UP Skills for Work

Introduction

ABC LifeLiteracyCanada

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Canada

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Welcome to *UP Skills for Work!*

The program helps you build your skills for learning, work, and life, which include:

- Motivation
- Attitude
- Accountability
- Presentation
- Collaboration
- Time Management
- Adaptability
- Stress Management
- Reading
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Digital
- Problem Solving
- Confidence
- Communication
- Creativity and Innovation

These skills are used in nearly every job and in daily life. They also allow us to learn new skills and to adapt to changes. Improving your skills can help you to build a good life for yourself.

You can also take these courses on ABCskillshub.ca

This workshop

This workshop gives you a first look at the 16 skills you can learn about in the *UP Skills* program.

In this workshop, you will:

- Learn what the skills are and why they're important
- Think about what skills you're confident with and what skills you'd like to improve
- Learn about barriers to learning skills and how to get past them

What are skills?

Everyone has **skills** they use in their life and at work. You probably use lots of skills every day without even thinking about it.

Skills are abilities we have that help us do tasks well and make life easier.

When we have strong skills many things we need to do in life or at work are easier for us.

Activity

Where do skills come from?

Make a list of 4 different skills someone might have. Think about skills you have or that people you know have. We've filled in the first one to help you get started:

1. Riding a bicycle

2.

3.

4.

Pick one of the skills on your list. Find a partner and explain to them how someone would get that skill. Then listen to them explain how someone would get one of the skills on their list.

Let's talk about it

Discuss these questions with a partner or in a group:

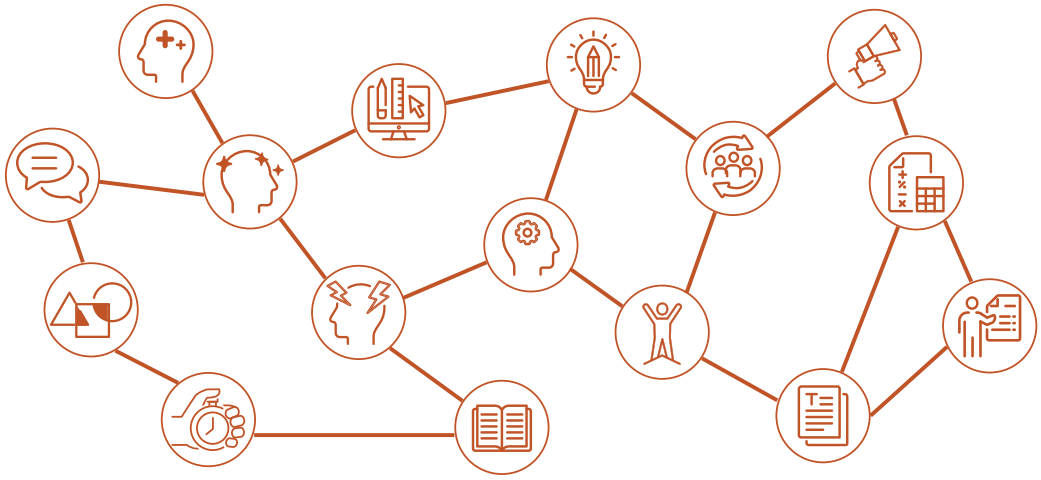
- When you and your partner talked about how to get certain skills, what was the same? What was different?
- Did anyone pick a skill that they were born knowing how to do?

We're not born knowing the skills we need in life and in work. That can sound like bad news. It means that if you want to be good at a skill it takes time and work.

But knowing that we aren't born with our skills can also be a good thing. It means that if there's any skill you'd like to have or to get better at, there's a way you can do it. We get our skills through learning and practicing. If you spend time learning and practicing you can have that skill too!

Why we chose these skills

The *UP Skills* program covers 16 skills for work and life that are useful to everybody, no matter what your job or life situation is.



If you're a truck driver, do you need to know how to juggle? Probably not! You don't need to be good at every skill. You just need the skills that are right for your life. We chose these skills because you can use them over and over again for your whole life, and they'll always be important.

These skills for life and work aren't the only skills you'll ever need. For example, depending what your job is, you might also need skills in Microsoft Office or managing staff. But the skills in this series are a great place to start, and they can make it easier to learn other skills, too.

Talking about skills is hard

Sometimes it can feel uncomfortable to talk about our skills. That's okay! It's normal to feel uncomfortable. It can help to think about why it's hard to talk about skills, and what we can do to make it easier.

Why is it hard to talk about skills?

Here are some reasons why it might be hard to talk about our skills. If you can think of any other reasons, write them in the blank space at the bottom of the list.

- We don't always notice when we're using certain skills. If you use a skill all the time, you might not even realize you're good at it.
- It's hard to admit when we want to get better at something. It's especially hard if other people seem to find that skill easy.
- We might not know how to improve our skills. Or we might be worried that it's impossible to improve them. Why talk about a problem we can't solve?
-

How can we make it easier to talk about skills?

