



RealCareer™ Employability Skills Program

CAREER-READY WORKPLACE SCENARIO CARDS

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Suggested uses for Workplace Scenario Cards:

5-minute icebreaker activity

1. Begin your class with a quick 5-minute workplace scenario challenge. Pick one scenario and read it to the class. You could also show it on a document projector.
2. Get students into small groups to discuss the workplace scenario, key questions and various points of view.
3. Have the class come back together and share answers to the key questions.

Journaling activity

1. Teach the employability skills lesson. At the conclusion, choose the Workplace Scenario Card that matches the skill taught in that lesson.
2. Use the workplace scenario as a journal-writing prompt and have students answer the key questions in writing.

Pre- and post-assessment

1. Choose the employability skill you wish to teach. Find the Workplace Scenario Card that matches that skill. Have students answer the key questions in writing.
2. Teach the lesson on the employability skill you have chosen.
3. After the lesson has been taught, have students go back to the original Workplace Scenario Card and answer the key questions again using the new skills they have learned in the lesson.

Employability Skills Program

Listening

Scenario: You have been employed at a new company for about six months. A co-worker, David, has been repeatedly sexually harassing you. You finally decide you've had enough and decide to file a complaint with Human Resources. You meet with the HR Director, Monica. During your meeting, she never takes any notes as you speak. She keeps checking her phone and also her Facebook on her laptop. You notice that she is doodling on her notepad. At the end of the conversation, you wonder if she really understood your concern at all.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Monica, the HR Director
 - David, the co-worker
-

Key questions

- Has Monica shown active listening behavior? What non-verbal cues has she shown the employee about her level of interest?
- What could Monica do to be a better active listener in the future? Do a short role-play between Monica and the employee, where Monica uses active listening strategies in the meeting.
- How do you, the employee, feel after your meeting? Do you feel that your concerns were heard?

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Respect

Scenario: You arrive at the grocery store you work at in a bad mood because someone cut you off on the freeway. Your co-worker, Max, reminds you that you are responsible for unloading canned vegetables from a truck this morning. The truck is already there and waiting when you arrive and the driver needs to leave shortly. You yell at Max, telling him you'll unload it when you're good and ready to. Your manager, Sasha, sees and hears all of this. Now you are in her office and she wants to address the situation.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Max, the co-worker
 - Sasha, the manager
 - The delivery driver
-

Key questions

- How could you have handled this differently? What steps can you take to make things right?
- Who is disrespected in this scenario and how? What should you have done to show respect to everyone involved?
- How do you think Max feels after your conversation?
- If you were Sasha how would you feel about this employee?

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Responsibility

Scenario: You asked your co-worker, Michael, to drop off a package at the post office after work on Tuesday. It is not too far out of the way home for him to do so, and you live farther away. It is important that the package be at its destination, National Manufacturing Incorporated, by noon on Wednesday. It includes a proposal that is going to be discussed at a meeting with international business partners who are in town only for that day. You find out on Wednesday afternoon that the package never arrived. You are responsible.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Michael, the co-worker
 - Management at National Manufacturing Incorporated
 - The international business partners
-

Key questions (Review the definition of responsibility)

Responsibility – A duty or task that you are required or expected to do; something that you should do because it is morally right, legally required, etc.

- What are you responsible for in this scenario?
- Who is holding you responsible?
- What should you have done differently?
- What could happen if you do not take responsibility in this situation?
- How can you restore trust after you have been irresponsible?
- How has this impacted each party involved?

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Patience

Scenario: You are part of a team that is preparing a presentation for a major conference. The final meeting on the presentation is this morning at 9 a.m. There are four participants: Mia, Julio, James and yourself. You arrive in the meeting room at 8:55 and James is there. Julio arrives at 9:02. You continue to wait for Mia to arrive so you can begin. No one has heard from her. You are getting irritated and feeling anxious. At 9:10 you can feel your muscles tightening and breathing increasing. James and Julio are visibly angry and talking about how stressed they are. You NEED to get this done today. At 9:20, all of you are fidgeting and decide to begin. At 9:23, Mia arrives with no apology or explanation.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Mia, the late co-worker
- James and Julio, team members
-

Key questions

- What signs of impatience are team members exhibiting?
- What is the root cause of the impatience?
- What can the team members do to manage their impatience?
- How does the reaction of the team members make Mia feel when she arrives?
- How does Mia's lack of concern for the other team members make them feel?

