



Confidence





Welcome to *UP Skills for Work!*

The program helps you build your skills for learning, work, and life, which include:

- Motivation
- Attitude
- Accountability
- Presentation
- Collaboration
- Time Management
- Adaptability
- Stress Management
- Reading
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Digital
- Problem Solving
- Confidence
- Communication
- Creativity and Innovation

These skills are used in nearly every job and in daily life. They also allow us to learn new skills and to adapt to changes. Improving your skills can help you to build a good life for yourself.

You can also take these courses on [ABCskillshub.ca](https://www.abcskillshub.ca)

This workshop

Confidence (or to be more exact, self-confidence) helps us to build a happy and successful life. It gives us the courage to take on new challenges and make the most of our lives.

In this workshop, we will explore what confidence is and what it feels like. We'll talk about how low confidence can hold us back, and how we can build our self-confidence over time.

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What is confidence?

Confidence is believing in yourself and your ability to take on a challenge and succeed. True confidence is realistic. It's based on understanding both your strengths and your weaknesses. Above all, it's based on the belief that you are able to learn new things and grow as a person.



Confidence is believing in yourself—in what you can do now, and in what you can learn to do tomorrow.

Confidence helps us to succeed in our goals by giving us the courage to try. It doesn't mean we believe we will always succeed! Confidence means being less afraid of failure. When you're confident, you know you will be able to recover from a setback – and learn from it.

Confidence is something you can work on and build.



Let's talk about it

- What does confidence mean to you?
- What sort of things help you feel more confident?
- What are some situations where you need confidence the most?
- Why can it be hard to feel confident? Why can it be hard to show others that you feel confident?



Ice breaker activity

“I don’t know”

- Find a partner. One of you will be Person A, and the other will be Person B.
- Person A has 30 seconds to make as many “I don’t know” statements about Person B as possible.
- For example: “I don’t know where you were born,” “I don’t know if you have children,” “I don’t know what your favourite food is.”
- Now Person B has 30 seconds to answer as many of the “I don’t know” statements as they can remember.
- Switch roles and play again.



Let’s talk about it

- Did you find it easier to be the person asking the questions, or answering the questions? Why?
- Do you feel more confident with your partner now that you know a bit more about each other?
- How did it feel to say you don’t know something?
- How does it feel to admit you don’t know something, when it’s about your work? How does that relate to confidence?
- Is shyness related to confidence?



What's my confidence level right now?

For each of these statements, check the box that is closest to how you feel.

How I feel about my confidence

Statements	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Not sure
I can accomplish most things I set out to do.				
When problems arise, I can usually solve them.				
I know what I'm good at, and what is more difficult for me.				
I believe I can succeed even at a challenging task.				
With training, I know I can learn new skills.				



The benefits of confidence

Confidence has an impact on many areas of our lives. Here are just some of the benefits of improving your confidence:



Motivation

The more you stretch yourself to attain new goals, the more you want to keep going. And every time you work hard, struggle, try again, and finally succeed, your confidence gets a boost. That feels good, and motivates you even more.



Less anxiety

When we lack confidence, we can spend a lot of time and energy worrying. Thoughts like “I can’t do it” and “What if I fail?” tend to go around and around in our heads. As our confidence grows, these negative thoughts fade and we are able to take action. That doesn’t mean we never have self-doubt or worries! But we don’t let them take over.



More courage

Lack of confidence keeps us from trying things if we aren’t sure we will succeed – like applying for a better job, asking someone out on a date, or going back to school. Confidence gives us the courage to try something that’s worthwhile.



Better relationships

When you have more self-confidence, you are less **self-conscious**. When you feel good about yourself, you can focus more fully on your friends, partners, or co-workers.



Being **self-conscious** means feeling worried about how other people view us.



Accepting yourself

With confidence, you can celebrate and use your strengths, and accept your weaknesses. You know who you are and that you are good enough.



