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Topic 1: Soft Skills

1.1 Communication

Developed by:

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Workshop Objectives

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of communication principles including its definition, types and significance in various contexts.
- Learn essential communication skills such as active listening and empathy to enhance interpersonal interactions.
- Identify common barriers to effective communication and explore strategies to overcome them.
- Learn how to implement different communication skills through interactive activities.

Introduction to Communication:

Communication is the process of **exchanging information**, ideas, and emotions between individuals or groups. It encompasses verbal, non-verbal, written and digital interactions and plays a **crucial role in everyday interactions.**

Communication Principles:

- We cannot **not** communicate-We always communicate.
- Communication always has a frame-Time, Place, participants etc.
- Communication is always "acting-reacting"
- We communicate differently-As individuals, teams, organizations.

Verbal Vs Non-Verbal Communication

Verbal

The use of spoken or written words to convey messages, ideas and information.

Examples: Conversations, speeches, emails, presentations.

Non-Verbal

The transmission of messages through gestures, facial expressions and body language.

Examples: Eye contact, facial expressions, hand gestures, body posture.

Non-Verbal Communication Types

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Facial Expressions

Gestures

Paralinguistics
(loudness or tone of voice)

Appearance

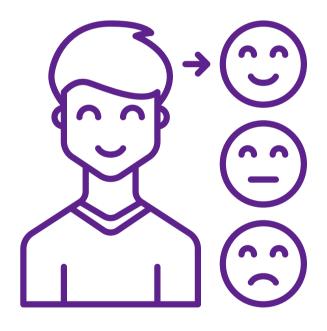Body Language

Eye gaze, touch

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Facial Expressions

- Facial Expressions play a **crucial role** in non-verbal communication. Expressions like smiles or frowns convey messages instantly, often before words are spoken.

- While nonverbal communication and behavior can vary between cultures, basic emotions like happiness, sadness and anger, are **universally expressed through facial expressions.**

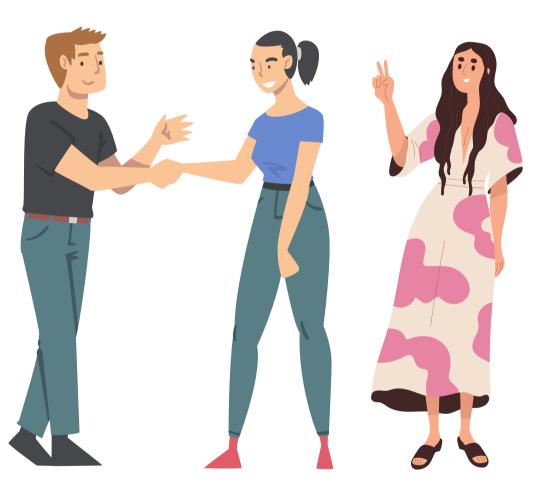- The face is often the **first thing noticed**, shaping initial impressions and influencing interactions.

Gestures

- Movements and signals are used to convey messages without words, playing a significant role in communication. Common gestures include waving, pointing or giving a thumbs up sign.

- Some gestures have **cultural significance**, such as the "V" sign, representing peace or victory in the U.S., but considered offensive in countries like Australia or Britain.

- Some gestures carry significant **influence**, so judges may restrict certain gestures in court to prevent bias.

Paralinguistics

- The **vocal communication beyond language**. It includes tone of voice, loudness and pitch.

- Paralinguistic features significantly impact how messages are **perceived**, often conveying emotions, attitudes and intentions.

- The tone of voice can **alter the meaning** of a statement. A strong tone may convey confidence and approval, whereas a hesitant tone can suggest doubt or disinterest.

Appearance

- Our clothing, hairstyle, and overall appearance, **communicate messages** about our identity, personality and status.

- Studies indicate that **appearance can affect earning potential and job opportunities.** Initial judgements based on appearance are impactful, emphasizing the importance of presenting oneself appropriately, especially in contexts like job interviews.

- Research in psychology reveals that **different colors can evoke various moods and emotions.**

Body Language

- Posture and movement convey valuable insights on emotions, attitudes and intentions.

- Common body language cues like **arm-crossing and leg-crossing**, have been associated with **defensiveness or discomfort**.

- Body language is often **subtle**, therefore, interpretations should be approached with **caution**, considering the complexity of human behavior.

Eye Gaze, Touch

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- Eye movements such as staring, looking and blinking **convey emotions and intentions.** For example, increased blinking and pupil dilation indicate interest or attraction.

- Touch communicates affection, familiarity and other emotions enriching interpersonal connections.

- **Men and women utilize touch differently**. Women often use touch to express care and nurturance while men use it to assert power or control in social interactions.

Can you guess what they feel?

What is Active Listening?

Active listening involves paying attention to what someone is saying as well as their **feelings and ideas**. It transforms a discussion into a dynamic, **two-way exchange that is free from competition.**
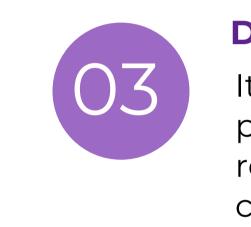
Why is active listening important in communication?
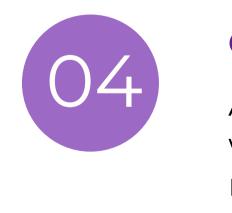
01 FOSTERS UNDERSTANDING

It allows individuals to fully comprehend the message being conveyed by the speaker, including their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives.

02 LISTENING TIME

Research indicates that 42-60% of our communication time is spent listening which shows the importance of active listening as a communication skill.

03 DRIVES POSITIVE OUTCOMES

It leads to more meaningful and productive communication exchanges, resulting a culture of respect and collaboration.

04 CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Active listeners are highly valued in the workplace and frequently promoted, with managers considering it to be the most crucial communication skill for success.

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How to be a good listener?

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1. **Avoid "Why" Questions:** These questions may come across as confrontational or judgmental.
2. **Ask Open Questions:** Encourage dialogue by asking open-ended questions that invite the speaker to share their feelings more expansively.
3. **Ask Clarifying Questions:** Ask specific, clarifying questions to ensure an accurate understanding of the speaker's message.
4. **Summarize after listening:** Demonstrate comprehension by summarizing the speaker's key points or feelings such as "If I understand correctly, what you are saying is.."

