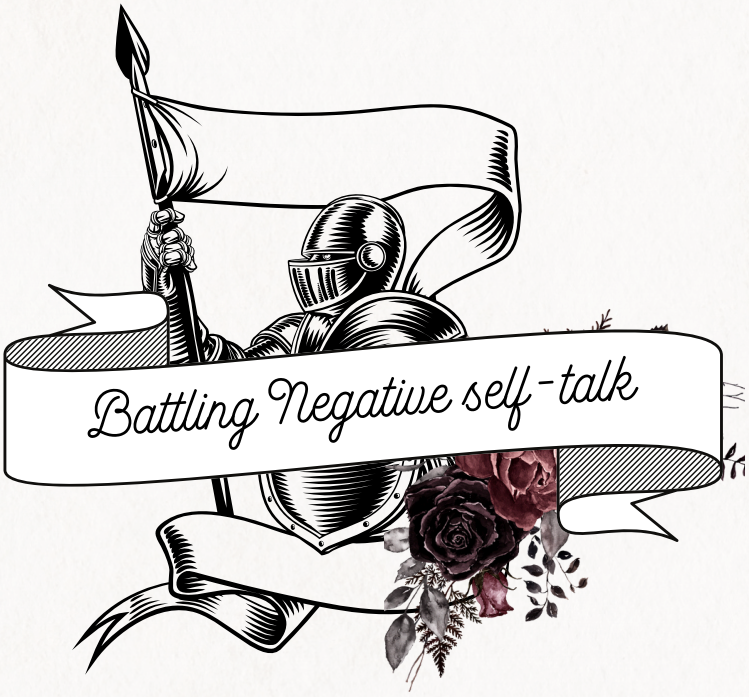


“Negative self-talk can often keep us trapped in negative feelings and makes it hard to let things go, keeping us feeling stressed, anxious, angry and low and focused on the thoughts and experiences fuelling these feelings and away from things that we enjoy and help us to feel better”.

— (Psychology today)

The way we talk to (and think about) ourselves <u>really matters</u>.
Negative self-talk is often explained as our persistent inner critic. The voice inside us that constantly judges and belittles our abilities, appearance and worth.

It’s fair to say that many of us don’t even notice ourselves doing it, but sometimes we can say things to ourselves that we would never dream of saying to anyone else, and this can have a huge impact on how we feel about ourselves, damaging our confidence and self-esteem.

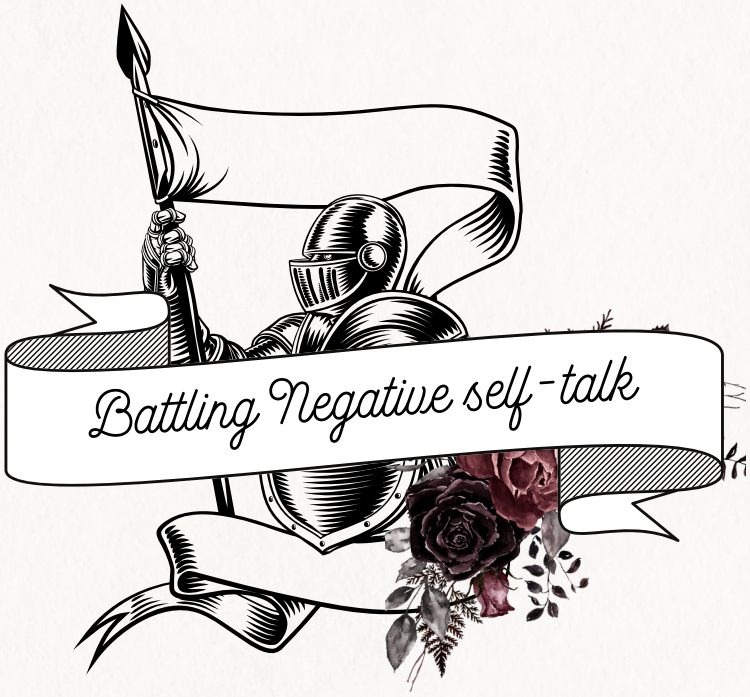
So, this month we’re going to find ways to help young people identify and challenge their inner critical voice.

We’ve put together a series of YouTube shorts to help young people identify, reflect on and challenge patterns of negative self-talk and produced some free worksheets that can be used to help reframe these thoughts into more helpful and positive reflections. You can find these free worksheets below or download separately on the home page of the Mental Health Hub.

We hope this helps in whatever way you can use it

Thanks,

THE HEADSTRONG TEAM



What is this worksheet for?

