

WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

We will begin promptly at 4pm



HOUSEKEEPING & LOGISTICS

- **The link to the recording will be posted on the [ASCEND 307 web page](#)**
 - This session will be recorded.
 - Handouts and the Slides are available on the ASCEND 307 webpage
- **Closed Captioning:** needs to be set up individually by clicking on the “closed caption” on the bottom row of icons on your session screen
- **Links posted in Chat:** throughout the session, pertinent links will be posted in the Chat
- **Q&A:** To ask questions, please use the Q & A box



ASCEND 307

Essential Readiness Skills Webinar Series

Focus on Communication Skills Necessary for Success

[Please watch a welcome video by Superintendent Degenfelder](#)

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

WHAT?

Skills employers consistently rank as essential for new hires.

- Applied Knowledge
 - Problem Solving
 - Making Decisions
- Effective Relationships
 - Team Member
 - Flexibility
- Workplace Skills
 - Manage Time
 - Communicate

WHY?

**Superintendent
Degenfelder 2025 Priority**

- Pursuing Academic Excellence
 - Expand career & technical education opportunities

**WY Community College
Commission**

- Social Capital Skills

**Office of Career, Technical
& Adult Education**

- Employability skills

WHO needs them WHEN?

All students with and without disabilities need to function in society.

- Executive Functioning skills form the core foundation of employability skills
 - Pre-K-12
 - Develop executive function skills
 - Transition
 - Employability skills



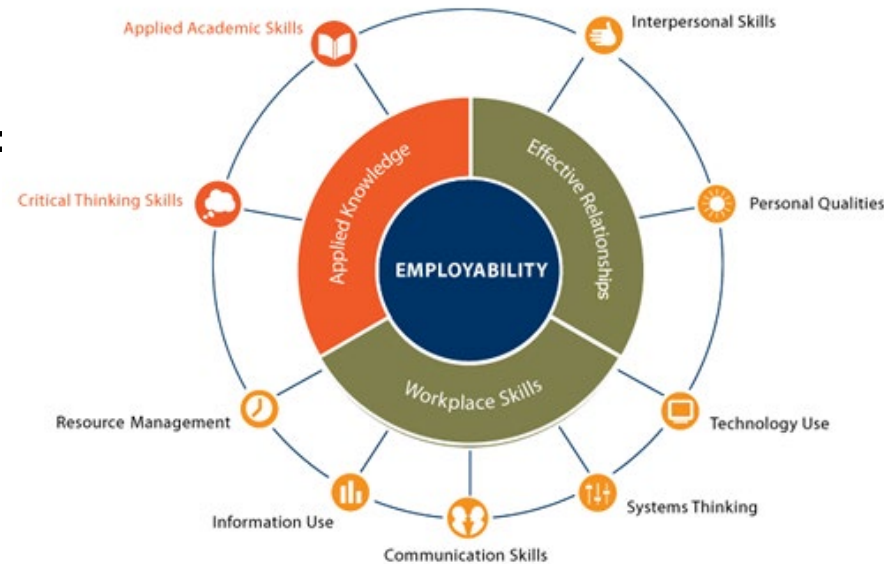
EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK FOR WYOMING-READY WORKFORCE

Applied Knowledge:

- Applied academic skills: reading, writing, mathematics
- Critical thinking skills: problem solving, make decisions

Workplace Skills:

- Resource management: managing time & other resources
- Information use: using a variety of information to perform tasks
- Communication skills: communicating effectively with others to perform tasks
- Systems thinking: contributes to workplace teamwork
- Technology use: applying technology appropriately to perform tasks



Effective Relationships:

- Interpersonal skills: teamwork, positive contributions
- Personal qualities: personal responsibility, professionalism, flexibility



FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS



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WHAT COMMUNICATION SKILLS DO YOU BELIEVE ARE NECESSARY FOR POST-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT AND SUCCESS?

Reflect in the Chat



WHAT ARE COMMUNICATION SKILLS?



WHY ARE THESE SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS SOFT SKILLS?

- **Origin:** The term began in the 1960s (U.S. military) to distinguish people-focused skills from technical or “hard” skills.
- **Human-Centered:** Soft skills involve communication, collaboration, adaptability, and empathy—skills rooted in human interaction rather than technical tasks.
- **Harder to Measure:** They’re called “soft” because they are intangible and difficult to quantify, unlike hard skills that can be tested or certified.
- **Misleading Name:** Despite the label, soft skills are often the hardest to teach and the most critical for success in school, work, and life.



