can't be seen without mirror. Then, when the subject faced with mirror they tend to touch the mark on their face. (Gallop, 1977a). In normal children, face recognition with mirror occurs at the average age of one and half years (Lewis and Ramsay, 2004) They are capable of pretend play like they may pretend to feed their baby doll. When they start recognizing themselves they start using personal pronoun like I, me, mine.

By the age of 2, the child becomes aware of general expectations like what is good and bad behaviour. They will smile when others are smiling at them and frown when others are getting angry with them. They are developing a sense of themselves by comparing them with the standard role model. This is beginning of self esteem.

By the age of three, they start recognizing themselves and others as boys or girls. Between the age of 3-12, the self concepts are based on developing talents and skills. Child thinks of himself as what he can do or what he can't do. Such as he can sing, he can draw or he can travel alone. At this age, the self concept is defined mainly in terms of sex, age, family and what child believes he or she can or can't do.



When the schooling starts at the age of 5-6, child begins to compare himself or herself such as 'I am intelligent, smart, faster than others'. This is beginning of social comparison.

Also during this stage, children learn that they can lie and keep secrets. There is hidden side of self which includes thoughts, feelings and desires which parents are unaware of. This development of **private self- concept** is major but often difficult developmental stage in the growth of self concept. It may start out with some imaginary friend, someone only they can hear or see. (Please watch the Hollywood film *Bogus* on YouTube). A child may not share this information with others.

Final unfolding of self concept during adolescence involves **perspective taking** that is, they are able to think and understand other's point of view. This is the main reason why teenagers become self conscious and why they are very cautious about their appearance. They might enter into the stage of **objective self awareness** where they want to become center of attraction and popular. Many adolescents accept group's mannerisms and behaviour patterns for the sake of this need.

### 3.5 Gender identity and gender role

Gender role and gender identity are important aspects of self-concept. 'Gender identity' and 'Gender role' are two different concepts. Gender identity is biological one. It is the perception of oneself as male or female. The sex chromosome determines whether the child will be boy or a girl.

'Gender role' is an acquired attribute which is psycho-social by nature. Gender role is determined by family atmosphere, cultural influences where the child learns through observation and imitation. Sometimes, you may notice a girl behaving assertively by leading the group and by taking firm decisions.

You may say that 'this girl is so masculine' or you may observe a boy who is interested in artistic things or nursing, cooking, caring etc. Here, people may give loose comments like 'the boy is so girly' which may make the person very uncomfortable. Remember, there is nothing wrong if a man takes up feminine role or woman behaves in a masculine way. You may notice that some men like Pt. Birjoo Maharaj, Sanjeev Kapoor or Vikram Gaikwad are famous in female dominated areas. Or females like Phogat sisters, Kalpana Chawla, Kiran Bedi, Avani Chaturvedi (first Indian fighter pilot) are successful in male dominated areas. Here, we can conclude that gender based roles are diluting now. Society is approving and accepting these changes with open mind which is reflecting in advertisements also like a father is getting his daughter ready for the school or a man is doing dish washing at home.

Now let us discuss some more concepts which are related to self concept....

### 3.6 Aspects of Self

There are four major aspects of self. They are self awareness, self image, self efficacy and self esteem.

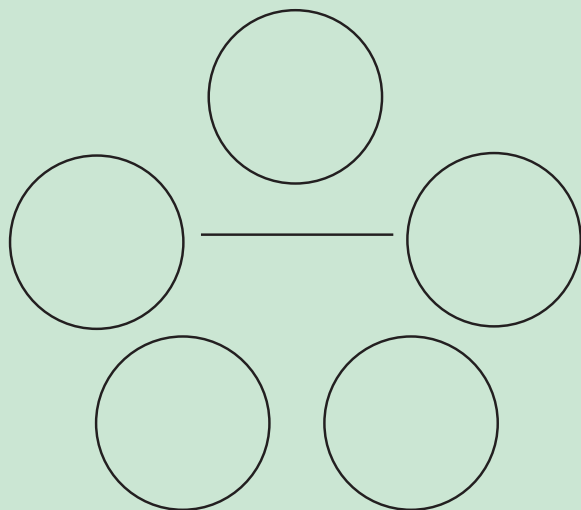
#### (A) Self Awareness :

This is a component of self concept. It is the quality or trait that involves conscious awareness of one's thoughts, feelings, behaviours and traits. (Cherry, 2018A). To have proper self concept, one must have some level of self awareness. It is the understanding that a person has separate identity from others. According to Piaget, self consciousness starts emerging between 15-24 months. Self awareness is necessary before the child becomes aware of being a focus of attention so that he can understand what others are feeling. Because on this basis they can differentiate between something that belongs to them and something that belongs to others.



