# Instructors Guide

On the following pages is a sample module from our Instructor Guide. It provides the instructor with a copy of the material and a Lesson Plans box.

The key benefit for the trainer is the Lesson Plan box. It provides a standardized set of tools to assist the instructor for each lesson. The Lesson Plan box gives an estimated time to complete the lesson, any materials that are needed for the lesson, recommended activities, and additional points to assist in delivering the lessons such as Stories to Share and Delivery Tips.
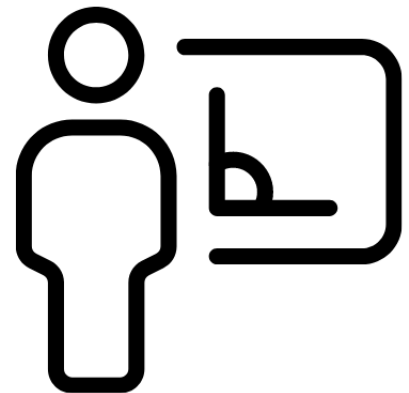
Module Two: What Are Soft Skills?

What are soft skills, anyway? Simply put, soft skills are the personal attributes that allow us to effectively relate to others. These skills enhance our personal interactions and lead to greater job performance and satisfaction. Unlike hard skills, which are the technical and knowledge skill set we bring to our work, soft skills are interpersonal and can be applied in a broad array of situations. Soft skills encompass both personality traits, such as optimism, and abilities which can be practiced, such as empathy. Like all skills, soft skills can be learned.

Definition of Soft Skills

Soft skills are personal attributes that allow us to effectively relate to others. Applying these skills helps us build stronger work relationships, work more productively, and maximize our career prospects. Often, we place the focus of our career development efforts on hard skills – technology skills, knowledge, and other skills that specifically relate to our ability to get work-related tasks done. This means we neglect to develop our soft skills. However, soft skills are directly transferrable to any job, organization, or industry. As a result, they are an investment worth making.

Soft skills include:

- Communication
- Listening
- Showing empathy
- Networking
- Self-confidence
- Giving and receiving feedback

Estimated Time	8 minutes
Topic Objective	Introduce the concept of Soft Skills
Topic Summary	**Soft Skills** Discuss the concept of soft skills.
Materials Required	**Flip board/chart and markers**
Planning Checklist	None
Recommended Activity	As a group, discuss soft skills. Brainstorm soft skills that class members use every day. List these on the board.
Stories to Share	Share any personal or relevant stories.
Delivery Tips	Invite individual participants to share their nightly routines.
Review Questions	What are soft skills?

Empathy and the Emotional Intelligence Quotient

Empathy is perhaps the most important soft skill we can develop for better interpersonal interactions. Empathy is the ability to identify with another person's experience. While we often think of empathy in terms only of identifying with someone's pain or negative experience, we can apply empathy in a variety of situations. Developing empathy allows us to imagine ourselves in another person's shoes, to respond to others, and even to vicariously experience others' feelings of emotions. When we demonstrate empathy, we create connections with others, which can help to build teamwork or otherwise create shared goals. Empathy also helps to forge stronger interpersonal connections between team members and colleagues, which is as important as shared goals or complementary skills, when it comes to accomplishing work.

Empathy is one component of what is known as Emotional Intelligence, or EI. Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognize and manage our feelings so that they are expressed appropriately. Exercising emotional intelligence helps to create harmonious, productive relationships. There are four key components to Emotional Intelligence:

- **Self-awareness**: The ability to recognize our own feelings and motivations
- **Self-management**: The ability to appropriately express (or not express) feelings
- **Social awareness**: Our ability to recognize the feelings and needs of others, and the norms of a given situation
- **Relationship management**: Our ability to relate effectively to others

Taken together, these skills make up our Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQI). The EQI is a measure of your ability to exercise soft skills such as empathy.

Estimated Time	8 minutes
Topic Objective	Introduce the concept of Emotional Intelligence
Topic Summary	**Emotional Intelligence** Discuss the concept of Emotional Intelligence.
Materials Required	**Worksheet 1-Emotional Intelligence**
Planning Checklist	None
Recommended Activity	Complete the worksheet individually. Share answers with the class if desired.
Stories to Share	Share any personal or relevant stories.
Delivery Tips	Encourage everyone to participate.
Review Questions	How can we demonstrate emotional intelligence?

