

# LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

R-CD

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## N.V.K.S.D. COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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# Life skills education



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# Preface

From the desk of editors

The very aim of any kind of education is to prepare the students for a better life. To have a better life they need to develop their hot skills and soft skills. If these skills are not developed, life will be miserable for any one. Hence the educationalists of today give a lot of importance in developing these skills, among the students and the youth.

Factory works, labour works and anything done manually are some of the examples of hot skills. The examples of soft skills are Self-awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Decision making, Problem Solving, Effective communication, Interpersonal relationship, Coping with stress , Coping with emotion, Time Management, Leadership qualities.

These soft skills are very essential to get a better job either in the educational institutions or in the industry. Also these skills are essential to lead a peaceful life. In this context this book has made an attempt to present certain ideas on the topic related to soft skills.

Dr.Deepa.R.P. & Devika.S.

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depend on logical thinking. It is the combination of these two types of skills that are needed for achieving assertive behaviour and negotiating effectively.

Dr. R. Parthasarathy, Professor, Department of Psychiatric Social Work, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore is the father of Life Skill Education programmes in India. He had developed a 'student enrichment programme' (Vranda and Rao, 2011) which encompassed the 10 skills listed by WHO in 1993. Life skills are based psychological theories such as Social learning theory of Bandura, Child and Adolescent development theory, Cognitive problem solving theory, Social influence theory, Multiple intelligences theory, Problem behaviour theory and Risk and resilience theory (Mangrulkar et al. 2001).

### **Why life skills are necessary?**

Adolescence is the most significant phase of an individual. It is the transitional period from childhood to adulthood marked by conspicuous physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes. The inbuilt buffers existing in the society in the form of control and support from the near and dear ones guide the adolescents to grow into a mature adult. However, in the recent years, big changes have taken place in our traditional society owing to industrialisation and globalisation. The impact is evident in the entire society, with no exception to adolescents. The family ties have weakened; moral, social, religious and cultural controls rarely exist and a new life style emerged among the adolescents. The highly competitive world of today and the absence of traditional values, norms and support have

heightened the stress among adolescents resulting in multiple mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, rejection, diffidence, anger, confliction in interpersonal relationship and failure.[Smith et al. 2004] Alcohol abuse and criminal behaviour among the adolescents too are not uncommon.

Life Skills Education is one of the most appropriate prevention and development approach to this serious scenario. As the definition by WHO (1997) suggests, internalising the core essential life skills helps the adolescents to deal with the concerns in the modern world in a dignified and mature way bringing success to them. These skills will help them to resist peer pressure as they learn how to accept themselves for who they are. These basic skills will help young people in coping with difficulties they face in their personal, emotional and social development. Life skills are essentially those abilities that help promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. With life skills one is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions in solving each problem or issue as it arises. Life skills training is an efficacious tool for empowering the youth to act responsibly, take initiative and take control. It is based on the assumption that when young people are able to rise above emotional impasses arising from daily conflicts, entangled relationships and peer pressure, they are less likely to resort to anti social or high risk behaviours.

The challenges children and young people regularly face are many, and require more than even the best numeracy and literacy skills. That is why the 164 nations committed to 'Education for All' have included "life skills" as a basic learning need for all young people.

Around the world, Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) is being adopted as a means to empower young people in challenging situations. LSBE refers to an interactive process of teaching and learning which enables learners to acquire knowledge and to develop attitudes and skills which support the adoption of healthy behaviours. Life skills-based education can provide the children with skills to manage such challenging situations, particularly in the context of supportive communities and environments. The focus is on reaching this target population through the school setting. Life skills-based education can and should be used to address a wide range of issues relevant to this young group.

## **Objectives of life skills education**

- To develop self awareness and confidence
- To build self esteem
- To understand about empathy and able to use empathy to change behaviour and build better relationships
- To enhance communication skills
- To make the students to work within a team environment
- To develop ability to assess a potentially dangerous situation
- To make them aware of social responsibility
- To develop critical thinking
- To foster creativity
- To explain how life skills effectively influence good decision making
- To equip with stress coping strategies and
- To discuss the application of social skills.

