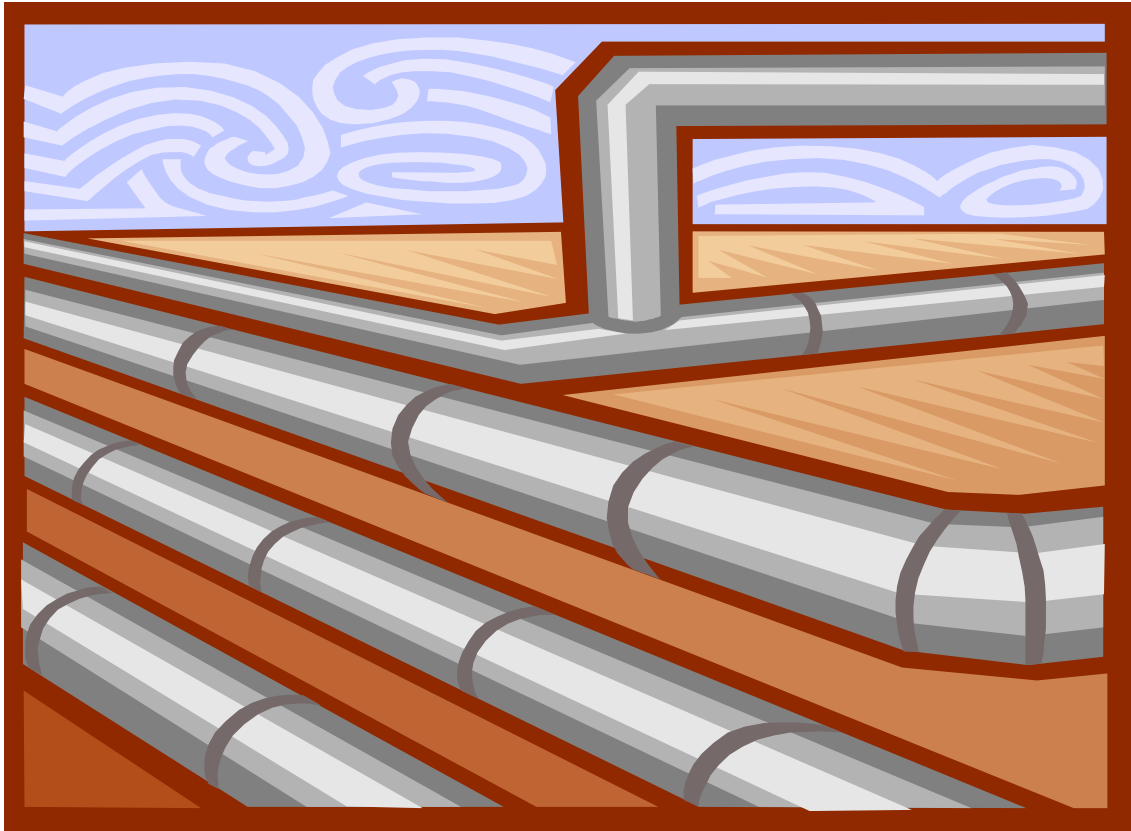


East Baltimore Pipeline Job Readiness Training Curriculum



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Baltimore Pipeline Project Job Readiness Program Manual

Introduction

Overview

Significant demographic factors have led forecasters to predict that the labor shortage of the past several years could be mild when compared to what's waiting in the wings. Studies report that in the next 15 years, the U. S will experience a 15 percent decrease in those typically considered to be emerging leaders--people age 35 to 44. As the most work-ready are absorbed into the workforce, those that remain will be the hardest to employ. At the same time, hospitals will experience a boom as they work to take care of the aging population, and hospitality will continue to be one of the key service sectors that hire entry-level workers.

Given the environmental factors listed above combined with the high number of unemployed and underemployed East Baltimore residents, employers are struggling to find work ready employees to fill the many jobs that are now and will be available. It is imperative that a workforce strategy be developed that can build a pipeline into jobs that bridge the gap and eliminate the disconnect that exists between what employers need and the capacity that exists to fill those needs.

The Baltimore Pipeline Project

The Baltimore Pipeline Project is focused on building a pipeline of qualified residents who can fill Baltimore's entry-level jobs. Over the past nine months, a committee of stakeholders that includes key employers has met to discuss the development of a job readiness program that would result in the development of a qualified workforce. There is a particular focus on East Baltimore, where unemployment is high and the education and skill levels of residents are low. Over ten community organizations were also consulted to understand both their strengths and challenges, and those of the populations they serve.

The Pipeline Project is rooted in a "dual customer" model, in which the focus of services is on both residents and employers - and in which the "win" will be for both employers and residents. Outcomes from the program are anticipated to include:

Implementation of a standardized training and placement program:

The project has developed a program that can be used in its entirety, that helps to standardize the delivery of services to employers and residents;

"Guaranteed" skill and service level of candidates graduating from programs: Through the standardized training and placement program, training organizations will be better poised to deliver a more consistent pool of job-ready candidates. Employers will be able to recognize that graduates of participating programs have been accurately assessed and provided with training to their specifications - and will be more willing to hire them.

Increase the capacity of CBOs to deliver a quality product to employers: Community organizations face tremendous challenges in providing training, support, and placement services to Baltimore's residents - in part because of the challenges that Baltimore's low-income residents themselves face. The Pipeline Project includes a focus on building upon the capacity of training organizations to deliver the standards and training curriculum within this manual.

Developing Skill and Program Standards

One major goal of the Baltimore Pipeline Project is to develop a set of standards that will "guarantee" that graduates of training programs possess the needed skills and qualifications to enter entry-level employment, with a particular focus on health care and hospitality occupations.

In order to provide that "guarantee," we have developed two related sets of tools:

- 1) A job readiness training curriculum that focuses on preparing individuals who lack a high school diploma and/or read and write at a 6th grade level with the skills they need to secure an entry-level job. The curriculum is focused on enabling participants to achieve the minimum standard set by employers interviewed for this project.
- 2) A set of standards for operating the supporting program components that represent the structure for the job readiness training. By itself, the job readiness curriculum cannot guarantee that graduates of a program will meet the standards set by employers.

Critical to the success of any training program is the ability of organizations to carry out a consistent set of activities that are related to the training program - assessment, case management, maintenance of employer relationships, job placement, and retention services. The Pipeline Project has developed a set of guidelines and standards for each program component, as well as provided guidance for how to link the pre-training, training, and post-training assessment phases. This is critical to ensuring a comprehensive approach and successful implementation.

Taken together, the tools will enable community organizations to deliver candidates whom employers will want to hire, and will enable employers to readily identify graduates from a standardized program in whom they can have confidence about their skill sets and overall job readiness.

The standards and curriculum are rooted in best practices within many of the Baltimore organizations we interviewed, as well as in national best practices. We are encouraged by the dedication of Baltimore's organizations to provide the highest quality of services to their neighborhood residents, and were pleased and grateful to be able to incorporate many of their insights into the development of this manual.

A word about the standards and curriculum: Taken together, and delivered with the right level of attention and expertise, the package will enable organizations to achieve the goals of the Baltimore Pipeline Project. Organizations may choose to select parts of the standards or curriculum to incorporate into their existing programs. We understand this, but at the same time caution that the overall integrity of the product is in how the components work with each other, so that using only parts of the product may compromise the individual participant outcomes. It may also compromise outcomes,

depending upon the strengths and structures of the training organization. Individual organizations will need to make a determination about how to use this manual, depending upon capacity, funding, and other considerations.

Job Readiness Curriculum Overview:

This curriculum is designed as a first step toward helping to prepare those seeking entry- level jobs for the workplace by developing the skills and knowledge that are essential for success. We recognize that entry- level jobseekers may enter this pipeline through a number of referral mechanisms. This core soft skills curriculum along with other ancillary components, including the assessment and screening process, industry customized training, case management, career coaching and ongoing retention and advancement support will enable entry- level workers to not only demonstrate their readiness to successfully enter the workplace, but retain and advance in their positions.

There are six sections in the curriculum and each section has multiple lessons. Some lessons cover more than one topic. Each lesson has a number of exercises and activities to provide real practice for skill development. We recommend that the training be conducted in an environment that matches the work setting and that the same performance that will be required on the job be demonstrated at the training site. To the extent possible, participants should be allowed to demonstrate the skills taught in a real-world situation.

Objectives:

The objectives of this four- week curriculum are to:

- ✓ Prepare individuals for work;
- ✓ Provide jobseekers with the necessary pre-employment skills;
- ✓ Empower individuals for success; and
- ✓ Promote job retention and advancement

Table of Contents:

Section 1: Workforce Preparation Skills

- Starting with a goal
- Entry Level Positions...What a new worker needs to know
- Dress for success
- Your attitude
- Self-talk
- Developing a good work ethic
- Understanding employer's expectations
- Preparing for the interview

Section 2: Communication Skills

- Reading essentials
- Writing essentials
- Listening essentials
- Body language
- Conflict resolution

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Section 3: Interpersonal Skills

- Understanding your personal style
- Working with others on a team
- Developing and maintaining good working relationships
- Valuing and respecting diversity
- Coping with change and other challenges
- Responding to Feedback

Section 4: Life Management Skills

- Managing time effectively
- Managing resources
- Math basics
- Developing support systems

Section 5: Decision-Making Skills

- Using good judgment
- Solving problems effectively
- Making good decisions
- Being assertive not aggressive
- Managing Anger

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Section 6: Customer Service Skills

- Providing prompt and courteous service
- Managing customer requests and concerns
- How to communicate with customers
- Telephone etiquette
- Handling problems and complaints

A Message to Participants

Congratulations! You have made the right choice

Many people come into the workplace with high energy and good intentions and yet we find that many jobseekers have difficulty getting and keeping a job. One of the primary reasons is the lack of ***soft skills***. Many people have just never had the opportunity to learn the basics for success. We believe that given the opportunity, most are ready to learn. The Soft Skills training course that you are about to engage in is about personal management skills—it's about recognizing and realizing your potential!

Getting the Most from This Program:

Ground Rules:

- ***Be Punctual***—Punctuality is a top priority. Training will start promptly at the designated time, please be present at that time.
- ***Set Personal goals and objectives***—You will be required to set personal goals and objectives that you want to get out of the training and for how you want to perform on the job.
- ***Act responsibly***—Take personal responsibility for yourself and achieving your goals and objectives.
 - Call if you cannot attend or keep an appointment
 - Conduct yourself professionally at all times
 - Demonstrate that you want to be here
 - Finish what you start

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- ***Communicate openly and honestly***—Employers often base their hiring decisions around this quality—there will be many opportunities to improve communication skills and boost confidence in this area.
 - ***Listen Actively***—this skill is as important as communication in the workplace and is often the basis for shaping our thoughts and actions. You will be encouraged to listen for information and feelings.

Section 1: Preparing to Enter The World Of Work



What You Will Learn in This Section

- ▶ Why you must start with a goal
- ▶ What a new worker needs to know
- ▶ How good work ethics help ensure your success
- ▶ How to dress for success
- ▶ The importance of positive self-talk
- ▶ How to match your performance with employer expectations
- ▶ How to deal with and overcome obstacles

Starting With A Goal In Mind

You must know how to set and achieve goals if you are to get to your "ideal future." As you develop this skill, you will find that your goals are not "set in stone" they may change, as you change and grow. The important thing is that you have a vision for yourself and begin the planning process to make that vision a reality.

Think about what you want to get out of this training, and the type of job or career that you want.

<i>Goal Setting Step #1: Paint a Mental Picture</i>
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It's not enough to just write your goals in words. Have you set personal or career goals and failed to achieve them? You may have a number of excuses for why? The answer is simple. Your goals were not strong enough or clear enough to create a burning desire or passion! When you can clearly see and believe it, you are more likely to achieve it!

One way to make a mental picture is by creating a dream board. Cut out pictures from magazines that create a picture of your goal and make a dream board.

Hang your dream board where you can see it every day. As you combine actions with this picture you will be well on your way to making your goal a reality!

Goals Worksheet: Who Am I And What Do I Want?

1. Who am I?

- ✓ Subjects I like(d) in school:
- ✓ Activities that I like:
- ✓ Things I like to do in my free time:
- ✓ My strengths are:
- ✓ My weaknesses are:

2. What is my dream?

- ✓ What goals do I have for myself?
- ✓ What would be my ideal job? Why?
- ✓ What is important for me to be happy?

3. How do I see my life in 5 years?

4. My goals and dreams for the future are:

***Goal Setting Step # 2: Picture Yourself Already There
Think Positive!***

Our present attitudes are habits that were formed from messages from parents, friends, society and self. These messages form our self-image and our image of others.

Our attitudes are reinforced by the conversations we constantly have with ourselves, or "self-talk." If most of your self-talk is negative, it will be impossible to achieve your goals. You must replace negative self-talk with positive conversations.

Steps to Positive Self-Talk

Step 1: Listen

Listen to the language in your head. Make a commitment to yourself to replace negative self-talk with positive thoughts. Praise yourself and others. Dream of success. Be enthusiastic.

Step 2: Focus

Stay focused on your goals and priorities, and positive actions. Concentrate on doing those things. Don't allow yourself to get distracted by negative thoughts, negative people or old habits.

Step 3: Challenge

Challenge yourself to change and improve each day. Do your best and don't look back. See learning and change as positive. Try new things. Meet new people. Ask lots of questions. Keep track of your progress. Be optimistic.

Goal Setting Step 3: Write Your Goal

Write a S.M.A.R.T. Goal Statement Here: (*Specific, Motivational, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Bound*)

Write Your Measures of Success Here:

Outstanding:

Expected:

Could do Better:

Unsatisfactory:

Write the Actions You Will Take Here:

When Will They Be Completed?

Goal Setting Step 4: Review Your Progress

Reviewing your progress is a very important part of achieving your goal. Checking your progress allows you to reflect on what is working and what is not, so you can adjust your actions or change a goal if you are not achieving what you want. You may discover that you need to work on more things than you thought or that it is taking longer than expected to reach your goal - that's okay. Remember we said that your goal should not be etched in stone. Use the form below to check your progress.

What's Working?	What's Not?
What Changes?	What Actions?

What A New Worker Needs To Know

Before you can convince an employer to hire you, you need to learn how to describe yourself to the employer. You need to be able to describe what skills and talents you bring to the workplace that would make you a better worker than the next person.

Look at the following statements and write *yes, no or don't know* next to each to learn the skills and attitudes that you would bring to the workplace. Remember to write the word that best describes your skills and attitudes.

Employability Skills	Yes/No/Don't Know
Communication	
I can speak and write clearly so that others can understand	
I can read and understand information in words, charts, or graphs	
I can listen and ask questions to better understand instructions and other's ideas	
I'm am able to share information using voicemail, email and computers	
I can figure out when something needs to be measured or calculated.	

<p>Thinking</p> <p>I can figure out what's happening in a situation, identify problems and solutions</p>	
<p>I am not afraid to try new and creative things</p>	
<p>Learning</p> <p>I like to learn new things</p>	
<p>I like to set goals to improve myself</p>	
<p>I learn from my mistakes and the advice of others</p>	
<p>Attitudes and Behaviors</p> <p>I am a confident person</p>	
<p>I am an honest person</p>	
<p>I am a responsible person</p>	
<p>I can adapt to changes and new information</p>	
<p>I plan and manage my time, money and other resources</p>	

I am motivated and have the energy to get the job done	
I respect the thoughts and ideas of others	
I do a good job of balancing work and home	
Working With Others I enjoy being on a team	
I like to contribute to common goals	
I try to understand the needs and styles of others	
I value and respect differences	
I take instructions and follow through	
I do whatever is needed to get the job done	

Developing a 30 Second Commercial

This commercial is a thirty-second chance for you to sell yourself! Your commercial will help the listener become aware—very quickly—of the specific and unique talents that you can bring to the job.

Tips for developing your commercial:

- ✓ Use crisp, clear language—don't ramble!
- ✓ Say what position you are seeking
- ✓ Talk about your abilities and experience
- ✓ Emphasize your individual strengths
- ✓ Use good eye contact and body posture
- ✓ Make a good first impression!

Samples of sentences to help you write your commercial:

- Hello, my name is...
- I am a...
- I do several things well, but I am best at...
- My strongest skills are...

Write Your Commercial Here

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing a commercial. It occupies the central portion of the page.

Understanding Employer's Expectations

One of the most important things that your employer will expect of you is that you conduct yourself appropriately in the workplace. This means that you get to work on time, dress appropriately, do your job correctly, and demonstrate maturity and professionalism.

Follow these tips, to avoid acting inappropriately at work:

1. Talk in a conversational tone of voice. Do not talk in a loud manner that may disrupt the work of other workers and customers.
2. Avoid laughing and joking when you should be working. You can have fun and be more relaxed during breaks, but always maintain self-control from the time you arrive until your shift is over.

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3. Watch your language! Using curse words or calling people names is never appropriate. Using slang can make it difficult to have good communication with co-workers and customers.

Write examples of slang that might confuse co-workers or customers:

4. Always behave professionally with customers. Use good manners and try to be as helpful as possible

Your Attitude

"Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

~Frank Outlaw

Positive Attitudes and Behaviors:

How We See Ourselves: The view that we have of ourselves affects not only our attitudes and behaviors, but also our views of other people. Our attitudes determine our responses to just about everything.

Our attitude affects how we look at the world and our behavior. It is reflected in how we think and feel about what happens to us in life. It includes our mindset, our perceptions, our disposition, our opinions, and our approach to dealing with self and others.

Discussion Point # 1: What do you think this statement means?

If you think you can and if you think you can't, either way you're right.

