CONTINUING EDUCATION

Illinois Valley Community College

Essential Workplace Skills (EWS) Professional Development for Frontline Employees

What is *EWS*?

Essential Workplace Skills (*EWS*) is a series of six, three-hour workshops that develop critical professional skills and improve the performance of the "doers" in your organization, whether they serve customers or coworkers. *EWS* workshops can be taken in any order, providing extra flexibility for your organization.

How does *EWS* benefit your organization?

EWS directly addresses national and regional data that links the absence of soft skills to the rate of employee turnover. Given it costs almost 40% of an employee's annual salary to replace them, this training solution is a powerful and affordable investment in developing and retaining a skilled workforce.

What skills are addressed in each workshop?

EWS workshops	Participants will learn to
1. Practicing Professionalism at Work	❑ Identify, describe, and model key components of professionalism ❑ Accept responsibility for avoiding personal triggers and for how you may trigger others ❑ Anticipate how to work with diverse colleagues in different professional environments ❑ Communicate and adjust your unique professional brand to contribute to the workplace
2. Communicating Effectively	❑ Describe core principles of effective communication and their importance in professional life ❑ Understand how individual styles and preferences shape communications at work ❑ Apply specific strategies to enjoy focused, intentional communication with coworkers, supervisors, and customers ❑ Understand when and how to engage in tough conversations about issues that could negatively affect an individual or an organization's professionalism
3. Thinking Critically at Work	❑ Explore different types of critical thinking ❑ Practice problem-solving and data-analysis strategies ❑ Recognize and overcome barriers that limit or impede our thinking ❑ Apply best practices for including others to resolve complex issues ❑ Improve how we communicate recommendations to others at work
4. Navigating Challenges and Stressors	❑ Identify challenges in professional life and what contributes to them ❑ Describe the impact workplace challenges and stressors have on organizations using available national data and apply to local-level ❑ Choose from a number of available strategies to manage challenges and stressors for improved professional experience ❑ Create a personal action plan and implement it to address challenges back on the job ❑ Engage others to support changes to reduce the effect of workplace challenges and stressors
5. Understanding Customer Service Essentials	❑ Identify and describe the core elements of excellent customer service ❑ Communicate effectively with diverse internal and external customers ❑ Identify and apply five strategies for challenging customer service situations ❑ Create a plan to respond to customer service challenges and continue developing customer service skills
6. Advancing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	❑ Describe how organizations view diversity, equity, and inclusion as current workforce priorities ❑ Identify intentional actions that build inclusive relationships among diverse coworkers ❑ Apply two strategies for developing cultural competency ❑ Create a plan to demonstrate inclusiveness to internal and external customers

EWS

Communicating Effectively

Communication drives workplace engagement. In this session, get more strategic about communication as a professional skill. Tune into your personal communication style and compare it to that of your peers, supervisors, and customers. Learn how to customize your approach and get the best results. Understand what to get right in managing in-person, written, and digital interactions to prevent conflict and promote productivity. Leave with new methods for connecting to others at work and contributing as a high-performing employee.

Practicing Professionalism at Work

A true professional is one who adds value to their organization. In this session, cross check your professionalism against best practices. Learn how to positively influence coworkers and customers, relate to diversity, and adapt to various work environments. Understand how to use feedback to improve performance and be seen as a problem-solver. At the end of the session, you will have new tools that help you contribute to a healthy and positive workplace.

Thinking Critically at Work

Boost your value at work by being seen as an effective problem-solver. Explore the skills and strategies behind critical thinking — what it is and how to show it. Practice the ability to adopt multiple perspectives, analyze different data, and tackle complex issues collaboratively. Explore techniques for evaluating solutions and communicating them to key stakeholders. Walk away with confidence that you know how to generate improvements to benefit yourself, your team, and the organization.

Understanding Customer Service Essentials

Inclusive and cross-generational workplaces are today's professional norm. In this session, assess your customer-centricity and learn how to maintain and improve trust. Expand communication skills, including use of technology, to serve internal and external customers equally well. Learn recovery steps that rebuild customer loyalty. Leave ready to provide professional customer-service excellence regardless of title or industry.

Navigating Challenges & Stressors

Stressors at work create opportunities to rethink our responses and habits. In this session, identify challenges in your professional life and what contributes to them. Adopt strategies such as a proactive mindset and what-if thinking to anticipate problems before they arise. Grow your emotional intelligence to improve encounters with peers, supervisors, and customers. Explore how attending to your whole self affects your professionalism and career path. Leave with an action plan that promotes resilience in the face of workplace demands.

Advancing Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are among today's most critical commitments for employers and employees alike. In this session, learn how top-ranked organizations put those commitments into action. Explore how to approach and improve interactions with others, so they feel involved and respected. Walk away with a plan to address implicit bias and contribute to an inclusive, high-performing workplace.

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