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# Self-Directed Skill Lessons

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Skills for Working with Supervisors/Teachers

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Published by:  
Boston University  
College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences: Sargent College  
Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation  
940 Commonwealth Avenue West  
Boston, MA 02215  
<http://www.bu.edu/cpr/>

The Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation is partially funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research and the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

All proceeds from the sale of this book are used to further the work of the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. No royalties are paid to the authors.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-878512-57-4

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**Skill Bundle:** *Skills for Working with Supervisors/Teachers*

- Skills:**
- *Assessing Task Performance*
  - *Reporting Progress*
  - *Sharing Self-Evaluations*
  - *Requesting Feedback*
  - *Responding to Feedback*
  - *Recognizing Support Needs*
  - *Disclosing Disability*
  - *Requesting Accommodations*

# Acknowledgements

A sincere thank you is due to the authors from our Center's *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Training Technology* for their work in developing the skills of the psychiatric rehabilitation process. Their early work has inspired continued work on developing and promoting psychiatric rehabilitation.

The skill lessons included in this collection were adapted from:

McNamara, S., Nicolellis, D., & Forbess, R. (2011). *Self-directed psychiatric rehabilitation activities*. Boston, MA: Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.

Cohen, M., Danley, K., & Nemec, P. (1985, 2007). *Psychiatric rehabilitation training technology: Direct skills teaching*. Boston, MA: Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.

Cohen, M., Farkas, M., & Cohen, B. (1986, 2007). *Psychiatric rehabilitation training technology: Functional assessment*. Boston, MA: Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.

BCPR Consulting, Inc. (McNamara, S., Nemec, P. B., & Forbess, R., eds.). (2002). *Psychiatric rehabilitation practitioner tools: Achieving valued roles (Compendium version)*. Boston, MA: Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.

Endless appreciation goes to Patricia B. Nemec for her Impeccable editing, review of the skill lessons, and complete support of this product. Deep appreciation also goes to Linda Getgen for her consultation for the design of this product as well as for her creative cover design. The clip art contributions came from the Microsoft Design Gallery Live.

Our heartfelt gratitude also goes to the people with lived experience who have shared with us their experiences, expertise, and incredible wisdom over the years. Without their generous contributions, our understanding of the activities that support people to regain lives of meaning would be quite limited, and the development of these Self-Directed Skill Lessons would not have been possible. Thank you very much.

--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:

- Assessing Task Performance
- Reporting Progress
- Sharing Self-Evaluations
- Requesting Feedback
- Responding to Feedback
- Recognizing Support Needs
- Disclosing Disability
- Requesting Accommodations

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 Working with  
Supervisors/Teachers*

**Skill:**                 *Responding to Feedback*

## Skill Lesson: Responding to Feedback

### Skill Information

**What it means:** Responding to Feedback means you share your reaction to someone else's opinion of your performance. Your performance may be related to a job task, a school assignment, or a task done at home.

The other person's opinion may be either positive or negative, and how you respond is important either way.

**Why it's important:** Responding to Feedback lets the other person know that you heard and understood what was said about your performance.

**When to do it:** Respond to Feedback when someone gives you his or her thoughts about your performance. You may have asked for the feedback, or someone may have just decided to critique what you did.

Usually it's best to stop yourself before you say anything in response to the person's feedback, so that you appear calm and open to the feedback. Occasionally, you may pause and need to think about their comments a little bit. You may need to respond to the other person at a later time, if the feedback was negative and you are unable to respond in a calm way.



## Skill Information (continued)

### How to do it:

#### 1. Monitor your Physical Reaction

Monitoring your physical reaction means you observe your body language when the other person is giving you feedback, such as:

- Crossing your arms in front of your chest
- Clenching your fists
- Tensing your facial muscles
- Frowning
- Rolling your eyes
- Sighing
- Turning or looking away from the person

When Responding to Feedback, you want to appear calm and open. You will appear calmer and more open to what the other person is saying when:

- Your arms and shoulders are relaxed
- You have a pleasant expression
- You make eye contact with the other person

Evaluate your tone of voice to consider how loud you are speaking and how strained your words sound. Regardless of the actual words you're saying, you will appear agitated if you talk loudly or rapidly, or if your voice appears strained, like you are trying to avoid yelling. When Responding to Feedback, you want your tone of voice to be steady and firm, so that you appear calm.

Finally, if your feelings are too strong, your body language looks defensive, or your tone of voice appears agitated; then you will need to modify your behavior to change the way you are acting so that you appear calmer and more open to feedback. Your evaluations of your body language and your tone of voice will tell you what changes you need to make. Sometimes taking a couple of seconds to take a deep breath will help you to calm down and be more open to listening to the feedback.

## Skill Information (continued)

### How to do it:

### 2. Monitor your Emotional Reaction

Monitoring your emotional reaction means you observe how you are feeling about what the other person is saying to you. You will need to pay attention to yourself to see how you are affected by what the other person is saying.

It is important to stop, listen to the feedback, and make any changes in your behavior so that you appear calm and open to the person giving you feedback.

Identify your emotional reaction to the feedback the other person has given you. Ask yourself, am I feeling

- Happy?
- Upset?
- Discouraged?
- Angry?
- Excited?

Knowing how you feel is important because it affects how you respond to the other person's feedback. Your feelings may affect how you appear to the other person. You will want to appear calm and open to the feedback, regardless of your feelings.



## Skill Information (continued)

### How to do it:

### 3. Summarize the Feedback

Summarizing the feedback means you restate the main points that the other person said about your performance. At this point, you are just focusing on what the other person has said. You are not adding any of your own thoughts or trying to defend your own behavior.

