

# TRANSITION & COURT-INVOLVED YOUTH

## Reinforce Workplace Readiness Skills

Developed by the Center on Transition Innovations  
at Virginia Commonwealth University

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Opportunities to learn and practice workplace readiness skills are critical transition activities. Workplace readiness skills contribute to successful employment. These include skills related to communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork.

Youth who are or have been court-involved may have fewer opportunities to practice these skills. The activities included here reinforce workplace readiness skills regardless of the environment in which a youth is served. By providing opportunities to practice conflict resolution, creativity and innovation, listening and speaking, and teamwork, these activities help youth build valuable skills for future employment success.

### **Lessons include:**

- Creativity and Innovation
- Listening and Speaking
- Teamwork
- Conflict Resolution

[CenterOnTransition.org](http://CenterOnTransition.org)

The contents were developed under a contract #881-APE62524-H027A220107 from the Virginia Department of Education. Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Education is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution. If specific accommodations are needed, please contact the Center on Transition Innovations at [transition@vcu.edu](mailto:transition@vcu.edu).

## Skill 1

# Workplace Readiness Skill: Creativity & Innovation

This lesson focuses on teaching students about creativity and innovation.

## Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Identify examples of creativity and innovation.
- Understand the importance of creativity and innovation in the workplace.
- Practice creativity and innovation.

## Materials

- White board or Large Post-It Paper
- Worksheets with five pre-drawn circles
- Markers

## Lesson at a Glance

**Focus:** Too often, we think of creativity in terms of visual arts, such as painting, or performance arts like acting. However, creativity is a necessary skill in many, if not most, jobs. Being creative and innovative means thinking of new and resourceful ways to solve problems and doing new things.

## Lesson Steps:

- 1 Prepare for lesson
- 2 Icebreaker
- 3 Review lesson objectives
- 4 Instruction
- 5 Reflection

# Lesson Procedure: Creativity & Innovation

## 1 Prepare

Gather lesson materials.

- White board or Large Post-It Paper
- Worksheets with five pre-drawn circles
- Markers

## 2 Icebreaker

Having creativity and innovation means you employ originality, inventiveness, and resourcefulness in the workplace.

### Examples of creativity and innovation:

- Use a wagon to bring in a lot of groceries at one time instead of making multiple trips.
- Paint a beautiful mural on a blank wall.

## 3 Review Objectives

Students will:

- Identify examples of creativity and innovation.
- Understand the importance of creativity and innovation in the workplace.
- Practice creativity and innovation.

## 4 Instruction

As a class, think of what it means to be creative and innovative.

**Example:** If you work at a grocery store and come up with a simpler method for bringing in grocery carts, this is creativity and innovation.

## 4 Instruction (continued)

Have students discuss a way they have been creative and/or innovative at home, school, or work.

### Activity

Provide each student a circle activity sheet.

1. Set a timer for two minutes.
2. Turn each circle into something else. Don't worry about quality. It doesn't matter if you draw well!
3. Have students share the pictures they created.
4. Discuss what was easy and what was challenging about creating something new.

