

Teacher's Guide

Supporting the wellbeing of primary school children

Positive self-talk



Positive self-talk can help students face their fears, build self-confidence and can be used every day to help a student achieve emotionally, socially and academically.

Discuss with the student what their thoughts were in a situation. Help them identify which were helpful and which were unhelpful thoughts. Then discuss the emotions and physical sensations that they experienced. Investigate how true the unhelpful thoughts are, plan alternate helpful thoughts to use whenever the unhelpful thoughts are experienced.

As students become aware of their unhelpful thoughts and associated changes in their bodies they are then able to self-regulate, relax and utilising helpful thoughts.

Examples are:

- 'I am hopeless, I'll never be able to tie my laces.' Can be reframed as;
- 'Each time I practice tying my laces I get better at it'.
- 'I can try, if I try and am still having trouble, I can ask for help.'

Listen, Challenge, Change

A process for encouraging positive self-talk with a student:

1. Listen to what you are saying about a situation or yourself. Notice what your inner voice is saying, is it positive?
2. Challenge your inner voice. Is the inner voice correct? Is there anything you can do to change the situation?
3. Change your inner voice. Students can develop their own positive mantra to use when not feeling confident and in control.

Developing your personal mantra

Instead of generating one positive message for each different situation, it can be helpful to come up with one thought that the student can always turn to. Students can be asked to listen to positive statement and repeat phrases they identify with, or come up with their own.

Remind students that the more they say the phrases, the easier it will be to remember the positive message when they need it.

The positive statement can be written somewhere that the student can access easily. It can be a visual reminder, a song or a role model and does not necessarily have to use words.

- Be brave.
- I can do it.
- I am strong and capable.
- I am in control of myself and my thoughts and choices.
- I am allowed to be me, without apology, guilt or shame.
- I am proud of myself, and my accomplishments, no matter how small.
- I am calm, positive, confident and self-assured.
- I am confident, and I am getting stronger every day.
- I am okay and doing well, I am healthy and strong.
- I can try new things, and ask for help if I need to.

If the behaviour persists despite trying a number of interventions, discuss the student's situation with a supervisor or member of the learning and wellbeing support staff at your school.

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/school-link-teachers-guide>