Improving Self-Esteem

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Osteoporosis and Low Self-Esteem

Many people with osteoporosis become more self-conscious about the way they look. They may feel as though their quality of life has been impacted, do not like their posture, how their body has changed and how their clothes fit. They think that they have aged prematurely and are more fearful of being judged in public. This negative outlook leads to worsening self-esteem and, if left untreated, to depression.

Rather than wait until depression and becomes an issue for you, address your self-esteem. Productive self-esteem treatment for osteoporosis targets two areas: how you look and how you feel about how you look.

Getting a New Look

You know that you feel better when you look better. Here's how to improve your look:

- **Clothes** – Often, people with osteoporosis make the mistake of wearing their old clothes as the disease progresses. This is like wearing maternity clothes when you are not pregnant. Purge the contents of your closet and find new items. Be sure to try on new styles while maintaining your objectivity. These clothes are going to look different on you and that's okay. With or without osteoporosis, the goal of fashion is to accentuate the positives. Take a trusted friend on your shopping trips to provide honest feedback.
- **Accessories** – Using new accessories to coordinate with your new clothes can grab the attention of others and provide a focal point. Experiment with a variety of scarves by twisting, tying and folding to increase your confidence. A new pair of earrings will highlight your face. Try a backpack style purse. Shoulder bags can disrupt your balance.
- **Shoes** – Having practical expectations about your shoes is necessary. You do not have to sacrifice fashion for function, though. Take your time and be patient with yourself to help ensure that you find footwear that is as stylish as it is comfortable.
- **Undergarments** – It's what's on the inside that counts. Finding supportive and comfortable bras and shapers may require a personal fitting but the benefits outweigh the time and frustrations.

Getting Comfortable with You

While you are looking better on the outside, you can improve the way you look at yourself. Here's how:

- **Find acceptance** – Any chronic medical condition requires some level of grieving the "old you". Don't avoid or deny the changes. Stand in front of mirror to notice the changes to your body. You will find, with some exposure, the changes are not as drastic as you thought they were.

- **Find positives** – Some parts of you have changed but this happens to anyone as they age. Focus on the positives that are still present. Find ways to appreciate your eyes, your smile or the birthmark on your knee. There are surely many positives left to value.

- **Look deeper** – What would you tell your daughter or granddaughter if she did not like the way she looked? Sometimes you may need to remind yourself that how you look is not the basis for the person you are. Search for the parts of your personality and character that you honor. What do others like about you? These are good ideas to remember.

Conclusion

With osteoporosis, you do not have control of many things. Spend your time and resources working to find balance in improving your appearance and your confidence; doing both will work better than either will alone. You will fend off depression and low self-esteem and improve your mood at the same time.