

# MOVING FORWARD

## A WORKBOOK TO START CONVERSATIONS

To move forward in a workplace, it is essential to understand the workplace expectations. This workbook will describe and give an opportunity to think about twenty expectations that were described by employers, employees and newcomers in the community when they were asked about working in Canada.



# MOVING FORWARD WORKBOOK

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# OVERVIEW

## MOVING FORWARD

The Moving Forward program was developed by Lethbridge Public Library – Read On Adult Literacy and Learning (Read On) to help people understand one of the most important parts of getting and keeping a job – workplace expectations. Workplace expectations can be hard to understand and unclear for many people. The Read On team hopes that by sharing what we have learned, we can help other people looking for work.

### **In the Moving Forward Program workbook you will:**

- Learn about some of the more common workplace expectations.
- Think about your own experiences.
- Learn from employers, community members and Moving Forward participants why they think different expectations are important.
- Build and practice communication skills.

# WHAT ARE WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS?

Workplace expectations are what employers expect you to do. Many of the expectations are not written down and can be hard to figure out. Some of these expectations are what will lead a boss to decide if you have **a good work ethic** or not. For example, being on time to work (or sometimes being early) is a workplace expectation. If you are late many times, your boss will describe you as having a poor work ethic. It is sometimes hard to understand what the workplace expectations are.

The Moving Forward workbook will explore some of the most common workplace expectations and will help you better understand them. It will make you aware to look for them.

## The 20 workplace expectations you will explore are:

1. Attendance and punctuality
2. Appearance
3. Workplace communication
4. Attitude
5. Handling conflict
6. Diversity and inclusion
7. Personal safety
8. Responsibility for safety
9. Unwritten rules
10. Accountability
11. Workplace respect
12. Collaboration and teamwork
13. Productivity
14. Adaptability
15. Organization and time management
16. Confidence
17. Confidentiality
18. Problem solving
19. Motivation
20. Character traits

### A WORKERS STORY

Understanding expectations is so important in the workplace. Failing to ask for clarity on expectations led me to put lots of work in the wrong direction in the past. Asking a question would have saved me time!

### VOCABULARY

#### Expectation

Something you think will happen.

#### A good work ethic

Describes someone who works hard at their job or duties.

## WHICH OF THESE EXPECTATIONS IS MOST IMPORTANT?

Read On asked Moving Forward participants, employers and community members to rank the workplace expectations for us by choosing their top 5. A funny thing happened – almost all the expectations were found to be equally important. The most important was clearly attendance and punctuality. The nineteen other expectations were also seen as important from the information Read On collected from the 50 learners, presenters and interviewers we asked.

### OVERALL RESULTS



# HOW DO YOU LEARN ABOUT WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS?

## ACTIVE COMMUNICATION

Active communication is a very important part of the workplace. It is important because it is the key to many of the twenty expectations you will talk about in this workbook. Being able to communicate well and to show you are engaged in your work is how our employers see you are meeting their expectations. Remember, communication is not just speaking and listening but also writing and reading. Messages can be both spoken and written.

## HOW DOES COMMUNICATION CONNECT TO THE EXPECTATIONS?

Workplace Expectation	Connection to active communication skills
Attendance and punctuality	Make calls if you are going to be away or late.
Appearance	Ask about the workplace regulations.
Diversity and Inclusion	Use language that makes everyone feels safe and respected.
Personal safety	Ask about the personal protective equipment (PPE) you need to wear at work.
Responsibility for safety	Know how to report unsafe things you see.
Workplace communication	Write notes or emails.
Attitude	Have the right body language and tone of voice when communicating.
Handling Conflict	Use communication to understand your co-worker's perspective.
Unwritten Rules	Speak up when you don't understand something.
Accountability	Send a message to co-workers about your progress.
Workplace Respect	Listen to co-worker's perspective.
Collaboration and Teamwork	Ask for support when you need help.
Productivity	Tell your supervisor when you see a problem.
Adaptability	Listen to a change in the work plan and clarify you understand the change.
Organization and Time Management	Send a reminder email to co-workers about a deadline you all have.
Confidence	Ask questions when you need to.
Confidentiality	Understand what information you might hear at work that cannot be shared outside the workplace.
Problem Solving	Ask questions so you know you understand the problem.
Motivation	When you finish a task let your supervisor or co-workers know and ask for another task.
Character traits	Communicate the workplace traits your employer wants by the questions you ask.



# HOW DO YOU ACTIVELY COMMUNICATE?

## 1 Ask questions

There are two styles of questions that you can use when you are trying to understand what someone is saying: closed or open.

### Closed questions

This type of question invites a short and focused answer. Closed questions are usually easy to answer as the choice of answer is mainly limited to yes or no. This type of question is sometimes used early in conversations to encourage participation and to begin to gather the facts.

#### Examples:

- Did you? Don't you?
- Will you? Won't you?
- Can you? Can't you?

### Open questions

Open questions allow for much longer responses and the speaker usually gives more information.

#### Examples:

- What happened when ...?
- Why did the ....?
- How did you ....?

## 2 Reflect or paraphrase

Reflecting is the process of paraphrasing and restating both the feelings and words of the speaker. The purposes of reflecting are:

- To allow the speaker to "hear" their own thoughts and to focus on what they say and feel.
- To show the speaker that you are trying to perceive the world as they see it and that you are doing your best to understand their messages.
- To encourage them to continue talking.

#### Examples:

- What I heard you say was...
- You were really frustrated when...

## 3 Encourage

These are the small words and sounds that confirm to the speaker that you are listening and connected to the information they are sharing.

#### Examples:

- Oh, really, I get that
- Mmhmm
- Uhhuh
- I see



## 4 Clarify

The purpose of clarifying is to ensure that the listener's understanding of what the speaker has said is correct. This reduces misunderstanding. It's a style of questioning that deals specifically with what you've already heard.

### Examples:

- I'm not quite sure I understand what you are saying.
- I don't feel clear about the main issue here.
- When you said...what did you mean?
- Could you repeat...

## 5 Summarize

To summarize is to restate the main ideas. It is helpful to repeat back what you heard to confirm you understand.

Use the following five guidelines to help you summarize.

1. Pull out main ideas.
2. Focus on key details.
3. Use key words and phrases.
4. Break down the larger ideas.
5. Say just enough to give the idea without too many details.

