
Positive Coping Self-Statements

Instructions

Following are some sample statements that you can say to yourself in place of negative “automatic” thoughts that may occur in stressful situations. You can photocopy this page and keep it with you as a reminder, or you can put a copy in a prominent place until you become familiar with the technique. If you don't find these coping self-statements helpful, there is space on the sheet to add your own. Feel free to try different statements in different situations until you find some that work.

1. *In preparation for stressful situations that you can predict will occur, try the following:*
 - (a) What is the specific thing I have to do?
 - (b) What plan can I develop for dealing with this?
 - (c) This situation is not impossible. I can handle it.
 - (d) Don't worry. Worrying isn't going to help anyway.
 - (e) I have a great many resources. I can put them to use in this situation.
 - (f) What am I scared of?
 - (g) I have a lot of support from people who deal with this problem all the time.
 - (h) _____
 - (i) _____

2. *During the course of a stressful situation, try the following (confrontation and coping):*
 - (a) I can manage this situation, if I just take it one step at a time.
 - (b) I've gotten through tougher situations than this before. This will not overwhelm me. It just feels that way at times.
 - (c) I can see this situation as a challenge or an opportunity to improve, rather than as an annoyance or a burden.
 - (d) These are the specific things I need to do to get through the situation (then list the steps).
 - (e) Relax. Calm down. I'm in control of this. Take a slow, deep breath.
 - (f) Let's keep focused on the present. What do I have to do?
 - (g) These feelings are a signal to use the coping skills I'm learning. I can expect the fear to increase, but it will not stop or overwhelm me. This feeling will pass; it always has.
 - (h) _____
 - (i) _____

3. *After the situation is over, try the following:*
 - (a) I need to pay attention to what worked.
 - (b) I need to give myself credit for making a good effort and for any improvement, large or small.
 - (c) All things considered, I did a good job.
 - (d) I'm learning how to deal with this situation more effectively. The next time, I'll do even better.
 - (e) I knew I could handle this. It just takes some time, patience, and effort.
 - (f) That wasn't as bad as I expected.
 - (g) I am making progress.
 - (h) _____
 - (i) _____