

CONFIDENCE: POSITIVITY

Inner Voice and Personal Affirmations

Our inner voice is what we say to ourselves in our heads – these can be negative e.g. “you’re so stupid” or positive e.g. “you can do this!” It’s important that we learn to control our inner voice so that it works for us and not against us. If you think positively then it can help you to grow in confidence.

Negative thoughts can drain your energy and make it hard to make the effort to change things. They can also snowball. For example, if you think “I’m not going to get an interview for this job, I’m not qualified enough” you might start feeling negative about yourself and then it’s easy to think “I might as well not bother applying for this job” or “I’ll never get a job”.

Thinking Positively

You can turn this around and think more positively e.g. “I’m not sure I’m qualified enough but I’m going to apply anyway – even if I don’t get an interview, I’ll get some practice at doing a job application.”

This can make you feel more in control and more optimistic. Try to keep your inner voice under control so you don’t get stuck in a spiral of negative thinking. Distract yourself, counter the negative comments with positive ones, make a list of the things you are good at or small achievements that you can remember when your inner voice is being critical. Here are some ideas to quieten that negative inner voice:

- Take a long, slow breath in and out to calm yourself if your negative thoughts are spiralling
- Smile! Even if you don’t feel like smiling, faking one can help you feel a little bit better
- Talk to someone about how you’re feeling who you know has a positive outlook, or who is a good listener and will help you work through your feelings
- Change the tone from negative to positive. Try “I can’t do it YET” instead of “I can’t do it”
- Remember no-one is perfect! Allow yourself to make mistakes and move on

Affirmations can be used to encourage positive thinking, helping to increase confidence and self-esteem. You can say them to yourself each day to promote positive thinking, and to help remember them you can also write them down. They can take the form of aspirational messages, messages to yourself or even reminders of what makes you feel special, for example, “I am brave enough to be me”. Ask the young people to write down an affirmation on their own on the MY AFFIRMATION handout.

Self-Care

It’s important to look after yourself mentally, physically, and emotionally. Here are some ideas:

- Eat regularly and try to include fruit and vegetables in your diet if you can
- Do some exercise, even a short walk around the block can give you more energy and help to clear your head if your thoughts are buzzing
- Unplug from your phone, laptop, or social media for a while to give yourself a mental break
- Listen to a favourite song, watch a favourite programme, read a favourite magazine
- Find something to make you laugh
- Have a 10-20 minute nap
- Do something nice for someone else – it’ll make you both feel more positive