

# Community Works Handbook

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Developed by

**also**

Alternative Learning Styles and Outlooks

Heartwood House

and

Ottawa Community Coalition for Literacy

Funded by

Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program  
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## Community Works

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**Spread the word! Give other people a chance to do what we have done.**

Mary Wiggin  
Ottawa Community Coalition for Literacy  
April 2008

## **Introduction**

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During your volunteer placement you will strengthen your skills and learn new ones. You will learn more about the workplace and practise work habits that can help you to get a paid job, keep it and progress in it.

This curriculum will help you learn about yourself and practise some skills you will need in your volunteer position.

The activities in this handbook are divided into 7 units.

**Units 1, 3 and 7** help you to learn more about yourself.

**Unit 2** gives you information to help you work safely in your volunteer placement.

Units 1, 2, 3, and 7 are recommended for everyone.

**Units 4, 5 and 6** help you to develop workplace skills.

Talk with your instructor to decide which units and activities you should do.

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## Community Works Curriculum

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### **UNIT 1      Looking in: Finding Out about Yourself**

The purpose of this unit is to encourage you to look within yourself and think about the personal qualities, beliefs, values, attitudes and skills which you bring to your new volunteer position. Thinking about who you are now will help you to measure the progress you will make during your volunteer placement.

You will work on:

- Discovering your personal qualities
- Recognizing your values and beliefs
- Learning about your attitudes
- Listing your skills
  - transferable skills
  - essential skills
- Exploring your feelings about volunteering – “Dear Me,” a self-reflective journal activity

### **UNIT 2      Workplace Safety**

This unit will provide you with the skills and information you need to keep yourself and your workplace safe.

You will work on:

- Identifying safety issues
- Working with equipment
- Working with chemicals
- Working with food
- Preventing injury
- Understanding your rights and responsibilities as a worker

### **UNIT 3      Charting Progress During Your Volunteer Placement**

This unit will give you the “tools” you need to chart your progress throughout your volunteer placement. You will learn how to start a portfolio

and keep track of your progress as you are building your skills and experience.

- Creating a learning portfolio
- Journaling, “Sentence Starters”
- Evaluating yourself
- Writing a personal information sheet

#### **UNIT 4 Managing Yourself and Your Volunteer Placement**

In this unit you will learn about good work habits, such as the importance of time management and reliability so that you become a person that an employer would want to hire.

Activities use scenarios from a children’s room. You will work on:

- Managing time
  - Being on time
  - Estimating time
  - Making To Do lists
  - Getting help from the family
  - Organizing your time
- Missing work
- Reading schedules
- Handling money

#### **UNIT 5 Communicating in the Workplace**

The purpose of this unit is to help you present yourself in a positive way and to improve your listening and speaking skills.

Activities use scenarios from reception in a literacy program. You will work on:

- Deciding what to wear
- Understanding body language
- Sending the right message – tone of voice and volume
- Spreading gossip and rumours
- Becoming a better listener
- Listening to instructions
- Taking telephone messages
- Using voicemail

**UNIT 6      Getting Along with Others**

The purpose of this unit is to help you to become a valued member of the team. You will also learn about problem-solving strategies and how to deal with stressful situations.

Activities use scenarios from a transit system's lost and found office. You will work on:

- Working as part of a team
- Dealing with diversity
- Cooperating and taking the initiative
- Solving problems
- Dealing with angry people
- Managing stress
- Knowing when to ask for help

**UNIT 7      Putting it All Together**

This is where you think about your volunteer experience and the new knowledge and skills you have learned. You'll be able to look back to see the progress you have made and how far you have come. You will prepare your résumé.

You will work on:

- Reflecting on your volunteer experience – “Dear Me” letter revisited
- Reviewing your portfolio: What have you discovered about yourself?
- Preparing your résumé
- Deciding what to do next



# **UNIT 1**

## **LOOKING IN: FINDING OUT ABOUT YOURSELF**

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## Uncover Your Personal Qualities

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Everyone has skills and qualities.....but what are **yours**? It can take time to discover who you are.

The next few activities will get you thinking about the qualities, skills, abilities and special talents that you already have. You may also uncover other things you are good at that you have not thought about before.

### What are Personal Qualities?

Personal qualities make up your personality. They help you to get along in new situations at home and at work.

Although skills are important, an employer also selects new employees based on their personal qualities. These make you a stronger candidate for any position, whether it is as a volunteer or a paid employee.

**Friendliness** and a **sense of humour** are valuable qualities in getting along with other people. In a busy workplace, **hardworking, flexible** and **organized** workers cooperate with each other to get the job done. In some jobs, workers need to be physically **strong** to lift and carry supplies or tools. Other qualities employers look for are **enthusiasm** and **willingness to listen and learn**. All employers want people who are **dependable** and **honest**.

**What is the difference between a skill and a quality?**

A **skill** is something I can do well. "I **can** ..."

A **quality** is something special about me. "I **am** ..."

### Activity 1: Personal Qualities

Match the words in the table with their descriptions. If you wish, use a dictionary to help you. The first one is done for you.

#### Descriptions

has a sense of humour	doesn't give up easily
shows interest or excitement	truthful
good at planning things	assists others
<del>takes care to do things well</del>	can be counted on
willing to try different ways	pleasant with others
completes many tasks without complaining	able to lift heavy things

Quality	Description
careful	Takes care to do things well
honest	
helpful	
enthusiastic	
dependable	
determined	
friendly	
humorous	
organized	
flexible	
strong	
hardworking	

**Activity 2: Find the Missing Quality**

Read the following sentences carefully. Choose the best word to fill in the blank.

1. Personal qualities are what make up your \_\_\_\_\_.  
situation / personality / patience
2. They help a person get along in a new \_\_\_\_\_.  
situation / skills / family
3. \_\_\_\_\_ helps you get along with others.  
friendliness / a healthy appetite / dishonesty
4. Employers want people who are dependable and \_\_\_\_\_.  
good looking / good cooks / honest
5. Though skills are important, an employer will select new employees based on their \_\_\_\_\_ as well.  
hairstyle / personal qualities / shoe size / cooking ability
6. Telling your supervisor that you found a five-dollar bill in the hallway is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.  
tidiness / honesty / great eyesight

### Activity 3: About You

#### Instructions:

For this activity, work by yourself, with a partner or in a small group.

- ❑ Take some time to really think about each question – dig deep!
- ❑ Jot down your answers in the space provided.
- ❑ With a partner (or your instructor) share your answers, or the ones you feel comfortable sharing.
- ❑ As you talk with others, you may wish to add to your answers.

1. People count on each other for lots of things. What do people count on **you** for?

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2. What difficulties have you overcome to get where you are now?

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3. What brave things have you done that you feel good about?

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4. What good qualities do you think you have? What shows that you have those qualities?

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5. Write about an occasion when someone told you you'd done a good job.

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6. Have you volunteered before (for example, at your child's school, your church, cultural organization, community group)? What skills have you used in these activities?

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7. Describe something you planned, created or fixed up, that gave you a strong sense of satisfaction (e.g. a new way to get things done, a new recipe, making “something out of nothing”, etc.). Why did you feel good about it?

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8. Now look at the list of personal qualities in Activity 1. Think about the answers you gave to questions 1-7 above. Which of the personal qualities do you think apply to you? List them here.

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9. Are there any personal qualities that describe you that are not on the list?

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### Activity 4: Qualities Word Search

Complete the puzzle below, or go to <http://www.teachers-direct.co.uk/resources/wordsearches/wordsearch-maker.aspx> for an interactive version you can complete on a computer.

h	t	o	r	g	a	n	i	z	e	d	r	e	e	w
a	e	i	l	m	e	e	e	v	t	e	h	v	l	i
r	d	a	r	u	t	i	i	o	s	y	u	i	b	l
d	e	a	s	i	f	t	m	p	e	h	m	t	i	l
w	w	v	l	y	r	e	o	f	n	t	o	p	x	i
o	d	o	i	e	g	n	r	d	o	r	r	e	e	n
r	p	e	s	t	s	o	e	a	h	o	o	c	l	g
k	y	s	t	i	a	d	i	g	c	w	u	r	f	p
i	a	e	b	e	i	e	n	n	n	t	s	e	l	u
n	i	l	d	c	r	o	r	n	g	s	f	p	u	n
g	e	t	a	f	r	m	h	c	l	u	a	b	f	c
e	d	t	t	t	p	d	i	h	b	r	s	i	p	t
p	e	r	s	i	s	t	e	n	t	t	t	a	l	u
d	n	n	n	e	n	e	r	g	e	t	i	c	e	a
f	r	i	e	n	d	l	y	o	e	d	e	r	h	l

#### Words to find:

assertive

careful

creative

dedicated

determined

easygoing

energetic

fast

flexible

friendly

hardworking

helpful

honest

humorous

organized

perceptive

persistent

polite

punctual

responsible

strong

trustworthy

warm

willing



## Activity 5: Design a Word Search

Identify at least eight qualities that apply to you. Go to <http://www.teachers-direct.co.uk/resources/wordsearches>. Follow the directions on the website (also printed below) to make up your own word search. When you have made your puzzle, you can exchange puzzles with someone else in your class.

### Instructions

- Step 1: Enter a title for your wordsearch. This could be your name.
- Step 2: You must choose a subject for your word search. The one chosen for this activity was *Psychology*. For *Key Stage*, the age chosen for this activity was 16+.
- Step 3: Choose *grid size 15x15*  
Choose *Basic Wordsearch*  
Choose *upper case* or *lower case* (lower case is easier to read).
- Step 4: In the box, enter the words you want to appear in your puzzle. Separate them by using spaces, commas, or put each word on a separate line. Check that you have spelled them correctly.
- Step 5: Choose the *word direction*. The one chosen for this activity was *All Directions*.  
For *Un-used Letters*, choose *Easy*, *Normal* or *Hard*.
- Step 6: Click the *preview* button. It may take a minute or two to generate the preview. Once the preview is on your screen, you can print your puzzle.

**Activity 6: “I Would Like You to Meet....”**

This is a public speaking opportunity!

When you have identified the words in your classmate’s puzzle, introduce the person to the class, describing his or her qualities. If you already know this person, you may also be able to give examples of these qualities.

**Example**

Beth is **organized**. I have noticed that she can always find the information that people need.

## Activity 7: My Personal Qualities

Read the Sample Personal Qualities list below. Go back to your wordsearch. Choose your 7 best qualities. List them in the chart on the next page. Also give examples that show you have these qualities. In an interview an employer will be interested to hear how you will take advantage of your qualities in the workplace.

### Personal Qualities I Bring to the Workplace – Sample

Quality	Example
I am friendly and polite and I enjoy working with people.	The staff and other learners say that they enjoy working with me.
Others can rely on me and I am always on time.	I have been a learner for three months and I have always been on time for class.
I am honest and hardworking.	I have been handling the coffee money and the account always balances.
I am a positive person.	I get satisfaction from doing a good job. I always put in extra effort.
I like to be busy. I look for things to do.	If the teacher isn't ready to mark my work, I often ask the others if there is anything I can help them with.
I am a good listener and pay attention to details.	I listen carefully to instructions. If they are complicated I write notes for myself. I check that I haven't missed anything.
I enjoy learning new things.	I learned how to use the computer to write to my landlord.

**Personal Qualities I Bring to My Volunteer Placement**

<b>Quality</b>	<b>Example</b>

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## Uncover Your Values and Beliefs

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### What are Values and Beliefs?

**Values** are principles or qualities that someone feels are important in life

**Beliefs** are things that a person believes in, or accepts as true

You bring your own beliefs and values to anything you do in life – at home, or in the workplace. Your work habits are the way you do things every day. Your personal qualities, values and beliefs are reflected in these work habits. They show others what kind of person you are.

The next few activities look at what **you** value.

**Activity 8: What Values Mean To Me**

Below are examples of values. What does each value mean to you? Think of an example of how someone might show they have this value. Write your example in the right hand column. The first two are done for you.

<b>VALUE</b>	<b>An example of this value is.....</b>
Love	The feelings people have for their children.
Kindness	Giving up your seat on the bus to an elderly person.
Loyalty	
Honesty	
Friendship	
Patience	
Respect (people, animals, the environment, etc.)	
Peace	
Generosity	
Commitment	
Excellence	

## Activity 9: What Are My Values?

Look again at the values listed in the last activity. Take time to think about each one.

Check off those that are important to you.

Then, choose **your** five most important values and list them.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

How do you think these values will be important to you in your volunteer placement and in a future job?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Uncover Your Attitudes

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### What are Attitudes?

In your volunteer position you will be learning new skills that will help you to get a job in the future. But skills are not everything.

The need to show a good attitude in the workplace is just as important as learning work skills. Workers with a good attitude are productive workers and they influence everyone else with their positive outlook.



## Activity 10: A Good Attitude... and How to Get One!

Discuss the tips with your instructor. Try to follow these tips. When you have been volunteering for a while check off the things you are good at doing. Try to improve those things you are not so good at doing.