Professionalism

The word "professionalism" often conjures up images of a cold, distant, brusque person in a nondescript navy-blue suit. In fact, many people have the sense that to be "professional" is exactly the opposite of demonstrating empathy and emotional intelligence! However, professionalism is a key soft skill, and it doesn't require you to be inauthentic, distant, or detached. Professionalism is simply the ability to conduct yourself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence. Acting with professionalism also means seeking to communicate effectively with others and finding a way to be productive. Professionalism involves what may seem to be small acts, such:

- Always reporting to work on time and returning promptly from breaks
- Dressing appropriately
- Being clean and neat
- Speaking clearly and politely to colleagues, customers, and clients
- Striving to meet high standards for one's own work

Estimated Time	12 minutes
Topic Objective	Professionalism
Topic Summary	**Professionalism** Explore the concept of professionalism
Materials Required	**Flipboard/chart and markers**
Planning Checklist	None
Recommended Activity	Have the class brainstorm traits or actions that they feel demonstrate professionalism and lack of professionalism. List these on the board.
Stories to Share	Share any personal relevant stories.
Delivery Tips	Encourage everyone to participate.
Review Questions	How can we strive to demonstrate professionalism?

Learned vs. Inborn Traits

Because soft skills are talked about as traits of a person's personality, it may seem as though you have to born with them. While some soft skills come more easily to one person than they might to another, soft skills are not inborn. Like all skills, they can be learned. Because we all have our own preferences and ways of moving through the world, some soft skills may be more difficult to learn than others. But if we think back, there are also aspects of our hard skill set that were difficult at first, though they now seem to come quite naturally to us. We develop soft skills in the same way we develop hard skills – we practice! Spending time with people who seem to be able to effortlessly demonstrate a soft skill that you find challenging is one way to build your soft skill set. Another way is to seek opportunities to practice in which the risk of failure is low, until you feel confident in your ability. You don't have to be born a networker or an empathetic person – you can learn and build these skills throughout your career.

Estimated Time	12 minutes
Topic Objective	Introduce the concept of building soft skills
Topic Summary	**Build Soft Skills** Consider ways in which we can build and practice soft skills.

Materials Required	**Flipchart/board and marker**
Planning Checklist	None
Recommended Activity	Have the class brainstorm ideas for how we can build and practice soft skills.
Stories to Share	Share any personal, relevant stories.
Delivery Tips	Encourage everyone to participate.
Review Questions	How can we build soft skills?

Practical Illustration

Dee was just not a "people person." She preferred to work by herself, and her position at her company allowed her to do that most of the time. She valued her productivity and her ability to meet deadlines and exceed expectations, and anything that got in the way of that was an annoyance. When she had to interact with coworkers throughout the day, she preferred to keep the interactions as brief as possible so she could get back to work. Her coworker Angela mentioned that people often found Dee unapproachable. "I'm just not wired to be social," Dee told her. "I don't relate well to others when I feel like they're wasting my time. I've always been a loner – it just comes naturally to me." Angela explained that she also preferred to focus on her tasks and work independently, but she had learned to relate to her coworkers so that she could have a more harmonious work experience.

Angela encouraged Dee to try changing her approach to coworkers, to try to see them not as interruptions, but as fellow humans who were worth paying attention to. Dee decided to try this, though it was hard for her. The next time a coworker interrupted her while she worked, Dee tried to really listen to what he needed rather than rushing him out of her office. She realized that her coworkers often didn't come to her until things were in crisis because they found her distant. She then realized that cultivating better relationships was a way to prevent crises in the workday.

Module Two: Review Questions

1.) Which of the following are true of soft skills?

    a) They are aspects of a person's personality
    b) They are actions as well as characteristics
    c) They can promote better workplace efficiency
    d) All of these

    Soft skills are aspects of a person's personality that impact how he or she interacts with others. They are learned, and encompass both characteristics and actions.

2.) The technical and knowledge skills we bring to our jobs are known as which of the following?

    a) Soft skills
    b) Hard skills
    c) EI
    d) None of these

    The technical and knowledge skills we bring to our work are known as hard skills. These are only one component of workplace success. Soft skills are also important.

3.) The ability to identify with another's feelings is known as which of the following?

    a) Empathy
    b) Sympathy
    c) Projection
    d) Role playing

    Empathy is the ability to identify with another's feelings. Demonstrating empathy is a key soft skill.

