

Positive Thinking

Grades 4-7

**Physical and Health Education, Language Arts,
Arts Education & Career Education**

Purpose of the Lesson

Positive thinking strategies have a huge impact on our mental health! This includes practices like gratitude, using a growth mindset, and reframing negative thoughts. An essential component of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is the practice of monitoring our thoughts and working on changing them to be more realistic and positive. CBT focuses on looking at how our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are all connected! If we can reframe our thoughts to something more positive it will in turn impact our feelings and behaviour. This lesson focuses on teaching students how to recognize their thoughts and the skill of changing them to be more positive. Overall, this will improve their mental health in all aspects of their life including at home, school, and in the community.

Curriculum Competencies:

Physical and Health Education

- ◇ Identify and describe factors that influence healthy choices (Grade 4)
- ◇ Describe the impacts of personal choices on health and well-being (Grade 5/6)
- ◇ Identify factors that influence healthy choices and explain their potential health effects (Grade 7)
- ◇ Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (Grade 4/5/6/7)
- ◇ Describe factors that positively influence mental well-being and self-identity (Grade 4)
- ◇ Explore and describe how personal identities adapt and change in different settings and situations (Grade 5/6)

Language Arts

- ◇ Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create (engaging and meaningful literary and informational) texts for a variety of purposes and audiences (Grade 4/5/6/7)

Arts Education

- ◇ Express, feelings, ideas, and experiences in creative ways, through the arts

Career Education

- ◇ Question self and others about how their personal public identity can have both positive and negative consequences

First Peoples Principles of Learning:

- ◇ Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors
- ◇ Learning requires the exploration of one's identity
- ◇ Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story

Video

[How to Defeat Negative Thinking: An Animation](#)

Guiding Questions:

- How can you distract yourself when you are feeling anxious?
- Are the negative thoughts you have true? Why or why not?
- How can you combat negative thoughts?
- What are some examples of good evidence to use against negative thoughts?
- What are some positive self-statements that you can use during tough times?
- How do sports teams stay positive during a tough game?
- Do you think positive thinking impacts team success?

Step-by-Step Lesson

1. Begin the lesson by watching the video “How to Defeat Negative Thinking: An Animation” This can be found [HERE](#). This awesome video describes two CBT strategies to fight negative thinking: distract or combat.
2. **Pause the video and use the teacher guiding questions to spark discussion.**
3. Second, display the Situation Shifter booklet in the Youth Activities section of the Student Mental Health Toolkit or [HERE](#). As you go through the booklet pages and the different situations, discuss the positive and negative thoughts and how they affect feelings. Before switching the page, get your class to predict another way to approach these situations, or give an example of how they would react.
4. **Discuss the curricular objectives for this lesson with your class.** Talk about why learning about mental health is important and tie any personal stories the students are willing to share about thinking positively in difficult situations.
5. **Follow-up Activity: Positive Thinking Poster!**
Divide students into groups of 2 and use the “Think, Pair, Share” discussion strategy to brainstorm what strategies can be used to promote positive thinking. On a small poster board, get each student to create their own “Positive Thinking Poster.” Show both positive and negative thinking. Using full sentences and pictures (can be drawn, painted, collage), students will demonstrate their personal strategies for positive vs. negative thinking.
6. **Lesson Closure:** When the project is finished, display or have students share their poster with the class and what they learned about how to be a more positive thinker! Allow students time to explore the situation shifter on their own and practice reframing different situations.