### Tips for Success in your Volunteer Position

- Be upbeat. No one likes to be around someone who is gloomy, cranky, or mean. Smile and look for the positive side of things.
- Show a sense of humour. While offensive jokes are not acceptable, appropriate humour brightens everyone's day.
- Take pride in your work. Whether you're helping a customer or sweeping the floor, try to do the best you can.
- Cooperate with others. Be willing to lend a hand to somebody who needs it.
- Be willing. Even if you don't like the task you're doing, try to see it as an opportunity to learn something.
- Take charge of the jobs you have been given. Use your initiative. Don't wait for someone to tell you what to do. Your work ethic will be noticed!
- Listen and keep an open mind. When you are willing to listen, others will talk to you and you may learn something new and interesting.
- Remember, you have customers! While you may not be volunteering in retail, you still have customers. Think about how your supervisor, the owner of the company, the general public and co-workers are all affected by your work.

**Activity 11: Tips to Get You Off to a Good Start**

Read the tips on page 21 again.

Can you think of any examples from your own work or personal experience where someone has shown a positive attitude? How did their positive attitude influence you?

Example of positive behaviour....	It made me feel.....

**When have you shown a positive attitude? Give at least one example.**

### Activity 12: Your Attitude Affects Others

How can a bad attitude influence other people in the workplace? Complete the following chart and discuss your answers with another student or your instructor. The first problem has been done for you.

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Often argues with co-workers about unimportant things</b>
Effect on worker with negative attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scares off co-workers</li> <li>• Has no friends</li> <li>• May lose the position</li> </ul>
Effect on co-workers (people who work with you)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes it hard to communicate</li> <li>• Can hurt team spirit</li> <li>• Takes them away from what they should be doing</li> </ul>
Effect on supervisor (person in charge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wastes time being referee</li> <li>• Takes longer to finish tasks</li> <li>• Takes attention away from more important problems</li> </ul>

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Is often late</b>
Effect on worker with negative attitude	
Effect on co-workers	
Effect on supervisor	

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Tells inappropriate jokes and/or uses bad language</b>
Effect on worker with negative attitude	
Effect on co-workers	
Effect on supervisor	

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Shows moodiness (anger, impatience, etc.)</b>
Effect on worker with negative attitude	
Effect on co-workers	
Effect on supervisor	

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Is lazy, does not do fair share of work</b>
Effect on worker with negative attitude	
Effect on co-workers	
Effect on supervisor	

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Gossips or spreads rumours (stories talked about as news that may not be true)</b>
Effect on worker with negative attitude	
Effect on co-workers	
Effect on supervisor	

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Does not care about safety issues</b>
Effect on worker with negative attitude	
Effect on co-workers	
Effect on supervisor	

How is your attitude? In the next activity, we will look at some of the behaviours that can show a negative attitude.

If you see yourself in any of these behaviours, think about how you might change them.

### Activity 13: Does Your Attitude Need Changing?

Check the box that applies to you. Rate yourself honestly.

Attitude	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
I usually show up late.				
I am moody.				
I get defensive when people criticize me.				
If it's not my job I don't see why I have to do it.				
I get annoyed with people who don't know anything.				
I don't wear a seat belt when I drive.				
I like to argue.				
Talking sometimes gets me into trouble.				
I often ask myself why some people have no sense of humour.				
I wait until my supervisor tells me what to do.				

For each "Often" or "Always" you have checked, come up with an action plan for improving that attitude.

## Sample Action Plan for Improvement

**Problem:** I usually show up late.

**Possible Solutions:**

1. Go to sleep half an hour earlier and wake up half an hour earlier.
2. Get a reliable alarm clock and change the batteries every six months.
3. Ask someone to give me a wakeup call.
4. Check the news for weather conditions that could make me late.
5. Put clothes out the night before.

Cross out the ideas that would not work for you. Make a plan.

**Action Plan:**

1. Buy an alarm clock.
2. Put clothes out the night before.
3. Get up half an hour earlier.



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## Uncover Your Skills

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### What are Skills?

In general, **skills** are the activities that a person does well.

"I can ....."

### What are Transferable Skills?

Think about a transfer that you use when you change buses. A transfer lets you get off one bus and onto another without paying for another ticket. Well, you can transfer skills from one situation to another. These skills are called transferable skills.

For example, if you are a good listener, you can listen to others in a variety of different situations. If you are a good listener in your personal life, the chances are you will continue to be so in your volunteer position and in your future workplace.

## Activity 14: What Are My Skills?

Think about the following questions and check off the things that apply to you. They will help you to see just how many skills you have.

### People Skills

- Do people often come to you for advice?
- Do you speak up at meetings?
- Have you ever played on a sports team?
- Do you enjoy meeting people?
- Do you like selling things to people?
- Are you good at persuading others to do things?
- Do people often choose you as a leader?
- Do you get along well with people?

### Organizational Skills

- Do you like to organize things?
- Do others ask you for help when they want to organize something?
- Have you ever helped to organize an event?
- When you are part of a team, do you end up giving directions to others?
- Do you know where all the important information is in your home?
- Do you naturally keep everything up to date (e.g. address book, payments)?
- Do you remember all your appointments and arrive on time?
- Are your things well organized?

**Are you good at.....**

- Managing your money?
- Gathering information?
- Working with numbers?
- Building things?
- Working with your hands?
- Finding things?
- Thinking up new ideas?
- Working long hours?
- Paying attention to detail?
- Interior decorating? Painting, sewing, photography?
- Fixing things?
- Gardening?
- Parenting?
- Cleaning?

## Activity 15: Transferable Skills

Think about some of the activities you have done or are doing now. They can be activities you take part in as a volunteer, in a job, as an individual, or as a family member. What kinds of things have you done? For instance, you may be used to shopping, cooking and budgeting for your family. You may want to brainstorm ideas with another student.

Then think about the skills you have used in order to carry out these activities. These skills are some of your **transferable skills**. You will realize that in doing everyday, ordinary activities, you have gained many talents!

You will use this information when you complete your personal information sheet in Unit 3, Activity 4.

### Sample Transferable Skills

Category	Activities	Transferable skills
Personal Interests	Sewing	Measuring Creativity Working with my hands
Home and Family	Taking care of children	Organizing people and things Managing time
Volunteering/work	Selling chocolate bars at the mall for a school fundraiser	Keeping track of money Meeting people Persuading others

**My Transferable Skills**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Transferable skills</b>
Personal Interests		
Home and Family		
Volunteering/Work		

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## Uncover Your Essential Skills

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### What are Essential Skills?

Over the last few years, the Government of Canada has done research to find the skills people use at work. They came up with nine **essential skills** that are used by workers in different occupations. While workers in most jobs use all of these skills, some jobs require you to use some skills more than others. These skills are needed not only for work, but also for learning and life.

The nine Essential Skills are:

- Reading Text**
- Document Use**
- Numeracy**
- Writing**
- Oral Communication**
- Working with Others**
- Continuous Learning**
- Thinking Skills**
- Computer Use**

### Why do I need to know about Essential Skills?

Being aware of **Essential Skills** will help you to learn more about the skills you will need in various jobs and in your volunteer position.

Being aware of **Essential Skills** will help you to think about the kinds of skills you have and those you need to work on.

Being aware of **Essential Skills** will help you to complete your *Self-Evaluation Worksheet* every week, as you work through your volunteer experience. From this worksheet, you will be able to see how your skills have developed during your volunteer placement. Then you can create a résumé that will show an employer that you know what is required for a job, that you have learned and practised those skills and that you may just be the perfect person for their position.

**Reading Text** is reading sentences or paragraphs. This includes: forms and labels if they contain *at least one paragraph*; print and non-print media (for example, text on computer screens); paragraph-length text in charts, tables and graphs.

**Document Use** is doing tasks that involve reading and entering information into schedules, charts, graphs, lists, tables, drawings, signs and labels used in the world of work. Documents can include things that are not in print, for example, computer screen documents, equipment gauges, clocks and flags.

**Numeracy** is using numbers and math concepts (such as multiplication, estimation, fractions or percentages) to carry out work tasks.

**Writing** is writing sentences or paragraphs, including completing forms and writing on a computer.

**Oral Communication** is giving and exchanging thoughts with people you meet in the workplace. It includes listening as well as speaking.

**Working with Others** is how people work with others to carry out their tasks. Do they have to work cooperatively with others? Do they have to have the self-discipline to meet work targets while working alone?

**Continuous Learning** is knowing how to learn and being open to new learning. It is important because these days all workers must continue learning new skills in order to keep or to grow with their jobs.

**Thinking Skills** is problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, job task planning and organizing, use of memory and finding information.

**Computer Use** is knowing how to use different kinds of computer programs and tools.

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## **Activity 16: Identify Essential Skills in your Volunteer Position**

Discuss each of the nine Essential Skills.

With your instructor, think of at least one example of how you are using each skill in your volunteer position.

Reading Text

Document Use

Numeracy

Writing

Oral Communication

Working with Others

Continuous Learning

Thinking Skills

Computer Use



## Activity 17: Continuous Learning – Go Online

To learn more about these nine skills, go to

[http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/Understanding\\_ES\\_e.shtml](http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/Understanding_ES_e.shtml)

You can ask your instructor to guide you as you explore this site.

Explore the site to find out what skills are important for occupations that may interest you in the future. Ask your instructor to help you find the National Occupations Classification (NOC) code for your occupation of interest and enter the numbers in the box.

[http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/search\\_occupation\\_noc.shtml](http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/search_occupation_noc.shtml)

## Activity 18: Dear Me

Write or type a letter to yourself that tells how you are feeling as you are preparing to start your volunteer placement. Be honest with yourself! Write about the qualities, values, beliefs, attitudes and skills you are bringing to your new position. Express any worries or concerns you may have about the challenges that lie ahead. If you already know there are areas you need to work on, say what these are.

Put your letter in an envelope and seal it. Address it to yourself. Put it in a safe place.

When you have almost finished your volunteer placement but before you complete your résumé, open your letter to see how far you have come!

# **UNIT 2**

## **WORKPLACE**

## **SAFETY**

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## Workplace Safety

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### Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Worker

**As a worker, you have the right to:**

#### **Know**

Everyone needs to have his or her tasks explained. Your employer should explain your duties and then show you what to do. You should be able to explain the tasks back to your supervisor. Once you can do this, try to do the tasks under supervision, at least for the first few times, to be sure you understand all the details.

Your employer must tell you about hazardous materials or equipment in your workplace. You should get training before using any of those materials or equipment.

#### **Participate**

Report anything unsafe. For example, if you notice that an electrical power cord is frayed tell your supervisor as soon as possible so he or she can fix it before there is an accident. In Canada, many workplaces have health and safety committees. Find out where you can get help if you have questions about safety at work.

#### **Refuse Unsafe Work**

If you think your work is unsafe tell your supervisor immediately. You can refuse that work until the situation is corrected. In the meantime, you should remain in a safe place near your workstation. You cannot be suspended, fired, or docked pay for refusing to do unsafe work.

#### **Work Safely**

Don't take risks. You might injure yourself or another worker.

#### **Report Unsafe Conditions**

If you see anything that looks unsafe, tell your supervisor immediately. Don't wait until someone gets hurt.

#### **Wear the Right Safety Equipment for the Job**

If necessary, wear protective clothing and equipment and get training to use it properly.

**Ask Your Employer First**

If you have any concerns or questions about health and safety issues tell your employer so he or she can take steps to prevent accidents.

**Safety Checklist**

Find out about possible risks. Don't say you understand safety instructions if you don't. Don't be tempted to say you understand just to please your supervisor.

Help to make sure of your own safety by knowing what to look for in different work situations. Know what questions to ask. Take the initiative. Protect yourself by asking the following questions:

- What are the dangers of my job?
- Will I receive job safety training? When?
- Are there any hazards (noise, chemicals) that I should know about?
- Is there any safety gear that I'll be expected to wear? Will I receive training in how to use it?
- Will I be trained in emergency procedures (fire, chemical spill)? When?
- Where are the fire extinguishers, first aid kits and other emergency equipment located?
- What is the safety route out of this building?
- What are my health and safety responsibilities?
- Who do I ask if I have a safety question?
- Do you have safety meetings?
- What do I do if I get hurt? Who is the first aid person?

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## Workplace Hazardous Material Information System

(WHMIS, pronounced whim-iss)

WHMIS is a Canada-wide system designed to protect the health and safety of working Canadians by providing information about hazardous materials on the job.

There are three main areas to WHMIS:

- Labels
- Material safety data sheets (MSDS)
- Worker education and training

WHMIS deals with the preservation of life and health against hazardous substances you may come into contact with at work. WHMIS is the law and applies in every province and territory in Canada.

Some jobs require workers to take the WHMIS course before they are allowed to start work. Find out if you will need WHMIS certification for your volunteer placement. There are many internet sites that offer WHMIS training and certification on-line, for a fee. Ask your instructor or supervisor to help you find the best one.

