

Wellbeing and Motivation

The next slides will look at how the way we think can influence our motivation levels and how we can work on this:

- Unhelpful self-talk
- Challenging unhelpful thoughts
- Balancing our thoughts



Negative self-talk

From time to time, we all experience unhelpful thoughts about ourselves and this can be common when we are taking on a difficult task or we are not feeling motivated.

It is easy to think of our thoughts as facts, especially when we have these thoughts regularly. We may end up believing thoughts like “I’m stupid” or “I can’t do this” even when this is not the case and we are trying our best. This may lead to us feeling even less motivated.

4 Challenging negative thoughts

Imagine these thoughts as an unpleasant “poisonous parrot” on your shoulder. It is a parrot without insight or wisdom; it just repeats unhelpful things without them being true.

The trick with the poisonous parrot is to notice it and shut it out. Imagine putting a blanket over its cage. With time, as you pay less attention the parrot, it will talk less or it will become quieter.



Balancing your thoughts

Considering an alternative way to perceive yourself or a situation can be helpful for promoting patterns of positive thinking.

For example, if you have an unhelpful thought, why not try to:

- Think of evidence against it
- Try to see a different perspective
- Ask yourself - would you say this to a friend?



6 Balancing your thoughts: examples

Unhelpful thought: “I can’t do this assignment. I am a failure.”



Evidence against: “I have found assignments difficult before and passed them.”

Different perspective: “I can develop my knowledge and skills in this area by doing more research.”

What I’d say to a friend: “Lots of people struggle with different assignments too. It’s ok to ask for help!”

Using these techniques can help you to develop a Growth Mindset that was defined in the 'Introduction to Motivation' section.

Having a growth mindset can mean that we are more resilient in challenging situations and we will be more motivated to complete a task, whether that's by trying a different strategy or by asking for help.

Checklist

- Can you identify your own 'negative self-talk'?
- Do you know how to challenge and balance your thoughts?
- Do you understand how these approaches can affect your mindset?