4.) Which of the following are components of emotional intelligence?

    a) Self-Awareness
    b) Self-Management
    c) Relationship management
    d) All of the above

    There are four domains of emotional intelligence (EI). These are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

5.) The ability to recognize our feelings and express them appropriately is known as which of the following?

    a) Psychological intelligence
    b) Emotional intelligence
    c) Emotional regulation
    d) Emotion management

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize our emotions and express them appropriately. Emotional intelligence is key to developing strong soft skills.

6.) Professionalism does NOT require which of the following?

    a) Acting with integrity
    b) Seeking to always be productive
    c) Communicating clearly with others
    d) Maintaining a wide emotional distance from colleagues

Professionalism requires that a person always act with integrity, accountability, and responsibility. He or she should always seek to communicate clearly and be productive. Wide emotional distance is not required, and can even undermine professionalism.

7.) Which of the following is NOT true of soft skills?

    a) They are inborn
    b) They can enhance productivity
    c) They can enhance work satisfaction
    d) All of the above

Soft skills are not inborn – they can be learned. Some skills come easier than others based on our experiences and personal preferences, but none of them are hardwired into us!

8.) Which of the following is the best way to develop soft skills?

    a) Research them
    b) Watch other people apply them
    c) Practice
    d) None of the above

Because soft skills can be learned, the best way to develop them is to practice! Professional development courses and mentoring can help you identify opportunities for practice.

9.) Speaking clearly and politely to colleagues, customers, and clients is an example of what?

   a) Intelligence
   b) Good communication
   c) Professionalism
   d) **B and C**

Professionalism involves what may seem to be small acts, such:

- Always reporting to work on time and returning promptly from breaks
- Dressing appropriately
- Being clean and neat
- **Speaking clearly and politely to colleagues, customers, and clients**
- Striving to meet high standards for one's own work

10.) What might be the result of increasing your level of empathy?

   a) Productivity
   b) Understanding
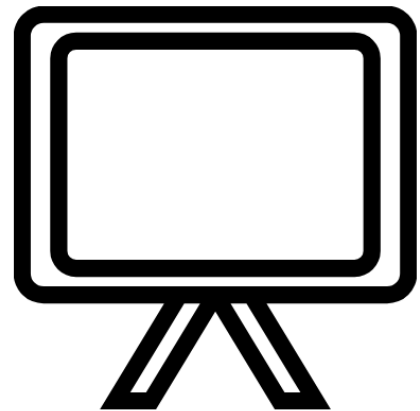   c) Communication
   d) All of the above

Developing empathy allows us to imagine ourselves in another person's shoes, to respond to others, and even to vicariously experience others' feelings of emotions. When we demonstrate empathy, we create connections with others, which can help to build teamwork or otherwise create shared goals.

PowerPoint Slides

Below you will find the PowerPoint sample. The slides are based on and created from the Instructor Guide. PowerPoint slides are a great tool to use during the facilitation of the material; they help to focus on the important points of information presented during the training.

I think we all have empathy. We may not have the courage to display it.

Maya Angelou

What are Soft Skills?

Soft skills encompass both personality traits, such as optimism, and abilities which can be practiced, such as empathy.

Definition of Soft Skills

Communication	Listening
Networking	Self-confidence

Empathy and the Emotional Intelligence Quotient

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship management

Professionalism

- Dressing appropriately
- Being clean and neat
- Speaking clearly and politely to colleagues, customers, and clients

Learned vs. Inborn Traits

We develop soft skills in the same way we develop hard skills – we practice!

Practical Illustration

- Definition of Soft Skills
- Empathy and the Emotional Intelligence Quotient
- Professionalism
- Learned vs. Inborn Traits

Module Two: Review Questions

1. Which of the following are true of soft skills?

A. They are aspects of a person's personality

B. They are actions as well as characteristics

C. They can promote better workplace efficiency

D. All of these

Quick Reference Sheets

Below is an example of our Quick Reference Sheets. They are used to provide the participants with a quick way to reference the material after the course has been completed. They can be customized by the trainer to provide the material deemed the most important. They are a way the participants can look back and reference the material at a later date.

They are also very useful as a take-away from the workshop when branded. When a participant leaves with a Quick Reference Sheet it provides a great way to promote future business.

Ten Soft Skills You Need
Quick Reference Sheet

Openness and Honesty

Open, honest communication is the key to building workplace relationships and demonstrating professionalism. While you do not need to discuss personal or private topics in the workplace, being transparent and honest about work matters, and generally being willing to communicate with others, is vital. People can sense when someone is hiding something or withholding information, and tend not to trust them. This damages workplace trust and relationships, and may lead to lower productivity and morale. Each of us has a different level of comfort with what we choose to disclose about ourselves, but being willing to share parts of yourself with your colleagues also helps to build rapport.