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Presentation Skills

Scenario: You are selected to present the new advertising campaign your marketing team has worked up for a new client. If you can close the deal, it will mean a huge financial win for the advertising firm. You want the presentation to look great to your marketing director, Scott. However, speaking in front of people is a secret fear of yours. You decide to practice the presentation in front of your team member, Samantha. You talk fast to get it over as soon as possible. You don't smile or make eye contact. You fold your arms and stay as serious as possible. You have a very long and complicated slide presentation that has no focus. Samantha has a hard time listening to your monotone voice. The practice presentation was a disaster. You don't have much time until the real thing!

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Samantha, team member
 - Scott, Marketing Director
 - Marketing team members
 - Potential client
-

Key questions

- What did you do during your practice presentation that was ineffective?
- If Samantha were the potential client, would she have hired your advertising firm based on your presentation?
- What should you change and do for the real presentation to make it more effective?
- How could Scott, as your director, help you improve?
- What could your other marketing team members do to help the situation?

Using Technology

Scenario: Micky loves to use technology. In fact, he just got the latest smart-phone and boy, was it expensive. He loves to use it to listen to music, play games and stay connected with the world. However, sometimes that gets him in trouble. You see, he loves to use social media and to archive his every move, every day! The problem is that he is so known in the social media world and he has shared some pretty private posts. He is worried about his future employment in the business world if they see some of the posts he has shared. So today he decided he is going to start changing how he uses technology in the social media world.

Points of view to consider

- Micky
 - Potential future employers
 - Potential client
-

Key questions

- What are some ways for Micky to keep himself on track?
- What are appropriate and inappropriate examples of technology usage for his future employment opportunities?
- Have you ever had a potential employer search your social media profile?
- Do you think employers have the right to search the social media posts of candidates they are considering hiring?

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Problem-solving

Scenario: Enrique and Anna are both sales employees at the same company. However, Anna has gone on a vacation and Enrique has volunteered to take over her business calls while she is away. On the first day of her trip, one of Anna's customers stops in the office and asks a secretary for a price on a new product. However, the secretary notes just the customer's first name, "Bob". With thousands of customers, what can Enrique do to find out who the customer was and get them what they need?

Points of view to consider

- Enrique
 - Anna
 - Bob
 - Secretary
-

Key questions

- What issue are you trying to solve?
- What are your options for solving the problem?
- What is the best solution?
- How does this solution satisfy everyone's interests?
- What could be done differently in the future to prevent this scenario from happening again?

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Negotiation

Scenario: You were just offered a job with a local bank. The job posting did not give wage information. During the interview, the human resources manager said that the pay range would be based on the candidate's experience and qualities. You leave the interview still unsure of what the pay range was. You really want a minimum of \$12 per hour with two weeks of vacation per year. You have prior experience as you worked for another bank for six months. You have also been the student manager at an on-campus coffee shop. The offer you just received is for \$10.50 an hour with one week of paid time off after one year.

Points of view to consider

- You, the potential employee
 - Human resources manager
-

Key questions

- Do you accept the offer as is? Why or why not?
- Why do you believe you are worth at least \$12 per hour?
- Do you believe you should negotiate starting pay? Why or why not?
- How can you use the five stages of negotiation (noted in the RealCareer™ Employability Skills Program curriculum) to reach an agreement?

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Networking

Scenario: Allen recently graduated from college and is searching for his first job in the graphic design field. He knows that in order to find a great position, he needs to network and get his name out in the field. Allen has an account on Facebook and enjoys posting his weekend activities, some of which can get pretty wild and crazy! Allen is hoping to use Facebook to make connections with other design professionals who may be looking to hire. He has been trying for three months and has not had any success using this approach.

Points of view to consider

- Allen
 - Other design professionals and/or potential employers
-

Key questions

- Do you believe that Facebook is the best social media source for creating quality connections?
- What other social media platforms could you use for making meaningful professional connections?
- What can Allen do to maintain a respectable image on social media?
- If Allen looked at your current social media profile on Facebook or other sites, do you think he would want to connect with you? Why or why not?

