

BSBWKR311

Develop self-awareness

Release 1

Developed for
BSB Business Services
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Learner guide

BSBWRK311

Develop self-awareness

Release 1

Learner guide

Aspire Version 1.1

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBWRK311 Develop self-awareness*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Icon	Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
	Learning content	Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
	Examples	These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
	Practice tasks	Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
	Video clips	Where QR codes appear, you can use a smartphone or other device to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help
	Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
	Learning checkpoints	There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses questioning as a strategy to expand knowledge• Reflects on existing thinking and current practices to examine self-awareness• Researches activities and articles on relevant topics
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates records on observations, experiences and thoughts• Prepares documents to monitor and reflect on performance
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participates in a verbal exchange of observations and elicits the view and opinions of others by listening and questioning
Interact with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborates with others to test, strengthen and explore self-awareness and different ways of thinking



Topic 1

Recognise your personal traits

'When I discover who I am, I'll be free.' – Ralph Ellison

Self-awareness is the ability to monitor your emotions and thoughts from moment to moment. It helps you to understand yourself better by proactively managing your thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

Self-awareness can be applied to every aspect of your life where you interact with others. Applying self-awareness at work means you can more easily identify your values, achievements and abilities, as well as your personal strengths and weaknesses. This can assist you to identify and get what you want from your job to help you reach your full potential as an employee.

Self-awareness can enhance your work performance by helping you to:

- manage work tasks more efficiently
- understand others better
- improve your relationships with colleagues and clients
- improve your decision-making ability.

In this topic you will learn about:

- 1A Your values and attitudes
- 1B Personal strengths and weaknesses
- 1C Understanding what motivates you

1A

Your values and attitudes

The Macquarie Dictionary describes an attitude as a position, disposition or manner with regard to a person, issue or thing.

Here is some information to help you understand values and attitudes, and identify the differences between them.

Values	Attitudes
<p>Values are the worth, merit or importance that you place on an action or thing. Commonly held values include honesty, integrity, love, compassion, respect, and a desire for fairness and justice.</p> <p>It is a personal regard you have for something, based on its worth or usefulness to you.</p>	<p>A personal attitude can be a viewpoint that is positive or negative. For example, one person may appreciate receiving constructive criticism about how to perform a task better, while another may take this as a personal attack.</p>
<p>You are mostly not consciously aware of your values because they are internal feelings. However, they underpin your beliefs and the actions you take. They will affect the way you approach your work and respond to other people.</p>	<p>Attitudes generally arise from values.</p> <p>You may express your attitudes through your behaviours such as how you communicate with others and the ways you act.</p>
<p>Values are less likely to change over time because they are deeply embedded internal feelings that have been developed over a lifetime.</p> <p>Values are guiding principles that arise from your life experiences and interactions with others. You may find you have similar values to your family, largely due to the way you were brought up.</p>	<p>Attitudes can change with new experiences. They develop as you experience new things and interact with others. For example, an employee may hold a negative attitude towards management because they once worked under a supervisor whose poor leadership meant they missed out on a performance reward. This attitude may change with time in response to a new, more positive experience.</p>

Value	Attitude	Example
Respect	Everyone has the right to be heard.	You allow each person to take turns speaking and do not interrupt when they are giving their opinion.

Self-awareness means you are taking responsibility for your own behaviour based on your values and attitudes. This will affect the way you make decisions, plan your work, schedule tasks, manage your time and complete tasks. In other words, your personal work performance will be influenced by the values and attitudes you hold.

Diverse values and attitudes

Identifying your own attitudes and values will help you to recognise the attitudes and values of others.

It is natural to make judgments of others based on your worldview and through the lens of your own attitudes and values. This can result in misunderstandings and miscommunication, which in turn can lead to conflict and disharmony between people.

When you identify that people have different attitudes and values to yourself, and recognise that values and attitudes are important, you can begin to understand others and develop better relationships with them. You will be able to work cohesively to accomplish collective goals because you appreciate and understand the positive differences in others.

This is referred to as 'self-awareness' – the capacity to review your own attitudes and values, and identify them in others.



A level of trust and commitment can be built between colleagues regardless of the differences there may be in values and attitudes. To establish a cohesive and collaborative workplace, it is not necessary to change your own ideas, values and attitudes, or to try to change those of others. A harmonious workplace can be achieved by the team working together and adapting their behaviour to develop respect. This means everyone is able to remain authentic to their own values, while at the same time accommodating the differences of others.

Self-awareness will help you to appreciate a diverse range of attitudes and values in the workplace because it allows for expression of different ideas and opinions.

Watch this video about how to identify your values and beliefs.

<http://aspirelr.link/values-beliefs-video>

Example

Your attitudes and values

Erin works in customer service for a small company of 35 employees who import smallgoods. She is thinking about her job and reflecting on her role and ways she can develop her career. This is what she identified:

Personal goals

- I want a career path with promotion.
- I want to continue learning new skills.

To help meet my goals, I will accept the back-fill team leader position while Stewart is on paternity leave. It is only temporary, but I will learn some new skills.

Work performance

I will explain to my manager Phil my reasons for taking the position and outline my goals. I will ask his advice on how best to reach my career goals and areas he thinks I should develop. I want to ensure I learn as much as possible during my time as team leader and understand how the office operates, how tasks are scheduled and how decisions are made. I can then work towards improving my skills.

Personal development action plan

I have two immediate areas I want to develop:

- the skills required for chairing the weekly team meetings
- confidence to delegate tasks and direct others in my team.



Practice task 1

Question 1

Make a list of your top five values. Ask a family member to do the same and compare your list. Why are these values likely to be similar?

Question 2

Match the beginning of each sentence about values and attitudes to the correct ending.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| * Values are | * personal viewpoints that can be positive or negative. |
| * Attitudes are expressed through | * embedded internal feelings that develop over a lifetime. |
| * Values are expressed as | * your behaviours and the way you act. |
| * Attitudes are | * guiding principles that are important to you. |

Question 3

Which of the following statements relate to values and attitudes? Select all that apply.