EXAMPLES OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY

- **Active listening:** Paying full attention to a speaker, asking clarifying questions, and paraphrasing to ensure understanding.
- **Clarity and conciseness:** Delivering messages directly and to the point.
- **Email and written etiquette:** Writing clear, concise, and professional emails that consider the lack of in-person cues.
- **Public speaking/presentations:** Communicating ideas effectively to a group.
- **Responding to messages:** Being timely and professional in all forms of communication.
- **Conflict resolution:** Handling disagreements calmly and respectfully to find a mutually agreeable solution.
- **Giving and receiving feedback:** Providing constructive criticism and being open to receiving it.
- **Storytelling:** Using narratives to explain complex information or persuade an audience.
- **Teamwork and collaboration:** Working with others to achieve a common goal.
- **Understanding nonverbal cues:** Like body language and tone.

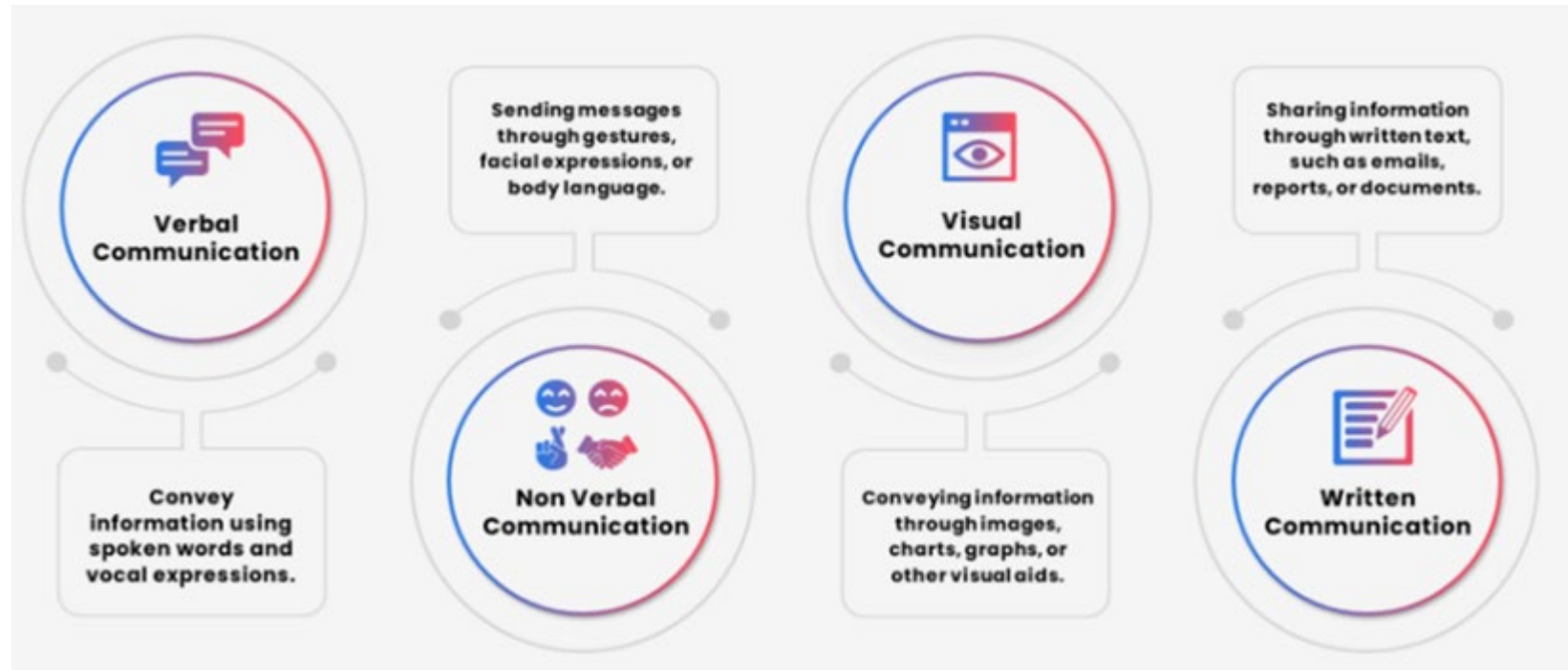


WHY DO COMMUNICATION SKILLS MATTER FOR EMPLOYMENT?