## **Importance of Life Skills Education:**

1. Life skills help to transit successfully from childhood to adulthood by healthy development of social and emotional skills.
2. It helps in the development of social competence and problem solving skills, which in turn help adolescents to form their own identity.
3. It helps to weigh pros and cons of the situation, hence, act as a mediator to problem behaviour.
4. It promotes positive social, norms that an impact the adolescent health services, schools and family.
5. It helps adolescents to differentiate between hearing and listening and thus, ensuring less development misconceptions or miscommunications regarding issues such as drugs, alcoholism etc.
6. It delays the onset of the abuse of tobacco, alcohol etc.
7. It promotes the development of positive self-esteem and teaches anger control.

## **The following chapters are discussed in this book:**

Self-awareness  
Empathy  
Critical thinking  
Creative thinking  
Decision making  
Problem Solving  
Effective communication  
Interpersonal relationship  
Coping with stress  
Coping with emotion



Time management

Leadership qualities

## **Activities that can strengthen life skills in children and adolescents.[Parthasarathy et al. 2009]**

- Deciding the menu to be prepared every day/special occasion/festivals/birthdays
- Looking after the household chores in the absence of elders at home
- Planning the holiday activities
- Actively involving the children/adolescents when the financial or personal constraints occur
- When too many guests arrive, assisting in sharing the responsibilities
- When a family member becomes sick, takes up the role of that person.
- Interior decoration/arrangement of the articles in the house as a routine as well as during functions
- Interacting/communicating with other family members based on the prevailing family situation
- Understanding the behaviour dynamics of parents and siblings and adjusting with them
- Developing and maintaining verbal communication with family members, visitors, relatives, neighbours, friends, guests and others
- Reading newspapers/story books and sharing the same with family members
- Going for picnics, visiting relatives, attending ceremonies

- Working together during family function
- Encouraging introspection
- Rewarding and punishing for their positive/negative behaviour
- Looking after the sick family members
- Helping the elderly family members
- Facing sorrowful events as well as happy events in the family
- Identifying and following some of the reputed family members as role model
- Learns to adopt the effective stress coping styles of significant family member
- Division of labour at home

### **How are they imparted?**

- It involves the process of Participatory learning using 4 basic components:
- Practical activities
- Feedback and reflections
- Consolidation and reinforcement
- Practical application to day to day life challenges
- Class discussions
- Brainstorming
- Demonstration and guided practice
- Role plays
- Audio and visual activities, e.g., arts, music, theatre, dance
- Small groups
- Educational games and simulations

- Case studies
- Story telling
- Debates
- Decision mapping or problem tree

## **Life skills-Commandments to Remember**

*I read, I forget, I discuss, I remember, I do, I inculcate.*

1. Life skills are essentially those abilities that help promote overall wellbeing and competence in young people as they face the realities of life.

2. Life skills are the beginning of wisdom which focuses on behaviour change or developmental approach designed to address a balance of three areas- knowledge, attitude and skills.

3. Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitude and values into actual abilities.

4. Life skills however are not a panacea of “**how to do abilities**” as they are not the only factors that affect behaviour. There are many factors such as social support, culture and environment that affect motivation and ability to behave in positive ways.

5. Effective acquisition and application of Life Skills can influence the way one feels about others, ourselves and will equally influence the way we are perceived by others. It contributes to perception of self confidence and self esteem.

6. Life skills for psychosocial competence needs to be distinguished from other important skills that young people will acquire as they grow up such as reading, numbers, technical and livelihood skills.

7. Life skills education involves a dynamic teaching process. The methods used to facilitate this active involvement includes working in small groups and pairs, brainstorming, role plays, games and debates.

8. We all use Life Skills in different situations such as:

a) To negotiate effectively at home, school or work place, we need to have thinking skills as well as social skills

b) When faced with difficult situations we tend to think critically, to analyze all the pros and cons of the situation to think out of box to find a solution to seemingly difficult problems.

9. Many life skills are required to manage a particular situation effectively. In a way, various Life Skills work best in conjunction. In fact, the appropriate combination of Life Skills in a given moment is an art.