- Attitudes don't change with time because they reflect the way you were brought up.
- Your attitudes and values influence how you view and respond to situations.
- Understanding the differences in people will help to develop a cohesive work team.
- To develop respect amongst colleagues it may be necessary to put aside your values.
- Many aspects of your job will be influenced by your values and attitudes.

Question 4

a. Explain why it is important for your values and attitudes to be aligned with those of your employer.

b. What impact can this have on the organisation?

1B

Personal strengths and weaknesses

When you are good at something and enjoy it, it is a true strength.

Daniel Goleman, the psychologist and author of books on emotional intelligence, identified self-awareness as being made up of:

- emotional awareness
- accurate self-assessment
- self-confidence.

Self-awareness is about knowing your emotions, your personal strengths and weaknesses, and having a strong sense of your own worth. If you can recognise your personal strengths you are likely to be more motivated and interested in your work. This increases your engagement, meaning you are more likely to perform work tasks to your full capacity and enjoy the challenges of your work.



Your personal strengths and weaknesses

Self-awareness involves using thoughts, emotions and behaviours to improve and better understand yourself.

Personal strengths are tasks or actions that you do well. These include your talents, knowledge and skills. You use these traits and abilities to complete tasks, work cooperatively with others, and achieve your personal and work goals.

Your personal strengths are more than just what you are capable of. They may be personal traits that you already possess or ones that you wish to develop and become more proficient at.

Personal weaknesses are those areas you identify that you can improve on as part of your personal development action plan. Self-awareness means you will be able to detail ways you can improve or correct these weaknesses. Here are some examples.

Personal strengths	Personal weaknesses
Patience	Impatience
Respect	Evading responsibility
Determination	Hypersensitivity
Dedication	Shyness
Honesty	Lack of confidence
Versatility	Overconfidence/arrogance
Loyalty	Fear of failure

As you develop your self-awareness, you should spend time thinking about your personal strengths and weaknesses. You may be asked to identify them to evaluate your fit for certain tasks and responsibilities during a job interview or as part of a work performance appraisal or review process, and it is important that you understand what they are.

The way you respond to this question says a lot about your self-awareness and honesty. It is only with self-reflection and self-examination that you can conduct an honest appraisal of yourself. The self-awareness and honesty you display in being able to openly discuss your weaknesses as well as your strengths may be the personal quality an employer is looking for.

For tips on how to discuss your weaknesses in job interviews, watch this video:
<http://aspirelr.link/discuss-weaknesses-video>

Example

Personal strengths

Tao works in administration at a university. He has been asked by his manager, Brian, to lead a small team to implement a new process for managing student accounts.

In his last performance review, Tao identified that he wants to develop his leadership skills and take on more responsibilities in his role. Brian has offered Tao this project leader role as an opportunity for him to develop his skills in these areas. Brian will guide and mentor Tao by meeting with him weekly to discuss and monitor the project in order to get the most from the team.

The team is made up of five employees from different departments who have not worked together before. At the first team meeting, Tao will outline the goals and outcomes of the project so everyone knows what they are working towards. He knows the importance of the team having a clear and shared understanding of the project aims and the outcomes they need to achieve. This way the team should be able to work cooperatively and cohesively to achieve their shared goals. Further, team members can work together to agree on and have a sense of pride in the quality of their work.

At the weekly meeting with his manager, Tao discusses the best way to allocate each of the project tasks. Brian suggests that he gets each team member to share their personal strengths with the group. Tao can see how this would give team members a stronger sense of their own worth, and better understanding of the personal attributes of other team members. This should benefit the team by motivating and engaging them in the project because they can see how each person will contribute to it.



Adaptability and flexibility

Adaptability and flexibility are two personality traits that are highly regarded by employers.

Adaptability and flexibility refer to your ability and willingness to change, or to modify to fit a changed circumstance or condition. In other words, how prepared you are to adapt to something new.

Being adaptable and flexible means you can:

- fit into a flexible job role that requires a range of skills
- rotate into different roles as required, such as when someone is on leave
- adapt to changing situations and expectations, such as:
 - changing from one project or task to another
 - adopting new technology or processes to complete tasks
- change how you report or who you report to
- put your hand up and offer to assist another department that needs some more staff to complete a project
- approach problems by using an open mind and flexibility in your thinking.

Benefits of being adaptable and flexible

The advantages of being adaptable and flexible become clear when you consider the disadvantages of lacking these traits.

People who are adaptable and flexible generally enjoy change and can adjust to it easily.

Those who are inflexible or unable to adapt don't like change. They prefer a predictable list of specific tasks that they need to achieve. An inflexible employee may also be rigid in their attitudes and show an inability to adapt to new circumstances. They may be closed off to personal growth and the development of self-awareness.

You will notice certain attitudes and behaviours from your colleagues who are unwilling to be adaptable or flexible at work.

Reasons for an unwillingness to adapt or be flexible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of self-awareness • Lack of self-confidence • Desire to protect themselves from failure • Lack of accountability and motivation to take on responsibility • Discontent with the job, colleagues or management
Characteristics of an adaptable and flexible employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having an open mind • Being open to opportunity • Being able to move seamlessly from one task to another • Being willing to listen to alternative ideas and approaches to tasks • Being able to adjust their behaviours and actions to meet the current task demands • Planning ahead and having a contingency plan in case something doesn't work out • Being able to identify creative or innovate ways to solve problems and make improvements • Making suggestions, implementing improvements or moving to another solution if things don't go right

Develop adaptability and flexibility

One aspect of developing self-awareness involves reflecting on your personal traits.

Here are some attitude changes that can help someone become more adaptable and flexible in their work role.

Overcome any uncertainty you have and mentally prepare yourself for change

You can change the way you think and become more willing and ready to adapt and change by altering the way you view problems, set yourself up and prepare for changes.

Observe people who are good at adapting to new circumstances and are not fazed by change

Try to imagine their thinking and copy their behaviour. This requires you to change the way you approach change.

