

# PERSONAL SELF-CARE TIPS



## Working with Self-Criticism



### WHAT IS SELF-CRITICISM?

Self-criticism is the evaluation of oneself or one's actions in a disapproving manner. It arises when we fail to fulfil our unmet needs such as the need for approval, to be accepted, etc.

While self-criticisms can be good, they can be harmful too.

### WHY IS SELF-CRITICISM GOOD?

Self-criticisms are intended to avoid danger, keep us safe and help us to become a better person. It allows one to be aware of himself/herself and to improve oneself by fulfilling those needs.



### WHEN DOES SELF-CRITICISM BECOME HARMFUL?

Self-criticisms arise when we try to fulfil these needs but do not know a better way to do so. As such, we often criticise ourselves with harsh words and tone.

For example, we look into the mirror and make harsh comments such as "Why am I so ugly?" our self-criticism is reflecting the need to be accepted and loved. However, due to the choice of words and tone used, our self-critic seems like it is hurting our self-concept.

### WHEN SELF-CRITICISMS ARE NOT MANAGED PROPERLY...

It can become a barrier to one's self-esteem and an increased in chronic stress, possibly resulting in depression, anxiety and other mental health conditions.



### INNER COMPASSIONATE VOICE

Inner compassionate voice activates one of our nervous systems which aids in reducing stress and anxiety, therefore achieving emotional balance to make better decisions.



Be aware of how you are talking to yourself. Take note when you are being self-critical.



Soften the self-critical voice with compassion.



"You need to shut up"



"I know you want me to be loved and accepted. However, you are causing me unnecessary pain now. Could you let my inner compassionate self say a few words?"



Reframe the observations made by your self-critic in a friendly, positive way.



"I know you are focusing on the flaws of your appearance because you want to look better and be accepted. But beating yourself up really doesn't do much good. How about we start improving one thing at a time?"

If someone you know may be at risk of suicide or is contemplating suicide, please contact:

**PSB Academy Counsellor**  
6390 9214  
Mon - Fri, 8.30am - 6pm  
(Closed on PH)

**Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)**  
1800 221 4444  
24-hour helpline

**Institute of Mental Health (IMH)**  
6389 2222  
24-hour helpline

Alternately, visit [www.psb-academy.edu.sg/student-resources/student-care](http://www.psb-academy.edu.sg/student-resources/student-care) for other 24-hour crisis helplines & community resources.