Definition of Attitude-According to Webster's Dictionary:

Is a way of acting, feeling or thinking

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you think we end up with the attitudes we have?
2. Do you know more people who look at life as mostly good or mostly bad? Which do you enjoy being with most? Why?
3. It is possible to change our attitudes? If so, how difficult is it?

Self-Awareness Test

To determine your own level of awareness, read the items below and place a check mark (Y) in the blank which you think describes how often you feel this way.

	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I'm eager to learn					
I am excited about working.					
I'm willing to listen with an open mind.					
I constantly have new ideas.					
I like taking direction from people who know something I don't.					
I try to look at the world through the eyes of the other person.					
I believe each person is unique.					

When someone is talking to me I really listen.

I'm honest with others and myself.

I've thought about my own strengths and weaknesses.

I'm sensitive to other's needs.

I care for and am concerned about others.

I recognize that others may not always agree with me.

I adapt easily to new environments and situations.

Having a good attitude and showing a good attitude are two different things. Some people are very positive about their jobs and are cheerful and energetic. Other people may say they have a good attitude, but complain about every task and show little or no energy to do the job. Below, list the traits that you think are ways to show an employer that you have a good attitude:

Ways to show that you have a good attitude in the workplace:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Small Group Exercise:

Now agree on the three most important traits from the list that your team created. In your small group, discuss job situations that would require you to use the traits that you have agreed on.

Job Situation #1:

Job Situation#2:

Job Situation#3:

Tips for Improving Positive Attitudes and Behaviors

- 1. Affirm yourself:** Learn to focus on your good qualities and all the positive things you do
- 2. Improve yourself:** Continue your education, learn a new skill, read a book, take a course, join a health club, meet new people. Do something that will challenge you and help you feel as if you have accomplished something new.
- 3. Assume responsibility for your own thoughts and actions:** It's easy to blame others. Remember that we only have the power to control and change our own behavior. *Responsibility* can be interpreted as "*the ability to choose your response*"
- 4. Set realistic goals:** Sometimes our expectations of ourselves are so high that we can't achieve them. Be careful not to take on too much at once and end up not achieving anything.
- 5. Behave according to your own good personal values and standards:** Stand up for what you know is right. Remember that *people treat you the way that you teach them to treat you.*

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6. **Maintain good health:** Wellness is much more than physical health. Remember the mind, body, and spirit connection. Healthy behavior includes an optimistic outlook, and a good sense of humor.
 7. **Plan your day as if it will be positive:** Even if you know that you will face some challenging issues and/or people during your day, try to see yourself handling these situations in a positive manner. Try to see the glass as half full not half empty.

When replaying your day, focus on your accomplishments: Give yourself a break—our tendency is to focus on our mistakes and overlook our accomplishments. Focus on the positive things that happened during your day.

Professional Behavior Under Pressure

One of the traits that you will have to develop in order to be successful in your new job is ***flexibility***. You can demonstrate a professional attitude by being flexible when asked to do low level, and unpleasant tasks. Adjusting to difficult situations while maintaining a good attitude is a way to demonstrate professional behavior under pressure.

Think of some examples of how to maintain a professional attitude when doing unpleasant tasks:

Example: Cleaning the restrooms?

Unpleasant Task

Your Professional Attitude

Professional Behavior Under Pressure Scenario:

It is your first week on a new job! You have learned your work routine and feel very confident. Your regular job is greeting clients as they enter your department and directing them to the right place. Because your co-worker is sick, your manager has asked you to answer the phones and make appointments. You are uncomfortable with this change in your routine, so you...

1. Tell the manager that it's not your job.
2. Discuss the procedure with the manager, clarify your understanding, ask for tips for doing the job, and then try your best to do everything that is expected.
3. Do what the manager asks but complain to everyone about how much work you had to do!

Remember: People with the traits that we have just identified are the kinds of people that employers look for, hire, and promote. People who are confident, dependable, motivated, persistent, flexible, and enthusiastic!

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is a professional attitude important for customer service?

2. Why is it important for teamwork?

3. Why is it important for decision making on the job?

Positive Self-Talk

According to motivational speaker Les Brown, more than 80% of our self-talk is negative. If you want to display a professional attitude, confidence and style on the job, it begins with how you speak to yourself!

1. Talk to yourself in a positive way
 - a. Give yourself a pep talk: "I am capable and lovable"
 - b. I know I can do this!
 - c. If not me, who?
 - d. I deserve good things to happen to me
 - e. I am in charge of me; I can control my responses

2. Speak to yourself with respect
 - a. You go girl!
 - b. I am a good person
 - c. What a great job!
 - d. I know I made a mistake, but I can and will do better

3. Be honest with yourself-set goals for improvement
 - a. That was not my best effort, but I think I've got the hang of it now.
 - b. If I try harder, I can do better
 - c. I need to listen more and follow through
 - d. I will remind myself not to talk so loud
 - e. After one week, I will check to see if my work has improved.

Developing a Good Work Ethic

It is a new day in the workplace. Now more than ever before it is important for workers to have a good work ethic. To get and keep a job in today's workplace you must show up on time, use initiative, and do what you are responsible for doing. Employers especially want to hire people who are dependable; in fact, being dependable is one of the most highly sought after traits for workers in the workplace today. Developing a good work ethic requires honesty, reliability and being on time.

People who are not dependable create serious problems for employers because of the wasted time and resources. In some cases even peoples' lives are at risk if another person is not dependable.

Work Ethics Exercise:

Think of the roles and responsibilities you engage in on any given day. For example, you may have responsibilities as a parent, a worker, a student, a club member, a church member, or as a member of some type of team. Answer the following questions with these roles in mind then discuss them in a small group.

- What personal traits can you list that make you dependable in these roles?

-
- What traits would you like to develop to make you more dependable?

- What are the most important characteristics of being dependable that will help you advance in the workplace?

Values and Workplace Ethics

Our values represent our basic beliefs. Beliefs that give us structure and helps organize and direct our life. In the workplace, our values affect our behavior and interpersonal interactions.

Five Foundations for Character:

Foundation #1: Trustworthiness

- ✓ Be honest
- ✓ Be reliable
- ✓ Do what you say you will do
- ✓ Have the courage to do the right thing
- ✓ Build a good reputation
- ✓ Be loyal

Foundation #2: Respect

- ✓ Treat others with respect
- ✓ Respect differences
- ✓ Be polite
- ✓ Use appropriate language
- ✓ Be considerate of the feelings of others
- ✓ Deal peacefully with conflict and anger

Foundation #3: Responsibility

- ✓ Do what you are responsible for
- ✓ Always do your best
- ✓ Be self-disciplined
- ✓ Think before you act
- ✓ Consider the consequences of your actions
- ✓ Be accountable for your choices

Foundation #4: Fairness

- ✓ Follow the rules
- ✓ Be open-minded
- ✓ Listen to others
- ✓ Don't blame carelessly

Foundation #5: Caring:

- ✓ Be considerate
- ✓ Show that you care
- ✓ Express gratitude
- ✓ Help others

Do's And Don'ts for Building Character In the Workplace

Integrity:

Do:

- ✓ Stand up for your beliefs—follow your conscience
- ✓ Be honorable
- ✓ Live by your principles
- ✓ Have the courage to do what is right
- ✓ Build and guard your reputation

Don't

- ✓ Don't do things that you know are wrong even if others are doing it
- ✓ Don't lose your confidence if you fail
- ✓ Don't promise things that you can't deliver
- ✓ Don't let your team members down

Honesty:

Do:

- ✓ Tell the truth
- ✓ Be sincere
- ✓ Be open to new ideas and ways of doing things
- ✓ Come forward with information

Don't

- ✓ Lie
- ✓ Cheat
- ✓ Steal
- ✓ Be sneaky or tricky
- ✓ Work around policies
- ✓ Forge information

Reliability:

Do:

- ✓ Be on time
- ✓ Keep your promises
- ✓ Honor your word and commitments
- ✓ Do what you are supposed to do
- ✓ Return what you borrow
- ✓ Pay you debts
- ✓ Be dependable

Don't

- ✓ Leave before you should
- ✓ Blame others for your mistakes
- ✓ Ignore deadlines
- ✓ Leave your team/co-workers hanging

Loyalty:

Do:

- ✓ Be a good employee
- ✓ Keep the confidence of those who trust you

Don't

- ✓ Betray a trust
- ✓ Let others down
- ✓ Spread gossip
- ✓ Ask others to break the rules
- ✓ Do or say things just to get ahead

Values and Workplace Ethics Exercise:

In your small group, read the following scenario and respond to the discussion questions.

Scenario:

You have been working for six months as a Patient Care Technician. You really enjoy this job and worked hard to get here. You feel that you are really good at your job and you are eager to do well. You just received new instructions by your supervisor for improving patient care, but your co-workers who are long term employees have told you not to follow the new policy and continue with the old. Your supervisor asked you to reassure patients that this new policy will improve the quality of their care. Your co-workers say that you should not change what you have been doing. What do you do?

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you respond? What does it mean to behave in a professional manner? What kinds of things are necessary to enhance and promote a professional image?
2. We each bring to the workplace a wide variety of skills, experiences, abilities, needs, values, expectations and dreams. What are some of the challenges associated with working in an environment where your values and ethical behaviors do not match that of your co-workers?
3. Think about how you want to be seen in a professional setting? What must you do to make sure that others see you as you see yourself? How do you close the gap?
4. How does this scenario help us to understand what overall professionalism means?

Self-Motivation

Taking the Initiative:

1. Why is self-motivation important?

2. What motivates you?

4. Who is responsible for motivating you in the workplace? Your supervisor? Your peers? Yourself?

5. What happens if you don't take responsibility for motivating yourself?

6. Can you think of any situation in which you would take on extra work, even if you were not getting compensated for it? Why or why not?

Exercise: Taking Initiative

Scenario: Read the following scenario. Discuss it in your small group

Margaret just got hired as a clerk in a medical laboratory. She is an extremely hard worker and is eager to prove herself to her new employer. After only a few weeks on the job she comes up with what she thinks is a better and more efficient way to process customer accounts. To impress her boss she comes in early one morning to implement her plan. Margaret's boss arrives at work, and is upset to find the office in a mess as she attempts to put her plan into action.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think that what Margaret did was wrong? Why or why not?
2. What could she have done differently?
3. How do you know your limitations at work?
4. How does this scenario demonstrate the importance of knowing the difference between taking the initiative and knowing your limitations?

Dress For Success:

A recent article in U.S.A. Today spoke about people showing up for job interviews wearing jeans, sweat suits, and spike heels or sneakers. Others chewed gum or showed up in rumpled clothes or with their pants falling down. One recruiter even told a candidate with his pants down below his hips, to "Pull your pants up." According to the article their dress costs these candidates the job.

You only get one chance to make a first impression. Your appearance is one of the first things that a potential employer will judge about you. You want to make the best first impression possible.

A big part of a hiring decision is based on nonverbal things in an interview--handshake, eye contact, body language, posture, listening skills, clothing, and grooming. Don't overlook the power of a good first impression. People make all kinds of assumptions about your professional credibility and potential to perform based on your appearance during a first meeting. It's very difficult to overcome a poor first impression, regardless of your skills or unique qualities.

To be successful, think about and practice for the interview and carefully plan the professional image you want to project. If you come to an interview dressed professionally, you will feel a sense of confidence that others will sense.

Basic Guidelines

- Select clothing, fragrances, jewelry, hairstyle, etc. that do not detract from your professional image. The interviewer's attention should be focused on what you say and your skills and talents.
- Make sure your hair is clean and neatly styled. Avoid styles that cover your face or that you have to brush back.
- Remove facial and body piercings other than single ear jewelry for interviews.
- Visible tattoos should be covered to avoid distraction.
- Make sure that your clothing is clean and neatly pressed.
- Your clothing should fit well and remain in place while sitting and/or walking.
- Choose professional attire that is appropriate for the industry or specific company.
- Less is more. Keep your look simple; if possible learn something about the environment and company's dress code.

Tips For Women:

- Choose a conservative skirt, suit, pantsuit or dress that draws the attention to your face.
- Skirts should be knee-length or longer to allow you to sit modestly and comfortably.
- Avoid blouses or sweaters that are transparent, tight fitting, or have low necklines, revealing waistlines or details that detract from your face as a focal point. Typically, arms are covered.
- Always wear hose to interviews. Wear plain-style, non-patterned hosiery. Carry an extra pair in case of runs.
- Perfume should never be strong. A fragrance can cause an allergic reaction or offend the interviewer. .
- Use natural-looking makeup. Nails should be neatly polished. This keeps the focus on the interview.
- Wear comfortable shoes, flat or low pumps in colors that avoid making your feet a focal point. Be sure that they are clean and polished.
- Keep accessories simple. Avoid large, dangling earrings and other accessories that would distract from the interview.

Tips For Men:

- If you have a suit, wear a suit in navy, black or gray.
- Wear white or a light blue dress shirt that contrasts with the jacket and/or tie.
- Socks should be colors such as dark blue, black or gray.
- Wear conservative, clean, and polished shoes.
- Wear a belt that holds your pants on you waist. Your belt should match your shoes.
- Your hair should be newly cut or combed.
- Cologne should never be strong. A fragrance can cause an allergic reaction or offend the interviewer. When in doubt, do not wear cologne.

DRESSING ON A TIGHT BUDGET

- There are a number of organizations that provide clothing to individuals in need for job interviews, including Dress For Success at www.dressforsuccess.org, and Dress for Success for Men at www.quintcareers.com
- Remember that self-confidence is your primary goal when selecting your interview clothing. Choose clothing with multi-use potential.
- Get durable, classic, well-made items that can be combined for a 'professional' or 'casual Friday' look.
- Colors like black, dark gray, and navy are standards
- Purchase matching components. Having options such as wearing a skirt or pant with jacket multiplies possible combinations.
- Use shirts/blouses/sweaters to create variety of visual effects.
- Consider thrift stores.

Preparing For the Interview:

An interview can be very stressful. You only have a few minutes to show an interviewer how capable, confident and right you are for the job.

The interviewer isn't just evaluating **WHAT** you say, but also **HOW** you say it. She's asking herself: Are you well-spoken? Are your answers clear and to the point?

A. Here are some tips for preparing for the interview:

1. Do a mock interview several days before your scheduled interview. Practice more than once.
2. Lay out your clothing the night before. You don't want to figure out what to wear on the day of the interview.
3. Make sure your outfit is clean and neatly pressed. Take care of other tasks the night before (polishing shoes, nails, etc.)
4. Gather all of the important materials that you will need—put them in a folder or portfolio. Place them where you won't forget them. Include things like resume, letter of reference, directions, identification cards, etc.

-
5. Make sure that you eat something before the interview.
 6. Make sure that you know how to get to the interview in advance.
Allow enough time for driving and parking or public transportation
 7. Find out exactly where you will need to go when you get there.
 8. Be courteous and professional to everyone that you meet. From the security guard to the receptionist
 9. If you have a cell phone or pager, turn it off.

B. Here are some tips to demonstrate your communication skills during an interview:

- Practice describing your skills and talents in under two minutes. Practice in front of a mirror.
- Have a friend ask you questions that you expect to encounter in an interview. Remember to answer clearly and slowly.
- If you do not understand a question, instead of panicking, just ask the interviewer for more details.
- If you find yourself getting nervous, just take a deep breath and relax your shoulders.
- Remember to start with a firm handshake and look directly at the interviewer as you speak. Good eye contact communicates confidence.
- Do not use slang in your interview.
- Last, but not least, **remember the breath mint!**

Conducting A Mock Interview:

You will have an opportunity to practice using interviewing skills in the mock interviews. You may choose from the following questions to complete the mock interview.

You are the interviewer:

- Tell me about yourself. What are your career goals?
- Why are you interested in our company/ organization/position?
- What are your major strengths/weaknesses?
- What qualifies you for this position?
- Tell me about a time when you had to go the extra mile.
- Describe a situation where a misunderstanding occurred; how did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you made a mistake; what did you learn from it?
- Take me through a situation where you had to get more information to solve a problem.
- How do you determine success?
- Why should I hire you?
- Do you think your grades are a good indicator of your academic abilities? Why/why not?
- Why did you choose this career field?
- You have an employee who makes too many personal phone calls on company time. How do you handle the situation?
- What salary do you expect?
- What kinds of people do you find difficult to work with?

You are the interviewee:

Be ready with some questions to ask the interviewer. Here are some suggestions:

- How would you describe the duties of the job?
- How will my performance be supervised and evaluated?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- Is there a formal training period and if so how long does it last?
- What is your company's policy on promoting from within?
- When can I expect to hear from you?
- Are there any additional qualifications you are looking for that we did not cover?
- Is there anything else I can tell you about my qualifications?

Mock interviews work best when businesspeople are recruited from various businesses and agencies to administer the mock interviews to participants. The more authentic the practice, the better prepared participants will be for their actual interviews.

Participants should be scheduled for interviews, and must be dressed appropriately. They should arrive with their resumes and references. At the end of the interview the participating professionals should critique each participant. Participants should continue to interview until they can obtain a passing performance for the mock interview. This process is an excellent way for participants to become job ready, in this important skill area.

Interview Do's and Don'ts

- Do arrive 10-15 minutes early to show eagerness and have a chance to get a feel for the environment.
- Don't chew gum.
- Don't smoke prior to your interview.
- Do leave your cell phone in the car.
- Do greet the interviewer with a smile and a handshake.
- Do answer a question thoroughly, but don't ramble on.
- Don't give just two word answers. The interviewer is trying to get to know you; talk with him/her.
- Don't interrupt the interviewer.
- Don't be afraid to pause and think about an answer before you begin speaking.
- Don't look at your watch during the interview. This tends to hurry things along. Let the interviewer set the pace.
- Do maintain good eye contact.
- Do ask questions about the job and organization to show your interest.
- Do show some knowledge of the company, position, and career field.
- Don't talk negatively about former employers, co-workers or professors.
- Do write a thank you note within 48 hours of the interview.