### Examples:

- First you talked about...then...
- What I heard you say...
- Let me make sure I heard everything...

## 6 Show you are listening

Another way to show you are listening carefully to what your co-worker is saying is to use nonverbal communication.

- Smile
- Make eye contact with the speaker
- Lean toward the person who is speaking
- Use similar facial expressions
- Nod your head

### Don't:

- Fidget
- Watch the clock
- Check your phone

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 1. ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

### Why are attendance and punctuality important?

Two things related to time that are important to employers are:

- **Attendance** - Showing up for your shifts
- **Punctuality** - Arriving on time

These two things are important because:

- You are paid for your work hours, if you are late your employer could take away some of your pay.
- If you are late or don't show up, the person you are taking over for can't go home. This can cause problems with your co-worker.
- Your employer and co-workers will think you are not a good worker.

### What does attendance mean?

When you start a new job you are given a work schedule. You are expected to show up for all the shifts on your schedule. Sometimes the work schedule is on paper but usually work schedules are electronic. It is your **responsibility** to know how to find, read and follow your work schedule.

When you have a job you need to plan days off with your employer.

- Sick days
- Vacation days
- **Bereavement** days
- Religious holidays
- Time away for appointments

You can't just not show up! Communicating with your employer is very important if you want to keep your job.

### What does punctuality mean?

Punctuality means being on time. Being on time can have different meanings for different people and different workplaces. For most workplaces being on time means:

- being on the jobsite (inside or outside)
- ready to work (coats and bags stored away, **PPE** on, at the work location)

Employers expect workers to arrive so that they can have these personal tasks completed before work time begins. If your work start time is 8:00 this often means arriving at 7:45 to prepare to start work.

Employers also expect punctuality from their workers related to break times (lunch or coffee).

### VOCABULARY

#### Attendance

Being at work.

#### Punctuality

Being on time.

#### Responsibility

Something that you should do because it is part of your job.

### VOCABULARY

#### Bereavement

Days provided to an employee after the death of a family member.

#### PPE

PPE means personal protective equipment. This is the clothes or gear you wear to keep yourself safe at work.

**Knowing what to do if you will be away or late**

You may be given a **policy guide** or a union contract that will tell you what you are to do if you will be absent from work. If you do not know or do not understand the rules, make sure you ask.

Questions you should know the answer to are:

- Who do you have to tell?
- How does your supervisor want to be told about your absences - by text, phone, email, or in-person?
- How much notice do you have to give your supervisor?  
If you don't give them enough notice, they may not be able to give you the time off.
- What are the policies for absences?
- Will you be paid if you are not at work?
- Is there a time limit on how long you can take for appointments?
- If you take time off, do you have to make it up?

**VOCABULARY**

**A Policy Guide**  
A document with the workplace rules and regulations.

**What should you do if you are going to be away?**

When contacting your employer tell them: your name, why you are contacting them, what time you will be to work by, and how/if they can contact you. For example:

This is Ramone. My car will not start and I am waiting for a tow truck. They think they will be here in one hour. If not, I will call a taxi. I will keep you posted. I am sorry about this.

**Practice by using your name and contact information below:**

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ (name). I am sorry but I will be late to work today because \_\_\_\_\_ (reason you will be late). I should be at work by \_\_\_\_\_ (time). I will contact you by \_\_\_\_\_ (time) if that will not be the case. If you need to speak to me, you can reach me by \_\_\_\_\_ (phone number or email).

**Think about it!**

- What do you do if you are going to be late or absent from work?

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- How does being late or absent impact your supervisor or co-workers?

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## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – SARA'S STORY

Sara had heard that being on time at work was really important but it was something that was very hard for her. In Sara's first country, if the start time was 8:30, people didn't arrive till 8:45 or 9:00. That was normal and accepted.

Sara had never thought about the impact of being late on her co-workers and was surprised when the **HR** managers talked about it. She was thinking about herself not the people she works with. She never knew that people thought she was unreliable because she was late for work. Being seen as **reliable** is very important to her. Sara now tries even harder to be on time for work and makes sure to call if there is a problem.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

### VOCABULARY

#### HR

HR is short for the Human Resources department. Human Resources is the department of a company that hires, schedules and arranges payment of workers.

#### Reliable

To be a person who people trust and depend on.

What questions could you ask to clarify the expectations about attendance and punctuality at work? Try to think of 5 questions.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 2. APPEARANCE

### What are workplace expectations around appearance?

Workplaces have expectations around your appearance or how you present yourself at work. Each workplace is different so taking the time to understand or asking before you start is an important step in starting a new job. Some things that are important to think about are:

- Clothing and personal style
- Scents and smells
- **Personal hygiene**

It is important to know that Canadian employers can set standards about appearance. The employer must be able to clearly say how they believe that appearance will impact safety or the **effectiveness** of their business. This link provides more information about appearance and your rights in the workplace: <https://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/Documents/AppearDressCode.pdf>

### Think about it!

- What do you do if you are not sure what the expectations about appearance at work are?

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- How can your appearance have an impact at your workplace?

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- Have you had an experience at a workplace related to clothing rules, scents and smells, or personal hygiene? If yes, what was it?

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### VOCABULARY

#### Personal Hygiene

Good health through being clean.

#### Effectiveness

Something that has good results.

## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – MAGGIE'S STORY

Maggie talked about one time when personal appearance and grooming impacted her as a customer. She placed an order at a fast food drive-thru. When she pulled up to pick up her food and saw her food being handled by someone with what looked like dirty hands, a big beard, and no hair net – she was surprised. It made her not want to eat her food. Appearance can really impact a businesses' sales which also impacts the amount of staff they have and the number of people that keep their jobs.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Some workplaces have very strict rules and other workplaces don't. **What are 5 open ended questions you could ask your supervisor to get more information about the appearance expectations at the job?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 3. WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

### What is workplace communication?

Workplace communication takes place in three different ways in the workplace. Each way is equally important.

- Verbal Communication – Information is shared in the workplace through conversation. Supervisors and co-workers provide instructions on what tasks to do, how to do the tasks and when to do the tasks by giving you verbal instructions.
- Written communication – Supervisors and co-workers may provide written instructions to you when they are not able to verbally communicate with you. These written communications may come on paper, as an email or as a text message.
- Document communication – Supervisors and co-workers may provide workplace documents that tell you the work instructions for different tasks. These are often written in the order they happen and require you to follow the steps as they are written in the document. Many workplace documents are designed for workers to write into them. This is workplace communication because you are telling your supervisors or co-workers what you completed or still need to do.

