# Perceived Competence Scales

## Scale Description

Within Self-Determination Theory, competence is assumed to be one of three fundamental psychological needs, so the feelings or perceptions of competence with respect to an activity or domain is theorized to be important both because it facilitates peopleÕs goal attainment and also provides them with a sense of need satisfaction from engaging in an activity at which they feel effective. Thus, perceived competence has been assessed in various studies and used, along with perceived autonomy (i.e., an autonomous regulatory style) to predict maintained behavior change, effective performance, and internalization of ambient values.

The Perceived Competence Scale (PCS) is a short, 4-item questionnaire, and is one of the most face valid of the instruments designed to assess constructs from SDT. Like several of the other measures--including the Self-Regulation Questionnaires and the Perveiced Autonomy Support (Climate) Questionnaires--items on the PCS is typically written to be specific to the relevant behavior or domain being studied. The PCS assesses participantsÕ feelings of competence about, say, taking a particular college course, engaging in a healthier behavior, participating in a physical activity regularly, or following through on some commitment. In this packet, there are two versions of the questionnaire concerning the feelings of being able to stick with a treatment regimen and being about to master the material in a course.

Two examples of studies that have used the PSC are Williams, Freedman, Deci (1998) for management of glucose levels among patients with diabetes and Williams and Deci (1996) medical students learning the material in an interviewing course. The alpha measure of internal consistency for the perceived competence items in these studies was above 0.80. Additional examples of the PCS can be found in the SDT web site within the Health Care, SDT packet.
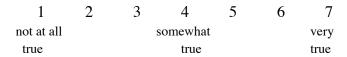
Williams, G. C., Freedman, Z.R., & Deci, E. L. (1998). Supporting autonomy to motivate glucose control in patients with diabetes. *Diabetes Care, 21,* 1644-1651.

Williams, G. C., & Deci, E. L. (1996). Internalization of biopsychosocial values by medical students: A test of self-determination theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70,* 767-779.

## The Scales

**Perceived Competence for Diabetes**

Please respond to each of the following items in terms of how true it is for you with respect to dealing with your diabetes. Use the scale:

|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | not at all true | | | somewhat true | | | very true |

1. I feel confident in my ability to manage my diabetes.

2. I am capable of handling my diabetes now.

3. I am able to do my own routine diabetic care now.

4. I feel able to meet the challenge of controlling my diabetes.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**Perceived Competence for Learning**

Please respond to each of the following items in terms of how true it is for you with respect to your learning in this course. Use the scale:

|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | not at all true | | | somewhat true | | | very true |

1. I feel confident in my ability to learn this material.

2. I am capable of learning the material in this course.

3. I am able to achieve my goals in this course.

4. I feel able to meet the challenge of performing well in this course.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

**Scoring Information**.  A personÕs score on the PCS is calculated simply by averaging his or her responses on the four items.