10. Children learn their Life Skills from parents, teachers and significant others who act as their role model. They gradually learn to use a particular skill effectively in diverse situation to cope with challenges of life

# Chapter 1

## Self-awareness

Self awareness means knowing our character, our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. It is the mental ability to recognise who and what you are, and how you are distinctly separate from other people in your environment. Self Awareness allows you to understand other people, how they perceive you, your attitude and your responses to them in the moment. Developing self-awareness is important for better relationships and for a more fulfilling life, both in the workplace and at home. To be self aware in the philosophical sense is to recognize your feelings as they occur, to understand the impact they have, and perhaps even put them to an effective use.

### Self Awareness Assets

- what you're capable of (your skills, knowledge, attitudes)
- what you have (external assets such as relationships, finances, possessions)
- what's important to you (values and beliefs)
- what's enjoyable for you (interests)
- what's worked in the past (experiences, achievements)

### Self-awareness includes:

- Understanding our emotions.
- Recognizing our destructive thought patterns so we can redirect them.
- Tuning into what's going on in our bodies so we can learn from it.
- Noticing our behavioural patterns and habits so that we can make adjustments to change negative ones



- Understanding our beliefs, assumptions, and expectations, and how they influence what we choose to do
- Accepting that we are responsible for our actions

## **How to Improve Your Self Awareness?**

- Check in with yourself. Label your emotions.
- Be in the moment.
- Accurate Self-Assessment is Key
- Make a list of your strengths
- Practice Self-Awareness in Dream
- Engage in positive inner dialogue and appraisal.
- Tune in to your senses.
- Get in touch with your feelings.
- Know what your intentions are.
- Pay attention to your actions. Daily Writing
- Defining Your Role
- Using the Coach as a Mirror
- Make a list of the things you like and dislike
- Know what motivates you.
- Write down your core values.
- Decide what is relevant to your life right now.
- Consider asking for honest feedback.

## **Self-Awareness Exercises.**

This exercise is designed to expand your self-awareness. Complete each sentence quickly, without attempting to edit your thoughts.

1. The one thing I have to have from other people is...

2. **What's missing in my personal life is...**
3. **Something that people do that bothers me is...**
4. **The one type of person I'd hate to work with is...**
5. **Relationships would be better if...**
6. **What I like most about people is...**

# Chapter 2

## Empathy

Empathy means to have a successful relationship with our loved ones and society.

Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person and understand and care about other peoples' needs, desires and feelings. Without empathy, our communication with others will amount to one-way traffic. Worst, we will be acting and behaving according to our self-interest and are bound to run into problems. No man is an island; we grow up in relationships with many people – parents, brothers and sisters, cousins, uncles and aunts, classmates, friends and neighbours. When we understand ourselves as well as others, we are better prepared to communicate our needs and desires. We will be more equipped to say what we want people to know, present our thoughts and ideas and tackle delicate issues without offending other people. At the same time, we will be able to elicit support from others, and win their understanding. Empathy can help us to accept others, who may be very different from ourselves. This can improve social interactions, especially, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity. Empathy can also help to encourage nurturing behaviour towards people in need of care and assistance, or tolerance, as is the case with AIDS sufferers, or people with mental disorders, who may be stigmatized and ostracized by the very people they depend upon for support.

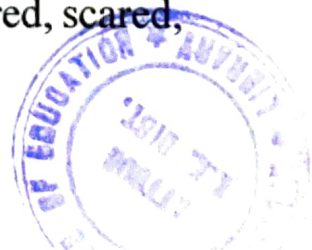
Empathy has many different definitions that encompass a broad range of emotional states, such as caring for other people and



having a desire to help them; experiencing emotions that match another person's emotions; discerning what another person is thinking or feeling; and making less distinct the differences between the self and the other. Since empathy involves understanding the emotional states of other people, the way it is characterized is derivative of the way emotions themselves are characterized. If, for example, emotions are taken to be centrally characterized by bodily feelings, then grasping the bodily feelings of another will be central to empathy. On the other hand, if emotions are more centrally characterized by a combination of beliefs and desires, then grasping these beliefs and desires will be more essential to empathy. The ability to imagine oneself as another person is a sophisticated imaginative process. However, the basic capacity to recognize emotions is probably innate and may be achieved unconsciously. Yet it can be trained and achieved with various degrees of intensity or accuracy. The paradigm case of an empathic interaction, however, involves a person communicating an accurate recognition of the significance of another person's ongoing intentional actions, associated emotional states, and personal characteristics in a manner that the recognized person can tolerate. Recognitions that are both accurate and tolerable are central features of empathy.