**Activity 1: Workplace Safety**

Go online to discover a good resource that will help you learn more about workplace safety.

[http://www.livesafeworksmart.net/english/special\\_needs/lesson\\_1-2.htm](http://www.livesafeworksmart.net/english/special_needs/lesson_1-2.htm)

Talk to your instructor about the activities and then complete the handouts in each lesson.

## **UNIT 3**

# **CHARTING PROGRESS DURING YOUR VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT**



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## Tools for Charting Your Progress

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In this unit you will find some tools that will help you chart your progress during your volunteer placement.

These tools are:

- ❑ How to Build a Portfolio
- ❑ Keeping the Communication Channels Open With Your Supervisor
- ❑ Self-Evaluation Worksheet
- ❑ Journal Sentence Starters
- ❑ Personal Information Record Sheet

As you work through these activities, you will gather items that show the skills you have learned. As you build your portfolio, you will begin to understand yourself more. You will recognize and appreciate your personal qualities, think more about the kind of work you would like to do in the future and learn that you already have skills that you can take into the workplace.

By the end of your placement, you will put together all of these things, add your past training and paid/unpaid work experience, find three people willing to give you a reference and create your own résumé.

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## Your Learning Portfolio

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During your volunteer placement, you will work on building a learning portfolio. You can put in your portfolio any certificates, letters of appreciation, or other evidence you have gathered. By the end of your volunteer placement, you will have collected items that demonstrate your skills, knowledge, personal qualities and experience.

Creating a portfolio during your volunteer placement will also help you and your instructor to recognize skills that you need to improve, so that you will be more successful in a job. Your portfolio is a “work in progress.” As your skills and experiences increase, your portfolio will grow.

At the end of your volunteer placement, you will use the items in your portfolio to help you build a résumé that will make you proud.

Use your portfolio to share your achievements with others, track how far you’ve come in your learning journey and figure out your next steps.

### **To start your learning portfolio, you will need:**

#### **Three-ringed binder or file box**

Whatever you choose, keep in mind that at some point you may want to show it to a potential employer. Your portfolio should be clean, hard-wearing and well-organized. The container you use should be big enough for you to add items later. Remember, your Learning Portfolio is a reflection of you – it is a work in progress, of which you can be proud!

#### **Dividers**

You may want to use dividers to separate different sections of your portfolio. You may choose to have a section about your volunteer positions and/or work experiences and one that describes your interests, qualities and so on. If your work is neat and well organized, an employer is likely to see you that way too.

**Plastic Covers**

These are for protecting the items you choose to include in your portfolio. It is important to keep your documents in good condition. This shows that you care and are proud of your achievements.

**Item Explanation Sheets**

These sheets should include a place to fill in the date of the item, the title of the item and a line or two about why you included it in your portfolio. This will show someone reading your portfolio why the item is important to you. It will also help you to remember details that you might forget over time.

A completed explanation sheet could look something like this:

The title of this portfolio item:	<u>Weekly Check-In Sheet</u>
The date I completed it:	<u>July 23, 2008</u>
This item shows that:	<u>I handled office phone calls on my own at lunch time, when it was very busy.</u>
The Essential Skills I used and/or work habits I showed:	<u>Oral communication (speaking and listening); customer service; reliability</u>

There is a blank explanation sheet on the next page. Use one each time you put an item in your portfolio. Photocopy as many of these blank sheets as you need.

The title of this portfolio item: \_\_\_\_\_

The date I completed it: \_\_\_\_\_

This item shows that:

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The Essential Skills I used and/or work habits I showed:

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**Your learning portfolio might include things such as these:**

- Samples of the work you have completed in this course
- Demonstrations that show your personal qualities, attitudes and values
- Evaluations that prove your skills and knowledge
- Evidence that you are assessing your own performance (e.g. journals, self-evaluation worksheets)
- Letters of reference from your supervisor, employer, instructor, etc.
- Letters of appreciation
- Records of volunteer experience
- Records of paid work experience
- Records of meetings/workshops you have attended
- Organizations that you belong to
- Awards and certificates, e.g. CPR, First Aid, Food Handling
- Any other items that show that you are the kind of person an employer would like to hire

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## Keep the Communication Channels Open!

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### Activity 1: Talk it Out

Read this scenario and answer the questions.

#### Anna's Story

A couple of months into my placement I was having difficulty setting limits and following instructions. Jodie (my supervisor) and I were having trouble communicating. Fortunately, we were able to sort through the problems when we started to communicate more. Jodie came up with this system where we would meet a few times a week and discuss 3 things that went well and 3 things that need to be improved. I found this helpful because I was getting constructive feedback and at the same time feeling positive about my improvements.

When Jodie and I started to communicate more I was more enthusiastic about learning. I started observing how she relates to the kids and the way she speaks and the words she uses. Jodie always emphasized "positive" words. When we speak to the children in a calm, clear and positive way it can help them learn and understand what you are asking them.

You have to be focused when working at the daycare, which was always a weakness of mine. But understanding what is expected and going so regularly I noticed myself noticing when I am not at my best. From all the feedback I've been getting I have started to learn when I am doing things right and when I am not.

There are always little things you have to do to keep a close eye on the kids. Like where you are seated in the room, or when you are doing an activity with one kid you have to keep an eye on the child that is a few feet away from you as well. It is for safety but it's also for the child to learn and grow. For example, often you see the kids not putting things away and to catch that in the moment and immediately communicate to them that you have to clean up will help them understand better. The daycare at times can be challenging but it's comforting to know that if Jodie or Kim has a problem they will be supportive of me and upfront.

It is a really wonderful experience to see how a child learns and grows by saying certain words or numbers and seeing how they start to adjust to the daycare and become more outgoing and comfortable. Overall my placement at the daycare really interested me and made me feel like I had grown as an individual. It has been a very rewarding experience and I am lucky to have had such a wonderful group of people to work with.

Extract from a journal written by a volunteer in the **also** Children's Room

**Answer these questions about Anna’s Story**

Think about the questions. Discuss your answers with another student and/or your instructor.

1. Anna didn’t immediately go to her supervisor. What do you think may have happened if she and Jodie had not communicated?

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2. What could Anna have done to prevent these bad feelings from happening?

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3. What should Anna do next time?

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4. What did Anna learn about herself during her placement?

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## Activity 2: Write it Out

Think carefully about Anna's situation. If you were Anna, what advice would you give to new volunteers? Write your answer in the space below.

## **Self-Evaluation Worksheet**

Once a week during your volunteer placement, you will score yourself on a Self-Evaluation Worksheet. A worksheet for a receptionist position in a literacy program is provided as an example on page 56.

## Self-Evaluation

As you have already read, regular meetings with your supervisor are important because they keep the communication channels open. At these meetings, you can talk about your successes and challenges and what you need to improve. Meeting with your supervisor can clear up misunderstandings which could lead to difficult situations in the future.

Another equally important way to keep track of your learning is through self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is an important part of any new learning experience. Thinking about your own progress will help you to recognize areas where you are doing well and areas that you need to work on.

The Self-Evaluation Worksheet will help you chart your progress with your volunteer position tasks. If you wish, use the sentence-starters to write about your experiences in a journal.

### The Self-Evaluation Sheet

Once a week during your volunteer placement, score yourself on a Self-Evaluation Worksheet. Each worksheet covers four weeks of work. Take it with you each time you meet with your supervisor. Keep your completed worksheets in your portfolio. They will help you to complete your résumé.

### Steps to complete your worksheet

1. Before you begin volunteering, list the tasks you will be expected to do during your volunteer placement. Your instructor will help you.
2. At the end of week one of your volunteer placement, score yourself on each task. Circle the number from 1-6 that best describes how comfortable you feel doing the task. Be honest with yourself.  

1	2	3	4	5	6
Not very comfortable		More comfortable		Very comfortable	
3. Repeat step 2 for each week you are in your volunteer position.
4. Once you have circled 6 on a task, check off the box next to the task.
5. If you don't do a task that week, don't circle a number.

Below is an example of a worksheet for a receptionist. Your instructor will give you a blank one when you're ready to list your volunteer position's tasks.

## Self-Evaluation Worksheet: Volunteer Receptionist, Literacy Program

Essential Skill Area	My Volunteer Position Task List	My scores for the Month of:			
		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<u>Reading Text</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read notes, messages, notices, lists	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Read for copy-typing with accuracy	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Read telephone numbers accurately	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Understand receipts regarding petty cash	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
<u>Document Use</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Use alphabetical order	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Use the telephone book	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Use dictionaries	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Understand schedules, maps	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
<u>Writing</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Write telephone messages	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain supply lists	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Write notes from visitors	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Take minutes at student meetings	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
<u>Oral Communication</u> <u>(speaking and listening)</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Greet students and visitors politely	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Answer the telephone clearly	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask for help if unsure about what is required	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Relay problems in a timely manner	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Attend monthly meetings	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
<u>Numeracy</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Use the calculator for basic operations	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Handle money (counting change)	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain supply inventory	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Track pop supply	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

<u>Computer Use</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Handle telephone and intercom	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Copy-type using MSWord, spell and grammar check, basic formatting	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Understand basic email with attachments	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
<u>Working with Others</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome visitors with confidence	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Let staff direct and guide activities	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Display a helpful and polite telephone manner	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assist students using the reception telephone for short/urgent calls	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Make coffee, purchase milk etc.	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain kitchen and reception areas	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
<u>Continuous Learning</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Attend monthly meeting with supervisor, accept feedback, offer constructive ideas	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Review routines and rules and be prepared to learn changes as needed	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Take responsibility for all required tasks however unpleasant	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
<u>Thinking Skills</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct maintenance check e.g. tidiness, garbage bins, watering plants	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Try to solve problems before asking for staff assistance	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
<b>Work Habits</b>	<b>My Volunteer Position Task List</b>				
<u>Safety</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Report any safety concerns quickly and quietly to supervisor or another staff member	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Work in a manner that prevents injury to yourself or others	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Report unsafe conditions e.g. cooking area	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Participate in health and safety training	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
<u>Customer Service</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Behave in a positive manner e.g. not criticizing others	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen carefully to find out visitors' needs	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
<u>Reliability</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Be on time	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Give adequate notice if you cannot do your shift	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete all tasks and report completion to your supervisor	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

### Activity 3: Journal Sentence Starters

Choose some of these sentence starters to help you write about your volunteer experiences during your placement. Choose the ones that apply to you. You can use them more than once. You can write as little or as much as you want. You may want to look at the personal qualities in Activity 7 of Unit 1.

Keep your writing in one place, so that you can read it at the end of your volunteer placement.

This week, I was proud of the way I handled .....

This week, I showed a good attitude by .....

Before now, I never thought I would be able to .....

This week, I worked on improving .....

Something I've discovered about myself that I didn't know before is .....

I have shown that I believe in ..... (value) by.....

This week, I changed my mind about .....

This week, I realized the importance of .....

Something that surprised me about myself was .....

I know I did well this week because .....

## Activity 4: Personal Information Sheet

You will use a personal information sheet to prepare your résumé. You can start this right away. You will find a template for a personal information sheet below. Remember to include transferable skills.

### Personal Information Sheet

#### Personal Information

*Include the information that applies to you*

Full Name

Address, including postal code

Telephone number

E-mail address

#### Transferable Skills That You Bring To Your Volunteer Placement

##### Reading text

*List the kinds of reading you have done in your personal life or in any previous work situation.*

I read:     —  
              —  
              —  
              —

##### Writing

*List the types of writing tasks you have done – telephone messages, log books, notes, letters, etc.*

I write:     —  
              —  
              —  
              —

##### Technology

*List the types of technology you have learned to use – computer, calculator, telephone, voicemail, etc.*

I use:       —  
                  —  
                  —  
                  —

Oral Communication *List the situations in which you have used your speaking skills – to communicate with other learners, take and receive telephone messages, relay messages and instructions to others, etc.*

I have used speaking skills to:

—  
—  
—  
—

Teamwork                   *Do you get along with instructors, learners and new people? Do you respect confidential information?*

This is how I work with others:

—  
—  
—  
—

Numeracy                   *List the ways you have used numbers – to measure, calculate, estimate, work out percentages, etc.*

I have used numbers to:

—  
—  
—  
—



Thinking                      *Do you use your memory, plan and organize tasks, solve problems, make decisions?*

I have used my thinking skills to:

- 
- 
- 
- 

Education and Training    *Include the information that applies to you*

- List the schools you have attended, with dates
- List your qualifications, with dates
- List any other training, with dates

Work Experience            *List in order, with the most recent (your volunteer experience) at the top. For each employer, write:*

- *Name and address of the company*
- *Your job title*
- *Dates employed*
- *Duties, any skills you needed, technology you operated, etc.*

These are the places I have worked. Include name of supervisor, contact information and addresses:

- *Job #1*
- *Job #2*
- *etc.*

Personal Qualities     *List your personal qualities and transferable skills.*

I have these qualities:

- 
- 
- 
- 

I have these transferable skills: *Look at page 33 for your skills list.*

- 
- 
- 
- 

References     *List three people who know your work well.*

<p><b>References</b></p> <p>Don't use relatives as references.</p> <p>Ask these three people for permission to use them as a reference.</p> <p>Give daytime phone numbers for your references. Find out the best time to contact them. Employers get frustrated if they have to keep calling.</p> <p>Ask each reference:</p> <p><b>"What would you say to an employer about me?"</b></p> <p>You need to make sure that they are going to say something positive.</p> <p>You do not put your references on your résumé. You put "References available on request." You may be asked to give their names at the end of an interview.</p>
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# **UNIT 4**

## **MANAGING YOURSELF AND YOUR VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT**

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## Time Management

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The chances are that as an adult learner you've found yourself trying to fit too many tasks into too little time.

