

Positive Self-Talk

Teach child positive statements to say when in pain (e.g., “I will be feeling better soon,” or “When I go home, I will feel better, and we will eat ice cream”).

Thought Stopping

Identify positive facts about the painful event (e.g., “It does not last long”).

Identify reassuring information (e.g., “If I think about something else, it does not hurt as much”).

Condense positive and reassuring facts into a set of brief statements and have child memorize them (e.g., “Short procedure, good veins, little hurt, nice nurse, go home”).

Have child repeat the memorized statements whenever thinking about or experiencing the painful event.

Behavioral Contracting

Informal: May be used with children as young as 4 or 5 years old:

- Use stars, tokens, or cartoon character stickers as rewards.
- Give a child who is uncooperative or procrastinating during a procedure a limited time (measured by a visible timer) to complete the procedure.
- Proceed as needed if child is unable to comply.
- Reinforce cooperation with a reward if the procedure is accomplished within specified time.