The 4 Basic Communication Styles

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Passive
1

- Has difficulty maintaining eye contact
- Fidgets
- Apologizes constantly
- Struggles to express feelings or needs
- Struggles to say no to projects or requests

Passive-Aggressive
2

- Uses sarcasm
- Makes facial expressions that contradict their words
- Spreads rumors or gives the silent treatment
- Disregards others' feelings
- Denies that they're upset

Aggressive
3

- Acts hostile when confronted
- Makes uncomfortable eye contact
- Disregards others' personal space
- Crosses their arms or rolls their eyes
- Insists their way is the right way

Assertive
4

- Communicates ideas directly and honestly
- Shows emotional intelligence
- Uses relaxed gestures
- Maintains eye contact
- Collaborates with team members

Let's take a "Communication Style Quiz"

Scan the QR Code below

Communication and Presentation Skills

Presentation skills are the qualities and abilities required to develop and **deliver an engaging presentation** that communicates ideas and information clearly.

Tips for effective presentations

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1. Maintain Eye Contact while presenting and Smile

By maintaining eye contact with the audience, you make your listeners feel personally addressed.

If you find it difficult looking at your audience in the eyes:
- Find a fixed point in the room (preferably a wall behind the audience)
-Find someone in the audience who seems genuinely interested or someone who you know (a friend, a colleague) and make eye contact at the beginning of the presentation until you feel confident.

Tips for effective presentations

2. Use of gestures and facial expressions

Avoid crossed arms, hands behind your back, or in your pockets during a presentation.

Always maintain a straight posture and try not to appear stressed or tense. Try to have a warm and approachable expression on your face to show that you enjoy the topic and you are confident in the information you are presenting.

Tips for effective presentations

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3. Be Prepared: Practice makes perfect

Practice your presentation alone or with people you know so you can get constructive feedback and improve. It is also crucial to rehearse with a timer in order to be within the limits of your presenting time.

This way, you will feel more confident and relaxed while presenting.

Let's practice!

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Choose one of the example topics below and prepare a **3 minute presentation** incorporating the tips we discussed. You will have **10 minutes** to prepare.

- Exploring a new hobby/ A hobby I love
- My favourite travel experience
- My Best Friends / family etc.

Remember to maintain eye contact, speak clearly and confidently and engage your audience.

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Topic 1: Soft Skills

1.2 Teamwork

Workshop Objectives

- Reflect on the different roles within a team and how you work with other people.

- Adopt strategies to become a more effective team member.

- Plot out your own skills and abilities in team working.

- Find out how you can improve those skills.

Introduction to Teamwork:

The process of working **collaboratively** with a group of people in order to achieve a **goal**.

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What is a team?

A team is defined as a **group of people** who perform interdependent tasks to work toward accomplishing a **common mission** or specific objective.

Some teams have a **limited life**: for example, a design team developing a new product, or a team organized to solve a particular problem.
Others are **ongoing**, such as a department team that meets regularly to review goals, activities, and performance.

3 Types of Teams

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Process Improvement Teams

- Project Teams
- Focus on improving or developing specific business processes
- They have a beginning and end

Work Groups or Natural Teams

- Responsible for a particular process
- Relatively limited to full self-managed
- "Employees are more productive with more responsibility"

Self-managed Teams

- Manage day-to-day operations
- Authorized to make decisions on a wide range of issues

Key components of effective teamwork:

Open Communication

Meaningful Goals

Defined Work Processes

Constructive Conflict Resolution

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Think about when you have been in a team before, from childhood to now.

Write some notes in the table below:

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The team I was a part of:	
What worked well:	What could have been improved:

Teamwork is a combination of skills:

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Communication Skills

Adaptability Skills

Problem Solving & Analytical Skills

Teamwork Skills

Work Ethic

Positive Attitude

Time & Energy Management

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Communication Skills

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- **Communicate with confidence:** You should **respectfully** and confidently **share your ideas** with your team, always keeping an eye on their opinions.

- **Practice active listening:** Prior to speaking out, you happily **listen and willingly accept new ideas**. You can also take criticism without getting defensive.

- **Manage Conflicts:** In order to find solutions to disagreements between team members, you must apply your conflict resolution skills.

Adaptability Skills

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- **Overcome Setbacks:** Teams often face difficulties and challenges that call for a **change in strategy** or direction. You have to **adjust** to these circumstances and help other team members if needed.

- **Flexibility in Roles:** Adaptability allows team members to transition easily between different roles and responsibilities.

- **Adaptability in Collaboration:** It's essential when collaborating with team members with diverse personalities and working preferences.

Positive Attitude

- **Continue to Learn:** Reflect on what has gone well and use that to improve grow and learn.

- **Focus on the positives:** While you do not overlook the negative things, you continue to maintain your attention on what is doing well.

Time and Energy Management

- **Be reliable:** Show up on time and do your fare share of the work. You consistently see things through completion.

- **Prioritize Tasks Strategically:** Prioritize tasks according to their significance and urgency, using your time and energy wisely to concentrate on high-impact activities that contribute to your overall goals.

Work Ethic

- **Be prepared to go the extra mile:** If unexpected issues arise, you cooperate effectively with your colleagues and are willing to put in extra effort to get things back on track.

- **Share your knowledge and experience:** You are aware that each member of a team has unique different abilities. You openly share your personal expertise to other members of the team.

Problem Solving & Analytical Skills

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- **Work together to solve problems:** When the team faces a challenge, everyone should collaborate with out conflict to exchange ideas and find solutions.

- **Utilize Diverse Perspectives:** Leverage the team's diverse skillsets and perspectives within the team to tackle issues from several viewpoints, encouraging originality and creativity in the process of addressing difficulties.

5 Stages of Team Development

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Stage 1: Forming

Stage 2: Storming

Stage 3: Norming

Stage 4: Performing

Stage 5: Adjouring

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Stage 1: Forming

- This is where Team Members first meet.

- This initial stage is the process of putting the structure of the team together.

- Individuals are usually excited to be part of the team and eager for the work ahead.

- Team members avoid conflicts at all costs since they need to be accepted into the group.

Stage 2: Storming

- At this stage members openly share ideas.
- They use this as an opportunity to stand out and be accepted by their peers.
- As the team begins to move towards its goals, members discover that the team can't live up to all of their early excitement and expectations.

Stage 3: Norming

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- By this point, team members have figured out how to collaborate.

- There's no internal competition.

- Responsibilities and goals are clear.