Look at your habits and the way you have defined your past success

Question whether these habits are still relevant or if they will continue to be helpful in the future. By changing how you view these experiences, you can adapt more easily to unpredictable changes. Remember, change isn't always a bad thing and can foster improvement and growth.

Adjust your attitude to change

When asked to swap to another work task that is more complicated, you can choose not to see this request as overwhelming. This will only lead to doubts about your abilities and self-confidence to complete the task. Instead, adopt a can-do attitude.

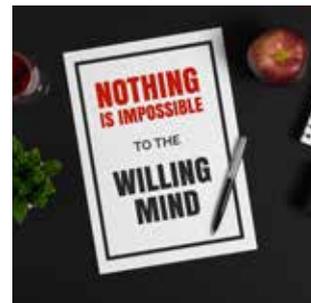
Break down an overwhelming task into smaller, more attainable objectives

Achieving smaller goals can help to improve your self-esteem, and build your confidence in your abilities and resourcefulness to complete work tasks.

Work commitment

A high level of commitment to work can lead to improved work performance.

If you are committed and feel aligned with your organisation, you will feel a higher level of satisfaction with your work. A committed employee is one who is engaged in their work, and can see a link between what they do and the outcomes of their efforts. If you are a committed employee, you will contribute to a more positive work culture and bring added value to your organisation. A committed employee is determined, proactively supports their employer, is highly productive and has an awareness of standards of quality required in their work – all great attributes in an employee!



Commitment can be defined as the level to which an employee:

- is connected to their job and feels a sense of purpose and value in what they do
- is dedicated to the organisation as a whole, its management, a supervisor or a particular work team
- believes in the organisation's goals and purpose
- has a desire to achieve the goals of the organisation
- has a positive attitude towards work
- has a good work ethic.

Level of commitment

Different levels of commitment will affect the likelihood an employee will remain with an employer.

Your level of commitment to your work is dependent on many factors, such as your level of attachment and sense of loyalty or bond to the organisation.

The following outlines the three levels of organisational commitment developed by John Meyer and Natalie Allen. You may recognise some of these characteristics in your colleagues.

<p>Affective commitment Staying because you want to stay</p>	<p>This refers to an employee who has a high level of commitment to the company because they identify strongly with it and agree with its objectives. They are bound to the organisation, making them more loyal and less likely to leave.</p> <p>An employee with this level of commitment would describe their job as: 'I can't wait to go to work each day.'</p>
<p>Continuance commitment Staying because of personal benefit</p>	<p>Employees experiencing this level of commitment will stay at a company because of a personal benefit, not due to a sense of loyalty. For example, an employee may have invested many years in a company building up leave entitlements, employee benefits and a good salary. It may be more beneficial for the employee to stay than to leave, so they remain, but may not feel compelled to perform at a high level.</p> <p>An employee with this level of commitment would describe their job as: 'I work here because the pay is good and I want to retire early'.</p>
<p>Normative commitment Staying because you feel you should stay</p>	<p>This occurs when an employee believes they must stay. For example, an employee may feel a sense of obligation to stay with their employer during its time of need even though it is no longer advantageous to do so. They may fear the potential disappointment in their employer or teammates.</p> <p>An employee with this level of commitment would describe their job as: 'I can't leave because my boss depends on me'.</p>

You may not fit wholly into one category, and may have a combination of these commitment levels to an organisation. Which level of commitment do you think best reflects your attitude to work?

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to rebound or recover, to adapt to changing circumstances, and to bounce back from challenges and stress.

Resilience is not a trait that you either do or do not have. It involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. For example, you may decide to put the last stressful weeks of work behind you now that the project is finished and everyone has returned to their regular job roles. Resilience requires maintaining flexibility and balance as you deal with stressful circumstances in your personal and professional life.



Resilience generally involves:

- managing strong feelings and impulses
- having high self-esteem and a positive view of yourself
- being self-confident in your strengths and abilities
- having good problem-solving skills
- being optimistic
- being able to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out.

After a stressful or difficult experience, you can examine the ways you react in terms of your behaviour and thought processes. By thinking in this way, you can identify your strengths and weaknesses, reflect on the situation and take a balanced view. You may decide that your reaction could have been different or that it might have been more productive or helpful to have reacted in a different way. This requires applying your self-awareness skills to monitor and manage your thoughts and emotions.

How resilience improves your work performance

- Higher level of engagement and involvement
- Higher productivity levels
- Greater flexibility in task management
- Greater cooperation and collaboration amongst staff

Example

Using your personal resilience in times of stress

Violet is feeling embarrassed about her unprofessional behaviour during a meeting. She reacted badly during the staff meeting when her manager told her about a possible merger with their parent company. She had been worrying about her job security for a few months, ever since the rumours began. When the possible merger was discussed, she got visibly upset and angry, raising her voice when asking questions. Her manager suggested that she go home early.



The following day she has had time to reflect and review what happened. She realises she should not have spoken out like she did and been so emotional in her response. She reacted quickly and didn't give herself time to think and consider the information before acting.

Her manager has been understanding and, after a face-to-face meeting, Violet now feels calmer about the future. Violet finds change difficult and recognises the strong emotions that rise up during these situations. She has now taken a mental note on several things she has learnt about herself as a result of this situation. She knows she needs to practise controlling her emotions so as not to have a similar outburst in future. She decides that taking a breath, physically relaxing her body and pausing are all useful strategies to help her overcome her emotions.

Violet is going to continue to work on developing her resilience and not automatically react negatively when she gets stressed.



Practice task 2

Part A

Read the following statements about personal strengths and weaknesses. Select true or false for each one.

Question 1

You are being adaptable when you are able to quickly swap between work tasks because there are urgent jobs that require your attention.

True

False

Question 2

Tony has a flexible attitude because he often changes his working hours to suit the workload of his department.

True

False

Question 3

Resilience is a trait that you are born with. It can't be learned or developed.

True

False

Part B

Question 1

Match the beginning of each sentence about personal strengths and weaknesses to the correct ending.

