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# Self-Directed Skill Lessons

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## Skills for Being a Friend

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**Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation**

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**Skill Bundle:** *Skills for Being a Friend*

- Skills:**
- *Acknowledging Praise*
  - *Expressing Appreciation*
  - *Giving Compliments*
  - *Expressing Interest*
  - *Responding to Feelings*
  - *Extending Invitations*
  - *Responding to Invitations*
  - *Choosing Gifts*

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--Sue McNamara

# Introduction

The *Self-Directed Skill Lessons* were inspired by the *Self-Directed Psychiatric Rehabilitation Activities*, which were published in 2011. Similar in style to that related product, the *Self-Directed Skill Lessons* are designed to be used by you, with or without the support of another person. The skill lessons are designed to help you to learn the skills you want and need, and they will help you to develop the skills to be satisfied and successful at home, school, work, or places where you socialize. This objective follows the main principle guiding the psychiatric rehabilitation process, which is:

Skills + Supports = Success + Satisfaction

## Format for the Self-Directed Skill Lessons

Each skill lesson is organized with:

- An Outline of the Skill Information
- An Example of the Skill
- Practice Exercises for Completing the Skill
- A Skill Use Worksheet

The *Outline* of the skill information includes what the skill means, why it's important, when to use the skill, and how to do the skill. The "how-to's" provide you with the steps you need to follow in order to perform the skill.

The *Example* of the skill shows you how the skill is performed using a scenario with a character in the scenario acting out the skill. Sometimes you will see the character thinking through some of the steps as well as engaging with another character for the other steps.

There are two Practice opportunities for each skill. *Practice 1* includes a scenario that continues from the one described in the Example. In this practice, you will perform the skill as if you were the main character from the scenario. This will give you a chance to walk through the steps of the skill in a fictional situation.

*Practice 2* requires you to think about a situation in your own life when you needed to perform the skill. In Practice 2, you will describe the situation and then perform each step of the skill as you've been taught in the lesson. This will give you another chance to gain some experience performing the skill. For most skills, you will need another person to role-play with you in this practice. The other person also may be able to give you some feedback about how you performed the skill. You may repeat Practice 2, if you'd like to try out your skill abilities with different situations. You may need extra copies or additional paper for Practice 2.

The *Skill Use Worksheet* gives you a way to monitor your use of the skill in real-life situations. The worksheet is a chart that includes noting the dates of situations where you thought you needed to use the skill, a column to check whether you used the skill or not, and space to write the reasons that you did or did not perform the skill. This worksheet allows you to see your progress with the new skill. You may choose to make extra copies of the Skill Use Worksheet so that you can track your use of the skills for as long as you'd like.

This format of an Outline—Example—Practice is designed to help you walk through the parts of how to perform the skill one step at a time. Some people learn best by reading or hearing about how to perform a skill, while others learn best by seeing examples of how a skill is performed. We all learn by performing a skill repeatedly, and practice with feedback can make perfect! The outlines, examples, practices, and skill use worksheets are written in a self-directed perspective. This allows you to guide yourself in learning how to perform the skills so that you may be satisfied and successful wherever you live, learn, work, or socialize.

## How to Use Self-Directed Skill Lessons

You may choose to use these skill lessons by yourself, with others who might share similar goals and skill needs, or with the assistance of a support person. You may want to share your completed practices with a service provider or other person supporting you in order to show the progress you have made with your skill development.

If you decide to use these self-directed skill lessons with a small group of peers, then having only a few people in the group works best. It also works best when group members need to learn the same skills for similar residential, educational, vocational, or social goals so that you and your peers can share ideas and experiences with each other. Within your small group, you may practice the skills with each other and give feedback to each other. This will allow you and the other group members to see how well you have performed the skill or how you might improve your skill performance.

After you have learned a new skill and monitored your use of the skill, you will be able to see whether your skill has improved in real-life situations. You may choose to share this completed worksheet with others to show and discuss your progress with your new skill use.



## Skill Bundles

This bundle of skills is called *Skills for Being a Friend*. There are 8 skill lessons included in this skill bundle:

- Acknowledging Praise
- Expressing Appreciation
- Giving Compliments
- Expressing Interest
- Responding to Feelings
- Extending Invitations
- Responding to Invitations
- Choosing Gifts

Additional skill bundles in this series of *Self-Directed Skill Lessons* will be published in the future and will be made available separately.

### Skill Bundles for Skills for Getting-Along with Others

Skills for Participating in Groups/Classes/Activities	Skills for Working Together	Skills for Working with Supervisors/Teachers
Asking Questions Responding to Questions Clarifying Information Expressing Feelings Expressing Opinions  <b>Available Now!</b>	Scheduling Activities Coordinating Schedules Dividing Work Responsibilities Requesting Assistance Offering Assistance Volunteering for Tasks Giving Feedback Respecting Others' Space  <b>Available Now!</b>	Assessing Task Performance Reporting Progress Sharing Self-Evaluations Requesting Feedback Responding to Feedback Recognizing Support Needs Disclosing Disability Evaluating Accommodations  <b>Available Now!</b>
Skills for Socializing	Skills for Being a Friend	Skills for Difficult Situations
Introducing Yourself Introducing Others Greeting Acquaintances Initiating Conversations Conversing about Social Topics Decoding Body Language Selecting Jokes  <b>Available Now!</b>	Acknowledging Praise Expressing Appreciation Giving Compliments Expressing Interest Responding to Feelings Extending Invitations Responding to Invitations Choosing Gifts  <b>Available Now!</b>	Paraphrasing Expressing Disagreements Discussing Differences Compromising Resolving Conflicts Refusing Requests Apologizing Forgiving

This chart includes many skills for “getting along with others,” but certainly it is not an exhaustive list. In addition, clearly some of the skills could cross over into other bundles, but this chart shows a way to categorize the skills and to break them apart into thematic, manageable skill bundles.

