

Ready to Work- Developing Soft Skills for Success in the Workplace

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Objectives

- Soft Skills
- Self Advocacy Skills
- Teaching Tips
- Strategies for Success
- Resources for additional reference

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Soft Skills

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Appearance

- Are clothes appropriate for the job?
- Are office dress codes/protocol being followed?
- Are recommendations regarding body piercing, tattoos etc. followed?
- Is good hygiene maintained?

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Interpersonal Skills

Are the employees:

- Using a positive, upbeat tone?
- Being courteous and attentive during meetings and when attending presentations?
- Being observant and emulating workplace communication patterns?
- Practicing ethical communication - no gossiping, verifying facts, asking appropriate questions?

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Communication Skills

Remind employees that all conversations must be :

- Professional by default.
- Cautious even in an informal setting
- Considered formal unless speaking to work friends.
- Considered confidential unless it applies to the whole group.

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Teamwork Skills

Members of the team should:

- Know the teams' job description.
- Be flexible: respect, be open to and supportive of the thoughts, opinions and contributions of others in a group.
- Recognize and respect people's diversity, individual differences and perspectives.
- Accept and provide feedback in a constructive and considerate manner.
- Contribute effectively and know to ask for help in appropriate circumstances.

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Problem-Solving Skills

Employees should be encouraged to:

- Examine the problem from all angles.
- Ask appropriate questions.
- Listen for issues or problems that recur.
- Paraphrase what is heard to clarify understanding.
- Work with "experts" from the team.
- Apply a solution and re-evaluate often.

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Work Ethics

Employees must be reminded that:

- Accountability means –
 - Being present for the entire required shift
 - Completing tasks that have been assigned
- Responsibility means – Being responsible for carrying out the specific duties that go along with the job
- Integrity means – Doing the right thing in a reliable way
- A positive attitude means – Maintaining a happy and optimistic outlook
- A negative attitude implies – No regard for rules

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Self Advocacy Skills

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Self Advocacy Skills

Employees must be able to:

- Provide eligibility documentation.
- Have a one-on-one meeting with employer regarding disability and related needs.
- Recognize when accommodations need to be changed, added or no longer needed.
- Know who they can speak with.
- When and how to report or complain as needed.
- Seek to and/or work with a mentor.

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Self Advocacy cont'd

Employees must be able to:

- Choose not to self-disclose.
- Ask for help in case of routine or personnel changes.
- Ask for transportation.
- Ask for work environment adjustments.
- Communicate effectively their goals for career advancement and ask for help with planning.

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Likely Liability Concerns

- Transportation
- Physical access
- Noise Reduction
- Over stimulation
- Off-site activities

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Teaching Tips

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Teaching Tips

- Demonstrate through examples.
- Reiterate rules often.
- Highlight instances when appropriate rule following occurs during the regular routine.
- Encourage curiosity.
- Set and consistently apply operational definitions.

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Tips cont'd

- Don't accept blame as an excuse for poor performance.
- Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction.
- Use humor and personal examples as appropriate.
- Paraphrase and have employee clarify understanding.
- Allow extra time for task completion.
- Provide time management and stress management skills training.

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Tips cont'd

- Provide task reminders
- Provide written/emailed directions to accompany verbal instructions
- Provide access to technology – screen readers, headset, assistive devices

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Strategies for Success

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Strategies for Success

- Create and update comprehensive job training plan.
- Consider need for transportation (potential liability issue).
- Ensure the employment site is ADA accessible (building and equipment).
- Consult with Job Accommodations Network for aid with specific accommodation needs.
- Employees can choose to disclose nature of disability – it is very likely they will perform well despite a disability.

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Strategies cont'd

- Determine the safety concerns and ensure that employees will not be in harm's way or perhaps be an encumbrance in case of emergencies.
- Consider a risk management plan ahead of placement.
- Plan and practice exit procedures in case of emergency.
- Determine risks, establish policies, and analyze applicable local, state, and federal regulations in conjunction with appropriate legal counsel.

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Resources

- 4 ways to hire more people with disabilities - <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/pages/4-ways-to-hire-more-people-with-disabilities.aspx>
- Guide for Hiring People with Disabilities: <https://www.twc.texas.gov/files/businesses/guide-hiring-people-with-disabilities-twc.pdf>
- Job accommodation Network: <https://askjan.org/contact-us.cfm>
- Employment Rights as an Individual with a Disability: <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/your-employment-rights-individual-disability>
- Policy, Data, Oversight - Disability Employment: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/>
- Types of Assistive Devices: <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/rehabtech/conditioninfo/device>
- Checklist included

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Ready to Work- Developing Soft Skills for Success in the Workplace Checklist

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Skill	Component	Currently in Place	Will Add
Appearance	Appropriate clothing		
	Dress codes/protocol		
Interpersonal Skills	Emulating workplace communication patterns		
	Practicing ethical communication		
Communication Skills	Professional conversations		
	Cautious, confidential and formal		
Teamwork Skills	Supportive of others		
	Accept and provide considerate feedback		
	Respect, individual differences		
	Be flexible		
	Contribute effectively		
Problem-Solving Skills	Paraphrase what is heard to clarify understanding		
	Work with “experts” from the team		
	Apply a solution and re-evaluate		
Work Ethics	Accountability		
	Responsibility		
	Integrity		
	Attitude		
Self-Advocacy Skills	Employees must be able to:		
	Provide eligibility documentation.		
	Have a one-on-one meeting with employer regarding disability and related needs.		
	Recognize when accommodations need to be changed, added or no longer needed.		
	Know who they can speak with.		
	When and how to report or complain as needed.		
	Seek to and/or work with a mentor.		
	Employees must be able to:		
	Choose not to self-disclose.		
	Ask for help in case of routine or personnel changes.		
	Ask for transportation		
	Ask for work environment adjustments		

	Communicate effectively their goals for career advancement and ask for help with planning		
Liability Concerns	Transportation		
	Physical access		
	Noise Reduction		
	Over stimulation		
	Off-site activities		
Teaching Tips	Demonstrate through examples		
	Reiterate rules often		
	Highlight instances when they occur during the regular routine		
	Encourage curiosity		
	Set and consistently apply operational definitions		
	Paraphrase and have employee clarify understanding.		
	Allow extra time for task completion		
	Time and tress management skills training		
	Provide task reminders;		
	Provide written/emailed directions to accompany verbal instructions		
	Provide access to technology – screen readers, headset, assistive devices		
	Strategies for Success	Create and update comprehensive job training plan.	
	Consider need for transportation.		
	Ensure ADA accessibility		
	Consult with Job Accommodations Network.		
	Determine safety concerns.		
	Plan for risk management.		
	Plan exit procedures in case of emergency.		
	Establish policies in conjunction with appropriate legal counsel.		