



# SELF-EFFICACY

**SELF-EFFICACY:** An individual's belief in their ability to execute the behaviours necessary to achieve a goal.

**Self-efficacy** is critical to successful behaviour change.

There are four main ways to increase self-efficacy:

## 1. MASTERY EXPERIENCES

Learning through personal experience.



- Achieving mastery over a difficult or previously feared task increases self-efficacy.
- Successive mastery leads to the refinement of skills and development of coping mechanisms to deal with problems.

*Approaches for clinical practice:*

- Collaborate with client to set challenging but achievable tasks that are tailored to the client's starting point.
- Gradually increase task difficulty through a graded plan (see our 'SMART goals' resource).
- Encourage practice.
- Attribute accomplishments to the client's abilities.

## YOUR TURN!

Try creating a graded plan:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4



### 3. EMOTION REGULATION

Effectively managing and responding to unpleasant emotions.

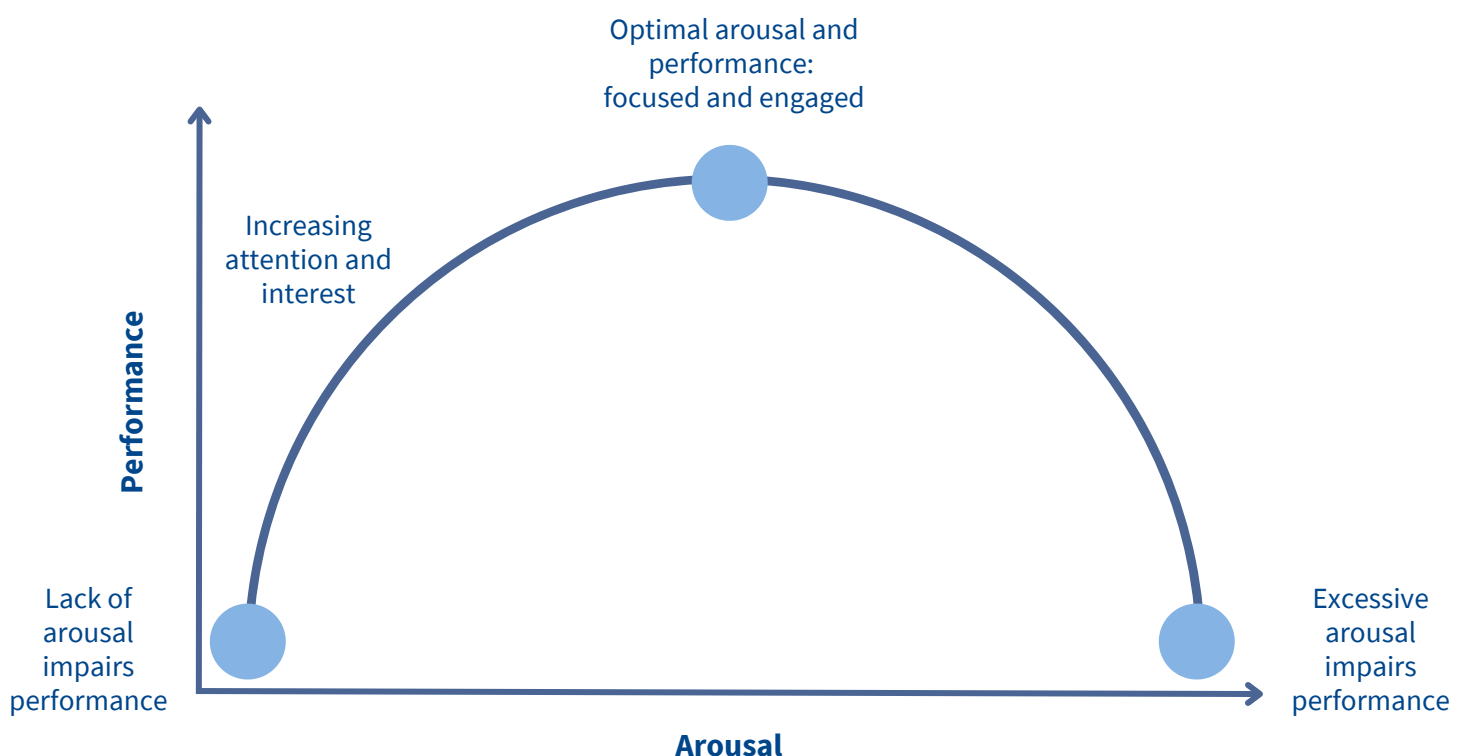


- Positive mood can boost self-efficacy.
- Anxiety or high physiological arousal can undermine self-efficacy, especially if one believes that arousal impairs performance or if one relies on information about their physiological state to determine their capabilities.

*Approaches for clinical practice:*

- Reduce stressful elements of task performance by managing mood before and during performance.
- Normalise anxiety.
- Teach techniques such as controlled breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and/or imagery.
- Provide clients with mobile applications that assist with relaxation and mindfulness: Breathe by ReachOut, Smiling Mind, Head Space, Calm.
- Teach clients about the Yerkes-Dodson law to challenge the belief that one cannot do something when experiencing anxiety (see diagram below).

### YERKES-DODSON LAW



## 4. VERBAL PERSUASION

Communication from others about one's capabilities.



- Providing credible feedback and/or reinforcement can boost self-efficacy.
- The effectiveness of this approach depends on whether the client believes what they are told about their capabilities.

*Approaches for clinical practice:*

- Give clients appropriate and constructive feedback on their performance.
- Feedback should always be credible rather than overly positive.

*Example feedback:*

- Well done, you are nearly there. Adding X could help you achieve your goal.
- You managed to achieve your goal every day except Sunday. That's a great start! Let's discuss what happened on Sunday to see what we can learn.
- You did X twice this week, which means you can do it! What can you do to make it happen more often?

\*Note the use of "we" and "you" in the examples above. The client needs to feel empowered to do things themselves ("what can you do") but must also feel supported in learning experiences ("what can we learn").

### References

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