### **How the child has a chance to experience and show Empathy with other children:**

1. They have to be allowed to play free and have freedom of movement, without an adult guiding them or doing a guided activity.
2. Their basic needs must have been met. Being hungry, tired, scared, overwhelmed, stressed, all stands in the way for a child



3. They must have a chance for physical imitation Play
  4. They must have a chance for role-play
  5. There are preferable different similar toys. For example: several rattles ; dolls ; cars ; enough dress up clothes. Or a toy that they can work with together like a doll-house, a garage, a sand funnel, a bucket.
- Not all children show Empathy in the same way. But with Empathy comes action for the one in need.

### **For young children the action they take can be:**

- Bringing something to the person in need.
- Sharing a favourite toy or food
- Standing near the person and looking at them
- Putting a hand on their shoulder.
- Bending over and asking if they need anything

### **For older children**

- Arm around the shoulder
- Talking
- Getting an adult to help out and explaining the situation from the view of the child in need

### **For teenagers**

- Hugging
- Sitting silent together
- Talking
- Keeping others away (getting others involved is often creating sympathy)
- Getting an adult

## Chapter 3

### ***Critical thinking***

Critical thinking is an ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute to health by helping us to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behaviour, such as values, peer pressure and the media. Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally. It includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking.

**Someone with critical thinking skills is able to do the following:**

- Understand the logical connections between ideas
- Identify, construct and evaluate arguments
- Detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning
- Solve problems systematically
- Identify the relevance and importance of ideas
- Reflect on the justification of one's own beliefs and values

Critical Thinking can be described as qualities of good thinking processes. Critical thinking processes are combinations of abilities, knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and processes.. While the knowledge base required for critical reflection varies from subject to subject, the underlying values and attitudes remain constant across school subjects. Although skills and processes are somewhat dependent upon specific subject matter for their form, these same values and attitudes are required in all subjects for their execution. It is also important to note that the content of each category is descriptive of the area but not a final or all inclusive list. Educators are encouraged

to evaluate these lists and to generate others as they become more familiar with incorporating critical into their teaching. Critical thinking contributes to achieving such crucial goals for education.

Paul (1987) distinguishes between “weak sense” and “strong sense” critical thinking in the following way. People who have the abilities necessary for undertaking quality critical thought but use them only to their own advantage are critical thinkers in the weak sense. Strong sense critical and creative thinkers, however, are committed to using their abilities to seek out the most accurate and fair positions regardless of or in spite of their own particular interests or desires. Such thinking takes into account the needs, viewpoints and arguments of others and is built upon analysis of one’s own motives.

### **Developing critical thinking in the class room through**

1. Questions, questions, questions.
2. Start with a prompt and help them unpack it.
3. Provide tools for entering the conversation.
4. Model your expectations.
5. Encourage constructive controversy.
6. Choose content students will invest in.
7. Set up Socratic discussions.
8. Assess their reasoning through different methods.
9. Let students evaluate each other.
10. Step back.

# Chapter 4

## Creative Thinking

Creative thinking is a novel way of seeing or doing things that is characteristic of four components – fluency (generating new ideas), flexibility (shifting perspective easily), originality (conceiving of something new), and elaboration (building on other ideas). Creative thinking is generally considered to be involved with the creation or generation of ideas, processes, experiences or objects; critical thinking is concerned with their evaluation.

### **Fostering Creative Thinking through:**

Introducing Creative Thinking

Practicing Creativity with the Class

Practicing Creative Thinking with the Class

Developing an Invention Idea

Brainstorming for Creative Solutions

Practicing the Critical Parts of Creative Thinking

Completing the Invention

Naming the Invention

Optional Marketing Activities

Parent Involvement

Young Inventors' Day

# Chapter 5

## Decision making

Decision making helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives. This can have consequences for health. It can teach people how to actively make decisions about their actions in relation to healthy assessment of different options and, what effects these different decisions are likely to have. People often find it hard to make decisions - inevitably we all have to make decisions all the time, some are more important than others. Some people put off making decisions by endlessly searching for more information or getting other people to offer their recommendations. Others resort to decision making by taking a vote, sticking a pin in a list or tossing a coin. Regardless of the effort that is put into making a decision, it has to be accepted that some decisions will not be the best possible choice. This page examines one technique that can be used for effective decision making and that should help you to make effective decisions now and in the future.