## Summary

In summary, the *Self-Directed Skills Lessons* are a new resource for you to use to develop your skills in your own living, learning, working, and/or social settings. We hope that you enjoy learning new skills in this way and can share your experiences with others.

Best wishes as you learn or improve some new skills and reach new heights to become satisfied and successful at home, work, school, and wherever you socialize!



## **Self-Directed Skill Lessons**

**Skill Bundle:**    *Skills for Being a Friend*

**Skill:**                *Expressing Interest*

## Skill Lesson: Expressing Interest

### Skill Information

- What it means:** Expressing Interest means you show concern to what’s happening for another person.
- You can express interest by asking a question, such as “How was your day? Or how’s your daughter?”
- Or you can express interest by making a comment, such as “I noticed that your favorite team was on TV last night.” Or “That movie you have been wanting to see is playing at the local theater now.”
- Why it’s important:** Expressing Interest shows that you care about the other person and his or her friendship. Expressing interest shows that you have paid attention to what’s important to him or her.
- When to do it:** Express Interest when you are having a conversation with someone. This person could be a friend, family member, co-worker, another student, neighbor, or an acquaintance that you might be trying to get to know better.



**Skill Information (continued)****How to do it:****1. Recollect the Person's Interests**

Recollecting the person's interests means you remember what is important to the person from past conversations. These conversations could be recent or from a long time ago. These conversations could be from face-to-face talks, over-the-phone discussions, or in writing via letter, e-mail, or text.

The person's interests may include a wide variety of things, such as:

- Jobs
- Education or schools
- Family members and pets
- Health situations
- Home life
- Hobbies or activities
- Religious or political beliefs
- Concerns in life
- Jokes or sense of humor
- Favorite foods, music, or movies
- Vacations and travel

The critical underlying skill here is listening carefully to people and then remembering what they have said about things that are important to them.



**Skill Information (continued)****How to do it:****2. Make an Inquiry or a Comment**

Making an inquiry or a comment means you ask a pertinent question or state a relevant comment about the person's interests.

Think about a question or a comment about something that you remember is important to the other person.

You could ask an initial question or state a comment, such as:

- How was your day at work?
- How was the move to your new home?
- How are you enjoying your new cooking class?
  
- The dresses on last night's award show were gorgeous.
- There's a huge number of candidates for the next presidential election.
- Wow, what a difference between the Red Sox season last year and this year!

Be sure to ask different questions or make unique comments so that you don't say the same thing every time you have a conversation with someone. It would be boring to the other person, if you asked "How was your day?" every day! It also would be nice to discuss different things with the person to show that you remembered a lot of his or her various interests.



**Skill Information (continued)****How to do it:****3. Continue the Conversation**

Continuing the conversation means that you say something more about the other person's interests. What you choose to say depends on how the person responded to your comment or inquiry. What you say will depend on how carefully you listened to the other person's reply.

Decide what to say to keep the conversation going about the person's interests. Make your follow-up remarks based on what you heard the other person say in reaction to your opening comment or question about the topic. Based on the other person's reply, determine whether you will ask a question or state a comment. You may want to restate what the other person said to show that you have listened and understood before proceeding with another comment or question.

The cycle of continuing the conversation can go on as long as you and the other person choose to talk about his or her interests. You may choose a different interest to discuss, or the other person may switch gears and talk to you about your interests. That's a sign of a give-and-take friendship, which means that you both are interested in each other and have something to offer to each other.



### Example of the Skill

**Scenario:** Robin and Cindy were roommates in college. They live about three hours apart from each other now, but are able to see each other every few years. When they do see each other, they quickly reconnect because they have such good conversations. One reason they converse so easily is because they are such good friends and express interest in each other's lives.

This year Robin and Cindy are celebrating big birthdays, so Cindy invited Robin to come to her apartment for a weekend. When Robin arrived, Cindy had made dinner for them. Cindy remembered that Robin liked fish, so she made salmon, a salad, and roasted vegetables. She also knew that Robin was a very good cook.

Robin said: "Wow, this dinner is so good!"

Cindy replied: "Thanks! I know that you like to cook really healthy meals, so I tried to make something that I thought you might like."

Robin said: "You really do know what I like!"

Cindy asked: "Have you tried any new recipes lately?"

Robin said: "Yes, I've been taking a cooking class at the local adult education center, and I'm learning more about seasonings and spices."

Cindy replied: "That sounds interesting. I don't know anything about spices."

Robin said: "If you'd like, I'll make dinner for you tomorrow night."

Cindy said: "Sure, but only if you teach me as you cook!"



**Skill Practice 1**



**Directions:** Read the following scenario, and write your answers for each of the steps of the skill of Expressing Interest, as if you were Robin. Then practice the skill in a role-play with another person, who will act as Cindy.

**Scenario:** After dinner, Robin and Cindy went into the living room to continue talking. Robin thought that Cindy had spent most of dinner asking questions and expressing interest in her life, so now she wanted to find out what was happening in Cindy’s life. Robin knew that Cindy worked as a fitness trainer, she made jewelry that she sold at craft fairs, and she enjoyed reading books. Robin also remembered that Cindy’s mother had been quite ill last year.



**1. Recollect the Person’s Interests**


**2. Make an Inquiry or a Comment**


**3. Continue the Conversation**


**Skill Practice 2**



**Directions:** Write down a situation that happened recently when you are having a conversation with someone you know well. Write your answers for each of the steps of the skill of Expressing Interest. Then practice the skill in a role-play with another person.

<b>Situation:</b>
<b>1. Recollect the Person’s Interests</b>
<b>2. Make an inquiry or a Comment</b>
<b>3. Continue the Conversation</b>