- | | |
|---|--|
| * A lack of self-confidence means | * you can adapt to changing situations and expectations. |
| * A low level of commitment to your job means | * you are unwilling to adapt or be flexible. |
| * Being adaptable and flexible means | * you feel a sense of obligation to stay with your employer. |
| * Being resilient means | * you can manage strong feelings and impulses. |

Question 2

What are **two** benefits to your employer of having a high level of commitment to your job?

Question 3

What are **two** benefits to you of having a high level of commitment to your job?

Question 4

How does an understanding of your personal strengths and weaknesses impact on your work performance?

1C

Understanding what motivates you

People who are motivated find a reason to complete a task, even when it is challenging.

You may be required to complete tasks that you find boring or difficult, but your overall motivation is what drives you to complete these tasks without the need for encouragement from others. An employee who is motivated will work until they feel that a task has been completed to the best of their ability.

Motivation to work hard and do a good job can come from a range of sources. Some people are motivated by their career goals, to improve their skills or simply for the personal satisfaction of doing a good job. Others are motivated by the feeling of satisfaction they get when they receive recognition for their work from a manager or colleagues. Personal motivation helps you to work towards achieving your goals and improving your work performance.

Employers need to keep their staff motivated. Good communication will help to improve the motivation of employees. You may have experienced how being listened to or asked your opinion and given encouragement can help with your level of motivation.

Here are some ways that your employer can help to improve your level of motivation in the workplace. Consider how each of these actions would affect you and which of them would increase your motivation to do your job.

Job enhancement

You may benefit from skill development and being able to demonstrate a greater level of skills. This will give you opportunities to grow and learn new skills.

Job enrichment

You may be allowed to take on higher level tasks or responsibilities from time to time, which will enhance your motivation to develop professionally.

Job rotation

If you are periodically moved from one role or task to another, this will offer you variety and mental stimulation.

Watch this video to learn more about job rotation.



Communicating

If your manager or supervisor takes time to meet and speak with you or personally thanks you for doing a good, this is likely to increase your motivation to perform well in the future.

Positive work environment

You will benefit from a positive work culture where respect, trust and new ideas are encouraged. This may include team-building meetings and activities aimed at boosting morale.

Celebrating success

If you and others in the workplace are recognised, rewarded and promoted based on your performance, this is likely to motivate you to work hard. You may also be motivated if the success of the company or specific departments is celebrated.

Personal motivations and self-awareness

Self-awareness means understanding what drives your behaviour and keeps you motivated.

To become more self-aware you need to be reflective and mindful of your thoughts. This means identifying the things that influence your thoughts and feelings. Use your self-awareness to examine what motivates you and why, and to periodically check on your level of motivation.

Here are some things that you can ask yourself to become more self-aware in relation to your motivation.

What motivates you?	Determine what you are motivated by and why. Your actions will be driven by the level of desire you have to achieve your goals.
Use your attitude to your advantage	Set your mind towards your goals and have a positive mental attitude. If you have a negative attitude towards work, this is likely to decrease your motivation and work performance, so be aware of your thoughts, and work to counteract negative thoughts and feelings.
Avoid comparison with others	This is a common reason why people deviate and don't pursue their goals. Most people are naturally competitive, so they tend to measure their success in comparison with others. This can lead to demotivation if others appear to be much more successful and advanced in their careers. You can change this by simply seeking to better yourself. Remember, it's not where you are now, it's where you are moving toward.
Pay attention to your thoughts	Start being strict on your daily thoughts. Before you take action, you must first think about the action you will take. Say things to yourself such as, "If I don't start now, I won't ever start" or "Success isn't going to work unless I work".

Example

Understand what motivates you

Luke has always wanted to work in marketing and was thrilled to be given a market research role in a large manufacturing company 18 months ago. Much of his role involves time-consuming administrative tasks.

He realises that he lacks motivation for a lot of these tasks. He thinks about how excited he was to go to work when he first got the job and self-reflects on what motivated him then. He realises that he expected to be given more hands-on marketing tasks, and feels that he has proved himself to be trusted with greater responsibility.

Luke speaks to his manager, explaining his feelings and requesting more challenging work. His manager agrees that he is a valuable employee and has demonstrated his ability and willingness to take on higher level tasks. He is incorporated into the team that is developing a marketing campaign for a valued customer. Luke is more motivated to do his administrative tasks because his workload is now balanced with more challenging tasks.



Practice task 3

Question 1

Give **two** examples of what motivates you at work.

Question 2

Identify **two** things that your employer or supervisor can do that would increase your motivation at work.



Summary

- Self-awareness is the ability to monitor your emotions and thoughts from moment to moment.
- Self-awareness helps you to understand yourself to better manage your thoughts, emotions and behaviours.
- Personally held values and attitudes are linked to the way you think, feel and behave at work, and should complement those of your organisation.
- Self-awareness can give you insight into the attitudes and values of others so you can work more collaboratively.
- Personal strengths are traits that you already possess or ones that you wish to develop to become more proficient at.
- Being able to discuss your weaknesses as well as your strengths may be the personal quality an employer is looking for.
- Personal strengths include adaptability, flexibility, resilience and a level of commitment to the job.
- Motivation is about having a desire to complete tasks to a high standard.
- Employers need to be aware of the need to motivate their employees.
- You can use your self-awareness skills to check on your level of motivation.



Learning checkpoint 1

Recognise your personal traits

1. Explain how your values and attitudes can impact your work.

2. Explain how your values and attitudes can impact on the way you work with others.

3. For each of the following personal strengths, identify one way this trait can enhance your work performance:

- a. Flexibility/adapatabilty

- b. Commitment

c. Resilience

d. Motivation



Topic 2

Apply self-awareness at work

'Know thyself' is an ancient Greek expression that describes self-awareness.

We all have the capacity for self-awareness and, with practice, can improve these skills; for example, by reflecting on the effects of your actions and behaviours on others. The more you practice, the more it will become a habit, and this will improve your relationships with others at work. You will gain insight into your behaviours and the triggers that make you respond or behave the way that you do.

