

Skills for Success Curriculum Resource Cover Page

Organization

CESBA

Curriculum Resource

Problem Solving and Decision Making in the Workplace

This course includes an introduction to soft skills, explores different decision making strategies and how to solve problems in the workplace. The skills necessary for problem solving including self-confidence, resiliency, listening skills, flexibility, adaptability, and collaboration are discussed.

Real world examples are introduced as practice for the information presented in this course.

OALCF Alignment

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A -Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	2
Competency A -Find and Use Information	A3. Extract information from films, broadcasts, and presentations	N/A
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B2. Write continuous text	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B3. Complete and create documents	1

Competency C - Understand and Use Numbers	C1. Manage money	2
Competency D - Use Digital Technology	N/A	2
Competency E - Manage Learning	N/A	1
Competency F – Engage with Others	N/A	N/A

Goal Paths (check all that apply)

- Employment
- Apprenticeship
- Secondary School Credit
- Postsecondary
- Independence

Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity and innovation
- Digital
- Numeracy
- Problem Solving
- Reading
- Writing

Notes:

Suggested milestones for this course:

Milestone 3, Milestone 14, Milestone 28, Milestone 60



Problem Solving and Decision Making in the Workplace

Includes Answer Guide

Pathway Pillar – Workplace Literacy

Project Manager: Charlotte Parliament, CESBA Program Manager

Project Coordinator: Debera Flynn

Project Consultants: Angela Williams and Susan Boyd

Project Support: Paul Cox, CESBA Executive Director

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Skills for Success: Problem Solving and Decision Making in the Workplace

Lesson 1: What are Soft Skills?



Hard skills are skills that we have been trained to do or are good at doing. Unlike hard skills that are more about the technical skills we show on the job, soft skills are more about how we react and think at work.

Soft skills include any skill that falls under personality traits or behaviours. Showing up on time to work, and problem solving are examples of soft skills. An example of a hard skill would be a plumber knowing how to fix broken pipes or an office assistant being able to type 40 words per minute.

Most soft skills can be classified into one of two categories: self-management skills or engaging with other skills. The table below shows examples of skills in these categories.

Self-Management	Engaging with Others
Time management	Being reliable
Showing initiative	Problem solving and resolving conflicts
Decision making	Collaboration
Integrity	Effective listening
Adaptability	Leadership

There are many soft skills that you need to succeed in the workplace. This course will focus on decision making and problem solving and offer suggestions and activities to help with the development of these soft skills.



The image is a job advertisement for Level Up Games. It features a purple border and a white background. At the top left, the company logo 'LEVEL UP GAMES' is displayed in blue and purple. Below the logo, the text 'JOIN OUR OFFICE TEAM' is written in black. The main heading 'We are Hiring Office Assistants' is in large, bold, blue letters. The advertisement lists several requirements: being friendly and adaptable, having good communication and time management skills, being an organized individual, and being an independent self-starter. It also specifies that applicants must have knowledge of Microsoft Office programs, Google Apps, and be willing to learn new software. Typing abilities of 40+ wpm are preferred, and knowledge of French is an asset. The application deadline is 'Apply today:' with the website 'www.nextlevelgaming.com'. On the right side, there are two images: a woman wearing a headset and glasses, and a group of people in a meeting room with a projector screen displaying a diagram.

LEVEL UP GAMES

JOIN OUR OFFICE TEAM

We are Hiring Office Assistants

Are you friendly and adaptable?
Do you have good communication and time management skills?
Are you an organized individual?
We are looking for an independent, self-starter to join our team.
Applicants must have knowledge of Microsoft Office programs, and Google Apps and be willing to learn new software.
Typing abilities of 40+ wpm preferred.
Knowledge of French an asset.

Apply today:
www.nextlevelgaming.com

Activity 1: Hard and Soft Skills

Look at the job advertisement above and use it to fill in the table on the next page. You will be sorting the skills requested in this ad into two categories: hard skills or soft skills.

Hard Skills	Soft Skills

Lesson 2: Decision Making

A decision is when you must choose between more than one option. It is not only about choice, even though making a choice that will be good for you, is an important part of the process.

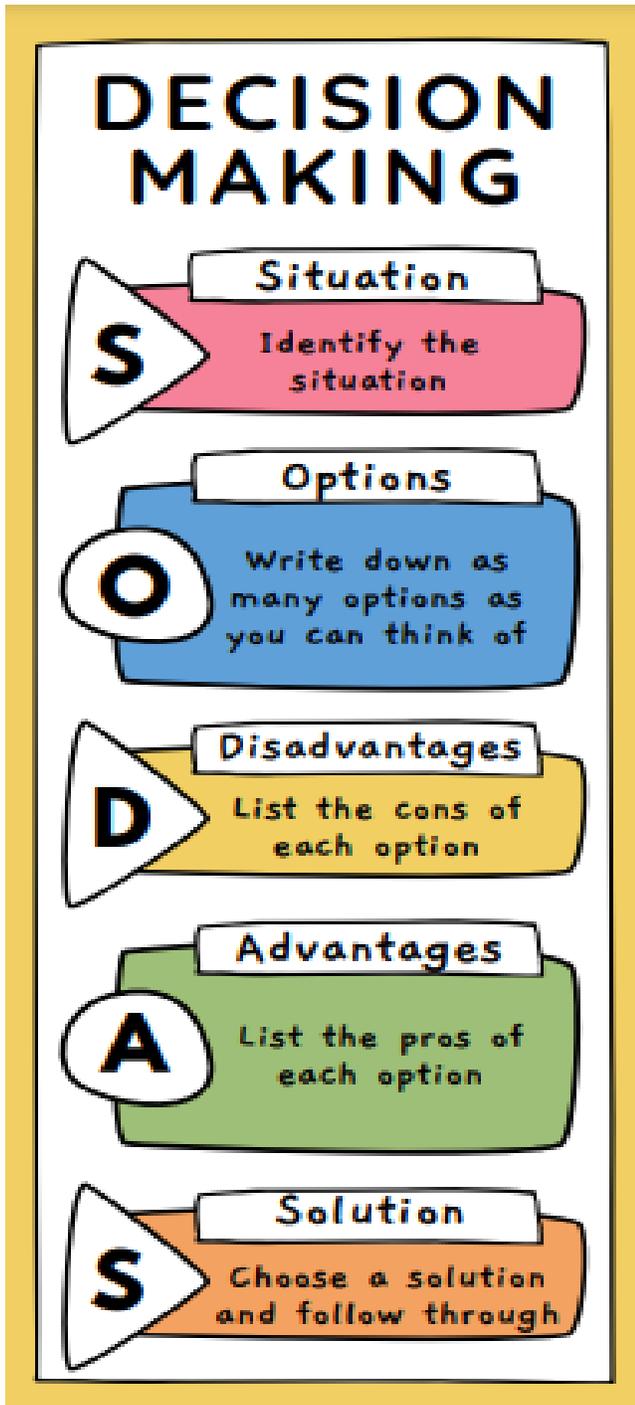
Some people think about decisions as being big or small. Big decisions may include where to work or live, while smaller decisions might include deciding what to wear to a job interview, what to pack for lunch, or what to put on your To Do list. Sometimes it might take just as much thought and planning to make a small decision as a large one.

