



# Unit 1- Character Development



## Soft Skills Background:

- **Definition-** the transferable skills needed by an individual to make them “employable”
- Employers are not only looking for good technical understanding and subject knowledge, they are often looking for the development of an expertise, knowledge base or mindset that makes you more attractive as an employee. They often improve your performance, minimize errors and promote collaboration with your coworkers, enabling you to perform your role more effectively.
- Other names: employment skills, work-readiness skills or foundational skills
- Why they are helpful- another job candidate may have the same qualifications and experience as you. Still, your advantage may come from a broader set of employability skills that are conveyed concisely and are particularly useful for that role.

## Character Development Background:


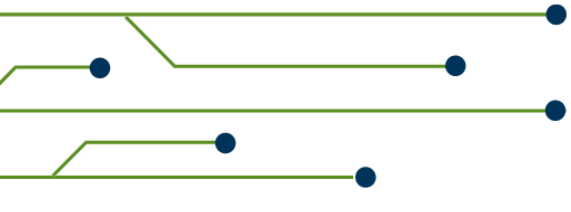
- In this unit there are five character development skills covered: Integrity, taking initiative, adaptability, empathy, and problem solving/decision making. Individuals may already possess these skills, or have trouble identifying them. No matter where an individual stands, there is always room for improvement. Throughout this unit, participants can learn more about the five skills and how to apply them in a work setting. While these skills are targeted for the workplace, students can relate them to things they are currently passionate about and involved in.

These lessons can take anywhere from 10-30 minutes. Use these outlines to fit your classroom style!

- If you have a student that prefers individual work over group work check out the individual work section after our categories that involve group work!

### Important Notice and Disclaimer

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### Journal or Self-Reflection Entry:

Have students take a few minutes to reflect on their personal skills. Have them think and write down three characteristics they like about their personality and three they either want to improve on or learn more about.

- ★ Students can do this individually and turn it in, write their answers on the board, or share them with the class.

### Teaching Guide

- **Definitions** – Have students fold a piece of paper down the middle to create two columns (hotdog style). On the left-hand side have students write: integrity, initiative, adaptability, empathy problem solving, and decision making. Students should leave 5-7 spaces between each vocabulary word depending on their handwriting. After students have written the vocabulary words ask them to take 3-5 minutes to brainstorm and write on the right-hand side of their paper their own definition and/or example for each word. Afterward, use the PowerPoint to go through each definition. Before sharing the definition on the PowerPoint, have 1-3 students share what they wrote. These vocabulary words can be used throughout the lesson as a guide and extra resource.

# Integrity



## Materials


- [Integrity in the Workplace: Definition and Examples article](#) (Indeed.com)
- Writing utensil
- Paper
- Four scenarios provided in the lesson

## Procedure

1. Begin by splitting students into 3 groups (could do six if you have a bigger class). Each group will be tasked with reading a portion of the article and then sharing specific details with the entire class. You could highlight the section students are supposed to read to limit confusion. The three sections are:
  - Character traits related to integrity
  - Examples of everyday integrity/What does integrity mean in the workplace
  - How to display integrity in the workplace
2. Group one - Character traits related to integrity – Students should read the eight traits and each group member should put a mark beside the three they think are most important. Once students finish reading, they should work together to create an overall top three character traits related to having integrity. Once they have determined the top three they should come up with ways to demonstrate those characteristics in the workplace and be able to explain how they relate to integrity. They will then share with the class

Group two - Examples of everyday integrity/what does integrity mean in the workplace? – Students will read these sections individually and each person will come up with 2 more examples of everyday integrity and one for behaviors in the workplace that show integrity. Work together to create a top five list for both. Only 2 can be from the *indeed* article. They will then share with the class

Group three – How to display integrity in the workplace – Students will read this section individually and mark their top three. Then as a group students will decide an overall top three. They will then



come up with a reason as to why their top three are important and what might happen if employees don't display these traits. They will then share with the class.

