

Session #6 Handout: Changing Negative Thoughts to Positive Thoughts

It takes practice to change our negative thoughts into positive ones. Here are some examples of different types of negative thoughts and suggestions on how you can modify them into positive thoughts and realistic goals.

Are any of these thoughts familiar?

| Negative Thought Types | Positive Refocusing |
|--|--|
| Good or Bad –What did I do today? Nothing. I didn’t even walk today. I’ll never get in shape.” | Create a Balance in Your Day –So I slipped up. It’s just ONE day. Tomorrow I will put my shoes by the front door to remind myself to walk.” |
| Excuses –It’s too cold to take a walk today.” –I don’t have the will power or the energy to do this.” | Be Creative- It’s Worth a Try –I will walk at the mall today.” –The sooner I go for a walk, the more energy I will have. It takes effort to change! Get going, Self!” |
| Should –I am sick of handouts and completing my physical activity chart. Why do we do this anyway?” | Take Charge- It’s Your Health! –Completing my activity charts will help me keep track of my physical activity behaviors. This will keep me safe AND help me improve.” |
| Not As Good As –Barry walked five times this week and I only walked three times.” | I Am Not Barry! –This is not a competition. I will progress at a rate that is safe for me and in line with my goals.” |
| Give Up –I cannot keep up with all this. I might as well forget it. I’ll never be an independent exerciser.” | Reach Out to Support System –Whenever I feel like giving up, I will call one of my social support buddies and ask for some help.” |

Session #6 Handout: Talking Back to Negative Thoughts

We're all guilty of negative self-talk. It's hard to avoid when you're feeling down. But saying negative things to yourself won't help you work toward your fitness goals—don't damage your own self-esteem! Here are some strategies for ~~—talking~~ “back” to negative self-talk and converting it into positive, supportive feedback.




Strategies for Talking Back to Negative Thoughts

1. Catch yourself in the act when it comes to negative thoughts. Practice recognizing when you're heading down a negative path and...
2. ...Shout to yourself internally, ~~—STOP!~~” Try to picture a huge red stop sign in your mind. This is a signal to take a step back. Challenge yourself to shut down those thoughts. Only you have control over them and you can change.
3. Reflect on the underlying meaning of the negative thought. Does it relate to a goal that seems out of reach? Let yourself know that it is o.k. if you wavered from the path to good health. Learn from it and move on with positive thoughts instead.
4. Now, talk back to that negative thought using a positive thought that relates to an attainable, realistic goal. Do this as many times as you need. Get in the habit of supporting yourself with positive self-talk. Being your cheerleader and allowing yourself to make mistakes is an important part of the process.

Session #6 In-Class Worksheet: Practice Changing Negative Thoughts to Positive Thoughts

Write down three examples of negative thoughts you have about your fitness goals. Say one of those thoughts in your mind and then say, **“STOP!”**

Now write down a response to that negative thought. Admit that maybe you didn’t reach your goal this time, but add a positive thought about what you will do moving forward to make sure you reach your goals.

| Negative thought related to a goal that seems out of reach | STOP! | Positive thought related to a goal that you can reach |
|--|---|---|
| |  | |
| |  | |
| |  | |

Session # 6 Take-Home Challenge: Increasing Positive Self-Talk

Below the dashed line, write down four positive thoughts or feelings about your commitment to modify your behavior, how physical activity makes you feel, or what you have to gain physically and mentally from this program.

My Positive Thoughts

Cut on the dashed line and put this sheet in your wallet or purse or somewhere you will see it everyday. Look at it when you need a positive reminder about physical activity.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Additional Techniques for Bolstering Positive Thoughts

- Take time to remember your accomplishments and what they mean to you and your health.
- Take 10 minutes at the beginning of each day to think about how you can help yourself maintain your physical activity program. Think about all of the health benefits that you will receive.
- When you are feeling down, take time to think of the things we take for granted, like nature, the laughter of children, or peace. Think about things that bring you happiness or joy and remind yourself that your goals are worth a little struggle.

Session #6 Take-Home Challenge, continued

Before the next session, take some time to answer these questions:

Did you practice *talking back* to your negative thoughts and bolstering your positive thoughts?

YES

NO

What effect did this have on your physical activity behavior throughout the week?

Did you try any of the techniques for bolstering positive thoughts?

YES

NO

**If yes, how did this make you feel about physical activity and exercise.
If no, why not?**