Summarize the feedback to let the other person know that you heard what was said. This can be helpful to avoid misunderstandings or miscommunications. Often when someone says something, the other person hears something different or attaches a different meaning to what was said. Summarizing the feedback is a way to check out whether what was heard was what the other person meant.

When summarizing, identify the main points of what the person is focusing on during the feedback. Often the person will repeat major points or give specific examples of your performance.

Note the suggestions or recommendations that the person made about how you might be able to change the behaviors that are viewed as problematic in your performance of the task.

State the summary by telling the person briefly, in your own words, what you heard about your performance. Be sure to touch on each of the main points as well as the suggestions. Your summary should just be a few sentences at most—just enough to let the person know that you were listening and to make sure that what you heard matches what the other person meant to say.

## Skill Information (continued)

### How to do it:

#### 4. Share Your Perspective

Sharing your perspective means you tell the other person what your point of view is on the feedback that was given to you.

NOTE: Sharing your perspective is an optional step or could be postponed until another time.

Before sharing your perspective, you need to evaluate the accuracy of the other person's feedback about your performance. Evaluate whether the feedback is accurate or not based on what you know about yourself and the task that you performed. Did you agree or disagree with what was said? Is your perspective similar or different?

Consider the different ways that you could share your viewpoint. Some ways you could respond are:

- Explaining your performance
- Acknowledging your struggles
- Asking for instruction, assistance, or support
- Stating what steps you will take to change
- Stating your disagreement with the feedback

Next, consider how the different ways of sharing your viewpoint are likely to influence the other person's opinion of you and/or the situation. Think through the effect that it might have before sharing your particular option.

Finally, state your viewpoint about the feedback in the way that is most likely to have good results for you. You can be honest about your opinion, even if you disagree with the other person's perspective, and still present your viewpoint in a way that is likely to earn respect.

## Example of the Skill

**Scenario:** Jim has been taking classes at the local community college. In his first history class, he needed to write a term paper about the civil war. When he finished his first draft, he asked his friend, Lola, for feedback before handing in the assignment because she had taken this class last year.

Lola read Jim's paper on the civil war and met with him to talk about her opinion of it

Lola said, "Jim, for writing your first paper in several years, I think you did pretty well overall. You got the information and all the facts right about the war. It was clear in your writing that you are passionate about history and enjoyed the subject of the civil war. I must say, however, that you were a little scattered in your writing and made points that seemed out of sequence. You also seemed a little rushed in your writing, which affected some of your grammar, such as misspelled words. But both of these things could be corrected. First, I suggest you write an outline before you start writing the paper in order to organize your thoughts about the main points of your paper. Second, be sure to use the spell-check function on your computer, to catch some of the misspelled words. And if someone else is willing to read over your paper, he or she might be able to catch any grammar mistakes that the spell-checker doesn't catch.

Jim felt his face flush with embarrassment as Lola gave her feedback. He noticed that he started to look away from her and cross his arms. As soon as he noticed these things, he took a deep breath, made eye contact again, and calmed down. He agreed with her feedback, but was just embarrassed that he had made those mistakes.

Jim said, "Thank you for taking the time to read my paper, Lola, and for your feedback. Overall, you said that the paper was good because of my interest in the civil war and my accuracy of the facts. You also said that I made a couple of mistakes with spelling and grammar that I can correct with that computer function. I didn't know about the spell-checker, so that will be very helpful. I'll also ask someone to proofread my papers in the future. I didn't make an outline before writing this paper because I just dove into the writing of it. I appreciate that suggestion, too! As hard as it was to hear about my mistakes, I agree with what you said. Thanks, Lola."



## Skill Practice 1



**Directions:** Read the following scenario, and go through the steps below as if you were Jim. You will need another person to role play with you as the teaching assistant, Michelle. Then follow the steps of the skill of Responding to Feedback.

<p><b>Scenario:</b> Jim wrote another paper for his philosophy class. Jim asked Michelle (the teaching assistant) to read his drafted paper.</p> <p>Michelle said, “Jim, overall, your paper was good because it was well organized as if you were following an outline of your points. It was well written with no grammatical errors. However, there was some confusion in the content of paper, as you were comparing and contrasting the theories of many different philosophers. I would suggest that you pick three philosophers, study their theories, and then write your comparisons of just those three people.”</p>	
<b>1. Monitor Your Physical Reaction</b>	
<b>2. Monitor your Emotional Reaction</b>	
<b>3. Summarize the Feedback</b>	
<b>4. Share Your Perspective (optional)</b>	



## Skill Practice 2



**Directions:** Write down a situation that happened recently when someone gave you his or her thoughts about your performance. You will need another person to role play with you. Then follow the steps of the skill of Responding to Feedback.

<b>Situation:</b>
<b>1. Monitor Your Physical Reaction</b>
<b>2. Monitor your Emotional Reaction</b>
<b>3. Summarize the Feedback</b>
<b>4. Share Your Perspective (optional)</b>

## Skill Use Worksheet



**Directions:** Monitor your use of the skill of Responding to Feedback over the next 2-4 weeks, indicating the dates when you think you needed to use this skill. Then check (✓) Yes or No for use of the skill, and write in why you did or did not use the skill in the right-hand column.

<b>Skill: Responding to Feedback</b>			
<b>Date I Needed to Use the Skill</b>	<b>Did I Use Skill?</b>		<b>Reasons</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>Results:</b>			