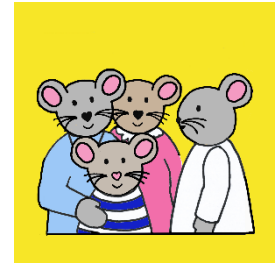


## Presenting a Positive Self

### Use This:

To address self-presentations that can negatively impact mood and interpersonal relationships.



### Goals

- The family will learn that being positive and optimistic can improve mood and have a positive effect on relationships with others.
- The child will practice positive-self skills in session.

### Materials

- **Fear Thermometer** and **Fear Ladder** (2 unrated copies for anxiety/trauma) (pp. 305, 307)
- **Feelings Thermometer** (p. 329)
- **My Negative Self and My Positive Self** worksheet (p. 356)
- **Practising My Positive Self** worksheet (2 copies) (p. 357)
- **Presenting a Positive Self** parent handout (p. 358)
- **Weekly questionnaires** and **Monitoring sheet** (see pages 268 – 285)
- **Therapist Note Taking Sheet** (p. 267)

*⌚ If time is tight: Discuss how the way we present ourselves impacts us and others. Use role plays to help the child experience the benefit of positive self skills. Compile a list of things the child can do to show a positive self.*

### Main Steps

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Set an Agenda</b>         | Remember to start by setting an agenda together and by reviewing any practice assignments.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Obtain Weekly Ratings</b> | If the main focus is traumatic stress or anxiety, use the 0 to 10 scale of the <b>Fear Thermometer</b> to obtain <b>Fear Ladder</b> ratings from both the child and his or her parent. If the main focus is depressed mood, use the <b>Feelings Thermometer</b> to take a rating. Review the <b>Weekly questionnaires</b> and <b>Monitoring sheet</b> in detail. |

- Introduce Positive Self** Tell a story (ideally about yourself) that illustrates the value of showing a positive self.

**Example script**

*I remember one time when I woke up feeling gloomy and grouchy, and I went through my whole day acting negative. When I did this, I noticed that I started feeling worse, and also that other people seemed not to be enjoying being with me very much. So, the next time I woke up feeling gloomy and grouchy, I **decided** to make myself go through my day with a positive attitude. I tried things like dressing in my favourite outfit and showing other people how much I was enjoying being with them. As the day went on, I noticed that making myself present a positive self actually made me start feeling better; and other people seemed to enjoy being with me, too.*

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- Review Main Ideas** In telling the story and discussing its meaning, convey three main ideas:
- Presenting a negative, gloomy exterior to the world can make us feel bad, and can also make other people uncomfortable and less likely to spend time with us.
  - Showing a positive self to the world can make us feel better, and can also make other people more comfortable and more likely to spend time with us.
  - Showing a positive self is a skill, like sports, dancing, or maths. It involves specific kinds of behaviour that people can practise and improve when they do practice.

- 
- Model Negative vs. Positive Self** Begin the discussion by noting the things YOU do to convey a negative and positive self. For example, you might say – **and demonstrate for the child** – that when you show a **Negative Self**, you have...
- Poor eye contact and posture
  - Negative facial expression
  - Sad or irritable tone of voice
  - Say negative things about your experiences, others, and the world.
- In contrast, to illustrate your **Positive Self**, you might say-**and demonstrate for the child**-that when you are being positive, you show...
- Direct eye contact and upright posture
  - Pleasant facial expressions
  - Clear, pleasant tone of voice
  - Say positive things about your experiences, others, and the world

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ACTIVITY</b> <b><i>Demonstrate Negative vs. Positive Self</i></b>	<p>Have <b>two</b> role-play conversations with the child in which you first display your negative self, then your positive self. Make the experience funny by exaggerating your negative self. Ask the child: which of these people was more pleasant to interact with? What differences did he or she notice in your behaviour, expressions, etc.?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Develop Description of Child's "Positive" and "Negative" Selves</b>	<p>Use the Presenting <b><i>My Negative Self and My Positive Self</i></b> worksheet to generate a list of specific behaviours the child uses to show a negative and a positive self.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>ACTIVITY</b> <b><i>Role Play Negative vs. Positive Self</i></b>	<p>Have the child do two role plays, acting out the behaviours listed on the worksheet. (If you have access to video-recording equipment, you can use it to record the two role plays and play each back for the child, to prompt a discussion about negative and positive self; this makes these particular role plays especially effective). The first role play is <b>Negative Self</b>. First practise with the child, coaching him or her to show the behaviours listed in the Negative Self column of the worksheet, as you read items from the interview below. Have the child provide a <b><i>Feelings Thermometer</i></b> rating before and after the role-play. Then do the role play by conducting the following interview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Please tell me your name, age, where you live, and where you go to school.</i></li> <li>• <i>Now just talk about yourself. Tell what you are like, what your interests or hobbies are, anything else people should know about you.</i></li> <li>• <i>Now tell me how you feel about your school, and what some of your classes are like.</i></li> <li>• <i>Tell me about some of the children you know, and what they are like.</i></li> <li>• <i>Tell me about some of the things you do with other children, outside of school.</i></li> <li>• <i>Now please tell me about your family or who you live with, what they are like, and what kinds of things you do with them.</i></li> <li>• <i>Finally, please tell me what you would do if you had a million pounds?</i></li> </ul> <p>Use the same interview script to guide the child through a <b>Positive Self</b> role-play. First, coach the child in a practice session, prompting and encouraging him or her to display the positive self items written on the worksheet. Have the child provide <b><i>Feelings Thermometer</i></b> ratings before and after this role-play.</p>

