



**RealCareer™
Employability
Skills Program**

**CULINARY CAREER
SCENARIO CARDS**

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Suggested uses for 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. Choose a Workplace Scenario Card.
2. Use the workplace scenario as a journal-writing prompt and have students answer the key questions in writing.

Pre- and post-assessment (for use with Employability Skills Program)

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 teaching the lesson, have students go back to the original Workplace Scenario Card and answer the key questions again using the new skills they have learned.

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Listening

Scenario: Jenny is a hostess at the restaurant you manage. A couple approaches her and they let her know that there will be 6 people in their party. One is in a wheelchair, so they will need a table with extra space if there is one available. When Jenny gets ready to seat the party, she begins to lead them through crowded tables to the back of the restaurant even though there is a table available with more space closer to the door. The family becomes frustrated and asks to speak to you, the manager. They complain that the hostess hasn't listened to their specific concerns and requests. Jenny explains to you that she was trying to seat them in a specific section because the server hadn't had as many customers that evening. You've had issues with Jenny ignoring requests from customers in the past.

Points of view to consider

- You, the manager
 - Jenny, the hostess
 - The family
 - The servers working that shift
-

Key questions

- How would you feel if it was your family member that was in a wheelchair?
- How could Jenny have handled the situation differently?
- How can you help Jenny to listen more carefully to customer requests in the future?
- What can you do, as the manager, to rectify the situation?

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Respect

Scenario: You are currently working as a sous chef to a world-renowned Italian head chef, but you personally do not care for his style of cuisine. One day, you are asked to fill in while the head chef entertains some very prominent guests. They order a signature item that you don't much care for. You decide that you are going to make it the way that you like it because you think it will wow the guests even more. It comes out and your head chef is upset because your version is not his style of cuisine and not what the guests ordered or expected. Your head chef calls you to meet about this dilemma.

Points of view to consider

- You, the sous chef
 - Your boss, the head chef
 - The guests
 - Coworkers
-

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 your head chef feels after this incident?
- If you were the guests, how would you feel about this sous chef?

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Responsibility

Scenario: You are working for a local restaurant and a complex order comes through that asks for no gluten in any of the items. This could considerably lengthen the cooking time for the order. Your coworker, Jason, throws the fried parts of the order into a gluten-contaminated fryer and says, "It's not like they will notice. They are probably just trying to be gluten-free, so it won't hurt anything." You follow Jason's lead. The customer receives the food and it turns out that the guest has a gluten allergy. Fortunately, the guest noticed that the food wasn't properly prepared, but they are very upset with the lack of precautions taken. Your manager, Stacey, asks Jason what happened. He points to you and says, "Well, they were doing it too." Your manager takes you both into the office to discuss what happened.

Points of view to consider

- You, a cook
 - Jason, the other cook
 - Stacey, the manager
 - The customer
 - The customer's waiter/waitress
-

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?
- 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 hired as one of four lunch-shift servers for a new startup restaurant. The manager for the restaurant has scheduled a training for all servers to review the new lunch menu. The meeting is at the restaurant at 9 a.m. on Tuesday morning. The four servers are Kia, Mitch, Brad and yourself. You arrive at the restaurant at 8:45 a.m. and Kia and Mitch arrive shortly after you do. You continue to wait for Brad to arrive so that the training can begin. The manager has also arrived and is waiting to begin. No one has heard from Brad. You are getting irritated and feeling anxious. At 9:12, you can feel yourself getting frustrated and you frequently sigh out loud. The manager is visibly annoyed. At 9:25 the manager decides to begin. At 9:43, Brad arrives with no apology or explanation.

Points of view to consider

- You, the server
 - The manager
 - Brad, the late coworker
 - Mitch and Kia, the other servers
-

Key questions

- What signs of impatience are team members showing?
- What is the root cause of the impatience?
- What can team members do to manage their impatience?
- How does Brad's lack of regard for other team members make them feel?
- How do you think the manager should have handled this?

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Presentation Skills

Scenario: Betsy is the new head chef at a renowned steak restaurant in town. The head chef always creates the specials for Saturday nights and does a tasting menu review with all the servers and sous chefs before they open for service. On her first Saturday night running the kitchen, Betsy gets behind and decides to skip the staff review, instead writing the specials on a board and asking everyone to refer to that.

Points of view to consider

- Betsy, the head chef
 - Sous chefs
 - Servers
 - Customers
-

Key questions

- How should a head chef manage their time to be the most effective in the kitchen?
- How does the review assist the staff in preparing for serving customers?
- How well is the entire staff prepared for the busy night?
- How can Betsy better manage her time for the next Saturday night shift?

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Using Technology

Scenario: You are the weekend manager at a local, well-established barbecue restaurant. The restaurant is packed on the weekend and usually has long wait times for tables, but maintains fast service. Recently, the owners integrated a POS (Point of Sale) system to help manage orders. The system was well received by weekend staff, as writing orders down took too long and caused several delays or mistakes in orders. During the week, when it is much slower, the staff has yet to adopt the new technology. Jenna is a server during the week who is covering a shift on a Saturday evening. She has not been using the POS system and asks you if it would be okay to just write orders down and turn them in to the head chef for her tables, because that is what she prefers.