While some people seem to be able to do it all, most of us have to work at using our time better. Learning how to use time better can help you to manage your home life, your school work and your volunteer position.

Time management is a **transferable skill** that you will need to be successful in the workplace. Whether you're volunteering your time or getting paid for it, how you use your time affects not only you, but others.

Consider the situation on the next page ...

## Activity 1: Lateness Affects Others

### Part 1

For the first time, Julie was going to look after the children in the Children's Room by herself! She was so happy to know that Shalma trusted her to do a good job. After all, she had only been volunteering at the daycare for two months.

Shalma was delighted to have Julie's help this Monday morning. She arrived very early at the daycare to make sure Julie had everything she needed. With everything ready and Julie arriving by 8:15, Shalma would be able to leave for her family literacy workshop by 8:35 for sure. It was great to have such a good volunteer to depend on!

Although Minoo would be at work this morning too, she would be busy making up crafts for next week's holiday party. What a relief that Julie would be here to look after the children while she got all the crafts ready.

But time was going fast. It was already 8:30 and the children were starting to arrive. Where was Julie? Shalma began to worry that she would be late for her workshop. Elijah was already here, wailing for his mom, who had to get to work at the Laundry Coop by 8:30. Janie was here now too, soaking wet from jumping in a puddle outside in the rain. Her mom, Brenda, had an interview this morning and was already running late. She apologized, but just didn't have time to change Janie's clothes. Out in the kitchen, little Carter was helping himself to a glass of apple juice from the heavy jug that Shalma had just filled. Shalma grabbed the jug just as a wave of juice spilled on the floor. What a mess! Where was Julie?

Supervisors need to be able to count on their workers. Being on time shows you are a reliable person. Other people need to be able to rely on you.

Because of Julie’s lateness, other people were affected. Brainstorm with a partner how Julie’s lateness could have affected other people.

<b>For .....</b>	<b>This could mean .....</b>
Shalma	
Minoo	
Elijah	
Janie	
Brenda	
Carter	

**Activity 2: Estimating Time**

Read the next part of the scenario and answer the questions on the next page.

**Part 2**

Julie usually gets a ride to her volunteer placement with her neighbour, but she had to get the bus today. She'd forgotten to set the alarm clock, because she'd been so busy the night before. It was already almost 8 o'clock and she was going to be very late arriving at the Children's Room. She might have known this would happen on the day she was going to take care of the children all by herself! This was the day she was going to prove she could do a good job!

She still had to have a shower, which usually took 15 minutes and she would need 5 minutes to get dressed. Then there was breakfast - 10 minutes for her cereal - and another 10 minutes to brush her teeth and fix her hair. It was 5 minutes to the bus stop and the bus ride was going to take 15 minutes. She was lucky the bus stop was right outside the centre.

**Estimating Time**

1. Complete the following table to estimate how much time it will take Julie to get to her placement.

Task	Time it will take
Have a shower	
Get dressed	
Eat cereal	
Brush teeth/fix hair	
Walk to bus stop	
Bus ride	
Walk from bus stop	
<b>Total time to get there</b>	

2. If Julie starts her shower at 8 o'clock and everything goes as it should, what time will she get to work?

\_\_\_:\_\_\_ a.m.

3. Things don't always go as we hope they will. What things might happen to delay Julie's plan to get to work?

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**Activity 3: How Long Will it Take Me to Get to Work?**

Suppose your volunteer placement starts at 9:00 a.m.

- 1) In the following table, list the tasks that you need to do each day from getting up until you start your volunteer placement.
- 2) Estimate how long it will take you to do each one. Be realistic. Allow some extra time for unexpected things to happen.
- 3) Add up the time it will take in hours and minutes: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Now count backwards. Subtract the total time from your start time.
- 5) What time will you have to set your alarm clock? \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ a.m.

<b>Things I need to do before I get to my volunteer placement</b>	<b>Estimated time each thing will take me</b>

## Activity 4: Time Management

### Part 3

Last night had been crazy. Not that it was any different than usual! There was supper to cook, dishes to do, lunches to make and three loads of laundry that had been sitting there all week.

Julie's son Kyle, 14, had needed help with his homework and 16-year-old Susie was on the phone - again! Ben, 9, had a crisis with his project. The paint wouldn't stick to the juice carton and it had dripped down onto the hand-embroidered tablecloth her mother had made her for Christmas (why hadn't he listened to her and covered it with paper first? It was ruined!! Her mother will be mad when she comes over tomorrow!)

Before she knew it, it was 11 o'clock and nobody had thought to take the poor dog out for a walk. And the lunches hadn't been made yet. She had finally crawled into bed around midnight.

But that was Tuesday. Now she had to worry about today! She stumbled out of her bedroom and headed for the kitchen to call Shalma, but the portable phone was missing from its cradle. Susie!! Julie was getting angry - at herself, for being so tired all the time and at Susie, who sometimes didn't seem to think about anyone else! If only she could get some help around here!

This had been a busy night for Julie, but a typical one. Julie has lots of responsibilities, not only as a volunteer, but also as a mother and a student as well. These responsibilities can be overwhelming to anyone trying to take on something new. But these challenges can be overcome.

There are things Julie and her family can do to help each other meet the demands of a busy life. If they can work together to get things done, everyone will benefit.

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## To Do Lists

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Have you ever forgotten to do something important? Everyone does, especially if they have a busy life. If you have forgotten something important in the past, then a **To Do List** is for you. A **To Do List** is a very effective way to help you manage your time.

1. Decide if your list is going to be a daily or a weekly list.
2. Write down all the things that you want or *need* to get done today or this week.
3. Pick the most important things – the things that *have* to get done. If you tackle the most important jobs first, you will not waste your time on jobs that do not matter as much.
4. Put a number beside the jobs in the order of importance – the most important ones first!
5. Re-write your list in the order of importance.
6. Remember to do all the jobs listed on your **To Do List**. Check them off as you finish them.
7. Carry this list with you, or put it in a safe place.

**Activity 5: Help Julie Organize Her Time Better**

Make a list of the things Julie has to do

<b>Julie's To Do List</b>

Next, Julie will need to talk to her family to get their help. Think about what each family member could do to help get these tasks done then list them.

<b>Family Member</b>	<b>Can help in this way</b>
Suzie (16)	
Kyle (14)	
Ben (9)	
Julie's mother	

What could Julie herself do differently, to make the evenings less stressful for her?

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Do you have others living with you? Could you divide these tasks to make life easier for everyone? How could you do it?

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Go over your list carefully. What could **you** do differently, to make life easier for yourself?

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### Activity 7: Choosing Options

Read the scenario and answer the questions.

**Part 4**

Julie wasn't sure what to do now that she was late. Should she still go to her volunteer placement? She hoped they had been able to manage without her. She decided to go.

As she hurried into her bedroom to get dressed, she remembered the only clothes she could wear to work were still in a wet ball in the washing machine! Julie sat on the edge of her bed, her head in her hands. It was such a hassle getting this day started.

Maybe she should just forget it all and go back to bed!

1. Discuss Julie's options with another student, or with your instructor. What would be the impact of each option?

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2. What do you think is the best solution?

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## Activity 8: Missing Work

Sometimes missing work seems the easiest way out. Is it ever a good idea to miss work? Sometimes the answer is yes and sometimes no. How do you decide?

For more activities on missing work, go to *The Learning Edge*, Issue 4 at: <http://www.thewclc.ca/edge/issue4/index.html>.

Click on **Missing Work** to find activities and quizzes on this topic. Complete the writing assignment and discuss your ideas with your instructor.

## Activity 9: Schedule

### Part 5

Suddenly the phone rang. Faint though it was Julie could tell the sound was coming from the sofa. The phone was under the cushion! Julie sprang into action and ran into the living room. It was Shalma and she sounded annoyed.

Shalma had gone to her course and was on her cell phone. She told Julie that Minoo was looking after everything until Julie could make it in. Thankfully, there were only three children in the Children's Room that day. Julie would find a schedule for the morning on the bulletin board in the playroom and a list of things to do.

After telling Shalma that she would explain the situation later, Julie hurried into the bathroom. She could still do something with this day!

When Julie arrived at 9:00 a.m., Minoo was with the children. Julie was happy to take over and Minoo was able to get back to preparing her crafts.

The children were busy with the sandbox, so Julie was able to check the schedule. It looked like an ordinary day.

Read the Children's Room Schedule on the next page. Answer the question that follows.

This is the schedule Julie found on the wall when she got to work.

Day	9:00	9:30	10:00	11:00	12:00	1:00	2:00
Monday	Free Play	Snack time	Crafts	Circle Time & Tidy-up	Lunch / nap time	Gross Motor Play	Free Play & Tidy-up
Tuesday			Painting			Dramatic Play	
Wednesday			Technology			Field Trips	
Thursday			Drama			Painting	
Friday			Cooking			Technology	

What is going to happen at ten o'clock? You may need to go back to Part 3 of the scenario to check the day.

## Activity 10: Petty Cash

### Part 6

After her shift, Julie asked Minoo if there was anything else she could do to make up for being late that morning.

It was the end of the month and the Petty Cash Sheet had to be prepared.

Minoo explained how to handle petty cash and asked Julie to help her fill out the Petty Cash Sheet.

Many offices and businesses have Petty Cash funds. Petty Cash is a small amount of money that is used to purchase low-cost items, such as coffee supplies, paper towels, dish detergent, etc.

At the beginning of every month the starting balance is the same. Every time a purchase is made, the receipt is kept. At the end of the month, the receipts are recorded on a form, added up and subtracted from the starting balance. Then a cheque is written to bring the starting balance to its original amount and the process begins again the next month.

There is an example of a petty cash form on the next page.

**Petty Cash for the month of January, 2008**

Starting Balance      \$ 35.00

Date	Item	Cost	New Balance
Jan 14	napkins	2.49	32.51
Jan 18	paper towels	4.68	27.83
Jan 18	sugar	1.93	25.90
Jan 20	milk	5.77	20.13
Jan 20	juice	2.49	17.64
Jan 21	stir sticks	2.34	15.30
Jan 30	coffee	8.16	7.14
Jan 31	tea	3.56	3.58
-----	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>31.42</b>	-----

To balance Petty Cash:

Starting Balance – Total Cost = Final New Balance

$$\$35.00 \quad - \quad \$31.42 \quad = \quad \$3.58$$
Money needed to replace Starting Balance = \$ 31.42

**Activity 11: Complete the Petty Cash Form**

Julie was given these receipts.

February 23	Crackers	\$2.75
	Peanut butter	\$5.69
February 6	Milk	\$5.77
February 3	Yoghurt	\$3.49
	Apples	\$2.99
February 11	Cream cheese	\$2.50
February 16	Cheese strings	\$4.99

First add up the amounts spent each day.

Then enter these items on the blank Petty Cash Form. Put them in the order the purchases were made, ending with the most recent date.

The starting balance is \$35.00.

Work out the amount of money that is needed to replace the starting balance.

Petty Cash for the month of: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting Balance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Item	Cost	New Balance
-----	Total Cost		-----

To balance Petty Cash:

Starting Balance – Total Cost = Final New Balance

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ – \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Money needed to replace Starting Balance = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# **UNIT 5**

## **COMMUNICATING IN THE WORKPLACE**



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## Clothing and Body Language in the Workplace

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Do you know the old saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words”? Often, first impressions – good or bad – come from the way we look to others and these can be the things people remember most about us.

You begin communicating at work the moment you walk through the door. **What you wear** and your **body language** can speak volumes about you, before you even speak.

Though we may not be aware of it, our **clothes, body** and **facial expressions** can give someone the wrong impression.

For your first day as a volunteer, what can you do to make those first messages positive ones?

### Clothing

Whether people dress **formally** or **casually** can depend on the type of work they do, or the expectations of their profession. Sometimes a workplace wants some of its workers to dress formally, while others can dress casually. For example, a bank may want its managers to dress in suits, while tellers are able to dress more casually. Some workplaces have a uniform, or a “Dress Code” policy to let people know what is acceptable and what is not. Also, some workers need to wear protective clothing to keep them safe on the job.

