

Self-Efficacy Case Study 1: Family Ties

Professor Rebecca Temin has been mentoring a very bright and motivated graduate student researcher, Winona Davis. Winona's high quality data have contributed to several projects and her results have even opened a new line of investigation, positioning Professor Temin to compete for a new line of federal funding. Winona is well suited for research and is very engaged in the lab, both when performing experiments and also when planning and discussing the experiments. Given her talent for research, Professor Temin has been encouraging her to pursue a career in academia, and Winona had originally expressed great interest in doing so. However, she feels conflicted about leaving the local area where her tribe is based and her extended family lives. She is an integral contributor to the care of her aging grandparents and feels a strong sense of responsibility to her family and her tribe. Even getting her to agree to attend a 2-day regional research conference to present her findings involved a difficult decision making process. Professor Temin knows that in order for Winona to pursue a career in academia, she must do a competitive post-doc, likely at another university. Ultimately, the location of Winona's job opportunities in academia may take her away from her family.

- What are some of the potential threats to self-efficacy that Winona is experiencing here?
- What are some of the questions that Professor Temin could ask to better understand Winona's self- efficacy and the personal/cultural factors that may be influencing her beliefs about her capability to pursue a PhD?
- What source (or sources) of self-efficacy might you use to boost Winona's self-efficacy for pursuing a PhD program?
- What story from your own academic experience (or the experiences of previous mentees) could you convey to Winona that would demonstrate empathy and provide an example of ways to adjust or cope?