Points of view to consider

- You, the weekend manager
 - The head chef
 - Jenna, a server
 - Other servers
-

Key questions

- How will Jenna not using the POS system affect the busy Saturday night service?
- What needs to be done to make the technology effective for the entire staff?
- What is the best solution?

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Problem-solving

Scenario: Guy and Jane both work at a restaurant. Guy was hired a few months ago and Jane has been with the restaurant for eight years.

Jane, while being a proficient worker, tends to wait until the last minute to get her work done. Guy works more steadily and keeps on top of his daily tasks. Guy complains that he feels he has to worry about Jane's work on top of his own. Also, they rely on each other for certain tasks and he is uncomfortable with waiting until the last minute when they have to collaborate.

With the situation becoming more tense, Jane is missing more work because she wants to avoid Guy and his frustration.

Points of view to consider

- Guy
 - Jane
 - Customers
-

Key questions

- What can Guy do to improve his work relationship with Jane?
- What are Guy's options for solving the problem?
- What is the best solution?
- What can Guy do in the future to help maintain a good working relationship with Jane?
- How might these issues affect customers?

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Negotiation

Scenario: You were just offered a job as a sous chef with a local farm-to-table restaurant. The job posting gave little information. During the interview, you asked what the compensation package would be. The Human Resources manager said that the pay per hour would be based on the candidate's experience and qualifications. You leave the interview still unsure of what the pay range really is. You need a minimum of \$18 per hour with two weeks of paid vacation per year. You have prior experience as a sous chef, having worked for another restaurant for four years. You were also enrolled in a culinary program at a local community college for two years. The offer you just received is for \$15 per 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 \$18 per hour?
- Do you believe you should negotiate starting pay? Why or why not?
- How can you use the five stages of negotiation (found in the Employability Skills curriculum) to reach an agreement?

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Networking

Scenario: Juan recently graduated from college and is searching for his first job as a dietitian. He knows that to find a great position he needs to network and make connections in the field. He has joined the National Dietetics Association (NDA). Juan also has several social media accounts and enjoys posting his weekend activities, many of which involve food, on Instagram. Some of his weekends can get wild and crazy! Juan is hoping to use his membership in the NDA as well as his social media accounts to make connections to find a job. He has been trying for four months, but has not had any success using this approach.

Points of view to consider

- Juan
 - Other dietitians and/or potential employers
-

Key questions

- Do you believe that Instagram is the best social media source for creating quality connections in this field? Are there other ones you would recommend using instead?
- What can Juan do to maintain a respectable image on social media?
- Should Juan consider maintaining separate professional and personal social media accounts? Why or why not?
- How could Juan leverage his membership with this national association more?
- What other places could Juan network to increase his chances of finding a position?

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Self-confidence

Scenario: You are a prep cook working under the head chef at a high-end, well-established restaurant.

You have a new recipe that you want to run past the owner of the restaurant, but the head chef is openly against anyone else submitting recipe ideas that will change his menu. You are positive that this recipe is a great fit and will only improve the menu without disrupting the head chef's overall style, but you lack the experience and confidence to present your idea.

Points of view to consider

- You, the prep cook
 - The head chef
 - The restaurant owner
 - Customers
-

Key questions

- What can you do to not only present your ideas, but also improve your self-confidence and gain the respect of the restaurant owner and the head chef?
- What potential benefits or consequences are there for presenting your recipe?
- What are your options?
- How can you better grow in your career?

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Stress Management

Scenario: Richard, a shift manager at a restaurant, has worked five 10-hour shifts in a row and now is being told by the manager that he needs to cover a shift for his coworker, Terry, the next day because she got stuck out of town. Richard is frustrated because Terry often calls in on short notice. He is also exhausted from the long hours he has been putting in at work and knows this would have been his only day off for the week. However, he is afraid to say no to the manager and leave the restaurant short-handed.

Points of view to consider

- Richard, the shift manager
 - The restaurant manager
 - Terry, the coworker
-

Key questions

- How should Richard handle the situation?
- What can the manager do to help Richard's frustration and exhaustion?
- Is there any way the manager could handle the situation better?
- How can Richard balance the stress of working at this restaurant?

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Teamwork

Scenario: You are the head chef of a new restaurant and you are responsible for building the kitchen team.

The challenge for you as a head chef is not only to attract young, energetic, talented and focused cooks and support staff, but also to identify those who want to work as a cohesive unit and are aligned with your vision. The people who are applying for the positions all seem to be young and inexperienced.

Points of view to consider

- You, the head chef
 - Restaurant owners
 - New staff
 - Customers
-

Key questions

- What can you do to give the new hires a great start to their careers, get them excited about their new jobs, and provide them with the skills they will need to properly support you and your vision in the kitchen?
- What would you want to learn from your new boss at a new job that you don't have a lot of experience in?
- What team-building exercises can you use to get the new staff excited about the job?
- What needs to be expected of the new staff members?