Here are some ways you can make it easier to talk about our skills. If you can think of any other ideas, write them in the blank space at the bottom of the list.

- Start talking! The first conversations are always the hardest. It gets easier and you'll feel more comfortable with practice.
- Get a friend involved. If someone you trust also wants to improve, you'll feel less alone.
- Remember that we all have room to learn and grow. No one has perfect skills.
- Be honest. If you tell people that you're trying to improve your skills, it's easier for them to help you or to be patient when you're trying something new.
- Remember the skills you do have! Everyone has skills already, and you should feel proud of yours. This program will help you build on skills and experience you already have.
-

What skills will we talk about?

In this section, you'll learn more about each of the skills covered in the *UP Skills for Work* workbooks. Think about how you've used each skill before or seen somebody else use each skill. Write an example of how you or someone you know has used this skill.

Skills in the workbooks

Skill	What does this look like?
Accountability is owning your actions, whether things turned out to be good or bad.	Admitting when you make a mistake, and doing what you can to fix it. Doing something you promised, even if it's not convenient.
Adaptability is how you react to change.	Being ready to learn new skills when you start a new role at work. Keeping a good attitude when something unexpected happens.
Attitude is how you show your thoughts or feelings through your words and actions.	Being respectful and friendly with co-workers, supervisors, and customers. Giving support to someone who's having a hard time.
Collaboration is working well with other people.	Sharing the work for a big project fairly. Trying not to bother your co-workers when they need to concentrate.

More skills in the workbooks

Skill	What does this look like?
Communication is when you use sounds, words, images, and movements to share your ideas and feelings with other people	Telling a joke. Showing a new employee how to do a work task.
Confidence is believing in yourself—in what you can do now, and what you can learn to do tomorrow.	Asking for a raise because you're doing great work. Believing you can learn a new skill even if it's hard.
Creativity and Innovation means using your imagination and ideas to make something new or better.	Inventing a new sandwich at the restaurant where you work. Figuring out how to fix a broken part with whatever supplies you have.
Digital skills help you use computer-based tools and systems.	Using social media to promote your home business. Using a spreadsheet to keep track of money.
Motivation is wanting to do something. It can also mean wanting to do something really well.	Doing your best at work even if no one is watching. Setting a goal for the week and working to achieve it.
Numeracy is the ability to understand and work with numbers and math.	Estimating how much a repair will cost. Making a budget.
Presentation is how you look and sound to other people.	Wearing clothes that are appropriate for your work. Practicing your answers to possible questions before a job interview.

More skills in the workbooks

Skill	What does this look like?
Problem Solving is using your skills and knowledge to fix something or make a situation better.	Solving an argument by finding a solution that both people can accept. Putting a reminder on your phone so you don't forget to do something.
Reading is understanding written language.	Reading an email from your boss. Checking the instructions on a cleaning product before you use it.
Stress Management is how you deal with challenges in your work, life, and relationships.	Planning to do something fun after a hard week. Asking for help when you're overwhelmed.
Time Management is making decisions about how you spend your time.	Setting your own deadlines for steps in a project so you can meet the final deadline. Figuring out which tasks are most important and making sure they get done.
Writing is communicating by putting words, numbers, and symbols on paper, a computer screen, or a phone.	Recording a customer's address, phone number, and menu choices for a take-out order. Writing a letter to apply for a job.

Let's talk about it

- Which of the 16 skills are most important for you at work? At home?

- Do you use your skills differently when you're at work than when you're at home? How?

- Are there any skills you'd like to add to the list?

How can skills help us?

The skills in this program help us achieve our goals in work and in life. For example, we can use them to:

- Get along well with other people
- Deal with setbacks and changes
- Take on new challenges
- Manage our money
- Be a good worker

Everyone is better at some skills than others. We all have strengths and areas where we can improve.

Meet Corey

Corey's daughter broke her front tooth when she was playing baseball and the ball hit her in the mouth. Corey needs to take his daughter to the dentist, but he also has to be at work in two hours.

- First he comforts his daughter and reassures her that she'll be ok.
- Then he phones some co-workers until he finds someone who can trade shifts with him.
- Corey checks the bus schedule to see when they need to leave home to get to the dentist on time.
- On the bus, Corey uses his smartphone to check his credit card balance online. He wants to make sure he can pay the bill for the dentist to fix his daughter's tooth.

Let's talk about it

- Can you think of 3 skills Corey used to deal with this problem?
- What if Corey didn't have those skills? How would this story be different?

My skills

Now that we've learned about the 16 skills and why they're important, think about how you use your own skills. Are there any skills you want to work on?

For each skill, read the description and check the box on the right that comes closest to your own situation.