Mock Interview Evaluation Form:

Participant's Name_____

Interviewer_____ Date_____

KEY: 4= Excellent

3=Very Good

2=Good

1=Needs Improvement

Greeted interviewer with smile and handshake	4	3	2	1
Able to explain purpose of the interview	4	3	2	1
Able to discuss personal strengths and areas for improvement	4	3	2	1
Demonstrated appropriate enthusiasm throughout interview	4	3	2	1
Avoided using slang/street expressions and other inappropriate speech mannerisms	4	3	2	1
Maintained eye contact throughout interview	4	3	2	1
Closed interview in appropriate manner	4	3	2	1

Source: Portland YouthBuilders, Portland, Oregon

Resume Writing

Even though you may have little or no previous work experience, it is important to create a resume to demonstrate to an employer that you have skills and talents that are valuable in the workplace. You will have an opportunity to look at sample resumes to begin this process. As you begin to develop your own resume, think about the things that you have done in your community, church, working with younger children, or family responsibilities that demonstrate your potential for employment.

The following information appears on just about every resume and can be used to guide you in the process:

- Current address and phone number
- Job you are seeking or career goal
- Experience (paid or volunteer)
- Dates of employment, name and location of employer (city and state), and job title
- Education: School's name, location, years attended, diploma or certificate earned, and courses studied
- Other skills, talents, hobbies, places traveled, special training, organizational memberships, etc.
- A list of at least three references that can be listed on the resume or application. (Check with references first before listing their names)

Job Readiness Checklist:

Document	Satisfactorily Completed	Not Completed
Application: Neatly printed or typed, with all required information requested by employer		
Resume: Current, professional looking resume that gives required information.		
Interview Completion Form: A statement from interviewers indicating successful completion of mock interview		
Transportation: Demonstrated working knowledge of public transportation		
Identification Documents: Driver's License (if required), other official identification cards, Social Security Card (to complete form on line, www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html)		
JRT Curriculum, Certificate of completion (check when 4-week curriculum is completed)		

GETTING READY TO START A NEW JOB:

Instructions: Use this checklist as you prepare for your first day on the job. Call the personnel coordinator and get the appropriate information.

Do I need a uniform? yes _____ no _____

If yes

Do I need it on the first day? _____

Where can I get it? _____

What do I need to get? _____

How many should I get? _____

What is the cost? _____

If no

What should I wear? _____

What time should I arrive? _____

Where should I
report? _____

To whom should I
report? _____

Do I need to bring any of the following forms? (check off which ones
you need to bring)

___ Document that establishes identity (birth certificate, driver's
license, picture ID)

___ Social Security card

___ Work permit (if you are under 18)

___ Occupational license (if needed)

___ Unexpired Employment Authorization Card (if you are an
immigrant)

___ Medical records (physical, doctor's authorization to work)

What special equipment do I
need? _____

What do people usually do for
lunch? _____

Sections 2: Communication Skills



What You Will Learn In This Section

- ▶ How to read to gather and use information
- ▶ How to communicate a clear verbal and written message
- ▶ How to use listening skills effectively
- ▶ How to use body language to enhance communication
- ▶ How to effectively deal with conflicts with co-workers, supervisors or customers
- ▶ How the anger cycle works and how to manage anger
- ▶ How to receive feedback and follow through

Using Communication Skills In The Workplace:

Any job that you get will require you to use good communication skills. It is one of the skills that employers seek the most. You may need to use good communication skills to:

- listen and say back the content of a message
- communicate clearly with words
- speak to individuals and groups
- present ideas in writing or verbally
- express your ideas, needs, opinions, wants and preferences while respecting the rights of others
- demonstrate good judgment
- describe objects or events accurately
- project a positive self-image to others
- work with a variety of computer programs
- teach a skill, concept or principle to others
- analyze the behavior of self and others in group situations

Knowing How You Learn Best:

Now that you have identified some of your strengths, weaknesses and know something about the ways that you learn best, here are some tips on how to improve your learning. As you work in this section, remember to focus on the way that *you* learn best!

If you learn best by listening...

- Read aloud the information you are studying.
- Use a tape recorder to record classes or trainings, and listen to the tapes to review the information.
- Ask the instructor if there is a videotape that helps reinforce the information.
- Ask people to explain things to you that you don't understand.
- Study with other people.
- Ask to have oral examinations instead of written tests.
- Call people on the phone instead of writing to them.
- Ask people about upcoming events instead of relying on memos.
- Choose a job where listening plays an important role.

If you learn best by seeing...

- Watch other people do the things that you are going to need to know how to do. You will be able to visualize their actions later on.
- Calm yourself by imagining you are in a comfortable environment and that nothing can interfere with your peace.
- As you read something imagine what it would look like if it were happening in real life, or on TV.

-
- As you study maps, pictures, charts or diagrams, look at them once and then close your eyes and "see" them again.
 - Watch videos on a subject so that you will have an easier time "seeing" the information again.
 - Visualize the things that you are going to need to do in a day.
 - Take note of the shape and color of the things that you will want to remember.
 - Visualize telephone numbers and words in your mind.
 - Use charts, graphs, and pictures.

If you learn best by doing...

- If given a choice, show others that you know how to do something by showing them how you do it rather than taking a test or describing to them how you do it.
- Arrange site visits to see how things are actually done in the job you want.
- When you have to learn how to do something new, watch someone who is actually doing it and ask them to coach you while you do it.
- Choose a job that lets you work with your hands and move around.
- Be sure that your work area has room for you to move around.
- Try moving/walking around when problem solving or when you need to remember information.
- Use your fingers or small objects when working with numbers.
- Act out instructions someone gives you. If they say go right, move your right hand to go right.

If you learn best by writing...

- When you read, have a pencil with you so that you can underline and take notes as you read along.
- Take notes when listening to instructions. Recopy your notes later on.

-
- Write down the things that you need to do. Make lists. Keep a written schedule.
 - Get a job that involves writing.
 - Write people memos in order to convey information.
 - When providing instruction, be sure to have use of a chalkboard so that you can write on it.

If you learn best by reading...

- Read a book that describes what you need to learn before attending a training class.
- Take good notes and then read them later on.
- Make plans for the future by reading about your options. Read travel guides for example.
- Read instructions instead of having someone tell you or show you how to do something.
- Have people write down directions for you to read.
- Read newspapers, job newsletters and memos to get the information you need.
- Choose a job that requires reading.

If you learn best by speaking...

- Ask questions when you don't understand something or need clarification.
- Talk to yourself when you are problem solving or learning something new.
- Study with other people so that you can talk to them about the new information.
- Dictate into a tape recorder the things that you need to remember and play back the tape to remind yourself.
- Repeat things right after you hear them in order to better remember them.

-
- Repeat phone numbers and names out loud.
 - Choose a job that requires a lot of talking.

Many people don't realize that they have a unique way of learning—one that helps them learn best. Other people are usually not aware of what your learning preference is. Let them know. Feel free to share with them what you know about your own learning style.

Doing: "I wonder if you could show me how this works?"

Listening: "Could you explain to me how this works?"

Reading: "Would you mind giving me written instructions of how this works?"

Seeing: "Would you mind giving me a diagram of how this works?"

Speaking: "Let's talk through this together."

Writing: "Let me write down what you are saying about how this works."

Reading Essentials:

Changing Old Habits:

Fill in your thoughts about each.

The way I read now:

The way I'd like to read:

Edgar Dale's Four Stages of Knowledge of a Word's Meaning

Stage 1: "I never saw [or heard] it before."

Stage 2: "I've heard it, but I don't know what it means."

Stage 3: "I recognize it in context - it has something to do with..."

Stage 4: "I know it." [I can say what it means.]

The Key to Meaning: Vocabulary:

Context Clues:

What is context? The words around an unknown word that give you clues to the meaning of the unknown word.

Types of Context Clues

- Definition Clues

- Example Clues

- Contrast Clues

- Experience Clues

Pronouncing Unfamiliar Words:

Most people, at one time or another, come across words that they are unable to pronounce. To pronounce an unfamiliar word, sound it out syllable by syllable. Here are a few simple rules for dividing words into syllables:

1. Each syllable is a separate, distinct speech sound. Pronounce the following words and try to hear the number of syllables in each.

Examples:

expensive	ex/pen/sive = 3 syllables
recognize	rec/og/nize = 3 syllables
punctuate	punc/tu/ate = 3 syllables
complicated	com/pli/cat/ed = 4 syllables

2. Each syllable has at least one vowel and usually one or more consonants. (The letters *a, e, i, o, u*, and sometimes *y* are vowels. All other letters are consonants.)

Examples: as/sign re/act cou/pon gen/er/al

-
3. Divide words before a single consonant.

Examples: hu/mid pa/tron re/tail fa/vor

4. Divide words between two consonants appearing together.

Examples: pen/cil lit/ter lum/ber sur/vive

5. Divide words between prefixes (word beginnings) and roots (base words) and/or between roots and suffixes (word endings).

Examples:

Prefix + Root: pre/read post/pone anti/war

Root + Suffix: sex/ist agree/ment list/ing

6. Divide compound words between the individual words that form the compound word.

Examples: house/broken house/hold space/craft
green/house news/paper sword/fish

A System For Learning New Words:

1. Whenever you hear or read a new word that you want to learn, jot it down.
2. Write the new word on an index card. Write the meaning and a sentence on the back.
3. Review your cards each day. Look at the word on the front — recall the meaning on the back.
4. Sort your cards into two piles: words you know, words you have not yet learned. Keep adding to your piles.

Comprehension: Reading As Thinking

Active Reading Habits

- Start with a positive attitude!
- Concentrate! Maintain your level of concentration.
- Set a purpose for reading; intend to remember.
- Question what you do not know or understand.
- Keep track of your level of understanding.
- Fill in any gaps in your level of understanding.
- Connect what you read to what you already know.

Monitoring Your Comprehension:

POSITIVE SIGNALS	NEGATIVE SIGNALS
<p>Everything seems to fit and make sense; ideas flow logically from one to another.</p>	<p>Some pieces do not seem to belong; the ideas do not fit together or make sense.</p>
<p>You are able to understand what the author is saying.</p>	<p>You feel as if you are struggling to stay with the author.</p>
<p>You can see where the author is leading.</p>	<p>You cannot think ahead or predict what will come next.</p>
<p>You are able to make connections among ideas.</p>	<p>You are unable to see how ideas connect.</p>
<p>You read at a regular comfortable pace.</p>	<p>You often slow down or lose your place.</p>
<p>You understand why the material was assigned.</p>	<p>You do not know why the material was assigned and cannot explain why it is important.</p>

<p>You can understand by reading the material once.</p> <p>You recognize most words or can figure them out from context.</p> <p>You can express the key ideas in your own words.</p> <p>You feel comfortable with the topic; you have some background knowledge.</p>	<p>You need to reread sentences or paragraphs frequently.</p> <p>Many words are unfamiliar.</p> <p>You must reread and use the author's language to explain an idea.</p> <p>The topic is unfamiliar; you know nothing about it.</p>
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Tips to Improve Comprehension:

PROBLEMS	STRATEGIES
Poor concentration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take frequent breaks. 2. Tackle difficult material when your mind is fresh and alert. 3. Use guide questions.
Words are difficult or unfamiliar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use context and analyze word parts. 2. Skim through material before reading. Mark and look up meanings of difficult words. Jot meanings in the margin.
Sentences are long or confusing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read aloud. 2. Express each sentence in your own words.
Ideas are hard to understand, complicated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rephrase or explain each in your own words. 2. Make notes. 3. Locate a more basic text that explains ideas in simpler form.
Ideas are new and unfamiliar; you have little or no knowledge about the topic and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make sure you didn't miss or skip introductory information. 2. Get background information by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. referring to an earlier

<p>the writer assumes you do</p> <p>The material seems disorganized or poorly organized or there seems to be no organization</p> <p>You don't know what is important; everything seems important</p>	<p>section/chapter in the book.</p> <p>b. referring to an encyclopedia.</p> <p>c. referring to a more basic text.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pay more attention to headings. 2. Read the summary, if available. 3. Try to discover organization by writing an outline or drawing a map as you read. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use previewing. 2. Ask and answer guide questions. 3. Locate and underline topic sentences.
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Becoming A Critical Thinker:

Ask these important questions:

1. What is the source of this material?
2. Is the writer an authority? Why?
3. Does the writer make assumptions?
4. Is the writer biased?
5. Is the writing slanted?
6. Are the writer's ideas supported?
7. Does the writer make value judgments?

Do You Have Faulty Reading Habits?

Directions: *Circle the number by each statement to show how often you practice the following.*

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. Look at each syllable or letter as you read.	1	2	3	4
2. Have a hard time keeping your place.	1	2	3	4
3. Pause between each word.	1	2	3	4
4. Mumble when you read or read silently.	1	2	3	4
5. Read silently and out loud at the same rate.	1	2	3	4
6. Say each word to yourself as you read silently.	1	2	3	4

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- | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|
| 7. | Move your head as you read. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. | Carefully look at the first and last words in each line. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. | Keep going back and re-reading lines or parts of lines. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. | Forget what you have just read. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Writing Essentials:

Focus Guide:

1. PURPOSE:

- ✓ Why are you writing this?
- ✓ How do you want the reader to respond?

2. AUDIENCE:

- ✓ Who is/are my reader(s)?
- ✓ What is the reader's role?
- ✓ What does the reader know about the subject
- ✓ How will the reader react?
- ✓ What is my reader's style? Should I adjust my writing to it?
- ✓ How will the reader use this document?
- ✓ Who else should receive this document?

3. END RESULT:

If the reader were to forget everything else, what one key point do I want remembered?

4. STRATEGY:

- ✓ Should "I" be writing this? At "this" time?
- ✓ Would a phone call or meeting be more effective
- ✓ Should I send this at all? Am I too late?
- ✓ Is anyone else communicating the same information? Should I check?

What Is A Sentence?

Sometimes it is easier to say what *is not* a sentence than to say what *is*. Read the following groups of words, and try to identify the *one* sentence in each group. If you have trouble, first check off the examples that you are pretty sure are *not* sentences; then see what you have left.

for the child to sing sweetly
the child's sweet song
the sweetly singing child
the child singing sweetly
the child is singing sweetly
that the child is singing sweetly
if the child is singing sweetly
whenever the child is singing sweetly

for the woman to smile knowingly
the woman's knowing smile
the knowingly smiling woman
the woman smiling knowingly
the woman was smiling knowingly
that the woman was smiling knowingly
because the woman was smiling knowingly
so that the woman was smiling knowingly

for the bomb to explode suddenly
the bomb's sudden explosion
the suddenly exploding bomb
the bomb exploding suddenly
the bomb exploded suddenly
that the bomb exploded suddenly
when the bomb exploded suddenly
unless the bomb exploded suddenly

for the student to be genuinely astonished
the student's genuine astonishment
the genuinely astonished student
the student being genuinely astonished
the student was genuinely astonished
that the student was genuinely astonished
since the student was genuinely astonished
although the student was genuinely astonished

∄ Sarah D'Eloia, *"The Uses — and Limits — of Grammar"*

Marks of Punctuation:

Correct, clear, effective writing is impossible without proper punctuation. Correct punctuation helps improve the communication of thought from the writer to the reader.

The most important marks of punctuation are:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| . period | , comma |
| ? question mark | ; semicolon |
| ! exclamation point | : colon |
| — dash | " " double quotation marks |
| - hyphen | ' ' single quotation marks |
| ' apostrophe | () parentheses |

Capital Letters

There are some basic principles that apply:

1. Capitalize the first word of every sentence, including every quoted sentence.
2. Capitalize the first word of every line of poetry.
3. Capitalize proper nouns.
4. Capitalize all words except prepositions, articles and conjunctions in the titles of books, plays, magazines, and musical compositions.
5. Do not capitalize prepositions, conjunctions and articles except at the beginning or end of the title, or unless they consist of five or more letters.

Abbreviations:

Abbreviations are shortened forms of words and phrases that help save time and space.

General rule: *Spell out all words and phrases that would be confusing if abbreviated.*

Common Abbreviations:

- ✓ Names and titles:
- ✓ School subjects:
- ✓ Addresses:
- ✓ Calendar divisions:
- ✓ Measurements:
- ✓ Money:
- ✓ Geographic names:

Numbers:

Generally Accepted Principles:

1. Never begin a sentence with an actual numeral.
2. Use words for numbers between one and ninety-nine.
3. Use figures for numbers above ninety-nine.
4. When a number can be expressed in not more than two words, write it in words.
5. When a number can be expressed in no less than three words, use figures.
6. Arabic numerals are generally preferable to Roman numerals.

The Sentence Fragment:

A **sentence fragment** is not really a "sentence" at all, because it is missing either the subject or the verb. One main cause of sentence fragments is that writers use a word that looks like a verb but doesn't really function like one. Another cause of fragments is that writers simply end a sentence too soon.

Practice:

Spelling Demon List:

Incorrect

Correct

Listening Essentials:

Active Listening Skills:

Active listening is an important skill to develop for effectiveness in the workplace because it is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves understanding. Many times when people talk to each other, they don't really listen. They are often distracted, half listening, half thinking about something else—like what they will say next. Sometimes people stop listening because they assume that they have heard what the other person is saying many times before, so rather than paying attention, they focus on how they can respond to win the argument.

