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Self-Perception and Self-Confidence

UNIT 7



MAVİ PENCERE
Special Education Association



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Theme 7:

Self-Perception and Self-Confidence

Self-perception is the way we see ourselves. It is how we understand our own thoughts, feelings, abilities and values. It is the internal image that we have of who we are. Self-perception is not only about our physical appearance, but also about our personality, our skills and the way we react to situations. It includes how we think about our strengths and weaknesses. It also includes how we judge our decisions and actions. Every person has a self-perception, even if they are not fully aware of it. Self-perception can change over time. It can be influenced by experiences, feedback from others and personal reflection. For example, if someone receives encouragement from friends or family, they may feel more capable. On the other hand, negative experiences or criticism can lower self-perception. Self-perception is important because it affects how we behave. People with a positive self-perception are more likely to try new things and take healthy risks. People with a negative self-perception may avoid challenges or feel anxious.



Self-confidence is closely related to self-perception. It is the belief in our own abilities and skills. Self-confidence allows us to trust ourselves. It helps us make decisions without constantly doubting ourselves. Confident people are more likely to express their ideas and opinions. They are more likely to take action in difficult situations. Self-confidence does not mean that we never feel fear or doubt. It means that even when we feel uncertain, we still try and take steps forward.



Positive self-perception and self-confidence are important for everyday life. They help us face challenges. For example, when learning something new, a person with confidence is more likely to practice and improve. Positive self-perception also helps us cope with mistakes. We understand that making errors does not make us a bad person. It is a part of learning and growing. Confidence and a positive view of ourselves help us communicate better with others. We are more likely to build healthy relationships because we feel comfortable and secure. Self-perception and self-confidence are also connected to mental health. People who value themselves and believe in their abilities usually have lower stress levels. They are less likely to experience anxiety or depression. When self-perception is negative, it can create self-doubt, worry and fear. Over time, this can affect emotional well-being and personal growth. Self-perception includes how we see our body, our emotions and our personality. It also includes our skills, talents and achievements. We notice how we react in different situations, such as at work, at home, or in social settings. We compare our abilities to our own expectations and sometimes to others. This comparison can be positive or negative. Positive comparisons can motivate us, but negative comparisons may lower our self-confidence.





Building self-confidence starts with understanding self-perception. By recognizing our strengths and weaknesses, we can set realistic goals. Small achievements gradually increase our confidence. Practicing skills, asking for feedback and reflecting on progress are all important steps. Confidence also grows when we face challenges, solve problems and learn from experiences. Self-perception and confidence are not fixed traits. They are flexible and can improve at any age. Everyone can develop a better understanding of themselves. Everyone can grow their belief in their abilities. With practice, reflection, support and patience, self-perception can become more positive. Self-confidence can become stronger. This helps people feel capable, make good decisions and live a more fulfilling life.

In summary, self-perception is how we see ourselves in terms of thoughts, feelings, abilities and values. Self-confidence is the belief in ourselves and our skills. Both are connected. Positive self-perception and confidence help us handle challenges, cope with mistakes, build strong relationships, communicate well and grow as individuals. Everyone has the ability to improve these aspects over time, with practice, support and self-compassion.





Topic 1: Understanding Self-Perception



Self-perception is your personal view of who you are. It is the way you understand yourself, your abilities, your personality and your emotions. It is like a mirror inside your mind, reflecting how you feel about yourself and how you judge your actions. Every person has a self-perception, even if they do not think about it consciously. Self-perception affects many areas of life. It influences how we make decisions, how we handle challenges and how we interact with other people. Understanding self-perception is important because it allows us to recognize patterns in our thinking and behavior. When we understand how we see ourselves, we can work to improve the parts that hold us back and strengthen the parts that help us grow.



1. Components of Self-Perception

Self-perception includes several aspects of who we are. These include:

- **Abilities and skills:**

Abilities are the things we can do. They include practical skills, like cooking or using technology and mental skills, like problem-solving or planning. Skills also include social abilities, like communicating clearly, understanding others and managing emotions. When we have a clear understanding of our abilities, we can make better choices and set realistic goals. For example, if you know you are good at drawing, you may choose to practice more or share your art with others. On the other hand, if you underestimate your skills, you may avoid opportunities that could help you grow.