The decisions we make are informed by our preferences (the things we like and value) and by the opportunities (the chances we have) that are available. Sometimes, what we decide for ourselves today might change in the future as we change, and as different opportunities open up to us. Our decisions change as we grow and learn.

At work and in your personal life you will need to make decisions. At work, you will want to make decisions that are good for your workplace, your co-workers and yourself. It may not always be easy to make the best decision. Decision making can be hard. This course will show you some strategies for decision making and how to use them.

SODAS – Decision Making Model

One strategy for decision making is using the SODAS decision making process.



The poster to the left describes the steps involved in this process.

You start by identifying the situation. You then write down possible choices and create a list of disadvantages (cons) and advantages (pros) for each choice.

After making these lists, choose the decision that has the most advantages.

This decision will be your solution.

Pro and Con Lists

When using the SODAS process, you will make decisions by creating **Pro** and **Con** lists. These lists are used to show the positive and negative consequences of your decisions. **It helps you sort out the advantages and disadvantages of each option.** You can make separate lists for each choice. This is a good way to think through a decision and will help you consider everything involved in each option.

Example: Abdul needs a vehicle to get to his new job in a neighboring town. He is trying to decide whether he should lease a car or buy a used car. He made two *pro* and *con* lists to help him decide.

Buying a Used Car	
Pros	Cons
No monthly payments	Will not be able to buy used car for six months
Extra money for gas and car repairs	Must take bus for six more months, through the winter
Can go on vacation next year	Older car might need more repairs
Will not need a loan	Does not help me improve my credit rating
Will not have monthly payments	
Will not have to work more or live on a budget	

Leasing a car	
Pros	Cons
Car will be newer, less repairs	Two payments of \$172.00 a month
Will have a reliable vehicle for work	Will need to budget more or pick up extra hours at work
Will not need all the money at once to buy car	Less money for entertainment and eating out
Can get it right away	Must eat at home more
Will not have to wait at the bus stop in the cold	No vacation for the next couple of years
New cars have more features	
Warranty on a new car	

Activity 1: Using the SODAS Decision Making Process

Read Sarah's story below and afterwards, help her by using the SODAS decision making process.



Sarah is working at a local hardware store. The manager is going away for a month and has asked Sarah to be acting manager while she is away. Sarah's manager appreciates her hard work and dedication. Sarah has asked for the day to think about her decision.

Sarah has a four-year-old son. Her mother watches him during her day shifts but cannot watch him at night. It costs Sarah ten dollars an hour for a sitter on night shifts. The night shifts are six hours long. Right now, Sarah works Monday to Wednesday day and Friday nights. Her acting manager shifts would be Monday and Tuesday nights and Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday days. Sarah makes \$15.50 an hour and the boss has offered her \$3.00 more an hour to manage the store. Sarah is saving for a car. She does not like taking the subway at night.

Sarah hopes to someday be a manager and likes adding new experiences to her resumé. Right now, Sarah runs the cash at the store. The acting manager makes schedules, takes lumber orders, supervises staff, and does bank deposits. Sarah has never managed the hardware store before, but her manager is willing to give her one week of training for the tasks she has not done before.

1. The Situation:

Option #1 _____

Option #2 _____

2. Use the pro and con lists on the next page to help Sarah decide.

Option #1: _____

Pros	Cons

Option #2: _____

Pros	Cons

3. Solution:

Based on the lists that you made, which decision do you think Sarah would choose?

Option # _____

4. Why do you think she would choose this decision? Include at least 2 reasons for your answer.

The Masquerade



The **masquerade** is a style of decision making where you make decisions by imagining how it will affect other people who are involved in the decision, such as a friend, employer, co-worker, or family member.

It is based on the word *masquerade*, which means, in this case, to pretend to be someone you are not. What would they say or think about the decision? This helps you to look at your decision from all possible angles.

For example: Clara was hired six months ago at a large clothing outlet and wants to ask for weekends off. Her son plays hockey, and her significant other takes him to all his games. She is not sure if she should ask for this or not.

So, she thinks...

- How would her boss react to this request?
- What would her co-workers think?
- What would be best for the company?
- What would her family want her to do?
- What would another hockey mom do?

She answers these questions, and it helps her make her decision.

She knows her boss wants her working on weekends because she schedules her to work these shifts.

She knows some of her co-workers have been there longer and are still working weekends, so they may think it is not fair if an employee hired after them asks for weekends off.

Her family would want her to do what is best for her. They are happy that she loves her job. Her son would love having her at his games, but he plays because he loves hockey and not because he needs an audience.

Another hockey mom might think she should be there, but some of the other mothers do not attend every game.

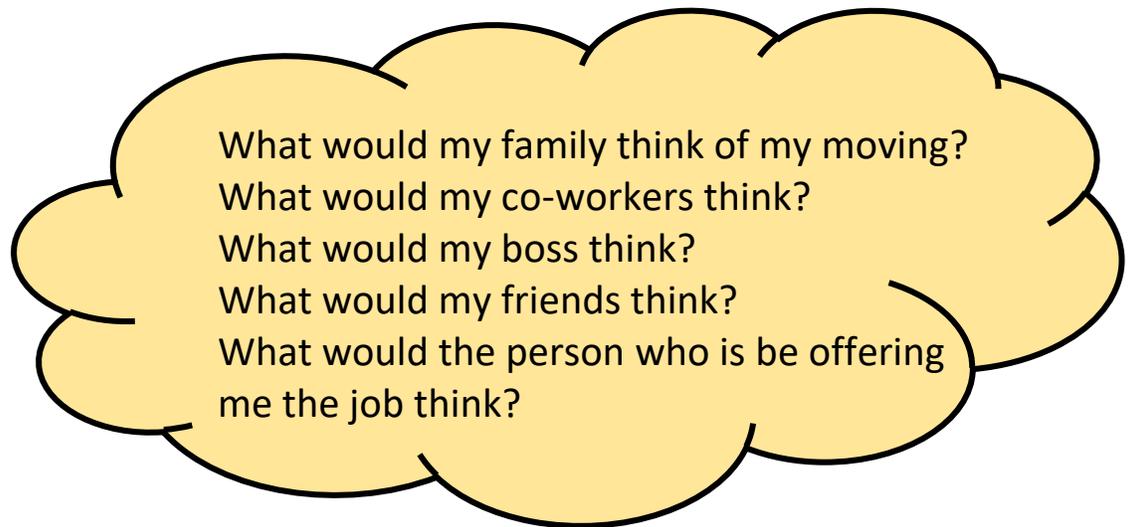
She makes the choice to stay at the outlet on weekends until she has been there longer. Looking at all sides has helped her make this decision.