- Each person works more effectively since they have learned to share their ideas and listen to feedback.
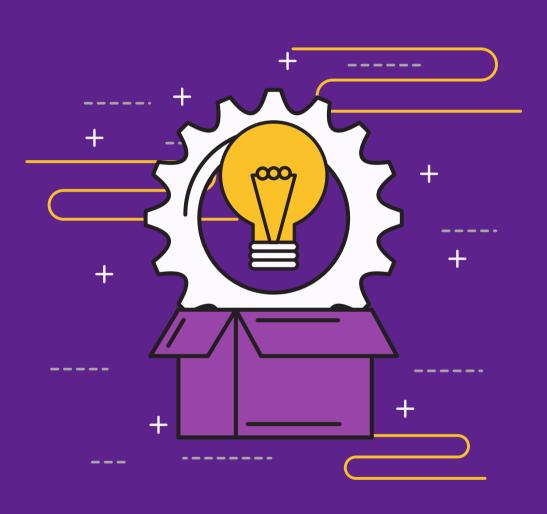
Stage 4: Performing

- High level of trust between team members.
- Teams function at peak efficiency with less supervision from team leaders.
- The team is flexible as individuals adapt to meet the needs of other team members.

Stage 5: Adjourning

- Not all teams stay together in the long run.

- Groups that were brought together to work on particular projects could start considering their next steps.

- This stage is also a stage of reflection. Managers should recognize that their team is about to enter a transitional period and make an effort to keep the group motivated while they finish up last-minute duties.

What are Ground Rules?

Ground Rules are like Team Guidelines. They help everyone understand how to behave and what's expected when working together.
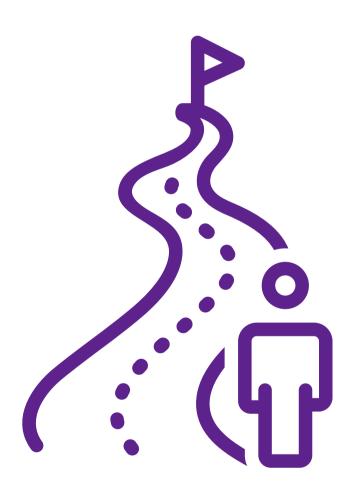
Why establish Ground Rules?

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- **Structure and clarity:** Everyone understands their roles, responsibilities and boundaries.

- **Positive Working Environment:** They foster mutual respect, communication, and collaboration.

- **Prevention of Conflicts:** Ground Rules prevent misunderstandings, enabling teams to work together more effectively towards shared goals.

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What Ground Rules should include:

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- **Communication:** How team members communicate with each other, including listening, speaking respectfully, and providing and accepting constructive feedback.

- **Decision Making:** The process by which choices are made within the team, including voting, assigning roles and dividing responsibilities.

- **Conflict Resolution:** The process of addressing and resolving conflicts and preserve a productive work environment.

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Key Components of Ground Rules:

- **Clear and Specific:** Ground Rules should be well defined and easily understandable by all team members.
- **Consensus-driven:** Ground Rules should be developed collaboratively, with input from all team members, to ensure commitment.
- **Adaptable and Flexible:** When new challenges arise, the ground rules may need to be changed or adjusted.
- **Enforceable:** Ground Rules should be accompanied by consequences for non-compliance, in order to maintain accountability.

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Benefits of Teamwork

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- Enhanced Creativity and Innovation
- Improved Productivity and Efficiency
- Stronger Relationships and Trust
- Shared Responsibility and Accountability
- Personal and Professional Growth

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BULDING STRONG TEAM RELATIONSHIPS

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1 **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**
Establish open and transparent communication to foster respect and trust among team members.

2 **ACTIVE LISTENING**
Practice active listening to show empathy and respect and foster stronger bonds.

3 **EMPATHY & UNDERSTANDING**
Show empathy and understanding for other people's perspectives and experiences.

4 **CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS**
Address conflicts constructively and maintain positive relationships

5 **RECOGNITION & APPRECIATION**
Value each member's contribution, encouraging mutual support amongst team members.

Essential Characteristics of Effective Teams:

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- **Consist of competent and Committed Members:** Individuals who possess the necessary skills and dedication to contribute to the team's goals.

- **Developmental Stages:** Effective teams go through several stages of development, to achieve optimal productivity.

- **Collaborative Atmosphere:** Teams thrive in environments characterized by mutual respect, trust and open communication.

- **Clear Goals:** Teams must have clearly defined goals, providing direction and purpose to their efforts.

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Topic 1: Soft Skills

1.3 Time Management

Workshop Objectives

- Learn essential skills, techniques, and practical strategies for effective time management.
- Discover methods to prioritize tasks efficiently and make the most of your time.
- Enhance productivity through the implementation of time management principles.
- Identify individual time management challenges and develop personalized strategies for improvement.
- Gain insights into stress reduction techniques and achieving a better work-life balance.

Introduction to Time Management:

Time Management is the process of effectively **planning, organizing and prioritizing tasks**. The objective is to get **more and better work** done in **less time**.

Why is time management important?

 Increased Efficiency and productivity

 Reduces Stress

 Better work-life balance

 Improved decision making

 Enhanced goal-achievement

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The stress-time management connection:

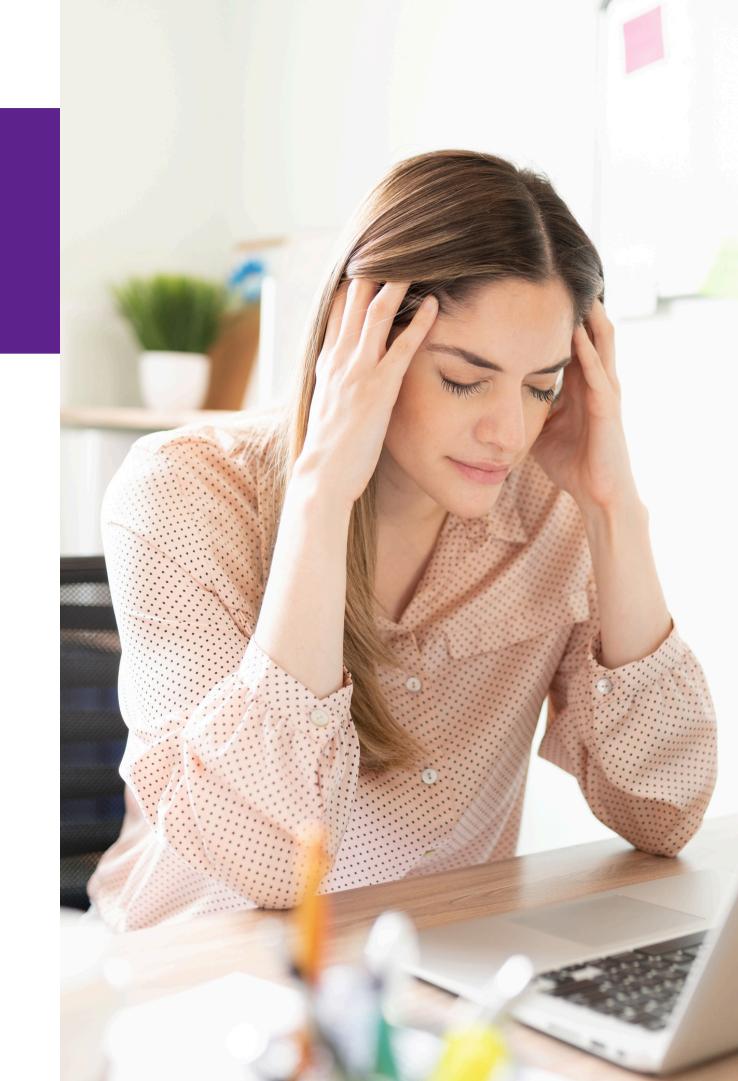Let's explore how effective time management can be your secret weapon in the battle against stress.

