

Mind over Matter: Metacognition

Can “thinking about thinking” help build resilience and independence in our kids? The answer is, YES!



How do we get our students to go from, “I can’t” to “How can I?”

When students feel stuck and frustrated it often leads to behaviors like giving up and shutting down. Adults can effectively model and teach kids to critically think about what is making them frustrated and what they would need to do to get unstuck. This is called metacognition, or the ability to think about their own thinking.

Some really important connections happen when we use metacognition: we gain the ability to reflect on our own thoughts, which in turn helps us process our feelings, needs, and even behaviors. This is how we can learn, grow, and manage new challenges. It also helps with self-regulation.

For example: Instead of, “I am going to do horrible on this social studies test.” We are asking and saying, “What is it about this social studies test that is making me anxious and what can I do about it?”

Strategies to encourage metacognition:

- Challenge (or quiet) negative self-talk: try to replace this sneaky negative voice with metacognition thinking which helps manage challenges instead of beating yourself up or bring self-critical
- When discussing challenges with your child encourage questions that are open-ended and non-blaming: Can you tell me more about why you think that?
- Solution-focused: How can you handle that challenge differently next time?
- Process-oriented: How will you know when you have studied enough for your test?
- Be patient: we always get excited to see progress, but kids, especially teens, don’t always share how they think and process, and that’s okay!
- Asking questions at home can help students develop these metacognitive strategies in and out of school.



How can you use these metacognition strategies in your daily life with your kids?

As always, please reach out to the Thunderbolt Counseling Office if you need additional support, we are here for you! Contact us by phone 928-854-7477 or email.

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