### Body Language

Sometimes the way people stand, sit, or where they look “says” something about them but it may be the exact opposite of what they wanted to say. Being aware of your body language can help make sure you aren’t sending the wrong message.

**Activity 1: Workplace Wear**

People need to wear appropriate clothes for the job. But what IS appropriate? Think about how employees dress in different workplaces.

What would you expect people to be wearing in these workplaces? Discuss your answers with your instructor.

<b>Workplace</b>	<b>Type of Clothing</b>
Receptionist in a government office	
Line worker in a factory	
Teacher at a school	
Store manager at a women's clothing store	
Nursing staff at a children's hospital	
Maintenance staff at a hotel	
Worker at a construction site	
Supermarket cashier	

## What Should You Wear?

People in the workplace are influenced by your appearance. Your appearance is one of the things that you can control.

As a new volunteer, you may be unsure about what you should wear. To find out, you may want to ask your employer or another worker, or visit the workplace to see the kind of clothing other people are wearing. This will give you an idea of what to expect and will help to make your first day more comfortable.

## What Not To Wear

In most workplace situations, the following items should be avoided:

- Torn or patched clothing
- Dirty or stained clothing
- Clothes that display offensive language
- Very short, tight or revealing clothing
- Shoes that are not suited to the job, for example, very high heels for women are not recommended.

Also, many workplaces ask their employees and volunteers not to wear strong perfume or aftershave. This can cause discomfort for other workers or customers and clients with allergies.

## Activity 2: Dressing for Your First Day at Work

Help Lynn, Ali and Maria to find some clothing suitable for their first day on the job.

### Suitable Clothing

Lynn is a student in the adult learning program at the Learning Centre. She's looking forward to her first day volunteering in the Children's Room. She has three kids at home and she hopes one day to take the Early Childhood program at the community college. She knows it's important to dress comfortably on the job, because a childcare worker's day is very active! As well, she wants the children to feel comfortable with her.

Ali used to be in construction, but is no longer able to work after an accident at a construction site. Now he's upgrading his education, so that he can get a job that is less physically demanding. He knows there will be work on reception and carrying and some cleaning at his new volunteer placement with OC Transpo Lost & Found, but he's more than ready for the challenge after being in the classroom for several months. However, he isn't sure about what he should wear for his new position, since he's always worked in coveralls and steel-toed boots.

Maria is working hard to improve her English and math skills. She can speak French and Spanish and her long-term goal is to get a job as a clerk with the government so that she can help support her elderly parents. She can't wait to get started as a volunteer receptionist at the Learning Centre because she has only had one other job and wants to add the experience to her résumé. She really wants to make a good impression. What should she wear?

**Suitable Clothing**

- 1) With another student, brainstorm the kinds of clothing that may be suitable for Lynn, Ali and Maria.

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- 2) Choose at least one of these characters. Use flyers, catalogues and/or newspapers to find and cut out items of clothing and shoes that she/he might wear on her/his first day. Glue these items onto a piece of plain paper.

- 3) Discuss your choices with your instructor, saying why you think your choices are appropriate.

- 4) Lynn, Ali and Maria are all students, with little cash to spare. In your part of town, where could they find good quality clothing for a fraction of the price many people pay?

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**Body Language**

Body language can sometimes give the wrong messages. Look at this table. Match the body language in the table with what you would take it to mean. The first one is done for you. If you wish, use a dictionary to help you. Look up any words you're not sure of and discuss their meanings with your instructor. Do you think you use any of this body language?

**Reading my Body Language**

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <del>I'm angry</del>        | I'm interested in what you have to say |
| I know it all               | I'm not confident                      |
| I'm nervous                 | What you have to say isn't important   |
| I'm impatient               | I don't respect what you're saying     |
| I have confidence in myself |  |

<b>Body Language</b>	<b>Reading My Body Language</b>
Hands on hips	I'm angry
Patting or playing with hair	
Biting nails	
Turning your back to another person	
Tapping feet or fingers, pen, pencil	
Sitting with your hands clasped behind your head	
Looking out of the corner of your eyes, rolling your eyes	
Walk with head held high	
Leaning forward towards the speaker	

## Important Tips for Positive Body Language

### Always:

- **Stand up straight.** Slouching makes you look like you aren't listening or are bored with what you hear.
- **Keep eye contact.** Look at your supervisor when communicating – but don't stare! This shows you are listening. Don't roll your eyes or look at the ceiling – this makes you look bored or disrespectful.
- **Don't cross your arms, or stand with hands on hips.** This can send negative messages, such as: "I'm not listening," or "I don't like you," or "I don't agree with anything you say."

For more work on Body Language, go to *The Learning Edge*, Issue 7 at:

<http://www.thewclc.ca/edge/issue7/index.html>

Click **Communicating in the Workplace** and choose "**It's how you say it**".

### Activity 3: Silent Messages

Think about this situation and answer the questions that follow. Discuss your answers with your instructor. If possible, find other students to play the parts of Rob, Meg, Eli and Sandji.

#### Cleaning Company Contract

Eli, an office cleaning company supervisor, is explaining a new job to his team. Eli wants to win a full-time contract to clean this new office building, so he needs his workers to do a good job.

**Eli:** We have to get this job done as quickly as we can, so I need everyone to do their bit as soon as possible. Rob, I want you to take the vacuum upstairs and start on the first floor offices. Meg, you can clean the bathrooms and don't forget the mirrors. Sandji, you'll need a new package of garbage bags to empty all the garbage cans from both floors.

**Rob:** (Takes out his pocket knife and begins to clean his fingernails as soon as his supervisor begins giving instructions.)

**Sandji:** (Looks directly at Eli when he is giving his instructions; nods occasionally; says "OK" once in a while. When Eli finishes, says "Got it!")

**Meg:** (As soon as Eli starts talking, her gaze wanders over to the window. Points and says under her breath to Rob, "Who's that leaving? You know whose truck that is?")



**Cleaning Company Contract**

1. Do you think the team will be able to do the job properly?

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2. How do you think Eli felt about the behaviour of Rob, Sandji and Meg?

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3. If Eli gets this contract and is looking for an employee to fill a more responsible position that pays more money, which worker do you think he will choose?

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## Tone of Voice, Volume and Choosing your Words

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### Tone of Voice and Volume

As you have learned, being aware of your body language helps you avoid misunderstandings. **Using the right tone and volume** when you talk can also change the meaning of what you say.

Most of us change the way we speak when we are excited or upset. In a work situation, however, this can get people into trouble. Showing anger or frustration can be signs of an **aggressive** person who may be concerned only about getting his or her own needs met.

If you tend to speak loudly and feel yourself losing patience at work, practise speaking quietly. It is good to be **assertive** and stand up for yourself but to be successful at work you will need to make sure the tone of your voice does not disrespect or upset others. The goal is to communicate in a respectful, calm, friendly and polite way.

**Assertive:** asking for something you believe is important

**Aggressive:** forcefully demanding what you want

It is good to be **assertive** but do **not** be **aggressive**.

**Activity 4: Communication Skills Vocabulary Builder**

If you're not sure of the meaning of these words, look them up in a dictionary. Write their meaning on the line beside the word. Put a check mark by the positive communication skills and a cross by the negative communication skills.

Find pictures (or print some off the internet) that matches as many of these words as you can. Label the pictures. Have one page for positive communication skills and one page for negative communication skills.

Frustrated	
Enquiring	
Impatient	
Enthusiastic	
Aggressive	
Assertive	

Using good communication skills will help you in all parts of life – with your friends and family, at school and in your job. In your volunteer position, you can practice these skills.

**Activity 5: It's All In How You Say It**

This activity shows how much we use tone to communicate. Read each statement twice, using the two different emotions listed beside each statement. Notice how it's not what you're saying, but how you are saying it, that makes the difference.

<b>Say this</b>	<b>Use these emotions</b>	
What did you say?	Threatening	Questioning
I'd like that now, if you don't mind.	Enthusiastic	Angry
Could you please pass me that pen?	Frustrated	Friendly
Let me do that.	Helpful	Impatient

**What did you learn?**

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## Activity 6: Go Online

For more work on Tone and Volume, go to *The Learning Edge*, Issue 6 at:  
<http://www.thewclc.ca/edge/issue6/index1.html>

Click on **Student Work Stories** and find out what student workers have learned about communicating with co-workers.

When you have finished, click on **Close** and it will take you back to the main page. Then, click on **Communicate for Success!** to learn more about respectful communication and complete the quizzes and assignments. If you wish, go back to the main page and take the assertiveness quiz to assess yourself.

## Activity 7: Dave's Dilemma

For this activity, go online to *The Learning Edge*, Issue 7 at:

<http://www.thewclc.ca/edge/issue7/index.html>

Click on **Communication in the Workplace**

Click on the button: **It's what you say**

Think carefully about the situation and choose the **best** answer. With your instructor, discuss why you think this is the best answer.

Have you ever been in a situation like this? When would be a better time and place for Dave to share personal stories with his co-workers?

### **Socializing**

When we volunteer, most of what we talk about is work related. But at break and lunch we often talk about other things, like our family, friends or what we did on the weekend.

While it is good to be friendly with co-workers, there's a time and a place for personal conversation. Knowing how and when to talk about some topics can help you to avoid embarrassment on the job.

Think about what you say before you say it.

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## Gossip and Rumours

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**Gossip** is casual conversation where people talk about someone else. Gossip is often hurtful and untrue.

**A Rumour** is a story talked about as news that may not be true.

Gossip is a part of life and it would be unrealistic to say that it should not happen.

Spreading rumours and gossip usually shows lack of respect. Gossip can be extremely hurtful and it can damage people's lives. Gossiping often spreads false rumours. Gossiping about co-workers can make you look petty, or small minded. It can also get you into trouble, especially at work.

In some situations, gossipers can be very powerful because other workers may be scared to stand up to them. Have you ever known someone who had that kind of power?

In your workplace, if you are tempted to gossip with others, first ask yourself, "How would \_\_\_\_\_ feel if she knew I was saying this about her?" and "How would I feel if \_\_\_\_\_ said this about me?" If the answer is "upset" or "hurt," then that is a good enough reason not to do it.

## Activity 8: Workplace Gossip

Consider this situation:

### Workplace Gossip

Thirty-five-year-old Sherry was on the bus on her way to volunteer on reception at the Learning Centre. She is a student at the Learning Centre in the mornings and really enjoys her afternoon of volunteering, not only because she is learning a lot about the workplace, but also because it gives her the opportunity to chat with people. Sherry lives alone in a very quiet building and she likes the liveliness of the Centre.

Sherry just had a wonderful weekend, but something disturbing happened. She went to a movie and afterwards to the coffee shop with her mother. At the next table, she'd heard Lise, an old school friend, say that her sister was going through a messy divorce and was planning on moving across the country with the children. Oh my goodness! It could only be Lise's sister Judy, one of the staff at the Learning Centre! Was it true? She hoped not, for Judy was her instructor and she really liked her. Judy worked part-time and had just been hired. Although Judy was a private person, Sherry had heard that she was hoping to be employed full-time at the Learning Centre. What would happen now? Sherry had no idea Judy was in this kind of a mess.

Sherry couldn't wait to get to her volunteer placement on reception to talk to someone about it. Maybe she could convince one of the other students to chat for a while. She just had to get this off her chest!



**Answer these questions:**

1. What could happen if Sherry started this rumour at the Learning Centre?

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2. How would it affect Lise, Judy and the Learning Centre in general? Do you think Sherry means to cause problems?

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3. What do you think Sherry should do?

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**Activity 9: Gossip – It’s What You Don’t Say**

For more work on gossip at work, go online to *The Learning Edge*, Issue 7 at: <http://www.thewclc.ca/edge/issue7/index.html>

Click on **Communication in the Workplace**

Click on the button: **It’s what you DON’T say**

Read the story and answer the questions. If possible, share the story and talk about your answers with other students.

## Becoming a Better Listener

In any volunteer position or job, developing good listening habits will help you to be a better worker. In the activity, check your listening skills.

### Activity 10: Self Assessment

<b>Am I a Good Listener?</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>
I keep eye contact when someone is talking to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I pay attention when someone is talking to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I ask questions when I don't understand something I hear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I take notes when I am given instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I repeat instructions I am given, to make sure I understand them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I nod my head or say I understand to show others I am listening to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I let others speak without interrupting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I move to a quieter spot or ask someone to speak up if I am in a noisy location.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I put aside what I am doing when someone is speaking to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I listen with an open mind.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Am I a Good Listener? – Self-Assessment

**Scoring:** Give yourself 3 points for each “always,” 2 points for each “sometimes,” and 1 point for each “rarely.” Enter the total for each in the spaces in the box below. Multiply each by the numbers shown and add up your total score.