TIME MANAGEMENT AND STRESS

You may have noticed that you get too stressed when your schedule doesn't go as planned.
You get even more stressed when you face this situation every day.

If you learn how to manage your time properly to be more productive, you will avoid feeling stressed

Good Stress Vs Bad Stress

Some stress can be **healthy** because it can encourage you to find a new skill, get things done or do something well. But stress that goes on for a long time can **negatively impact** all aspects of your health.

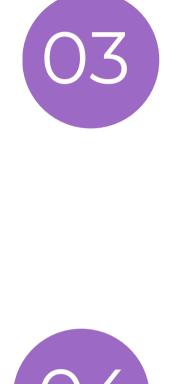# Here are 4 ways to improve time management in your life and reduce stress over your workload
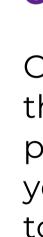
01

BREAK DOWN YOUR GOALS

In order to manage your time well, you have to have a clear understanding of how long things take. Breaking them down into sub-goals will not only help you do that, you'll also find yourself much more focused.

02

REMOVE DISTRACTIONS AND TIME WASTERS

The worst thing you can do is let yourself get distracted by meaning less tasks, eliminate distractions-put your phone on silent, and close your door.

03

TAKE CARE OF RESISTANCE

Resistance comes in many forms-fear of failure, not having a clear plan or feeling inadequate for the task. If you find yourself procrastinating, try to get to the root of the problem and get yourself going.

04

GET TO KNOW YOURSELF

Our energy and willpower fluctuate throughout the day, and we all experience peaks at different times. Pay attention to your own energy levels, you can use them to your advantage and structure your day accordingly.

The 4Ps of Time Management

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PRIORITIZING

- Run tasks in order of importance.
- Build in time for the unexpected.
- Roll over uncompleted items and reprioritize.

PLANNING

- Categorize tasks.
- Focus on one task at a time.
- Stay on track.
- Daily/Weekly/Monthly lists.

PRODUCTIVITY

- Create a plan of action.
- Achieve more in less time
- Chunking: split your tasks into small chunks.
- Little and often.

POSITIVITY

- Positive thinking has a significant impact on time management.
- Spend more time reflecting on what you have achieved, not what is left to do.

Fail to plan

Or plan to fail

Tips for Effective Planning

Set SMART Goals

Establish well-defined goals and increase the likelihood of success

Make Lists

Make a Daily, Weekly, Monthly To do List

Use Planning Tools

Use available tools and time management software

Regular Review the plan

Plans are meant to evolve as circumstances change

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HOW TO SET SMARTER GOALS

(S) **SPECIFIC**
Make your goals specific and narrow for more effective planning

(M) **MEASURABLE**
Make sure your goals and progress are measurable

(A) **ACHIEVABLE**
Make sure you can reasonably accomplish your goal within a certain time frame

(R) **RELEVANT**
Your goal should align with your values and long-term objectives

(T) **TIME-BASED**
Set a realistic but ambitious end date to clarify task prioritization and increase motivation

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How can you prioritize effectively?
Let's see some methods.

EISENHOWER MATRIX

Urgent

Not Urgent

Important

DO:
Tasks with deadlines or consequences

Examples:
- Projects with deadlines
- Crises/emergencies
- Pressing problems

Schedule:
Tasks with unclear deadlines that contribute to long-term success

Examples:
- Relationship Building
- Long-term planning
- Personal Improvement

Not Important

Delegate:
Tasks that must get done but don't require your specific skill set.

Examples:
- Interruptions
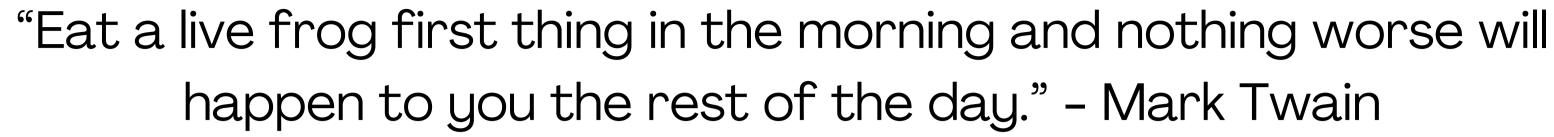- Regular Routines
- Busywork

Delete:
Distractions and unnecessary tasks

Examples:
- Internet browsing
- Pointless meetings
- Disruptive socializing

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EAT THE FROG METHOD

"Eat a live frog first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day." - Mark Twain

- **Identify your frog:** your hardest and most important tasks for the day.
(a task is supposed to take **too much of your time**, it's **too difficult**, or simply **boring**, it can be considered a frog.)

- **Eat them:** do them first thing in the morning, and don't leave them for later.

- **Repeat every day:** turn this technique into a habit and see how you become much more productive.

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ABCDE METHOD

A The Highest Priority
These tasks are crucial and demand your immediate attention.

B Tasks you SHOULD do
Tasks in this category still need to be addressed, but not right now.

C If Not Done – HAVE NO (Serious) Consequences
There is no pressure in this category. You perform these tasks because they give you pleasure.

D You can Deligate
Occasionally, you will have tasks that someone else can do. Therefore, you can delegate tasks to someone while focusing on important ones.

E Eliminating
Typically, tasks in this category are irrelevant and not worth your time. It means you can easily remove them.

Plan your day

Block you day into multiple events. Personalize your day with TimeBloc's intuitive design.

Daily Routines

Creating a routine is simple. Just plan it once and let TimeBloc integrate it into your timeline.

Free with Premium Packages

Shareable Online Calendar

You can manage work, personal life, and everything in between

Google Calendar

Invite people

You can ad anyone with an email address to your event, even if they don't have a google account.

Tackle your to-dos

1. Add a task
2. Set a due date
3. Check it off

Add focus time

You can add focus time, like adding any other event. It can also automatically decline meeting invites that interfere with focus time.

