Creating Powerful Affirmations
To Cope With Chronic Health Concerns

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Objectives
Attendees will be able to…
- Describe the relevance of affirmations to self care for chronic health concerns
- Suggest powerful affirmations to support patient goals
- Lead a conscious breathwork exercise using affirmations
1. Assess readiness for change. If not, consult Changing for Good (Prochaska, et al) or Motivational Interviewing (Miller & Rollnick) for strategies to support patients who are still in the contemplation stage.
2. Facilitate self reflection, as part of your assessment, pattern identification and outcome setting.
3. Encourage the use of affirmations to launch the new thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, and action leading to your patient’s desired health outcomes.


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AFFIRMATIONS ARE RELEVANT TO THE CARE OF PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC HEALTH CONCERNS

- Negativity interferes with adherence to treatment and lifestyle change.
- Self doubts and self defeating attitudes interfere in health behavior change.
- Positive affirmations have the potential to shift patients from a stress response to a relaxation response, activating the sympathetic nervous system rather than the parasympathetic nervous system.
- Positive affirmations engage patients in their care.

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BE WHERE YOUR PATIENT IS

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- Positive affirmations engage patients in their care
CHARACTERISTICS OF
POWERFUL AFFIRMATIONS

- Present tense
- Full sentences
- Positive terms
- Personally relevant

CREATING YOUR OWN
AFFIRMATION FOR SELF CARE

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Sources for Affirmations

- Louise Hay
- Bernie Siegel MD
- Peggy Huddleston
- Belleruth Naperstek
- Wayne Dwyer

Conscious Breathing

- Assess your patient.
- Provide the following directions:
  - Breathe in.
  - As you breathe out, state your affirmation to your Self (or out loud if you are alone).
  - Repeat your affirmation several times as you continue to breathe slowly.
  - Notice any thoughts and gently release those that are distracting.
  - Continue as long as you like. When you are done, you may want to write or sketch the insights that were helpful.

“It takes action to bring affirmations to life. Just saying an affirmation is not enough to create change within our lives, our jobs and our relationships with others. However, it is a start.”

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Bibliography


Epton, Tracy; Harris, Peter R. Self-affirmation promotes health behavior change. Health Psychology, Vol 27(6), Nov 2008, 746-752.


Nilsson, U.; Rawal, N; Enqvist, B; Unosson, M. Analgesia following music and therapeutic suggestions in the PACU in ambulatory surgery; a randomized controlled trial. Acta Anaesthesiologica Scandinavica. 2003 March; 47 (3); 278-83.


James Prochaska, *Changing for Good: A Revolutionary Six-Stage Program for Overcoming Bad Habits and Moving Your Life Positively Forward*.

American Holistic Nurses Association’s *Scope and Standards of Practice*, 2007


Rachel Y. Hill, Nursing from the Inside-Out: Living and Nursing from the Highest Point of your Consciousness. (2011)


**Resources for affirmations**

Louise Hay, You Can Heal Your Life, 1999

Belleruth Naperstek, Affirmations. (Audio CD)


