

Self-Efficacy: Believe in yourself (Part I of III)

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Self-efficacy is defined by Schutzer et al. as, “an individual’s belief in their ability to successfully perform a specific behavior.” (1) Do you remember the first time you were in the truck cab, driving by yourself? If you have been driving for a number of years chances are you feel much more confident now than you did on that very first day.

Self-Efficacy can have a big impact on how you deal with situations in your life. Do you remember a time in your life when you just couldn’t get the “hang” of something? Chances are if you wanted to get the “hang” of it bad enough you kept working at whatever it was, right? You probably tried a different technique, asked someone else for advice, or maybe even read a book about it. When you removed whatever “barriers” or “stumbling blocks” that were holding you back, you more than likely achieved success.

Have you tried and been unsuccessful at changing your health? Maybe it was something like changing your diet to attempt to lose weight? Maybe it was adding exercise to your daily routine? Or maybe it was trying to give up those pesky cigarettes? Whatever the case, often times when it comes to our health, we are only inclined to change our habits when something bad happens.

This is explained by the Health Beliefs Model (HBM). The HBM is explained by four principles: 1) your own belief of susceptibility or risk, 2) your own belief of the severity of the condition or problem, should it occur, 3) your own thoughts of the benefits of taking a particular health action and finally 4) your own beliefs of barriers or obstacles to taking action. (2)

In this 3 part series of articles, I will take you down the road of mapping out a plan for change in your life by discussing ideas to remove those “stumbling blocks” to a healthy lifestyle and by discussing ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle while out on the road!

Reference:

1) Schutzer KA, Graves BS. Barriers and Motivations to Exercise in Older Adults. *Preventative Medicine*. November 2004; 39(5): 1056-1061.

2) Kelly RB, Zyzanski SJ, Alemagno SA. Prediction of Motivation and Behavior Change Following Health Promotion: Role of Health Beliefs, Social Support, and Self Efficacy. *Soc. Sci. Med.* 1991; 32(3): 311-320.