### **What is Decision Making?**

‘Decision Making is the act of choosing between two or more courses of action’. However, it must always be remembered that there may not always be a ‘correct’ decision among the available choices. There may have been a better choice that had not been considered, or the right information may not have been available at the time. Because of this, it is important to keep a record of all important decisions and

the reasons why these decisions were made, so that improvements can be made in the future. This also provides justification for any decision taken when something goes wrong. Hindsight might not be able to correct past mistakes, but it will aid improved decision making in the future.

## **Stages of Decision Making**

The stages are:

Listing all possible solutions/options.

Setting a time scale and deciding who is responsible for the decision.

Information gathering.

Weighing up the risks involved.

Deciding on values, or in other words what is important.

Weighing up the pros and cons of each course of action.

Making the decision.

## **Ways to improve your decision making ability**

1. Whenever possible, consider alternatives.
2. Reframe the question
3. Correlation doesn't equal causation.
4. Never forget the sample size
5. Anticipate your impulsivity
6. Make contingency plans
7. Make important decisions when relaxed and rested
8. Weigh costs against benefits

9. Imagine your decision will be spot-checked
10. Distance yourself.
11. Beware the vivid, personal and anecdotal
12. All decisions are not equal
13. Be rational
14. improving practical thinking.
15. Applying guidelines.
16. Moving thinking upstream.
17. Finding hidden assumptions.
18. Keeping track of unexpected events.
19. Thinking from varied perspectives
20. Applying practical reasoning.

### **Ways to improve one's reasoning ability.**

What if? (e.g., what if this assessment were not the case?)

What else? (e.g., what else could be happening?)

So what? (e.g., is there a practical difference?)

What specifics?

(e.g., can claims be confirmed with specific information?)

Is there a weak link?

(e.g., are there any inconsistencies or confusions?)

What is unexpected?

(e.g., is there incomplete or poor reasoning?)



# Chapter 6

## Problem solving

Problem solving helps us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain. The ability to solve problems applies to more than mathematics homework. Analytical thinking and problem-solving skills are part of many jobs, ranging from accounting and computer programming to detective work and even to creative occupations such as art, acting, and writing. While the skills need to solve individual problems may vary, there are approaches that can help you improve your problem-solving skills in general.

### Steps in problem solving

- Identify the problem
- Define the problem
- Examine the options
- Act on a plan
- Look at the consequences

This is the **IDEAL** model of problem-solving.

### Stages to solving problem:

#### *1) Evaluating the problem*

- **Clarifying** the nature of a problem
- **Formulating** questions
- **Gathering** information systematically

- **Collating** and organising data
- **Condensing** and summarising information
- **Defining** the desired objective

## ***2) Managing the problem***

- **Using the information gathered** effectively
- **Breaking down a problem** into smaller, more manageable parts
- Using techniques such as **brainstorming** and lateral thinking to consider options
- **Analysing these options** in greater depth
- **Identifying steps that can be taken** to achieve the objective

## ***3) Decision-making***

- **deciding between the possible options** for what action to take
- **deciding on further information** to be gathered before taking action
- **deciding on resources** (time, funding, staff etc) to be allocated to this problem
- See our **page on decision-making skills**

## ***4) Resolving the problem***

- **Implementing action**
- **Providing information** to other stakeholders; delegating tasks
- **Reviewing progress**

## ***5) Examining the results***

- **Monitoring the outcome** of the action taken

- **Reviewing the problem and problem-solving process** to avoid similar situations in future

## How to improve your problem-solving skills

- **Focus on the solution – not the problem**
- **Have an open mind**
- **View problems neutrally**
- **Think laterally**
- **Use language that creates possibility**
- **Simplify things**
- **‘Mind games’** such as cryptic crosswords, Sudoku, chess, bridge, etc;
- **Computer games**

# Chapter 7

## Interpersonal relationship

Interpersonal relationship skills help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. This may mean being able to make and keep friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being. It may mean keeping good relations with family members, which are an important source of social support. It may also mean being able to end relationships constructively.