3. Allow all groups to share
4. Read aloud the following four scenarios or print them out for students to read (printable available below). Have students individually write down how they would respond to the situation in a way that represents integrity. Students can turn these in or share with the class.
  - Samantha, a farm manager needs to fill an open farm hand position. She interviews two individuals, Tori and Katie. Tori happens to be Samantha's best friend. Katie has previous farm hand experience and is more qualified for the position than Tori. How should Samantha proceed in choosing who should get the position?
  - Jenny and Bridget are spending their summer helping out on a dairy farm. Jenny has previous experience working on a dairy operation. Today, Bridget is in charge of cleaning the milking area. Jenny notices that Bridget is missing key steps and gives her some tips and tricks. Afterwards the owner of the Dairy comes in and praises Bridget's work. How should Bridget respond?
  - Rick, a feed salesman overhears his colleagues gossiping about co-worker George and how he isn't meeting sales quota. How should Rick react?
  - A customer asks Joseph, a new vet tech, if a specific medicine is intramuscular, subcutaneous, or intravenous. Joseph can't remember, but sees that his boss is busy. What should Joseph do?

#### Individual work

- Have the students individually read the article. While students read the article they can do the following:
  1. Circle things they find important – most important character traits, how to display these character traits, etc.
  2. Put a star by things they want to learn more about
  3. Put a question mark by things they are confused or have questions about
  4. Underline new words – students can then define the new words.
- When students finish reading the article they can ask the questions they came up with while reading.
- Students who prefer individual work can use the printout of scenarios below.

#### Additional resources

- [How to Maintain Professional Integrity in the Workplace](#) (Indeed.com)

## Scenarios

Samantha, a farm manager needs to fill an open farm hand position. She interviews two individuals, Tori and Katie. Tori happens to be Samantha's best friend. Katie has previous farm hand experience and is more qualified for the position than Tori. How should Samantha proceed in choosing who should get the position?

Jenny and Bridget are spending their summer helping out on a dairy farm. Jenny has previous experience working on a dairy operation. Today, Bridget is in charge of cleaning the milking area. Jenny notices that Bridget is missing key steps and gives her some tips and tricks. Afterwards the owner of the Dairy comes in and praises Bridget's work. How should Bridget respond?

Rick, a feed salesman overhears his colleagues gossiping about co-worker George and how he isn't meeting sales quota. How should Rick react?

A customer asks Joseph, a new vet tech, if a specific medicine is intramuscular, subcutaneous, or intravenous. Joseph can't remember, but sees that his boss is busy. What should Joseph do?

# Taking Initiative



## Materials

- [9 Ways To Take Initiative at Work](#) article (Indeed.com)
- Writing Utensil
- Paper

## Procedure

1. Have students split into nine separate groups. Assign each group a “way to take initiative at work” (*Be proactive, find opportunities for improvement, voice your ideas, be decisive, improve systems, address and prevent problems, be prepared for meetings, anticipate questions and prepare answers, set realistic standards*)
2. Have each student read their assigned section. While reading they should write down key factors and find a way to apply it to their life right now. They can apply it to sports, extracurricular, work or something that is meaningful to them. Once students finish they should share within their group. Once all students finish they can share with the class. When students share with the class they should explain their “way to take initiative at work” and then how they applied it to their life.
  - Example for being proactive: I have a test and livestock show on Friday. I can be proactive by making a schedule and setting aside time every day to accomplish the tasks that need done to be successful with both.

## Individual work

- Let the student pick one of the nine sections to focus on. They should read through it then make their own description. The student should also compare it to something in their life that they are passionate about. This student should turn in their sheet.

# Adaptability



## Materials


- [FAQ: What Is Adaptability?](#) article
- Writing utensil
- Paper

## Procedure

1. Begin reviewing what adaptability means and looking at the students definitions and examples. Then use the indeed article *FAQ: What is adaptability*. Give each student a section from *what are adaptability skills?* (*Critical thinking, observation, memorization, persistence, resilience, motivation, problem-solving, creativity, curiosity, communication.*) Students can be put into groups if it is a larger class.
2. Ask students not to share what their section says. Students will then be given five minutes to prepare. Students will then act out what was on their section for the entire class and they will guess what their classmate is acting out. After the students correctly guess what their classmate is acting out, or give up, the student can read their section aloud.
3. Afterwards ask students to pull out a sheet of paper. Read them the following scenario or print it out. Students should be creative with their solutions and adaptability skills.
  - Bill is a ten year employee as sales manager at the local feed co-op. This past week Bill has had to raise prices, hire a new employee and submit a quarterly financial report. In your opinion, what 3 adaptability skills has Bill had to use this week? Include how Bill has used these skills. Be creative.