Always	_____	× 3 =	_____
Sometimes	_____	× 2 =	_____
Rarely	_____	× 1 =	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>			_____

If you got:

25-30 points: You already have good listening habits. A quick review of the **Listening Tips** on the next page will refresh your memory about what it takes to stay an effective listener.

18-24 points: You use some good listening skills but could benefit from some practice. Talk with your supervisor or instructor about the habits you could improve.

10-17 points: You need to work on improving your skills. Meet with your instructor to develop an action plan to work on them.

## Listening Tips

### Stay focused

- ❑ Make eye contact with the person who is talking to you.
- ❑ Stop what you are doing: give him or her your whole attention.
- ❑ Remain quiet: don't interrupt when he or she is speaking.
- ❑ Watch your body language: don't yawn, slouch or stare off into space.
- ❑ Nod your head to show understanding.

### Get the information you need

- ❑ If you don't understand, ask questions.
- ❑ If you can't hear what's being said, say so.
- ❑ If you're in a noisy space, ask to move to a quieter spot.
- ❑ Pay close attention to the details.
- ❑ Repeat instructions to make sure you understood.
- ❑ If you forget, don't guess – ask again.
- ❑ Take notes or use drawings to help you remember details.

### Keep an open mind

When someone starts to say something you think you already know, don't stop listening: you could learn something new! If not, at least you have shown them respect.

If the person you are listening to does not speak English well, be patient. Think about how you would feel trying to get your message across in a different country. Ask them to repeat the words as kindly and politely as you can.

## Activity 11: Active Listening Quiz

**Choose the best answer for each of the following questions:**

One effective way to show the speaker you're listening would be to:

1. Nod your head
2. Look over their shoulder
3. Tap your fingers

Which of the following shows someone is not listening actively?

1. Making eye contact with the speaker
2. Asking questions to clarify something said
3. Staring off into space

If you forget something you are told you should:

1. Just not do it
2. Ask again
3. Guess

If someone is repeating instructions you think you've heard before, you should:

1. Listen in case there's something new
2. Decide what to cook for dinner
3. Yawn

If you don't understand someone's English, you should:

1. Complain to your supervisor
2. Give them a dictionary
3. Patiently ask them to repeat their words

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## Listening to Instructions

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In your volunteer position, you will often be given instructions from your supervisor, a co-worker, or a customer. Listening to instructions is perhaps one of the most important skills you can master.

On the job, you will be expected to get meaning from what is being said and respond to it. Here are some hints to help you listen to instructions, whether you are face to face with someone, or on the telephone.

### Tips for Listening to Instructions

- Listen carefully and take notes as you listen. Pick out the key words in the information you are being given. It's easier to remember one or two important words than a whole sentence.
- Give each new step in a set of instructions a number. It will help you remember them later.
- Repeat the instructions or the information you've been given back to the person who gave them to you. If you've got anything wrong the person will correct you and the repetition will help you remember.
- Ask questions if you are unsure about anything or replay the recorded message if it is on voicemail.
- Go through the complete sequence in your mind so that it is clear. If you are taking a message for someone else, re-write it using complete sentences so that it will make sense to the reader.
- If you are on the telephone, you will have to listen carefully because there will be no body language to help you figure out what's being said.

## Scenario - Making Sure You Understand the Instructions

### Sherry's Instructions for the Board Meeting

Isobel is Sherry's supervisor at the Learning Centre. She's on her way to a meeting and she wants to remind Sherry to pick up some refreshments for the Board Meeting tonight. She calls her from her cell phone.

**Isobel:** Sherry, can you please make sure you go to the grocery store this morning? We need some milk - 2% - and 3 loaves of bread for the sandwiches. Get 3 cans of tuna and a dozen eggs.

Tuning out the noise from Isobel's car engine, Sherry listens carefully. She writes:

#### Grocery Store

1. Milk
2. Bread - 3
3. Tuna - 3
4. Eggs



**Sherry:** Yes - milk, 3 loaves of bread, 3 cans of tuna and a carton of eggs. Did you say 2% milk?

**Isobel:** I think that would be best. Some cookies would be nice - the chocolate ones we had for lunch last week. Oh, and don't forget to photocopy the minutes from the last meeting.

Sherry's list now looks like this:

Grocery Store

1. Milk - 2%
2. Bread - 3
3. Tuna - 3
4. Eggs
5. Chocolate cookies

Minutes

**Sherry:** That's chocolate cookies....and I'll do the minutes next. Do you want them on coloured paper? And the bread - should it be white or whole wheat? Do you want me to get some mayonnaise?

**Isobel:** Whole wheat - and you're right, we do need mayonnaise. I think light blue paper would be good. Sherry, you're the best! See you later!

**Sherry's final list looks like this**

Grocery Store

1. Milk - 2%
2. Bread - 3 - whole wheat
3. Tuna - 3
4. Eggs
5. Chocolate cookies
6. Mayo

Minutes - light blue paper

## Activity 12: Taking Voicemail Messages

Taking instructions from voice messages has its good and bad points – you get to re-play the message if you want, but there’s no opportunity to ask questions. You need to get as much information from the message as you can.

Role-play this activity with another student. Take two chairs and place them back to back. One student gives the message and the other takes notes. Go over the message together to check that you have included all the important information. Switch roles and do the same for the second message. See the next page for examples of what your messages should look like.

### Message 1

Hello, it's Paperclips Business Supplies here. You recently placed an order for some office furniture. We have 6 chairs in stock, but not all of them are blue. Three are black. Is that all right? You only ordered 4 boxes of paper, but we're sending you the 2 extra that we owe you. Please give us a call and let us know about the chairs. We can drop them off on Tuesday morning between 9 and 11. We'll pick up the cheque for the last order at the same time. Our phone number is 613-567-3028.

### Message 2

Good morning. My name is Amanda Black and I'm interested in coming to school. I want some help with writing. I have a three-and a half-year-old daughter and I'm wondering if you have child care. Jessie is pretty active and I should tell you she's allergic to peanut butter. I can only come to classes Tuesday mornings from 10-12 noon, or Wednesday afternoons from 1-3:30 pm. Please let me know if I can come in to see you. You can call me back at 613-254-6586 after 3 pm today.

Your messages should look something like this:

Message			
For:	Beth		
From:	Paperclip Business Supplies	Phone:	(613) 567-2038
Date:	Friday, Mar. 7	Time:	9:38 am
Message:			
They have 6 chairs, 3 black, 3 blue - is that OK? Please call to confirm			
Will send 4 boxes paper + 2 they owe us			
Will deliver Tuesday am between 9 and 11 and pick up cheque for last order			

Message			
For:	Isobel		
From:	Amanda Black	Phone:	(613) 234-6586
Date:	Tuesday, Oct. 8	Time:	1:12 pm
Message:			
Wants to come to class Tues. am or Wed. pm			
Needs child care (daughter, 3½, peanut butter allergy)			
Please phone after 3 pm today to arrange appointment			

## Activity 13: Leaving Voicemail Messages

Using the tips below, write your own voicemail message. Read it to a partner, who can write down the information as a telephone message. When you have completed this activity, go over both voicemail and telephone messages, to make sure all information is present. Repeat the activity several times.

### Tips for Leaving Voicemail Messages

Some people are shy about leaving voicemail messages, but in many positions it is a necessary part of the job.

- ❑ Visualize the person who is talking (not the machine). He or she will seem more real in your mind.
- ❑ Speak slowly, clearly and pleasantly. Put a smile on your face and it will show through in your voice!
- ❑ State your name and the reason for your call.
- ❑ State the date and the time.
- ❑ Keep your message brief but leave all necessary information.
- ❑ Avoid leaving confidential information on a voicemail message.
- ❑ Leave a number where you can be reached, with the best time to reach you.

### Go Online

For practice on dealing with messages, go to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/listening/listeningforspecificinformation/index.shtml>

# **UNIT 6**

## **GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS**

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## Being a Team Player

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You've probably heard the expression "team player" a lot, but what does it really mean? Besides describing someone who plays on a sports team, it is used in the workplace to describe a person who is able to work with other people to get a job done.

A "team" doesn't have to be a large group of people. A team can be just two people.

## Activity 1: Teamwork

Complete this table.

This team	Works to .....
A hockey team works to...	<i>Get the puck in the net as often as possible.</i>
A group of highway workers works to...	
Firefighters work together to...	
At a bake sale, a group of volunteers work to...	
At a hospital, the emergency team works to...	
A pair of robins looking for food to take back to their nest work to...	

Team members may have different jobs. One hockey player is a shooter; another is a defenceman. On a road project, there are flagmen, heavy-equipment drivers and engineers. Whatever their jobs, the whole team **cooperates** and **works toward the same goal**.

It's very satisfying to work with a team when all the members pull their weight and help each other. Life goes smoothly when you are part of a community where people work together and encourage each other.



**Activity 2: Think, Pair and Share**

Have you ever worked as part of a team? Take some time to think about the “teams” you have been on to achieve a goal. Remember, a team doesn’t have to be more than two people.

What was your goal? Think about the things you liked and disliked about the experience. Share your answers with another student, or your instructor.

<b>I worked in a team</b>	<b>Our goal</b>	<b>What I liked/disliked</b>
...at home		
...at school		
...in a job		
...in my community		

### Activity 3: Becoming a Team Player

Do you have what it takes to become a good team player?

Chances are you already have many of the qualities you need to work with others, because teamwork skills are transferable. Skills you have practised in your life as a family or community member, or as a student will be valuable in your volunteer position.

**Answer these questions.**

	Yes	No
Do you believe everyone should be treated with respect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you let someone give their opinions without interrupting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you safety conscious?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you offer help to someone without having to be asked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you ask for help when you need it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you like working with people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you look for solutions if there is a disagreement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you always do your share of the work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered *yes* to most of these questions, you are already on your way to being a good team player.

## How to be a Good Team Player

What do you have to do to be a good team player in your volunteer position?

### Play By These Rules!

- ❑ Understand that the duties of all team members are important. Everyone has a part in working towards a goal, even though they may have different skills and abilities.
- ❑ Be patient. If people have different roles, they may not be as aware of a situation. When passing on information to others, take the time to explain your message clearly.
- ❑ Praise your co-workers if they've done something well. A compliment costs nothing and saying nice things shows you have a positive attitude.
- ❑ Share responsibility for the mistakes as well as the successes. Don't expect your team-mates to cover for you.
- ❑ Try to get your jobs done on time. Someone else may not be able to start their job until you've finished yours. Don't interrupt others when they are trying to complete their tasks.
- ❑ Don't let gossip hurt feelings and relationships. Everyone is entitled to their privacy.
- ❑ Leave your problems at home. It can be hard to stop your personal problems from affecting how you feel, but don't take out your bad feelings on co-workers.

## Activity 4: Multiple Choice Quiz

Use *Play By These Rules!* to answer these questions. Circle your answer.

Your supervisor has a new volunteer, who will be working on the inventory list. You are busy but your supervisor has asked you to give the new volunteer a tour of the building. He speaks only a few words in English.

To be a good team member, you should:

1. Complain to the supervisor because everyone who works on the team should speak good English
2. Avoid the new volunteer because the language barrier will slow you down
3. Take extra time to introduce the volunteer to everyone because he is a new member of the team

As an elderly lady was leaving the building early this morning, she slipped on the ice-covered front steps. Although she wasn't hurt, your supervisor calls a meeting to find out why the steps hadn't been sanded. Sanding isn't your job, but you are in charge of filling the sand bucket and you'd left it empty last night.

To be a good team member, you should:

1. Go to the bathroom and hope no one asks for you
2. Own up and say you hadn't had time to purchase sand for Bob whose job is to clear the entrance to the building
3. Look at Bob and wait for him to answer

A family argument keeps you up late. You wake up tired and annoyed.

To be a good team member, you should:

1. Get to work on time and put last night's fight behind you, so you can concentrate on your work
2. Get to work on time, yell at a couple of your co-workers and slam a few doors to blow off steam and reduce stress
3. Report to your volunteer position around noon, when you know you'll be in a better mood

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## Respecting Individual Differences

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In your volunteer position and in your future workplace, you will find yourself working with people of different cultures, ages and abilities.

At work and in your personal life, it's important to respect everyone, not just those who are like you. If you let respect be your guide, you will receive respect in return.

### **Get to know people for themselves**

Understand that as part of a team, everyone has the same goals. These include doing good work, finishing tasks on time and making the workplace an enjoyable place to be.

By focusing on the things you have in common and taking time to get to know each other, you can appreciate each person for their individual talents and abilities.

### **The empathy rule**

Empathy is thinking about the way you would feel if you were in another person's place. How would you feel if someone made fun of you, your family, your religion, or your way of speaking? Think back to when you were a child and how you felt when the other kids teased you or called you names. Words can crush someone, or at best, hurt their feelings. What may be "funny" to one person can be hurtful to another.

## Activity 5: Who Can Contribute to the Team?

Consider these questions and talk about them with your instructor:

- Who can solve a problem more quickly: a younger worker or an older worker?
- Who is a more patient worker: a man or a woman?
- Who will do the best job, whites, people of colour, men, women, Catholics or Muslims?
- Who can get things done more efficiently, a worker with a disability or one without a disability?