A worksheet for challenging, reframing and reflecting on the way we speak to ourselves. Use this worksheet to help you recognise and identify negative thought patterns you may be trapped in and explore other

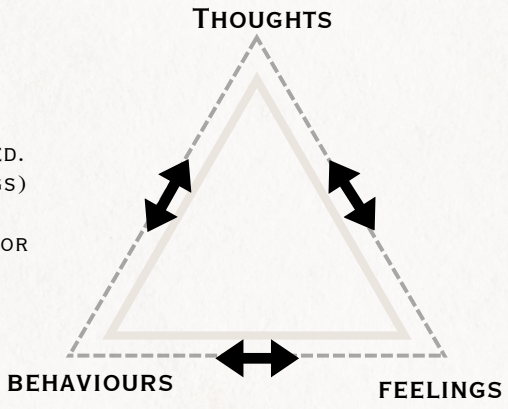
What is negative self-talk?

The way we talk to (and think about) ourselves really matters
So often, without realising it, we can be our harshest critics, endlessly putting ourselves down, saying hateful or damaging things about our bodies and criticising our abilities- things that we'd NEVER say to anyone else.
Negative Automatic Thoughts can pop up in our minds when we don't expect them and really get in our way. It's almost like our brain sabotages us by always telling us the same negative story about ourselves or the world, which might not actually be true.
Our Negative Automatic Thoughts (or nats) can come from things people have said to us (especially when we're younger) or ways people have made us think or feel – messages about ourselves which have gone in deep and become an automatic thought.
They may be messages we pick up from culture – maybe social media or things other messages people talk about that impact us.

How we think about ourselves is important because it impacts not only how we feel but also how we act- so we have to remember to challenge these thoughts.

Some quick c.b.t

This is the CBT Cognitive triangle model of how our thoughts, feelings and behaviours interact- it can help us to understand how all three areas are connected.
We can start with having a thought which provokes us to feel a certain way (feelings) and leads us to act (behaviour).
The important thing this teaches us is that as all three are connected, by changing or challenging one area we can interrupt and change the cycle. Ultimately, CHALLENGING our thinking can help our feelings AND we CHANGE our behaviours.



WHY IS IS IMPORTANT TO CHALLENGE OUR NEGATIVE SELF-TALK?

Challenging the way we talk to ourselves can feel a bit like a battle. Maybe we've been caught in thinking the same negative thoughts about ourselves for a long time and don't know how to stop.
Our thoughts can have a huge impact on our mental wellbeing and constantly criticising and putting ourselves down can leave us feeling stressed, low and trapped.
It's important to remember 'just because you think something doesn't make it true'.

The tricky thing is that if we repeat something enough times to ourselves, we can start seeing those inner criticisms as truth and stop fighting them. Becoming aware of negative self-talk is the first step in fighting it. Writing down and keeping a journal of the thoughts that come in and out of our minds can help us to identify the negative thoughts that we have.

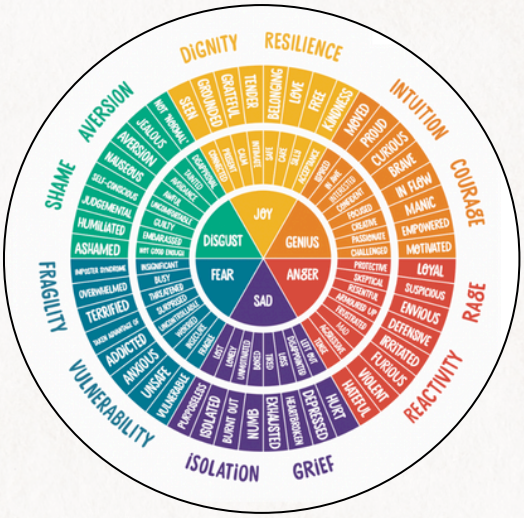
Have a go at the worksheet on the next page and see if you can identify a negative thought and then have a go at reframing it.

Battling Negative self-talk

Start here:

Is there something negative or hurtful I say to myself:

When I have this thought, how does it make me feel?



How does this thought affect the way I treat myself?

Does it fit into a thinking trap?



Catastrophising:

When we imagine the worst possible thing will happen and we won't be able to cope



Black & White thinking:

Looking at things in extremes



Mind Reading:

Believing we know what others are thinking and believing they are thinking the worst



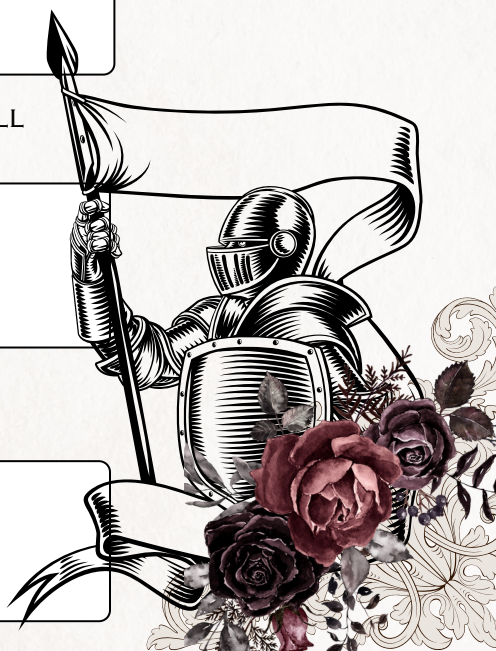
Fortune Telling:

Predicting things will turn out badly

When you have this thought what does your supportive inner voice want to say to you?