Let's talk about it

- Can you think of any other benefits that come from confidence?

Taking on challenges with confidence



Meet Jay

Jay's work unit needs to elect someone to sit on the health and safety committee.

Years ago, Jay saw one of his buddies badly hurt on a job site that wasn't as safe as it should be. Since then, he takes safety on the job seriously. He likes the idea of being on a committee to help keep workers safe.

But he doesn't put his name forward. "I'm not good at talking in front of people, or reading all that legal stuff," he thinks. "And I probably wouldn't be chosen anyway."



Meet Jenna

Jenna works at the same company as Jay. She is also interested in joining the health and safety committee. She has the same doubts as Jay. But then she thinks, "Some of the other people on the committee are like me, and they did fine. If they can learn it, I can."

Jenna volunteers her name and is chosen to be on the committee. She serves on the committee for five years and learns a lot from it.



Let's talk about it

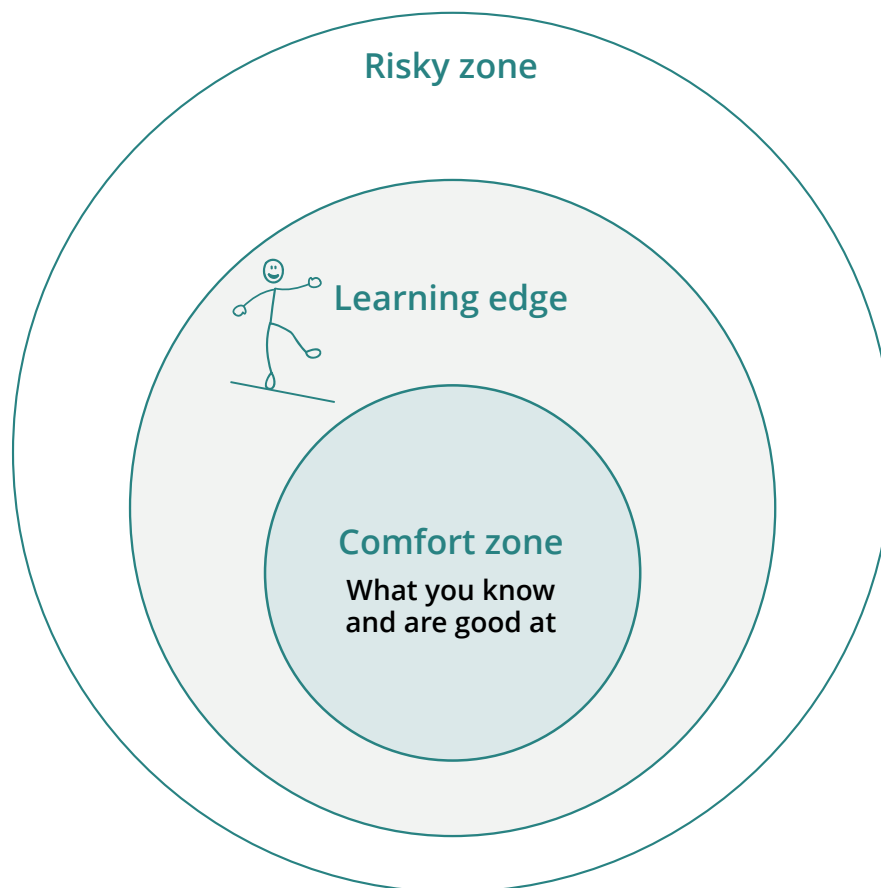
- Jenna and Jay both had fears about joining the committee. How did Jenna find the confidence to do it?
- If you were Jay's friend, what might you say to encourage him to run for the committee?
- Can you think of a time when you tried something you weren't sure you would succeed at? How did you find the confidence to do it?



Your learning edge

It takes confidence to go outside our **comfort zone** and take on a new challenge. At the same time, succeeding at a challenge (even if there are failures along the way) builds our confidence.