When you develop skills in active listening, you learn to listen and respond in a way that focuses the attention on the speaker. The listener must really focus on speaker fully, and then repeat, in his/her own words, what he or she thinks the speaker has said. The listener does not have to agree with the speaker--he or she must simply state what they think the speaker said. This helps the speaker to find out whether the listener really understood. If the listener did not, the speaker can explain some more.

Benefits of Active Listening:

- It forces people to listen attentively to others
- It avoids misunderstandings as people confirm their understanding of what the other person has said.
- It opens people up, to get them to say more.
- In a conflict situation, people are less likely to act out in anger because they feel that their concerns and wants were heard. If both parties in a conflict use active listening, the chances of being able to develop a solution to their problem become much greater.
- It reduces the number of mistakes that happen as a result of assumptions.
- It helps improve the quality of work and service to customers.

Active Listening Exercise # 1:

Think about those friends, family members, teachers or clergy who have had the biggest impact on you. How would you describe the communication between you? Was it helpful? comfortable? or inspirational?

In one-to-one relationships with someone who knows us well, we are usually so much in sync that communication flows between us almost without words. Chances are that those who influence us most are powerful listeners. Whether naturally or through practice, they have developed the skill of empathy.

A University of Maine researcher, Dr. Marisue Pickering, identifies four characteristics of empathetic listeners:

1. **Desire to be other-directed**—rather than to project one's own feelings and ideas onto the other.
2. **Desire to be non-defensive**—rather than to protect the self. When you feel the need to protect yourself, it is difficult to focus on another person.
3. **Desire to imagine the roles, perspectives, or experiences** of the other person, rather than assuming they are the same as your own.
4. **Desire to listen as a receiver, not as a critic**, and desire to understand the other person rather than to achieve either agreement or change that person.

Ten Skills Associated with Empathy:

SKILLS	EXPLANATION
1. Attending, acknowledging	1. Providing verbal or non-verbal awareness of the other, i.e., eye contact
2. Restating, paraphrasing	2. Responding to person's basic verbal message
3. Reflecting	3. Reflecting feelings, experiences, or content that has been heard or perceived through cues
4. Interpreting	4. Offering an interpretation about the other's feelings, desires, meanings
5. Summarizing	5. Bringing together in some way feelings and experiences; providing a focus

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- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 6. Probing | 6. Questioning in a supportive way that requests more information or that attempts to clear up confusions |
| 7. Giving feedback | 7. Sharing perceptions of the other's ideas or feelings; disclosing relevant personal information |
| 8. Supporting | 8. Showing warmth and caring in one's own individual way |
| 9. Checking perceptions | 9. Finding out if assumptions, and perceptions are correct |
| 10. Being quiet | 10. Giving the other time to think as well as to talk |

SOURCE: Pickering, Marisue, "Communication" in EXPLORATIONS, A Journal of Research of the University of Maine, Vol. 3, No. 1, Fall 1986, pp 16-19.

Listening Skills:

1. Communicating that we are listening:

- Non-verbal skills: eye contact
body language
use of silence
- Verbal skills: Minimal encouragers

2. The art of questions

Open questions: how? what? could? would?

Closed questions: is? are? do? did?

Why questions: sometimes open, sometimes closed

3. Focus--be aware that the conversation may take on a variety of focuses:

speaker focus	topic focus
other(s) focus	listener focus

4. Reflections:

- reinforce and support the speaker
- clarify the meaning of what was said
- reflect factual content
- reflect feeling content

5. Summary:

- Restate what was said for better understanding
- Beginning discussion - remembering where we left off - summarizing in mid-discussion
- Using "I" statements
- Keeping the focus and avoiding "topic jumps"
- Encouraging others to see themselves with clarity

Listening Skills Exercise #2:

Objective:

The objective of this practice exercise is to give each person the opportunity to learn how to use verbal and non-verbal skills and become a better listener.

Directions:

The group will be divided into subgroups of three. There will be three roles in each subgroup:

- Speaker
- Listener
- Observer

Everyone will take each role once in this practice, so divide into your subgroups and decide who is going to take which role first.

Directions for the speaker:

Your task is to talk about something that is important to you: the job you want, your family, a decision, or a question.

This practice will be more helpful if you talk about something you really care about, although role-playing is possible.

Directions for the listener:

Your task is to practice good listening skills: eye contact, body language, silences, and encouragement. Don't panic! Just concentrate

on following the speaker's train of thought. Try to limit your responses to the skills discussed in this session.

Directions for the observer:

Your task is to observe the listener's verbal and non-verbal skills. Observe and count only as many behaviors (eye contact, body posture, verbal encouragement, topic jumps) as you can manage and still be accurate.

Procedure:

The first speaker will talk with the listener for three or four minutes. The listener will then discuss the listening experience with the two other members of the subgroup.

To the listener: What was comfortable? Difficult? Did you stay with the speaker?) Then the speaker will share his or her feelings about the listener's listening.

To the speaker: Did you feel listened to? Was it helpful? Did the listener have any habits you found distracting?) The observer will then share observations. This sharing process should take about three or four minutes.

Now everyone change places. Have the listener become the speaker, the speaker the observer, and the observer the listener. Go through the five minutes of talking and listening and five minutes of exchanging remarks twice more so that each person takes each role once. The entire practice session should take about 25 minutes.

When you are finished, return to the large group. Your facilitator will help you share your practice experiences. How are these skills important in the workplace? Where else would they be useful? Go around the group so that participants have a chance to share at least one thing they have learned about themselves in this practice session.

Source: Interactive Skills Program: Helping Through Listening and Influencing, Hedlund and Freedman, Cornell University Cooperative Extension Service, 1981.

LISTENING SKILLS Exercise #3:

Questions, Reflections, Summarization

Form subgroups of three and practice using question asking as a listening skills. Each member of your subgroup should take turns being the speaker, the listener (who practices the skill of questioning), and the observer.

Directions for the speaker—In the speaker role, we ask you to: Share something that is a real concern to you. Obviously, we are not asking that you share anything that is very private or that might be embarrassing. Sharing a real part of your life will make this practice both interesting and useful. (And you might find it helpful to have someone carefully listen to your concern).

In addition to giving you practice as the speaker, the purpose of this exercise is to give the listener a chance to practice interactive skills. If you, as the speaker, take all of the practice time in a talking about yourself, the listener will not have a chance to practice listening skills. So, be sure to pause often to encourage the listener to respond. Try to share information that allows the speaker to practice the skill of the session--the art of questioning. If you give the complete details of your concern, for example, it may be difficult for the listener to find anything to ask questions about. Or, if your story is completely factual and does not include your personal feelings or opinions, the listener may have difficulty asking questions with a speaker focus. As the speaker in the practice session, part of your job is to help your listener practice listening skills.

Directions for the listener:

In this session try to concentrate on asking questions, reflecting, and, at the end, summarizing even though this may seem difficult. You may use encouragement occasionally, as long as your primary responses are questions. Vary your responses between open and closed questions and vary the focus of your questions (i.e., on speaker, topic, or others). By using both open and closed questions you will also see how your question and its focus can determine the course of the conversation.

Directions for the observer:

Keep track of the listener's responses. Include the number of open and closed questions used by the listener and the focus of each question; note the use of feeling and factual reflection, and the effectiveness of the listener's summary.

Procedure:

The speaker and listener will have a conversation three or four minutes long. The observer can also time the conversation, saying, "stop" when the time is up.

After the conversation, take a few minutes: First, the listener will share thoughts about how they used questions; second, the speaker will comment on his/her experience during the conversation and the listener's use of the skill; finally, the observer will share observations and comment on the conversation.

Now trade roles and repeat the practice.

Each listener practice should take eight to ten minutes: three or four minutes for the initial conversation and three or four minutes to review it--to share the listener's and the speaker's impressions and the observer's reactions (1/2 hour).

When exchanging observations about a conversation, please give the listener accurate feedback about how he or she used the skills. If the listener is having difficulty asking open questions, reflecting, or summarizing, say so and help him/her learn how to do better.

Remember that the purpose of practice is for the *listener* to learn the listening skill. Feedback and suggestions from both speaker and observer are important to the learning process.

Source: Interactive Skills Program: Helping Through Listening and Influencing, Hedlund and Freedman, Cornell University Cooperative Extension Service, 1981.

Effective Confrontation Exercise #4:

Procedure:

The group should break into sub-groups of four or five people. Go around the group, with each person taking time speaking about some personal concern for a few minutes. The next person in line is the listener, who responds to the speaker with a confrontation.

The group can then discuss the listener response:

- Was it a confrontation?
- Was it effective?
- What was the focus?
- What are some alternative confrontations that could be made?

After discussing the response, the listener becomes the next speaker. Move around the circle as time permits, hopefully allowing each person to practice responding with a confrontation.

If there is time, discuss the use of confrontation as a skill of self-expression:

- What are the possible risks in using this skill?
- How might you use this skill in the workplace or daily life?
- How could you improve your capacity for self-confrontation?
- What are the benefits of confronting effectively?

Conflict Resolution Skills:

What are your feelings about conflict?

What we have learned along the way about how to deal with conflict, along with our past experiences in dealing with conflict will have a great impact on shaping our ideas and attitudes in the workplace.

Finish the following sentences:

1. The way that we deal with conflict in our home is...
2. When I was growing up, what I learned about conflict is...
3. The way that my friends and family deal with conflict is too...
4. When I'm involved in a conflict, I usually...
5. When I see someone else involved in a conflict, I usually...
6. When people make me angry, I...
7. Conflicts are usually...
8. I think that most people deal with conflict by...
9. The best way to handle a conflict is to...
10. I wish that I could learn...

Please respond to the following questions:

1. How does conflict in the workplace affect the work that you need to do?
2. What are some of your fears and concerns about dealing with conflict in the workplace?

Conflict Resolution Exercise# 5:

Definition of Terms- 20 minutes

What is Workplace Conflict? To answer this question, we need to break this question into two parts. First, what is conflict? Second, what defines the workplace?

Procedure:

1. Break into two groups (if there are more than twenty participants, break into four groups instead of two)
2. For each group, identify a recorder and reporter
3. Each group will have 20 minutes to create a working definition of either *Conflict* or *The Workplace*.
4. Each group should spend time brainstorming ideas before trying to write their working definition
5. Each group should come up with as many ideas as possible about these terms.
6. Each group will have a chance to report out. Capture each definition on a flipchart.

Webster's Dictionary Definition of Conflict:

"A clash, competition, or mutual interference of opposing or incompatible forces or qualities (such as ideas, interests, or wills)."

Basically conflict exists when there is *a disagreement between two or more parties*. It may result in harm or good. It may involve many or a very few. It may be result in a mutual resolution or require outside help to solve. Conflict may be legitimate or seem petty, misguided, and irrational. Wherever disagreement occurs, you have conflict.

The Workplace:

A simple definition of the workplace is *the setting in which work is performed*. You may interpret that as the physical location at which people interact in the process of producing goods or services for an organizational purpose. Today's workplace is very complicated, because of technology you may have to work with others who are separated from the physical setting. Therefore a more accurate description is *the various arrangements and mechanisms—including physical location—through which work flows*.

Workplace Conflict:

From this, we can define workplace conflict, as disagreements between two or more parties in the workplace—be it a common physical site or another medium through which work is performed.

Discussion:

Based on these definitions, disagreements may arise over a variety of matters and sometimes over issues not connected with work or the work site. People may react to conflicts at the emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral levels. These reactions can become very disruptive to the workflow and safety of people in the workplace.

Common Causes of Conflict in the Workplace:

Most conflicts at work fall into one of three overlapping categories: interests, rights, and power.

- **Interests:** Conflicts over interests concern disagreements that affect what people want or need to receive in the workplace. These matters run from general treatment in the workplace to more specific concerns such as assignments, evaluation, scheduling, promotion, and pay. Conflicts over interests occur among and between employees at all levels across the organization.
- **Rights:** Today workers enjoy a host of legally protected rights. These rights result from a variety of sources: statutes, regulations, and court decisions. In addition, organizations establish their own systems of internal rights, through policies, procedures, or contractual agreement. For example, policies regarding dismissal, the application of progressive discipline and the rights of employees who are being disciplined.

The rights of employees under federal law come from a variety of labor protections, including:

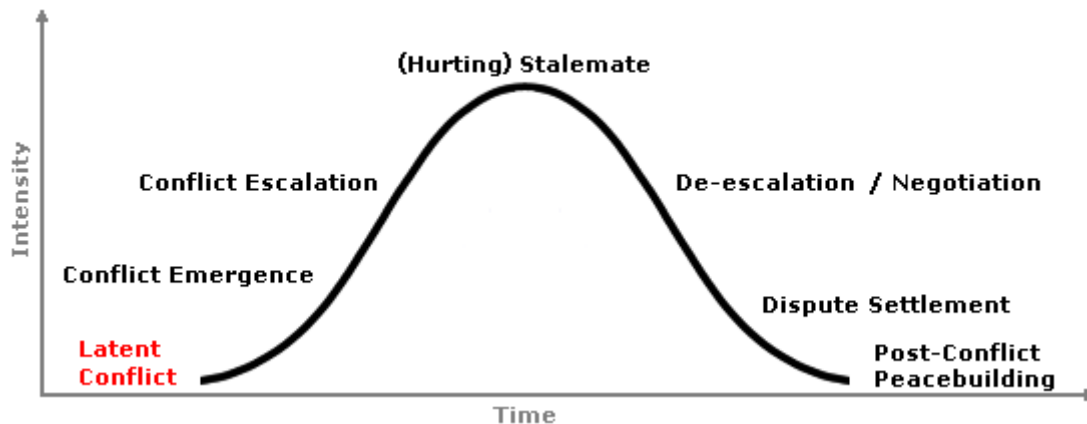
- **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII)**, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;
- **The Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA)**, which protects men and women who perform substantially equal work in the same establishment from sex-based wage discrimination;
- **The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA)**, which protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older;
- **Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**, which prohibit employment discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector, and in state and local governments;
- **Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**, which prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities who work in the federal government; and
- **The Civil Rights Act of 1991**, which, among other things, provides monetary damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination.
- **The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA)**, which became effective on August 5, 1993 and requires all employers of 50 or more employees within a 75 mile area to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to "eligible" employees for certain family and medical reasons.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces all of these laws. EEOC also provides oversight and coordination of all federal equal employment opportunity regulations, practices, and policies

Power: Many times in the workplace, conflicts involve a test of power. Just use of power can cause conflicts:

- Who has it?
- When should it be used?
- How should it be used?

Conflict Stages:



Stage 1: Latent Conflict

This first stage happens when individuals, groups, organizations have differences that bother one or the other, but those differences are not great enough to cause one side to act to change the situation. This stage is often referred to a "unstable peace."

Stage 2: Conflict Emergence or "Eruption"

After a conflict has gone on for some time without resolution, if the underlying frustrations are strong enough, a "triggering event" will start the "eruption" phase of the conflict. This event may be the first time people see the conflict

Stage 3: Conflict Escalation

Escalation happens when there is an increase in the intensity of a conflict and the things people do to deal with it. It is driven by changes within each of the parties, new patterns of interaction between them, and the involvement of other people in the struggle. When conflicts escalate, more people tend to become involved. Parties begin to make bigger and stronger threats. Violence may start, or if violence has already occurred it may become more severe.

Five Changes That Happen As Conflicts Escalate:

Dean Pruitt and Jeffrey Rubin list five changes that occur as a conflict escalates.

1. Parties move from light tactics to heavy tactics—from efforts to please the other side, to threats, power plays, and even violence.
2. The conflict grows in size. The numbers of issues that people disagree about increases, and parties put more energy into the struggle.
3. Issues move from specific to general, and the relationship between the parties falls apart.
4. The number of people involved grows from one to many, as more and more people and groups are drawn into the conflict.
5. The goal of the parties changes from "doing well" to winning, and finally, to hurting the other.

Stage 4: Hurting (Stalemate)

Once conflicts escalate they often reach a stalemate: a situation in which neither side can win, but neither side wants to back down or accept loss either. Even though both parties may realize that the conflict is going nowhere, they will find it difficult to think about a resolution.

Stage 5: De-Escalation-Negotiation

De-escalation involves changes within each of the parties involved in the conflict, and may require the assistance of a third party. In most cases, de-escalation does not happen until the parties have reached a prolonged stalemate where both sides see that they are being harmed by continuing the conflict. Once they realize this, they are more likely to be willing to negotiate.

Once started, de-escalation moves slowly and requires much effort. Many small steps must be taken before bigger steps can be taken and are usually coordinated by a third party.

Stage 6: Dispute Settlement (Peacemaking)

A peaceful solution can happen in a conflict when most or all of the underlying causes of the conflict are finally satisfied. The conflict may be resolved permanently. If some of the grievances are not addressed, the conflict may be "settled" for the time being, but may develop again later as grievances again become significant.

Summary:

There are four very important aspects to reconciling a conflict so that it stays resolved. They are:

- Truth -coming to see that there truth (their truth) to the other side's view of the conflict.
- Justice—each party feeling that their needs have been fairly addressed as a means of putting the past to rest.
- Forgiveness—letting go of anger and harsh feeling on both sides, and
- Safety—the expectation of a peaceful work environment.

Conflict is an aspect of life. If working through conflict is viewed as an opportunity for growth and change in a work environment, the potential for a positive outcome is great. On an individual level, the ability to solve problems or manage change plays an important role in your success. In the same way, the overall ability of an organization to solve problems through collaborative efforts has a strong impact on the organization's bottom line and overall success.

When conflict is unresolved, it takes on a life of its own and eventually produces damage that could have been prevented.

