

# Self-efficacy

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In this podcast, Jules Willcocks chats to Kirsten McKenna about self-efficacy.

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## About Kirsten McKenna

Kirsten is Founder and principal consultant of two purpose driven businesses - [Cortex Consulting](#) and [Winefulness](#) in Sydney, Australia. Kirsten focuses on igniting and cultivating curiosity within individuals, inspiring teams and engendering positive change in organisational cultures. As an accomplished leadership and performance [coach](#), well-being expert & author of the book *Lead Well: How to Show Up Consistently Well in Leadership and Life*, Kirsten is passionate about human potential.

With degrees in psychology, education and physical and health education, Kirsten translates science into practical tools to help individuals, teams and organisations thrive. As a transformational coach, she supports others in sifting through the overwhelm in order to cultivate clarity, confidence and grit. A soccer-Mum, avid runner, triathlete, insatiable reader and yoga teacher, the free time that Kirsten does have is all about family, friends, fitness and personal growth.

## About Dr Jules Willcocks

Jules Willcocks is an Emergency Medicine Consultant and the Director of Prevocational Education and Training at [Gosford Hospital](#).

His interest is in bringing out the best in people principally through [mentoring](#) and coaching. He firmly believes that [wellbeing](#) is a crucial part of this and that you cannot look after someone to the best of your abilities if you yourself are not well.

He trained as an executive coach and has a particular interest in [financial wellness](#) for doctors.

He is married with two boys, which is why he's not living a degenerate life in Las Vegas and loves playing poker and fine single malt Islay whisky.

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## Self-Efficacy

*Kirsten McKenna, Founder of Cortex Consulting and Winefulness, Performance Coach & Speaker, Sydney, Australia*

## Introduction

Psychologist Albert Bandura first described the self-efficacy theory in the 1970's. In recent years, self-efficacy has become increasingly applied in various fields including education, business and more recently in medicine. In this podcast, Kirsten McKenna talks about its relevance to junior doctors.

### 1. What is self-efficacy?

- Self-efficacy is defined as one's perceived ability to learn, achieve or perform an action
- It differs from confidence as it is more specific, positively geared and future orientated
- It is experience-dependent and influenced by those around us from a young age

### 2. How is self-efficacy relevant to junior doctors?

- A lot of junior doctors do not feel prepared when they begin postgraduate training
- Self-efficacy provides a tool or process to enhance performance, receive and give feedback and a mindset focused on growth
- There is often a culture of negative reinforcement in the current practice of medicine. Self-efficacy encourages positive achievements
- Senior clinicians should aim to encourage self-efficacy as part of their mentoring role

### 3. Components of self-efficacy

- **Mastery Experiences:** Outcomes are improved with more experience with a certain task. This can be enhanced by exposure or observation of tasks
- **Vicarious experiences:** Process of observing others who are performing similar tasks and achieving successfully, will improve self-efficacy
- **Verbal persuasion:** Process of giving and receiving feedback. As a junior doctor, this can be improved by aiming to receive as much feedback as you can get on your performance to reflect on and refine a task
- **Physiological Feedback:** Sensations, emotional experience and perceptions shape one's own belief of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy encourages a positive inner voice and finding practices that can put yourself in a positive physiological state

#### 4. How to assess self-efficacy?

- There are a number of validated tools including the General Self Efficacy Scale and Academic Self Efficacy Scale

#### 5. Self-efficacy in junior doctors

- Validated scales were used to assess a group of junior doctors at Gosford Hospital, in New South Wales, in 2020. The results showed that this group scored a lower self-efficacy compared to the general population
- A number of reasons were hypothesised as the cause including the big transition from medical school to individual practitioners in the first few years, doctors tending to be high achievers and the vast knowledge base needed to practice medicine

#### 6. Tips to improve self-efficacy in junior doctors

- Aim to throw yourself into a challenging situation with an objective to learn
- Have self-compassion when our performance does not meet expectations and move on with the learning
- Schedule wellbeing sessions: yoga, meditation, visualisation, social connections

#### Take home messages

In order to improve self-efficacy, junior doctors should aim to continue practicing and gaining feedback from challenging tasks, observing other doctors and asking questions, continue to have a positive outlook prior to challenging experiences and genuinely prioritising their wellbeing

#### Resources

- Association for Psychological Science, Stanford University. Inside the Psychologist's Studio with Albert Bandura. 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=->

\_U-pSZwHy8

- TEDx Talks, Mamie Morrow. Why Self-Efficacy Matters. 2019.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agwsjYg9hJ8>
- Positive Psychology website. <https://positivepsychology.com>
- Self-Compassion website. <https://self-compassion.org/>
- Cortex Consulting website. [www.cortexconsulting.com.au/](http://www.cortexconsulting.com.au/)
- General Information: <https://positivepsychology.com/self-efficacy-scales/>
- Self-Efficacy Beliefs In Medical Students
- Self-Efficacy Moderates Feedback From Supervisors
- Applying Sport Psychology to Improve Clinical Performance
- Information Sheet – self-efficacy: <https://onthewards.org/information-sheet-self-efficacy/>
- Coping – self-efficacy scale: <https://onthewards.org/coping-self-efficacy-scale/>
- General self-efficacy scale-GSE: [https://onthewards.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/General\\_Self-Efficacy\\_Scale-GSE.pdf](https://onthewards.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/General_Self-Efficacy_Scale-GSE.pdf)

## Related Blogs

- [Setting your sights to thrive](#)
- [A letter to an intern](#)
- [Pearls of wisdom for newly minted junior doctors](#)
- [Registering the feedback loop: communicating and supervising as a first year registrar](#)
- [An alternative route to burnout](#)
- [Asking for help](#)

## Related Podcasts

- [Wellbeing: Looking after yourself to look after others](#)
- [Self-care](#)
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- [Preparing for high performance under pressure and for exams](#)

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