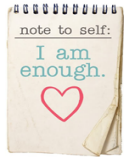




POSITIVE SELF-TALK

I AM SO...

By completing this sentence with a positive attribute, students learn positive self-talk, which, in turn, is paid forward to someone else, "You are so..." with the same positive attribute.



SELF- ACCEPTANCE

OPINION POLL

Getting to know themselves builds self-acceptance with a message related to being true to self and the importance of doing things they like



RELAXATION

5-4-3-2-1
4-3-2-1
3-2-1
2-1
1

FLEX IT & KEEP UP

Discovering new ways to keep ourselves mentally healthy by using our own bodies. Muscle relaxation as well as exercise can have a positive impact to our total wellbeing.



DEEP BREATHING

DANDELION BREATHING

Deep breathing is a fundamental tool for calming anxiety and accompanies almost every other tool students are learning for coping with stress



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

PASS THE RESPECT

Showing our appreciation for others can help us maintain positive relationships. Small gestures of kindness can change someone's life.



CONFIDENCE

POWER STANCES

Building confidence by using our body to release that confidence. Learning about stress chemicals and how we can counteract them by implementing some simple body stances into our regular day.



AWARENESS OF EMOTIONS

BIG RAIN

Emotions can be like a storm that sometimes can get out of control. When this happens, it might be a sign to ask someone for help.



GRATITUDE

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Being grateful has been proven to improve health and overall well-being. Students are asked to name their gratitudes and reminded that this practise can help improve their mood, as well create more positive energy.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND IT...

During the YouthSpeak visit, students hear from youth who share their personal stories about challenges they faced and how they have built resilience and tools to cope; as well impactful messages related to having a voice, building empathy, self-acceptance, courage, respect, healthy relationships, strength & vulnerability, mental health and wellness. They learn two or more of the following tools based in mindfulness with the goal of integrating present-moment awareness into every aspect of daily life.

There is an abundance of research on the positive effects of mindfulness; its' relationship to physical, cognitive and emotional health. Mindfulness is conceptualized as a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging ones thoughts, feelings, and body. Controlled research studies have shown that mindfulness-based interventions can "effectively reduce symptoms in people with recurrent depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse" ("Nine Essential Qualities of Mindfulness," Melanie Greenberg, 2012).

Mindfulness interventions have been shown to promote increased attentional control over our emotional, behavioural, and attentional responses to threat ("Changing Your Brain By Changing Your Mind," Melanie Greenberg, 2011). The coping strategies outlined in this toolkit are forms of mindfulness-based strategies that have shown to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing.

- **Positive Self-Talk** is a great tool for personal growth as well as for overcoming anxiety and depression. It can take the form of affirmations, internal dialogue, or prayer. The beauty of it is that you can choose the method that works best for you. The real trick is to learn to do it on a daily basis. ("Positive self talk for personal growth" Barton Goldsmith, 2015). Research on positive-self-talk in students demonstrates its potential to "change perspectives, attitudes, and reactions in regard to one self, to others and to the circumstances in which we find ourselves." This study shows that we all have the ability to consciously control our thoughts and feed our minds with positive empowering self-talk ("The Impact of Positive Self-Talk," Chopra Komal, 2012)
- **Relaxation** of the muscles helps to alleviate tension through a series of tensing and relaxing muscles throughout the body which helps neutralize stress. Research has demonstrated that deep relaxation can help "shut down the release of stress chemicals into the bloodstream simply by counteracting some of the effects of these chemicals. The stress chemicals cause muscles to tense up" ("How Deep Relaxation Affects Brain Chemistry," Berit Broggaard, 2015). When we consciously decide to relax, we have the power of counteracting these stress chemicals.
- **Healthy Relationships** helps students mobilize their energy, motivate for success, and encourage healthy behaviours. Research on mindfulness in the context of interpersonal relationships has shown that when we attend to our emotional and bodily experiences and break from "cycles of automatic reactivity," we become more compassionate toward others. As a result, students will experience less stress and more connected relationships ("How Mindfulness Improves Your Brain and Relationships," Melanie Greenberg, 2015).
- **Confidence** is an important factor for students to achieve educational success. Building confidence in students helps educators ensure a safe atmosphere for learning, and sustain the most important ingredient for success: motivation. Amy Cuddy's ground-breaking research on power stances suggests that a "person can, by assuming two simple one-minute poses, embody power and instantly become more powerful" (Amy Cuddy, TED Talk). These power stances are characterized by open and expansive postures, which result in neuroendocrine and behavioural changes. For example, high power posers experienced decreases in cortisol, and increased feelings of power and tolerance for risk (Amy Cuddy, TED Talk).
- **Gratitude** is the quality of being thankful and a readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. A research study on the power of gratitude shows improvements in psychological, emotional and physical wellbeing ("The Transformative Power of Gratitude," Marilyn Price-Mitchell, 2012). For example, recent ground-breaking neuroscience research on gratitude shows powerful cardiovascular and immunological benefits, and the activation of the "reward circuitry of the brain that produces satisfaction...and the ability to understand others' mental states, moral judgments, and interpersonal bonding" ("Choose Gratitude Your Own Way for Good," Giacomo Bono, 2015).