You will be expected in the workplace to communicate in all three ways, by verbally responding, by writing (notes, texts or emails) and by reading and writing in workplace documents.

Workplace communication is a very important workplace expectation. Without communication it is hard to know:

- What has been done
- What needs to be done
- How it should be done
- Who should do it
- When it should be done

Communication is the key to a **productive** and safe workplace.

### Verbal Communication

Verbal communication is more than just the words you speak. Employers often think workers have bad **attitudes** at work because of the body language (eye contact and **posture**) or tone of voice they use when they speak to them.

### Written Communication

Workplace writing is hard for many people. Some workers avoid communicating in writing because they worry about writing poorly. This can also make employers think you have a bad attitude or you might be lazy. If writing is problem for you, it is okay to let your supervisor know and they will find ways to make it easier.

### VOCABULARY

#### Productive

To complete tasks quickly and well.

#### Attitude

A positive or negative approach.

#### Posture

The position of the body.



## Document Communication

Workplaces often have many documents to communicate information to their workers. If you struggle with reading and are told to read several documents on the same day, it can be frustrating or stressful. The documents often have lots of important information so 'not reading' them is a bad plan. If reading is a problem for you it is okay to let your supervisor know and they will find ways to make it easier. It is better to let them know you have trouble reading than to not read important information and put yourself or a co-worker in an unsafe situation.

Workplaces also have many documents that they want you to use to give them information in. These documents can be confusing if you struggle with reading and writing. Ask for help from your supervisor.

### Think about it!

- Which of the three types of workplace communication are you most comfortable with?

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- Many people in Canada are not confident reading or writing. Has reading or writing ever been a problem for you at work? If yes – what are some things you can do to get better at reading and writing?

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There are many community programs that can help you improve your workplace writing, reading or document use skills. Look for community literacy programs to help you today!

## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – MELANIE’S STORY

Melanie remembers having to complete a daily sheet at work to tell the next shift what had happened during the shift. Writing was something she wasn’t good at and she didn’t want her boss or co-workers to see what a poor writer she was so she wrote the same thing every day. She wrote, “Everything was okay” even when it wasn’t. Her boss would get really mad at her and called her lazy. Finally she quit because she was **embarrassed** and wasn’t willing to show people she couldn’t write.

Melanie later learned that many people in Canada also have trouble writing and she wished she had asked for help instead of quitting.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

What are some questions you could ask your boss if writing or reading is difficult for you?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### VOCABULARY

#### Embarrassed

Feel shy, ashamed, or guilty about something.

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

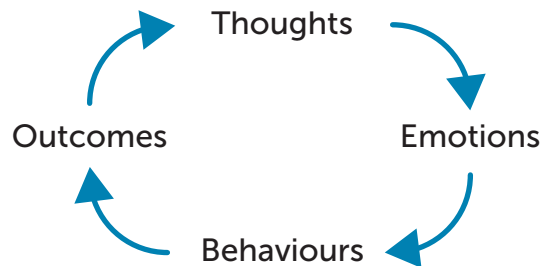
## 4. ATTITUDE

### What is a workplace attitude?

Your workplace attitude is very important to an employer. Employers expect you to have a 'good attitude' when you are at work. Attitude can be hard to define and understand. Attitude can be shown through words, actions and body language.

### Thoughts can impact our attitude

Did you know thoughts can impact your attitude at work? If you have negative thoughts your emotions are negative, your behaviours are negative, and the results are negative. The same is true if you have positive thoughts.



### Examples of thoughts:

Negative	Positive
He's a jerk.	He's frustrated. I wonder what's going on?
I'm stupid.	I still need to learn how to do this. I wonder who can explain it to me?
I always do it wrong.	There's a problem and you need to fix it.
She thinks she's the boss.	She's a natural leader.
I don't have to listen to her!	Wow – her ideas are different than mine. That's interesting.

You need to pay attention to your thoughts. Thoughts can make your attitude negative. Negative thoughts can also get us into conflicts.

### Think about attitudes and how they connect to jobs.

Your attitudes connect to the thoughts you have. Can you see how negative thoughts may lead to negative attitudes and positive thoughts may lead to positive attitudes at work?

Here are some examples of thinking that shows a positive attitude:

- I want to help make a difference.
- I'm part of a team.
- I can do this.
- We can do this.
- This is worth doing.
- I can help move us forward.
- I see opportunities for improvement.
- Can I help?
- Let's get this done!

**Think about it!**

- How can your thoughts impact your work?

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- How can your thoughts impact your relationship with your supervisor or co-worker?

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**CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – CAROL'S STORY**

Carol is an HR professional and believes that a positive attitude is a very important thing to have at work. She says, "Your approach to work is important, so show up with a positive attitude. No one can take that from you. You will quickly become a role model and a support person for many team members. This will be viewed as an excellent quality by supervisors".

**Active Communication Practice**

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Carol had some great advice about attitude at work. Paraphrase what she had to say.

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# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 5. HANDLING CONFLICT

### Why is handling conflict a workplace expectation?

Employers expect you to be able to handle **conflict** in the workplace. With many personalities, backgrounds, cultures and experiences in a workplace employers expect conflict but they don't expect fighting.

### What does **perspective** have to do with conflict?



Conflicts often start when two people are seeing the same thing in different ways. A simple example of this is when people look at this picture. Some think it is a picture of an old woman. Some think it is a picture of a young woman. Some might think it is a picture of both. What happens when you look at this picture also happens in conflict. Co-workers have different ideas about how work should be done or how their co-workers should behave. Cultural differences can often create different ways to see the same picture.

### Think about it!

- How well do you handle conflict at work? What is something you wish you could do better?

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- How do you think conflict impacts your relationship with your supervisor or co-workers?

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### VOCABULARY

#### Conflict

A disagreement that results in strong feelings

#### Perspective

The way someone views something

## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – ALLIE'S STORY

Allie who was a Moving Forward workshop participant says it is also important to learn how to appreciate other people's strengths and weaknesses and how to work with someone who may work or think differently or have a different personality.