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Communication

Scenario: You are the head of the FOH (front of house) at a busy restaurant.

There is an unfriendly divide between the FOH and the BOH (back of house—kitchen) at the restaurant. The prep cooks are blaming all the timing issues on the wait staff and the wait staff continuously complains about being mistreated by the kitchen staff.

Points of view to consider

- You, the head of the FOH
 - FOH staff
 - Head of the BOH
 - BOH support staff
 - Customers
-

Key questions

- What can you do to help create a positive relationship between the FOH and BOH and boost team morale?
- How can you make the team feel more positive about each other?
- How can stress play into the divide of the FOH and BOH?
- What solutions are there?
- How does this relationship affect the customers?

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Motivation

Scenario: Tina works at a busy local diner. Her alarm goes off at 5am for her 6:30 a.m. breakfast shift. She just worked until close the night before and is contemplating calling in to work today. She knows that Saturday mornings are busy, but also would rather sleep in.

Points of view to consider

- Tina
 - Tina's coworkers
-

Key questions

- Where does motivation come from?
- How can Tina become motivated to go to work?
- If Tina does not go to work, what will her coworkers think?

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Work Ethic

Scenario: There's a lull between the lunch and dinner rush in the amount of customers who come into the restaurant you work at. Normally, you and the other servers use that time to prep and help restock before it gets busy again. A new server, Tom, started working at the restaurant this week and he is encouraging the other staff to just take it easy instead of helping the rest of the staff with mid-shift tasks.

Points of view to consider

- You, a server
 - Tom, the new server
 - The other servers on your shift
 - Your coworkers at the restaurant
-

Key questions

- What is work ethic?
- How can you display good work ethic?
- How can you encourage the others to display a strong work ethic?
- In what ways will this affect your restaurant and work environment?

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Flexibility

Scenario: You are a hard-working and dependable cook at a local restaurant. It's a busy Saturday night and there are a couple of mix-ups on food being rung in by servers. Jessie, a hard-working server who rarely makes mistakes, has asked for you to make a basket of fries for her on the fly. You quickly grab the next fries on line and hand them to her. She rings them in 20 seconds later to make sure that they are accounted for and being paid for. Brianna, a less reliable server who never rings anything in when it's made late, has asked you for multiple favors throughout the night. You have asked that she make sure to ring them in before you make them for her. She saw you hand the fries to Jessie and is immediately asking why you were so quick to help Jessie and not her.

Points of view to consider

- You, the cook
 - Jessie, a server
 - Brianna, a server
 - Your manager
-

Key questions

- How would you explain your flexibility and willingness to do whatever is asked by Jessie to Brianna?
- How would you explain your decision to help Jessie?
- Did you make the right decision in helping Jessie right away without a ticket for the food item?
- What could Brianna do to earn your trust and make you feel more secure in helping her more quickly?
- How would you explain your flexibility to your manager?

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Interpersonal Skills

Scenario: You work for a small bakery and have held the same position for the past four years. You are a cupcake maker and cake decorator. Your manager, Julia, tells you that she now needs you to also rotate with others and work the front counter, taking customer orders and payment. It could also involve answering the phone. These tasks are not in your current job description. You know that being willing and flexible in your position will help you become a more valuable employee but are hesitant to take on these responsibilities. You are very shy and not a 'people person' which is why you've always enjoyed your behind-the-scenes role. You have a tough time chatting with strangers and feel socially awkward.

Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
 - Julia, your manager
 - Customers
-

Key questions

- How will you handle this request from your manager?
- What questions would you have for your manager?
- Which interpersonal skills should you work on to be able to take on these new responsibilities?
- What could Julia do to help ease you into this new part of the job?

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Time Management

Scenario: Dion is a server at a pizza shop and works on Friday nights. He is one of three servers that oversee taking orders, getting guests food and drinks, cleaning tables, and checking customers out. Friday nights get very busy, but Dion always puts the customer first and spends extra time chatting and building a good rapport while the other two servers pick up his slack and drop off his drinks and wipe down his tables. At the end of the night, Dion has done very well in tips, but his boss has given him a verbal warning for not doing his job.

Points of view to consider

- Dion, a server
 - The other servers
 - The boss
 - Customers
-

Key questions

- How could Dion have spent his time during his shift?
- What did Dion do correct in his role and what could he improve on for the next shift?
- How do the customers feel about their time at the pizza place?
- How does this affect the other servers?
- What can the boss do to help with this situation?

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Interviewing

Scenario: Maggie recently opened her own catering company and has just received a request to meet with a couple, looking for services for their wedding, that same day. Maggie is so excited to prepare, she makes several desserts, as she wants to have some treats for the interview. When she meets with the couple, they begin asking her questions about her company, her staff and the process of how the event will flow. Maggie is not prepared with anything to show, except her desserts.

Points of view to consider

- Maggie, the caterer
 - The couple looking for a caterer
-

Key questions

- How would the clients feel if the caterer was unprepared?
- What factors should Maggie consider before going on an interview?
- How could Maggie organize herself for future interviews?

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