As you prepare to enter the work world, the skills of solving problems and resolving conflicts prove very helpful.

What Does a Company Stand For?

Before you go for your first interview, become familiar with your potential employer's grievance policies, statements of commitment to diversity, and equal opportunity practices.

Tips For Resolving Conflicts With Others:

When you are having conflict with someone, consider using the following strategy:

- 1. Identify the problem.** Identify the person you are having trouble with. Figure out the specific behavior or attitude that is bothering you and how frequently it occurs.
- 2. Look at the relationships.** Examine how the person interacts with others. Is it similar to the way s/he interacts with you? What makes him/her act that way? Figuring out the causes of someone's behavior helps point the way toward possible solutions.
- 3. Determine the costs.** How does that behavior affect others? Does it cause people to lose morale? Does it affect productivity? Does it make everyone uncomfortable? If no one is affected by the person's behavior, the behavior should be ignored.
- 4. Plan an approach.** Once you identify that the person's behavior does affect you and others, you need to have a discussion with the person. Plan an approach that fits the nature of the problem, the personality of the person involved and your relationship with that person.
- 5. Describe the behavior.** When you do meet with that person describe the behavior in a non-accusatory manner and explain why it bothers you. Use "I" statements. For example, "Today during the meeting when I was talking about the budget and you interrupted me before I had finished my sentence, I felt really cut down."

6. State what you want. Next be clear about what you want. "I hope that the next time I talk that I won't get interrupted".

7. Seek agreement: Be sure the person understands and try to get commitment to change. "Do you see things the same way that I do?"

Conflict Resolution Role Plays:

For each of the following situations, you will be asked to role-play using the skills that have been covered on conflict resolution. Each role-play provides a situation and a recommended solution.

Role Play Situation #1: Dealing With The “Back-Stabber”

Trey is just as like his name suggests, determined to get ahead personally by “*backstabbing*” others. He gossips and spreads little tidbits about everything from your work habits to your personal life that are twisted versions of the truth or outright lies. To make matters worst, he smiles in your face, and is friendly and open, because he hopes you'll reveal some useful material about yourself.

Suggested Solution:

Do not go to his level—spreading negative rumors, as revenge about him will only lower people's opinion of you and your ability to deal with conflict. No one will remember who started the conflict; you both will be viewed as petty and untrustworthy. Prove the negative rumors wrong through your abilities and performance. Take the high ground even though it may seem hard in the beginning.

Role Play Situation # 2: Dealing With The Too Friendly Supervisor

Your supervisor is too friendly and open with all the details of her private life, and expects you to do the same. Even when you seem uncomfortable hearing about the last fight with her ex or what her doctor said, you'll wind up sitting in her office way too long, listening to a lot of unwanted information.

The solution: Recognize that you're not the one being inappropriate and don't feel that you have to discuss any topics you feel are off-limits. Don't encourage her to continue to share personal information by offering advice or asking for more information when she starts telling you personal things. You certainly are not required to answer personal questions. Sometimes a laugh or joke will get the point across.

Section 3: Interpersonal Skills



What You Will Learn In This Section

- ▶ More about your personal strengths and weaknesses
- ▶ How to work effectively with others on a team
- ▶ Skills for valuing and respecting differences
- ▶ How to develop and maintain good working relationships
- ▶ Giving and receiving feedback
- ▶ How to cope with constant change and other challenges

Interpersonal Skills: Refer to the ability to...

- Contribute to a team and keep it and moving toward the achievement of a common goal
- Maintain group cooperation and support
- Use strengths to contribute to the overall goals of the organization
- Interact effectively with peers, superiors and customers
- Express one's feelings appropriately
- Understand and respect the feelings of others
- Use conflict resolution techniques
- Be willing to take risks
- Make commitments and keep them

Understanding Your Personal Style:

1. What do we mean by personal style?

In you small compare the styles of two of your favorite comedians, or sports celebrities.

2. Now, think about your own personal style by answering the following questions

- What unique quality would you bring to the workplace?

- List several words or phrases that describe how you would do your work or deal with customers

-
- If you were to observe yourself from a distance, what is the most interesting thing you would notice about how you work?

- Imagine yourself working with others. How would your co-workers describe you and your way of working with them?

- Again, imagine yourself on the job. How would your supervisor describe you and the way you complete your work?

Journal Entries: During the course of the workshop, keep a record of how you have demonstrated your personal style. Be prepared to share your reflections with your classmates.

Developing and Maintaining Good Working Relationships:

To Form New Relationships:

- Introduce yourself, so you know the person's name.
- Say hello and be friendly
- Get to know the person before you ask personal questions or tell personal things about yourself
- Respect people's personal space

To Improve Relationships With Co-Workers or Team Members:

- Make every effort to get to know your co-workers and the individuals they are
- Spend time talking during breaks and after work.
- Understand the importance of people having friends outside of work.
- Never hang around when you are off and that person is still working
- Be proactive in your communication
- Follow through on what you promise
- Make every effort to resolve conflicts quickly and completely
- When people share information in confidence, keep it confidential!
- Be loyal to your team or work group

Working With Others on a Team:

Working with others on a team requires the following self-management skills:

1. Emotional Self-Control.

This is the ability to keep your impulsive feelings and emotions under control. It is being able to avoid negative actions when faced with conflict or hostility from others, or when working under pressure.

The person who uses Emotional Self-Control:

- Deals calmly with stress
- Displays impulse control and restraint
- Stays poised and positive, even in trying moments

Personal Improvement Activities:

- Make a list of all the things that cause you to "lose it" (your triggers). Create a strategy to prevent these triggers from causing you to lose your composure and your self-control.

-
- Reduce your stress through physical activity or other types of conscious relaxation techniques (meditation, exercise, reading, etc.)
 - Read information on stress management
 - Read: *Angry All the Time: An Emergency Guide to Anger Control*, Ron Pottern-Efron, 1994.

2. Trustworthiness.

This can be described, as taking action that is consistent with what you say and value. It includes communicating intentions, ideas, and feelings openly and directly and welcoming openness and honesty in others. You show integrity and take responsibility for your own behavior and performance. You build trust through reliability and sincerity.

The person who is trustworthy:

- Is real ("what you see is what you get")
- Sticks to their beliefs even if they are unpopular
- Confronts unethical action in others

Personal Improvement Activities:

- Spend some time thinking about the values and principles that you feel most strongly about. Write down the most important ones. Next to each one, place a check if your behavior is consistent with the value. Ask yourself what you would need to do differently in order to be true to your beliefs.
- Consider the issues you are willing to stick to “no matter what”. Clarify for yourself what is and is not worth fighting for. If an opportunity comes up to act on something you believe in, take it!
- Read: *Principle-Centered Leadership*, Stephen Covey, 1992.

3. Conscientiousness:

This is about taking responsibility for your personal performance. It reflects a drive for being reliable and delivering quality work. You work in a careful and organized manner, paying attention to detail, following through on commitments and promises, and building trust through reliability.

The person who is conscientious:

- Follows through on commitments
- Is careful in his/her work
- Shows attention to detail

Personal Development Activities:

- Keep a detailed filing system for all monthly bills: telephone, rent, heat, credit cards, etc.
- Develop a calendar of activities. Build a check-off system into your calendar to make sure that you are sticking to deadlines.
- Read: *A Passion for Excellence*, Tom Peters, 1986

4. Adaptability:

This is the ability to be flexible and work effectively within a variety of changing situations and with various people and groups. People with this ability are willing to change their own ideas or perceptions when they get new information or evidence. They are flexible, and juggle multiple demands as required.

The person who is adaptable:

- Smoothly juggles multiple demands
- Easily handles shifting priorities and rapid change
- Adapts plans, behavior, or approaches to fit major changes in situations.

Personal Development Activities:

- Regularly review the progress you are making for the goals that you have set. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? Is there a better, more efficient way of doing things?
- When strategies are not working? Stop what you are doing, acknowledge that it is not working, and make the necessary adjustment to your plans, activities, objectives, or behavior. Be willing to make some changes or adjustments when things are not going well or when situations demand change.
- Read: *Strategies for Fast Growing Times*, N. Booh, 1997.

5. Optimism:

This is about seeing the world as a glass that is "half-full" rather than "half-empty. This is the ability to see good in others and in the situation at hand. Challenges are viewed as opportunities that can be acted upon and taken advantage of to achieve the best outcomes.

The person who is optimistic:

- Sees opportunities rather than threats
- Usually have positive expectations about others
- Hope that the future will be better than the past

Personal Development Activities:

- For two or three days, make a list of all the bad breaks or setbacks you have. Keep a journal of how you have responded to them. Next write down the consequences of each your responses. For example, "I cursed all the way to home," after I missed the bus to my appointment." Pay attention to when your responses are negative and the negative result on your activity and when they are positive, how positive energy flows. Try to change your "self-talk" from negative to positive.
- Read: *Learned Optimism*, M. E. P. Seligman, 1990.

6. Achievement Orientation:

This shows a concern for working toward a standard of excellence. This standard may be a personal need to improve your performance over past accomplishments, to outperform others, or even to surpass the greatest accomplishment ever achieved.

The person who is achievement orientated:

- Anticipates obstacles to a goal
- Takes appropriate risks
- Sets measurable goals

Personal Development Activities:

- Try using some projects or activities that you are currently working on to practice Achievement Orientation. Create some goals that make you stretch. Regularly monitor your progress against your activities. Discuss your progress with another person, like a mentor. This will help you understand the patterns of your work and your accomplishments against your plans.
- Keep a log of when you demonstrated the behaviors of Achievement Orientation. At the end of each day or week think about how well you thought about obstacles; decide if you took

any risks during the course of your work, and if you made any progress toward your work/personal goals.

- Read: *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*, J. M. Kouzes and B. Z. Poser, Jossey-Bass, 1987

7. Initiative:

This is the ability to identify a problem, obstacle, or opportunity and take action on it. People who show initiative are consistently trying to do better, to experience new challenges and opportunities, and to be held accountable for their actions and ideas.

The person who shows initiative:

- Acts rather than waits
- Seeks information in unusual ways
- Cuts through red tape and gets the job done!

Personal Development Activities:

- Volunteer to be a leader of some activity in your church or community.

-
- Make a list of all the external factors that affect your success. Make a similar list of all the internal factors that affect your success. Looking at both lists, identify changes, opportunities or problems. Map out in detail the steps you need to take in order to take advantage of those opportunities or take actions to prevent more problems.
 - Read: *The Art of the Long View*, P. Schwartz, 1996.

Valuing and Respecting Differences:

When the strengths of a diverse work force are fully utilized, an organization can more gain a more effective edge in today's competitive marketplace. Valuing and respecting differences makes for healthier working relationships that lead to better productivity.

In the workplace, diversity refers to the differences we recognize in others, and ourselves such as:

- Gender type
- Culture
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Physical and mental abilities or challenges

Diversity can also be used to describe differences relating to our workplace relationships, such as:

- Management vs. non-management
- Main office/headquarters vs. field/satellite offices
- Technical vs. non-technical
- Employees with families vs. single employees

Valuing and respecting differences in the workplace begins with individual self-awareness. It is up to each of us to take a deep look into our feelings and beliefs so that we can understand how we can open our minds and change our behaviors to more effectively value the diversity around us.

Our Attitudes About Differences:

During this time, you will be asked to think about your belief systems, and how they were formed. Try to think about how your family or others have influenced your attitudes about other cultures. Some of your beliefs may be based on how you were raised, or your own experiences. The following are examples of things that shape our attitudes about differences:

Experiences that Shape Attitudes

- Things that happened to you personally
- Things that you personally observed
- Things that you have heard from witnesses
- Things that your have heard from somebody who heard it from somebody else (third hand).

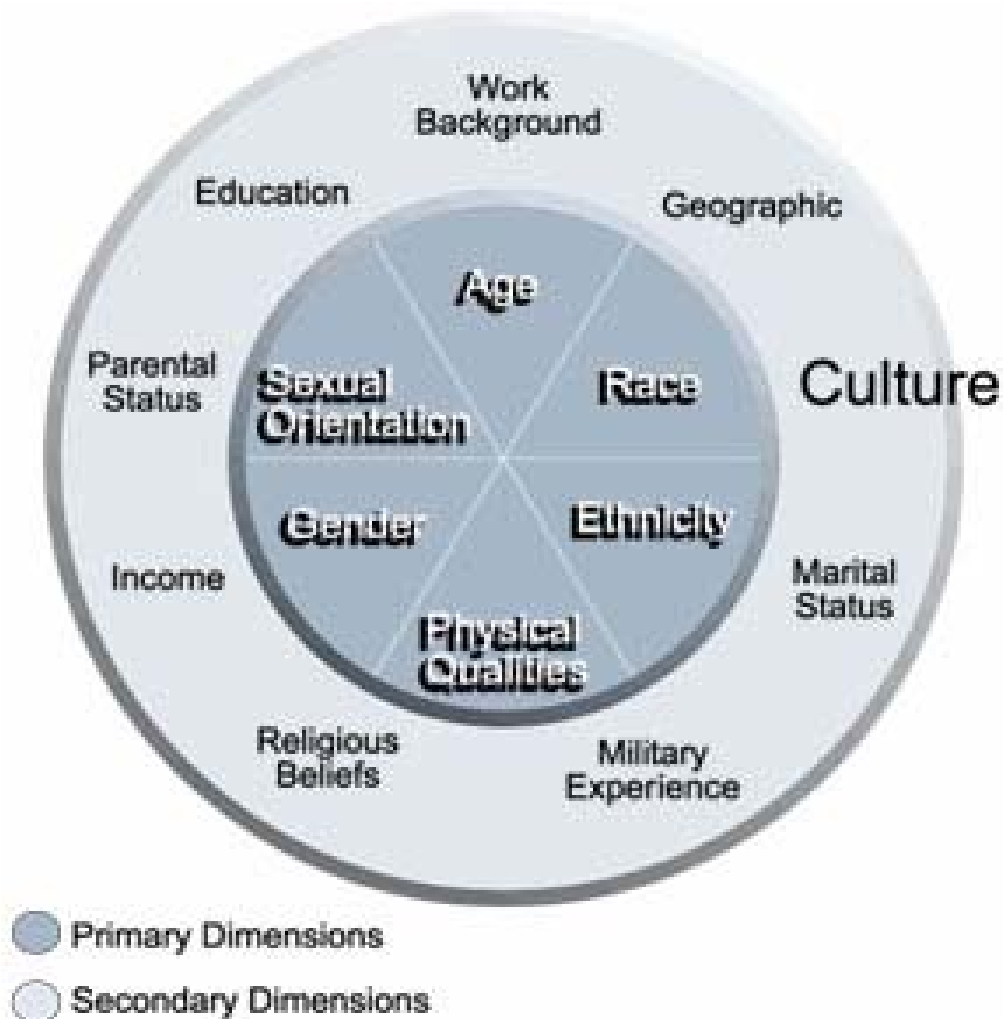
Family/Association Influences

- Parents/grandparents
- Siblings
- Friends
- School/work associates
- Clubs/churches, etc.

Environmental Influences

- Movies, TV, video games
- Newspapers, magazines
- Books and studies
- Political campaigns

Dimensions of Diversity Exercise:



Source: Primary and Secondary Dimensions of Diversity - Marilyn Loden and J.B. Rosener

Dimensions of Diversity Exercise:

Valuing and respecting differences in the workplace begins with individual self-awareness. It is up to each of us to take a deep look into our feelings and beliefs so that we can understand how we can open our minds and change our behaviors to more effectively value the diversity around us.

Primary and Secondary Dimensions:

Primary Dimensions of Diversity Include: (The Inner Circle)

- Age
- Ethnic heritage
- Gender
- Mental/physical abilities and characteristics
- Race
- Sexual orientation

Secondary Dimensions of Diversity Include (The Outer Circle)

- Communication/Work Style
- Education
- Family Status
- First Language
- Geographic Location
- Income
- Military Experience
- Organizational Role and Level
- Work Experience & Work Style

Directions:

During this exercise, you will have an opportunity to think belief systems, and try to identify how they were formed. Try to think about how your family or others have influenced your attitudes about cultural differences. Some of your beliefs may be based on how you were raised, or your own experiences. Look at the Dimensions of Diversity Model and answer these questions:

1. Which of the dimensions of diversity are a part of your core identity? Which of the dimensions would be part of your inner circle? Write the three most important things in the space below:

2. Now think about yourself at work. What are the two or three special contributions that you would bring to the workplace because of your own unique diversity? In what way would these contributions make the workplace better?

Tips for Improving Relationships in a Diverse Workplace:

- **Communication:** Utilize all aspects of effective communication, including words, body language, eye contact. Practice conscious self-talk to change old assumptions about differences. Key skills are openness, active listening and respectful language.
- **Think before you speak:** Be sensitive to others. If you accidentally offend someone, apologize immediately. Avoid generalizations. Key skills: avoid using words, images and situations that suggest that all or most members of a particular group are the same.
- **Listen more:** When people feel that they are being heard, it increases their self-esteem and confidence. Listening encourages people to be less defensive and talk through concerns or problems. People are more likely to cooperate with the person who listens.

Coping With Change And Other Challenges:

Adapting to change and being flexible are required skills for success in the workplace. A person who is rigid and closed in his or her thinking will have a difficult time adapting to change and moving ahead in the workplace.

Attitudes About Change Exercise:

You may have to make many changes in your ideas, attitudes and behaviors to get and keep a job. Change is not easy, but it is possible for anyone who really wants to do it. Real change requires commitment, energy, effort and courage. The thing that you have the most control over changing is **YOU!** Actually change starts with you. Don't try to change the past, or the things that you cannot control. Start with changing you, and you will be surprised how quickly those other things start to disappear.