- **Appearance:**

Appearance is how we see our physical self. It includes how we feel about our body, face and style. Our appearance affects our self-perception because it influences confidence and comfort in social situations. Positive feelings about appearance can make us feel proud and motivated. Negative feelings, like dissatisfaction with body image, can lower confidence and make us avoid social interactions. Appearance is only one part of self-perception, but it interacts with how we view our abilities and personality.



- **Emotions:**

Emotions are another important part of self-perception. They include how we feel in different situations and how we understand our feelings. For example, noticing when you feel happy, anxious, frustrated, or proud helps you understand yourself better. People with strong self-perception recognize their emotions and can explain them to others. Emotions influence behavior: if you are angry, you may respond differently than if you are calm. Understanding your emotions is a key step to improving self-perception.



- **Personality:**

Personality refers to your traits, habits, and ways of thinking. It is how you behave naturally and how you relate to others. For example, some people are naturally outgoing, while others are more reserved. Some are patient, and some are quick to react. Understanding your personality helps you make choices that fit your style. It also helps you appreciate differences in others and avoid unnecessary conflicts. Personality interacts with abilities and emotions to shape your overall self-perception.



2. Types of Self-Perception

Self-perception can be **positive, negative, or mixed**.



- **Positive self-perception:**

This is when you see yourself in a good light. You recognize your strengths and accept your weaknesses. Positive self-perception helps you feel capable and motivated. It encourages learning, growth and trying new things. People with positive self-perception are more likely to set goals, face challenges and recover from setbacks. For example, if you see yourself as a good listener, you may volunteer to help friends solve problems.



- **Negative self-perception:**

Negative self-perception occurs when you focus on weaknesses or mistakes. You may doubt your abilities or feel inadequate. Negative self-perception can lower confidence, increase stress and make challenges feel overwhelming. It can also cause people to avoid opportunities or isolate themselves. For example, if you believe you are bad at speaking in public, you may avoid presentations, missing chances to improve.



- **Mixed self-perception:**

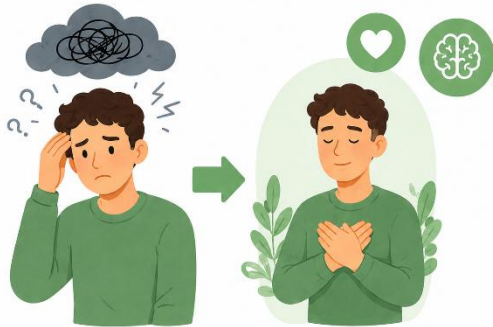
Many people have a mix of positive and negative perceptions. You may feel confident in one area, like art or cooking, but insecure in another, like sports or social skills. Mixed self-perception is normal. Recognizing both strengths and weaknesses allows you to focus on improvement while appreciating your abilities.



3. Effects of Self-Perception



- **Confidence and motivation:**
Positive self-perception increases confidence and motivation. When you believe in your abilities, you are more willing to take risks, try new things and face challenges.



- **Stress and mental health:**
Negative self-perception can increase stress and affect emotional well-being. People may feel anxious, frustrated, or hopeless if they see themselves negatively.



- **Relationships and social life:**
Self-perception affects how you interact with others. Positive self-view helps build trust and communicate effectively. Negative self-view may cause withdrawal, defensiveness, or social anxiety.



4. How Self-Perception Develops

Self-perception develops through several sources:

- **Experiences:**
Everything you go through in life shapes how you see yourself. Successes build confidence. Failures can be opportunities for learning but may also hurt self-perception if not processed positively.
- **Feedback from others:**
Words and actions of family, friends, teachers, and colleagues influence self-perception. Encouragement and recognition improve it, while criticism or neglect can harm it.
- **Self-reflection:**
Thinking about your actions, decisions and feelings helps you understand yourself better. Self-reflection allows you to correct negative thoughts and recognize achievements. Regular reflection strengthens positive self-perception.

Understanding self-perception is the first step to improving confidence. It involves noticing your abilities, appearance, emotions and personality. Self-perception can be positive, negative, or mixed. Positive self-perception increases confidence and motivation, while negative perception can cause stress and self-doubt. It develops from life experiences, feedback and reflection. By recognizing and understanding self-perception, you can take steps to strengthen confidence, make better decisions and build healthier relationships.