Managing Distractions

A major key to productivity, especially if you want to find a flow state, is to manage your distractions. Distractions happen – we can minimize them and manage them, but never eliminate them altogether. Creating a plan for managing distractions is a key time management skill. The first step is to determine what your major distractions are. Is it colleagues popping into your office? Is it your email or voicemail? Do you get bored with routine tasks if you have to focus on them too long? Figuring out what your major distractions are can help you brainstorm solutions and better manage them.

Some common distractions are:
- Colleagues stopping by to chat
- Checking email or voicemail
- Clutter in your workspace
- Boredom after spending too much time on one task

You can solve these by:
- Establishing "open door" hours
- Closing your door or otherwise indicating "Please Do Not Disturb"
- Using noise canceling headphones
- De-cluttering your workspace
- Building in breaks

The Multitasking Myth

Multitasking is exactly what it sounds like – trying to do more than one thing at a time. Many of us multitask throughout our day – listening to a colleague while checking email, working on a document while talking on the phone. We have the idea that we get more done when we multitask, or that this is the best way to maximize our time. However, studies show that 30-40% more time is spent when you multitask rather than when you mono-task (work on one thing at a time). Multitasking also means your attention is divided, which can lead to miscommunication and errors. Multitasking can also damage relationships, as it may convey that we are not really interested in what another is saying. It can be difficult to break the multitasking habit, but it is key if we are to be the best we can be.

Handouts

Each course is provided with a wide range of worksheets. Worksheets help check your participants' understanding. If a lesson calls for a worksheet, it will be listed in the Lesson Plan box under Materials Required. All worksheets are customizable and can be found in the Appendix of the Instructor Guide and the Training Manual.

As a trainer, icebreakers give your participants the opportunity to get to know each other better or simply begin the training session on a positive note. Icebreakers promote collaboration, increase engagement, and make your training more light-hearted and fun. Below is an example from the Icebreakers folder.
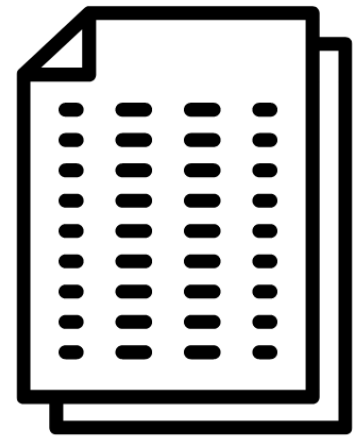
Sample Worksheet 1

Emotional Intelligence

In this space, reflect on your own Emotional Intelligence. Which skills do you think you apply well? Which are hard for you?

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Icebreaker: House of Cards

PURPOSE

1. To help participants get to know each other

2. To identify participants' goals for the session

MATERIALS REQUIRED

3. One playing card per participant, with an equal number of cards from each suit

4. Several sets of markers

5. Flip chart paper

PREPARATION

Pass out one playing card to each participant, face-down.

ACTIVITY

On your cue, ask participants to turn over their playing cards. They are to find others with their suit, but they are not allowed to talk or show their card. For example, if a person had a spade, they may illustrate that by pretending to dig a hole.

Once participants are in their groups, they are to introduce themselves and come up with a list of five things that they would like to learn during the workshop.

DEBRIEF

Once groups have created their list, bring participants back together. Have each group present their list and combine topics on the flip chart. Use this as a guide during the workshop. If there are any topics that will not be covered, let participants know where they can find more resources (such as follow-up workshops or materials from the Recommended Reading List).

Certificate of Completion

Every course comes with a Certificate of Completion where the participants can be recognized for completing the course. It provides a record of their attendance and to be recognized for their participation in the workshop.
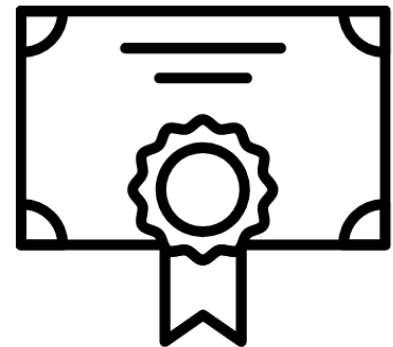
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

[Name]

Has mastered the course
Ten Soft Skills You Need

Awarded this _____ day of _____ e _____, 20 _____

Presenter Name and Title