## Individual work

- Let the student pick one of the topics. The student should read the description, make it their own and relate it to their life. Ask them to think of a scenario where they had to be adaptable and how they



handled it. Also ask them to think of a scenario where they could have been adaptable, but they weren't and how they would change that.

#### Additional resources

- [Adaptability in the Workplace: Benefits and Importance](#) (Indeed.com)
- [6 Important Workplace Adaptability Skills](#) (Indeed.com)

#### Scenario

Bill is a ten year employee as sales manager at the local feed co-op. This past week Bill has had to raise prices, hire a new employee and submit a quarterly financial report. In your opinion, what 3 adaptability skills has Bill had to use this week? Include how Bill has used these skills. Be creative.



# Empathy



## Materials

- [How To Be Empathetic in the Workplace](#) (Indeed.com)
- Scenario worksheet
- Writing utensil

## Procedure

1. Start out by reviewing the definition of empathy. Ask students to write down one time they felt like they were empathetic and one time someone was empathetic to them. Students can share if they would like.
2. Ask students to individually read the section “How to be empathetic in the workplace”
3. Once they are finished reading, have them use the scenarios below. They should use the seven ways to be empathic in the workplace and explain how they would empathically respond if they were in this situation.

## Additional Materials

- [Why Empathy in the Workplace Is Important](#) (Indeed.com)

Use the section “How to Be Empathetic at Work” to answer the following scenarios

<p>A classmate is confused about the difference between monogastric and ruminant digestive systems</p> <p>Skill used:</p> <p>Your response:</p>	<p>A fellow classmate is visibly upset about her performance at the county-level soil judging competition</p> <p>Skill used:</p> <p>Your response:</p>
<p>Your fellow peer received a low grade on her most recent exam</p> <p>Skill used:</p> <p>Your response:</p>	<p>Your sister has two tests, a project and a show this week and is extremely stressed and overwhelmed</p> <p>Skill used:</p> <p>Your response:</p>

A classmate tried to start a garden, but it failed

Skill used:

Your response:

Your best friend must cancel plans to hang out because they have to do chores

Skill used:

Your response:

Your brother broke his ankle

Skill used:

Your response:

Your Grandpa's tractor broke

Skill used:

Your response:

Reflection: How can being empathetic improve your social skills?

How will you try to be more empathetic in the future?

# Problem Solving/Decision Making

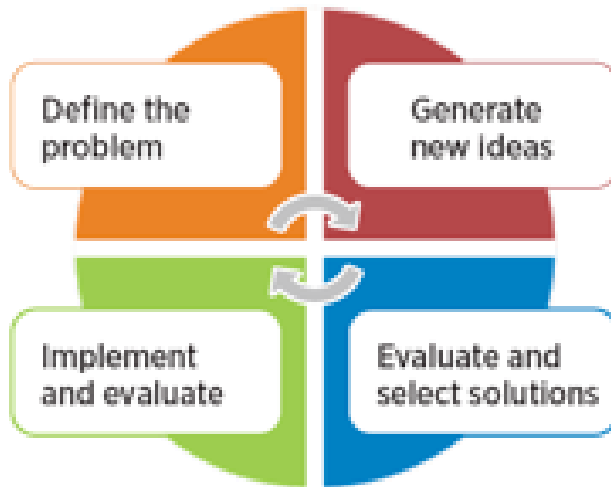


## Materials

- [What is problem-solving?](#) Article (ASQ.org)
- [Decision-Making Skills: Definition and Examples](#) Article (Indeed.com)

## Procedure

1. Begin by showing students the problem-solving chart and letting them review the *What is problem solving? Article*. They will be used as a reference. They should use the scenario and worksheet to work through the chart. Once they reach the “evaluate and select an alternative” section they should use the *decision-making skills: Definitions and Examples*. Within the article are ways to improve decision-making skills. This could be individual or group work. Students could also present their solution and talk about the problem-solving and decision-making process



### Problem Solving/Decision Making

Scenario: A classmate's house has recently burnt down and their family lost everything. You and your fellow classmates would like to find a way to help out. Work through the problem solving and decision making process to find a way to help your classmate!


Use: [What is problem solving?](#) and [Decision-Making Skills: Definition and Examples](#)

1. What is the problem?

2. What are the alternative solutions?



3. Evaluate the solutions and pick an alternative

- List the advantages and disadvantage of each solution
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4. Implement and follow up on the solution