

What are Interpersonal Skills?

Interpersonal skills are the life skills we use every day to communicate and interact with other people, both individually and in groups. People who have worked on developing strong interpersonal skills are usually more successful in both their professional and personal lives.

Employers often seek to hire staff with '*strong interpersonal skills*' - they want people who will work well in a team and be able to communicate effectively with colleagues, customers and clients.

Interpersonal skills are not just important in the workplace, our personal and social lives can also benefit from better interpersonal skills. People with good interpersonal skills are usually perceived as optimistic, calm, confident and [charismatic](#) - qualities that are often endearing or appealing to others.

Through awareness of how you interact with others - and with practice - you can improve your interpersonal skills.

A List of Interpersonal Skills Includes:

- [Verbal Communication](#) - What we say and how we say it.
- [Non-Verbal Communication](#) - What we communicate without words, body language is an example.
- [Listening Skills](#) - How we interpret both the verbal and non-verbal messages sent by others.
- [Negotiation](#) - Working with others to find a mutually agreeable outcome.
- [Problem Solving](#) - Working with others to identify, define and solve problems.
- [Decision Making](#) - Exploring and analysing options to make sound decisions.
- [Assertiveness](#) - Communicating our values, ideas, beliefs, opinions, needs and wants freely.

You Already Have Interpersonal Skills.

We've all been developing our interpersonal skills since childhood - usually subconsciously.

Interpersonal Skills become so natural that we may take them for granted, never thinking about how we communicate with other people. With a little time and effort you can develop these skills. Good

interpersonal skills can improve many aspects of your life - professionally and socially - they lead to better understanding and relationships.

Interpersonal skills are also sometimes referred to as: **social skills, people skills, soft skills, communication skills** or **life skills**. Although these terms can include interpersonal skills they tend to be broader and therefore may also refer other types of skills.

Develop Your Interpersonal Skills

There are a variety of skills that can help you to succeed in different areas of life. However, the foundations for many other skills are built on strong **interpersonal skills** since these are relevant to our **personal relationships, social affairs** and **professional lives**. Without good interpersonal skills it is often more difficult to develop other important life skills.

Unlike specialized and technical skills (hard skills), interpersonal skills (soft skills) are used every day and in every area of our lives.

Find out how to improve and develop your interpersonal skills including:

Learn to Listen

Listening is not the same as hearing. Take time to listen carefully to what others are saying through both their verbal and non-verbal communication.

Choose Your Words

Be aware of the words you are using when talking to others. Could you be misunderstood or confuse the issue? Practice clarity and learn to seek feedback to ensure your message has been understood.

Encourage others to engage in communication and use appropriate questioning to develop your understanding.

Understand Why Communication Fails

Communication is rarely perfect and can fail for a number of reasons. Learn about the various barriers to good communication so you can be aware of - and reduce the likelihood of - ineffective interpersonal communication and misunderstandings.

Relax

When we are nervous we tend to talk more quickly and therefore less clearly. Being tense is also evident in our body language and other non-verbal communication. Instead, try to stay calm, make eye contact and smile. Let your confidence shine.

Clarify

Show an interest in the people you talk to. Ask questions and seek clarification on any points that could be easily misunderstood.

Be Positive

Try to remain positive and cheerful. People are much more likely to be drawn to you if you can maintain a positive attitude.

Empathize

Understand that other people may have different points of view. Try to see things from their perspective.

Understand Stress

Learn to recognize, manage and reduce stress in yourself and others. Although stress is not always bad, it can have a detrimental effect on your interpersonal communication. Learning how to recognize and manage stress, in yourself and others, is an important personal skill.

Learn to be Assertive

You should aim to be neither passive nor aggressive. Being assertive is about expressing your feelings and beliefs in a way that others can understand and respect. Assertiveness is fundamental to successful negotiation.

Reflect and Improve

Think about previous conversations and other interpersonal interactions; learn from your mistakes and successes. Always keep a positive attitude but realize that you can always improve our communication skills.

Negotiate

Learn how to effectively negotiate with others paving the way to mutual respect, trust and lasting interpersonal relations.

Working in Groups

We often find ourselves in group situations, professionally and socially. Learn all about the different types of groups and teams.

Bottom of Form



Self-assessment quiz

<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ls/index.php/343479/>

Find more at: <http://www.skillsyouneed.com/interpersonal-skills.html#ixzz36F2li3FW>

Take the self-assessment. What skills do you need to work on?

How would have interpersonal skills helped Mark & Bryon?