



MAKING  
CARING  
COMMON  
PROJECT

# Positive Self-Talk and Problem-Solving

## Talking to yourself like you'd talk to a friend

### Overview

Practicing positive self-talk can be a powerful tool to support mental health, both for you and for your child. When negative thoughts or emotions arise, try this simple exercise to shift the focus to positive self-talk. In the brief steps below, you can use the examples for yourself or for guidance in what to share with your child. Children (including teens) need scaffolding or examples to help guide them in their own processing.

### Steps

1. Notice your negative thought(s). For example, "I just can't get my life organized, I was late to work again today."
2. Think of someone you care about (such as your best friend or someone in your family). "Hmm, what about Jess, who's also a super busy mom."
3. Envision that the person you chose in Step 2 is expressing the negative thought you had about yourself, but about them. How would you respond? Say that back to yourself (out loud, writing it down, whatever works for you). "What if Jess said that? I would probably tell her something like: *'Girl, the struggle is real! It's hard getting to work on time sometimes. But you are so organized in so many other ways. I admire you! If going to work late happens often, what are some things getting in the way? Can you change something—even one thing to start?'*"

### Going further

If your child likes writing or journaling, you can also work through these journal prompts together. Check in over time and help them notice patterns in their negative thoughts (what the thoughts are about, when they occur, specific people around whom they occur, etc.)

- What is the negative thought that I am having?
- What caused this thought? (Think about what was going on, who you were with, where you were, etc.)
- Who is someone I care about a lot?
- What would I say to them if they had that negative thought about themselves?