GUESTS

Add guests

Guests can:
☐ Modify event
☑ Invite others
☑ See guest list

My Tasks

○ Title

≡ Details

📅 Date/time

Focus time

Event | **Focus time** | Out of office | Task | Reminder | Appointment schedule

🕐 Friday, August 5   9:00am – 11:00am

Time zone

Does not repeat ▾

☐ Automatically decline meetings

The Multitasking Myth

People mistakenly believe that multitasking reflects a high level of cognitive ability and think that you should multitask to maintain your brain health.

The constant switch between tasks tires our brain and makes it less efficient. It also affects our ability to focus in general.

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Reference: Lifespan, Delivering health with care, Harvard.edu

The Solution: Monotasking

In reality, our brains are not set up to multitask. We are designed to be "monotaskers," that is, to focus on and complete one task at a time.

Monotasking allows you to <u>focus</u> your time and energy to the task at hand.

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Strategies to reduce your multitasking

Create a list of daily priorities

Reduce or eliminate outside distractions

Avoid switching between tasks

Keep your work space clean and organized

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Let's evaluate our Time Management Skills

Scan the QR Code to access the online Time Management Self-Assessment Tool. Evaluate your current time management practices and discover areas for improvement to boost your productivity and efficiency.

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SCAN ME

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Topic 1: Soft Skills

1.4 Flexibility and Adaptability

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Workshop Objectives

- Learn the difference between adaptability and flexibility skills.

- Understand the importance of adaptability and flexibility in various aspects of life and work.

- Practical Strategies to enhance these skills.

- Embrace Change Confidently and navigate uncertainties.

- Enhance problem-solving skills in dynamic environments.

- Foster a growth mindset for personal and professional development.

Introduction to adaptability:

Adaptability is a soft skill that means you can easily adjust to changing circumstances.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

An adaptable person can keep up with moving priorities, projects, clients and technology.

Example of Adaptability:

A team member for a marketing team may show adaptability by shifting from in-office work to working at home. By changing their routine, losing their commute and adapting to new communication methods, they alter their behavior for a new situation. The reverse of this, going from working at home to working in the office, can also show adaptability.

Introduction to flexibility:

Flexibility often refers to offering more or taking less of something, depending on the situation

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
Flexibility allows individuals to effectively respond to unforeseen circumstances and evolving environments.

Example of Flexibility:

A cashier at a grocery store receives a call that one of their team members has a family emergency. The cashier has shifts at the end of the week, while their team member has shifts at the beginning of the week. The team member asks if they can switch their shifts so they can have time to manage their family situation. When the cashier agrees to change shifts with their team member, they're showing flexibility.

Adaptability Vs Flexibility
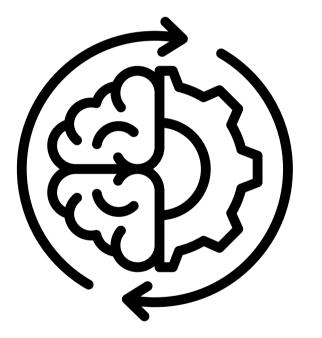
Adaptability refers to a **change in behavior** or acclimation to a **new type of situation** and can involve comprehensive changes. **Flexibility** usually refers to a person giving more or less **in the same situation** without changing the components or altering their overall approach or behavior.
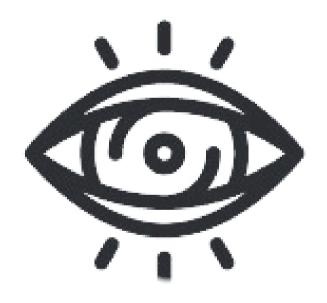
3 TYPES OF
FLEXIBILITY

COGNITIVE

EMOTIONAL

DISPOSITIONAL

COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY

Cognitive flexibility is all about your **brain's ability to adapt** to new, changing, or unplanned events.

It is also the ability to switch from one way of thinking to another. Also known as "task switching".

You use it on a daily basis, when you multitask, when you switch from task to task and when you interact with other people.

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EMOTIONAL FLEXIBILITY

We constantly face situations and moments that challenge us and leave a mix of often unwelcome feelings.

That is where emotional flexibility comes in. When we leverage this mindset, we can see problems for that they are and make more intentional decisions.

"Psychological flexibility supports emotion regulation and gives people a way to take more conscious actions."

DISPOSITIONAL FLEXIBILITY

Dispositional flexibility is all about practicing the ability to remain optimistic and, at the same time, realistic.

People who display dispositional flexibility, operate from a place of optimism grounded in realism. They will see a bad situation while visualizing a better future.

People with dispositional Flexibility see change as an opportunity rather than as a threat.

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Why Flexibility and Adaptability Matter:

Increased Value at your workplace:

In this modern era, adaptability has become the watchword of doing business. What this means is that as an employee, you must be willing to adapt as well.

Helps to manage uncertainty:

Flexibility allows individuals to adjust to new information, while adaptability allows them to change their strategies as circumstances demand.

Enables Innovation:

When faced with new challenges or opportunities, a willingness to experiment and try new things can lead to creative solutions.

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Why Flexibility and Adaptability Matter:

Supports Growth and Development:

By embracing change and adapting to new circumstances, individuals can learn new skills, gain new experiences, and expand their knowledge base.

Enables smooth Career Changes:

Adaptability and flexibility increases your chances of succeeding, as you will find yourself trying out different job roles while searching for a job.

Enhances Resilience:

Adaptability expands your capacity to handle change, no matter how serious it might be. Adaptable people are resilient people.

Tips for improving your Adaptability and Flexibility

01

FORCE YOURSELF TO TAKE RISKS

Challenge your comfort zone by actively embracing risk-taking. This approach cultivates adaptability and fuels personal growth, fostering resilience in the face of change.

02

LEARN FROM OTHERS

Take notes when people exhibit the adaptability skills you're keen to learn, or ask them directly for tips and guidance.

03

EMBRACE LEARNING

lLearn from experience, experimenting with new tactics, approaching new situations with a growth mindset, seeking feedback, and apply these lessons in real time to new situations.

04

IMPROVE YOUR PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Problem Solving helps you resolve specific issues as they arise and adapt accordingly.

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Scenario 1:

You're scheduled to deliver a presentation to your team at work. The presentation format is a traditional **PowerPoint** slideshow with a duration of **30 minutes**. You've prepared your slides and practiced your delivery to ensure a smooth presentation.

Unpredicted circumstances

Moments before your presentation, you're informed that the **projector and screen** in the meeting room are malfunctioning and **won't be available**. Additionally, the meeting room itself is **double-booked,** so you must find an alternative location for your presentation. You're also notified that your presentation time has been shortened to 15 minutes due to scheduling conflicts.

What do you do?

