Positive Self-Talk

In this activity you will consider:

- The importance of self-talk in gaining self-confidence
- The role of self-confidence in career success
- How to use positive self-talk
- How to overcome bad thinking habits

WHY DO I NEED TO USE POSITIVE SELF-TALK?

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

By thinking about and challenging the messages that we give ourselves, and by substituting positive messages for those that are negative, we can develop self-confidence to overcome obstacles to success.

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND CAREER SUCCESS

To be successful in almost every type of career it is essential to be confident about our abilities. This does not mean that we should become arrogant. But it does mean that we need to believe in ourselves.

Work with classmates to consider ways in which self-confidence is important in achieving success in a career. It might help to think of scenarios in a job that you might be interested in doing in the future.
**USING POSITIVE SELF-TALK**

Most of us – including those who would never admit it – doubt our abilities from time to time (and for many of us it is more often than that). We are very good at putting ourselves down.

For each of the following situations, think about the negative self-talk that people often use. Then suggest an alternative, positive self-talk. The first one is given as an example.

In the empty boxes, write down some other situations and do the same for each one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation:</th>
<th>Negative self-talk:</th>
<th>Positive self-talk:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making a presentation</td>
<td>People will think I'm stupid</td>
<td>People will be impressed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving an opinion in class</td>
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<td>Trying something for the first time</td>
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<td>Starting a new job</td>
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Next time you notice that you are using negative self-talk, counteract it with some positive self-talk. The more you practice, the easier it becomes.
WHAT IS THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?
A common form of negative self-talk is to ‘catastrophise’. That means we think of the worst possible outcome for a situation. It can make us afraid of trying anything new. It can make us terrified of things that are really not all that terrifying. As a result we might miss out on great opportunities.

An example is:
“If I give a presentation in class, everyone will think I am stupid, no-one will talk to me ever again, I will fail all my subjects and have to drop out of uni, I will never get a degree, and my life will be a disaster!”

It might sound ridiculous but we all have things that we are terrified of doing and lots of us have these sort of thoughts.

The only way to overcome these thoughts is to confront them with ‘What is the best that could happen?’

In the same example we could think:
“If I give a presentation in class, everyone might be impressed by what I have to say, the lecturer might give me a high grade for this subject, it could lead to new opportunities in the university which will give me the experience I need to get my dream job.”

To practice, write down two things you are afraid of doing, then complete the following two sentences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am afraid to:</th>
<th>The worst that could happen is:</th>
<th>The best that could happen is:</th>
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