Applying and practising self-awareness can help you to reach your goals. Your goals may be to further your career by getting a promotion, or you may want to improve your relationships at work.

Everyone has limits in some area of their work that they can improve on. In order to make these improvements, you may need to ask others for help. This could be feedback on the ways you work, your skills and capabilities, or the perceptions others have of you as a team member or employee.

In this topic you will learn about:

- 2A Actions to improve self-awareness
- 2B Applying self-awareness
- 2C Strategies for ongoing improvement

2A

Actions to improve self-awareness

Write down what you want to do and what you hope to achieve by improving your self-awareness skills.

Self-evaluation is a large part of self-awareness. Regular and varied self-evaluation keeps you in touch with your personal values, and helps you monitor your goals, actions and behaviours towards others.

Self-evaluation can happen in a number of ways. Here are some examples.

Informally



Self-evaluate as part of your everyday job when you communicate with others, make decisions and complete your work tasks. You may record your observations in a reflective journal or log.

Formally



Self-evaluation occurs as part of your performance review with your manager. This review looks at your personal abilities and skills. It highlights your strengths and identifies your weaknesses, allowing you to plan strategies for support and improvement. Feedback can be provided by your supervisor, implemented and trialled.

Self-evaluation can occur at any time, such as when you are given a new challenge. You can record your goals and track your progress to meet them in an action plan. A plan can be a record of your reflections, thoughts and emotions. You can then reflect and determine the benefits of achieving your goals.

Create a personal development action plan

Writing your ideas down can help you process your thoughts.

An action plan helps you to clearly define your goals and objectives. Once you understand your strengths and weaknesses, you can plan how you will use your self-awareness skills to improve these.

A plan allows you to:

- identify the steps needed to achieve your objectives
- record the changes you observe in yourself and its effects on others
- reflect on your insights and identify improvements you have made
- record feedback from others who are assisting or guiding you.

Here is an example of a personal development action plan.

Goal	Objective	Action step – what is required	Personal reflections	Feedback from others
To react less emotionally when I get pressured with work	Control my emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause and take a breath before letting the stress build up. • Identify the triggers that make me react. • Don't take work home; instead, use that time to relax. 	In the week before the project deadline, I didn't take work home with me, even though I was tempted to. Instead, I used the time to forget about work and went swimming and out to dinner. I have never missed a deadline because I am an efficient worker, and this project is no different to the last ones. I can always ask Georgia to help me with the final steps of the task.	My manager congratulated me on my reliability for always meeting deadlines and for the quality of my work. Georgia said she was always willing to help me out and I only had to ask.
To get more experience so I can apply for other positions	Become more adaptable and gain more exposure to new skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take initiative and offer to help on other projects. • Speak to my manager and explain my goals. 	I have my performance review with my manager next week. I will seek her advice about how to increase my skillset. I want to have the opportunity to experience new challenges.	My manager and I discussed my personal abilities and skills, and my desire for new challenges. She encouraged me to apply for other positions in the organisation. She helped me to develop a plan for the experience I want to have, and to outline what I would like to get from the experience. I will start by shadowing an employee in another department.

Communicate your action plan

Collaboration with others helps to strengthen and develop your self-awareness by introducing different ways of thinking.

When you explain your plan of action, you are identifying what you want, such as your goals, personality traits, work habits, strengths and weaknesses, and relationships with others at work. This provides your supervisor with insight into your work performance. It also offers you the chance to gain insight you might not have considered, including new ways of looking at things.



There are several people that you can work with to implement an action plan and monitor your progress: your manager, supervisor, HR manager or other colleagues. You will need to obtain approval from a more senior person to make sure that any actions you want to take are in line with the organisation's policies and procedures.

For example, if your goal is to improve your confidence and self-esteem by applying for other positions, then you may need to conduct research to investigate other job roles in the organisation. You may need to access job descriptions, pay structures and speak to people in these roles. This would require permission and some forward planning. Your manager should make sure other staff consent to being questioned and that personal information, such as salary details, remains confidential.

Many organisations have a formal process for reviewing work performance. This offers an opportunity to discuss and communicate your action plan. Sometimes reviews are scheduled as part of a six-monthly performance review, or they may be part of a fortnightly catch-up with your manager or supervisor.

Watch this video to learn more about performance reviews.



Gather feedback

Feedback from others can help you to become more self-aware.

You may need to use your self-awareness skills when reviewing any feedback you are given by your supervisor or other colleagues. Some people have a blind spot for their negative traits. If there are any negative comments about your work, try not to be defensive or reactive. Instead, use it as an opportunity to self-reflect and ask yourself, is there any truth to this?

Constructive feedback should provide ideas on how you can make improvements to your personal and professional growth and development. Feedback can provide insight into how you are seen through the eyes of others. Any feedback you receive can be used to revise your action plan.

Watch this video about the value of receiving feedback at work.



Things to consider when asking for and receiving feedback

- You may have developed skills for a role that doesn't match your personality.
- People who only see you in one role may only be able to describe your behaviours in relation to that role.
- People can have a different perception of your values than you do.
- Listen to what others have to say and pay attention to their emotions and body language.
- Some people may not feel they can be completely honest and may try to hide the truth if they feel it will be hurtful.
- You might be surprised with some information because you are unaware of traits that others see in you.
- Use your self-awareness to be open to the opinions of others and to explore different ways of thinking.
- Part of the self-reflection process is to adjust your goals and review your objectives.

Example

Actions to improve self-awareness

Bill works for a busy transport company and is responsible for making sure the invoices are produced in time to be sent with the goods before they are loaded on the trucks. He has been thinking about his communication with colleagues.

In the office today, Bill was working at his computer and needed to print a batch of invoices in a hurry. The truck had arrived early and he had been asked to produce them earlier than arranged so the truck could leave ahead of schedule. There is only one printer in the office and even though the others knew about the urgent request, one of Bill's colleagues, Gaye, decided to print the annual report which was going to require the printer for at least an hour.