Allie also thinks it is important to separate work and personal life, and to learn to not let on the job issues "trigger" personal issues.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

To better understand the message in Allie's story, what are some questions you could ask?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 6. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

### What does diversity and inclusion mean?

There are many different people in Canada. Employers are expected to provide a safe work environment and include all people. You as an employee are expected to be part of this safe environment and include all people. This is diversity and inclusion in the workplace and many workplaces have rules connected to this.

**Diversity** and **inclusion** is an important part of the Canadian identity that is getting a lot of focus recently. It applies to the workplace in many ways. Many employers have a goal that their employees represent the communities that they live in. The challenging part for companies is that to have a diverse employee group, the company culture must feel inclusive.

### Protected Grounds

Canadian workplaces must accept all people and cannot exclude a person because of:

- Race
- Colour
- Gender
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Religion
- Ancestry
- Age
- Physical disability
- Mental disabilities
- Family status
- Marital status
- Source of Income
- Sexual orientation

These are called the protected grounds. A good website to visit for more information is: [https://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/Documents/HR\\_in\\_AB\\_view-only.pdf](https://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/Documents/HR_in_AB_view-only.pdf)

### VOCABULARY

#### Diversity

To include members of different groups (race, gender, religion) in a meaningful way.

#### Inclusion

To make a person a part of a group or place.



**Think about it!**

- Think about a time you experienced exclusion or saw co-workers being excluded in the workplace based on any of the protected grounds?

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- What is the biggest thing you think needs to change so all people feel safe and included in the workplace?

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**CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – MOVING FORWARD PARTICIPANT STORY**

One of the Moving Forward participants chose diversity and inclusion as their most important expectation in the workplace. They have experience with being excluded. They say you should all be part of making workers feeling safe and included at work. They say there is some history that made **racism**, **classism**, and **ableism** okay and this needs to change. Equal access to employment through diversity and inclusion leads to pathways for supportive and safe employment opportunities.

**Active Communication Practice**

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

**VOCABULARY**

**Racism**

The belief that some races are better than others.

**Classism**

The unfair treatment of people because of their social or economic class

**Ableism**

The unfair treatment of people because of a disability.

You don't understand all the 'protected grounds' words and what they mean. **Ask a few clarifying questions to better understand what you don't know.**

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# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 7. PERSONAL SAFETY

### What is personal safety?

Personal safety is an expectation in the Canadian workplace. There are two types of safety:

- Physical safety means wearing the PPE that will protect you and following the safety rules that your job requires.
- Psychological safety means that you are protected from **bullying, discrimination** and **harassment**.

You as an employee are expected to report anything you see that might be unsafe.

### Physical safety

Most Canadian workplaces will have a Health and Safety document that outlines the policies for working safely. When you are being trained for a new job you will hear about the many safety rules. These are the most important things for you to understand. These policies or rules are what keep you and your co-workers safe.

These are the things to think about when you start a new job.

- What personal protective equipment (PPE) do I need to wear?
- What safety hazards are there at my workplace?
- What do I do when I see something that might be a safety **hazard**?

### Psychological safety

Psychological safety is harder to talk about at work but is just as important as physical safety. Psychological safety is not a hazard that you can see and includes bullying, discrimination and harassment. If you are experiencing any of these things at work you should talk to your supervisor.

Your cultural background can also lead to some **misunderstandings**. What is okay in your cultural group may not feel okay for people in other cultural groups. At work it is very important to not do anything that people may misunderstand as bullying, discrimination or harassment.

- No touching
- No flirting
- No racial jokes
- No gender comments

It is important to also pay attention to social distance. This is the distance people are comfortable with when you are talking to them. Pay attention to the cues, if people move away from you, you are probably too close. Not paying attention to people's cues about social distance is a common reason for misunderstandings at work. These misunderstandings often become claims of bullying, discrimination or harassment.

### VOCABULARY

#### Bullying

To frighten, hurt or threaten someone.

#### Discrimination

Unfairly treating a person or group of people.

#### Harassment

To annoy or bother someone in a repeated way.

#### Hazard

Something that is dangerous.

#### Misunderstanding

Fail to understand something.

**Think about it!**

- From your own experience give examples of the two types of workplace safety.

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**CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION - TODD'S STORY**

Todd who is an HR manager thinks being safe is important because if you get hurt you aren't being productive. Productivity isn't just important to the company but it should be important to you because without productivity there are no jobs.

Todd says taking breaks at work helps to keep the workplace safe. Taking breaks is not just about resting your body but also about resting your mind. Physical fatigue and mental fatigue can cause accidents in the workplace.

**Active Communication Practice**

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

**Paraphrase why Todd thinks being safe is important.**

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**Ask an open ended question to get more information from Todd.**

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# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 8. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY

### Who's responsible for safety at work?

In Canada the answer is – EVERYBODY!

In Canada you are expected to take part in keeping the workplace safe. You can do this by:

- Keeping your eyes and ears open for hazards
- Telling your supervisor if you see something unsafe
- Completing safety checklists or report forms

### Employer's Responsibilities

- Make sure there is a Health and Safety committee in the workplace.
- Take every reasonable precaution to make sure the workplace is safe.
- Train employees about any potential hazards and how to safely use, handle, store and dispose of hazardous substances and how to handle emergencies.
- Make sure workers know how to use and handle the equipment safely and properly.
- Make sure workers use necessary PPE.
- Immediately report all critical injuries to Alberta Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) or the ministry in your province.
- Make sure the department manager(s) sets the standards for performance, and ensures safe working conditions are always being followed.

### Manager's responsibilities

- Make sure workers are following OH&S rules.
- Make sure that workers are using PPE and/or devices.
- Tell workers of **potential** and actual hazards.
- Given written instructions to workers on what the company is doing to protect them.
- Take every reasonable precaution that their workers are safe.
- Make sure the duties of the Employer are being followed.

#### VOCABULARY

##### Potential

The chance or possibility that something could happen.

### Your responsibilities

- You are responsible to obey the laws, use PPE if required, report hazards and dangers to your supervisor, work safely, use equipment safely, tell your supervisor about missing/broken equipment or protective devices.
- You have three basic rights. You have the right to refuse unsafe work. You have the right to take health and training training to become a health and safety representative. You have the right to know about actual and potential dangers in the workplace.

