

**CURRICULUM RESOURCE**

Workplace Skills, Strategies, and Know-How: Changes in the Workplace

**OALCF ALIGNMENT**

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	2
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A2. Interpret documents	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B3. Complete and create documents	2

**Goal Paths (check all that apply)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment   | <input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship          | <input type="checkbox"/> Independence  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School Credit |  |

**Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adaptability              | <input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creativity and innovation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital                              |   |

**NOTES:** Part eleven of an eleven-part series on workplace norms for employed learners.

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## WORKPLACE SKILLS, STRATEGIES, AND KNOW-HOW

### Note for practitioners:

This series of **Skills for Success Curriculum Resources** is a beginner's guide to the modern workplace for LBS learners. The goal is to provide essential tools to employed learners, or learners seeking employment, so that they can thrive as employees. This series considers personal development topics ranging from conflict resolution to time management; topics focused on changes in the workplace; and mental health issues like stress management.

The overall focus of the series is on helping employees (or aspiring employees) understand their rights and responsibilities.

These resources are learner-based and activity-focused, with each topic area serving as a mini-lesson, followed by personalized activities. The activities invite learners to respond to lesson material or explore their own ideas on the subject.

The series is divided into eleven sections that can be used separately or in tandem:

- Your Rights in the Workplace
- Adaptability in the Workplace
- Collaboration in the Workplace
- Communication in the Workplace
- Creativity and Innovation in the Workplace
- Problem Solving in the Workplace
- Work-Related Stress
- Time-management
- Conflict Resolution
- Self-Advocacy
- Changes in the Workplace

# WORKPLACE SKILLS, STRATEGIES, AND KNOW-HOW: CHANGES IN THE WORKPLACE

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*This is Section Eleven, Workplace Skills, Strategies, and Know-How:  
Changes in the Workplace*

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## Overview

Are you currently employed? Are you about to start a new job? There are many things about the modern workplace that you may not know.

This resource series is designed to help you get the most out of your employment. When you have a job, there are several important questions you should ask:

- What are my rights?
- How can I advocate for myself?
- How should I expect to be treated on the job?
- What are the expectations at a modern workplace?
- What has changed at workplaces over the last few years?
- How can I be my best at:
  - conflict resolution
  - time-management
  - communication

You may also face other challenges on the job. Do you have concerns about:

- stress on the job
- mental health at your workplace

This resource series will consider these topics and more. Participate in the lessons and activities, and you will learn to get the most out of the modern workplace.



## Introduction

Have you recently started a new job? Have you been working somewhere for a while? Either way, change is something you must deal with at work. Workplaces evolve over time. As an employee, it's helpful to learn ways to adapt to workplace changes.

Some of the ways your workplace might change include:

- introduction of new technology or equipment
- introduction of new rules and regulations
- changes in expectations from management
- changes to roles or to how tasks are completed
- changes to personnel through hirings and layoffs
- changes to the workplace itself (building or location)

This resource will discuss how you can adapt to changes in the workplace. It will teach you how to improve your adaptability skills.



**Let's discuss!**

Soon we will learn more about changes in the workplace. First let's talk about **your** situation. Check the boxes that apply to you:

- ☐ I find change stressful or difficult.
- ☐ I get nervous when asked to take on new responsibilities.
- ☐ I like to have a routine and stick to it.
- ☐ I find new opportunities exciting.



Are you in a different situation? Discuss with your teacher or partner.



## Your Goals!

It's time to think about your **goals**:

1. Are you currently looking for work? Yes ☐ No ☐
2. If so, what sort of work interests you? Discuss with your teacher and partner.
3. How do you think **adapting to workplace changes** might help you at work?



## Optional Task!

Do this now or when you have more time:

- Make a list of five jobs that interest you.
  - Now re-write the list.
  - Put the job you'd like most at the top.
  - Then put the job you'd like second-most. And so on.
  - Do any of these jobs involve the use of technology or equipment?
- Jobs that involve technology have changed a lot over the last few years. In some jobs, you may have to learn to use new apps or computer programs.

## Adapting to Change

### Adapting to Change

Change is a constant at work. Businesses are always looking for advantages and improvements. These changes can be challenging. But they might also mean new and exciting opportunities.

You will manage change better if you:

- try to accept the change and stay positive
- reflect on the changes
- communicate your feelings
- try to be patient and keep trying
- learn to **adapt** to the change

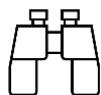
**The good news:** adaptation is a skill that you can improve. The more you prepare and practice, the better you will be at handling change. Let's discuss some ways to improve your adaptability skills.

#### 1. Accept the Change

You can't adapt to change until you accept that the change has happened. Change at work can be overwhelming. It can feel like you are losing something good and familiar.