Directions:

In your small groups, discuss the following question. Write your answers down and be prepared to report out to the large group:

What is the difference between an optimist and a pessimist?

Adapting to Change In The Workplace

Exercise:

You will be asked to think about some examples of how things may have to change once you start a job. List as many examples as you can in the time allowed.

Example:

- ***You have been hired as a greeter in a restaurant and have been asked to clean tables.***

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you think you would feel if you had to make a change in your routine?
2. Everyone has to go through changes in their job routines; how can you use a change in your routine to your advantage?
3. What role should the supervisor play in helping an employee adapt to a change at work?

What We Know About Change:

Change is a "Process," not an event:

- It occurs over a period time and it requires ongoing management in order to last.
- Change in human behavior involves stages, each one harder than the one before.
- Change is a highly personal experience
- Change involves developmental growth.

Tips for Embracing Change:

X Be a change agent—Change yourself first

X Practice continuous improvement

X Practice self-motivation

X Keep a positive attitude

X Have the necessary skills

X Manage your own morale

Coping With Change and Unexpected Events:

A very important part of responsibility is making and keeping commitments. It is impossible to be taken seriously if you don't keep and honor your commitments. Commitment is a serious promise to press on, to get up, no matter how many times challenges and life may knock us down.

Making and Keeping Commitments Exercise:

Directions: In your small group, determine the commitments that are necessary to make each of the environments listed below function effectively:

Home:

Work:

Community:

Discussion Questions:

1. How might a person feel differently if she/he is committed rather than apathetic? Why?
2. How does our decision to be committed or apathetic make a difference in the lives of others whom we live with? Work with? Share the community with?

Case Examples: Please use the following case examples to test your level of commitment and responsibility:

1. You are taking your child to daycare on your way to work. Once you get to the daycare provider you find that they are closed:

Options

- A. Call immediately to speak to the charge nurse to let her know that you will attempt to see childcare. You inform her that you will call her back when you find someone to watch your child.
- B. Call the job and tell them you are on your way to work and that you have your baby with you. You are arranging for someone to pick your child up from the hospital.
- C. Call the charge nurse and tell her you are not coming in today.

-
2. It is the routine in your Hotel, for staff to switch a scheduled workday with another employee. What would you do if you work on Saturday for Jane and Jane was supposed to work on Sunday for you; however, Jane never came to work!
 - A. Tell them they need to call Jane because she switched with you
 - B. Call Jane and try to find her
 - C. Come into work and make a note not to switch with Jane again.

 3. The charge nurse asks you to perform a duty on a patient that is not assigned to you. You already have a full patient load and you know performing this duty will cause you to be late performing on your other task, what do you do?
 - A. Tell the nurse that is not my patient, and tell her who's patient it is so she can ask them to perform the task
 - B. Tell the nurse you are too busy
 - C. Explain to the nurse what you have on your plate and ask her how should you prioritize your tasks?

 4. You are new employee at a construction company; you have been there for only a week. A site supervisor who has been there for 22 years is orienting you. You both observe a construction worker performing an act that is in direct violation of the work site safety codes. What do you do?
 - A. Point out the violation to Supervisor who has been there 22 years?
 - B. Nothing, because the supervisor saw it and he did not say anything

-
- C. Discuss it with others over lunch?
5. You wake up in the morning and you find your children's schools are closed due to the ice storm. You are scheduled to be at work in two hours. What would you do?

Key Points:

Being responsible and demonstrating commitment is not easy, just like the road to success. It's easy to get discouraged sometimes. It's easy to think the road is too hard, or it's taking too much time, or just not worth all the effort. Commitment is well worth the price in the long run. Not only will your relationships improve in all the areas of your life, but people will notice that you have what it takes to succeed. If you are true to your values and committed to success, people will be drawn to you.

Responding To Feedback:

Giving Feedback:

DO'S

1. Describe the person's behavior which bothers you.
"It bothers me when you finish my sentences for me."
2. Talk to the person right when things come up.
Don't wait until things are likely to have been forgotten.
3. Use "I" messages. Own your feelings.
"I feel bad when you finish my sentences for me."
4. Check for clarity.
"Do you understand what I mean when I say that?"
5. Give consequences if behavior continues.
"If you keep interrupting me, I most likely won't want to spend time talking with you in the future."
6. Only bring up behaviors that the person can do something about.
7. Be ready to listen to the other person's point of view.

DON'TS

1. Don't accuse the person.
"You always interrupt me."
2. Don't bring in third parties.
"John also says that you interrupt a lot."

-
3. Don't take for granted that the person understands what you are saying.
 4. Don't give vague consequences.
"That kind of behavior is going to get you in trouble."
 5. Don't bring up behaviors that the person can't help.
"The way you breathe really bothers me."
 6. Don't deny the other person's feelings.

Receiving Feedback:

Tips on receiving feedback...

1. Listen to the feedback without getting defensive.
2. Do not blindly accept what you are told as the ultimate truth.
3. Paraphrase the feedback to make sure that you understand correctly what is being said to you.
4. Remember that all feedback is helpful, because it gives you a chance to see how others view your work.
5. Follow through on the areas of improvement that are discussed.

Accepting Criticism: Role Play

Directions: Two volunteers will act out the following scenario. Follow along with your copy and be prepared to offer comments and observations in the discussion that follows:

Background/Set-Up: The team leader enters the room with a booklet in her hand. The employee is waiting in a chair and looks up at the team leader, with a startled look on her face.

Scenario 1:

Team Leader:

"Is this the report that you gave me to review?"

Employee:

"Yes, I put it on your chair before I left yesterday. Have you had a chance to read it?"

Team Leader:

"I can't believe that you gave me this report!" First I couldn't read it because of all of the typos and secondly you didn't follow any of my directions!" This is the worst report that I have ever received in my ten years in this hospital! I need you to redo this thing before you leave today!

Scenario 2:

Take the same scenario and act it out with the changes that your instructor will provide.

Group Discussion

1. How would you react to the criticism provided in each scenario? What do you think is the right way to handle the situation?
2. How might the criticism each person received affect the way they felt about themselves?
3. How might the team leader's tone and body language—even though the message may have been the same—affect your response?
4. How is asking someone to do something different than telling someone to do something? Which do you prefer?
5. What are some of the factors that affect how you feel about taking directions from others? Factors like their age, race, seniority, personality, etc.?
6. Notice that in the first scenario the team leader did not tell the employee what to change? How was she supposed to know what to fix? What was needed to close the feedback loop?
7. In general, when is it appropriate to try to figure something out for yourself and when is it appropriate to ask questions? Who do you ask? Are you afraid of asking a question that you think is stupid? Do you think that asking too many questions might make you look bad?

Section 4 Life Management Skills



What You Will Learn In This Section

- ▶ How to manage time effectively
- ▶ How to create a healthy lifestyle to avoid getting sick and perform well at work
- ▶ How to develop a personal resource map
- ▶ Money management skills
- ▶ How to develop support systems
- ▶ Basic math skills
- ▶ Basics for using information and technology
- ▶ Why you must keep learning new things

Managing Time Effectively: How Well Do I Save Time?

Give yourself 2 points for each of the following habits you have.

1. I take advantage of my learning style. I know the strategies that help me to learn best and I use them
2. I have a monthly calendar to help me keep track of my activities and responsibilities.
3. I have a weekly calendar to help me keep track of my activities and responsibilities.
4. Every morning I write down a list of the things I have to do.
5. Any time I feel that there are too many things I have to do, I take a few minutes to sit down and organize myself.
6. When I first get to work, I take a few minutes to figure out the things I have to do throughout the day.
7. I have all of my phone numbers in one place.
8. I have stacks of papers, which represent things I have to do.
9. I use self-stick notepapers to remind me of the things I have to do.
10. I carry a calculator, so I can do math faster.
11. I am not afraid to ask people for information that I need.
12. I choose to do my work at times when I'm most alert.

13. I schedule the tasks I don't like to do between the tasks that I like, so that I work faster on the things I don't like to do in order to get to the tasks I enjoy doing.

14. I do two tasks at the same time when one of them requires waiting.

15. I make a budget to manage my money. I know how much money to put in the bank and what bills to pay off right when I get paid.

16. I know my environmental preferences and make sure I work under those conditions whenever possible.

17. I get enough sleep, exercise and eat good food. I am in good health.

18. I often review my future goals and obligations.

TOTAL POINTS, PART ONE: _____

Part Two: Do I Throw Time Away?

Give yourself 2 points for each of the following habits you have.

1. I am often sleepy at work. I'm more of a night owl than a morning person.
2. I get to work and get busy. I don't have time to think of my daily obligations or to plan ahead.
3. I like to do just one thing at a time. When the laundry is going, I take a rest.
4. I watch TV at least 3 hours a day.
5. When I have a personal or professional problem, it occupies my mind. I can spend hours worrying about something.
6. I'm not the most organized person in the world. My drawers are a disaster area and it seems that I spend a lot of time hunting around for things.
7. I don't use a calendar to schedule my time.
8. (If you smoke or drink coffee) I usually spend a good five minutes relaxing with my cigarette or cup of coffee every time I get a chance.
9. I often take personal calls at work.
10. When someone wants to meet with me, I often agree, only to find out later that I am busy at that time. Then I have to call up and reschedule. I just can't keep it all in my head.

TOTAL POINTS, PART TWO: _____

FINAL SCORE:

Part One Points: _____

Part Two Points: _____

(Subtract Part Two from Part One)

Total: _____

What your final score means:

If you score between 30 and 36 you are excellent at managing your time. Feel free to offer suggestions to others!

If you score between 22 and 28 you are like most people. Look at the suggestions in part one to improve your time management skills.

If you score below 20 you really need to focus on improving your time management skills. You seem to waste a lot of time. Chances are that you are not as organized as you could be. Being disorganized can really work against you on a job and in many other situations.

Time Log

Look at your past week. How did you spend your time? Mark how much time in minutes and hours that you spent doing the following:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sleeping							
Eating							
Working							
in school							
homework							
commuting							
TV/radio							
Phone							
Relaxing							
exercising							
Cleaning							
Visiting							
partying							
shopping							
Nothing							
Family							
Other							

How Do You Spend Your Time?

Objective: To identify how you spend your time on a typical day.

Directions: Think about a typical weekday. How much time (approximately) do you spend on each activity?

_____ Sleeping

_____ Cooking and Eating

_____ Getting ready for the day

_____ Working

_____ School/Training

_____ Entertainment (TV, sports, socializing, etc.)

_____ Taking care of children

_____ Commuting to work and/or taking children to
daycare or school

_____ **Housework (repairs, cleaning, grocery shopping, etc.)**

Other _____

_____ **TOTAL**

Discussion:

Did your time add up to more than 24 hours? Where can you cut back?

Do you have time left in the day? What can you do with this extra time?

Balancing Conflicting Interests Exercise:

Directions:

Take a few minutes to think about your priorities and answer the first question in the space provided. Think about things like your family, friends, spirituality, health, finances, etc. You will then have the opportunity to share your ideas with the group.

- 1. What are your priorities? What things are most important for you to do or accomplish?

2. What does an individual need to have or do to balance work with other responsibilities?

You may want to add responses that you hear from others in the group.

3. Why is it important to maintain a healthy lifestyle?

Developing Support Systems:

Creating a Resource Map

Directions: As a group, you are going to create a map of community resources. Take your time to think about anything that can be a resource: a community organization, a large or single-person business, a government agency, a church, or even your neighbor. There are many resources available to all of us, some of which we aren't even aware.

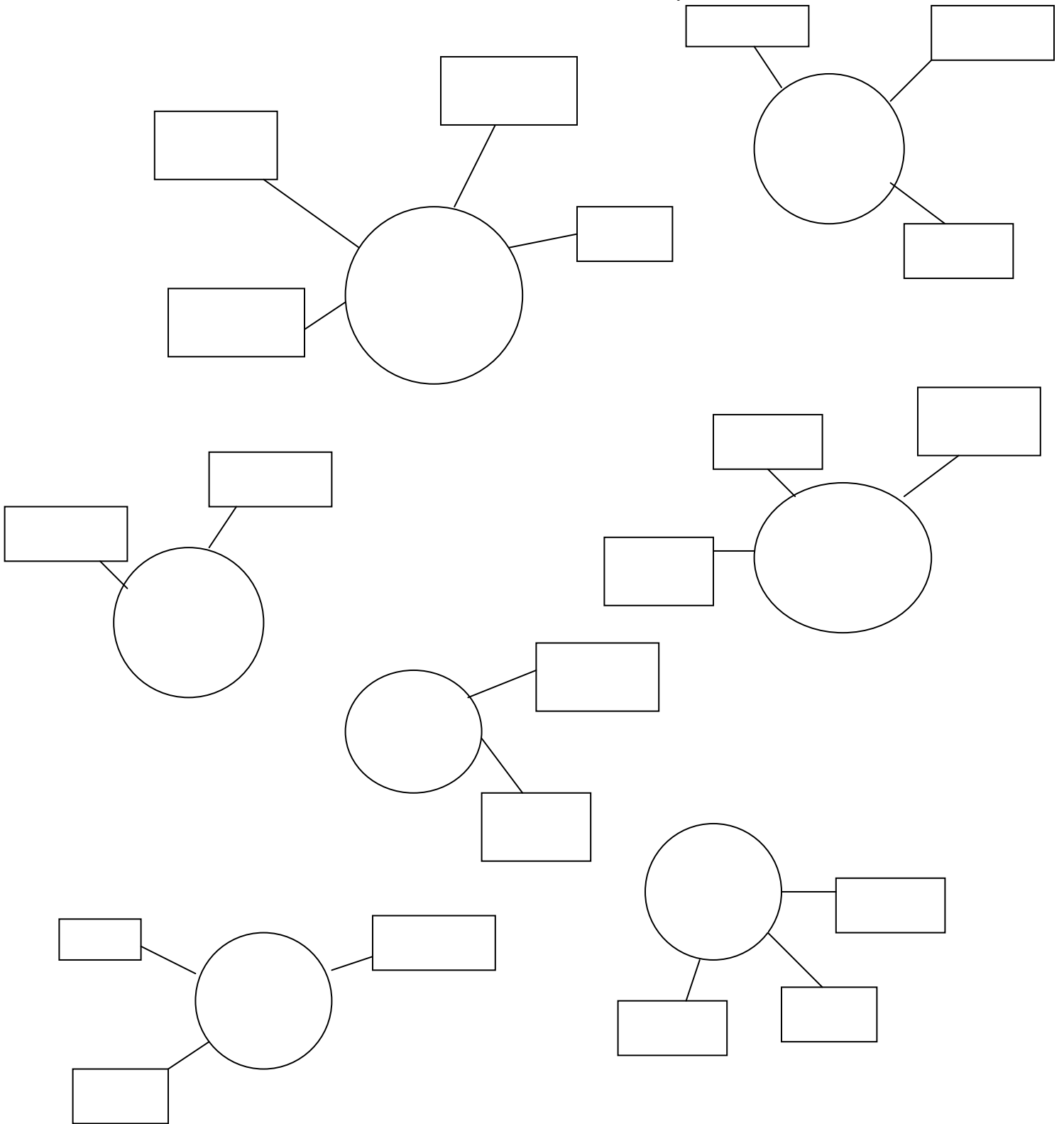
1. Look through newspapers, phone books, and any other lists of community organizations, government agencies, and businesses for all types of resources and services within your community. Write the names of these resource providers on the map for the group.
2. Next, write the service or benefit that the organization provides. It does not have to be something you have used or expect to use. Although, if you write it down, you will be aware of the service when you, or a friend, need it.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 for your personal resource map, filling in the spaces on the blank map provided. In addition to the community organizations and businesses listed on the group map, consider the following things:

-
- Who (personally) do you know? What organizations do you belong to that may offer a resource just for you?
 - What resources do these people provide? A car? A skill? Live near your child's school?

4. Look at the group map and your personal map and put these resources into a list that you can use at home. The sample list can help you organize each community resource by category. For example, if the church provides both childcare and a support groups, you would write the church information in both categories. Then, you don't have to remember all the church's activities.

Add the name, number, address, and other details of each organization in the proper column on the resource worksheet. Do not limit yourself to this worksheet - add any new categories you think you may need and add as many pieces of paper as necessary. It is better to have too many resources on hand than too few.

Personal Resource Map



Community Resource List

Category of Resource	Person/Organization Phone & Address	Description of Services & Availability
Example: One-Stop	WorkSource, 768-1988 400 Fairfax Ave.	Job bank, training vouchers, career counseling. Open M-W-F 9am-5pm, T-Th 9-7pm
Child Care		
➤ All day		
➤ Emergency Only (e.g., sick child or provider)		
➤ Weekends		
➤ Evenings		
Transportation		
➤ Public Transportation		
➤ Taxi		
➤ Friend with Vehicle		
➤ Car repair		

Finances		
➤ Bank		
Category of Resource	Person/Organization Phone & Address	Description of Services & Availability
Finances		
➤ Credit Counseling		
Social Service/Support		
➤ Financial Assistance		
Health		
➤ Emergency room		
➤ Clinic/Family Doctor		

Career		
➤ Job counselor		
➤ Community College		
➤ One-Stop center		

Preparing for Emergencies & Unexpected Events (Scenario 1)

Good news. Beth's cousin, Toni, has found a job opportunity for her. The receptionist at her dentist's office quit and they need to hire someone immediately. Toni told her dentist what an organized and enthusiastic person Beth is, and that she'd be great for the job. The dentist said that if she can come in for an interview on Thursday with a list of references, they would consider her for the job. Today is Monday.