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Self-Confidence

Scenario: You're in a meeting with your co-workers, brainstorming ideas for a big upcoming project. Most of your co-worker's ideas are being rejected by the project leader. He seems to be waiting for that one really great idea. You think you have it, but are afraid of speaking up because the idea of speaking in front of groups is nerve-wracking for you. If your idea is chosen, it would make a great impression with your new manager.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Your co-workers in the brainstorming meeting
 - The project leader
 - Your new manager
-

Key questions

- Should you share your idea? Why or why not?
- What kind of positive self-talk can you use to increase your confidence?
- What could the team leader do to make the atmosphere more comfortable for sharing ideas?
- What can you do in the future to help co-workers feel free to share ideas?
- What can co-workers do for you to help increase your self-confidence?

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Stress Management

Scenario: One of your employees needs help with a project that is due soon. You also have another employee who is asking for you to mentor her. You need to meet with the Board of Directors tomorrow for an important quarterly meeting. The board members will be arriving tonight and you need to pick them up from the airport and take them out to dinner. In addition, you have several important presentations to prepare in the morning for the board meeting. You are feeling anxious, tense and having difficulty concentrating and getting things done. You feel pulled in many directions and are feeling very stressed out!

Points of view to consider

- You, the manager
 - Your employees asking for assistance
 - The Board of Directors
-

Key questions

- What signs of stress are you exhibiting?
- What stress management techniques could you use to calm down?
- How do you handle multiple tasks at one time? How do you prioritize and decide what is important?
- How can your employees help?

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Teamwork

Scenario: You have been asked to be part of the Activities Committee at work. This committee is in charge of planning the upcoming summer picnic, which will include all employees and their families. The company CEO gives the committee full control to plan the event, with expectations to have 80% of employees attend while keeping the cost under \$1,000. Tess is the committee leader and has already booked a park where the event will be held, booked a caterer and determined the picnic will be hosted on the second Friday in July because that is what works in her schedule. You meet the first week in July to start planning and then inform employees of the event by posting signs around the building. The event occurs and is a great success, but only 40% of employees attend.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Tess, the leader
 - Event attendees, employees and their families
-

Key questions

- What aspects of the team were missing in planning the event?
- Who was the true leader of the group and what role did he or she play?
- What could he or she have done to be a more effective committee leader?
- What was the goal of the summer picnic?
- What could the committee have done differently to ensure the goal was met?

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Communication

Scenario: You're a sales rep for a local food distribution company. When you get into the office Monday morning, you have an email from the customer service team: "Please call Lindsay Bock from Joe's Steak House after 3pm regarding an order for 10 cases of beef." You email Lindsay a quote for 10 cases of ground beef, the monthly special, but do not hear from her again. You follow-up with an email a week later asking if she needed additional information and still hear nothing back. A month goes by and you decide to call Lindsay about her quote to see if she is ready to purchase. She informs you she did not want ground beef, but 10 cases of steak - a much more significant sale. She informs you she has chosen to go with a competitor and hangs up.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Lindsay, the customer
 - Customer service team
-

Key questions

- How could you have handled your communication better?
- What steps should you have taken to clearly communicate with Lindsay?
- Where did the communication channels break down in this instance?
- How can you work to better serve customers in the future?
- What written communication and verbal communication could have helped in this instance?

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Motivation

Scenario: You have been employed at your company for a year and are pretty familiar with the routine responsibilities of your job. Lately, however, you have been struggling to accomplish basic tasks, and you feel disinclined to participate in an upcoming team project with Jackie, your co-worker. One day, you start to notice that Rebecca, your supervisor, is checking in on your tasks and progress more regularly than ever before. You feel intruded upon by this close supervision, and wonder how to demonstrate that such supervision is unnecessary.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Jackie, your co-worker
 - Rebecca, your supervisor
-

Key questions

- What could you, the employee, do to increase your motivation to work hard and be a productive member of the team?
- How is Jackie's job affected by the lack of motivation in you, her co-worker, especially if it continues?
- How do you think Rebecca, the supervisor, perceives your sudden lack of motivation, and how does that lack affect your performance?
- Why is self-motivation a positive skill in an employee?
- What intrinsic motivation can you identify to apply to your job?
- What extrinsic motivators could increase your performance?