- Good communication skills are crucial in the workplace because they boost productivity, improve collaboration, and reduce conflict. They also lead to higher employee engagement and job satisfaction, foster a healthier workplace culture, and build stronger relationships with colleagues and customers.
- [5 Reasons Why Communication is Important in the Workplace?](#)
- Better employee engagement
- Healthy workplace culture
- Fewer Conflicts
- Improved productivity
- Improved direction for employees
- Improved client relationships
- Improved job satisfaction
- Increased innovation
- Strengthened team building
- Improved public impression
- [10 Benefits of Effective Communication in the Workplace.](#)



FOUR TYPES OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS



[4-types-of-Communication-Skills-1024x576.png \(1024x576\)](#)



WHAT DOES TEACHING COMMUNICATION SKILLS LOOK LIKE IN SCHOOL?

- Most important, take time to **know your students**.
- How the skills are taught will look different for different students – it will be **differentiated**.
- Communication skills are **taught daily**, but not always explicitly.
- Explicitly teaching and modeling **verbal** skills (like clarity and respect) and **non-verbal** skills (like eye contact and body language).
- Using **visual aids** like picture boards and photos.
- Showing **active listening**, asking questions, and giving **constructive feedback** are also teaching communication skills.
- Teaching the skill provides **frequent opportunities for practice** through structured activities and giving immediate and specific feedback.



TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU INTENTIONALLY DEVELOPING STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SCHOOL AND POST- SCHOOL SUCCESS?

Reflect in the Chat



HOW CAN EDUCATORS DEVELOP STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS?



TEACHER MODELING AND INSTRUCTION

- **Model good communication:** Demonstrate clear speaking, active listening, and appropriate body language, which students will then emulate.
- **Explicitly explain communication concepts:** Instruct students on specific skills like using complete sentences, adjusting tone, and making eye contact.
- **Provide clear, concise instructions:** Break down complex information to ensure understanding and use a calm, confident tone.
- **Use respectful language:** Set rules for respectful dialogue and model this behavior yourself.

**What
have
you
tried?**



FOSTERING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

- **Build trust and rapport:** Be approachable, listen actively to students' questions and concerns, and create a safe space for them to express themselves.
- **Promote active listening:** Teach students to give their full attention to the speaker, use facial expressions to show engagement, and ask clarifying questions to confirm understanding.
- **Provide constructive feedback:** Teach students how to give and receive feedback effectively and provide them with timely, constructive feedback on their own communication.

**What
have
you
tried?**



STUDENT PRACTICE AND ACTIVITIES

- **Engage in discussions:** Facilitate conversations in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class, and provide sentence stems, scenarios or specific roles to guide participation.
- **Practice public speaking:** Give students opportunities to present their work, give speeches, or participate in debates to build confidence.
- **Use written communication:** Assign tasks like writing letters, resumes, or emails to each other to practice written communication.
- **Incorporate activities:** Use games or physical tools to make learning about communication more engaging.

**What
have
you
tried?**



WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT COMMUNICATION SKILLS?

Reflect in the Chat

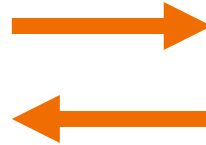


COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND SELF-REGULATION



CONNECTING COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND SELF-REGULATION SKILLS

- **Expressing Needs and Emotions:** Students with stronger communication skills can use words to express their needs and feelings instead of resorting to disruptive behaviors. This is crucial for managing frustration and anger.
- **Understanding Emotions:** Language helps students understand their own emotions and those of others, which is a key component of emotional regulation.
- **Guiding Behavior:** Internalized communication, or private speech, acts as a self-regulatory tool to guide behavior on difficult tasks, similar to how one might "talk through" a problem to solve it.



- **Interpersonal Effectiveness:** Better-regulated students are often better equipped to navigate social interactions, which can lead to more positive communication experiences with peers and teachers.
- **Academic Engagement:** Self-regulation enables students to focus, manage their motivation, and participate actively in learning environments, which can improve their ability to communicate and engage with academic material.