Activity 2: Using the Masquerade Approach



Pierre has been offered a sales job in a town five hours away. The pay is much better, and he would get his own work vehicle 24 hours a day and a company cellphone. His current car always seems to need repairs. He owns a house in the town where he works now. His daughter stays with him every second weekend. She goes to the local school and has many friends there. He lives next door to his elderly parents. He helps them a lot with household tasks. He gets along well with his co-workers and his boss thinks he does a great job. He plays baseball with some old high school friends twice a week.

Pierre thinks...



What would my family think of my moving?
What would my co-workers think?
What would my boss think?
What would my friends think?
What would the person who is offering me the job think?

What do you think Pierre's decision might be based on using the masquerade approach to decision making?

Decision Making in the Workplace

While it is important to consider all opinions for the best decision as part of a team, there could be times that it is up to you at work to decide which option to choose. Strong decision making skills can help you decide on the best solution. You should choose what is best after thoroughly considering each option.

Handling Decisions with the Proper Focus

The word **focus** when decision making involves getting into an open frame of mind with a willingness to change, and that is considerate of other points of view. If your decision involves others, focus on a process that will care for others when making your choices.

Identify any feelings, values, ideas, or actions which might possibly influence the information gathered. Examples of this will be shown in the next activity.

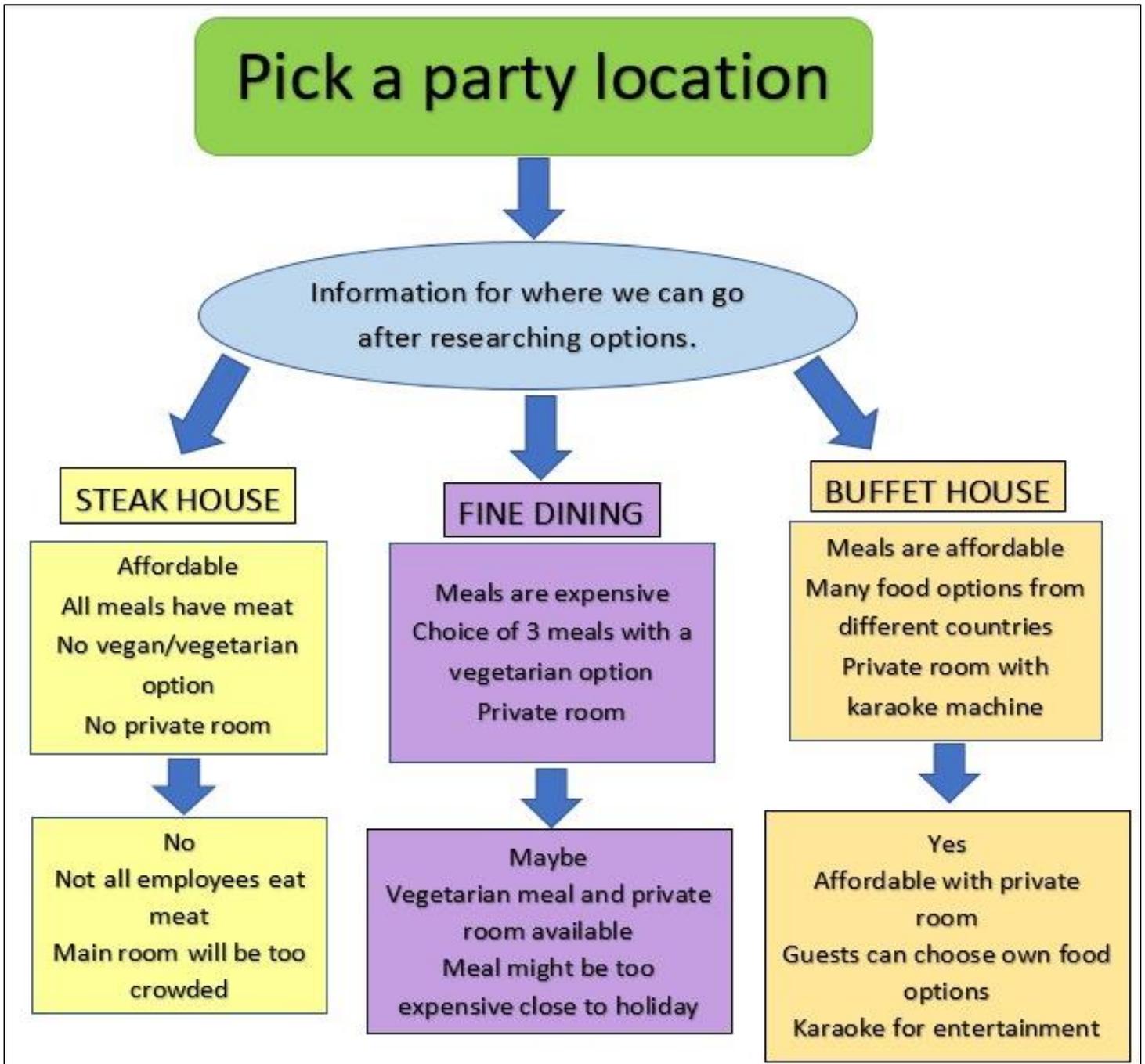
The Flow Down the River Approach

Another way to make decisions is called **flow down the river**. This approach uses a flow chart to explore possible decisions.

Kaya has been asked to plan the store's holiday gathering. She has three choices: What's Your Beef (the local steak house), Chez Pierre (a fine dining place which offers organic, vegan options), and the Buffet World (a serve yourself buffet restaurant with various food options from different cultures). Kaya is prepared. She discusses food allergies and food preferences with her co-workers.

Example: **Two of Kaya’s co-workers are vegetarians, and one of her co-workers feels anxious in crowded areas, so considering their needs is part of Kaya’s focus. Some of Kaya’s co-workers celebrate different holidays because of their culture or religious beliefs.**

Read the Flow Down the River Chart below to see how Kaya considers her options.



