CREATE YOUR OWN AFFIRMATIONS

Individual, Dyadic, or Group Mindfulness Exercise

USE THIS EXERCISE TO BUILD:

Nurturing Parent-Child Interactions | Social and Emotional Abilities | Safer and More Stable Conditions | Resilience and a Growth Mindset | Social Connections

PURPOSE

Sharing affirmations out loud with others, or repeating them to yourself regularly can provide survivors with new ideas, build connections with other peers, and add power to the words they wrote. This exercise is designed to increase individualized connection to each protective factor through self expression, especially to ones that may benefit from further growth. These affirmations can be used to replace harmful thoughts and to provide support during difficult sessions or situations.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY LENGTH: 1 HOUR

10 minutes for instructions | 35 minutes for brainstorming | 15 minutes for reflection

MATERIALS

Protective Factors Infographic handout for each participant
Paper, journal, or notecards
Items to write with, like pencils, pens, crayons, or a tablet or computer

Notes for the facilitator

- Print out the “Protective Factors Infographic” sheet for each survivor, or have the sheet visible for them to read throughout the session.
- Encourage survivors to keep these affirmations on them in a way that feels doable: on a piece of paper that they carry, a sticky note in a visible place, in their phone notes, etc.
  - If able, facilitators can provide survivors with small cards to keep with them
- Affirmations may be particularly useful for survivors when paired with other mindfulness exercises, such as the Exercise 13: Leaves on the Stream Meditation. Facilitators can encourage survivors to use the Leaves on the Stream Meditation when they are feeling particularly stressed, and then use the created affirmations to replace the thoughts and feelings that float away on the stream.

When using this activity with children:

- Consider age (recommended range: 6–18 years old)
- Substitute each individual protective factor for simpler words, such as safe, loved and cared for, confident and powerful, and a good friend or sibling.
- Ask kids to come up with things they can say to help them feel each of these things. Try to add movement with the affirmation to connect the affirmation to their mind and body.
- Example: When I want to feel confident, I will stand tall with my hands on my hips and say: "I am strong!"

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Using the "Protective Factors Infographic" sheet, read through the protective factors.
2. Create affirmations that apply to each protective factor. You can even create affirmations outside of each protective factor – just write down affirmations that feel important for what you need. (Swearing is encouraged if appropriate!)

Example format:

- "I am ___."
  - Example: I am stronger than my anxiety.
- "Even though ___, I can/am ___."
  - Example: Even though things are tough right now, I am strong and resilient.

Example affirmations:

- I grow from my mistakes.
- I am safe.
- I am deserving of kindness and compassion from others.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How did you feel while writing?
- Did any thoughts come up for you?
- What protective factors were easiest to create an affirmation for?
- Which factors were the most uncomfortable?

Promising Futures | FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

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