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS FOR SELF-REGULATION

- **Working memory:** The ability to hold and use information in your mind while performing tasks.
- **Response inhibition/self-control:** The ability to think before you act, controlling impulses and resisting distractions.
- **Cognitive flexibility:** The ability to adapt to new situations, setbacks, or changes in plans, which help individuals manage thoughts and behaviors to achieve goals.
- **Emotional control:** The ability to manage and regulate your emotions and control your behavior.
- **Sustained attention:** The ability to focus on a task, even when it's boring or difficult.
- **Planning and organization:** The ability to organize your actions, create systems, and set priorities.
- **Goal-directed persistence:** The ability to stay motivated and keep working to achieve a goal.
- **Time management:** The ability to estimate how long tasks will take and use time efficiently.
- **Stress tolerance:** The ability to cope with and endure stressful situations without becoming overwhelmed.



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS FOR SELF-REGULATION

Teach students strategies to:

- Using daily routines like morning meetings
- Providing tools and spaces for calming down
- Explicitly teaching emotional identification and coping strategies
- Using activities like games
- Teaching how to take and use mindfulness breaks

Benefits for students:

- Improved academic performance
- Increased self-confidence
- Better social skills
- More effective time management and learning
- Greater ability to handle challenges, setbacks, and stress
- Better independence in learning
- Enhanced resilience

**What
have
you
tried?**



LET'S PRACTICE

Breathe in through the nose,
Breathe out through the mouth.

Breathe in feeling the lungs expanding,
Breathe out feeling a sense of letting go.

POSTHOOD

Breathe in to feel the body getting fuller,
Breathe out to feel the release of any tension.

Breathe in feeling alive and awake,
Breathe out feeling muscles relaxing.

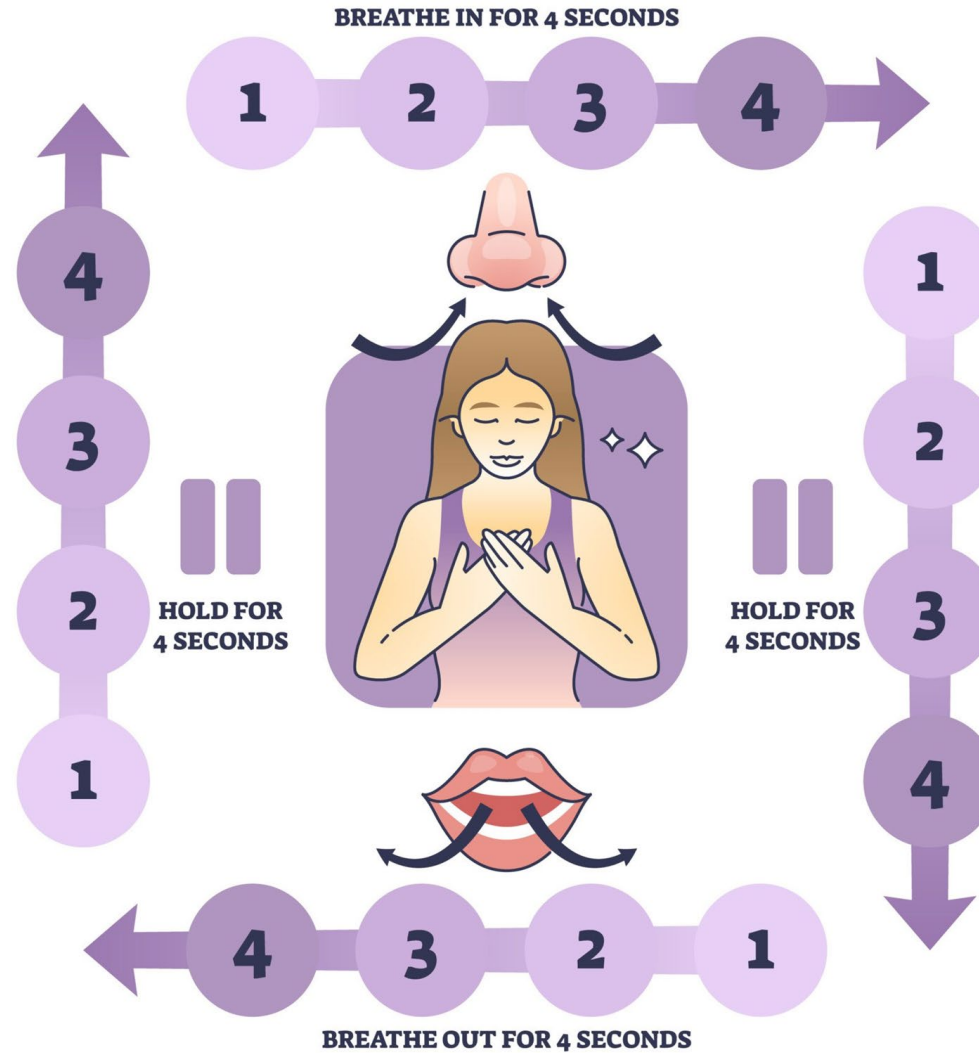
Breathe in that sense of fullness,
Breathe out that unnecessary tension.