Some facts about Beth:

- She has a three-year-old son;
- She lives four miles from the dentist's office;
- She has never had a job before; and
- She is a volunteer at the Neighborhood Networks center and her church.

To make sure that Beth doesn't forget any details of preparing for the interview, think only about what does she need? Think about everything she will need for herself and for her family in order to get to the interview, as well as everything she will need during the interview.

When you think you have covered everything necessary to be ready for the interview, look at your community asset map and list for where Beth can find help in preparing for the interview.

What must Beth do to be ready for an interview on Thursday?	Community resources Beth can use

Preparing for Emergencies & Unexpected Events (Scenario 2):

Congratulations! Beth got the job. Can you believe they need her to start working on Monday? That leaves her only three days to find reliable and affordable childcare for her three-year-old son. She has called a few day care centers and made two disheartening discoveries: (1) her son does not have all the immunizations needed to attend a licensed day care; and (2) the day care centers require payment after the first two weeks- but she won't get paid and have enough money for four weeks. What can Beth do?

What does Beth needs to accomplish before she can begin her new job?	Community resources Beth can use

Are there any emergency situations for which Beth should make plans?

Preparing for Emergencies & Unexpected Events (Scenario 3):

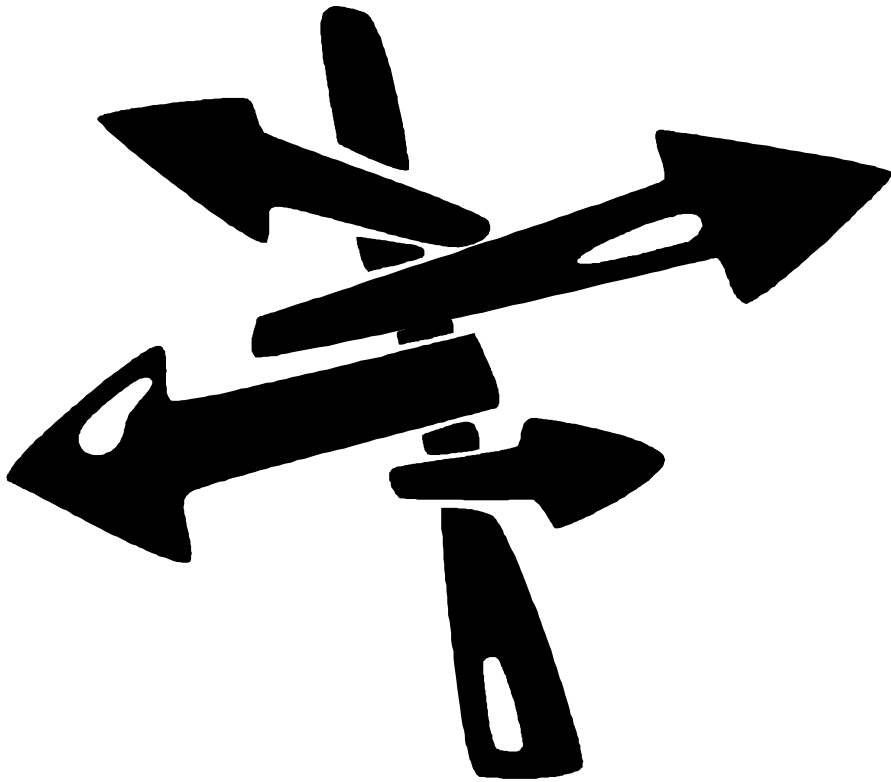
Beth has been working as a receptionist in the dental office for six months now. She is good at her job, but she doesn't find it very challenging. She would prefer to be one of the dental hygienists, as it seems more interesting and she knows that she could make more money as a hygienist. Unfortunately, Beth is concerned that she does not have the time or money for the required training. What can Beth do?

What does Beth need to do to explore and pursue a new career?	Community resources Beth can use

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Did you discover any new resources or uses of the resources during this exercise? If so, write them here.

Section 5: Decision-Making Skills



What You Will Learn In This Section

- ▶ Techniques for making good decisions
- ▶ How to solve problems effectively
- ▶ How to set and achieve goals
- ▶ How to be assertive, not aggressive
- ▶ How to deal with unexpected emergencies
- ▶ Tips for making and keeping commitments

Using Good Judgment:

A very important part of acting responsibly on the job is using good judgment. Sometimes using good judgment will require you to make decisions in tough situations. Sometimes it will be just a matter of using common sense. Many employers worry that employees cannot use good judgment and make decisions that are appropriate for the workplace. And finally, sometimes using good judgment will require strength and courage on your part, to press on, to get up, no matter how many times challenges and life may knock you down.

Using Good Judgment Exercise:

Case Examples:

Please use the following case examples to determine your ability to use good judgment:

1. You are taking your child to daycare on your way to work. Once you get to the daycare provider you find that they are closed:

Options

- A. Call immediately to speak to the charge nurse to let her know that you will attempt to see childcare. You inform

-
- her that you will call her back when you find someone to watch your child.
- B. Call the job and tell them you are on your way to work and that you have your baby with you. You are arranging for someone to pick your child up from the hospital.
 - C. Call the charge nurse and tell her you are not coming in today.
2. It is the routine in your hospital to switch a scheduled workday with another employee. What would you do if you work on Saturday for Jane and Jane was supposed to work on Sunday for you; however, Jane never came to work!
- D. Tell them they need to call Jane because she switched with you
 - E. Call Jane and try to find her
 - F. Come into work and make a note not to switch with Jane again.
6. The charge nurse asks you to perform a duty on a patient that is not assigned to you. You already have a full patient load and you know performing this duty will cause you to be late performing on your other task, what do you do?
- A. Tell the nurse that is not my patient, and tell her who's patient it is so she can ask them to perform the task
 - B. Tell the nurse you are too busy
 - C. Explain to the nurse what you have on your plate and ask her how should you prioritize your tasks?

-
7. You are a new employee at a construction company. You have been there for only a week. A site foreman who has been there for 22 years is orienting you. You both observe an employee performing an act that is in direct violation of the site safety policies. What do you do?
- A. Discuss what you saw with the site foreman since he is in charge?
 - B. Nothing, because the site foreman saw it and he did not say anything?
 - C. Tell everyone at lunch what you saw?
8. You wake up in the morning and you find your children's schools are closed due to the ice storm. You are scheduled to be at work in two hours. What would you do?
9. You have lots of things going on with your family. As a result, family members are always dropping in on your job, so you
- A. Decide that there is nothing that you can do if a family member needs to visit you at work.
 - B. Talk to you supervisor, tell them about your situation and get permission from her to deal with the emergency and let her know of your plan to fix the problem
 - C. Take 30 minutes every time someone shows up.

Key Points:

Knowing the right thing to do and using good judgment is not easy, just like the road to success. It's easy to get discouraged sometimes. It's easy to think the road is too hard, or the challenges are too great. The more practice you get using logic instead of emotions to solve problems, the more flexible and creative you will become. It is well worth the effort in the long run. Not only will you be able to fix things so that they don't keep coming up, but people will notice that you have what it takes to succeed. If you learn to think on your feet and work things out, people will notice!

Overcoming Obstacles:

Things to remember when overcoming obstacles:

- ✓ It is common for an employee to come across a situation in the workplace without knowing the best way to handle it.
- ✓ Sometimes we are assigned a task that seems too difficult for us to perform. Or, we may be assigned more work than can reasonably get accomplished. We may have to establish some boundaries.
- ✓ To be successful in the workplace, an individual must be flexible and must be able to think "outside the box" to develop solutions. These are critical skills that will enable you to solve problems at home and at work.

Seven Step Model For Decision-Making:

There are many complicated situations that will come up in the workplace. It is helpful to use a clearly defined decision-making process to make sure that you carefully consider all of the possibilities, as well as the consequences of each action.

Steps in the Process Include:

1. STOP AND THINK:

One of the most important steps to better decisions is the oldest advice in the world: think ahead. This may take discipline, but it may keep you from acting too soon.

People often make foolish decisions when they are under both tired and under pressure. When we are in a hurry or under pressure, we easily ignore important facts.

Stopping to think prevents foolish decisions. It prepares us for a more thoughtful process. And it can allow us to develop discipline.

2. CLARIFY GOALS:

Before you choose, clarify your short- and long-term goals Determine what is important to you long term and short term. Sometimes a quick fix will fill immediate wants and needs but more headaches are down the road.

3. DETERMINE FACTS:

Be sure you have enough information to support an intelligent decision. You can't make good decisions if you don't know the facts.

To determine the facts, first determine what you know and, then, what you need to know. Be prepared to get additional information and to verify assumptions and other uncertain information.

Part of making good decisions involves making good judgments as to who and what to believe.

Here are some guidelines:

- Consider the reliability and credibility of the people providing the facts.
- Consider the basis of the supposed facts. If the person giving you the information says he or she personally heard or saw something, evaluate that person in terms of honesty, accuracy and memory.
- Remember that assumptions, gossip and hearsay are not the same as facts.
- Consider all sides, but be careful to consider whether the source of the information has values different than yours or has a personal interest that could affect their perception of the facts.
- Where possible seek out the opinions of people whose judgment and character you respect.
- Finally, evaluate the information you have in terms of completeness and reliability so you have a sense of the strength of your decision.

4. DEVELOP OPTIONS

Now that you know what you want to achieve and have made your best judgment as to the facts, make a list of options, a set of actions you can take to accomplish your goals. If this is a really important decision, talk to someone you trust so you can broaden your perspective and think of new choices. If you can think of only one or two choices, you're probably not thinking hard enough.

5. CONSIDER CONSEQUENCES

Two techniques help reveal the potential consequences.

- Filter your choices through each of the Foundations of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Will the action go against any of your core ethical principles? For instance, does it involve lying or breaking a promise; is it disrespectful to anyone; is it irresponsible, unfair or uncaring; does it involve breaking laws or rules? Eliminate unethical options.
- Identify how the decision is likely to affect other important people. Consider your choices from the point of view of those people.

6. CHOOSE

It's time to make your decision. If the choice is not immediately clear, see if any of the following ideas help:

- ***Talk to people whose judgment you respect.*** Seek out friends and mentors, but remember, once you've gathered opinions and advice, the ultimate decision is still yours.

-
- ***What would the most ethical person you know do?*** Think of the person you know or know of (in real life or fiction) who has the strongest character and best ethical judgment. Then ask yourself: what would that person do in your situation? Think of that person as your decision-making role model and try to behave the way he or she would.
 - ***What would you do if you were sure everyone would know?*** If everyone found out about your decision, would you be proud and comfortable? Choices that only look good if no one knows are always bad choices. Good choices build good reputations. It's been said that character is *revealed* by how we behave when we think no one is looking and *strengthened* when we act as if everyone is looking.
 - ***Golden Rule: do unto to others, as you would have them do unto you.*** The Golden Rule is one of the oldest and best guides to ethical decision-making. If we treat people the way we want to be treated we are likely to live up to the Six Foundations of Character. We want others to treat us with respect, so we should treat others respectfully.

7. MONITOR AND MODIFY

Since hardest decisions use "best effort" guesses, some of them will be wrong. Monitor the effects of your choices. If they are not turning out like expected or are causing additional unintended and undesirable results, then re-assess the situation and make new decisions.

- **Just do it.**
Once you have made your decision, get going on it. Do not start worrying and second-guessing yourself. Remember, you usually have the option of changing your mind later.

- **Review how it is going.**

At some points along the way check to see if the outcomes are what you expected. You may need to make some adjustments. Do you have enough information? What else do you need to know? You can usually change your mind.

Decision Making Scenarios:

Scenario 1:

Katie has been working at CBA, Inc. for one year. Because of her proven efficiency and high quality work, her managers have been giving her a lot of work. Every day the piles continue to build up on her desk. Unfortunately, it has gotten to the point that it is no longer manageable for Katie to complete all of the work on her own. Jim, her colleague, does much of the same work that Katie does, but he does not seem to be consistently busy like Katie. The only way for Katie to complete her responsibilities is to stay late at least two nights per week. This is a problem for Katie because she does not have anyone to care for her children if she is late. What should Katie do?

Talking points for Scenario 1:

- ✓ Katie has been given too much work and needs to decide how to approach the situation in a professional manner.
- ✓ Some alternatives include telling her boss that she cannot keep up with all of her work, finding alternative daycare until she can get caught up, and asking Jim to take on some of her workload. What are the pros and cons of each choice?

-
- ✓ How should Katie choose between the options? Consider the consequences of each option, including the financial impact of additional daycare as well as the impact of each option on Katie's career development.
 - ✓ Which decision is the most realistic? If you were in this situation, what would you choose to do?

Scenario 2:

Anthony is a 23-year-old ex-offender. When he was 19, he was a member of a gang and committed armed robbery. He served one year in jail and was released on good behavior. While in jail, he began to turn his life around. He started by getting his GED, as well as taking courses offered by a local college program. Now that he has been released from prison, is about to join the workforce. However, he must declare on all his job applications that he has served time. Anthony has applied for five different positions, but has yet to make it to the face-to-face interview to explain how he has turned his life around. What can he do?

- **Talking points for Scenario 2:**

- ✓ All employers have the legal right to ask an applicant if they have been convicted of a crime. And it is the legal obligation of the applicant to answer the question honestly.
- ✓ Unfortunately, when a candidate does answer yes, it may cause the employer to think twice before interviewing the candidate for a position.

-
- ✓ In the eyes of the employer, Anthony may be viewed as dangerous, dishonest, or a threat to others (because of his past behavior).
 - ✓ Therefore, Anthony must "sell himself" to the employer on the application. It is important for Anthony to stress all special skills and experiences that make him a perfect candidate for the position. Anthony must also point out how he has changed, what he has learned from the experience, and how this all relates to him being a good match for the company.
 - ✓ Anthony has made a mistake, but from each mistake a lesson is learned. Anthony has suffered the consequences and now is ready to start his life over.
 - ✓ It is important that the ex-offender highlights his/her selling points and can genuinely answer what they have learned from this experience (instead of ignoring it or trying to hide it.)

Scenario 3:

Susan is a 25-year-old single mother of two. The children range in age range from 14 months to two years. She has been working for the same employer for three months, has not missed a day of work, and has consistently been on time. Her children are not old enough for school yet, so Susan must wake up extra early to bring her children to daycare. To reduce the costs of daycare, Susan's mother baby-sits the children twice a week. However, Susan's mother has been sick with a cold for the past week. Unknown to Susan or her mother, the children have caught the cold. Susan's mother is too weak to care for the sick children and the daycare provider will not allow sick children in their care. Susan is expected to attend a meeting at work, so it is important for her to be there on time. How should Susan handle this unexpected turn of events?

- **Talking points for scenario 3:**

- ✓ List the possible solutions to this problem. Make sure all answers are realistic.
- ✓ Some possible alternatives for child care:
 - Another family member or close relative
 - A trustworthy neighbor.
 - A friend that is a stay-at-home mom or that works an afternoon or evening shift.
- ✓ Other alternatives include rescheduling the meeting or perhaps working from home (and participating in the meeting through a conference call).

Being Assertive Not Aggressive:

There is a big difference between aggressive and assertive behavior. A lot of confusion exists with respect to these two terms, but there is quite a difference. Aggressive behavior is behavior that includes intent to do harm or cause unnecessary damage to another person. Assertive behavior involves making one's presence felt without the intent of causing harm. Fair play, self-control, and rules are observed in assertive efforts. Clearly, to say someone is aggressive is not a compliment to that person's character. Aggressive behavior shows a lack of respect for rules and a lack of regard for the safety of others. Aggressive behavior should be displayed only in the defense of one's own or another's life, not in the workplace or as a means of solving conflicts.

So are you aggressive or assertive?

Tips For Being Assertive;

1. **Eye Contact**—Avoid harsh stares. Do not stare at people 100 percent of the time.
2. **Body Posture**—Try to face the person. Stand or sit up tall, but don't be stiff as a board
3. **Distance/Physical Contact**—You should not be close enough to be in the person's face. Keep a comfortable distance
4. **Gesture**—Use hand gestures to add to what you are saying, but don't over-do it!
5. **Facial Expressions**—Your face should match your emotion and what you are saying. Don't laugh when you are upset and don't frown when you are happy. A relaxed, pleasant face is best when you are happy. A serious face when you are upset.
6. **Voice Tone, Inflection, Volume**—When you are making an assertive message, you want to be heard. Pay attention to the tone of your voice, the inflection of your voice and the volume of your voice. Use a volume that is appropriate for inside, face-to-face conversation.
7. **Fluency**—It is important to get your words out in an efficient manner. If a person stammers or rambles on, the listener will become bored.
8. **Timing**—When you are expressing negative feeling or making a request of someone, this is especially important. Seven days later may be too late. Doing it when you are most upset is not the right time either.
9. **Listening**—An important part of assertiveness. Give the other person a chance to respond.
10. **Content**—What a person says is one of the most important parts of the assertive message.

Communication Styles Exercise# 1:

Identify each communication style in the following examples:

P = PASSIVE

AS = ASSERTIVE

AG = AGGRESSIVE

- _____ 1. "That is the dumbest idea I've ever heard. Don't you ever think before speaking?"
- _____ 2. "Let's reconsider this response."
- _____ 3. "I will not be able to carpool with you. I sometimes work later than usual."
- _____ 4. "I feel so uncomfortable when you are too hard on yourself. I wish you would be gentler with yourself."
- _____ 5. "Gee, thank you for the invitation, but I really don't enjoy jazz."
- _____ 6. "A disco! You've got to be kidding! We're both too old for that kind of foolishness."
- _____ 7. "I know that you are busy, but do you mind if I bother you for a minute?"
- _____ 8. "This is probably the wrong answer but. . . ."