The **learning edge** is that place a step or two beyond what is easy and comfortable. That's where you learn and grow, but still have a good chance of success. Jumping into the **risky zone**, on the other hand, may be overconfident or even foolish. You need to think this challenge through with care.



Arjun, Franny, and Jean

After you read each story, check the box that best matches the choice made by the character to be on the “learning edge” or in the “risky zone.”

Arjun has worked for several years as a taxi driver. He would rather drive a bus. He speaks to a transit system manager to find out more about the job and how to qualify. Then he takes out a small bank loan to pay for a three-day training course. After that he will need to pass a test for the type of license he needs to drive a bus, and then find a new job as a bus driver.

Learning edge

Risky zone

Franny has a new job at a bakery. The owner needs a cake decorated and asks Franny if she can do it. Franny doesn't want to admit that she's never done cake decorating, so she says, “Sure.” After all, how hard can it be?

Learning edge

Risky zone

Jean has started as assistant manager of a car rental branch. He listened carefully during his training and has been doing really well. Then the manager asks him to make up the staff schedule. Jean doesn't remember how to use the scheduling program on the computer. He tries a couple of things, but it's not working and he's worried he might make a mistake that causes problems. He decides to ask the manager to review the steps again.

Learning edge

Risky zone



Let's talk about it

- Why do you think Arjun, Franny, and Jean made the choices they did?
- What would you advise each person to do?



Finding your confidence

Where does confidence come from? It's more than our record of successes and failures. A lot of it comes from within.

Our thoughts and past experiences can either build or weaken our confidence. So being aware of these things is important. When we know what is affecting us, we can do something about it.

Some causes of low confidence

Sometimes experiences from our past (or present) can cause us to have low confidence. For example:

- A lot of harsh criticism as a child or being made to feel like they could never be "good enough."
- Lack of success at school. School is such a big part of a child's life that not succeeding at school can make them feel like they're not good at anything. But school is only one part of life.
- Harsh treatment or abuse from people who are supposed to love them, or frequent bullying.
- A very stressful life event, ongoing serious health problem, or mental health disorder can all eat away at one's confidence.



Let's talk about it

- Can you think of other possible causes of low confidence?
- What are some ways to build your confidence again after a big setback?



It's not only personal

Bigger problems in our society, like poverty and racism, affect us as individuals. It can be harder to have confidence in yourself if your life experience includes being discriminated against or looked down on.



Some sources of confidence

What do you value about yourself? What are you proud of? One way to build your confidence is to keep a list of your good qualities and the things you have achieved. You can review this list when you need to remind yourself that you have reason to be confident.

Remember that what you learn in one area of your life can be applied to another. If you got through a time of high personal stress and managed well, you can likely deal well with stress at work. If you can do three things at once as a parent, you can probably juggle a busy job. If you have been a trustworthy and supportive friend, those same qualities will make you a good co-worker.

My reasons to be confident:

Write about your achievements, qualities, and roles below.

1. **My achievements** (at work, school, home, or in the community, your skills, knowledge, and successes)

2. **My qualities** (your positive values and personality traits)

3. **My roles** (roles you have taken on that you value: parent, friend, community volunteer, neighbour, mentor...)

Work on your list over several days, adding things as you remember them. Then read it over. Does it give you a new view of yourself?



Rewriting negative thoughts

We all have self-doubts. One way to build confidence is to “talk back” to that doubt with positive messages. Some people even look in the mirror and say it out loud!

The positive message you choose needs to be realistic. After all, if it’s not believable, it’s not going to help.



Meet Riley

Riley is very discouraged and down on himself when he fails his driver’s test for the second time. “How could I be so stupid!” he thinks. “I’ll never get it right. I may as well just give up.”



Let’s talk about it

- What could Riley tell himself to boost his confidence to try the test again?
- What plan could he make that will give him a good chance to succeed?