[Resource Link](#)



LET'S PRACTICE



[Resource Link](#)



QUESTIONS AND RESOURCES

- [Activities for Self Regulation](#)
- [Self Regulation Workbook for Teen](#)
- [Emotion And Stress Regulation Magic Tool Box](#)



LEARN MORE

- Social Capital Skills: communitycolleges.wy.edu/adult-education-standards-success
- Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education: <https://cte.ed.gov/>
- Employability Skills Framework; Employability skills Planning Checklist both pdf and docx
<https://cte.ed.gov/initiatives/employability-skills-framework>
- Integrating Employability Skills: A Framework for All Educators:
<https://air.org/resource/guidetoolkit/integrating-employability-skills-framework-all-educators>
- ASCEND 307 web page: <https://edu.wyoming.gov/parents/special-education/ascend-307/>
- Employability skills framework instruction planning tool
<https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/employability-skills-framework-instruction-planning-tool.pdf>
- Understanding the IDEA and FAPE in relation to functional skills
https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/policy/documents/IDEA_FAPE_FunctionalSkillsGuide.pdf
- Employability skills handout air.org/resource/guidetoolkit/integrating-employability-skills-framework-all-educators



LEARN MORE

- Belonging handout; Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies; Teaching Social Behaviors; Instructional Technology
[Promotingprogress.org/home](https://promotingprogress.org/home)
- Self-Management tip sheet <https://intensiveintervention.org/>
- PK-5k SEL Competencies with Assessment; 1-3 SEL Competencies with Assessment; 4-5 SEL Competencies with Assessment; 6-8 SEL Competencies with Assessment; 9-10 SEL Competencies with Assessment; 11-Adult SEL Competencies with Assessment
<https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/social-emotional-learning/competencies>
- Integrated Supports Star - overview; Integrated Supports Star - tip sheet; Respite Supports Star; Safety and Security Supports Star; Support and Decision Making Supports Star; Advocacy and Engagement Supports Star; Social and Spirituality Supports Star; Healthy Living Supports Star; Community Living Supports Star; Daily Life and Employment Supports Star
<https://www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/integrated-supports-star/>
- Employability Skills Workbook <https://www.air.org/resource/guidetoolkit/integrating-employability-skills-framework-all-educators>
- Employability Skills Framework Assessment Selection Tool <https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/employability-skills-framework-assessment-selection.pdf>
- Employability Skills Framework Interviewing for Employability Skills <https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/employability-skills-framework-interview-guide.pdf>
- Matrix of comparisons of employability skills assessments <https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/employability-skills-framework-source-matrix.pdf>
- Social and Emotional Competencies and Career and Technical Education Employability Standards Crosswalk
https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/FINAL_SEL_CTE_Crosswalk_1.pdf
- Wisconsin's Employability Skills Certificate Implementation Guide
<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/cte/pdf/esimpleguide.pdf>



PLEASE COMPLETE THE EVALUATION

Add link and QR code



ASCEND 307 WEBINAR SERIES - WHAT'S NEXT

Employability Skills Webinar Series are (generally):

Second Wednesday of the month, 4-5pm

- January 15: Critical Thinking Skills
- February 11: Technology Use
- March 11: Resource Management and Information Use
- April 8: Systems Thinking
- May 6 (NOTE: first week in May): Wrap up, review/circle back as applicable

Please see the [ASCEND 307 website](#) to register.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ASCEND 307 is a multi-year initiative developed through a federal grant awarded to the Wyoming Department of Education. The overarching goal of the Wyoming State Personnel Development Grant is to improve outcomes for students with disabilities by enhancing personnel preparation and professional development in education and transition services.

