Human Resources and
Skills Development Canada

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Office of Literacy and Essential Skills

Working with Others Tip Sheet

*This tool provides practical tips to help you improve your **working with others** skills. Review each of the tips below and practise the ones that are the most relevant to your learning needs.*

Working with a Partner or a Team

▌ Maintain open lines of communication with team members by freely sharing information.

▌ Exchange contact information with your colleagues and create a team contact list.

▌ Contribute to group decisions by stating your ideas and points of view.

▌ Make decisions co-operatively within the team.

▌ Contribute to the team by completing the tasks assigned to you on time.

▌ Get acquainted with new team members by introducing yourself and sharing an interesting fact about your job.

▌ Build a good rapport with your colleagues by participating in group activities (e.g. after work social events).

▌ Acknowledge and understand your own strengths and weaknesses.

▌ Acknowledge and use the skill strengths, ideas and opinions of other team members.

▌ Encourage your team members to share ideas by asking questions and listening attentively.

▌ Always consider the feedback and advice given by other team members.

▌ Phrase your suggestions as questions (e.g. instead of saying "I think we should…" say "What about doing…").

▌ Let your colleagues know when they are doing a good job.

▌ Respect the feelings, views and values of other team members.

▌ Support and encourage fellow team members by helping those who need assistance.

▌ Do not avoid conflict. Address issues or problems when they happen.

Working Independently

- Set realistic daily/weekly goals and evaluate your success at the end of the day/week.

- Create a daily/weekly to-do list to help prioritize and organize your tasks.

- Divide large projects into smaller and more manageable tasks.

- Minimize interruptions by scheduling a specific time to work on a project/task.

- Manage your time carefully so that you have time to respond to unexpected requests.

- Regularly review the progress you have made in your work. Make adjustments to your to-do list or schedule if necessary.

- Write your daily/weekly accomplishments in a log and share them with your supervisor.

- Provide regular progress reports to your supervisor so that he/she is aware of the work you do.

- Take initiative by doing what needs to be done before being asked.

- Understand the big picture by asking colleagues how the work you do affects their work.

- Connect with people who share your interests by networking at seminars, joining associations and/or volunteering.

- Ask for help and/or advice when you have questions.

Working in a Leadership Role

- Set clear roles and responsibilities for each team member.

- Establish team goals that are clear, understood and accepted by everyone.

- Discuss and establish team procedures (e.g. for team meetings).

- Hold regular team meetings to get updates on each team member's progress.

- Help others by sharing your experiences and offering guidance or advice.

- Lead by setting a good example for the people around you.

- Let people know when they are doing a good job.

- Recognize the accomplishments of those around you.

- Give constructive feedback to help others improve their work.

- Be objective when giving feedback or input.

- Support others by listening to their concerns and feelings.

- Include everyone in group discussions by encouraging others to share their ideas.

- Do not judge others' ideas or suggestions when hearing them for the first time.

- Consider all options when making a decision.

- Take the time to explain something when a colleague doesn't understand.

- Demonstrate passion and enthusiasm for the work you do.

- Encourage group interactions and maintain a positive atmosphere.

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Working with Others
Practice and Learning Exercises

*Practise your **working with others** skills by completing the following exercises. Use the Working with Others Tip Sheet to help you as you work through the exercises. A learning plan template is also included to help guide your skills development.*

Practice Exercises

1 GIVING FEEDBACK

Think about a time when you provided feedback on someone else's work. Did you…

▮ Limit your feedback to 2 or 3 key points?

▮ Recognize the strengths of the work before addressing areas for improvement?

▮ Offer specific suggestions for improving the work?

▮ Take responsibility for your feedback (e.g. begin sentences with "I think" or "In my opinion")?

▮ Choose an appropriate time and location to deliver the feedback?

▮ Explain what could be learned from this experience?

▮ Follow up after the feedback session to demonstrate support and offer additional help?

Use the table below to record what you did well and what you could improve the next time you provide feedback.

What I did well	What I could do better next time
e.g. I offered very specific suggestions on how to improve the work.	*e.g. I did not choose the best location to deliver the feedback. Next time, I will choose a more private location.*

2   RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Think about a time when someone gave you feedback on your work. Did you…

- Actively listen to the feedback provided and try to understand the other person's point of view?
- Take notes so that you could review and apply the suggested changes?
- Avoid taking the feedback personally?
- Focus on what could be learned by this experience and how things could be done differently in the future?
- Ask for clarification if/when you did not understand a comment?
- Thank your colleague(s) for taking the time to provide you with feedback?

Use the table below to record what you did well and what you could improve the next time you receive feedback.

What I did well	What I could do better next time
e.g. I asked my colleague to explain some of his feedback when I did not understand what he was saying.	*e.g. I did not write down all the feedback I was given, and now I forget what changes need to be made. Next time, I will write down all of the suggestions provided to me.*

3   PERSONALITY TYPES

Review the 4 personality types shown below:

Type "A" Personality

- Independent
- Direct and to the point
- Not afraid of change
- Takes charge

Type "B" Personality

- Often the center of attention
- Very expressive and fun-loving
- Wants to be liked by others
- Supportive, yet direct

Type "C" Personality

- Very analytical
- Detail-oriented
- Researches everything before making a decision
- Thoughtful and usually very sensitive

Type "D" Personality

- Does not like change
- Motivated by security and benefits
- Very punctual and consistent
- The one others turn to when they have a problem

Source: Adapted from Charles J. Clarke's BOLT System

What personality type most reflects you? _____ (insert type).

What personality type least reflects you? _____ (insert type).

If you work in a team, try to also identify the personality types of your team members. This exercise will help you gain a better understanding of your colleagues' perspectives and how they may react in different situations.

Additional Learning Exercises

▮ Create a to-do list for the week ahead. Be sure to describe the task, assign a due date and note any specific pieces of information you will need to complete the task.

▮ Get together with your co-workers (on a break or during lunch time) to discuss the different personality types of those on your team. Identify ways that different personalities complement each other and can work together.

▮ Organize a team building or icebreaker activity with your co-workers (on a break or during lunch time). Make sure that everyone is involved.

▮ Ask your manager if you can facilitate your next team meeting. Think about:

  ▮ What items should be on the agenda?

  ▮ Who will speak about each item?

  ▮ What are the desired outcomes for the meeting?

  ▮ How much time should be spent discussing each item?

Notes:

_____

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My Learning Plan

Complete this worksheet to help guide your skills development. Set a target date to reach your goals and use this date to track your progress.

My learning goal is to improve my **working with others** skills by: _____ (insert date).

Tips or practice exercises I can use to improve my **working with others** skills include:

_____

_____

_____

Additional resources (e.g. books, courses, workshops, co-workers and/or supervisors) to help improve my **working with others** skills include:

_____

_____

_____

Additional learning activities (e.g. job shadowing, new work responsibilities, volunteering in my community) to help improve my **working with others** skills include:

_____

_____

_____

Examples that show I have improved my **working with others** skills include:

_____

_____

_____

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