- Discuss Experience of Positive vs Negative Self** Discuss the child's experience of the role-plays, including how the child felt after acting so negative/positive, how he or she might feel after acting that way all day, and how other people would react to these two styles of self-presentation. Review the child's **Feelings Thermometer** ratings for evidence of how self-presentation affects mood.

- ACTIVITY "Real World" Positive and Negative Self** If time permits, arrange for the child to go outside the therapy room and try his or her positive self out on a third person. For example, after practising once or twice with you, the child might choose to walk to the clinic receptionist, flash a big smile, and say something like "May I have the key to the bathroom?" or "How late is the clinic open today?" or "I like that pin you are wearing." When the child comes back into the office, you can discuss how it felt to try this positive self, how the person responded, and how it feels now that the experience is over. Alternatively, the third person could be the child's parent. (It is wise to prepare the receptionist or parent before the session, so that he or she will be sure to respond to the child in a positive way.) It may also be helpful to role play a time when the child can show his or her positive self in the real world, such as when he or she comes home from school after a difficult day, or when talking with an authority figure.

- PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT Positive Self at Home** The child will practise using his or her positive self two times, and will complete the **Practising My Positive Self** worksheet as part of this practice. Decide with whom the child will practise presenting his or her positive self each time, and write this on the worksheets. Work with the child to pick a person who is likely to give a positive response. The child is to record **Feelings Thermometer** ratings before and after each Positive Self practice during the week.

- Send the materials for the next session** Tell the parent/s you will send a written summary and the materials for the next session. Remind them that they do not need to be completed for next session as you will go through them together in the session. Tell the family you will also send the **Weekly questionnaires, Monitoring sheet** and **Feelings Thermometer** which need to be completed for the next session.

Confirm date and time of the next call.

- Summarising** Ask if they would like you to summarise the session, if they want to summarise or if you should do it together.

### Leave 'Em Laughing

End the session on a positive note with the family by perhaps talking about things that are unrelated to treatment or a game or activity that will leave them feeling good about the work you've done today. The end of each session should be used to praise the family's efforts and to convey support and encouragement.

## Helpful Tips

- If the child has not already been trained in the use of the *Feelings Thermometer*, it will be important to introduce that skill before going through the activities in this session.
- When helping the child identify behaviours that convey a negative-self and positive-self, be sensitive to cultural, familial, and developmental differences in the interpretation of body language and verbal behaviour.
- Be careful to avoid any impression that you are criticising any child's "depressed" self. Instead, the exercises should be presented in the context of exploration and curiosity. That is, you really do want to know what the child thinks about these two different role plays, and what he or she thinks the consequences of positive and negative behaviour may be for how we feel and how others feel about us.
- Try not to imply that "showing a positive self" is the same thing as "faking it." Instead, the key idea is that we all have the capacity inside us to behave in lots of different ways; the positive ways seem to make us feel better, and to make other people feel better about being with us.
- It is important that the child's positive-self be likely to elicit a positive response both from peers and from adults. You want to avoid creating a positive-self profile that might seem arrogant or obnoxious to adults, even if it is likely to evoke a positive reaction from peers. Instead of "I'm great at football!" the child might say "I love football" – i.e., positive, but not arrogant. Likewise, avoid coaching the child to behave in a way that adults might like but that his or her peers may find "nerdy" or socially undesirable.
- If you intend to use a third person, either a parent or co-worker, it is wise to prepare this person ahead of time, to ensure that the child receives a favourable response to showing his or her "positive self."
- If the child enters the session in a bad mood, or seems tired, lethargic, or uninterested, this is an opportunity to introduce a **mood booster**: take a brief mood rating, spend a few minutes engaging in a pleasant activity, then re-rate the mood. If it is successful, be sure to highlight to the child that *what we do changes how we feel*.
- Check in on goals: Does the child feel that he or she is making progress? How does the material you covered today relate to the goals you set together?

## How's Your Style?

- Did you praise often?
- Did you review often, by asking questions?
- Did you simplify the steps as needed?
- Did your pace match that of the child or family?
- Did you stay on track?