## 5 Reflection

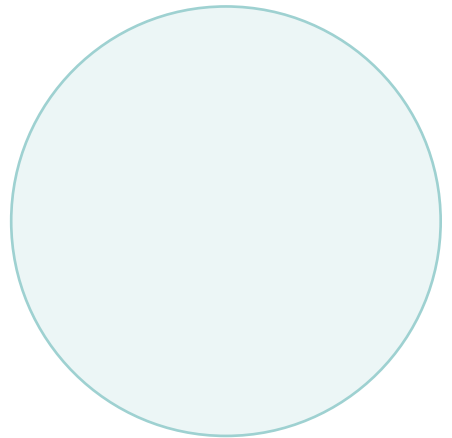
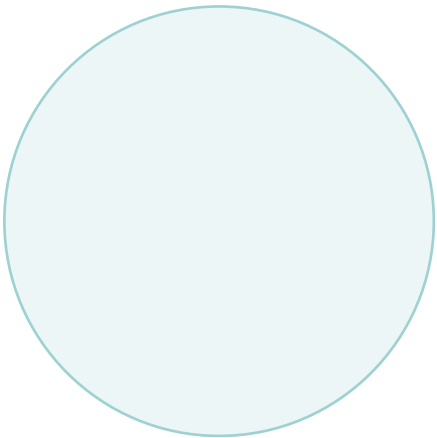
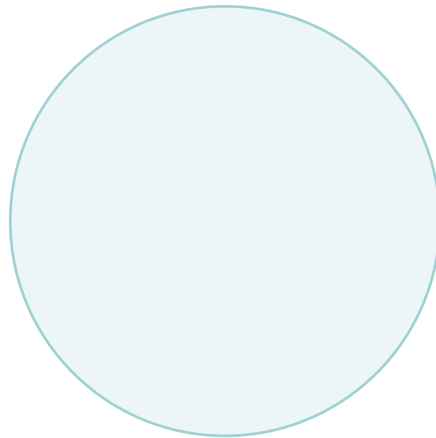
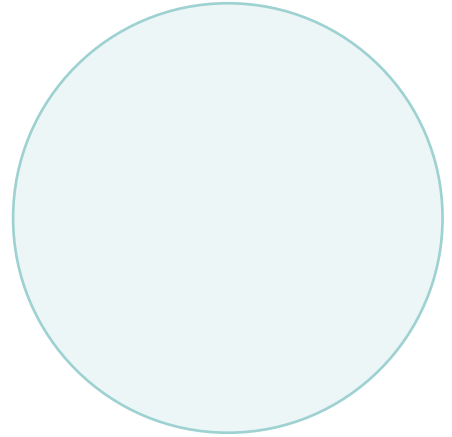
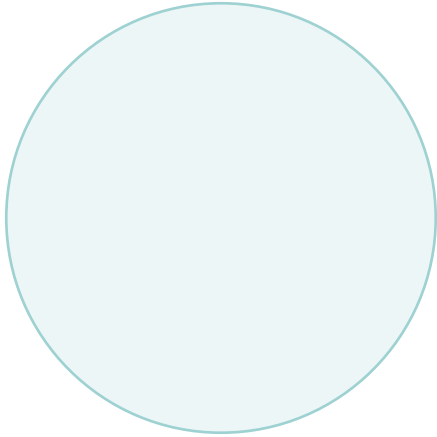
Review these questions with your students after completing the activity.

- Did this information help you better understand demonstrating creativity and innovation?
- What was easy or hard about learning and practicing this skill?
- Why is this skill important to use at work?
- How can you continue to practice this skill?
- What information or resources do you need to continue to practice this skill?

# Workplace Readiness Skill: Creativity & Innovation

## Circle Activity Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Skill 2

# Workplace Readiness Skill: Listening & Speaking

This lesson focuses on teaching students about listening and speaking.

## Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Understand the importance of listening and speaking in the workplace.
- Identify one strategy to improve listening.
- Practice active listening.

## Materials

- White board or Large Post-It Paper
- 5 letter-size sheets of paper with one pre-written letter each: S, L, A, N, and T
- Markers

## Lesson at a Glance

**Focus:** Have you ever gotten in trouble for not listening? Have you had trouble talking to others? Listening and speaking skills are critical parts of workplace communication in almost all jobs. The ability to understand what another person is saying and the ability to express your thoughts will help improve your job performance.

## Lesson Steps:

- 1 Prepare for lesson
- 2 Icebreaker
- 3 Review lesson objectives
- 4 Instruction
- 5 Reflection

# Lesson Procedure: Listening & Speaking

## 1 Prepare

Gather lesson materials.

- White board or Large Post-It Paper
- 5 letter-size sheets of paper with one pre-written letter each: S, L, A, N, and T
- Markers

## 2 Icebreaker

Listening and speaking means you pay attention and ask questions to clarify meaning; you share ideas clearly in a manner appropriate for the setting and audience.

### Examples of listening and speaking:

- You speak to your mother clearly and calmly to figure out a solution to the Wifi not working properly even though you are frustrated.
- A customer is complaining about a product your store sells and you quietly listen to their problem without interrupting.

## 3 Review Objectives

Students will:

- Understand the importance of listening and speaking in the workplace.
- Identify one strategy to improve listening.
- Practice active listening.

## 4 Instruction

To improve listening skills, teach the SLANT strategy. It may be helpful to write each step out on a white board or large Post-It paper.

