

## Possible Selves

Click on a topic below to go directly to that section.

[Definition of Possible Selves](#)

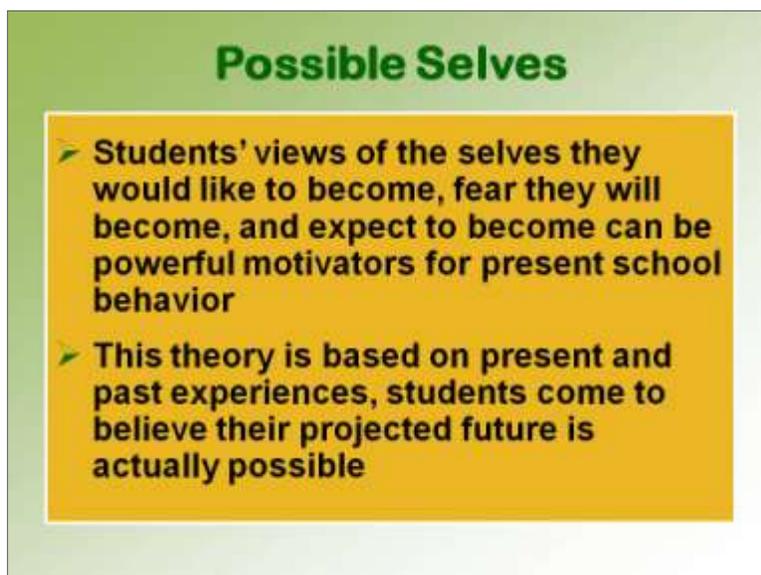
[Possible Selves are Fundamental to a CBA](#)

[Additional Resources Related to Possible Selves](#)

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### Definition of Possible Selves

The graphic below offers a definition of possible selves and how it affects students' view of themselves.



Possible selves theory is an extension of self-concept theory. Similar to other approaches in this tradition, possible selves theory emphasizes the impact that a student's self-definition has on school behavior. Students' motivation to engage in effortful learning in school is related to how vividly they can picture different possible selves, the nature of their possible selves, and the

connections students perceive between school behavior and either achieving a positive self or avoiding a negative self.

Possible selves are projections about the future that are rooted in students' present and past experiences. Both positive and negative possible selves reflect what students have come to believe are actually possible for them.

### **Possible Selves are Fundamental to a CBA**

If counselors are able to promote students' internalization of motivation by helping them recognize the value of their school learning and by helping them develop a positive future identity into which the academic learning is integrated, higher levels of self-motivated work to master the academic material and consequently higher levels of academic achievement will result.

### **Additional Resources Related to Possible Selves**

The Internet is a wonderful tool for accessing information on just about any topic. It has been invaluable in helping us to identify what research has demonstrated to be strongly related to students' academic achievement and well-being, and evidence-based practices that provide concrete examples of how to translate the research findings into meaningful learning opportunities that support student development.



Staying informed about what works and does not work to help students achieve and succeed is one of the defining characteristics of a professional school counselor. Internet search engines can be used to develop a deeper understanding of the topics discussed on the CBA Website. To get you started, here are some additional resources you may find helpful. These resources, however, only scratch the surface of what is available on the Internet or in published books and articles. We encourage you to use search engines to find more resources that will increase your understanding and build your capacity to apply these ideas in your work as school counselors.

## Videos

This is a video on possible selves by Sarah Dee who developed it for a class project in a social psychology class.

[https://youtu.be/tYNIJN9k\\_UU](https://youtu.be/tYNIJN9k_UU).

## Websites

A research brief from the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation (CSCORE) on “What are the Implications of Possible Selves Research for School Counseling Practice?”

<http://www.umass.edu/schoolcounseling/uploads/brief5.2.pdf>

A webpage on “Possible Selves Theory.” It discusses development of possible selves, individual and contextual factors, assessing possible selves, and motivational consequences of possible selves on choice, persistence and achievement.

<http://www.education.com/reference/article/possible-selves-theory/>.