But there may also be positives to the change. We don't see these positives, if we focus on the negatives.

- Try to **change your focus** and look for positives.
- Try to reframe the change as an **opportunity**.



### An Example:

An employee has worked as a cashier at Canadian Tire for three years. One day the manager says that the store is getting new cash registers. All the cashiers will have to learn to use the new cash registers. The cashier is used to the old machines. They are nervous to use the new machines. The change feels negative and overwhelming.



The cashier uses the new machines for a week. They find that the new machines are tricky in some ways. The buttons are in different places. The screen is laid out differently.

But they also find that the new cash registers work faster. They get used to the layout of the buttons and screens. They find that the new screens are easier to read. The buttons are still confusing. But they are not as worn down as the old buttons.

The cashier makes a list and finds there are more pros than cons:

#### Pros

new registers work faster  
new screens are easier to read  
new buttons are not as worn down

#### Cons

new registers are tricky to learn  
new buttons are still confusing

- The cashier tries to focus on the pros.
- This helps them **accept** and then **embrace** the change.



### New Task!

1. Have you experienced change at work? Are you experiencing change at work right now? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
2. Make a list of the pros and cons about the change at your workplace.

#### Pros

#### Cons

3. What part of the change do you like the best? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
4. What part of the change do you find most challenging? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
5. Does the change present the chance for new opportunities? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
6. Do you feel that you can adapt to the change? Discuss with your teacher or partner.

## Reflect on Your Feelings

### 2. Reflect on Your Feelings

One of the best ways to deal with change is to try to understand your feelings. This can be a very confusing time. There may be exciting aspects to the change. There may be scary aspects.

To be clear on what you're feeling, you need to reflect:

- Take time to sit with your thoughts.
- Make lists like the pros and cons list above.
- Talk through your feelings with loved ones or trusted friends.
- Write down reflections about your feelings.



#### **New Task!**

Do this reflection exercise after work or on the weekends.

1. Dedicate a notebook to recording your feelings about the changes at work.
2. Try to write down what you are feeling as often as you can. Record your thoughts about the workplace changes. Record your worries and fears. Record your hopes.
3. Keep the journal private. This is only for you. That way, you can be honest about what you feel.
4. Continue to record your thoughts and feelings for a month or more. Check back on how your feelings have changed by re-reading the journal.

## Communicate Your Feelings

### 3. Communicate Your Feelings

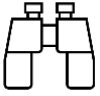
To cope with change, sometimes you should do more than reflect on your feelings. Sometimes you should communicate how you are feeling with your manager and co-workers.

You might want to express things, like that you:

- find the changes challenging
- are confused
- are feeling overwhelmed or upset
- might need time to adjust
- have questions about the changes
- need some extra support

But **remember**: in the workplace you must communicate in a **professional** manner. Follow the communication tips below:

- Ask to speak privately.
- Be aware of your emotions and be sure you are calm.
- If not, take deep breaths through the nose to calm down.
- Wait until it's your turn to speak.
- Speak with confidence by being clear and loud enough.
- Make eye contact.
- Be aware of non-verbal cues like smiling and frowning.
- Listen carefully to replies.
- Show you understand by nodding or giving a thumbs up.

**An Example:**

An employee has been a warehouse worker for many years. They are told that the warehouse is going to begin using a new computer system. The new system means a change to how things are organized in the warehouse. This will mean changes to how the warehouse worker does their job.

The warehouse worker is anxious about the changes. They are angry that they have to learn something new. They express this anger by yelling at the manager in front of co-workers. They interrupt the manager and yell. They do not listen to the manager's response. The manager sends the warehouse worker home with a warning.

**Reflect!**

It's time to reflect on what you have learned:

1. Read the example above about the warehouse worker.
2. Consider the list of tips on the previous page. How could the warehouse worker have communicated better?
3. What might have changed if they communicated better?



### New Task!

What do you want to communicate after a change at work?

1. Make a list of things you want to express to your manager about the change at work. Fill in all three parts of the lists: concerns, support, and questions.

What feelings and concerns do you want to express:

What support might you need the adjust to the changes:

What questions do you have about the changes:

## Patience and Not Giving Up

### 4. Patience and Not Giving Up

Adapting to change doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. You need to give yourself the chance to adjust. You need to get used to the new way things are.

Are you dealing with the way a new manager operates?

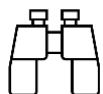
- Take the time to learn their expectations and communication styles.

Are you dealing with new responsibilities or roles?

- Remember that you will learn and improve with time.

Are you dealing with new technology or systems?

- Remember that things get easier with practice. And practice makes perfect.



