

Self-talk

Words That Help With the Next Step

Adults | 10 to 15 minutes

Inner language can be harsh, worried, encouraging, or practical. Rather than forcing a positive belief, explore what one sentence leads you to do. A useful alternative may simply describe the situation and the next manageable action.

Choose an ordinary difficult task or mistake. Write the exact sentence you noticed and test a more specific version.

Notice the effect

Ask whether the sentence helps you begin, repair, ask, pause, or learn. A statement can feel familiar without being useful or complete.

Use credible language

Try a task-sized sentence such as, 'I missed one part; I can check it,' or 'I need clarification before continuing.' Choose words you can honestly use.

1. What sentence did I say to myself?**2. What did that sentence lead me to do or avoid?****3. What more specific and credible instruction could I try?****4. What action will show whether the new wording is useful?****Clinical use and adaptation**

Do not debate or shame a client for negative thoughts. Adapt for trauma and entrenched shame. Distinguish ordinary self-talk from distressing voices or other experiences requiring assessment; do not imply the same exercise fits both.