Activity 3: Exploring the Flow Down the River Approach

1. What factors did Kaya consider when making her decision?

2. Why do you think these places were not chosen as the best option?

a) What's Your Beef (steak house)

b) Chez Pierre (fine dining restaurant)

3. Do you think Kaya chose the best place for the party? Why or why not? Explain your answer.

Activity 3: Review of Focus in Decision Making

Focus when making a choice does not just end when the decision is made. It is one you should keep in mind while working on plans for your decision as well. Kaya does a great job researching locations for the party. She picks a place that meets the needs of her co-workers.

After deciding on a restaurant, Kaya makes the invitation shown below for the party.



1. Kaya can go ahead and send this to her boss. Yes, or no? _____

2. What part of Kaya's original focus did she forgot when she made this poster?

3. If you think the poster needs to be changed, which changes should Kaya make before giving it to her boss?

Lesson 3: Problem Solving



Good team players work together to solve problems that arise. They work to identify problems and then work on collaborating with their team to find a solution. They do not place blame on others. They recognize that the problem belongs to the team and try to find positive ways to solve it.

When employers talk about problem solving skills; they are often referring to the ability to handle difficult or unexpected situations in the workplace, as well as workplace challenges. Employers need people who can assess situations and calmly produce solutions. Problem solving skills are traits that help you do that. While problem solving skills are valued by employers, they are also highly useful in other areas of life like relationship building.

Steps to use when solving a problem include the following:

1. **Identify** the problem.
2. **Brainstorm** any ideas you can think of that may help solve the problem. Be creative. Share any ideas that you may have.
3. Write the ideas down.
4. **Evaluate** (discuss) each idea on the list. Cover the **pros and cons** of each idea.
5. Choose a **solution**.
6. **Use** the chosen solution.

Example: Joseph and Sophie need the electrician to come before they can finish the work that they are doing in the bathroom. The electrician has had a medical emergency and cannot come until the next day. It is only 9 am, and they need to figure out what to do. Their supervisor is offsite today. They decide to sit down and discuss options.

The problem: No electrician and unable to continue work on the bathroom.

Brainstorming ideas

- Take the rest of the day off without pay
- Work on another job in the house
- Spend the day cleaning up around the worksite
- Email the supervisor and see if the supervisor responds
- See if anyone else on-site needs help

Evaluations

- They really need the pay and do not think they can leave without permission of a supervisor.

- They cannot start another job in the house because they do not have all the needed materials.
- The worksite needs maybe half a day of cleaning.
- Their supervisor would want them to deal with this problem themselves, as he has many jobs that he is overseeing.
- They are not sure if anyone else needs any help.

Sophie goes out to see the other workers to ask if they could use their assistance. The on-site labourers have materials to move in after lunch if they want to help.

Choose a solution: Clean up until noon and help the labourers after lunch.

Use the solution: Joseph and Sophie follow this new plan, and Sophie emails her supervisor at the end of the day to let him know about the electrician not coming and what work they did to keep him up to date.

During this problem solving, Joseph and Sophie both had ideas that were put on the list. They wrote down all their ideas and then evaluated them later. They did not say no to each other's ideas. They waited until the list was made and talked each one over practically. This way each person felt heard and valued.

Helpful Problem Solving Language

Nothing feels like more of a workplace accomplishment than overcoming an issue with your team. When working through a problem with others, there are certain things you can say to keep your group on task. Some ideas work better in a leadership role, but many can be used by any group member to help when people do not agree or are not staying focused.

Here are some examples of helpful problem solving phrases:

1. I did not realize this was going on, so tell me more about it.
2. I want to listen to your point of view, but I cannot do it as well when you are upset.
3. We all need to put more effort into this if it is going to work.
4. Why do you not agree with my idea?
5. We are having trouble reaching an agreement; let us take a break to think about it and come back to work on more solutions.
6. What can we do differently to improve things in our group?
7. Let us take a moment and clear the air and then get back to work.
8. What can I do to help you with this work?
9. What do you think this team effort needs to be more successful?
10. Let us pick our two best options, do a secret vote, and go with the majority.



Activity 1: Choosing the Right Language

Read the following examples and choose a problem solving phrase from the previous page that would help the best in each situation. Write the number of the phrase you have chosen beside each situation.

1. Your team is stressed and some of the members are being irritable with each other. _____
2. One of your team members comes to you to tell you that a fellow teammate is asking for extra work, so she does not have to attend the team planning meeting. _____

3. One of your teammates just yells out, “No,” when you share your ideas. _____
4. One of the members of the team has been having health problems and is finding his share of the work overwhelming. _____
5. None of the team can agree on just one solution. _____
6. One of the team members is talking to another about what a joke the team is. _____
7. When you tell one of the team why you think his idea will not work, he starts yelling at you. _____
8. You realize that your team might not meet their deadline. _____

Activity 2: Solving a Workplace Problem



Last year, after 10 years of loyal service, Tom was promoted to a front-line supervisor position at the factory. Tom became responsible for taking over several tasks at the factory. One of those tasks was to monitor attendance for every employee at the factory and give a bonus each month to the factory workers who have perfect attendance for that month.

This month, one of the workers missed a day due to a loss in the family. The worker starts crying on the floor in front of the area that Tom supervises and tells Tom that she needs the bonus desperately since she is behind on her rent. The rules are clear and the bonus has only ever been awarded for perfect attendance in a month.

There have never been any ifs, and or buts in the whole time Tom has worked at the factory. However, Tom does have the authority to make exceptions to the rule if he wants to do so.

Using the problem solving method shown above, help Tom solve this problem.

1. Identify the problem.

2. Brainstorm any ideas you can think of that may help solve the problem. Be creative. Share any ideas that you may have.

3. Write the ideas down.

4. Evaluate (discuss) each idea on the list. Cover the pros and cons of each idea. A table is provided for you on the next page.

Idea	Pros	Cons

5. Choose a solution. Explain why this was your choice.

Lesson 4: Becoming a Good Problem Solver

Problem solving is an important soft skill, but did you know that being a good problem solver also involves other soft skills? There are skills that you can build to help you when dealing with problems.

Read the information in this lesson, which lists and describes helpful soft skills for problem solving.

Believing in Yourself (Self-Confidence)



Being confident in your approach is important, and as you learn which strategies work best for making decisions and working through problems, your confidence will grow in these areas.

Believing in yourself can help you find the strength to deal with problems. It will also help you when communicating with others about workplace problems. Your self-esteem is the confidence you have in yourself. A lot of self-esteem comes from treating yourself well. See the poster on the next page for some tips on how to improve your self-esteem.

How to Build Self-Esteem

Set your own boundaries and say no when needed.

Do not compare yourself to others. Be the best you.

See challenges as chances to grow.

Talk positively about yourself.

Take time for yourself.

Exercise often.

