

In a nutshell

This resource can be photocopied and used as a revision tool or a prompt for discussion with your peers.

Self-efficacy

This describes a person's beliefs about their capability to exercise influence over their lives. The term was outlined by Bandura (1977) to explain the way our thoughts and feelings affect how we motivate ourselves to achieve outcomes. Bandura outlined the differences in the ways individuals might respond to events if they had a 'strong' or 'weak' sense of self-efficacy.

'Strong'	'Weak'
Problems seen as challenges	Avoid challenging tasks
Intrinsic interest in activities	Have lower aspirations
Sense of commitment to interests	Less commitment to goals
Recover quickly from setbacks	See difficult tasks as beyond them
Sustain efforts in the face of failure	Focus on personal failings and negative outcomes
	Less confidence in personal abilities

Putting it into practice

Whether you believe you can do a thing or not, you're right. This famous quote, accredited to Henry Ford, explains the concept of self-efficacy in a nutshell. Try the following to help develop your self-efficacy.

Take baby steps. If you see a task as overwhelming, break it down into small steps and enjoy the success of achieving each one.

Remember past success. If you think you can't do something . . . think about if there was a time when you could. Remember this success.

Visualise. Imagine yourself carrying out a particular task or behaviour successfully. See and feel what that is like – if you can visualise it, the chances are you can do it.

Recognise self-doubt. Notice self-doubt and accept it for what it is. This isn't a truth or a fact, it is simply a perception. If you can doubt yourself, you can also believe in yourself.

Get support. If you don't know where to start, talk to someone you trust. Ask what they would do then decide on your own approach.

Source: Bandura (1977).