#### Activity 4 :

Place your name in the centre. Choose five different aspects of your identity and write each of them in the identity circles provided.



**Fig. 3.1 Self Awareness**

Make a list of 5 strengths and 5 weaknesses of yours. Discuss how can you convert your weaknesses into strengths.

#### (B) Self Image :

Self image is a personal view or mental picture that we have of ourselves. Self image is an internal dictionary that describes an individual including things such as intelligent, beautiful, ugly, talented, selfish or kind. It is a collection of assets (strengths) and liabilities (weaknesses) of an individual.

Self image is dynamic and changing. We can develop healthier and accurate view of ourselves. A healthy self image starts with learning to accept and love ourselves. It will also include being accepted and loved by others.

**Table no. 1**

#### Specific steps to develop a positive self-image

- Make a list of your positive qualities.
- Ask your parents, friends to describe your positive qualities.
- Define personal goals and objectives that are achievable.
- Try to overcome illogical, irrational thinking.
- Avoid comparing yourself to others.
- Develop your strengths.
- Learn to love yourself.
- Give positive affirmations.
- Remember that you are unique.
- Remember how you have dealt with problems of your life.



**Fig. 3.1 Self Image**



Body image is a part of self-image. Our body image includes more than what we look like or how others see us. It also refers to how do we think, feel, and react to our physical attributes. For example, a normal girl till the age of 25, Anagha Modak, became visually challenged after attack of dengue, is now successful compere in Marathi who is positively and confidently helping others to look at life more positively.

Body image development is affected by cultural images and the influence of family, peers, and others. A positive body image contributes to enhanced psychological adjustment (less depression, positive self-worth, life satisfaction, less interpersonal anxiety, fewer eating disorders). Distortions in our thinking contribute to a negative body image which will lead to maladjustment.

### (B) Self Efficacy :

Self efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to accomplish some specific goal or a task. It depends on his trust in his own competency. Competence can vary from one situation to another. Say for example, a teenager's self efficacy may be high in Psychology but his self efficacy may be low in mathematics. Maddux (2002) defined it as 'what I believe I can do with my skills under certain conditions'. There are two factors related to it, one is **Outcome expectancies** means the skills required to complete the goal and **efficacy expectancies** is person's analysis about whether he has those capacities. Self efficacy is based on Social cognitive theory holds that humans actively shape their lives rather than passively reacting to environment (Barone, Maddux and Snyder, 1997).

**Table no. 2**

### **Characteristics of self efficacy**

#### **Characteristics of high self efficacy**

- Self confidence
- Accurate self evaluation
- Willingness to take risks
- Sense of accomplishment

#### **Characteristics of low self efficacy**

- Fear of risks
- Fear of uncertainty
- Fear of failure
- Impression management

#### **How self efficacy can be improved?**

- Develop skills
- Accept role model and follow him/her regarding that particular activity.
- Ask others to give specific and constructive feedback
- Reinforce yourself.
- Use verbal persuasion by a counsellor
- Learn various techniques to control your arousal which is lowering your performance for example : meditation, mindfulness, biofeedback, hypnosis, relaxation.

#### **Activity 5 :**

Refer to Table no. 2 and evaluate yourself on characteristics of high self efficacy and low self efficacy . In a group of friends, think and discuss about various ways of improving self efficacy. Make a note of it and share it on college notice board.





More recently, Chen et al. (2001) have developed an 8 - item New General Self-Efficacy Scale.

