

## United States Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy

### Youth in Transition

### Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success

#### Disability Employment Policy Resources by Topic

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#### Overview

"Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success," is a curriculum developed by ODEP focused on teaching "soft" or workforce readiness skills to youth, including youth with disabilities. Created for youth development professionals as an introduction to workplace interpersonal and professional skills, the curriculum is targeted for youth ages 14 to 21 in both in-school and out-of-school environments. The basic structure of the program is comprised of modular, hands-on, engaging activities that focus on six key skill areas: communication, enthusiasm and attitude, teamwork, networking, problem solving and critical thinking, and professionalism.

#### Introduction Materials

- [Introduction and Activity Layout](#) (PDF)
- [Through the Lens of Universal Design for Learning](#) (PDF)
- [Tips for Improving Access for Youth with Disabilities](#) (PDF)

#### Soft Skill #1: Communication

The activities in this section will not only help participants practice and recognize how they provide information to others, but also help them consider how others may prefer to receive information. It is important to reinforce with participants that communication skills involve give and take — and they can, indeed, be learned and strengthened over time.

- [Download Soft Skill #1: Communication](#) (PDF)

#### Soft Skill #2: Enthusiasm & Attitude

The activities in this section seek to teach participants about the importance of enthusiasm and a positive attitude in the workplace. Participants will hear strategies for turning negative thinking into positive thinking and displaying and discussing enthusiasm during an interview and on the job.

- [Download Soft Skill #2: Enthusiasm & Attitude](#) (PDF)

#### Soft Skill #3: Teamwork

The activities in this section seek to teach participants about the importance of teamwork to workplace success and the specific role each individual on a team may play. Participants will learn about positive teamwork behavior and discover how their own conduct can impact others on a team.

- [Download Soft Skill #3: Teamwork](#) (PDF)

#### Soft Skill #4: Networking

The activities in this section focus on the process of networking and its relevance and importance to career development. Participants will learn about taking initiative and overcoming fear, informational interviewing, as well as potential guidelines to consider when using social networks, texting, and email for networking purposes.

- [Download Soft Skill #4: Networking](#) (PDF)

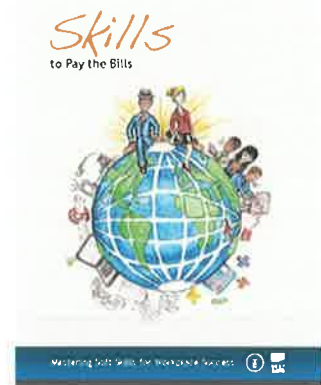
#### Soft Skill #5: Problem Solving & Critical Thinking

The activities in this section focus on learning how to solve problems in a variety of ways in the workplace. Participants will hear about how to properly tell the difference among criticism, praise, and feedback and reacting appropriately. The section will also review strategies for making ethical decisions, solving problems on a team with others, and learning how to take into account others' perceptions when assessing actions or statements in the workplace.

- [Download Soft Skill #5: Problem Solving & Critical Thinking](#) (PDF)

#### Soft Skill #6: Professionalism

The activities in this section focus on each of the five individual soft skills presented in this publication (communication, enthusiasm/attitude, teamwork, networking, and problem solving/critical thinking), but in a broader framework. This is because professionalism, is not one skill but the blending and integration of a variety of skills.



- [Download Soft Skill #6: Professionalism](#) (PDF)

**Additional Materials**

- [A Word About Social Networking](#) (PDF)
- [Additional Resources for Youth with Disabilities](#) (PDF)
- [In Their Own Words](#) (PDF)

**Note:** You will need [Acrobat Reader](#) available on your computer in order to view the PDF documents.