#### An Example:

An employee has been a retail worker at the Hudson Bay Company for two years. For all that time they had the same sales manager. But now the manager has changed. The new manager has a different communication style. The new manager is louder and bossier. They suggest ways the retail worker can do better.

The retail worker struggles to adjust at first. They are offended by the criticism. They consider quitting. But they stayed patient. They kept trying to learn. After a while they became used to the new manager's style. They begin to appreciate the extra guidance. Under the new manager, they have been pushed to improve. They begin to increase their sales.



### Reflect!

It's time to reflect on what you have learned:

1. Read the example above about the retail worker.
2. How did they use patience and not giving up? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
3. What was the result of their using patience and not giving up? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
4. Are you a patient person? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
5. Make a list of ways that you have had to change at work:
6. Make a list of ways that you have improved at work:



### New Task!

Redo your pros and cons list after a month.

1. Think again about the workplace change you discussed earlier in this resource. Have you adapted? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
2. Make another list of the pros and cons about the change at your workplace.

### Pros

### Cons

3. Has the list shifted at all? Have some cons become pros? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
4. Has the change at work caused you to improve in any way? Discuss with your teacher or partner.
5. Has the change resulted any new achievements for you? Discuss with your teacher or partner.

## Record Your Successes

### 5. Record Your Successes

As you learn, practice, and improve, you will have some successes. Change in the workplace might require you to try new things. It might make you come out of your comfort zone. When you succeed, you grow.

These are all reasons to give change a chance. But it's important to keep track of your successes as they happen. Take note of your successes big and small.

Did change at work:

- make you learn a new skill?
- help you improve in your role?
- help you become more effective or efficient at a task?
- lead you to a new achievement?
- help you learn more about your job, your co-workers, or the workplace?



#### **New Task!**

After a change at work, keep track of your successes for one week.

Discuss these successes with your teacher or partner.

## Practice Self Care

### 6. Practice Self-Care

Stay positive! Share your feelings! These steps are important when dealing with change at work.

But the truth is that sometimes change at work is upsetting. Sometimes things do get worse. Sometimes there is no easy fix.

If this feels like the case to you, it's important to practice self-care. Be gentle with yourself and use self-care to get through the worst of it. Some self-care steps you can take include:

- Practice reflection and journalling.
- Read over your reflections.
- Read over the successes you have recorded.
- Try to eat healthier.
- Try to exercise.
- Be grateful for the good things in your life and write them down.
- Spend time with loved ones and friends.
- Try to be resilient.
- But also be forgiving to yourself.
- Seek professional help.



- **Self-care** will help you cope with change. But don't hesitate to seek help. There are professional help contacts at the end of this resource.



### New Task!

How does change at work cause you stress?

Make a list of changes that might cause you stress at work:

Consult the self-care list above. What self-care strategies would you use to help:

Discuss your lists with a teacher or partner.

## Skills for Success

### Skills for Success and Work-Related Stress

The **Skills for Success** (SFS) are the everyday skills Canadians need for work, learning and life. Several SFS are required to you adjust to changes at work:

- **Adaptability.** Changes at work will require you to adapt. Learn adaptation skills to make these changes smoother and build resilience.
- **Communication.** Good communication will help you handle change at work. You will be better able to ask for support and communicate your feelings.
- **Problem Solving.** Dealing with change requires identifying the problem. Then think about it carefully. Then work toward a solution.
- **Creativity and Innovation.** Sometimes addressing change requires creativity. Imagine how your situation could improve. Use your skills and creative thinking to get there.



What are your strongest SFS? Which do you most need to work on?  
Discuss with your teacher or partner.

#### Reflect!

Learn more about the Skills for Success here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html>

## Next Steps

Are you feeling stressed at work? Is it getting worse? Don't hesitate to seek help.

There are many resources available to help you. Some are listed below:

- The Canadian Mental Health Association. Tips and resources for dealing with stress: <https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/understanding-and-finding-help-for-stress/>
  - Support for when you are in crisis at Talk Suicide:
    - Call anytime: **1-833-456-4566**
    - Text between 4pm and midnight ET: **45645**
  - eMentalHealth.ca offers a listing of local mental health resources: <https://www.ementalhealth.ca/Ontario/Stress/index.php?m=heading&ID=118>
  - ConnexOntario offers free mental health support 24/7 by phone or chat: <https://www.connexontario.ca/en-ca/>
  - 211 Ontario offers free mental health services:
    - Call **211** or toll free at **1-877-330-3213**
  - Distress and Crisis Ontario offers crisis centres in many communities: <https://www.dcontario.org/>
- Also see the other resources in this series: **Workplace Skills, Strategies, and Know-How**