Communicating with confidence

The way we communicate affects both how people see us and how we feel.

An **assertive communication** style shows confidence, and also helps us feel more confident.



Assertive communication means you can be direct and stand up for yourself, but also respect other people's rights and feelings.

Assertive communication increases our confidence and earns respect from others. It invites people to solve problems together and can lead to better relationships.

For many of us, this style is different from what we are used to. But we can learn to communicate more assertively.



Tips for becoming more assertive

- Start small. Try being more assertive in situations that are low risk before tackling a difficult work or life problem. After each attempt, think about how it went and what you might do differently next time.
- Use “I” statements. This method is a good way to let others know what you are feeling and thinking without adding blame or accusing them. For example:

How to use “I” statements

Instead of this:	Try this:
You’re wrong.	I disagree.
You should be on time.	I don’t like having to cover for you when you are late.
Whatever.	I’d prefer not to eat sushi, but I’m open to any other option.
Would you turn off that damn radio! (or saying nothing)	I’m finding it hard to concentrate. Could you turn down your music or wear headphones?

- **Listen carefully.** Try to understand the other person’s view and don’t interrupt.
- **Rehearse what you want to say.** Consider role-playing with a friend and asking for feedback.
- **Stay calm.** Feeling angry, frustrated, or crying is normal when there is conflict—but these emotions can get in the way of problem-solving. Try to breathe slowly and keep your voice even and firm.



Learning to be assertive takes practice. Using “I” statements or preparing what you want to say ahead of time can feel awkward at first, but with time it will be more natural.



Did you know?

Did you know that our body language can actually make us feel more or less confident?

Try this experiment:



Sit up straight or stand up tall. Put your hands on your hips and plant your feet about two feet apart. Lift your head. Lift your chest and pull your shoulders back (comfortably). Hold this position for two minutes.

Write how that felt below.

Sitting or standing tall, open and relaxed shows confidence, and also makes us feel more confident.



Build confidence with community

Connecting with others and confidence go hand-in-hand. As we become more confident, we are more willing to step out of our comfort zone to connect with others. And having a connection with people who support you helps boost your confidence.

Some ideas for making connections at work:

- Have lunch with a co-worker
- Join a committee
- Sign up for a training session
- Get involved with your union
- Volunteer for a work-sponsored charity event

Collect small wins

Telling yourself that you can do it is helpful, but proving to yourself that you can do it has a lasting effect.

Building small steps along the way to a big goal makes you more likely to succeed, and also steadily increases your confidence as you go.



Meet Lena

Lena is a smart, hard-working employee. However, she is very nervous about speaking to a group of people. She knows she could go farther in her job if she was a more confident speaker.

Lena starts planning small steps. First, she resolves to make at least one comment at each staff meeting. She presents an idea she and her co-workers developed to their boss. Next, she gives a toast at a dinner party. These things give her a little more confidence, but she is still afraid of speaking to a larger crowd. She decides to get some training, and signs up for a public speaking course. She is very nervous at first, but the teacher helps her feel safe. She learns tips for calming her nerves, keeping an audience's attention, and how to put together a talk. At the end of the course she gives a speech to the class and is really proud of herself. She knows she is making progress!



Let's talk about it

- What small steps did Lena make to achieve her goals?
- Is Lena using any other skills that we've talked about today?



Congratulations!

You've completed the *UP Skills for Work* **Confidence** workbook. You've taken a step in building skills for learning, work, and life.

What did you learn about your confidence? What would you like to improve?

For the last activity, we hope you will make a **pledge** to continue building your confidence skills.



Skill words

A **pledge** is a serious promise to yourself or to others.

The pledge can be personal, or you can share it with others.

My pledge

I pledge to work on my confidence skills by:

Sometimes a pledge needs an **action plan**: a list of steps you'll take to make your pledge happen.

My action plan

What do I need to do first?

Who will support me?

How will I overcome setbacks and obstacles?