A: Proceed with your prepared slides and attempt to find an available meeting room.

B: Quickly adapt your presentation to a verbal format, focusing on key points without visual aids.

C: Ask for a postponement of the presentation until the technical issues are resolved.

D: Deliver your presentation as planned but request additional time due to the unexpected challenges.

What do you do?

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B: Quickly adapt your presentation to a verbal format, focusing on key points without visual aids.

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D: Deliver your presentation as planned but request additional time due to the unexpected challenges.

WHY CHOOSE B?

This option acknowledges the **technical difficulties** and **time constraints** while providing a practical solution to deliver the presentation effectively within the given limitations.

Scenario 2:

You're the project manager for a highly anticipated product launch for your company. The launch event is scheduled to take place at a prestigious venue, with extensive marketing campaigns and media coverage planned to generate buzz and excitement around the new product.

Unpredicted circumstances

One week before the scheduled launch date, you receive news that a major competitor is launching a **similar product on the same day** at a highly publicized event. Additionally, a **key member** of your marketing team unexpectedly **resigns,** leaving a crucial gap in the team's expertise and capacity to execute the planned marketing strategies effectively.

What do you do?

A: Proceed with the planned launch event and campaigns, confident in the uniqueness and value proposition of your product.

B: Revise the launch strategy to differentiate your product from the competitor's offering and intensify marketing efforts to counter their impact.

C: Postpone the launch event to a later date to allow time to regroup, refine strategies, and address the staffing gap in the marketing team.

D: Explore alternative marketing channels and tactics to reach target audiences and generate excitement around the product launch in the absence of key team members.

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A: Proceed with the planned launch event and campaigns, confident in the uniqueness and value proposition of your product.

B: Revise the launch strategy to differentiate your product from the competitor's offering and intensify marketing efforts to counter their impact.

C: Postpone the launch event to a later date to allow time to regroup, refine strategies, and address the staffing gap in the marketing team.

D: Explore alternative marketing channels and tactics to reach target audiences and generate excitement around the product launch in the absence of key team members.

WHY CHOOSE B?

Given the unexpected challenges of increased competition and team member resignation, it's crucial to effectively differentiate your product and capture audience attention amidst the competitor's launch. This option focuses on **proactive measures** to mitigate the impact of the competitor's event and maximize the success of your product launch.

Showcase your adaptability to potential employers

Add them to your resume and LinkedIn Profile

In the "skills" section add Adaptability and Flexibility.

Use examples in your cover letter

Try explaining how you solved a client's problem or some other emergency. This lets your employer know you can rise to the challenge.

Talk about them in your interview

Try explaining how you solved a client's problem or some other emergency. This lets your employer know you can rise to the challenge.

Embrace Change, Thrive in Uncertainty

In the face of constant change and uncertainty, remember that adaptability is your greatest asset. By embracing change with open arms and cultivating a positive mindset, you can thrive in any situation. View challenges as opportunities for growth, and approach them with confidence and resilience.

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Thank you!

For more information:

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Empowering women, driving growth.

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Topic 1: Soft Skills

1.5 Problem Solving

Developed by:

NOVATEX
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Workshop Objectives

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- Reflect on how you currently solve problems.
- Enhance your Problem-Solving skills.
- Understand Decision Making models and strategies to make informed and rational decisions.
- Improve critical thinking and analytical skills in order to assess risks and identify opportunities.
- Explore techniques to foster creativity and generate innovative solutions to problems.
- Learn how to work collaboratively with others to address challenges.

Introduction to Problem Solving:

Problem solving is the process of **identifying a problem**, developing possible **solution** paths, and taking the appropriate course of **action**.

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Why is Problem Solving Important?

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- Essential for personal and professional success

- Empowers individuals to overcome challenges and achieve their goals

- Promotes Continuous Improvement and Innovation

- Enhances Adaptability and Flexibility

- Empowers Personal Growth and Development

First Step:
Understanding the Problem

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Before attempting to solve a problem, it's crucial to accurately define and understand the nature and underlying causes of the problem.

This step is essential since it lays the foundation for effective problem-solving and ensures that efforts are focused on addressing the root rather than treating the symptoms.

Why is it important to accurately define the problem?

Prevents Misdiagnosis: By taking the time to accurately define the problem, individuals can ensure that their efforts are focused on addressing the true underlying issues.
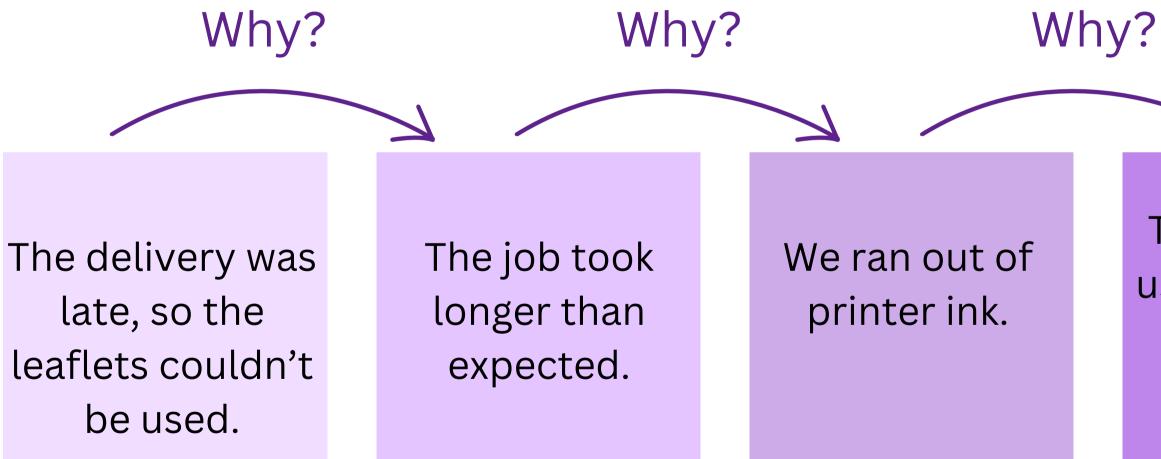
Identify Root Causes: Accurately understanding the problem, allows individuals to identify its root causes rather than just addressing surface-level symptoms.

1. The '5 Whys' Approach to getting to the root of the problem

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Problem: Our Client refuses to pay for leaflets we printed for him. ***Why?***

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

The delivery was late, so the leaflets couldn't be used.

The job took longer than expected.