Bill could feel his stress rising and showed his displeasure and irritation with Gaye by standing next to the printer with his arms crossed and tapping his foot, then walking back and forth from his desk to the printer huffing and puffing with annoyance. This got everyone's attention and distracted everyone from their work.

He reflects on his behaviour later in the day by asking himself some questions:



What went wrong?

I did not communicate my needs for the printer directly to the others in the office. I just presumed people would know not to use it.

How did I feel?

I felt stressed as I couldn't complete the urgent task as requested by my boss. I was worried that she would think I was not competent because I couldn't do what I was asked to. I thought this would reflect badly on me.

I also felt frustrated, impatient and angry with Gaye for not checking with me about the availability of the printer and allowing me to do my work. I wanted her and others in the office to know how I was feeling.

What have I learnt?

I need to communicate better with my team. I could have sent an email or made an announcement regarding my plans to use the printer.

I could have alerted by boss that it was going to take extra time due to having to wait for the printer.

What can I do next?

I should speak to Gaye and apologise for my behaviour.

What can I do to alter my future actions and behaviours?

When I feel my stress levels rising, I should pause, take a breath and consider my options. Talking to people and explaining my needs will be helpful. I can't expect others to read my mind and know what I want without explaining it to them.



Practice task 4

Part A

Read each statement about actions you can take to improve your self-awareness and select true or false in relation to each one.

Question 1

A performance review session with your manager is where your personal weaknesses are examined.

 True False

Question 2

If there is any negative feedback about your work, you should defend yourself and say that the other person is wrong.

True

False

Part B

Question 1

Which of the following statements in relation to receiving feedback are correct? Select all that apply.

- Don't react until you have time to consider the information provided.
- Most people will try to hide the truth so you don't get hurt.
- A blind spot is what others see in you, but you are unable to see in yourself.
- Self-awareness means being open to the opinions of others and exploring different ways of thinking.
- Regular and varied self-evaluation keeps you in touch with your personal values.

Question 2

Which of the following statements in relation to recording your reflections are correct? Select all that apply.

- An action plan allows you to set out many goals to work on at the same time.
- Writing your thoughts down helps you to reflect and process your thoughts and feelings.
- Recording changes in yourself helps to identify improvements you have made.
- A manager can help you develop your action plan and assist you to monitor your progress.
- Regular and varied self-evaluation keeps you in touch with your personal values.

2B Applying self-awareness

Most of the time your thinking is on 'autopilot'. You will not be conscious of how your mind jumps from one topic to another unless you apply self-awareness.

Self-awareness allows you to become conscious of your emotional and behavioural responses, and to question why you react or respond the way you do. It makes you aware of your patterns of thinking and behaving, and allows you to question if these patterns should be changed.

There is usually a trigger that makes you respond to a situation in a certain way. You may need to use self-awareness to remind yourself to pause or think differently about what is happening before reacting. You can take a moment to examine your emotions, thoughts and feelings, and to question yourself about the best course of action to take. For example, instead of being immediately defensive when you are accused of a mistake you didn't make, you can pause to take a breath and respond calmly with a statement of the facts.



Improving your work performance

There are a number of ways you can apply self-awareness to improve your work performance.

To make sure self-awareness exercises are meaningful, you must always be honest and open in your assessment of yourself. Consider how well you are able to apply the following areas to your work.

Self-management

- Setting personal goals
- Measuring your performance
- Managing time efficiently
- Identifying work methods and practices that can improve personal performance
- Establishing a personal development and/or work plan
- Asking for, analysing and interpreting feedback

Social awareness

- Being aware of how others are feeling
- Working with respect for others
- Working sensitively to avoid conflict
- Working to increase social justice
- Responding to inequality and discrimination
- Being aware of different cultural viewpoints

Relationship management

- Relating to people from a range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- Seeking support to manage complex ethical issues or dilemmas
- Applying skills of negotiation, communication and decision-making
- Developing and maintaining professional networks

Personal behaviour

- Being patient and able to wait
- Pausing before making a judgment
- Remaining calm during conflict

Personality traits

- Being able to adapt to change
- Understanding the ideas of others
- Trusting others
- Treating everyone with respect
- Understanding the views of others

Professional relationships to enhance your work performance

- Seeking, analysing and reflecting on feedback
- Seeking opportunities for supervision and mentoring
- Identifying and participating in personal development
- Integrating learning into improved practice

Motivations

- Identifying what motivates you
- Identifying whether you need to be acknowledged or rewarded for your work

Emotions

- Remaining impartial
- Not reacting too quickly
- Maintaining professional boundaries
- Recognising emotions in others
- Understanding what you are feeling

Identify personal triggers

Personal issues may affect your reactions and emotional responses to others.

Workplace stress refers to the adverse reactions that occur when the demands of a job do not match the resources, needs or abilities of the employee.

While some level of stress is expected in the workplace, unnecessary or excessive stress has the potential to hinder a person's productivity or ability to perform in their role.

Stressors are events or situations that occur in the workplace that trigger the stress response in an individual or team. Workplace stressors can cause physical, chemical or mental responses, affecting thinking and work performance. For example, if you are susceptible to having low self-esteem, suffer from a fear of failure or rejection, or are easily intimidated, then your personal perceptions may cause you to respond inappropriately or unreasonably to a number of situations that occur in the workplace.



Personal triggers usually arise when you are not getting your needs met. They include feeling:

- rejected
- excluded
- disrespected
- misunderstood
- demoralised
- ignored
- constrained
- unsafe
- bored.

Questions to ask yourself include:

- What past experiences or situations have caused me to react negatively?
- What specific things do those people do or say that cause me to respond emotionally?
- When reflecting on an emotionally charged situation, what was the specific action or comment that triggered my response?
- Are there any patterns in the situations that tend to trigger me?
- How do my emotional responses make the situation worse?
- How can I respond in a way that allows me to maintain my composure?