**Table no. 3**

Using 5 - point rating scale, show how much you agree with the following statements:

- 1 = strongly disagree;
  - 2 = disagree;
  - 3 = neither agree nor disagree;
  - 4 = agree;
  - 5 = strongly agree.
1. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I set for myself.
  2. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.
  3. In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.
  4. I believe I can succeed at most any endeavour to which I set my mind.
  5. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.
  6. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.
  7. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.
  8. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.

Key for interpretation- 40- 32 means high on self efficacy, 31-24 is average on self efficacy and below 24 is low on self efficacy .

#### **(D) Self – esteem :**

Self esteem is general evaluation of an individual along a dimension. For example, good-bad or like – dislike. According to Seligman, self esteem is ‘your overall evaluation of your worth as a person, high or low, based on all positive and negative self perceptions’. Self esteem is respect one has for himself. An individual may have various levels of self esteem like a girl may have high self esteem about her intelligence but she may have low self esteem while talking to the strangers . (we have discussed this topic into detail in chapter number 5).

**Table no. 4**

#### **Characteristics of self esteem**

##### **Characteristics of high self esteem**

- Responsibility
- Goal commitment
- Genuineness and forgiving
- Internal values
- Positivity
- Self improvement

##### **Characteristics of low self esteem**

- Feeling of unhappiness
- Feeling of anxiety
- Feeling of superiority or inferiority
- Impatience with self or others
- Externally oriented goals
- Negativity

##### **How self esteem can be improved?**

- Eliminate negative self talk
- Recognize your strengths
- Recognize self worth
- Accept mistakes
- Accept rejection



### Activity 6 :

Refer to table number 4 and evaluate yourself on characteristics of high self esteem and low self esteem. Discuss with your friends about how you can raise your self esteem. How you can improve yourself. How you can cut down the qualities related to low self esteem. Narrate in a write up.

After discussing various aspects of self, now you must be wondering how we can regulate ourselves. Let us discuss...

### 3.7 Self Regulation

Is being able to control our thoughts, feelings and actions for our benefit. Here we are behaving according to social norms. We must take care that our behaviour should not disturb our college atmosphere, and our relationship with others. When you regulate yourself, you will not react impulsively or you will stop or control yourself from immediate satisfaction of desire.

Self regulation involves monitoring our actions and reactions because we can predict or imagine the consequences. It also involves focusing on certain parts of life and ignoring some other part for some time. For example As your exams are nearing, you will stop spending time with your friends and focus on your studies. Higgins, (1996) research on regulatory focus shows that people either have promotion regulatory focus or prevention regulatory focus. People either focus on achieving positive outcomes or they don't do anything in order to prevent negative outcome. People from East Asian culture tend to focus on preventive form of self regulation, attempting to avoid negative reactions from others (Hamamura and Heine, 2008) That may mean that we all study because we don't want scolding and taunts from our parents, relatives and friends.

Self regulation has crucial implication in our life and our brains are evolved that way. Heatherton (2011) identifies important psychological components that helps us to stay socially connected. First, we must be aware of our actions and at least be able to evaluate it. Secondly, we must be able to predict other's reaction to it. Here, we are aware of what others will think, this capacity develops during childhood. Third, we must detect any kind of threat or rejection from others. Finally, we must do something constructive to improve the situation. Such as establishing good relations with others. Here we have control over our actions, control over acting on our impulse and even avoid nasty thoughts, which is not at all easy.

### Activity 7 :

Based on Heatherton model, narrate a situation of your life where you have gone through all these situations and how you could handle the situation. If you were unsuccessful in handling the situation, how you will improve next time?

To understand the concept of self better, let us discuss at least one theory like

### 3.8 Carl Rogers theory of self

According to Rogers, every individual has tendency to actualize himself. According to Rogers, mentally healthy individuals have congruence between their experience and their self concept. Neurotic individuals deny awareness of their sensory and emotional experience. For example, if a mentally healthy student is facing failure in exams, he will find out the reasons and will try to overcome his weakness. But those who deny this experience and are incongruent with it, may accept escapist attitude, may give false excuses and will not accept his failure and blame others for it.