Topic 2: Building Self-Confidence



Self-confidence is the belief that you can do things successfully. It is the inner feeling that you are capable, skilled and able to handle different situations. When a person has self-confidence, they feel more secure, more open to challenges and more motivated to try new things. Many people are not born confident. Confidence is built slowly, through daily actions, repeated practice, support from others and personal reflection.

Building self-confidence is a gradual process. It takes time, patience and consistency. You do not need big achievements to start building confidence. Small steps can lead to major improvement. When you begin to believe in your own strengths, you communicate more easily, make clearer decisions and feel more comfortable in your own life.



1. Self-confidence comes from believing in your skills and decisions

Self-confidence begins with believing in yourself. This means trusting your abilities and recognizing what you can do well. It also means understanding that you have strengths, knowledge and talents that matter.

Believing in your decisions is equally important. When you trust your own choices, you stop doubting yourself all the time. For example:

- choosing which task to do first,
- deciding how to respond in a difficult conversation,
- choosing to try something new even if it feels uncomfortable.

When you believe in your skills and decisions, you act with more calmness and courage. Even when you make mistakes, you do not judge yourself too harshly. Instead, you see mistakes as learning opportunities, not as failures. This mindset builds strong and lasting self-confidence.



2. Self-confidence grows by setting small goals and achieving them

Small goals are one of the most powerful tools for building confidence. They are easy to complete and do not create stress. When you set a small goal and reach it, your brain recognizes it as a success. Success increases confidence naturally. Examples of small goals:

- organizing your desk,
- learning one small new skill for 10 minutes,
- taking a short walk,
- finishing a simple task you have postponed.

Each small achievement becomes “proof” that you can succeed. Step by step, these small successes build stronger confidence. Over time, small goals help you feel more capable and more prepared for bigger challenges.

3. Practicing skills regularly increases confidence

Practice is a key part of building self-confidence. When you practice a skill often, it becomes easier and more natural. The more you repeat it, the more comfortable and confident you feel. Your brain learns through repetition. Practice sends the message: “I know how to do this.”

Examples:

- Practicing sign language with new people helps you communicate more freely.
- Practicing writing helps you express your thoughts more clearly.
- Practicing a sport helps you build strength and confidence because you see improvement.

Regular practice reduces fear. It shows you that skills can grow and change. With every practice session, your confidence becomes stronger and more stable.



4. Support from friends, family and mentors strengthens self-confidence

Support from others is extremely important. When you have people who believe in you, it changes how you see yourself. Encouraging words, emotional support and understanding from others help build confidence. Supportive people can:

- lift you up when you doubt yourself,
- remind you of your past successes,
-
- give honest and helpful feedback,
- make you feel safe to try new things.



Mentors and teachers also play a big role. They can see your abilities clearly and help you develop them. They can guide you, challenge you and help you grow. The people around you can act like a mirror that reflects your strengths and potential.

5. Positive self-talk helps change negative thoughts into encouraging ones

Positive self-talk is the way you speak to yourself in your mind. It is the internal voice that reacts to challenges. If this voice is negative, it can weaken your confidence. But if you learn to talk to yourself kindly and supportively, your confidence grows.

Examples of negative self-talk:

- “I can’t do this.”
- “I’m not good enough.”
- “I will fail.”

Positive self-talk replaces these thoughts with supportive ones:

- “I can try. It does not have to be perfect.”
- “I am learning. It is okay to make mistakes.”
- “I have succeeded before. I can do it again.”

Positive self-talk is a skill. It takes practice, but it can transform the way you feel about yourself. Over time, it builds a stronger sense of self-worth and self-confidence.





6. Facing challenges rather than avoiding them builds resilience and confidence

Confidence does not grow only from success. It also grows from facing challenges. When you avoid challenges, fear and doubt become stronger. But when you face a challenge, even if it feels uncomfortable, you show yourself that you are capable. Facing challenges can mean:

- trying something new,
- communicating with new people,
- expressing an opinion,
- solving a difficult problem,
- staying calm in a stressful situation.

Each time you face something difficult, your resilience grows. Resilience is the ability to recover, adapt and keep going. Strong resilience creates strong confidence. Even if the result is not perfect, the act of trying builds your inner strength.

