

## POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Self-talk is the stream of unspoken thoughts that run through our heads. These thoughts can be positive or negative. Some self-talk comes from logic and from a clear understanding of what is going on. But other times, **self-talk may be based on a lack of information or a biased or unbalanced perspective.**

When we experience uncomfortable or strong emotions, our self-talk is sometimes negative. "I cannot believe that just happened! How could I be so stupid? What is wrong with me?" Instead of letting negative thoughts run unchecked, we can **take control of the conversation** by looking critically at what we are saying to ourselves. Just like there are things we say or think to ourselves about a situation that can make us feel worse, there are things we can say or think that can help us calm down. **We call these things positive self-talk.**

As an educator, it is important to both model positive self-talk, as well as teach youth how to check their negative thoughts and think more positively. Below are some important points when talking to youth about this skill.

1.

### Try to consider both sides of a situation.

Positive self-talk does not mean that you ignore what is going on around you or ignore how you are feeling. It just means that you approach stressful situations in a more positive and balanced way. Help your students counter a negative thought (e.g., "I do everything wrong") with a more positive and balanced one (e.g., "It is clear you can do this -- you received a B+ on an exam earlier this year."). **Try to find a positive spin somewhere.**

2.

### Stay in the moment.

Stay focused on the present situation, not what has happened in the past or what may happen in the future. **We can't see into the future.**

3.

### Don't wait to laugh about it later.

One day you may look back and find it funny - you might as well make that day **today.**

4.

### Know your triggers.

If you are about to enter what you know will be an uncomfortable situation (e.g., telling a parent about a poor test grade), **plan ahead:** What can you tell yourself beforehand? What can you do or tell yourself during the situation? What about afterward?