There are two important concepts related to this :

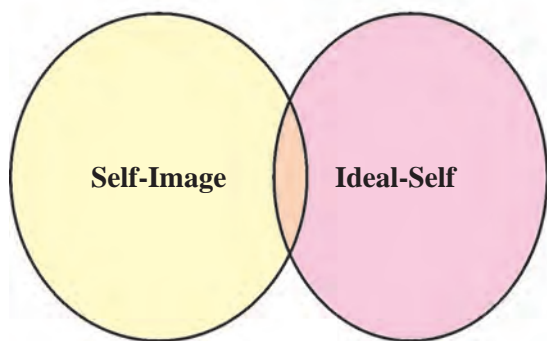
**Real self (self image)** is what we actually are. It is very important for good psychological health. A teenager may perceive himself as beautiful or ugly, good or bad person. Self image directly affects how a person feels, thinks and acts in this world. Real self has tendency to actualize himself, organismic valuing needs and receives positive regard and self regard. Real self is our inner personality. It may not be perfect but it is our real part (Grice, 2007).

**Ideal self** is what we want to be. For example, a girl may want to be a dancer or a boy may want to be a cricketer. It represents our dynamic ambitions and goals. By Ideal self, Rogers meant some goals which are beyond our reach. This may result in the gap between real self and ideal self.

If ideal self and real self are similar, our self concept is accurate. High congruence between real self and ideal self leads to greater sense of self worth and a healthy productive life. When there is large gap or incongruence between them, it leads to maladjustment.

When we try to achieve our full potential. we strive to be **fully functioning individuals**. These people are self actualized . Self actualization means people recognize and explore their own potential. They are well balanced, well adjusted and interesting to know (McLeod, 2007). For (Rogers, 1959) a person who has high self worth can cope with challenges of life, tolerate failure and sadness at times and is open to people. An individual with low self worth may avoid challenges, can't tolerate troubles and distress. Now ask yourself, how you will prefer to see yourself? If you plan to develop proper self concept, use the information given in this chapter and develop your appropriate self concept.

**Incongruent**

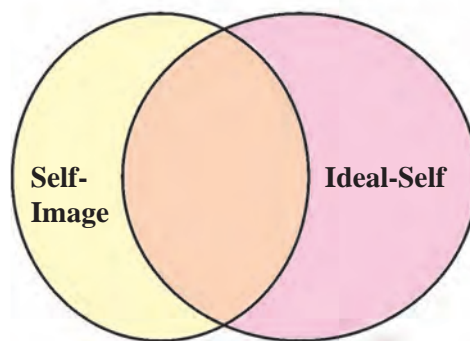


**The self-image is different to the ideal self.**

**There is only a little overlap.**

**Here self-actualisation will be difficult.**

**Congruent**



**The self-image is similar to the ideal self.**

**There is a more overlap.**

**This person can self-actualize.**





### Summary :

- Self concept is defined as the totality of perceptions each person has of himself. It is how a person perceives, thinks and values himself and how he enhances or defends himself. It begins to form as an infant starts distinguishing his body from the rest of everything he sees. Gradually, he continues to identify his gender, his talents and abilities in childhood. The child also learns to hide certain things about himself. This hidden side of self which includes thoughts, feelings and desires of which others are unaware. This is his private self- concept. During adolescence they are able to think and understand other's point of view. They enter into the stage of objective self awareness.
- Self awareness is the quality or trait that involves conscious awareness of one's thoughts, feelings, behaviours and traits.
- Self image is a personal view or mental picture that we have of ourselves. Self image is an internal dictionary that describes an individual including things such as intelligent, beautiful, ugly, talented selfish and kind. It is collection of the strengths and weaknesses of an individual.
- Self efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to accomplish some specific goal or a task. It depends on his trust in his own competency.
- Self esteem is an overall evaluation of one's own worth as a person, high or low, based on all positive and negative self perceptions.
- Self-regulation is being able to control our thoughts, feelings and actions according to the social norms.
- According to Rogers, every individual has tendency to actualize himself. Mentally healthy individuals have congruence between their experience and their self concept. Real self is what we actually are. It is very important for psychological health. Ideal self is what we want to be. High congruence between real self and ideal self leads to greater sense of self worth and a healthy life. Lack of congruence between the real and the ideal self leads to maladjustment.

