Confidence depends on having a healthy level of self esteem and being able to employ skills to help us perform in challenging situations.

**SELF ESTEEM**

Self esteem is the concept we have about ourselves. We are not born with negative beliefs but these often develop as a result of life experiences. Low self esteem can lead us to believe we are not as good others, or that we must behave in a certain way to maintain the approval of significant people. Because of such beliefs, we adopt biased ways of thinking about the world and behave in unhelpful ways.

**BEHAVIOUR ASSOCIATED WITH LOW SELF ESTEEM**

- Playing down our achievements, or not even noticing them.
- Focusing on what’s gone wrong, rather than being pleased about what went well.
- Being self critical and comparing ourselves unfavourably to others.
- Imagining that others think and feel negatively about us.

**RAISING SELF ESTEEM**

In order to feel better about ourselves we need to recognise and celebrate our positive qualities.
• Write a list of your positive qualities and some evidence for each. Read the list everyday and add new items.
• At the end of each day, think about 3 good things that have happened, rather dwell on disappointments and what went wrong.
• Start challenging that negative parrot on your shoulder — the one that says ‘you’re no good’, ‘you screwed that up’, etc. Counteract what it says about you by providing evidence to the contrary.

DEVELOP NEW SKILLS TO RAISE YOUR CONFIDENCE

• Visit the Mental Health Resource Room on the Student Counselling Centre website. Check out the booklist and self help materials in the confidence and self esteem section.
• Look out for groups and workshops on confidence related topics at the Counselling Centre, Library and LUU.
• Get out of your comfort zone and start practising. If we lack confidence we often avoid situations we feel anxious in, but this reinforces our belief we can’t succeed and our confidence remains low.
• Lower your expectations. Set yourself small, specific, achievable goals you can succeed at, rather than vague, over ambitious ones that are unrealistic.