Activity 1: Building Self Esteem

1. To learn more about being the best you, please open your browser (Chrome, Edge, Safari, Firefox, etc.) and type this site into your address bar.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOrmS8vJDQw>



or go to YouTube.com and search - Stop comparing yourself to others Dean Furness

1. What advice is given to the audience by Dean Furness in this video?

2. Read the letter seeking advice below, and research some of the tips from the poster online to help the writer in your response.

Dear May,

I read your advice column all the time. I have been at my new job for a month. I find it hard to say no to helping my co-workers with their work during the day. I want everyone to like me. I am always staying late to finish my reports and therefore get home in time to eat quickly and go to bed. It seems like I am working much harder to do the same job that the others are doing. I am starting to think I might be hopeless. I have some good ideas on how to do the reports in a shorter amount of time, but I doubt anyone will listen to my ideas. Can you give me any advice at how to succeed at this new job, so I can be as good as the people with whom I am working?

Thank you,

Worried at Work

Dear Worried at Work,

Signed,

Listening Skills



Active listening skills are necessary in problem solving as they help you to learn important information from everyone involved. Listening shows your team that you are interested in all their opinions and ideas. This encourages them to be open about any problem and to take part in offering solutions.

Being a Good Listener



There are many ways to be a good listener. We learn a lot by listening to others. **Really listening helps when understanding other people's wants and needs** and that can help when looking for solutions that will work for everyone.

When listening, try to make eye contact and avoid thinking of what you are going to say while the person is talking. Often, we do not fully listen to people because we know what we want to say next and are just

waiting for them to stop talking to say it. Being focused on what you are trying to say can be distracting.

Repeating information back to the person while using your own words can also help with listening. This is called paraphrasing.

Look at the conversation below to see how Ming does this when talking to Jin, her supervisor.

Jin: Ming, I want you to come in an hour early on Saturday.

Ming: An hour early... so at 9am?

Jin: Yes, I need you to set up the backroom for a brunch and a presentation that is happening at 10.

Ming: So, the back room is rented and needs to be set-up?

Jin: Yes. It will be for thirty people, and they want the tables set up in groups of six.

Ming: Ok, five tables with six chairs and you want the usual set up?

Jin: Yes. That would be good. I will get you the menu this afternoon.

Ming: Ok. I will come in early to set up the backroom on Saturday.

Jin: That is great! Thank you, Ming.

Activity 2: Finding Information in a Conversation

Read the conversation between Ming and her boss above and answer the questions below.

1. What information does Ming repeat back in her own words (paraphrase) to her boss?

Flexibility and Adaptability



Sometimes things do not go the way they are supposed to go. An important soft skill in any workplace situation is being able to adapt to sudden changes or unexpected occurrences.

Flexibility is the ability to accept changes or modifications.

Adaptability is the ability to accept new tasks, or situations.

Change is the only constant in life. One's ability to adapt to those changes will determine your success in life.

-Benjamin Franklin

Problem solving often leads to change. Being open to new ideas and differences in the workplace means you can be a better problem solver. When you deal with an issue; being open to all options and willing to accept whatever changes come along when solving the problem, then you will be able to plan your solutions in a positive way.

Adaptable and flexible employees are highly valued by their employers. Therefore, an employee must be able to come up to speed quickly and adjust to new circumstances. Sometimes, it is easy to get wrapped up in the stress that comes along with workplace change so much that you do not face the change head on. You work against it instead of with it.

Deciding to try new things at work and **keeping a positive, flexible mindset** will help you be a great and valued employee.

Activity 3: Exploring Flexibility and Adaptability

1. Carlos is working as a labourer for a construction company. The boss's son is covering for Carlos's boss, who is off because of illness. The boss's son asks the workers to measure the floor first and pre-cut pieces for it all at once instead of measuring and laying flooring as they go. He needs to take the large saw to a project on the other side of the building.

Carlos becomes frustrated and argues about the new directions. He thinks it will be harder to do and easier to make mistakes. When the boss's son tells him that he has to do it the new way for today, Carlos walks away to cool off. He comes back over thirty minutes later while the other workers are cutting the floorboards. The boss' son tells him to get back to work. He mentions that the workers on the other side of the building will have to be paid to work late now because Carlos left angry.

1. What should Carlos have done differently in this situation?

2. What do you think the boss' son will do?

3. Sheila works at a market outside the grocery store selling flowers and plants. There is a terrible rainstorm, and she is unable to run her stand. The boss tells Sheila to go into the store because they need help sweeping and washing counters. Sheila does not think this is her job and dislikes cleaning. What should she do?

Resiliency

Resiliency is the ability to cope with change and challenges, and to recover or ‘bounce back’ during those difficult times. Resilient people understand that things change, often unexpectedly without warning. They also accept that these changes are sometimes beyond their control. In terms of planning a path, these changes are the bumps in the road, the detours, and the roadblocks.

Complete the survey in the following activity to find out how resilient you are right now.

Activity 4: How Resilient Are You?

Resilience is a term used to describe a person’s ability to recover or adapt to change well and quickly.

This survey allows you to explore your level of resilience. Some statements will describe you better than others. There are no right or wrong answers.

Read each statement on the next page and indicate how much the statement is like you - using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Never Like Me	Seldom Like Me	About Half the Time Like Me	Usually Like Me	Always Like Me

Statement	Rating
1 - I am a curious person who liked to ask questions and wants to know how things work.	
2 - I can handle my emotions well when changes happen in my life (anger, frustration, being sad, etc.).	
3 - I try to turn things around for myself even when they are not going well.	
4 - I can come up with creative ways of meeting challenges by finding new ways to solve problems or by trusting my intuition (hunches).	
5 – Looking back, I can see that I am a better and stronger person after having overcome negative experiences and situations.	
6 - I try to predict when problems are going to happen and take steps to avoid or stop them.	
7 - I can adapt to change in my life in healthy ways (for example, listening to music or talking about my feelings; not using alcohol, drugs, or smoking to cope with stress).	
8 - I often find myself learning from experiences and I can take that learning and use it in other situations in the future.	
9 - I take good care of myself.	

10 - I can learn from the experiences of others and apply those lessons to my own life.	
11 - I work at improving my self-confidence daily.	
12 - I am hopeful during tough situations that things will work out well in the end.	
13 - I am a good listener and respond to others with empathy (the ability to understand the feelings of others).	
14 - I feel okay with myself or others having mixed emotions or reactions (for example, cautious and trusting, sensitive and strong, being unselfish and focusing on self-care).	
15 - I try to find the funny side of situations by laughing at myself and I try to see the positive side of sudden changes.	

Scoring:

The higher the score, the higher the degree of resilience you see yourself as having.

Maximum score is 75.

Add up the numbers you filled into the rating column. Divide your total by 75 and then multiply by 100 to get your resiliency percentage.