There is no right answer to any of these questions, just as people are not right or wrong because of the way they look or sound.

**Everyone can contribute to the workplace team.**

## Activity 6: Dealing with Hurtful Behaviour

Here are some ways that people can hurt others:

- Name calling
- Teasing that goes too far
- Inappropriate naming of cultural groups
- Ethnic jokes
- Sexual humour

Think of a time when you or someone else was treated in any of these ways. Write about it and discuss your answer with your instructor.

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If someone you know or someone at your workplace calls others disrespectful names, what should you do?

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If you have called someone by an inappropriate name by mistake, or in a time of stress and anger, don't defend your mistake or give excuses. Just apologize and try not to make the same mistake again.

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## Cooperating with Others

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Have you ever heard the expression, “Two heads are better than one”? If you’re stuck with a stubborn problem, it is a good idea to work with someone else to find a solution. Even though you may think you’ve considered all the options, another person’s input often saves time and trouble.

Cooperating with other workers pays off!



## Activity 7: Help Lucy to Find the Lost Pass

Read the scenario and answer the questions.

### Problem Solved: Part 1

Life in the OC Transpo Lost & Found is never dull. Phones are constantly ringing, 200 lost items arrive each day, inventory needs to be checked and there is an endless stream of anxious customers hoping to find their lost treasures. The shelves are full of items from pie plates to laptops.

Today, the Lost & Found was operating quite smoothly. That is, until one customer arrived to pick up her lost bus pass.

Marie Goudreau had received a call earlier in the day from one of the volunteers to tell her that her pass, pass number 153607, had found its way to the Lost & Found office. She was thrilled to receive this good news! Lucy, a volunteer staff person, checked the list to confirm the pass was on the list and began to look for it in the bus pass box.

Where would Lucy look for the lost pass? Passes are filed by the last name of the owner (alphabetically) and by the number of their pass (numerically).

Look at the names and numbers on the following lists. Circle the names and numbers that would come before and after the lost bus pass.

#### Alphabetical List

Gaston  
Gallenstein  
Gellman  
Gibson  
Glenn  
Gloade  
Green  
Guerrero

#### Numerical List

125490  
126067  
135203  
139937  
150253  
253566  
263008  
495673

### Activity 8: Lessons Learned

Read the next part of the scenario and answer the questions.

**Problem Solved: Part 2**

Lucy couldn't believe her eyes. The pass wasn't there!!

Another volunteer, Lucas, offered to help find the pass and then Bill tried. No one could find the lost pass! The pass had come to the office and the volunteers were responsible for it until it was picked up. Feeling almost sick, Lucy started towards her supervisor's office.

Just then, Bill remembered that several bus passes had been placed in new sticky plastic holders that morning. Could some passes have stuck together?

The volunteers split up the stack of passes that had been filed and everyone sorted through theirs. "Here it is!" cried Lucy with relief. The customer's pass was stuck to another pass! Problem solved!

This problem was solved by great teamwork. Another happy OC Transpo customer was quickly reunited with her pass.

#### Answer these questions

What might have happened if the volunteers had not cooperated with each other?

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How do you think the volunteers felt during this incident and afterwards?

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Have you ever worked with someone to solve a problem? Describe the situation and how you felt afterwards.

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## Solving Problems

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Problems arise all the time. You already have experience solving problems – it is a transferable skill. Think about some of the problems you solve on a daily basis, in your personal and family life. Problem-solving skills are an asset in any volunteer position or job.

You can solve some workplace problems yourself. Others are best solved by your supervisor. How do you know which is which?

This is a difficult question to answer. For sure, if you notice something that is health and safety related, you must tell your supervisor. If you are in doubt about going ahead and solving the problem yourself, watch other workers at your placement site. This may help you decide. What kinds of problems do they handle on their own and when do they ask for help? If you still can't decide, ask another volunteer who is more experienced, or your supervisor.

Realize that you are learning. If you get the feeling that your supervisor isn't pleased with the way you handled a situation, ask, "Should I have gone ahead and fixed this, or should I have asked you?" or "Was there a better way of dealing with that situation?"

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## Using Logic to Help Solve Problems

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You and your team can use this model to help solve problems.

**A. Recognize the problem. State the problem as clearly as possible.**

**B. What are some possible solutions?**

**C. Choose the best solution:**

**Step 1: Will this solution cause other problems?**

- Yes. Choose another solution and go back to step 1.
- No. Go to step 2.

**Step 2: Can we come up with a plan to carry out this solution?**

- Yes. Go to step 3
- No. Choose another solution and go back to step 1.

**Step 3: Does everyone agree that this solution meets our needs?**

- Yes. Choose this solution.
- No. Choose another solution and return to step 1.

**When you need to solve a problem, try using this model.**

## Activity 9: What Shall We Have for Lunch?

If possible, do this activity with one or more people. If not, work out the possible choices yourself and choose what you think is the best option. Be creative!

Lucy, Bill, Lucas and Meghan have been doing excellent work with you at your volunteer site and your supervisor has decided to treat you all to lunch. You decide to order in and she gives you \$30.00. Lucy doesn't eat fish; Bill is a vegetarian and doesn't eat meat. You and your team members have to select only one meal for the whole group. Taxes are included in the price.

Here are your choices:

- Choice 1     Steak sandwich and salad: \$7.50 per person
- Choice 2     Large pizza with pepperoni and sausage: \$14.95
- Choice 3     Fish and chips: \$6:25 per person
- Choice 4     Chinese take-out: \$8.99 per person

Now, answer the following questions for each choice:

**Step 1: Will this solution cause other problems for those involved?**

- Yes. Choose another solution and go back to step 1.
- No. Go to step 2.

**Step 2: Will our budget cover this choice?**

- Yes. Go to step 3.
- No. Choose another solution and go back to step 1.

**Step 3: Does everyone agree that this is the best choice?**

(If you are doing this activity alone, do you think this choice would please everyone?)

- Yes. Choose this solution.
- No. Choose another solution and return to step 1.

Our choice is:

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## Problem Solving Steps

Think of a problem that you need to solve. Try using the steps to find a solution.

**A. Recognize the problem. State the problem as clearly as possible.**

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**B. What are some possible solutions?**

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**C. Choose the best solution:**

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## Dealing with Angry People

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If your volunteer position involves dealing with the public, sooner or later you will need to deal with someone who is upset or angry. Learning how to deal with an angry person will help you not only in your volunteer position, but in your personal life too.

In life, as well as in work, you will sometimes have to deal with people who are angry. Here are some things to think about when faced with an uncomfortable situation.

### **Why may a person be angry?**

Usually, when a person is angry it is because they are feeling unappreciated, helpless, attacked or wronged.

### **What should you do when a person is showing anger?**

Don't get angry yourself!

Stay in control of your emotions. Your anger will only make the other person angrier. This is difficult when you feel that you are being attacked, but if the situation is to be resolved, you need to stay in a frame of mind where this can happen. Breathe deeply and slowly; stay cool.

If you feel safe in the situation, you might allow the person the opportunity to vent. When they feel as if someone has listened to their problem, they are more likely to try to find a solution.

### **Anger or Aggression?**

If the person becomes aggressive or violent, then back away from the situation. Call your supervisor or someone else in the building to help you deal with the person. Aggression crosses the line from expressing anger to damaging something or intimidating or hurting someone. You have a right to feel safe in the workplace.



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## Handling Difficult People in the Workplace

Follow these steps:

### **Remain calm.**

Don't react with anger or tears. Recognize that everyone has bad days and that the person's display of anger isn't your fault. Take a few deep breaths.

### **Allow the person to express his or her concern.**

There is no point in interrupting. He or she won't hear you anyway. Let them vent. Listen for key points in what they are saying. Keep eye contact with the person.

### **Show you understand.**

Acknowledge the person's emotions, e.g. "I understand that you are angry. I would be too."

### **Restate the problem and use their name if you know it.**

"Mrs. Smith, I understand the problem. Let's see if we can fix it."

### **Let someone else try.**

Sometimes you can't do anything to calm a person. In this case, pass him or her over to your supervisor. Be sure to provide all the details so the angry person does not have to retell the story. Sometimes all it takes is a different face saying the same things you have already said.

## Activity 10: Anger is an Emotion That We All Have

We all have the right to feel angry. It is how we deal with it that makes the difference between reaching a reasonable solution or a disastrous one.

### Christine's Letters

Christine was volunteering on the front desk at Heartwood House. She had been working with her instructor on her reading, writing and spelling skills and this volunteer position was helping her to gain skills for the workplace. One of the things she wanted to work on was her tendency to lose her temper when she was in a stressful situation.

It was a busy day and everyone was feeling the pressure. Deliveries were arriving; at times people were lined up at the counter and the telephone was constantly ringing. Christine was answering the phone when the courier came in and set the handful of letters on the counter. She didn't notice when Jim, the cleaner, came in and scooped up the pile of newspapers for recycling, the letters along with them.

Her supervisor had been waiting for a very important letter and Christine couldn't find the envelopes. She suspected Jim had taken them by mistake; either way, she'd been busy and it wasn't her fault. Since Christine was working on the front desk, the supervisor called her into the office to try and figure out what had happened to the letters. When she came out, Christine was mad.

Christine always regretted this kind of behaviour later, but somehow she hadn't been able to do things differently. Lately though, she had learned some strategies she could use to calm herself down in a bad situation. One of the strategies was letter writing.

Christine chose to write a letter to give to her supervisor. She wanted to express her feelings and concerns.

The letter looked something like this.

..... Why are you blaming me for losing the letters? People were waiting and I was the only person on the desk! Why don't you have enough people working on the desk? I didn't have any help and the person on the phone expected me to look for her bus pass and she was getting really mad - what could I do? And I can't pay attention to everything other people do. It was Jim that took the letters!

Christine

Christine kept this letter for a day and did nothing. Then she re-read the letter and made some changes to it. Although she was still upset, she was now able to step back and view the situation more calmly. She was able to identify her concerns and suggest some possible solutions for change.

The new version looked like this:

..... I felt like I was being blamed for losing the mail. But I didn't know you were waiting for that important letter and it was so busy I didn't have time to worry about it. I think that if possible there should be two people on the desk. We should have a place to put all the letters as they come in, so everyone can find them. Maybe we could put the newspapers in a recycling box for Jim to pick up. I'd like to talk about how we can do some of these things so this doesn't happen again."

Christine

Christine sent her letter to her supervisor. This allowed her to deal with a difficult situation in a calm and respectful way. On her next shift they met to talk about setting up a letter box for incoming letters and a recycling box for the newspapers. Her supervisor agreed to get someone else in for times when extra help was needed. She and her supervisor were able to communicate effectively.

**Please answer the following questions**

If Christine had responded to this situation as she had done in the past, how do you think she and her supervisor would have felt?

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How do you think using the letter-writing strategy changed the outcome of the situation?

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Why was it a good idea for Christine to take some time between writing her two letters?

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## Managing Stress

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We all have many demands on our time. There are lots of things we have to do or want to do. Fitting them all in makes life interesting but it can also cause stress as you try to decide what has to be done and what can be left until later or not done at all.

People respond to stress in different ways. Too much stress can make you ill. If you know what causes you stress, find ways to stop that stress from happening. You can reduce certain types of stress with simple solutions.

Anything that upsets us causes stress. Even little things can cause stress, such as somebody clicking a pen, the bus being late, or spilling your coffee. But we can also feel stressed when we do something new. Even new things that are good can cause stress, such as getting married or having a baby. Things that cause us stress are called “stressors.”

We need to find ways of managing our stressors. Knowing what we can change and how to do it is called “stress management.”

The next few activities will help you to come up with solutions for your “stressors.”

## Activity 11: Stress – Self-Assessment Checklist

First you need to start thinking about what stresses you. These are your ‘stressors.’

Check the boxes in the following list that apply to you. Look at the suggestions beneath each cause of stress and think if it might work for you.

- Do you get frustrated because the person who makes the early morning coffee at work gets busy doing something else and forgets?**

Make extra coffee at home. Buy a travel mug. It may save your morning!

- Do you hate waiting in line?**

Take along a book or magazine to help pass the time. Use the time to plan ahead – think about supper menus for the rest of the week.

- Do you feel pressure because there is too much to do in a short time?**

Come up with a plan to spread the work around. Ask co-workers for help or ask a family member to make a meal or clean up afterwards.

- Are you dreading an upcoming test, interview, or heavy work week?**

Prepare as much as you can. Exercise. Do something to take your mind off it. Get a good night’s sleep.

- Do you leave things until the last minute?**

The longer you spend thinking about doing something difficult, the more stress builds up. Whenever possible, do the hardest part first. You’ll be amazed at how much stress you can avoid.