**S – Sit up straight.**

**L – Lean forward and listen.**

**A – Answer.**

**N – Nod your head.**

**T – Track the speaker.**



Have the class practice active listening using SLANT with the following activity.

### Activity

1. Have students take turns listening as they each talk about the best part of their day; the worst part of their day; and something they hope to do after the class.
2. After a student shares, have another student repeat the answers provided and ask one follow-up question.
3. Switch the students' roles and repeat the activity until all students have talked about their day.

You can adjust the skill level by decreasing or increasing the number of topics in each conversation. You can also increase or decrease the difficulty of the topics.

## 5 Reflection

Review these questions with your students after completing the activity.

- Did this information help you better understand listening and speaking?
- What was easy or hard about learning and practicing this skill?
- Why is this skill important to use at work?
- How can you continue to practice this skill?
- What information or resources do you need to continue to practice this skill?



## Skill 3

# Workplace Readiness Skill: Teamwork

This lesson focuses on teaching students about teamwork.

## Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Understand the importance of teamwork in the workplace.
- Identify one example of a team role.
- Practice teamwork.

## Materials

- White board
- Markers
- 10 pieces of paper
- Tape

## Lesson at a Glance

**Focus:** In life, we often find ourselves working with others to accomplish a goal like a class science project or painting a room in the house. At work, teamwork is key whether you are working with a customer, a supervisor, or with your coworkers. In fact, teamwork is something that employers want to see and a lot of times they will ask about it in an interview.

## Lesson Steps:

- 1 Prepare for lesson
- 2 Icebreaker
- 3 Review lesson objectives
- 4 Instruction
- 5 Reflection

# Lesson Procedure: Teamwork

## 1 Prepare

Gather lesson materials.

- Understand the importance of teamwork in the workplace
- Identify one example of a team role
- Practice teamwork

As you prepare for this lesson, take time to consider the skill level of your students and adapt the lesson activity as needed. This may mean you need to give your students five minutes to discuss the activity, select their materials, or make a plan before beginning.

## 2 Icebreaker

Teamwork means sharing responsibility for collaborative work and respecting the thoughts, opinions, and contributions of other team members.

### Examples of teamwork:

- Help make dinner with a family member.
- Listen to ideas and develop a social media marketing plan with coworkers.

## 3 Review Objectives

Students will:

- Understand the importance of teamwork in the workplace.
- Identify one example of a team role.
- Practice teamwork.

## 4 Instruction

As a class, lead a conversation as about teamwork.

Have students name all of the ways they work with other people to get work done. This teamwork can be at home, in school, or in the community.

## 4 Instruction (continued)

Once you have this list, break down each example with the following prompts:

- Talk about the team as a whole—what are the team’s goals or tasks?
- What role does each person play in working towards finishing their task?

To illustrate teamwork, lead the class in the following activity.

### Activity

1. Provide students with ten pieces of paper and tape.
2. As a class or in small groups, have students work together to build the tallest structure they can. The structure must be able to stand on its own!
3. After students build their tower, talk about what the experience was like with the following prompts:
  - Discuss the different roles each person played.
  - Talk about what went well on each team by highlighting what each student successfully contributed to the team.
  - Ask students to reflect on what each person could do better and how this would improve the team.

## 5 Reflection

Review these questions with your students after completing the activity.

- Did this information help you better understand teamwork?
- What was easy or hard about learning and practicing this skill?
- Why is this skill important to use at work?
- How can you continue to practice this skill?
- What information or resources do you need to continue to practice this skill?

## Skill 4

# Workplace Readiness Skill: Conflict Resolution

This lesson focuses on teaching students skills to resolve conflicts.

## Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Understand that conflicts are natural and can happen in a variety of environments, such as at school, work, or in the community.
- Identify at least one way to resolve a conflict.
- Practice resolving conflict in a calm manner.

## Materials

- White Board or Large Post-It Paper
- Paper and Pencil
- Conflict scenarios
- Selection of stress balls
- Markers

## Lesson at a Glance

**Focus:** Conflict and problems at work are natural and can happen when talking to a coworker, boss, or a customer. Conflict can make us feel discouraged or upset, making the skill to resolve conflict a necessary one. The ability to resolve conflicts at work can increase problem-solving skills, productivity, communication, and independence.

