

# Preventing suicide at Lake Tahoe: It's important to use words that promote positive mental health

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Special to the Sun



The power of positivity is an awesome one.

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## LEARN MORE

Do you want to learn more about the effects of thinking on our mood? Join "Mental Health in the Mountains" on Thursday, Sept. 24, at 6 p.m. at Kings Beach Elementary, where MFT Karin Sable will speak on "Don't believe everything you think: How our thinking affects our mood."

For more information on this event, call the North Tahoe Family Resource Center at 530-546-0952.

## TURN IT AROUND

Here are some examples of shifting negative self-talk into positive self-talk:

Negative self-talk: I've never done it before.

Positive self-talk: It's an opportunity to learn something new.

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Negative self-talk: I can't figure this out.

Positive self-talk: I'll try a different way.

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Negative self-talk: This will never work.

Positive self-talk: I will try to make it work.

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Negative self-talk: I can't figure this out.

Positive self-talk: I'll give it another try.

TAHOE-TRUCKEE, Calif. — Are you familiar with that little voice in your head that says, "I can't do this" or "this is impossible"?

Many of us have been colored by our thought patterns since childhood, and the way in which we talk to ourselves can be very negative and limiting.

The good news is that in a learned behavior, there is an opportunity to reverse patterns and be kinder to our self. We need to use words that positively impact our stress levels, and in turn our mental health.

Positive thinking doesn't mean we ignore life's less than pleasant situations. Rather it means we approach them in a more positive and productive way.

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We often hear the term "self-talk" associated with positive thinking. Self-talk is the constant stream of thoughts running through our mind, the unspoken thoughts. Those thoughts can be positive or negative.

The things we think to ourselves each and every day impact our view of self, our outlook on life, and the way we handle our stressors that arise. If those thoughts are mostly negative than our outlook on life is pessimistic.

There are many ways to adapt our negative thinking to become positive thinking. Self-awareness and the desire to create a new habit are two important ways in which to shift thinking.

Effective stress management has been linked to mental health benefits. One key component of stress management is positive thinking and positive self-talk.

Positive self-talk also provides other benefits, such as:

Lower rates of depression

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Negative self-talk: There's no way it will work.

Positive self-talk: I can try to make it work.

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Negative self-talk: No one bothers to talk to me.

Positive self-talk: I'll try to communicate differently.

Lower levels of stress

Better coping skills during times of stress

Better physical and mental wellbeing

The health benefits of positive self-talk continue to be researched. One theory is that the ability to adapt to stressors in a positive way and limit the effects of stress on the body will increase longevity and mental well-being.

If a negative thought enters your mind, evaluate it and try to rationalize it in a positive way. By working towards less self-criticism and higher compassion toward self, we can positively shift our thoughts to a more accepting attitude and increase

our overall well-being.

When our thoughts are more positive, we are better able to handle the everyday stressors of life in a constructive way.

Sarah McClarie is the facilitator for the Tahoe Truckee Youth Suicide Prevention Coalition. Contact her at [smcclarie@ttusd.org](mailto:smcclarie@ttusd.org) or by calling 530-582-2560.

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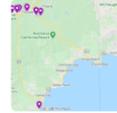
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