Personal attributes

As your self-awareness skills improve, you will notice that you need to draw on other personal skills.

You will need certain personal skills and attributes to help you make decisions, lead or direct others, complete tasks or communicate to and ask questions of others.

Personal attribute	Description	Example
Self-reliance	This means relying on your own efforts and abilities. It is having confidence in your own judgment and decision-making ability.	Sylvie has phoned the customer and confirmed the delivery details for an important order. She has spoken to the dispatch department and updated them with the new delivery address details, and updated the database records with the correct address and contact information. She has sent an email to her boss outlining what she has done. He replied by thanking her for making sure the order will arrive as it should.
Self-confidence	Self-confidence means feeling you can complete a particular task well. It is your ability to trust your own skills, capacities and judgments. It is a belief that you can successfully face day-to-day challenges and demands.	Marcel has been working on an important report for the past week. It is now edited and formatted, and he is very pleased with the final document. He completed all the work himself, including the cover and binding. Marcel is looking forward to handing it to his manager, as he knows she will be happy with his work.
Self-esteem	This is your belief in yourself. People with high self-esteem like themselves and value their own achievements. People with low self-esteem are often insecure and doubt their own abilities.	Jenny is a customer service officer and can see that the new process to be used for recording customer feedback takes too long. She feels like she would be more productive spending this time on the phone with customers. She decides to discuss how she feels with her boss. She has a few suggestions for ways to improve processes.

Review your personal strengths and weaknesses

Start practising self-awareness to identify your strengths and weaknesses.

Think about what traits or characteristics you have that are your strengths. Look at what work tasks provide you with satisfaction and pleasure.

Now examine the habits that you deem to be your weaknesses. Observe yourself and monitor your emotions in different situations. Your reactions to different circumstances will tell you a lot about yourself. For example, consider the following:

- How do you behave under certain situations?
- How do you react to others in specific circumstances? Does your behaviour change according to who you are speaking to?
- How do other people react to you? Watch their reactions and responses in your conversations at work.



Keep a record of these observations as part of your action plan. Include examples from your observations to see where and under what circumstances you reacted the way you did.

Personal strengths	How is this evident in your work?	Personal weaknesses	How is this evident in your work?
Adaptable/ flexible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like change. I always put my hand up to change or swap tasks as different priorities arise. • I like to be challenged with new tasks that extend my knowledge. I have told my manager he should speak to me if he wants something done. • I enjoy additional responsibilities and working in a variety of areas where I can interact with teams from different areas of the business. 	Impatient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I get frustrated with colleagues who perform too slowly. • I don't like mistakes and I often find myself wanting to correct people. This happens a lot with one of the colleagues in my team. • My team often tells me I am impatient, so it must be obvious in my body language.

Personal strengths	How is this evident in your work?	Personal weaknesses	How is this evident in your work?
Resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't get emotional when I'm given critical feedback, unlike others in my team. • I always look on the positive side. • I like getting feedback – whether it is positive or negative – because it helps me to improve my work. • I am often looking for ways to improve myself and don't get stressed when this happens. 	Unmotivated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I become unmotivated and lose interest in my work when I get bored. • When things are quiet, I find it hard to stay focused on tasks. • I like to work towards a specific goal such as a deadline where something has to be completed by a certain date. • When I'm unmotivated, I get lazy and all my productivity slows down.
Committed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love my job and look forward to coming to work to see my colleagues. • I like the feeling of finishing a task or project. I know at these times I am very productive and have a high work output. • My manager often compliments me on my ability to do my job, and this makes me want to work even harder. 	Domineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like asking questions. I have been told I have an enquiring mind. I believe it is one of my strengths, but some people don't like this trait in me. I have been told that I ask too many questions and people feel like I am interrogating or cross-examining them. My teammates don't like me asking too many questions during our meetings. Some even say I dominate meetings.

Generic work skills

During a performance review you can reflect on your generic skills and identify areas for improvement.

There are certain skills you rely on to do your job. In addition to these, there are other skills that you need in order to work effectively and efficiently. These include skills in communication, teamwork, planning, initiative, problem-solving and self-management.

Here is an example of how to evaluate your work performance for generic work skills.

Personal skills	Your comments and examples	Manager feedback/ comments and examples
<p>Communication</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I feel I can communicate clearly with my colleagues in meetings. I send professional emails and reports to customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains open, effective communication with all employees and customers. Written and verbal communication is clear, concise and easy to understand.
<p>Teamwork</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I work well with my colleagues and enjoy sharing ideas and getting feedback from others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingly cooperates, shares information, assists and is tolerant of colleagues, vendors and clients in daily transactions.
<p>Reliability</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have a strong work ethic and can be relied on to complete tasks by the deadline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be relied on to complete tasks and follow up as needed.
<p>Adaptability/ flexibility</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I like the variety of changing tasks and can adjust my priorities to suit current customer needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easily adjusts to changes in routine, assignments and company/client needs, and continues to be productive.

Personal skills	Your comments and examples	Manager feedback/ comments and examples
<p>Initiative</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I put forward ideas and suggestions in meetings, such as ways of improving a process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntarily recommends resourceful, alternative or original ideas and procedures for improving work or solving problems.
<p>Planning/scheduling</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I always meet deadlines by prioritising task requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritises tasks, anticipates needs and makes adjustments accordingly.
<p>Problem-solving</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have identified a number of issues, and have made suggestions about more efficient ways of carrying out tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies problems within own area, develops resourceful solutions and makes recommendations for corrective action.

Example

Apply self-awareness

Clarence and Thomas are both employed as marketing assistants at Brilliant Brothers, a medium-sized furniture retailer. Clarence has only been employed in this role for five months, while Thomas has been with the company for several years. One of their jobs is to manage and maintain the company's social media marketing campaigns. This requires putting up posts that engage and inform their customers, as well as screening and monitoring posts from the public. Thomas loves his job and enjoys the challenges he faces every day.