**Think about it!**

- What are your rights and responsibilities in the workplace?

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- What are your manager’s responsibilities?

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- What are your employer’s responsibilities?

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- What could happen if you, your manager, and/or employer don’t follow through on workplace safety?

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**CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – JOSE’S STORY**

For Jose this expectation was hard to understand. In his culture, employees are always supposed to follow the rules of the job but he would never point out problems to his supervisor. In his home country, he would be thought of as a bad employee if he made suggestions to improve safety as that was his bosses job.

In Canada, his supervisor was frustrated with him because he didn’t speak up at the safety meetings. He told Jose that if he didn’t start paying attention to safety he would have a warning put in his employee file. He was a hard worker and wanted to be thought of as a good employee but making this change and speaking up was a big challenge for him.

**Active Communication Practice**

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Look back and review your responsibilities in the workplace. Write three questions to clarify your responsibilities.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 9. UNWRITTEN RULES

### **What are unwritten workplace rules?**

There are many unwritten social rules in Canada that can have big impacts in the workplace. Employers expect you to understand these rules and adjust to the 'norms' in the workplace.

An unwritten rule may be understood in a culture even though there is no formal or official proof of it existing.

Some of these unwritten rules connect to:

- Personal space
- Eye contact
- Handshakes
- Chit chat
- Gossip

### **Personal Space**

Personal space is the distance between two people in a family, social, or work relationship. This distance is different for each of these scenarios. The distance between you and others is different and depends on a variety of things like, how well you know the person, your relationship to that person, how much you trust them, and your culture.

In the workplace the average distance between people is 1 to 2 meters. It is important to pay attention to the comfort of your co-workers and your own comfort. In the workplace, it is better to be too far away than too close.

### **Eye Contact**

Eye contact is very different from cultural group to cultural group in Canada. In general, making eye contact with a person is believed to show you are listening to them. Not making eye contact makes many people think you are hiding something or not telling the truth. Eye contact can be very confusing in the workplace if there are many different cultures. It is important to understand that there is a difference and try to follow the lead of the majority cultural group.

### **Handshakes**

In general, a handshake needs to be firm, but not too firm. The ideal handshake will project you as a confident person. If your handshake is not firm some people will think you are not a strong or confident person. Handshakes, like eye contact, are different from culture to culture. If your culture or gender is not comfortable with handshakes, it is okay but it is important to explain why you do not wish to shake hands or people will think you are rude.

### **Chit chat**

Feeling comfortable and connected to your co-workers at work is positive and makes you enjoy your work more. To do this, co-workers participate in chit chat or small talk. Common chit chat topics are the weather, your hobbies, your children or your weekend and holiday time. There are some unwritten rules about how much chit chat is okay at work. Chit chat should not make you less productive at work. There are also some topics that you shouldn't chat about with your co-workers. These are politics, money, religion, age and weight. These topics are too sensitive for workplace small talk.

### Gossip

Gossip is talking about a person or people when they are not part of the conversation. Usually gossip is negative. It is very important to not gossip at work and to not be part of conversations where other people are gossiping.

#### Think about it!

- What are some other unwritten rules you have learned?

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### CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – FARIQ'S STORY

All workplaces have unwritten rules. They can be as simple as making sure to make new coffee when the coffee pot is empty or as complicated as asking what is the right order to approach your co-workers in for help.

Fariq is an HR manager who says the best way to ask for help on the job is to be genuine and honest if you don't understand the unwritten rules. Ask questions. Everyone may have a different opinion or view but being friendly with your co-workers even if you don't agree with them is important.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Use closed or open ended questions to ask about some workplace 'norms'.

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# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 10. ACCOUNTABILITY

### What is accountability?

**Accountability** is about taking ownership for your job tasks and responsibilities. Accountability is a character trait that is very important to Canadian employers. The expectations connected to accountability are:

- When you say you will do or complete something that you will do just that.
- If you can't meet deadlines you will speak up and let the supervisor know before it is overdue.
- If you make a mistake you will 'own up' to the mistake and take responsibility for fixing it.
- If you break something you will 'speak up' and tell someone what happened.

### VOCABULARY

#### Accountability

Taking ownership for your tasks and responsibilities.

### Steps for being accountable

- Admit it – Approach the person before they figure out that you made a mistake, broke something or did something wrong. Admitting to something before someone approaches you makes you trustworthy. And, it may lower the person's anger or disappointment level of you.
- Own it – You are not placing the blame on someone else. You are owning your part of what happened.
- Apologize – Be genuine and honest.
- Fix it – in some cases you will not be able to make it up to them, but, at least offer to do so.
- Learn from it – you should always learn from your mistakes.

### Think about it!

- Why do you think being accountable is hard for some people?

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- Give an example of a time when you were accountable at work.

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## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – LILA'S STORY

Lila thinks that a lot of people don't know their role or the real importance of their work, and how they affect the company.

This is accountability. At her last workplace one of her co-workers never finished her tasks on time. She always had an excuse and she never took responsibility for how being slow made the people she worked with get behind in their work. Lila's co-workers tried to talk to this person but she would get angry and not talk to them for days. It was really frustrating that she was not accountable to them.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Paraphrase why Lila was frustrated by her co-worker and why she thought she wasn't being accountable at work.

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# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 11. WORKPLACE RESPECT

### What is workplace respect?

Workplace respect is an expectation. Employers expect workers to respect the company, their supervisors or managers, their co-workers, the rules, and the tools they use to do their job. Knowing what respect looks like is sometimes different from person to person.

Here are some examples of what respect looks like in the workplace:

- Looking your supervisor or co-worker in the eye.
- Following the rules of the company about time.
- Responding quickly to texts or messages from your supervisor or co-worker.
- Putting the tools you use back where you got them.
- Completing the tasks you have been asked to do.
- Cleaning up your work area at the end of each day.

### Different communication styles can look like disrespect

Respect can be shown by our actions, (the way we act) or the way we say things. This can be confusing for others. People can assume we respect or disrespect them by how they see us act or what they hear us say. Some cultures have a direct communication style and some cultures have a very indirect communication style.

### An example

A boss who communicates in a direct – “Sweep the floor now.” If the worker is from a culture with an indirect communication style, they may be upset with this style and feel disrespected.