Interpersonal skills are the life skills we use every day to communicate and interact with other people, both individually and in groups. People who have worked on developing strong interpersonal skills are usually more successful in both their professional and personal lives.

### A List of Interpersonal Skills Includes:

- **Verbal Communication** - What we say and how we say it.
- **Non-Verbal Communication** - What we communicate without words, body language is an example.
- **Listening Skills** - How we interpret both the verbal and non-verbal messages sent by others.
- **Negotiation** - Working with others to find a mutually agreeable outcome.
- **Problem Solving** - Working with others to identify, define and solve problems.

- **Decision Making** – Exploring and analysing options to make sound decisions.
- **Assertiveness** – Communicating our values, ideas, beliefs, opinions, needs and wants freely.

## **How to improve and develop your interpersonal skills**

### **1. Learn to Listen**

Listening is not the same as hearing. **Take time to listen carefully to what others are saying through both their verbal and non-verbal communication.**

### **2. Choose Your Words**

**Be aware of the words you are using when talking to others.** Practise clarity and learn to seek feedback to ensure your message has been understood. Encourage others to engage in communication and use appropriate questioning to develop your understanding. **Verbal Communication**, introduces the subject, you may also be interested in **Effective Speech** for tips on how to use your voice to full effect and **Questioning** which can help you encourage communication in others and clarify what they have said.

### **3. Understand Why Communication Fails**

**Communication is rarely perfect and can fail for a number of reasons.** Learn about the various barriers to good communication so you can be aware of - and reduce the likelihood of - ineffective interpersonal communication and misunderstandings.

## **4.Relax**

**When we are nervous we tend to talk more quickly and therefore less clearly.** Being tense is also evident in our body language and other non-verbal communication

## **5. Clarify**

Show an interest in the people you talk to. Ask questions and seek clarification on any points that could be easily misunderstood.

## **6.Be Positive**

Try to remain positive and cheerful. People are much more likely to be drawn to you if you can maintain a positive attitude.

## **7.Empathise**

Understand that other people may have different points of view.

## **8.Understand Stress**

Learn to recognise, manage and reduce stress in yourself and others . Although stress is not always bad, it can have a detrimental effect on your interpersonal communication. Learning how to recognise and manage stress, in yourself and others, is an important personal skill.

## **9.Learn to be Assertive**

You should aim to be neither passive nor aggressive. Being assertive is about expressing your feelings and beliefs in a way

that others can understand and respect. Assertiveness is fundamental to successful negotiation.

## 10. Reflect and Improve

Think about previous conversations and other interpersonal interactions; learn from your mistakes and successes. Always keep a positive attitude but realise that you can always improve our communication skills.

## 11. Negotiate

Learn how to effectively negotiate with others paving the way to mutual respect, trust and lasting interpersonal relations.

- **Smile.** Maintain a positive, cheerful attitude about work and about life. Smile often. The positive energy you radiate will draw others to you.

- **Be appreciative and don't complain.** Find one positive thing about everyone you work with and let them hear it. Be generous with praise and kind words of encouragement. Say thank you when someone helps you.

- **Pay attention to others.** Observe what's going on in other people's lives. Acknowledge their happy milestones, and express concern and sympathy for difficult situations such as an illness or death. Make eye contact and address people by their first names. Ask others for their opinions.

- **Practice active listening.** To actively listen is to demonstrate that you intend to hear and understand another's point of view. It means restating, in your own words, what the other person has said.

- **Bring people together.** Create an environment that encourages others to work together. Treat everyone equally, and don't play favorites. Avoid talking about others behind their backs. Follow up on other people's suggestions or requests. When you make a statement or announcement, check to see that you have been understood.

- **Resolve conflicts.** Take a step beyond simply bringing people together, and become someone who resolves conflicts when they arise. Learn how to be an effective mediator.

- **Communicate clearly.** Pay close attention to both what you say and how you say it. A clear and effective communicator avoids misunderstandings with coworkers, colleagues, and associates. Verbal eloquence projects an image of intelligence and maturity, no matter what your age.

