

Positive self-talk

Teachers' notes

Outcome

Apply positive self-talk as a means of developing self-confidence.

Rationale

An important strategy for success is to develop an understanding of the way that our attitudes and thoughts influence – for better or worse – our feelings and behaviour.

When students learn to recognise the negative and irrational attitudes that lead to self-defeating behaviours, they can change them to more positive and rational attitudes through positive self-talk.

By thinking about and challenging the messages that they are giving themselves and substituting positive messages for those that are negative, students can develop the self-confidence to overcome obstacles to success.

Task description

Some examples of positive self-talk:

'I can do it.'

'I'm good enough.'

'If I want to, I can.'

'It doesn't matter if I make a mistake.'

'I can make it happen.'

'If I try hard, I'll get there.'

1. Teacher briefly introduces the meaning of self-confidence to the class.
2. In small groups, students brainstorm a range of skills and activities that require confidence and an acceptance of mistakes before success (playing an instrument, bike riding, skate boarding) on butchers' paper. Each group then posts its list on the wall for a whole-class discussion.
3. Teacher facilitates a brief, whole-class discussion on each group's list, and links the skills listed with academic achievements.
4. Teacher facilitates a whole-class discussion on the notion of positive self-talk, explaining the difference between positive and negative self-talk and the effects of each.
5. Students individually complete the 'Making it happen' worksheet.

6. In small groups, students complete the 'Nothing ventured, nothing gained' worksheet. Students should discuss the importance of taking risks and being prepared to make mistakes.
7. Using the 'Being a "Yes" person' sheets, the teacher facilitates a whole-class discussion of the meanings and key concepts of a person's 'inner' and 'outer' worlds.
8. In pairs, students work out from their response on the 'Being a "Yes" person' sheet whether they are 'Yes', 'No', or 'I don't know' type people.

Extension activities

- Update dictionary of terms in portfolio.
- Group students according to the 'type' of person they are, i.e. a 'yes', a 'no' or a 'don't know' person.
- A problem-solving activity may be used to highlight the differences between the groups. A discussion may follow, explaining the importance of different 'types' in work groups.
 - Students may keep a diary for a week, noting the times they say ' yes', 'no' or 'I don't know' to situations. They should also note what each situation was. Students should note a minimum number of situations, for example two per day.

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Worksheet 1: Making it happen

A little voice in our head gives us messages. Sometimes the messages say that we are clever and doing well. At other times they say that we are 'stupid' or that we can't do anything.

Write down how you feel when the messages are negative as well as how you feel when they are positive. The first has been done as an example.

You can also add some other situations to the list.

Situation	Negative self-talk	Positive self-talk
Example: Speaking to someone new	I'm dull. They won't want to talk to me.	I'm interesting. Maybe I'll make a new friend.
Feelings	<i>Frightened</i>	<i>Excited</i>
1. Trying a new	I'll make a mistake.	The more I try the

Situation	Negative self-talk	Positive self-talk
problem		better I'll get.
Feelings		
2. Giving a talk to the class	They'll laugh and tease me.	I can do it.
Feelings		
3. Asking if you can join a game	They don't like me.	This will be fun.
Feelings		
4. Asking to borrow something special	They'll say no.	They'll say yes.
Feelings		
5. Giving an opinion	They'll all laugh.	They'll think I'm smart.
Feelings		
6. Making a speech	I'll make a fool of myself.	I'll do a pretty good job.
Feelings		

Other situations

Situation	Negative self-talk	Positive self-talk
7.		
Feelings		
8.		
Feelings		
9.		

Feelings		
10.		
Feelings		
11.		
Feelings		

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Worksheet 2: Nothing ventured, nothing gained

Some people don't try new things because they're scared.

1. What would be the worst thing that could happen if you didn't do as well as you would like at:

Learning pottery? _____

Reading aloud? _____

Surfing? _____

Trying a new hairstyle? _____

Introducing yourself to someone new? _____

Learning the piano? _____

2. List some additional activities you could try and give the worst and best things that could happen.

I should try	The worst that could	The best that could
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	happen	happen

3. The messages we give ourselves are called 'self-talk'. Give four examples of negative self-talk that could make you feel frightened of trying something new.

a _____

b _____

c _____

d _____

4. Now give the positive self-talk that should replace these negative messages.

a _____

b

c

d

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Worksheet 3: The inner voice

- Being a positive learner is about the language you use when you talk to yourself.
- We have three internal voices – the YES voice, the NO voice, and the I DON'T KNOW voice.
- As a human being, you have an inner world and an outer world.
- Your inner world is made up from your thoughts and your feelings (plus a lot of physical things, like your spinal cord, heart, intestines, lungs, etc).
- Your outer world is made up of the other things – other people, buildings, circumstances, family, the weather, your outer environment.
- Within your inner world there is a voice – this is your Inner Voice of thought.
- Our Inner Voices talk to us in certain ways. Sometimes they talk to us in a YES voice, sometimes in a NO voice and sometimes in an I DON'T KNOW voice.
- The great news for learning and living is that we can program our Inner Voice and become the voice and the person we wish to be. What we say with our Inner Voice will show up as 'living' to the Outer World people.

- This is great news, because it means our Inner Voice is powerful.
- It means you are powerful.
- The more you choose to program a YES voice, the more powerful you will be!

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Worksheet 4: Being a 'Yes' person

What makes a 'Yes' person?

Yes	No	I don't know
I've got this task to do: YES I'll give it my best shot!	No, I can't do it!	I don't know.
I will be able to do this.	This is silly, this is stupid.	I'm not sure
There is a solution and I'll find it.	I can't do this: it's too hard.	I think I'll try!
I'll do it now!	I'll do it tomorrow (next week).	I could do it tomorrow.
Sounds good, I'll give it a go.	I'm hopeless. This is impossible: I'm not even going to try!	I don't know about that. Maybe I'll wait and see.
I can do it, it may take time and effort but I can do it!	I'm dumb.	I could but I've got a cold.
Yes, I made that mistake and I can learn from the experience.	It's not my fault, don't blame me (it is their fault ... teachers, parents, boss).	Don't ask me!
That person has some really good points.	I don't like that person.	I'm not sure. I'll wait to see how they match up.
I'm good at ... (maths, reading).	I'm hopeless at ...	I'm not really good at anything.
I am a learner.	They'll laugh at me.	I'm tired.

I am good value.	I'm no good.	I am not sure of myself.
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So, what makes a YES person?

- YES people have a YES physiology. A YES body language is confident and happy.
- A YES face is open and smiles a lot.
- YES people look for possibilities and not restrictions.
- YES people see problems as learning and seek solutions rather than being stuck in the problem.
- YES people celebrate themselves and others.
- YES people program their Inner Voices for YES living.
- YES people communicate clearly and openly.
- YES people stretch their thinking and train their brains

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