

Teaching my child self-efficacy and how it can help them manage their childhood-onset heart disease



What is self-efficacy?

Self-efficacy is the belief in your own ability to succeed in achieving a goal and having the confidence to know you can accomplish whatever you set out to do through the management of your emotions, behaviour and thoughts.

Children and adults with higher levels of self-efficacy can perform more challenging tasks, set higher goals and, importantly, carry them out. People with high levels of self-efficacy put more effort into tasks and persist longer. This helps them to build resilience and when setbacks occur they can still move forwards and complete their goals.

Why is it important for my teen?

Building self-efficacy can improve health outcomes and quality of life for patients living with a life-long disease such as childhood-onset heart disease (CoHD).

As your teen progresses through adolescence they will eventually need to start to manage their own life and healthcare and make important decisions about difficult problems on their own.

Research has shown that good self-efficacy predicts better self-management of life-long conditions such as CoHD. It is also important for improving mental health, general quality of life and can even help with educational outcomes. It can also help your teen to cope with difficult situations, reducing feelings of stress and enhancing positive emotions.

How can I help them develop this skill?

Provide them with opportunities to practice

When they have successful experiences they will build self-efficacy. By letting them gradually become responsible for their care you will provide them with these opportunities.

Give them opportunities to learn from the success of others

This could be watching you make a health booking or through talking to other teens going through the same learning experience through a support group. People draw strength to succeed themselves through observing the success of others.

Give them encouragement

By giving feedback and helping guide them through tasks, you can help motivate them to put in their best effort! Coach them to success when they are having problems or get stuck on tasks.

Help them understand their emotions

When trying something new or difficult it is easy to become anxious which can stop people completing or even trying out tasks. By explaining that feeling anxious is normal and just another way of feeling excited can help your teen recognise the feeling and use it in a positive way. Provide support during the tasks that make them anxious to help them succeed. The more they practice the stronger the emotion will be linked with success, improving self-efficacy!

Have self-belief

Make sure you are well informed about CoHD, act as a good role model and believe in your role in their education. If you believe in yourself this will build trust and help build their self-efficacy.

Provide a stimulating environment

Show interest in their learning. Perform tasks together and encourage them to learn with and from peers. Online resources are also great in building this skill and younger people learn well online. Working together on tasks will breed success!

If you want to find out more about self-efficacy you can watch a short video by scanning the QR code.