A boss who communicates in an indirect style – “The floor is dirty.” If the worker is from a culture with a direct communication style, they may not understand the boss expects them to sweep the floor now, and the boss will feel disrespected.

### Giving and Receiving Feedback at Work

Many Canadians have adopted a feedback style that is between direct and indirect. It is sometimes called the feedback sandwich and is:

- A 'positive' comment – You did this really well.
- A 'needs improved' comment – I'd like to see this little thing change.
- Finish with a 'positive' comment – But overall you are doing a great job.

### Think about it!

- Can you think of ways you show your respect at work?

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- Have you felt disrespected in the workplace? What happened?

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## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION - DINA'S STORY

Dina sometimes felt like employers in Canada didn't value or respect her. In her country, it is important to finish a task and her employers in her country expected her to stay late if she wasn't finished. In Canada, her boss told her to go home at the time she was scheduled to leave at. She felt hurt and thought he didn't care about her. It took her a long time to know that he actually cared about her **well-being** and he wanted her to go home to her family because he saw her as important.

One of the HR professionals who talked to the Moving Forward workshop participants talked about respect as the 'Golden Rule'. She said that a lot of her work was because people didn't follow this rule and then other workers complained about them. The expectation of employees is that workers show and practice respect for themselves and other people at all times. Disrespect in the workplace will not be **tolerated** at any level. Dina learned that sometimes culture makes the 'Golden Rule' seem different.

### VOCABULARY

#### Well-being

Being happy, health or successful

#### Tolerate

To allow something that is unpleasant or wrong.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Dina's story is an example of miscommunication because of a cultural difference and misunderstandings. **Use questions to clarify Dina's story to be sure you understand. Try to ask four questions.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 12. COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK

### What does collaboration and teamwork mean?

To collaborate means to work together to complete a task. Most jobs need you to collaborate. Employers value workers who are able to collaborate with their co-workers to get the work done.

Collaborating with your co-workers is a workplace expectation and is an important part of working as a team. Communication and cooperation are a very important part of collaboration. Many jobs are connected in the workplace and if you don't cooperate and communicate clearly, the tasks won't be done well or on time. Poor collaboration can equal poor teamwork and poor teamwork can equal poor productivity.

These are important points to think about to be a good team member.

- Respect and listen to the perspectives of your co-workers.
- Try hard everyday to do your best.
- Adapt to change when you need to.
- Think about solutions and do not place blame.
- Be counted on to do what you say you will.
- Help others out when you can.
- Know how to listen and actively communicate.

### Think about it!

- Think about a time you were part of a team. In our past, we have all been part of strong teams and weak teams. Describe what makes a strong team.

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- What are the most important character traits your team members should have to make collaborating with them easy?

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## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – LEN'S STORY

Len liked his new job and was very surprised to learn that his team lead was complaining that he wasn't a team player. He worked hard and always listened to the team lead and did whatever the senior workers asked him to do. He actually thought he was one of the best members of the team.

His boss was surprised that his perspective was so different than the team leads so he invited them both to a meeting. Len's team lead talked about his silence at the team meetings. The team lead said Len never asked questions and seemed to not listen or not care about the discussion because he was always looking at the table.

Len was doing what he thought he should do to be a good team player, what he had learned in his first job in his country. He was doing what the lead told him to, following the direction of the other employees who had been at the company longer and not questioning them even when he thought it was wrong or it could be done a better way. He was showing them respect.

It was a very important conversation and the first step for Len to understand how his culture was playing a part in how his co-workers saw him.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Paraphrase Len's story in your own words.

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# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 13. PRODUCTIVITY

### **What does productivity mean?**

Workplace productivity is a workplace expectation and one that is very important to both employers and employees. Without productivity a company is not successful and will not be able to stay open. If a company closes, employees will not have a job. Productivity is a result of all the workplace expectations combined.

Productivity is one of the most important things to an employer. When someone is paying you a wage for work, they like to see you working.

Many employers talk about being frustrated when they see workers 'wasting time'. Wasting time can be:

- Chatting too much with co-workers.
- Using your cell phone when working.
- Playing games or checking social media on the computer.
- Standing around waiting to be told what to do.

Productivity is about not wasting work time.

### **Why should you care about productivity?**

What many workers don't think about is that if the productivity at a workplace is poor the business may have to close because it is not making money. Productivity or 'not wasting time' at work helps you as much as it does the company.

### **Why does your employer care?**

In the workplace you will hear lots of people talking about productivity. For most companies, productivity is what allows them to continue to operate and not have to close their company forever.

Your employer will almost always be looking 'at the bottom line'. They want to make sure that their company is meeting goals, making money, or making a difference. If it's not, then they will be looking at employees to find out why.

Your personal productivity will go up or down based on many factors. If you are having a bad day, are feeling sick, or have other things on your mind, your productivity will go down. Employers know and understand this – however, if it continues for long periods of time they will likely pull you into their office to ask why.



**Think about it!**

- Who is responsible for productivity in the workplace? Why?

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- Have you ever thought about productivity at a workplace? Explain why you should think about productivity as a worker.

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**CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – A LOCAL EMPLOYER’S STORY**

A local employer was very honest about his hiring practices. He said there are very few reasons he would hire an employee. He hires people:

- To make the company money
- To take over tasks that allow others more time to make the company money

To be valuable to a company you need to understand productivity related to making money. Employers' all need to consider productivity and the skills of their employees to do the tasks they are hired to do. Businesses close very quickly if there is no attention to productivity.

**Active Communication Practice**

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Using active communication skills summarize what the local employer said and then ask two questions to clarify what you need more information about.

Summarize: \_\_\_\_\_

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Questions: \_\_\_\_\_

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# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 14. ADAPTABILITY

### What does adaptability mean?

**Adaptability** is being able to respond to change. Workplaces change regularly. Staff change, documents change, and work procedures change. Being able to keep up with the changes and accept the changes is a workplace expectation. Remember change usually happens for a good reason.

How can you show you are adaptable?

- Try to understand the reason for the change.
- Ask questions about the change.
- Show interest in the change.
- Give feedback about the change.
- Keep a positive attitude.

Employers look for workers who are adaptable. It is an expectation because change happens at work just like it does in your personal life. Some of the personal changes you adapt to might be the change from school to work, the change from one city to another or the change from living with many people to living by yourself. You don't always like change but you usually have to accept it.