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Work Ethic

Scenario: You've just been hired at your first full-time summer job, along with a co-worker Sarah. Although the position is not related to anything you currently envision for yourself in the future, you're excited because you know the job will A) provide you with an income of your very own for the summer and B) enable you to start building your resume with true job experience. Your hours are 9am-5pm Monday-Friday, with a 30-minute paid lunch. However, you spend each day that summer arriving at 7:45 and leaving at 5:15, and you typically do not take a full lunch. Sarah, on the other hand, struggles to get to work by 9 and is usually a few minutes late. You cheerfully accept for any task that your boss, Jessica, asks of you: filing, phone calls, research, even basic office housekeeping - and tackle each task with a smile and focus. Sarah feels like you get the better tasks to do. By the second month, you've learned to anticipate many of the tasks Jessica will need each day and whenever possible, prep them before she's even asked. Sarah keeps telling you how glad she is that this summer is almost over! By the end of the summer, Jessica has offered you full-time employment over winter break and the following summer - along with a raise. Sarah hears about this and is jealous.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Jessica, the supervisor
 - Sarah, your co-worker
-

Key questions

- What message were you, the employee, sending each day that you arrived shortly before your scheduled time and leave shortly after?
- How did Jessica perceive you each time you accepted an assigned task with a smile?
- How do you think you felt at the end of the summer when you were offered continued employment?
- What negative characteristics was Sarah exhibiting?
- What positive characteristics were you showing?
- Is there anything Jessica could have done to help improve Sarah's work ethic?

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Flexibility

Scenario: You are a manager at a local grocery store. Your full-time, salaried employee, Wanda, who is always on time for her shifts, requests to leave for an hour during the middle of your shift for an appointment. You look at the schedule and determine there is enough coverage for her to leave and grant her request. A part-time, undependable, hourly employee, Marcus, hears about this and is upset that Wanda is getting special privileges. Marcus is now in your office saying that it is unfair. He previously asked off for a half-day to sleep in after attending a late-night concert and you declined his request.

Points of view to consider

- You, the store manager
 - Wanda, the salaried, full-time, dependable employee
 - Marcus, the hourly, part-time, unreliable employee
 - Your store director
-

Key questions

- How can you explain the flexibility you are giving Wanda to Marcus without upsetting him?
- How would you explain your decision to your director?
- Did you make the right decision in letting Wanda leave?
- How will you handle this differently the next time it happens or would you handle it differently?
- What could Marcus do to begin earning your trust and in turn, more freedom?

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Interpersonal Skills

Scenario: You work for a small dog daycare and grooming company. You have held the same position, dog walker, for over three years. Your boss, Mercedes, tells you that you will now be working the front desk, meeting with customers and answering the phone. This is not in your current position description. You know that being flexible in your position will help you become a more valuable employee but are hesitant to take on this task. You are very shy and like working only with the dogs. You have a hard time making small talk with strangers.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Mercedes, your boss
 - Customers
 - The dogs
-

Key questions

- How will you handle this request?
- What questions would you have for your boss?
- Which interpersonal skills should you work on to be able to accomplish these new tasks?
- What could Mercedes do to help ease you into this new part of the job?

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Time Management

Scenario: You have a really busy day with many things to do at work and in your personal life. You work in the marketing department at a local company. The final layout of the annual catalog is due today to your manager, Stan, by 5pm. You are easily distracted and have a hard time keeping focused when busy. Here are the tasks you have noted to accomplish today:

- Go out to dinner to celebrate your friend Madison's birthday
- Meet with the catalog photographer, Al, to make sure you have final digital copies of all catalog photos
- Meet with the product manager, Julio, to double check pricing accuracy in the catalog
- Clean off your desk so you can find files quicker
- Read personal email
- Check your Facebook
- Schedule a meeting with your manager, Stan, to review the final layout
- Answer your work emails received today
- Go grocery shopping

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Stan, your manager
 - Madison, your friend
 - Al, the photographer
 - Julio, the product manager
-

Key questions

- Using good time management strategies, prioritize your task list into these four areas:
 - What is urgent and important?
 - What is important but not urgent?
 - What is urgent and not important?
 - What is not important and not urgent?

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Interviewing

Scenario: You decide you'd like to get a part-time job to help save money for college. You've never had a job before. You look at the local job listings online and apply for an account manager position in sales. You receive a call from the human resources director, Sierra, for a personal interview. You know very little about this company and are really nervous about this interview. The HR director says that you will be interviewing with a panel including the sales manager, Benjamin, and the operations manager, Edward. What can you do to prepare for this interview?

Points of view to consider

- You, the potential employee
 - Sierra, the HR director
 - Benjamin, the sales manager
 - Edward, the operations manager
-

Key questions

- What do you do to prepare for the interview?
- What questions will you ask the sales manager?
- What questions will you ask the HR director?
- What questions will you ask the operations manager?
- What can you do to create a great first impression?

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