## Lesson Steps:

- 1 Prepare for lesson
- 2 Icebreaker
- 3 Review lesson objectives
- 4 Instruction
- 5 Reflection

# Lesson Procedure: Conflict Resolution

## 1 Prepare

Gather lesson materials.

- White Board or Large Post-It Paper
- Markers
- Paper and Pencil
- Conflict scenarios
- Selection of stress balls

For the conflict scenarios, use the provided scenarios or develop your own.

## 2 Icebreaker

Being able to resolve conflicts means you can negotiate agreeable solutions to personal and workplace issues.

### Examples of conflict resolution:

- Plan a computer schedule with your sibling to ensure that each of you can get your work done instead of fighting over the computer.
- Calmly talk and compromise with a coworker on how to get a project done when you disagree on how it should be done.

## 3 Review Objectives

Students will:

- Understand that conflicts are natural and can happen in a variety of environments, such as at school, work, or in the community.
- Identify at least one way to resolve a conflict.
- Practice resolving conflict in a calm manner.

## 4 Instruction

As a class, think of conflicts that could happen at school or in a workplace.

If discussing real conflicts seems stressful, practice this activity by listing conflicts seen in popular movies or TV shows or by using the provided conflicts listed at the end of this lesson.

## 4 Instruction (continued)

### Activity 1: Resolving a Real Conflict

1. Write the conflicts the class brainstormed on the whiteboard or post-it paper.
2. Work as a class to choose one conflict to resolve together.
3. Use the following steps to figure out how to resolve the conflict:
  - Talk about the feelings people often experience when they think about the conflict. These feelings could be frustration, anger, sadness, or annoyance.
  - Have students take turns discussing how they feel about the selected conflict.
    - ▶ **Prompt students to share what they might need or want if they were to experience this conflict.**
    - ▶ **Encourage the other students to listen while each student shares their thoughts and feelings.**
  - As a class, think of as many solutions to the conflict as possible. Write down the solutions on the whiteboard or post-it paper. Any idea is worth writing down!
  - Go through each solution as a group and decide what would happen if you picked that idea to resolve the conflict. Talk about the pros and cons of each.
  - Ask the group to come to a consensus about which option would best resolve the conflict.

Have students repeat this activity in pairs or individually using another conflict identified by the group at the beginning of the lesson.

Conflict cannot be resolved peacefully if we cannot manage our emotions. Use this activity to help develop strategies to help your students stay calm.

### Activity 2: Keeping Calm During Conflict

1. Begin with a discussion: ask students to draw or talk about how they might feel when something doesn't go our way or when we have a conflict.
2. As a group, make a list of actions that can help people calm down. Some examples are:
  - taking deep breaths
  - going for short walks
  - talking with a trusted person
  - squeezing a stress ball
  - focusing on an affirmation
  - drawing

## 4 Instruction (continued)

### Activity 2 (continued)

3. Model the strategies listed that students may be unfamiliar with.
4. Have students identify one or two strategies they would like to use.
5. Using conflict scenarios, have students role-play a conflict, practice their selected calming strategies, and resolve the conflict.

Remind students that these techniques can be used to stay calm in a variety of situations to better resolve conflicts!

## 5 Reflection

Review these questions with your students after completing the activities.

- Did this information help you better understand conflict resolution?
- What was easy or hard about practicing this skill?
- Why is the skill of conflict resolution important? At work? In the community?
- How can you continue to practice this skill?
- What information or resources do you need to continue to practice this skill?

### Conflict Scenarios

For Activity 1, use the following conflict scenarios or create your own scenarios to use with your students.

- You work as a host/hostess at a local restaurant. Saturday nights are usually very busy, and on this particular night, two servers called out sick from work causing the restaurant to be short-staffed. Because of this, the wait time to seat customers is even longer than normal. After waiting for 30 minutes, a customer approaches you and rudely questions why the wait for a table is so long. What do you do?
- Your friends have been planning to see the latest Marvel movie, and you are really excited to go with them. However, the plans changed, and they are going to see a movie about zombies instead. Zombies give you nightmares, but you are afraid of being teased by your friends if you admit you're scared. What do you do?