We ran out of printer ink.
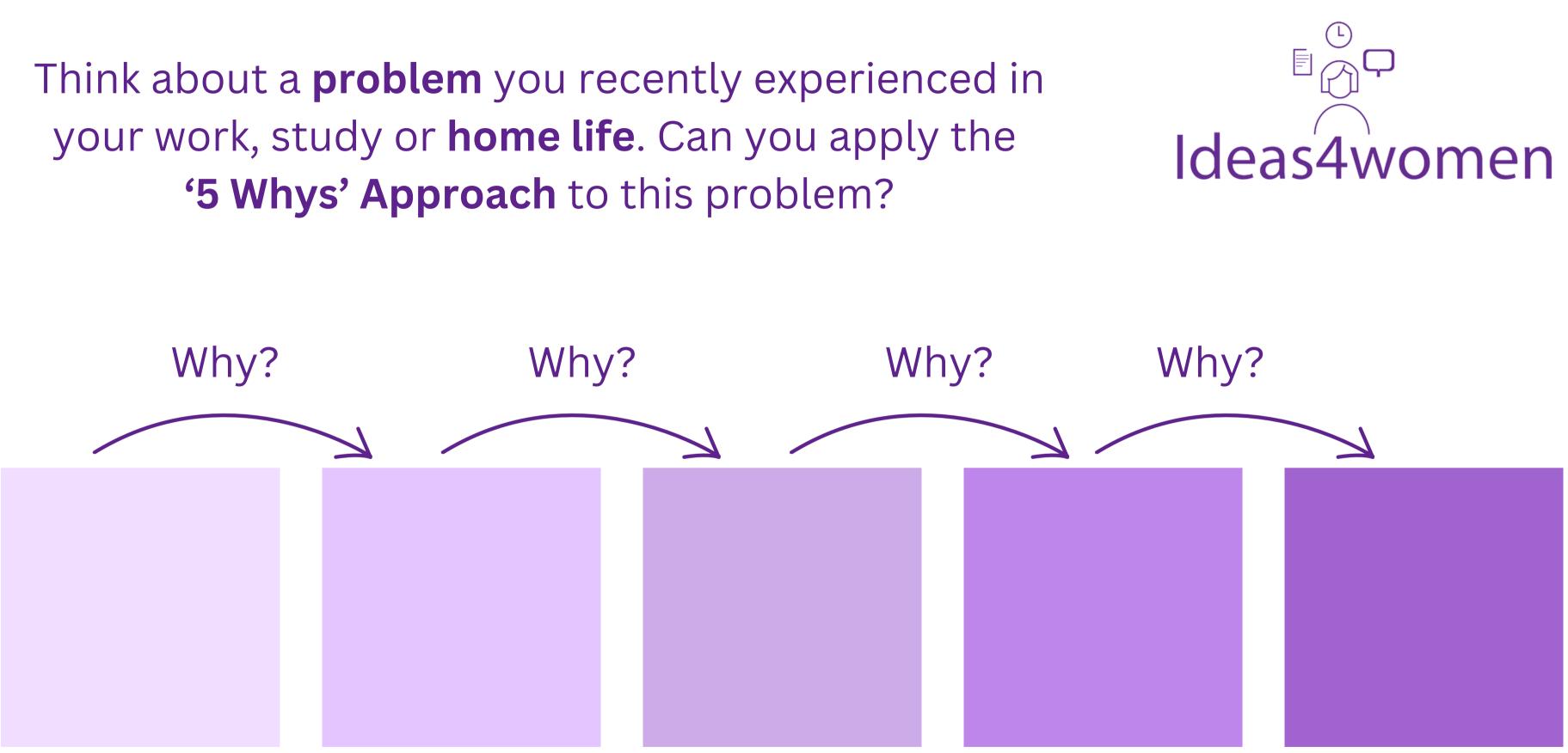
The ink was all used on a large, last-minute order.

We didn't have enough ink in stock and couldn't order new supplies in time.

Think about a **problem** you recently experienced in your work, study or **home life**. Can you apply the **'5 Whys' Approach** to this problem?

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Why?   Why?   Why?   Why?

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2. Problem Decomposition

Problem Decomposition is the process of breaking a large problem into more manageable sub-problems.

Example:

You have been late to school 3 times this week. You'd like to fix the problem and be on time starting tomorrow.

2. Problem Decomposition

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Define the problem: Being late to school multiple times.

Solution: Change morning routine so you won't be late to school anymore.

Decomposition:

1. Why were you late for school? I missed the bus.

2. Why did you miss the bus? I got there a few minutes late.

3. Why were you late? It takes me too long to get all my stuff together in the morning.

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3. Brainstorming

What is Brainstorming?

It's a Collaborative problem-solving technique that involves coming up with different ideas of solutions to a specific problem or challenge.

By facilitating a brainstorming session, teams can identify root causes and explore the potential consequences of the problem.

3. Brainstorming
Approach to Brainstorming

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Define the problem: Firstly, clearly define the problem or challenge to provide direction for the session.

Generate Ideas: Encourage participants to brainstorm ideas and observations related to the problem without judgment.

Explore Different Perspectives: Encourage participants to view the problem differently by asking questions such as " How might others perceive the problem?".

Organize Ideas: Use white boards, sticky notes, or mind maps to capture and organize ideas.
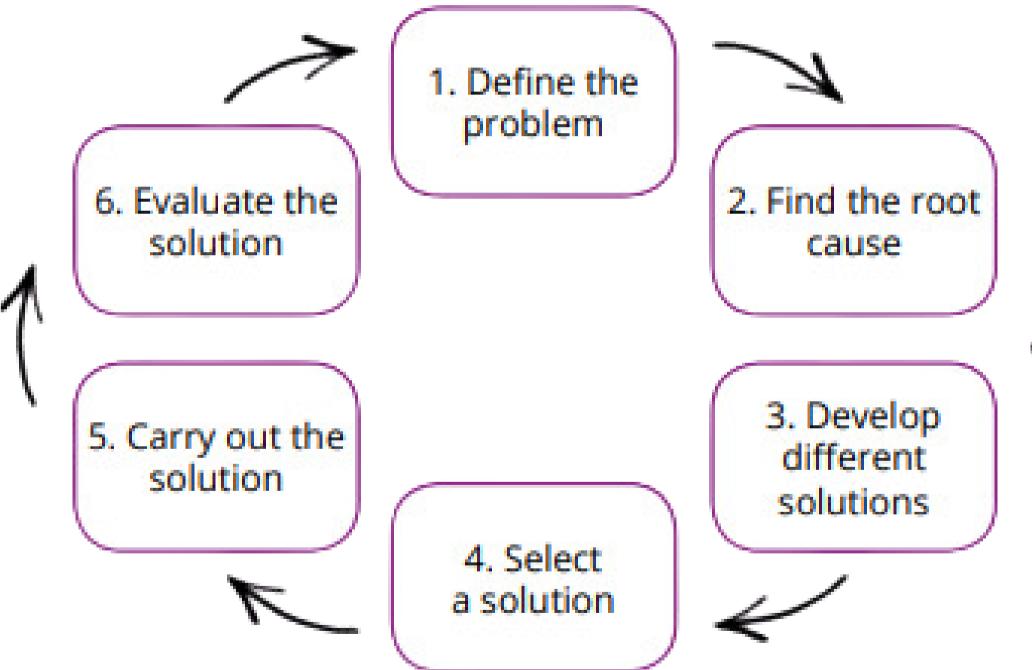
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Problem Solving:

Explore different decision making models and strategies and identify which one will help you solve the specific problem more efficiently. Discuss factors that influence decision making including risk assessment and ethical considerations.