- **Humor them..** Use your sense of humor as an effective tool to lower barriers and gain people's affection.

- **See it from their side.** This can be accomplished through staying in touch with your own emotions; those who are cut off from their own feelings are often unable to empathize with others.



# Chapter 8

## Effective communication

Relationships don't exist in a vacuum. They exist between two emotional human beings who bring their own past experiences, history, and expectations into it. Two different people also have different levels of skill when it comes to communication. But better communication, because it is a skill, can also be learned. The most popular myth about communication in relationships is that since you talk to your partner, you're automatically *communicating*. While talking to your partner is indeed a form of communication, if it's primarily about every day, "surfacey" topics ("How were the kids?" "How was work?" "How's your mother?"), you're not really communicating about the important stuff. Communication either makes or breaks most relationships.

You can improve your relationship today, right now, by putting into practice some of these tips for improving the communication in your relationship.

1. **Stop and listen.**
2. **Force yourself to hear.**
3. **Be open and honest with your partner.**
4. **Pay attention to nonverbal signals.**
5. **Stay focused in the here and now.**
6. **Try to minimize emotion when talking about important, big decisions.**
7. **Be ready to cede an argument.**
8. **Humor and playfulness usually help.**



## 9. Communicating is more than just talking.

Nobody is a perfect communicator all the time. But you can work to become a *better communicator* by trying a few of these tips.

1. Whenever possible, consider alternatives
2. Reframe the question
3. Correlation doesn't equal causation.
4. Never forget the sample size
5. Anticipate your impulsivity.
6. Make contingency plans
8. Weigh costs against benefits
9. Imagine your decision will be spot-checked
10. Distance yourself
11. Beware the vivid, personal and anecdotal
12. All decisions are not equal
13. Be rational

# Chapter 9

## Coping with stress

Coping with stress means recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affects us, and acting in ways that help us control our levels of stress, by changing our environment or lifestyle and learning how to relax.

### How to manage our Stress

- Learn how to say “no”.
- Avoid people who stress you out
- Take control of your environment.
- Avoid hot-button topics
- Pare down your to-do list
- Express your feelings instead of bottling them up
- Be willing to compromise.
- Be more assertive.
- Manage your time better.
- Reframe problems.
- Look at the big picture.
- Adjust your standards.
- Focus on the positive.
- Adjusting Your Attitude
- Don't try to control the uncontrollable.
- Look for the upside.
- Share your feelings.
- Learn to forgive.
- Connect with others.

- Do something you enjoy every day.
- Keep your sense of humour.
- Don't try to control the uncontrollable
- Look for the upside
- Share your feelings.
- Learn to forgive.
- Healthy ways to relax and recharge
- Go for a walk.
- Spend time in nature.
- Call a good friend.
- Sweat out tension with a good workout.
- Write in your journal.
- Take a long bath.
- Light scented candles.
- Savour a warm cup of coffee or tea.
- Play with a pet.
- Work in your garden.
- Get a massage.
- Curl up with a good book.
- Listen to music.
- Watch a comedy.

# Chapter 10

## Manage emotions

We often resort to less effective and sustainable tactics to manage emotional experiences. These may include blocking out negative emotions with excessive drinking, gaming or TV. Managing uncomfortable feelings and thoughts by persistently pushing them away is also counter-productive and often makes them persist and erupt when we least expect it. Emotion suppression over time is also associated with a raft of health problems.

### Emotion management strategies

- Smile to make yourself feel good.
- Smile to make others feel good.
- Get up and move.
- Check in with your body.
- Physically remove the tension.
- Talk to someone.
- Disengage and re-engage emotions.
- Label your emotion.
- Label emotions for others.
- Spend time with a pet
- Engage in a repetitive action like knitting, painting, or walking
- Think about something that triggers a positive feeling
- Breathe deeply
- Count backwards from a large number by sevens or some other number (for example, 856, 849, 842, 835, etc.).