When I next have this thought what do I need to remember to tell myself? Or how can I challenge it?

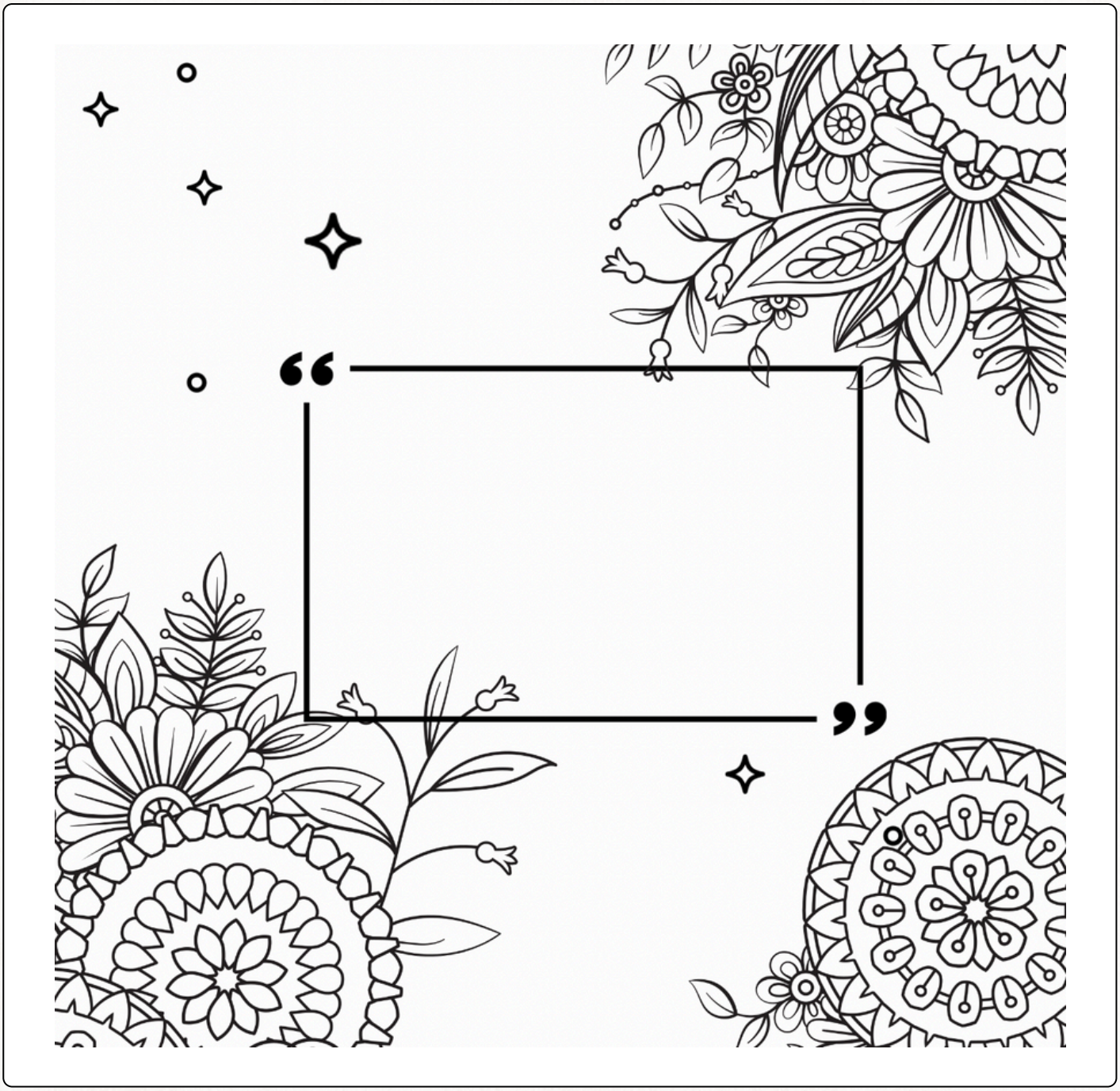
Is there something I can do when I feel this way to look after myself better or distract myself?



Positive Affirmations

One way we can look after ourselves, and begin to gently challenge our negative thinking patterns, is by reinforcing our positive thoughts and views about ourselves with positive affirmations

Use the image below to create your own positive affirmation cards that you can use to encourage yourself when you need it. Fill the space with a positive message you would like to tell yourself, colour in the image, cut it out and put somewhere you will see it.



Here's some inspiration for your card:

- I will be kind to myself today
- I am strong
- I will look for the good in things
- My possibilities are endless
- I will make time for what brings me joy