### Key Terms :

- Self Concept
- Ideal Self
- Real Self
- Self Actualization
- Self Esteem
- Self Efficacy
- Self Awareness
- Self Image
- Self Regulation

### Key Psychologists :

#### Carl Rogers (1902- 1987)

Carl Rogers (1902-1987) was an American psychologist who took the humanistic approach to psychotherapy which was nondirective and client centered. According to Rogers, every individual has tendency to actualize himself. According to Rogers, mentally healthy individuals have congruence between their experience and their self concept. Self image directly affects how a person feels, thinks and acts in this world. Real self has tendency to actualize himself, organismic valuing needs and receives positive regard and self regard



## Exercise

### Q. 1. (A) Complete the following statements

1. The Self concept begins to form when .....  
*a. a one and half year old child recognizes her image in the mirror.*  
*b. an infant is able to distinguish his body from the rest in his surrounding.*  
*c. a child recognizes his/herself as a boy or a girl*
2. According to Carl Rogers, every individual strives for .....  
*a. Achievement*  
*b. Self actualization*  
*c. Status in society*
3. Self esteem is a sense of self worth that depends upon .....  
*a. Actual performance of an individual*  
*b. Self perception of one's own performance*  
*c. Other people's perception of one's performance*
4. Ability to monitor our actions and feelings, is called .....  
*a. Self regulation*  
*b. Self awareness*  
*c. Self efficacy.*

### (B) State whether the following statements are True or False and give reason for your answer.

1. Congruence between the Real self and Ideal Self is an indicator of good mental health.
2. Namrata aspires to become a pilot but she should not be encouraged because one must choose a profession appropriate to their gender.
3. People with a high self esteem are not necessarily the ones who are always successful.
4. Accepting mistakes helps improving self esteem.
5. Self awareness is a necessary attribute to have a healthy self concept.

### (C) Identify the odd item from the following:

1. Goal-orientation, Internal values, Feeling of superiority, Positivity
2. Fear of risks, Fear of uncertainty, Self confidence, Impression management
3. Self indulgence, Self awareness, Self efficacy, Self esteem



**(D) Match the following pairs.**

A	B
1. Rentsch and Heffener model	a) A sense of self worth
2. Carl Rogers	b) Monitoring one's own actions
3. Congruence between ideal and real self	c) Confidence in one's own abilities to complete a task
4. Self esteem	d) Categories of self concept
5. Self regulation	e) Fully functioning person
6. Self efficacy	f) Good mental health

**Q. 2. Answer the following questions in around 35-40 words each.**

1. How do we develop a concept of our 'self' as we grow?
2. Explain the sex-identity and sex-role as a part of the self concept.
3. What are the ways in which we can achieve congruence between the Ideal self and the Real self?
4. Why is the congruence between the ideal self and the real self is very significant to enjoy psychological wellbeing?
5. What is meant by self esteem?
6. Describe the characteristics of individuals with high self esteem.
7. What are the ways to improve one's self esteem? Give example.
8. What are the characteristics of individuals with self efficacy? Give examples.
9. What is self image?
10. What are the ways to regulate Self? Give examples

**Q. 3. Compare and contrast**

1. Ideal self -- Real Self
2. Private Self -- Objective Self Awareness
3. People with High Self-esteem -- People with low Self esteem

**Q. 4. How will you deal with the following situations if it were you in those situations**

- a) Grishma thinks she is extremely good-looking; which is not true in reality; she aspires to become a star model.
- b) Harshad is avoiding places where he has to meet many people as he wears spectacles and he has got lot of pimples.
- c) Sushma is too short so she does not mix with others.

**Q. 5. Write short notes in 50-60 words each.**

1. Gender role
2. Carl Rogers' theory of Self
3. Self Efficacy
4. Self Awareness
5. Self Esteem
6. Self Regulation

**Q. 6. Answer the following questions in 150-200 words.**

1. Give a detailed account of development of an individual's Self concept through the stages of life.
2. Explain the theory of Self as proposed by Carl Rogers.