### Think about it!

- What is a big change that happened in your life that you had to adapt to? Describe the ways in which you had to adapt.

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- What do you think makes some people resist change and unwilling to adapt?

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- What is a way that you can think of that might make adapting to change easier?

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### VOCABULARY

#### Adaptability

Able to change your action or thinking to match your workplace.

## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION - AN HR STORY

Adaptability isn't always about the employee changing as one company shared in a story. This company hired many people from different countries. Some of these people were from countries that celebrated different religious holidays than the human resource department was familiar with. The human resource manager felt it was very important to adapt. She knew there were 15 Protected Grounds in Canada and religion was one of them. More importantly, she valued and respected all the employees so knew she had to make some changes. She knew it wouldn't be easy but she committed to making it work.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Before the HR manager could adapt to the different religious needs of her employees she needed information. **What are 5 closed or open-ended questions she could ask the staff before she begins to make the needed changes.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 15. ORGANIZATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT

### What is organization and time management?

To be successful at work you need to organize yourselves. Good organization skills help you meet deadlines and stay on top of tasks. This also helps reduce your stress. Being organized includes knowing where you can find items physically (tools and supplies) or virtually (files and websites). Some jobs have strict schedules and timelines that are decided by management to meet production goals. Those jobs still need you to be organized so you can meet the timelines and schedules. All jobs connect in some way to both organization and time management skills.

### What does organization and time management look like?

It may seem that organization and time management skills come easily to people, but every organized person who also manages their time well, has many strategies to help them achieve this. It may seem that these skills come easily to some people, but they don't always. It is possible to develop strategies to organize yourself and make you better at managing time at work.

### Organization and time management strategies

- Make a list.
- Decide what order the tasks should be completed in. What's most important or what needs to be done first?
- Decide if any of the tasks will impact a co-worker and their work.
- Check to see you have everything you need or know where to find it.
- Turn off distractions if you can (phones, emails, etc.).
- Let people know when you are available and when you are not available. Send an email or mark yourself busy if you share a calendar.
- Don't **procrastinate**.

### VOCABULARY

#### Procrastinate

To avoid or delay doing a task.

### Think about it!

- What is the connection between organization and time management?

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- Why do employers want organized employees?

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- What does it mean to your employer/co-workers if you don't meet your deadlines?

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## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION

Tina talks about being bad at organization and time management. She says she's always been bad at it. She always feels like she is behind in both her personal and work life. In all her past jobs when she had a performance review, her supervisor told her she would never get a higher job because of this issue. She knew she was very good at leading people and thought if she could fix her weaknesses she could get a better job.

She knew she had to change. She also knew that her supervisor was a very organized person so she decided to ask for help. Her supervisor was really happy that Tina knew her own strengths and weaknesses and had asked for help. For one month, Tina and her supervisor spent ten minutes at the start of the day making a list of the tasks and then deciding which were the most important so Tina knew which tasks to start with. At the end of the month, Tina had really improved and felt more in control of her time at work.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Tina says that being organized is a big problem for her. She was bad at managing time at work and at home. **Look at the 'Organization and time management strategies' list and summarize it in your own words.**

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# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 16. CONFIDENCE

### Why is confidence important?

Confidence is an interesting workplace expectation. Confidence comes with experience so it can be difficult to be confident when starting a new job.

When employers were asked about confidence in the workplace they said they want their workers to be confident on their first day of work to:

- **Ask questions.** Employers don't expect you to know everything but they expect you to ask when you don't know.
- **Speak up.** If you don't know how to do something speak up. If you haven't been trained speak up. This is important for the safety of yourself and the safety of others.

### VOCABULARY

#### Speak up

Communicate directly.

### Think about it!

- Both the employer's examples of when you need to be confident at work connect to communication skills. What are some other ways you think it is important to show confidence at work?

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- Sometimes people are described as overconfident. What does this mean? Is this a positive or a negative way to be described?

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## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – AN IMMIGRANT STORY

Several of the students in the Moving Forward program were from other countries. They all talked about their low confidence level when speaking at work. They worried if their supervisors heard them speaking poor English (bad grammar or poor pronunciation) that they might not be able to keep the job. They had a real fear and this impacted their confidence.

Employers responded and said that they agree. Being able to communicate in English in the workplace is very important but they don't hire people for perfect English. They hire people for work skills and they really need you to be confident asking questions and speaking up. They want to see you trying to get better at English because your safety is connected to your ability to speak and understand quickly. If there is a workplace emergency they want you to be safe.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Showing confidence at work in a new job means asking questions when you don't know what to do or don't understand. **Think about starting a new job and prepare 5 questions that you can ask to get more information about workplace expectations. (Hint – You can use some of the workplace expectations topics you have completed to ask questions about.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 17. CONFIDENTIALITY

### What is workplace confidentiality?

**Confidentiality** means to not share private information with your family, friends or sometimes, even other co-workers. There are many types of information that needs to be kept in confidence at the workplace. Two of two of the most important types are:

- Personal information of clients or co-workers.
- Business information of your employer.

### Confidentiality is serious

Keep in mind you must take workplace confidentiality seriously. When you are hired on, they will likely tell you what you can and cannot talk about to those inside and outside of the workplace. If they don't, ask. It can be as simple as making sure:

- Files are locked up before you leave your desk.
- Your appointment book is put away.
- You lock your computer screen if you leave your desk.
- You pick up papers from the photocopier immediately.

Or as difficult as:

- Pretending not to recognize a client when at a social event.
- Avoiding/evading direct questions from the media or clients.
- Knowing what to say when police come with a warrant.

### Think about it!

- In your opinion why is confidentiality an important workplace expectation?

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### VOCABULARY

#### Confidentiality

A promise to not share private information with others.



## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION

Hugh works at an Adult Literacy Centre. Last week he saw one of the literacy students at the food court at the local mall. Hugh is a very friendly person so he went over to say hello to the student who was eating lunch with his family. When the student's son asked how Hugh knew his dad Hugh explained.