Your Results

My percentage was: _____

The statements in the survey discuss personal qualities, mindsets, and behaviours that can help you adapt to changes in life; the qualities that can make you more resilient.

For example:

1 - I am a curious person who tends to ask questions and wants to know how things work.	The personal quality reflected in this statement is <i>curiosity</i> . The behaviours it reflects are <i>showing an interest</i> in things and <i>having a desire to learn</i> .
---	--

Activity 5: Exploring Resiliency

1. Highlight **two** statements for which you gave yourself the highest ratings and complete the chart below:

Statement #	a) Identify the resiliency trait. b) What personal quality, attitude, or behaviour does the statement describe?	Describe a situation where you demonstrated this resiliency trait.

2. If your scores were not as high as you hoped, do not worry.

Watch the video below on ways to become more resilient.



Open your web browser (Chrome, Edge, Firefox, Safari, etc.) and type the following address into your address bar:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNCL1glwyOI>

Or, go to YouTube.com and search:

10 Ways to Build and Develop Resilience, Art of Improvement

Name two ways mentioned in the video to improve your resiliency.

Collaboration (Teamwork)

Good problem solving requires teamwork. You need to work closely with your team to ask about their thoughts on the problem and involve them in discussing solutions. Even after you choose the solution, strong teamwork is necessary to track its progress (how the solution is working out) and discuss feedback.

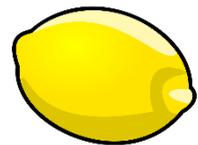
You and the team will need to stick together to remain on task and work towards goals. This may mean encouraging each other at work when changes happen. When you solve a problem together, it makes your team work better and then it is easier to tackle anything new that might come up.

Communicating with your team will also help you understand **what each person wants and why**, which can be very helpful when deciding what to do.

Activity 6: Understanding the 'Why'

The Lemon

There is one lemon available for five people who all want to use it.



There is a cook, a child, a busker, an artist, and a cashier.

They ask you to help them solve their problem.

If you were going to do it right now, it might be very difficult to offer a solution.

After asking why each person wants the lemon, you find out that:

- The cook wants to use the lemon rind for a recipe.
- The child wants to use the lemon to make lemonade.
- The busker wants to juggle the lemon.
- The artist wants to paint a picture of the lemon.
- The cashier wants to sell the lemon.

Now, that you know the reason each person wants the lemon, fill in the chart shown on the next page.

1. Identify the problem	
2. Brainstorm an idea or ideas -----	
3. Write the idea or ideas down	
4 Evaluate the idea(s) Pros/Cons Why is the idea good or bad?	
5. Choose a solution	
6. Share the solution with the 5 people. -----	

Activity 7: Assessing your Problem Solving Soft Skills

Now that you have read about the skills needed when problem solving, rate your current skill levels on the assessment below. There are no wrong answers.

<i>RATE YOUR</i>									
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS									
LOOK AT THE SOFT SKILL AREAS BELOW AND RATE YOURSELF BETWEEN 1-10 WITH HOW SELF-AWARE AND CONFIDENT YOU ARE IN EACH CATEGORY.									
BELIEVING IN MYSELF									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NOT VERY					EXTREMELY				
MY ABILITY TO BE OPEN-MINDED									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NOT VERY					EXTREMELY				
HAVING A FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NOT VERY					EXTREMELY				
MY TEAMWORKING SKILLS									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NOT VERY					EXTREMELY				
MY ABILITY TO LISTEN EFFECTIVELY									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NOT VERY					EXTREMELY				

CESBA - Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills

1. Please share which skill you rated the lowest and why.

2. Share your thoughts on how you might improve your lowest-rated skill on the lines below.

Review Task #1: Knowledge Check



Answer the following multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions to check your knowledge of this course. You may look back over the lessons in this course while completing this review task at any time.

1. Which decision making method suggests thinking about the other people who will be affected by your decision?

- a) SODAS
- b) Flow down the river
- c) The masquerade
- d) The lemon

2. Being a good typist is an example of:

- a) a soft skill.
- b) a hard skill.

3. Being a good listener is an example of:

- a) a soft skill.
- b) a hard skill.

4. Using focus when decision making at work means:

- a) thinking of the culture, values, and preferences of others at work.
- b) doing what is only best for you.
- c) getting someone else to make the decision for you.
- d) drinking a lot of coffee.

5. Using a flow chart to explore options, is called:

- a) the masquerade.
- b) the chart method.
- c) SODAS.
- d) flow down the river.

6. When using the SODAS decision making strategy advantages and disadvantages are also referred to as: _____ and _____.

7. When looking for a solution to an issue you must first identify the _____.

8. After you have evaluated all the ideas, you should choose a _____.

9. Which of the following are good ways to build your self-esteem?

a) Exercising often.

b) Basing your self-esteem on what other people accomplish.

c) Saying nice things about yourself.

d) Saying yes to everything you are asked to do all the time.

e) Taking some time for yourself to recharge your energy.

f) Seeing a challenge as a chance to grow and learn.

Review Task #2: Matching Skills

Look at the soft skills below and match each one with the explanation of why that skill helps with problem solving in the workplace.

Decision Making

You need this skill so you can include other people's thoughts on a problem and work together. It will help find a solution and with tracking how that solution worked out over time.

Resilience

The ability to accept changes or modifications. It is a skill that is highly valued by employers.

Collaboration

There could be times that it is up to you at work to use this skill and make a choice. This skill can help you decide on the best solution.

Flexibility

The ability to brainstorm ideas, assess situations and calmly come up with solutions to issues.

Listening

The ability to cope with change and challenges, and to recover or 'bounce back' during difficult times.

Problem solving

These skills are necessary in problem solving as they help you to learn important information from everyone involved. It shows your team that you are interested in all their opinions and ideas.

Final Task: Finding a 'What If' Solution

'What If' situations require adaptability. In interviews, employers will often ask you questions starting with 'What If' to see how you will handle a situation. This shows them that you can make good decisions and problem solve when faced with unexpected scenarios.

Read the scenario below.

Example:

What if you were working alone at an ice cream parlor on a hot summer day and there was a power outage? At the parlor, the power needs to be on to keep the ice cream and the ice cream treats from melting.

What plans would you make once it was clear that the power is not going to come back on for a while.

On a separate piece of paper, use one of the tools you learned in this course to decide how to handle this situation.



Congratulations! You have finished this course.

Skills for Success: Problem Solving and Decision Making in the Workplace – Marking Guide

Lesson 1: What are Soft Skills?

