
Self-Directed Skill Lessons

Skills for Working Together

Sue McNamara



Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

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Skill Bundle: *Skills for Working Together*

Skills:

- *Scheduling Activities*
- *Coordinating Schedules*
- *Dividing Work Responsibilities*
- *Requesting Assistance*
- *Offering Assistance*
- *Volunteering for Tasks*
- *Giving Feedback*
- *Respecting Others' Space*

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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.

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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 Working Together*. There are 8 skill lessons included in this skill bundle:

- Scheduling Activities
- Coordinating Schedules
- Dividing Work Responsibilities
- Requesting Assistance
- Offering Assistance
- Volunteering for Tasks
- Giving Feedback
- Respecting Others' Space

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	Scheduling Activities Coordinating Schedules Dividing Work Responsibilities Requesting Assistance Offering Assistance Volunteering for Tasks Giving Feedback Respecting Others' Space	Assessing Task Performance Reporting Progress Sharing Self-Evaluations Requesting Feedback Responding to Feedback Recognizing Support Needs Disclosing Disability Evaluating Accommodations
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	Acknowledging Praise Expressing Appreciation Giving Compliments Expressing Interest Responding to Feelings Extending Invitations Responding to Invitations Choosing Gifts	Paraphrasing Recognizing Conflict Situations Evaluating Frustration Level Disagreeing Negotiating 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 Together*

Skill: *Giving Feedback*

Skill Lesson: Giving Feedback

Skill Information

What it means: Giving Feedback means you tell someone your evaluation of how well he or she completed a task. Your focus is on how well the person did the job, not about the person.

Giving positive feedback typically is easier than giving negative feedback. People usually enjoy hearing praise about their work. With any negative feedback, it's important to state it in terms of a suggestion for improvement, rather than as a complaint.

Why it's important: Giving Feedback lets the other person know your thoughts about their work. When people are informed that they are doing something well, it can help them to continue doing well, and it even may make their day a little bit better! When a person is informed that he or she is doing something incorrectly, then you can help the person to learn how to do it differently the next time in order to improve. The main purpose behind any kind of feedback is to help someone learn.

When to do it: Give Feedback when someone is at a stopping point or has finished working on a task. The timing of when to begin the conversation about feedback depends on whether you are alone together and whether you have the time to have the feedback conversation.

If it's a new task for that person, he or she may ask for your opinion about his or her work. You do not need to be in a supervisory role that officially evaluates someone; you can give feedback to anyone as a co-worker, roommate, classmate, or friend.



Skill Information (continued)

How to do it:

1. State your Overall Impression

Stating your overall impression means you tell the person what you generally think about his or her performance of the task. You might say something like, “You did great!” or “You’re on the right track.”

It is best to begin by expressing a positive overall impression, even if you think the person did not do very well at performing the task. If you think that the person did not do very well, then you may choose a positive feeling with low intensity, such as “fine” or “good.” You will have an opportunity to point out any mistakes later; but if you start off on a negative note, then the person may feel defensive and not listen to your specific feedback.

Be sure to note how the other person reacted to your overall statement. Noting reactions involves listening to whatever he or she says in response. Listen to the words that the person says as well as his or her tone of voice. Noting reactions also involves observing any body language, such as facial expressions, eye contact, or body position (facing you or turned away, arms crossed or open, hands relaxed or clenched).

2. Describe Strengths

Describing strengths is pointing out exactly what the person said or did correctly. Use specific behavioral language that describes the action of what you saw or heard. Add to your overall impression by saying, for example, “Good job! I noticed you purchased everything on your grocery shopping list!”

It is always important to identify strengths, even if the person did not do a very good job at the task overall. Be sure to take the time to identify something positive, even in the midst of the mistakes.

Encourage the person to repeat the strengths again, to help the person gain confidence and pride in a job well done. You might say, for example, “This is exactly how to do it every time!”

Skill Information (continued)

How to do it:

3. Suggest Improvements

Suggesting improvements means telling the other person about a specific mistake that he or she has made or a way to do the task better the next time. Be sure to point out exactly what was said or done incorrectly and to explain why it was a mistake. It is very important to use plain language and a calm tone of voice. Mistakes should be explained in an objective, matter-of-fact way. Then, describe exactly what could be said or done differently next time. Limit your feedback to one or two important improvements.

Be aware that some people react in a defensive way when you point out mistakes. Ask the person for his or her understanding of what you have said. Inviting a response helps to clarify whether the person has heard the feedback correctly. You may say something like, "Tell me your understanding of the improvements that I am suggesting to you."

It is important to follow up any negative feedback with a clear recommendation for improvement so that the person is told how to make progress next time. Most of us can use suggestions for improvement, even if we didn't make a mistake. Sometimes there are quicker or easier ways of accomplishing something.

4. End on a Positive Note

Ending on a positive note means you finish the conversation with something upbeat. After you share what needs to be done better, it is important to return to strengths, or at least end with an encouraging comment. Think about making a "feedback sandwich" with an improvement "sandwiched" in between two strengths.

If the person made a lot of mistakes, and you are having trouble coming up with something positive, you can always add an appreciation, such as, "I really appreciate you making the effort and being so willing to learn."

Example of the Skill

Scenario: Mario and Ron are taking a class together at the local community college. The class is on public speaking, which is required for their Communications degree program. After a couple of weeks of lectures, the instructor gave the class an assignment of writing and giving a 5-minute speech about something important to them in their lives.

After class, Ron said to Mario that he thought the assignment was rather vague. But Mario replied that he was excited because he knew exactly what his topic would be—his family’s restaurant.

During the break after Mario’s 5-minute speech in class about his family’s restaurant, Ron went up to him and said, “Great job, Mario. Your speech was so interesting!”

Mario replied, “Thanks, Ron!”

Ron continued, “It was interesting because you talked about how the business got started with your grandmother’s recipes from Italy. You gave the history about the restaurant, and you also sprinkled in a couple of jokes.”

“Thanks for your compliments, Ron,” said Mario.

Ron continued, “The only thing I recommend is that you hand out some business cards or take-out menus, because marketing is part of our Communications program.”

Mario replied, “That’s a great idea, Ron. I wish I had thought of that before!”

Ron stated, “Well, you can bring some in next week—it won’t be too late. I really appreciated your talk, and I hope the rest of the speeches are as good as yours!”

“Me, too, and thanks for the great suggestion!” said Mario.



Skill Practice 1



Directions: Read the following scenario, and go through the steps below as if you were Mario. You will need another person to role play with you as Ron. Then follow the steps of the skill of Giving Feedback.

Scenario: After the break in class, it was Ron’s turn to give his 5-minute speech. Ron talked about his brother’s service as a war veteran. Ron was quite nervous and his voice was quiet at the beginning of his speech. As he progressed through his speech, Ron projected his voice better and he became more animated with his brother’s story. At the end, his speech was very moving as he held up his brother’s purple heart medal.



1. State Your Overall Impression

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2. Describe Strengths

3. Suggest Improvements

4. End on a Positive Note

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Skill Practice 2



Directions: Write down a situation that happened recently when you observed someone completing a task. You will need another person to role play with you. Then follow the steps of the skill of Giving Feedback.

Situation:
1. State your Overall Impression
2. Describe Strengths
3. Suggest Improvements
4. End on a Positive Note