How I feel about my skills

Skill	I'm pretty good at this	I'd like to improve	I'm not sure
Accountability: I take responsibility for what I do. If I make a mistake, I admit it and try to fix it.	☐	☐	☐
Adaptability: I don't get upset or stressed out when things change or when I need to do things differently.	☐	☐	☐
Attitude: I try to keep a positive attitude, even when things are hard.	☐	☐	☐
Collaboration: I'm a team player. I work well with other people.	☐	☐	☐
Communication: I can express my ideas and feelings well. I understand what others are trying to tell me.	☐	☐	☐
Confidence: I feel like I can handle most situations. When something needs to be done, I believe I can do it well	☐	☐	☐
Creativity and Innovation: I enjoy using my imagination. I can come up with lots of ideas.	☐	☐	☐

How I feel about my skills

Skill	I'm pretty good at this	I'd like to improve	I'm not sure
Digital: I'm comfortable using computers and other digital tools. When I don't know how to do something, I can usually figure it out.	☐	☐	☐
Motivation: When I go to work or start a new project, I really want to do my best.	☐	☐	☐
Numeracy: I'm confident working with numbers and have good basic math skills.	☐	☐	☐
Presentation: I know how to make a good impression on people.	☐	☐	☐
Problem Solving: When I run into a problem, I don't give up. I look for a way to fix what's wrong.	☐	☐	☐
Reading: I can understand written instructions, manuals, and news articles.	☐	☐	☐
Stress Management: I handle stress well. When I start feeling stressed out, I know how to deal with it.	☐	☐	☐
Time Management: I can use my time well and I get tasks done on time. When there's too much to do, I finish the most important things first.	☐	☐	☐
Writing: I can communicate well in writing. I organize my writing well and don't make many mistakes.	☐	☐	☐

Let's talk about it

- What is one of your strongest skills?
- What skill do you want to improve the most?
- How would improving this skill help you at work or in your life?
- Is there anything that would make it hard for you to work on this skill?

Strategies for learning skills

We learn new skills all the time. Some skills are easy to learn. Others take a lot of effort, time, and support.

There are many ways to learn new skills, such as:

- Practicing with a friend or relative
- Watching an online video
- Taking a workshop, class, or lessons
- Reading a book or website
- Experimenting and practicing on your own

It helps to have a plan when you're starting to learn a new skill. Think about skills you've learned in the past. What were important parts of the plan you made to improve that skill?

Support and barriers

We all have different life experiences and challenges. Many people face **barriers** that make it harder to learn or use certain skills. They might use **supports** to help them get past barriers.

A **barrier** is something that makes it harder for you to achieve a goal. Usually you don't have control over a barrier.

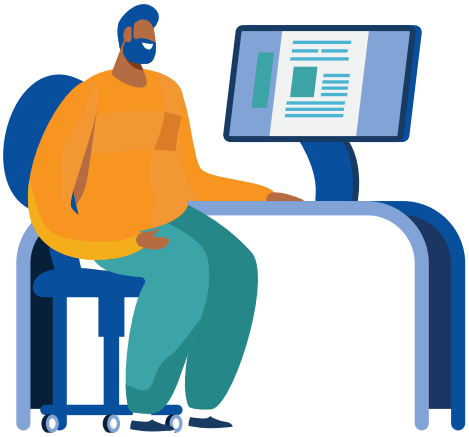
A **support** is something that helps you get what you need to reach your goals.

Here are some common barriers with supports that might help someone get past them.

Barriers and supports for learning skills

Barrier	Support
Cost of a community college course	Special grant for low-income students
Learning disability	Screen reader that reads text out loud
Not enough time	A family member who offers to babysit
Feeling shy or scared to try something new	A friend to learn the skill with

It's normal to face barriers when you're learning new skills. Sometimes you'll have to try a few different solutions before you find one that works.



Meet Nula

Nula's boss warns her that she's been late for work too many times. She might get fired if she's late again! Nula has to get her kids ready for school every morning, and she doesn't have much time left to get herself ready for work. Whenever something goes wrong, like when she can't find clean work clothes, she misses her bus.

Nula thinks about ways to save time in the morning. She writes down a few ideas, and she decides to start by getting organized the night before work. She might forget to get organized when she's busy with her kids, so she asks her brother for support.

"Every night before work, I plan to get my lunch and my work clothes ready for the next day," she says to her brother. "For the next while, can I text you once I have everything ready? And if you don't hear from me by 9:30pm, can you send me a reminder?"

Let's talk about it

- What was Nula's problem at the beginning of the story? How did it affect her?
- What barriers did Nula face trying to solve her problem?
- What steps did Nula take to solve her problem?
- Can you think of any other solutions Nula could try? Make a list of ideas like Nula did.

Congratulations!

You've completed the *UP Skills for Work* **Introduction** workbook. You've taken the first step in building skills for learning, work, and life.

We hope you're inspired to think about your own skills and participate in some of the other workshops in this program.

For the last activity in every workbook, we ask you to make a **pledge** to continue building your skills for work and life. We hope you'll make your first pledge now.

A **pledge** is a serious promise to yourself or to others.

The pledge can be personal, or you can share it with others.

My pledge

I pledge to work on my skills by:

Sometimes a pledge needs an **action plan**: a list of steps you'll take to make your pledge happen.

My action plan

What do I need to do first?

Who will support me?

How will I overcome setbacks and obstacles?