**Do you find yourself thinking negative thoughts about yourself?**

Low self esteem or worry can make you think negatively. Don't focus on things you cannot do well. Instead, focus on the things you can do well. Go back to Unit 1 to rediscover your skills, abilities and special talents. Believing in yourself is a great stress buster.

 **Do you feel frustrated when things don't go as expected?**

Be flexible. Things rarely go 100 percent according to plan. Try to roll with the punches and adapt to changing situations. You will be less stressed

 **Do you often take things too seriously?**

Hang on to your sense of humour! Laughter relaxes muscles. You won't always be able to laugh your troubles away, but a healthy sense of humour can help you out of a lot of stressful situations. As the old saying goes, laughter really is the best medicine.

**Activity 12: Find Your Sources of Stress**

Read the information on the previous page. Find three areas that cause you stress. With the help of your instructor, make an action plan for dealing with each stressor.

Personal Stress Worksheet	
Cause of stress	
Action plan	
Cause of stress	
Action plan	
Cause of stress	
Action plan	



# **UNIT 7**

## **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

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## How Far Have You Come?

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In this unit you will bring together the things you have learned about yourself during your volunteer placement. Your instructor will play an important part in helping you to create a résumé and you should work closely with him/her as you begin this unit.

But first.....remember the *Dear Me* letter you wrote to yourself as you were about to begin your volunteer work? Open it now and read it.

Chances are you are feeling very differently about yourself than you were back then!

If you were nervous and unsure of your abilities in the beginning, you have probably learned a lot more about yourself over the past months. You can be proud of the fact that you had the courage to put yourself forward as a volunteer.

Flip through your portfolio and review the items and the work you've done.

Look how far you've come and celebrate your achievements. Your volunteer position has given you valuable experience. You have learned and practised skills that are transferable to the workplace – skills that you can list on your résumé.

## Activity 1: Creating your Résumé

You will use items from your portfolio to start to create a résumé that highlights your qualities and skills. Ask your instructor to advise you as you start this task.

You will need:

- Your activities from Unit 1, Looking In: Finding Out about Yourself
- Any journal entries you have completed
- The check-in sheets from your meetings with your supervisor
- Your self-evaluation worksheets
- Your personal information record sheet

On the next page is a sample résumé belonging to Bill Smith. With his past job and volunteer experience at OC Transpo Lost & Found, Bill is going to apply for a job as a Commercial Building Superintendent.

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## Bill Smith

613-123-4567/ [bill.smith@gmail.com](mailto:bill.smith@gmail.com)  
66 George Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1N2

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### Goal: Commercial Building Superintendent/Maintenance Worker

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#### PERSONAL STRENGTHS

- ✓ **Dedicated, strong** worker with **solid experience in the service sector**. Related skills include **Cleaning and Maintenance, Operation and Maintenance of Tools/ Equipment/ Machinery, Inventory Management and Customer Service**.
  - ✓ **Sound knowledge** of cleaning methods and products, complemented by strong manual dexterity and hand-eye coordination. **Keen interest to troubleshoot and fix equipment problems and a proven ability to use hand and power tools**.
  - ✓ **Flexible, organized** worker who adapts well to working independently and in teams. **Demonstrated ability to work with others to solve problems and to come up with creative solutions independently**.
  - ✓ **Responsible, polite, dependable, punctual and trustworthy** individual who values life-long learning and the acquisition of new skills.
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#### DEMONSTRATED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

##### Cleaning and Maintenance

- Swept/mopped/waxed floors using the appropriate equipment and cleaning products, removed garbage from canisters, separated recycling, replaced with fresh bags and placed garbage in centralized garbage storage area for a commercial property; kept inventory of supplies.
- Solved problems and repaired various household appliances including lamps, toasters and changed light fixtures
- Maintained grounds in winter months ensuring that there was clear and safe access to parking lot, entrances and walkways for a commercial property

##### Inventory Management and Customer Service

- Answered customer enquiries on the phone and in person
  - Handled difficult people, troubleshooting and solving problems
  - Monitored visitors to a public building, keeping track of access to building
  - Collected parking fee payments and wrote receipts
  - Signed for deliveries to the building and informed residents of visitors and packages
  - Used a computer to record inventory items lost and claimed and issued claim receipts for customers
  - Organized inventory items
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#### WORK HISTORY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

OC Transpo Lost & Found Office, Heartwood House, Ottawa, Ontario	1 season
Building Maintenance Worker, Heartwood House, Ottawa, Ontario	4 years
Cleaner: Beaumont Enterprises, Ottawa, Ontario	6 years
Counter person: Tim Horton's, Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario	2 summers

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**REFERENCES:** Supplied on request

In the first section of his résumé, “*Personal Strengths*,” Bill summarizes his knowledge and experience and lists the **personal qualities** that show his strengths.

- ✓ **Dedicated, strong** worker with solid experience in the service sector. Related skills include Cleaning and Maintenance, Operation and Maintenance of Tools/ Equipment/ Machinery, Inventory Control and Customer Service.
- ✓ **Sound knowledge** of cleaning methods and products, complemented by strong **manual dexterity** and **hand-eye coordination**. **Keen interest** to troubleshoot and fix equipment problems and a **proven ability** to use hand and power tools.
- ✓ **Flexible, organized** worker who adapts well to working independently and in teams. Demonstrated **ability to work with others to solve problems and to come up with creative solutions independently**.
- ✓ **Responsible, polite, dependable, punctual and trustworthy** individual who **values life-long learning** and the acquisition of new skills.

**Review the items from your portfolio to choose words that show your strengths.**

**Ask yourself:**

1. What have I discovered about my skills, abilities and special talents?
2. What are the five most important values that I live by? Which ones do I think will make me a strong candidate for a job?
3. Think about the personal qualities you identified during these activities. Are you friendly and polite? Can people rely on you to be punctual and hardworking? Are you a positive person who likes to work with people?
4. During your volunteer placement, what positive things have others said about your attitude and work habits? Has anyone made comments about your work that have made you feel proud?

For your résumé, choose words that describe your qualities.

Next, Bill describes the **tasks** he has performed in previous jobs and in his volunteer position. These tasks show that he has developed skills - transferable skills – that he can take to another job. Bill has broken down the tasks he’s performed in his past paid and volunteer work. He’s grouped the tasks into two main areas: Cleaning and Maintenance and Inventory Management and Customer Service.

#### **Cleaning and Maintenance**

- **Swept/mopped/waxed** floors using the appropriate equipment and cleaning products, removed garbage from canisters, separated recycling, replaced with fresh bags and placed garbage in centralized garbage storage area for a commercial property; kept inventory of supplies.
- **Solved** problems and **repaired** various household appliances including lamps, toasters and changed light fixtures
- **Maintained** grounds in winter months ensuring that there was clear and safe access to parking lot, entrances and walkways for a commercial property

#### **Inventory Management and Customer Service**

- **Answered** customer enquiries on the phone and in person
- **Handled** difficult people, troubleshooting and solving problems
- **Monitored** visitors to a public building, keeping track of access to building
- **Collected** parking fee payments and wrote receipts
- **Signed for** deliveries to the building and informed residents of visitors and packages
- **Used** a computer to record inventory items lost and claimed and issued claim receipts for customers
- **Organized** inventory items

Review your portfolio and identify the transferable skills that you brought to your volunteer position.

Review your self-evaluation worksheets to identify the tasks you have carried out during your volunteer placement and the improvements you’ve made during your placement.

What tasks have you performed – in your personal life, previous employment and/or in your volunteer position – that might be attractive to a potential employer?

Choose ACTION VERBS to describe your tasks. The action verbs Bill used to describe his tasks are in bold type. Notice the action verbs come right after the bullet points.

Action verbs highlight the tasks you can do. Using them in a résumé makes it more powerful and persuasive.

For a list of action verbs, you can go to <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/543/02/>

Finally, use the information in your *Personal Information Sheet* to fill in your personal information and to list your work history.

There are many kinds of résumés. Because Bill doesn't have a lot of formal education, he has chosen to highlight his qualities and experience rather than his education and training. If you have education and training you would like to list, you can create another section for this in your résumé. If you are unsure about the sections you wish to include in your résumé, ask your instructor for help.

Remember that a résumé is always a work in progress. You will continue to add to it as you get more experience with different tasks.

Bill has quite a lot of experience. On the next page you will see Jennifer Rowlandson's résumé. She has less experience than Bill.

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## Jennifer Rowlandson

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613-123-4567/ [jenner@rogers.com](mailto:jenner@rogers.com)

29 Pleasantview Road, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 3S8

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**Goal: To obtain a position in customer service**

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### PERSONAL STRENGTHS

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Over 2 years experience of paid and volunteer work; skills and strengths include customer support/dealing with people, job task planning, and workplace health and safety

- Dependable and trustworthy worker who gets to work every day, on time
  - Able to take initiative when faced with problems
  - Independent worker who follows through with assigned tasks, and takes initiative to identify and complete others
  - Eager to take on new experiences, with a positive attitude
  - Interacts well with people of all ages and cultures
  - Attentive, and understands the importance of listening, taking and delivering messages
  - Comfortable working with numbers and computerized equipment
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### RELEVANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

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#### Customer support

Served customers in front cash and drive thru, taking orders and including instructions for special requests

Provided accurate change to customers using a computerized cash payment system

Delivered newspapers to 342 subscribers on schedule, making sure the paper was not damaged

Answered customer enquiries on the phone and in person

Handled difficult people, troubleshooting and solving problems

#### Job Task Planning

Made sure orders were submitted to kitchen in order

Delivered food to customers as soon as they were prepared

Counted flyers and inserts to make sure there were enough for all homes

Checked schedules (museum, library, pool) to plan various activities for children

Looked at existing craft supplies, making a list of things that needed to be replenished by children's parents

#### Workplace Health and Safety

Practised good hygiene in handling food

Supervised children, making sure their environment was safe

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### WORK HISTORY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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Tim Horton's: Cashier	Ottawa, Ontario	6½ months
The Pennysaver: Carrier	Ottawa, Ontario	1 year
<b>also:</b> Volunteer receptionist	Ottawa, Ontario	6 months
Private families: Child minder	Ottawa, Ontario	4 years

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**REFERENCES:** Supplied on request

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## Next Steps

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### **Activity 2: What's Next?**

Now it's time to look at the essential skills you would like to improve.

Continuing to work on your essential skills will bring you many benefits. These can include getting the job you want and making more money. You can gain confidence and self-esteem to tackle new challenges – in your volunteer placement, work and personal life.

Go back to your self-evaluation worksheets. Identify the essential skills you think you would like to improve. List them in the table on the following page.

<b>Essential Skill Area</b>	<b>Things I would like to Improve</b>
Reading Text	
Document Use	
Numeracy	
Writing	
Oral Communication (speaking and listening)	
Working with Others	
Continuous Learning	
Thinking Skills	
Computer Use	

Reviewing your answers to the above activity will help you decide what your next steps should be. Meet with your volunteer supervisor and teacher to discuss these.

You may feel you are now ready to find a job, or you may want to continue to improve your reading and writing skills. If you feel you want to keep on improving your job skills, you may consider finding another volunteer placement.

### Activity 3: Continuing your Volunteer Role

There are many exciting and challenging volunteer opportunities available in most communities. These can be on-going positions, or opportunities to help out at one-day events.

#### Go Online:

Do a search using the words “volunteer opportunities in \_\_\_\_\_” (your town or city).

In Ottawa, you can check out <http://www.volunteerottawa.ca>. On this website you can search volunteer positions by specialty listings, by agencies or by your own interests.

If you live in a small town or rural area, look for opportunities in your local newspaper, search the bulletin boards in your local school, church, community centre or grocery store, tell people you are looking for a volunteer position. You can also ask your instructor for ideas.

1. Identify positions that interest you. Choose one or two you especially like.
2. With your instructor, talk about the essential skills you may need in these positions.
3. With your instructor’s help, write a cover letter to apply for these positions.

## Activity 4: Essential Skills Success Stories

Some people think of learning as something that takes place at school. But learning doesn't stop when you finish your schooling.

Developing a positive attitude towards learning and change – taking control of and being responsible for your own **continuous learning** – will help you to get on in life, at school, at home, or in the workplace.

Reading about other people's successes is not only interesting, but helpful. It can inspire you to move forward with your continuous learning and figure out your next steps.

### Go Online:

Go to <http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/learner.shtml#14>.

Click on [Living and Learning - Essential Skills Success Stories](#). Here you will find a guide developed by the Conference Board of Canada.

Read the case studies of workers who have chosen to follow different pathways on their journeys to improving their essential skills. Then, answer the questions on page 11 of the guide to develop your own plan for improving your essential skills.

### One last word....

During your volunteer position, you've learned that you can do things you may never have thought possible.

- Make the most of the confidence and skills you've gained in your volunteer position.
- Keep your mind open to new things, and believe in yourself.
- Challenge yourself to look for new opportunities, and have the courage to step forward with confidence.

**Become a continuous learner and  
gain rewards that will last a lifetime!**