Activity 1: Hard and Soft Skills

Hard Skills	Soft Skills
<i>knowledge of Office programs</i>	<i>adaptable</i>
<i>Google apps</i>	<i>friendly</i>
<i>typing 40+ wpm</i>	<i>communication skills</i>
<i>knowledge of French</i>	<i>time management</i>
	<i>self-starter</i>
	<i>independent</i>

Lesson 2: Decision Making

Activity 1: Using the SODAS Decision Making Process

1. The Situation: *The manager is going away for a month and has asked Sarah to be acting manager while she is away.*

Decision #1 – *To be acting manager*

Decision #2 – *To not be acting manager*

Pros and Cons

Possible sample answers shown on the next page.

Option #1: To be acting manager	
Pros	Cons
<i>The position recognizes her hard work.</i>	<i>She will have to pay a sitter twice a week instead of once a week.</i>
<i>She will get paid more money.</i>	<i>She will have to take the subway at night twice a week.</i>
<i>More money will help her save for a car.</i>	<i>She does not know the job.</i>
<i>She will get more shifts.</i>	<i>Less time with her son.</i>
<i>She will learn new skills at work that might help her become a manager.</i>	
<i>She will get to start her weekend earlier.</i>	
Option #2: To not be acting manager.	
Pros	Cons
<i>More time at home with her son.</i>	<i>She may not get given an opportunity again at the store.</i>
<i>She will not need a babysitter.</i>	<i>She will not learn management skills or get extra training.</i>
<i>Not having to take the subway a second night.</i>	<i>She will have less money to buy herself a car.</i>

<i>She will not worry if she can do the job well.</i>	
---	--

Learner chooses the decision that they think is best for Sarah and provides two reasons why from the lists that they have created.

Activity 2: Using the Masquerade Approach

Pierre's decision based on the masquerade approach should be to stay where he is because most of the people that he is considering other than the one who has offered him the job, would benefit more from that decision.

Activity 3: Exploring the Flow Down the River Approach

1. What factors did Kaya consider when making her decision?

Kaya considered the eating preferences of her co-workers, along with choosing somewhere that her co-worker with anxiety would feel more comfortable.

2. Why do you think these places were not chosen as the best option?

a) What's Your Beef (steak house)

The steak house had no options for her vegetarian co-workers and did not have a private room for the party.

b) Chez Pierre (fine dining restaurant)

Kaya was worried about the price of meals for her co-workers so close to the holidays.

3. Do you think Kaya chose the best place for the party? Why or why not? Explain your answer.

I believe Kaya chose the best place for the party because the buffet restaurant was the one that met the needs of her co-workers.

Activity 4: Review of Focus in Decision Making

1. Kaya can go ahead and send this to her boss. Yes, or no? *No*
2. What part of Kaya's original focus did she forget when she made this poster?
*She forgot that people at her workplace have different cultural beliefs.
Might not celebrate Christmas.*
3. If you think the poster needs to be changed, which changes should Kaya make before giving it to her boss?
She should change the name of the party (suggestions may include holiday party, work party, winter party, etc.) and take off the Christmas symbols on the invite.

Lesson 3: Problem Solving

Activity 1: Choosing the Right Language

1. Your team is stressed and some of the members are being irritable with each other. *5*
2. One of your team members comes to you to tell you that a fellow teammate is asking for extra work, so she does not have to attend the team planning meeting. *1*
3. One of your teammates, just yells out, "No," when you share your ideas. *4*
4. One of the members of the team has been having health problems and is finding his share of the work overwhelming. *8*
5. None of the team can agree on just one solution. *10*
6. One of the team members is talking to another about what a joke the team is. *6*
7. When you tell one of the team why you think his idea will not work, he starts yelling at you. *2*
8. You realize that your team might not meet their deadline. *3*

Activity 2: Solving a Workplace Problem

1. Identify the problem.

Tom gives bonuses for monthly attendance. An employee who missed a day in the month still wants her bonus to help pay rent.

2. Brainstorm any ideas you can think of that may help solve the problem. Be creative. Share any ideas that you may have.

3. Write the ideas down.

Answers may vary. *Sample answers:*

Tom can give the employee the bonus.

Tom can follow the rules and not give the employee the bonus.

Tom can talk to the workers at the factory and see what they think.

4. Evaluate (discuss) each idea on the list. Cover the pros and cons of each idea.

Idea	Pros	Cons
<i>Tom can give the employee the bonus.</i>	<i>Employee can pay her rent. Being nice to someone who lost a family member.</i>	<i>Other employees might expect special treatment if they miss days too. It goes against the system.</i>
<i>Tom can follow the rules and not give the employee the bonus.</i>	<i>Tom keeps to the way things have always been. The employee has missed a day so does not have perfect attendance. Tom treats everyone the same way and does not show special treatment.</i>	<i>The employee cannot pay rent. Tom may seem mean in front of his workers for not helping his employee.</i>
<i>Tom can talk to the workers at the factory and see what they think</i>	<i>This way it will be decided in a way everyone agrees upon. Tom will seem fair and interested in his employee's opinions.</i>	<i>Will be hard to decide if the worker's opinions vary. Other workers may ask for the same treatment if they miss days in a month.</i>

5. Choose a solution.

Learner chooses a solution and explains why that solution was chosen.

Lesson 4: Becoming a Good Problem Solver

Activity 1: Building Self Esteem

1. *His advice is not comparing yourself to others or even to things you could do in the past.*

2. *Answers will vary, might include:*

Not comparing yourself to others, not doing as much of other people's work, taking more time for self-care, speak more positively about yourself, not to give up, to believe in yourself.

Activity 2: Finding Information in a Conversation

Ming paraphrases the following information in her own words:

Coming in an hour early at 9am, setting up the backroom, the number of table and chairs, and the day of the week that she will be in early.

Activity 3: Exploring Flexibility and Adaptability

1. *Answers will vary. The expected answer is that Carlos should have been flexible and gone along with the plans. His actions negatively affected everyone.*

2. *Answers will vary. Sample answer:*

The son may tell Carlos' boss, and this could ruin Carlos' credibility at work because it makes him look like a difficult employee.

3. *Answers will vary. Sample answer:*

Sheila should go with the flow and do what she is asked to do. It shows she can be adaptable, and it is only for that day.

Activity 4: How Resilient Are You?

Learner completes survey, totals survey, and calculates percentage of resiliency.

Activity 5: Exploring Resiliency

1. *Learner chooses 2 statements from the survey and shares a personal experience for each of those statements.*

2. *Learner lists two of the 10 ways to become more resilient listed in the video.*

1 – Be proactive

2 – Protect your downtime

3 – Change your mind set about adversity

4 - Build relationships

5 – Focus on the present

- 6 – Know that Life Is not Fair
- 7 – Stay flexible
- 8 – Focus on What you Can Change
- 9 – Be grateful
- 10 – Practice resilience

Activity 6: Understanding the ‘Why’

Answers will vary. Learner should share one idea and then evaluate that idea.