The 6 Step Problem Solving Method

1. Define the problem

2. Find the root cause

3. Develop different solutions

4. Select a solution

5. Carry out the solution

6. Evaluate the solution

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Collaborative Decision Making

What is it?

The process by which a team identifies a decision and assesses alternative solutions. It means combining input from many stakeholders to make the best decision for a group. The goal is always to reach a consensus.

Why is it important?

Involving multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process can make for more successful decisions and increased acceptance of decisions.

Benefits of Collaborative Decision Making

01. MORE EFFECTIVE DECISIONS
Having a diverse set of views on the table will inspire thoughtful answers. Also, involving a variety of experts can reduce future risks before a solution is put into action.

02. BETTER TRANSPARENCY
It promotes transparency by including everyone in the prpocess to reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings

03. IMPROVED COMMUNICATION
By allowing everyone to provide unfiltered feedback, the communication of the team is improved. Collaborative decisions help employees build and improve relationships.

04. INCREASED TRUST
Collaborative decision making builds trust within teams by giving colleagues the opportunity to see each other's view points.

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How to facilitate the collaborative decision-making process

1 **ASSIGN A FACILITATOR** Start by determining who will facilitate your collaborative decision-making sessions

2 **IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM** The second step is to clearly define the nature of the problem. At this stage, gather relevant information and conduct any necessary research.

3 **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS** Develop a handful of possible solutions for your team to choose from.
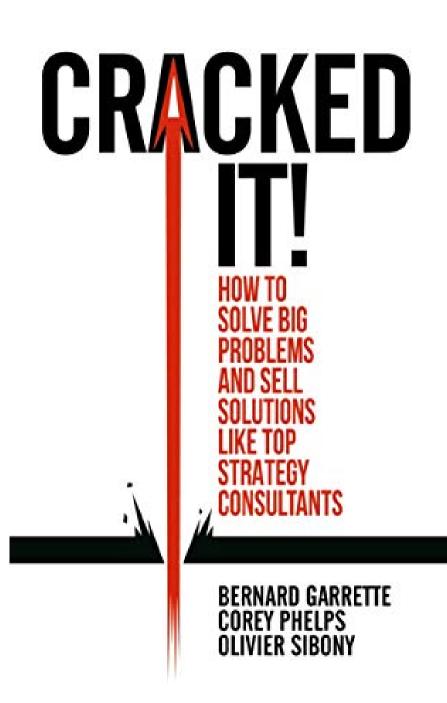
4 **PROS & CONS OF SOLUTIONS** Rank each solution based on the value system you developed as a group in step one before making your final decision.

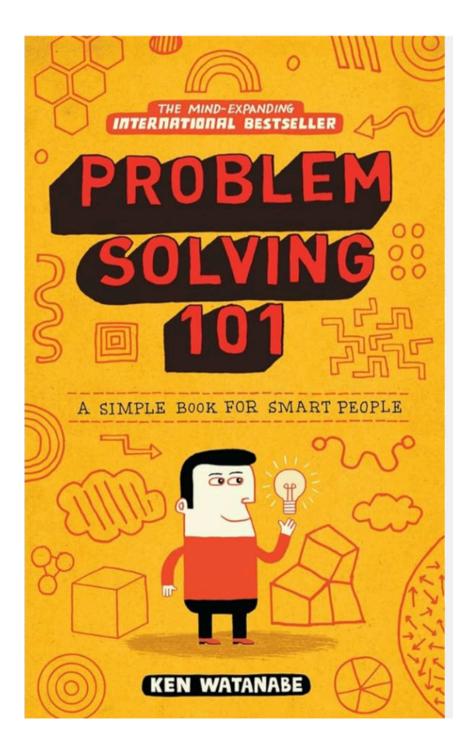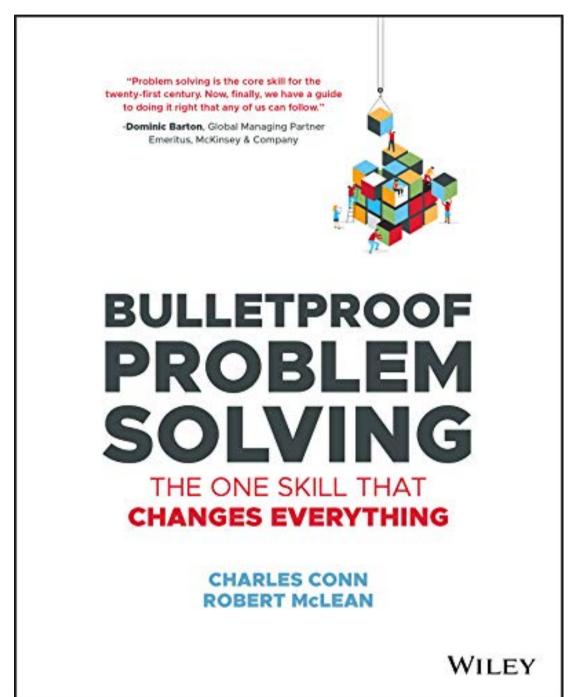**5** **CHOOCE THE BEST SOLUTION** Create a plan of action to implement the solution moving forward.

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Resources

CRACKED IT!
HOW TO SOLVE BIG PROBLEMS AND SELL SOLUTIONS LIKE TOP STRATEGY CONSULTANTS

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COREY PHELPS
OLIVIER SIBONY

THE MIND-EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER
PROBLEM SOLVING 101
A SIMPLE BOOK FOR SMART PEOPLE
KEN WATANABE

"Problem solving is the core skill for the twenty-first century. Now, finally, we have a guide to doing it right that any of us can follow."
-Dominic Barton, Global Managing Partner Emeritus, McKinsey & Company

BULLETPROOF PROBLEM SOLVING
THE ONE SKILL THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

CHARLES CONN
ROBERT McLEAN

WILEY

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