Building self-confidence is a long, steady process. It starts with believing in yourself and trusting your decisions. It continues through setting small goals, practicing skills, receiving support, using positive self-talk and facing challenges with courage. All these steps work together to create strong, stable self-confidence that improves your life, your relationships and your emotional well-being.





Topic 3: Factors Affecting Self-Perception and Confidence

Self-perception and self-confidence are shaped by many different influences in a person's life. They do not develop in isolation. Instead, they change over time based on experiences, relationships, emotions, communication and personal growth. The way a person sees themselves is connected to the events they have lived through and the environment they interact with every day. For deaf adults, these influences can feel even stronger, especially when communication, accessibility and social understanding are involved.

Understanding the factors that shape self-perception helps people recognize why they think and feel the way they do. It also helps them understand that low confidence is not a personal failure, it is often the result of repeated challenges or unsupported experiences. When individuals become aware of these influences, they can take steps to strengthen their self-view, build healthier confidence and create a more accurate picture of their abilities. Just like building confidence, understanding these factors is a gradual process. It requires reflection, patience and honesty. Each factor offers an opportunity for growth, healing and self-improvement.

1. Past experiences, successes and failures influence self-view

Past experiences are one of the strongest forces shaping self-perception. Every success creates a sense of pride and ability. These moments act as reminders that you are capable, strong and able to learn. Even small successes – solving a problem, completing a task, communicating clearly, build a foundation of confidence that grows over time.

Failures and difficult experiences, however, can have the opposite effect. When a person faces repeated obstacles, misunderstandings or criticism, they may begin to doubt themselves. They may start to believe negative messages from the past, even when those messages are not true. For deaf adults, experiences with exclusion, communication barriers, or lack of understanding can strongly influence how they view their abilities.

But past experiences do not define the future. By understanding how the past has shaped your self-perception, you can begin to challenge old beliefs, celebrate past successes, and build a healthier and more accurate sense of who you are.



2. Comparison with others can harm self-confidence

Comparing yourself to others is a common habit, but it can be very damaging. When people compare their own lives, abilities or achievements to someone else's, they often focus only on what they think they lack. Social media makes this even harder, because it shows only the best parts of people's lives – successes, achievements and happy moments, without showing the challenges behind them.

Comparison can create feelings of jealousy, pressure or self-doubt. It can make you feel as if you are not good enough, even when you are doing your best. It can also distract you from your personal growth, because your attention becomes fixed on someone else's progress instead of your own.

A healthier approach is to compare yourself only to your past self. Ask questions like:

- “How have I grown?”
- “What am I doing better than before?”
- “What small successes have I achieved?”

By focusing on personal progress instead of comparison, self-confidence becomes stronger, more stable and more authentic.





3. Social support and encouragement improve self-perception

Supportive relationships have a powerful impact on how people see themselves. When you are surrounded by people who understand, respect and appreciate you, it becomes easier to believe in your own abilities. Encouraging words from friends, family, mentors or colleagues can help you recognize strengths you may not see in yourself.

Supportive people can:

- remind you of your successes,
- help you stay motivated,
- give honest and caring feedback,
- make you feel safe to express yourself,
- help you handle stress and challenges.



For deaf adults, social support also includes accessible communication – people who sign, people who are patient and environments where communication is equal. Being understood and valued in communication improves self-perception and helps individuals feel confident in social situations.

When you receive support from others, it reflects your worth back to you. This reflection strengthens your identity and builds long-lasting confidence.

4. Physical health, emotions and stress levels affect confidence

The body and mind are deeply connected. When your physical health is strong, when you sleep well, eat well and move your body, you often feel more energetic and capable. When you feel tired, sick or physically overwhelmed, even simple tasks can feel intimidating. This can temporarily lower confidence and make challenges seem bigger than they are.

Emotions have a similar influence. Feelings like anxiety, sadness, frustration or stress can affect how you interpret situations. Stress can create negative thoughts, which may weaken confidence. Emotional exhaustion can make you question your abilities or avoid situations you normally handle well.

Recognizing the connection between physical health and self-confidence helps people understand that low confidence is not always a personal flaw. Sometimes, the body simply needs rest, support or care. Healthy routines, stress-management techniques and emotional awareness can greatly improve self-perception.