1. Identify the problem	<i>Everyone wants to use the one lemon - cook, cashier, child, busker, artist</i>
2. Brainstorm an idea or ideas -----	
3. Write the idea or ideas down	<i>1. The cashier can sell the lemon to the artist. The artist then paints the lemon and gives it to the busker. The busker juggles the lemon and then gives it to the child who squeezes it for lemonade and gives the rind to the cook. 2. To pick one person to be the only one who gets the lemon.</i>
4 Evaluate the idea(s) Pros/Cons Why is the idea good or bad?	<i>Decision 1 - Pros - everyone gets to use the lemon. It is a good idea because it fits everyone’s needs. Cons – The busker may drop and squash the lemon while using it making it hard to be used for lemonade by the child. Decision 2- Pros – one person will be happy. No one will be fighting about the lemon. Cons – four people will be unhappy. Not everyone gets to use the lemon. Will be hard to choose who gets the lemon.</i>
5. Choose a solution	<i>To have all 5 share the one lemon. The cashier can sell the lemon to the artist. The artist then paints the lemon and gives it to the busker. The busker juggles the lemon and then gives it to the child who squeezes it for lemonade and gives the rind to the cook.</i>
6. Share the solution with the 5 people. -----	

Activity 7: Assessing your Problem solving Soft Skills

Learner must complete assessment and answer questions 1 and 2 by discussing the 2 that were lowest rated and how he/she will improve on those skills.

Review Task #1: Knowledge Check

1. Which decision making method suggests thinking about the other people who will be affected by your decision? *c) The masquerade*

2. Being a good typist is an example of: *b) a hard skill.*

3. Being a good listener is an example of: *a) a soft skill.*

4. Using focus when decision making at work means:

a) thinking of the culture, values, and preferences of others at work.

5. Using a flow chart to explore options, is called:

d) flow down the river.

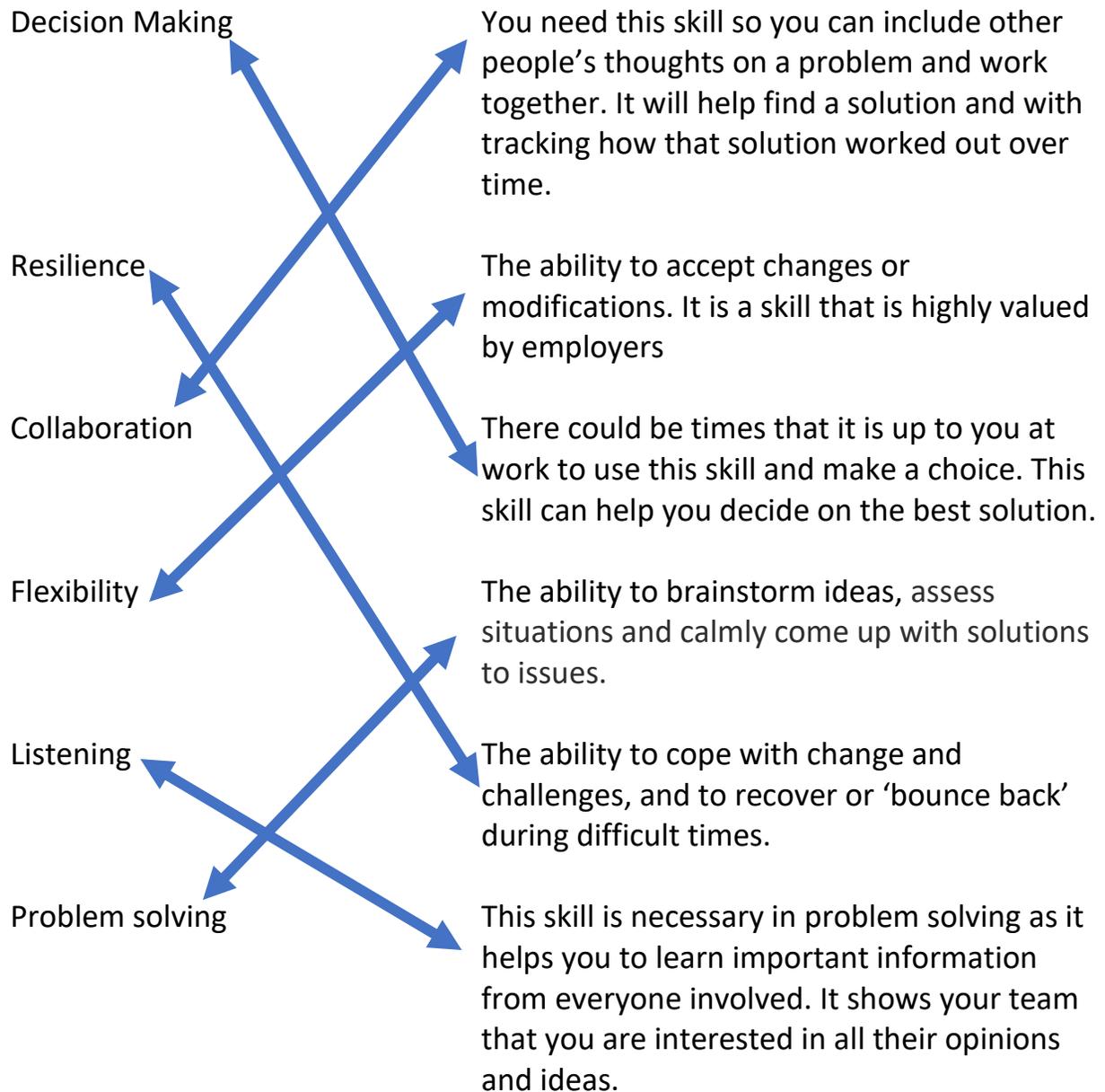
6. When using the SODAS decision making strategy, the advantages and disadvantages are also referred to as: pros and cons.

7. When looking for a solution to an issue you must first identify the problem .

8. After you have evaluated all the ideas, you should choose a solution.

9. Which of the following are good ways to build your self-esteem?

- a) Exercising often.
- c) Saying nice things about yourself.
- e) Taking some time for yourself to recharge your energy.
- f) Seeing a challenge as a chance to grow and learn.



Final Task: Finding a 'What If' Solution

Answers will vary. Learner must apply what they have learned in this course when working on a solution.

Some past creative answers have included: having a 50% off ice cream sale, charging people in the neighborhood \$10 each for all the ice cream they can eat, or finding someone who can lend a generator and plugging in as many freezers at a time as possible to keep most of the ice cream from melting. Acceptable answers are at the discretion of the instructor.