When Hugh got to work on Monday there was an angry phone call for him from the student. He was angry because his son and daughter didn't know their dad struggled to read and Ryan had told him about him working with a tutor to get better at reading.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

It is very important when someone is angry to let them know that they have been heard. Summarizing what you hear them say is a good way to prove you hear them. The student was angry because Hugh did not keep his private information to himself. **Summarize what you imagine the student yelled in his message to Hugh.**

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# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 18. PROBLEM SOLVING

### What is problem solving?

Problem solving can be a big part of an employer's workplace expectation. Problems can be connected to tasks (the instructions aren't clear), machines (the machine keeps breaking down), technology (the internet is not working) or people (the staff doesn't know how to do something).

### Problem solving steps

It is important to think about all the steps of problem solving so that action to solve the problem happens.

1. Identify the problem and be sure that it is the real problem.
2. Brainstorm ways to fix the problem.
3. Evaluate all the suggested solutions.
4. Take action.

Step 1 is very important because without spending time to really understand the problem, the problem is often not fixed and happens again and again. Step 1 should include getting input from co-workers because they may see the problem differently than you do.

Many companies use a '5 Why Model' when they see a problem to make sure they get to the root of the problem and aren't solving a surface problem.

Here is a link to a good video that explains the '5 Why Model': [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC\\_5W.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_5W.htm)

### An example of the 5 Why Model

Problem – The monthly newsletter is never sent out on the right day.

Why isn't the newsletter sent out on the right day?	It's not ready on time.
Why isn't it ready on time?	Because the information to include is always late.
Why is the information to include late?	Because the staff forget the deadline.
Why do the staff forget the deadline?	Because they haven't added a reminder to their calendar.
Why haven't they added a reminder?	Because they have a new calendar app they don't know how to use.

Once the real problem is discovered, steps 2, 3 and 4 can be completed.

**Think about it!**

- Do you have examples of the same problem happening again and again? If yes - what was the problem?

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- If you think about the problem now, do you think you were solving the real problem?

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- What are examples of problems you have had to solve at work?

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**CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – KERRY’S STORY**

When Kerry first came to Canada he noticed there was a problem at his new job. It was a simple problem that he knew could be easily fixed because of his work experience before he came to Canada. He didn't know if it would be okay for him to speak up because in his country only the bosses were involved in problem solving. He was really happy when the boss asked him his opinion and he could use what he knew to help his new company. His boss told him that he wanted to hear any ideas he might have, this surprised him but also made him excited for his future at work.

**Active Communication Practice**

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Problem - Liza is always late for work. This is a big problem for her co-workers because she is never there for the start of the morning planning meetings. **Ask the question 'why' to try and understand the root of the problem. Imagine what Liza's answer is.**

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# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 19. MOTIVATION

### What is workplace motivation?

**Motivation** is wanting to do something. It can also mean wanting to do something really well. Motivation is an expectation that is shown by your engagement with your work, your supervisor and your co-workers. Motivation is seen in the way you communicate and the way you take initiative. Employers who are unhappy with their workers often describe them as unmotivated.

### VOCABULARY

#### Motivation

Wanting to do something without being asked or told.

### What does being motivated look like?

Taking initiative is one of the best ways to show you are motivated at work. To initiate means doing something without waiting for someone to tell you to do it. This is called “using your initiative”.

These are a few ways to show you are motivated.

1. Don't wait to be told what to do. Ask someone.
2. Watch what your co-workers do when they finish a task and follow their example.
3. Clean or tidy up.

### Think about it!

- What makes you motivated?

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- Describe how you show you are a motivated person.

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## CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – BILL'S STORY

Bill felt proud of himself because he could complete his tasks so quickly and then have free time while he waited for his co-workers to finish their tasks. He was surprised when his supervisor asked to speak to him and talked about Bill's laziness. He saw Bill looking at his phone a lot and even spending extra time in the lunch room. His supervisor wondered why he didn't help his co-workers.

Bill tried to explain that he only took breaks when he was finished the work he had been told to do. His supervisor was very frustrated and told him if he was being paid to work, then he needed to work. He told Bill to let him know when he was done and he would give him more tasks to do. Finally, his supervisor said if Bill wanted to get a higher level job in the company he had to take some initiative and not be lazy. Bill was confused because this was very different than in his country.

### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Bill and his supervisor see Bill's work style very differently. Ask Bill some open-ended questions to find out more about the difference between his experience in his country and Canada.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

# WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

## 20. CHARACTER TRAITS

### What character traits are important for employers?

Employers expect their workers to have certain 'character traits'. There are many character traits that are very valued in the workplace. These are also traits that we would like our co-workers to have.

Below are the common traits employers said they want to see.

- Honest
- Dependable
- Trustworthy
- Has common sense
- Professional
- Asks questions
- Problem solver
- Team worker
- Confident
- Hard working
- Takes initiative
- Adaptable

### Think about it!

- Define each of the words as they relate to the workplace and why each is a good trait to have. Think about how each trait will benefit co-workers, management and/or customers.

Honest: \_\_\_\_\_

Dependable: \_\_\_\_\_

Trustworthy: \_\_\_\_\_

Common sense: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional: \_\_\_\_\_

Asks questions: \_\_\_\_\_

Problem solver: \_\_\_\_\_

Team worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Confident: \_\_\_\_\_

Hard working: \_\_\_\_\_

Takes initiative: \_\_\_\_\_

Adaptable: \_\_\_\_\_

- Are there any character traits you think are important that are not listed above? If so, what are they?

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- Are there any character traits listed above that you think should not be on the list? If so, why?

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### CONNECTING THE EXPECTATION – KELLY'S STORY

Kelly was a person who complained a lot on the job with co-workers. They said a lot of negative things about the boss and the company. Then Kelly had a baby and went on leave from work. When they were asking their boss about coming back after their maternity/paternity leave, the boss said "I understand you don't like the way I run my business. Why should I give you your position back?" This was shocking for Kelly as they trusted their co-workers and didn't think that they would say anything bad about them. But, in the year away from work, people were speaking about Kelly's poor attitude, and that information reached the employer. Kelly is now back at their job, but it was awkward at first. They are now working on changing their workplace behaviour and complaining less to co-workers.

#### Active Communication Practice

In this section you will practice using the active communication skills you learned at the start of the workbook. Write your answers below.

Kelly's story is not uncommon. Their story is an example of why employers think certain character traits are important workplace expectations. **Which of the character traits listed above were lacking in Kelly's workplace behavior?**

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**Summarize Kelly's story.**

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