



Growing In Professional Skills

Learning at-a-Glance

All sessions will be held in training room 3, 1st floor,
James K. Polk Bldg. unless otherwise noted

Dealing with Ambiguity

Can effectively cope with change; can shift gears comfortably; can decide and act without having the total picture; can comfortably handle risk and uncertainty

Skilled Behaviors:

- Isn't upset when things are up in the air
- Doesn't have to finish things before moving on

Unskilled Behaviors:

- Not comfortable with change or uncertainty
- May not do well on fuzzy problems with no clear solution or outcome
- May prefer more data than others, and structure over uncertainty
- Prefers more data than others, and structure over uncertainty
- Prefers things tacked down and sure
- Less efficient and productive under ambiguity
- Too quick to close
- May have a strong need to finish everything
- May like to do things the same way time after time

Informing

Ability to adapt, to be responsive, and to manage self-awareness during the process of talking and listening; being sure staff has correct information and is clear about what is happening around them

Skilled Behaviors:

- Provides the information people need to know to do their jobs and to feel good about being a member of the team, unit, and/or the organization
- Provides individuals information so that they can make accurate decisions
- Is timely with information

Unskilled Behaviors:

- Not a consistent communicator
- Tells too little or too much
- Tells too late
- Timing is off
- May be unclear, may inform some better than others
- May not think through who needs to know by when
- Doesn't seek or listen to the data needs of others
- May inform but lack follow-through
- May either hoard information or not see informing as important
- May only have one mode – written or oral or e-mail

Learning on the Fly

Learns quickly when facing new problems; analyzes both successes and failures for clues to improvement; experiments and will try anything to find solutions; enjoys the challenge of unfamiliar tasks

Skilled Behaviors:

- Learns quickly when facing new problems
- A relentless and versatile learner
- Open to change
- Analyzes both successes and failures for clues to improvement
- Experiments and will try anything to find solutions
- Enjoys the challenge of unfamiliar tasks
- Quickly grasps the essence and the underlying structure of anything

Unskilled Behaviors:

- Not agile or versatile in learning to deal with first-time or unusual problems
- May not analyze problems carefully or search for multiple clues and parallels
- May be afraid to take a chance on the unknown
- Learns new things slowly
- May be stuck in historical, tried-and-true methods, uncomfortable with ambiguity and quick to jump to a solution
- Doesn't look under rocks, just sticks to the obvious
- Looks for the simplest explanation too soon
- Gives up to soon and accepts a marginal solution
- Functions on the surface, doesn't go deep

Peer Relationships

Senses other's feelings and perspectives and takes an active interest in their concerns; anticipates, recognizes, and meets other's needs; helps to bolster peer's abilities

Skilled Behaviors:

- Can quickly find common ground and solve problems for the good of all
- Can represent his/her own interest and yet be fair to other groups
- Can solve problems with peers with minimum of noise
- Is seen as a team player and is cooperative
- Easily gains trust and support of peers
- Encourages collaboration
- Can be candid with peers

Unskilled Behaviors:

- Not good at lateral cross-boundary relations
- Doesn't strike fair bargains or understand what peers expect or need
- Not open to negotiation
- A loner, not seen as a team player, doesn't have the greater good in mind
- May withhold resources from the other team members
- May not respect their functions or disciplines and somehow communicates that
- May be very competitive, play and maneuver for advantage and withhold information
- May have a chilling effect on the entire unit because he/she won't play
- May deal with lateral conflict noisily or uncooperatively

Process Management

Plans and monitors the performance of a process; applied knowledge, skills, tools, techniques, and systems to define, visualize, measure, control, report, and improve processes with the goal to meet requirements successfully

Skilled Behaviors:

- Good at figuring out the processes necessary to get things done
- Knows how to organize people and activities
- Understands how to separate and combine tasks into efficient work flow
- Knows what to measure and how to measure it
- Can see opportunities for synergy and integration where others can't
- Can simplify complex processes
- Gets more out of fewer resources

Unskilled Behaviors:

- Not good at figuring out effective and efficient ways to get things done
- Works in a disorganized fashion
- Doesn't take advantage of opportunities for synergy and efficiency with others
- Can't visualize effective processes in his/her head
- Lays out tasks for self and others in a helter-skelter way
- Doesn't work to simplify things
- Uses more resources than others to get the same thing done
- Lacks attention to detail
- Doesn't anticipate the problems that will arise
- Not a systemic thinker

Self-Development

Proactively investigates new perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors, and takes steps to evaluate and improve performance

Skilled Behaviors:

- Is personally committed to and actively works to continuously improve him/herself
- Understands that different situations and levels may call for different skills and approaches
- Works to deploy strengths
- Works on compensating for weakness and limits

Unskilled Behaviors:

- Doesn't put in the effort to grow and change
- Doesn't do anything to act on constructive feedback
- May not know what to work on or how
- May know what but doesn't act on it
- Doesn't adjust approach to different audiences and situations may be immune to negative feedback - arrogant or defensive
- May fear failure and the risk of admitting shortcomings
- May not believe people really change, therefore it is not worth the effort
- May believe current skills will last
- May believe in development but is always too busy

Understanding Others

Are attentive to emotional cues and listens well; shows sensitivity and understands other's perspectives; helps out based on understanding other people's needs and feelings

Skilled Behaviors:

- Understands why groups do what they do
- Picks up the sense of the group in terms of positions, intentions, and needs
- What they value and how to motivate them
- Can predict what groups will do across different situations

Unskilled Behaviors:

- Is not equitable toward direct reports
- Doesn't listen to direct reports' concerns and needs
- May not read people's needs well and not be able to tell how they are responding to his/her treatment
- Hides or keeps things from his/her people they have a right to know
- May be inconsistent and play favorites
- May not think about it or be too busy to pay attention to equity
- May bucket people into good and bad buckets and treat them accordingly