

REFRESHING RECESS EXPANSION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER #7:

Positive Thinking

● Positive Thinking

“Positive thinking” refers to maintaining a positive outlook on life and *seeing the glass as half full*. An optimistic mindset can be key to effective stress management. In fact, some studies have shown that personality traits such as optimism and pessimism can have an effect on overall health and well-being. Adults can help facilitate positive thinking among children by modeling it themselves and squashing any negative self-talk they hear. Self-talk and unspoken thoughts can be positive and constructive. However, children who are observed to demonstrate excessive pessimism and *negative* self-talk may need help practicing positive thinking.

● Identifying Negative Thinking

- **Filtering** – Children who filter out the positive aspects of a situation, magnifying the negative.
Example: they had a great day at school. They completed all of their classroom assignments and got a good grade back on their test. However, at recess they were the first person out in a group game. Now they can only focus on this “failure,” associating it with a horrible day.
- **Personalizing** – Children who automatically blame him/herself when something bad happens.
Example: Their soccer team keeps losing, and they assume it is because they are on the team, and they aren’t any good.
- **Catastrophizing** – Children who automatically assume the worst.
Example: Their friend is busy and cannot play with them today, making them think they will never be able to play with them again.
- **Polarizing** – Children who only see things as good or bad; there is no middle ground.
Example: They associate missing one basket in a game of basketball as a total failure.

CHECK THIS OUT!

- Positive Thinking: Stop negative self-talk to reduce stress:
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950>
- How Your Help Your Students Support One Another:
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct15/vol73/num02/How-You-Help-Your-Students-Support-One-Another.aspx>



● Put Positive Thinking Into Practice

Negative Self-Talk	Positive Thinking
I can't do it - I've never done that before	It's an opportunity to try something new
That's way too hard, I give up	I'll just try it again using a different strategy
There's no way I can get that accomplished	I will try to do as much as I can
That could never actually happen	I'll take a chance; you never know until you try
Nobody every wants to hang out with me	I will ask a different friend if they want to play
I'm never going to get better at this	I will keep trying

● Compliments and Affirmations

A great way to boost someone's confidence and facilitate positive thinking, is through giving compliments and affirmations. Children need praise and encouragement to become more self-motivated. There is a positive correlation between self-motivation and better mental health. As children become more self-motivated they rely less on being rewarded by others in order to feel good about themselves. Compliments and positive affirmations are effective in enhancing self-esteem and self-worth.

It is also important for children to learn how to give each other compliments. In fact, compliments are a powerful social skill that can enhance other communication skills by fostering the flow of conversation and enhancing receptivity. Teaching children how to build each other up and support their peers can create an overall, positive learning environment.



- Counselor Keri. (2019). Partner mindfulness activity: Receive a compliment. Retrieved from <https://www.counselorkeri.com/2019/03/09/mindfulness-group-activity/>
- Educational Leadership. (2015). Tell me about ... How you help your students support one another. *Emotionally Healthy Kids*, 73(2), 91–92. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct15/vol73/num02/How-You-Help-Your-Students-Support-One-Another.aspx>
- Mayo Clinic Staff. (2020). Positive thinking: Stop negative self-talk to reduce stress. Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950>
- Monke, A. (2020). The power of compliments. Retrieved from <https://sunshine-parenting.com/the-power-of-compliments-2/>
- Parenting NI. (n.d.). The importance of praise and encouragement. Retrieved from <http://www.parentingni.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Importance-of-Praise-and-Encouragement-2.pdf>