- Take part in a fun and challenging game that requires some level of attention, such as a crossword puzzle or Sudoku.
- Focus your attention on your environment. Name all the colors in the room. Try to memorize and recall all the objects that you see in a room.
- Do something creative. Draw a picture or build a model.
- Do some chores, such as cleaning the house, doing laundry or washing dishes.
- Read a good book or watch a funny movie.
- Call or write a letter to a good friend or family member.
- Exercise.
- Go out shopping (even if it is just window shopping).

# Chapter 11

## Leadership qualities

Leadership skills can play a large role in career development. Often, your technical skills can only take you so far. To help you move forward in your career, you need soft skills such as the ability to be a good leader. Therefore, leadership skills are considered to be important traits which can help you get to the top of your career field. You're more likely to be hired or get a promotion if you've been successful in leadership roles in your professional or personal life. Few people are born to be leaders. Most of us need to practice being a good leader, and that's why leadership development is so important.

### **How to become a successful leader.**

#### **Taking Initiative**

A good way to develop your skills is to take on extra projects outside of your job description. Learning more and taking on more responsibility can help move you into a leadership role in your workplace.

#### **Critical Thinking**

Good leaders are also aware of potential opportunities and take advantage of them to benefit the company and employees.

#### **Listening Effectively**

One of the most important skills for a leader is listening. Without listening skills, you are not able to get feedback from others and get a sense of what team members like about the projects they work on.

To listen effectively, you need to maintain eye contact, avoid distractions and respond appropriately.

## **Motivate Others**

. A true leader should positively influence people.

## **Discipline**

Discipline is required in order to execute the goal. Even if you have a vision or a good idea, it's useless without discipline.

## **Constant Learning**

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other,” said John F. Kennedy. When things are changing rapidly, it is important to constantly learn and challenge yourself.

## **Know How to Delegate**

Delegate work to your employees and let them feel empowered. Delegating will allow you to better concentrate on the goals you need to achieve yourself.

## **Handling Conflicts**

Leaders have to know how to handle difficult people and resolve conflicts. If an employee doesn't work to the best of his or her ability and brings a negative attitude to work, leaders have to step up and talk to that person in private. Leaders have to be honest and straight to the point.

## **Be a Follower**

Leaders should learn to recognize the value of team members, learn from them and encourage other team members to learn from



them. Learn things that you didn't know from a person who specializes in that area.

## **The Bottom Line**

The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority. If you want to improve your leadership skills, think about what actions you can take to be more influential.

# Chapter 12

## Time management

It is managing ourselves in relation to time. It is setting priorities and taking charge of your situation and time utilization

### *Time : its attributes*

Time is neutral

Time cannot be saved for future use

Each activity requires a minimum quantum of time

Time has a value like currency

Time is cumulative in nature

### TIME MANAGEMENT

Time is life, do not waste it

Identify major thieves of time and eject them

Make a realistic list of things to do and act on it

Eliminate unnecessary activities

Memory aids such as diaries and tape recorders are useful

Analyse how time is spent

Never take on more than is necessary, learn to say no

Analyse yourself and operate within your strengths

Get on by being organized

Employ a programme of physical and mental fitness

Manage backlog

Employ a schedule or planner to chart the way ahead

Never cease striving to become more efficient and effective

Treat each day as your last, maximize it.

## MANAGE YOUR TIME BY

- ⊕ Doing things with concentration, dedication conflicts and commitment and not in a careless manner.
- ⊕ Trust others and distribute works to others
- ⊕ Never think about unnecessary things and never interfere in others matters
- ⊕ Postponement of planned events is an avoidable bad habit
- ⊕ Breakdown your goals into smaller task with manageable steps
- ⊕ Be punctual
- ⊕ Hurrying up is to always the best way of doing a thing faster
- ⊕ Don't forget or misplace things
- ⊕ Use a calendar/ Get organized
- ⊕ Assess your priorities
- ⊕ 2. Get print-out of your schedule
- ⊕ 3. Know important deadlines
- ⊕ 4. Make a scheduled appointment to see a counselor to do an educational plan
- ⊕ 5. Take advantage of resources and services
- ⊕ 6. Get to know your instructors
- ⊕ 7. Monitor your progress during the semester
- ⊕ 8. Interact with classmates, form study groups
- ⊕ 9. Get involved on campus
- ⊕ 10. Get a printout of your grades once semester ends

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