

Positive Motivation Skills



SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH-ASSIST
ÉQUIPE D'APPUI POUR LA SANTÉ
MENTALE DANS LES ÉCOLES

FOUR FINGER AFFIRMATION

Purpose	An affirmation is a statement to promote confidence and a growth mindset, self-regulation and resiliency. With practice, this activity can help students to think positively in the face of stress or challenges.
Division	All
Time Required	5-10 minutes
Materials	N/A
Instructions	<p>Provide students with an explanation of affirmations. Have students write or think of a four-word affirmation. Consider brainstorming examples together at first ("I can do this", "I can do division", "I'll try my best", "I am loved today", "I believe in me", "Today will be awesome", "I know my alphabet", "I can decode words" ...).</p> <p>Script: "Each word you have chosen will match a finger in your hand. As you say your affirmation in your head, match each finger with your thumb; one finger per word."</p> <p>Let students know that they can use their Four Finger Affirmation to feel more confident in stressful situations. It can be practiced privately as no one has to know when students are using their affirmation.</p>
Supplementary Resources	Information about class affirmations. http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/affirmations Stories such as: Little Engine that Could and/or stories of professional athletes who use visualizations.
Adaptations	With older students, explain how thoughts are linked to emotions and behaviour. You can acknowledge that it is sometimes difficult to battle negative self-talk and that it takes practices to think more positively.

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Evidence	There is extensive evidence to show the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and actions. Practising using positive thoughts can influence our emotions and behaviours in helpful ways, and can help with reframing negative events and providing a more optimistic outlook (Sherman, et al., 2013; Brandy, et al., 2016).
References	<p>Sherman, D. K., Hartson, K. A., Binning, K. R., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Garcia, J., Taborsky-Barba, S., . . . Cohen, G. L. (2013). Deflecting the trajectory and changing the narrative: How self-affirmation affects academic performance and motivation under identity threat. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 104(4), 591-618.</p> <p>Brady, S. T., Reeves, S. L., Garcia, J., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Cook, J. E., Taborsky-Barba, S., ... & Cohen, G. L. (2016). The psychology of the affirmed learner: Spontaneous self-affirmation in the face of stress. <i>Journal of Educational Psychology</i>, 108(3), 353.</p>