5. Communication abilities, especially for deaf adults, impact self-confidence in social situations

For deaf adults, communication plays a major role in self-perception. Clear communication builds connection, trust and confidence. When communication goes well, individuals feel understood, included and respected. However, when communication is difficult, when people do not sign, do not face you, or do not try to understand, it can create frustration, embarrassment or insecurity.

Communication barriers may lead to:

- misunderstandings,
- feeling ignored or left out,
- fear of joining conversations,
- decreased confidence in social settings,
- reduced participation in group situations.

These experiences do not mean a person lacks ability. They mean the environment is not accessible. When communication is supported, through sign language access, interpreters, captioning, patient communication partners or visual tools, confidence increases. People feel free to express themselves and take part in conversations without fear.

Accessible communication is essential for strong, healthy self-confidence.





6. Learning new skills and celebrating achievements enhance self-esteem

Learning new skills expands your abilities and strengthens your identity. Each new skill becomes evidence that you are capable of growth. Whether the skill is practical, creative, academic or social, it adds to your sense of competence.

Celebrating achievements is equally important. Many people forget to acknowledge their own progress. They move from one task to the next without recognizing how far they have come. Celebrating achievements, even small ones, helps you remember your strengths and successes.

Examples of achievements worth celebrating:

- finishing a task,
- improving communication skills,
- learning new vocabulary in sign language,
- solving a problem independently,
- staying calm in a difficult moment,
- taking care of yourself during stress.

Each celebration acts like a small boost of confidence. Over time, these boosts build a strong foundation of self-esteem and resilience.

Self-perception and self-confidence are shaped by many different influences (past experiences, comparison with others, social support, physical and emotional wellbeing, communication environments and skill development). By understanding these factors, individuals gain the power to reshape their own self-view. They can challenge negative beliefs from the past, seek healthier communication, build supportive relationships, strengthen their emotional and physical wellbeing and celebrate their achievements.

All these elements work together to create a stronger, healthier and more confident sense of self.





★ Learning Notes

These learning notes show the key ideas from Theme 7. They make the information easier to understand. They help learners remember the most important points.

1. Self-perception is how you see yourself: your abilities, emotions, personality and value. It can be positive, negative or mixed, and it changes over time based on your experiences.
2. Self-confidence is the belief that you can do things successfully. It grows through practice, small achievements, support from others and positive self-talk.
3. Past experiences, including successes and failures, strongly shape self-perception. Positive experiences build confidence, while negative ones can create doubt, but they do not define your future.
4. Comparing yourself to others often harms self-confidence. Focusing on your own progress helps build a healthier self-view and reduces negative thoughts.
5. Social support and encouragement from friends, family, mentors and accessible communication improve self-perception and emotional wellbeing.
6. Physical health, emotions and stress levels affect how confident you feel. Taking care of your body and mind strengthens your inner balance and self-esteem.
7. Communication experiences and learning new skills increase confidence. Clear communication and celebrating achievements help deaf adults feel capable, connected and motivated.





Assessment Test:
Theme 7 + Answer Key

Instructions:

Read each question carefully. Choose the correct answer from the options given. For True/False questions, select the correct statement. Select only one answer per question.

1. Self-perception means:

- a) How others describe you
- b) How you see and understand yourself
- c) Only your physical appearance
- d) Your job or social status

2. True or False: Self-confidence grows through small successes, practice and positive self-talk.

- a) True
- b) False

3. Past experiences influence self-perception because:

- a) They shape how you view your strengths and abilities
- b) They have no impact on confidence
- c) Only successes matter
- d) You must forget all past events

4. Comparing yourself to others usually:

- a) Builds strong confidence
- b) Helps you grow faster
- c) Weakens self-esteem and creates negative thoughts
- d) Makes you perfect





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5. Social support improves self-perception by:

- a) Creating pressure to perform
- b) Providing encouragement, understanding and accessible communication
- c) Making you depend on others forever
- d) Avoiding honest feedback

6. True or False: Clear communication and learning new skills help deaf adults build confidence and feel more capable.

- a) True
- b) False

Question	Correct answer
1.	B
2.	A
3.	A
4.	C
5.	B
6.	A



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