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- _____ 9. "It seems to me that you have a problem."
- _____ 10. "Look, we can do it my way or not at all."
- _____ 11. "I have seen that particular movie, but I guess I could see it again even though I really don't want to."
- _____ 12. "I'll take care of that project. It's obvious that today is not one of your best. You always seem so out of it. I think you should seek some professional help."

Assertive Body Language Exercise #2:

P = PASSIVE

AS = ASSERTIVE

AG = AGGRESSIVE

- _____ 1. Fists on hips
- _____ 2. Touching someone's forearm as you speak with them
- _____ 3. Shifting repeatedly from one foot to another while standing
- _____ 4. Constantly nodding head up and down while someone is speaking to you
- _____ 5. Leaning back, propping feet on desk, grasping hands behind head
- _____ 6. Looking down while speaking
- _____ 7. Standing with arms folded while listening
- _____ 8. Standing with arms folded, head tilted, and legs crossed while listening
- _____ 9. Sitting with elbows on table, hands together, chin on hands while listening

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- _____ 10. Elbows on table, hands together at fingertips forming a "steeple"
 - _____ 11. Voice rising at the end of a sentence or statement
 - _____ 12. Unblinking glare or stare; tense look
 - _____ 13. Slumped shoulders
 - _____ 14. Occasional head nodding
 - _____ 15. Curt delivery when speaking

Anger Management Skills:

One aspect of demonstrating professionalism in the workplace is the ability to manage anger. Anger, sadness and frustration are not bad. It's okay to be angry, but it's not okay to call people names, yell or hit others. You will be asked to keep track in your journal of your behavior when you are angry. You will be asked to recognize the signs of getting angry and pay attention to your behavior (raising your voice, pacing, head motions, etc.). You will learn that you always have the ability to choose your response. Anger is best managed at the trigger point, before it escalates

Anger Journal Exercise:

For each section, check the information that best describes where you were, what made you angry, how you handled it, and if you think you acted in a professional manner. You may use this form or your journal to keep track of your responses.

1. When?
2. Date?
3. Morning? Afternoon? Evening?
4. Where?
 Home____ Work____ Community____
5. What happened?
6. Somebody said something that...
7. Somebody did something that...

Reviewing Your Responses:

At the end of one week, review your journal entries with your facilitator. Your facilitator understands that it is often difficult for people to admit that they have been angry and acted in a bad way. It is important that you write down your responses no matter how difficult. Your facilitator will provide feedback to help you to improve your skills in this area. Continue with your journal throughout the program and continue to meet with your facilitator weekly.

Section 6: Customer Service Skills



What You Will Learn In This Section

- ▶ How to provide prompt and courteous service
- ▶ How to manage customer requests and concerns
- ▶ How to deal with angry customers
- ▶ Correct telephone etiquette
- ▶ How to handle problems and complaints
- ▶ How to project a professional image

Customer Service Skills:

Customer Service is an important part of any organization's success strategy. Some of the areas included in excellent customer service include: professionalism, telephone etiquette, communication skills and the dealing with angry customers.

Small Group Exercise #1:

Customer service is measured based on how you service the customer. In your small groups discuss things that you could do to demonstrate excellent customer service for each category below:

1. Greeting:
2. Listening:
3. Problem Solving:

4. Checking results

5. When to ask for help:

Key Points:

The delivery of excellent customer service has a major effect on the quality of the experience of the customer and the effectiveness of the organization. In a climate of excellent customer service everyone feels respected and is treated as an important member of the organization. You must examine your own behavior and assumptions to improve in this area.

Telephone Etiquette Test:

Circle the letter for the correct answer to these questions.

1. *How long do you get to make a good first impression on the telephone?*
 - a. 4-6 seconds
 - b. 30-45 seconds
 - c. 1-4 minutes

2. *What are buffer words?*
 - a. Words that add polish to your conversation
 - b. Words that have no specific meaning
 - c. First words of the greeting used in answering a phone call?

3. *What percent of business calls get completed on the first try?*
 - a. 74 percent
 - b. 43 percent
 - c. 25 percent

4. *When is a smile most important when handling a telephone call?*

- a. When you greet the caller
- b. When you state your company name
- c. Before you pick up the phone

5. *When is the customer right?*

- a. When the complaint is legitimate
- b. Always
- c. Whenever he or she thinks so

6. *When is it okay to hang up on a caller?*

- a. When he or she is rude
- b. When you know you don't want the caller's business
- c. Never

7. *When can you hear a smile?*

- a. Never
- b. Always
- c. On your birthday

8. *When should you offer help on the phone?*

- a. Only when it's about your department
- b. Always
- c. Only if you have time to service the call

9. *When is it okay to lie to a caller?*

- a. Never
- b. When your boss tells you to
- c. When you don't know the answer

10. *If you call a client and get voice mail, you should:*

- a. Hang up immediately
- b. Leave your name, then hang up
- c. Give your name, phone number and a detailed message of why you're calling

Test Answers

Here are the correct answers.

1. **a. 4-6 seconds.** The first indication of a company's excellence is how the phone is answered. It's entirely possible to "turn off" a prospective customer merely by answering the phone tardily, or in a rude or unfriendly fashion.

2. **c.** First words of the greeting used in answering a phone call. Buffer words set up the most important part of any conversation, and are particularly effective when the phone is first answered. Use "Good morning" or "Thanks for calling" before you state your company or department name. Using a friendly buffer makes the caller feel welcome.

3. **c.** Only 25 percent of all business calls get completed on the first try. Find out the best times to reach the person. Make sure to leave a complete message if the party you're calling is unavailable, or use voice mail to leave a personal message.

4. **c.** Before you pick up the phone. Don't wait to be friendly until you realize it's an important caller on the line. Oftentimes that's too late. If you smile *before* you pick up the phone, you can be sure every caller will get the same warm welcome.

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5. **c.** Whenever he or she thinks so. Perception is everything. Customers always think they're right. You'll never win an argument with a customer.

 6. **c.** Its *never* okay to hang up on a caller. If you're having difficulty with a caller, ask if they're able to hold and get some assistance. Remember, when you hang up on a person, you label yourself as rude.

 7. **b.** The customer can always hear a smile.

 8. **b.** *Always* offer to assist the caller. Even if you're not personally able to assist, you can always give the name and the telephone number of the person who can help.

 9. **a.** There is *never* a situation when lying to a caller is appropriate.

 10. **c.** Leave your name, phone number (repeat it, in fact), and a detailed message of why you're calling. If possible, state a deadline for when you need to be called back. Also, don't forget that most voice mail systems default to an operator. If you prefer, press 0 and see if someone else can help you.



What Bugs You On The Telephone Exercise #2:

1. What personally bugs you in telephone calls?

2. Name three things you can do to eliminate the things that bug you?

3. How does putting yourself in the customers place help you to be more effective on the telephone?

Dealing With Angry Callers:

You may get a job that involves taking calls from unhappy callers; you've got your work cut out for you. Many of us are the victims of outbursts from customers or associates who may be dissatisfied with a product or service, or perhaps experiencing a disaster or other stressful situation. Handling these calls takes time and training, but it *can* be accomplished effectively. You can't control all the reasons for caller complaints, but there is one critical way you can reduce the number of complaints: Simply listen more closely. Poor handling of relatively routine requests triggers a number of complaints. This can often be avoided by simply listening more closely to be sure that you understand specifically what information the customer wants, and then answer. Here are some additional techniques for turning unhappy callers into satisfied customers.

Get Off On The Right Foot

Realize that an angry customer is not unhappy with *you*, but with the *situation*. Don't take the caller's hostility personally. You're the lightning rod, not the target.

You can do a great deal to diffuse a caller's anger before you even pick up the phone. How? By *smiling* before you answer that call. A smile really can be heard in your voice over the phone. Your caller will find it more difficult to be rude to someone who's warm and friendly.

USE THE ASAP TECHNIQUE

There are four basic steps to handling an irate caller. We call them the ASAP technique:

1. APOLOGIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE CALLER'S FEELINGS.

You'll probably spend about 80 percent of your time soothing the caller and about 20 percent actually working on the problem. Acknowledge feelings are the key: *I'm sorry the information was incorrect. No wonder you're upset.*"

2. SYMPATHIZE WITH THE CALLER. EMPATHIZE!

Put yourself in the caller's position; imagine how you'd feel if you were calling with this complaint or problem. You can show your interest in the situation by making statements such as *"I don't blame you for being upset. That's got to be very frustrating."*

3. ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY

When you answer the telephone on your job, you've accepted 100 percent responsibility for the call. You can say, *"Let's see how I can help. My name is Mary. I'm (offer your name). And I'm speaking with...?"* Always introduce yourself-and if you have a title, now's the time to use it to create credibility

4. Prepare To Help

Be sincere. Let the customer know that you sincerely care about their problem. And be sure to use the caller's name--that usually helps to lessen the anger. Once you've done this, begin to draw out what happened. Then begin to ask questions. *"Thanks, Mr. Jones. Again my name is Mary. Let's see how I can help you."*

DON'T MAKE EXCUSES

Don't make excuses to a complaining caller! No one wants to hear, "The computer is down," or "I'm the only one in the office." That's *your* problem, not the caller's. When you give an excuse, what the caller hears is, "I'm not going to help you now."

Avoid Transferring The Call

Sometimes you won't be able to solve the problem on the spot. Often you'll need more information from another department, or the call may have to be handled by another person. Although these are real issues, they will usually upset the caller again.

When you need more information, *tell* the caller. Then ask if they're "*able to hold*" while you get that information, or if they would prefer to have you call back. Avoid using untrue phrases such as "Hold on a sec." Nothing takes a second.

If you need to transfer the caller, tell him or her the name of the person to whom they will be speaking. Explain why you're bringing in that person. "*Joe, Mrs. Smith in our claims department is the real expert in this area. Let me transfer you directly to her. In case we get disconnected, her extension is 431.*"

When you contact the person who will handle the problem, be sure to explain it completely. That keeps the caller's having to tell it all over again, and perhaps getting even angrier.

Developing A Positive Telephone Personality:

The image that is created at the first "point of contact" determines the perception that the outside world develops of how an organization does business. The assistance that is offered to customers over the telephone influences the image that they form. The opportunity to "get it right" the first time is called "the moment of truth".

Fill in the blanks with things that you could do for each of the five skills to ensure positive moments of truth:

The First Impression

-
-
-

Your Introduction

-
-
-

Identifying the Caller

-
-
-

Telephone Courtesy

-
-
-

Determining the Purpose of the Call

-
-
-

Making A Good First Impression:

Your customer experience with you from the first contact will determine the result -a good or bad first impression. As the old saying goes, "There's no second chance for making a good first impression!"

In this age of voice mail, the telephone experience of customers doesn't seem to get much thought, *a major mistake!* Whether by personal contact or by voice mail, that experience of your customer should leave a lasting positive first impression. It is important that everyone who has contact with a customer has the proper training, especially if you are the receptionist or telephone operator.

Use the following tips to ensure that you make a positive first impression:

1. Smile before you answer the telephone. It will help to put you in a positive frame of mind, which is communicated to the customer in the tone of your voice.
2. Answer on the second ring. You need to smile and get to the telephone. On the second ring, your company is "Johnny on the spot!" After the third ring, customer is wondering if anyone is at work in your business.
3. If the customer is calling directly to your line, answer in this sequence: "Good

morning/afternoon, (department name), this is (your first name, last name)." 99% of the time this will get the customer to give his or her name in return. *Do not ask for the customer's name.*

"Good morning/afternoon" communicates good social graces and gives the customer a moment to prepare for your real response. The name of the company communicates he or she has reached the right place. "This is" tells the customer that your name is coming. Giving your first and last name helps the customer know to offer their first and last name as a response.

If the call is being transferred to you, you may answer, "Good morning/afternoon, this is (your first name, last name)."

4. Listen attentively.
5. If the customer asks for another team member and the team member is available, respond, "Thanks so much for calling. I am connecting you to (give the team member's extension in case you are disconnected). You might also give the entire number as the customer may have been transferred several times before reaching you.

If the customer has told you they are upset about a problem, let the team member know before transferring the call.

If the customer asks for a team member who isn't available, respond, "_____ is with someone right now. Is there some way I or another team member can help you?" *Do not say the team member is in a meeting.* If not, "Shall I transfer you to _____'s voice mail, or would you like me to take a message?" If to voice mail, "Thanks so much for calling. I'll put you straight through." If a message, "Let me have some details, so I can help."

If you have voice mail or an answering machine, your message is also important. Most customers will also appreciate being given the option of skipping the message.

Effective Telephone Techniques:

The following nine telephone techniques cover all of the basics for developing the proper telephone skills for speaking to customers and making a great first impression:

TECHNIQUE 1: TELEPHONE BASICS

- Answer the telephone promptly
- If you must place the caller on hold, ask permission and wait for an answer
- Make sure the caller is on hold before discussing the caller's situation with a coworker
- Take messages accurately
- If it is necessary to transfer the call, give the caller an explanation and complete dialing information in case you are disconnected
- Never eat or drink while talking on the telephone

TECHNIQUE 2: TAKE ACCURATE MESSAGES

- Keep a note or message pad handy
- Ask the caller for:
 - Name (be sure to get the correct spelling)
 - Department/Company, if applicable
 - Telephone number
 - Convenient time to call back

-
- A short message
 - Also note the date and time of the call

 - Before hanging up, repeat the information back to the caller to ensure accuracy

 - Use your best voice
 - Tone of voice accounts for 86% of what listeners hear and remember
 - Words account for only 14% of what listeners hear and remember

 - Smile when you speak; the caller will hear the positive tone in your voice
 - Speak at a normal pace, clearly and audibly
 - Vary tone and inflection to maintain energy
 - Communicate interest and acceptance

TECHNIQUE 3: ANSWER THE TELEPHONE

- Answer in 4 or fewer rings and use the four courtesies:
 - *"Hello/good morning/good afternoon"*
 - *"Social Security Administration (fill in the name of your department)"*
 - *"This is (fill in your name)"*
 - *"How may I help you?"*

TECHNIQUE 4: USE EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS

- Use ***open*** questions:
 - To get more detail and discuss the issue with the caller
 - To understand the request for information
 - To manage the conversation
 - To obtain agreement

- Open questions are often phrased as statements and begin with words such as *describe, explain, discuss, why, how, tell me about...*

- Use closed questions:
 - When you need a yes/no or specific response
 - To gain better control of the call and a talkative caller
 - To shorten calls
 - To confirm understanding or agreement

- Closed questions are phrased as short inquiries and usually contain words like when, where, how many, how long, to whom...

Technique 5: Focus on the Caller's Concerns

- Listen to what the caller says
- Address concerns and questions quickly
- Address issues quickly and courteously
- Respond in clear and positive terms
- Offer only relevant and useful information

- If you ignore concerns, the caller will either:
 - Stop you and repeat the concern or question
 - Say nothing, but feel dissatisfied

TECHNIQUE 6: NEGOTIATE SOLUTIONS

- Negotiating involves:
 - Recognizing the needs of the caller
 - Comparing needs against your ability to deliver what is required
 - Reaching a satisfactory solution

- Some tips:
 - Question to determine the full scope of the problem
 - Select a course of action. Be direct and specific in your statements
 - Remain positive and service oriented

TECHNIQUE 7: SOFTEN BAD NEWS

- Provide an explanation
- Be courteous
- Be honest. Don't mislead the customer just to be nice
- Suggest an alternative

TECHNIQUE 8: CLOSE THE CALL

- Thank the person for calling
- Outline any next steps
- Provide assurance that promises to follow-up will be honored (and do follow up!)
- Let the caller hang up first. This simple courtesy gives the caller a final chance to add something
- Leave the caller with a positive impression of you and the organization

9: FOLLOW THROUGH

- If you are unable to assist the caller at the time of the original call:
 - Review the specific question(s) and the information needed
 - Give the caller a time frame for providing requested information
 - Make a commitment to call at an agreed-upon time (and keep the promise!)

-
- Make the follow-up call:
 - Plan what you are going to say
 - Greet the caller in a friendly manner
 - Introduce yourself and your department
 - State the purpose of your call
 - Ask if it is convenient for the caller to talk
 - Deliver your message in a friendly, clear and professional manner, leaving room for questions
 - Ensure that the caller's original question/concern has been addressed

Role Play Exercises: What Would You Do:

1. When a well-known chronic complainer calls late in the afternoon—this person is an employee of the organization (internal client) who always finds something wrong with the procedures in your office, or the delivery of services.

Skills:

2. When you've been on the line for twenty-five minutes with a customer who thinks he knows a lot more about your services than you do. He suggests impossible solutions to the problems that he has outlined and is making unreasonable demands.

Skills:

-
3. When you must calm an angry supervisor. Despite your best efforts, this person remains dissatisfied and becomes verbally abusive.

Skills:

Dealing With Dissatisfied Customers:

Role Play Activity #1:

Based on the experiences that you have had with bad customer service, briefly describe a situation that involved being a dissatisfied customer. Then, write what you would say to **clarify** and **confirm** your understanding of the problem.

Situation involving customer dissatisfaction: *program/service performance problem*

What would you say?

Role Play Activity #2:

Situation involving customer dissatisfaction: *a client with an unrealistic expectation that can't be met*. Write what you would say to acknowledge the dissatisfaction.

What would you say?

Role Play Activity #3:

Situation involving customer dissatisfaction: *customer has been transferred three times and disconnected once*. The problem is urgent and unresolved. Write what you would say to show your sincere understanding to the customer.

What would you say?

Role Play Activity #4:

Situation involving customer dissatisfaction: *customer misunderstands previously communicated information.*

What would you say?