On Monday afternoon, Clarence and Thomas had a discussion about a social media campaign they were planning to launch on Wednesday. Thomas had been planning to check with his manager before he launched the campaign. On Tuesday he was absent from work, so Clarence decided to make a head start on the campaign, launching it a day early. He put up a post on Twitter and Facebook asking for the public to finish the following sentence for a chance to win a \$50 voucher: 'I prefer Brilliant Brothers furniture because...'

Clarence did not tell Thomas he had put up the post. When they both arrived at work on Wednesday morning, they had received an email from the marketing manager requesting they immediately remove the post because of the negative comments about the company that had been made on social media. A customer who had recently had a bad experience with the company (damaged furniture was delivered) had posted sarcastic comments and this had been picked up by several other followers.

Thomas was initially shocked when he read the email from his manager. He could feel himself getting angry with Clarence. This was a familiar feeling, and he had recently been thinking that he needed to be more professional at work by having better control of his emotions when he feels stressed. Thomas reflected on his relationship with Clarence and decided they needed to work together to resolve the issue.

Thomas took a deep breath and suggested to Clarence that they work together to remove the post. Clarence agreed that the best action was for them to speak with their manager to determine ways to counter the negative publicity that had been generated as a result of the posts.



Practice task 5

Question 1

Which of the following statements are correct in relation to applying self-awareness? Select all that apply.

- Wandering thoughts help you understand and observe yourself.
- If you question your patterns of thinking and behaving, you can work towards changing your thoughts and behaviours.
- Be conscious of your preconceptions, and question why you react the way you do.
- At times of stress, always pause before you tell the person what you honestly think.
- So people can be reassured about you, respond in the way you have always done in certain situations.

Question 2

Match each personal attribute with the correct definition.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| * Self-confidence | * Relying on your own efforts and abilities and having confidence in your ability to make a decision. |
| * Self-reliance | * Your belief in yourself. |
| * Self-esteem | * Your trust in your own skills, capacities and judgment. |

Question 3

For each of the following strengths and weaknesses, give an example of how these could be recognised in the behaviour of others.

- a. Adaptability

- b. Respectfulness

- c. Shyness

- d. Perfectionism

2C

Strategies for ongoing improvement

People respond to having objectives, making progress and achieving goals.

Your action plan may need to be altered if new issues arise or some of the objectives that were once important become unimportant or difficult to implement.

As the areas in need of improvement become clearer as a result of your self-awareness, you can decide on how to implement these improvements. Talking through your performance after having applied self-awareness practices in different situations at work will help you to continually reflect on and improve your performance. Your supervisor or manager will be best placed to suggest strategies and people that you can speak to, or make suggestions of other opportunities that will contribute to your ongoing personal development.



Evaluating your progress

Regularly review and improve your work performance by asking for advice, a mentor or additional training.

Self-reflection means that you are:

- taking responsibility for your self-improvement by acknowledging areas still in need of improvement
- identifying areas of your personal development that can be further developed and benefit you, your employer and others you work with.

You can use the lessons learned in your action plan to evaluate to what degree your work performance has improved and can continue to improve. You can reflect on your insights and experiences with self-awareness. For example, if you identified stress as a trigger for your emotional outbursts or poor communication with others, you may be able to identify strategies to reduce your stress. This will improve your relationships with others as you collaborate on tasks and make you more productive when deadlines have to be met.

You can debrief with your supervisor or another person on what you have identified about yourself and the impact of your action plan on your work performance. You can explore ideas for personal development activities or strategies that can help improve your capabilities and skills to do a good job. These discussions will help you to stay focused and motivated to improve.

Asking questions is an excellent way to highlight where your performance and skills can be addressed.

Self-reflective questions

- What have I achieved recently?
- What areas do I need to work on?
- What areas have I improved in?
- What benefits have any changes I've made brought to the organisation or to myself?
- What personal strengths can I develop further?
- Where are there gaps that have weakened my ability to achieve my personal goals?
- How did I handle unforeseen difficulties and challenges?
- What feedback have I received from others and has this been implemented, including negative feedback and a need to improve my skills?
- Are there any specifically targeted training activities I can undertake to help me develop my self-awareness?
- Is more training required to do my job effectively?
- Who can help me achieve my goals?

Personal development strategies

You may need to contribute to your own professional development.

Your supervisor may make suggestions about how you can continue to develop your personal skills. They may suggest further accredited training, professional development activities, or suggest that you be given a mentor who will guide and monitor your progress.

A mentor is usually a more experienced staff member or supervisor. Other ideas for professional development activities include:

- a session with an in-house specialist or expert, such as a HR professional trained in communication
- attending a conference
- attending a talk from a motivational speaker
- completing an online training module.

For any strategy to be successful it is important to have the support of your organisation.

There may be statements in position descriptions, policies and procedures that address professional development for staff. Your manager will need to consider your availability and the cost. You can always take on additional learning and development of your own initiative.

Some businesses require employees to complete a professional development plan. This requires you to outline the purpose of the activity and how the organisation will benefit from you taking part. For example, you may need to consider the following:

- How will you implement what you have learnt into your work tasks?
- How will this enhance the workings of the organisation?

It can also be a requirement that your experience is shared with others through a team meeting or report.

A personal development plan:

- clarifies what you are trying to accomplish
- sets outcomes and shows you why you're doing what you're doing
- gives you direction
- includes short- and long-term goals, letting you measure your progress
- allows you to share and celebrate your success.

Continuous review of your action plan

You owe it to yourself and to your organisation to ensure you work to your full capacity.

It will take some time to get to the point where you apply self-awareness without thinking about it, and it becomes part of who you are and what you do. Self-improvement is a commitment you are making to yourself because you understand the benefits it will bring. The benefits will positively affect your work performance, self-confidence and self-esteem. This change may become evident to your colleagues and supervisor. They may even comment on changes they see in your level of motivation and other improvements in your attitude towards work.

Here are some practical examples of things you can do to continuously improve your self-awareness skills.

Take initiative

Show initiative by finding out about training activities or undertaking professional development. Ask questions of others and try to remember what you have learnt.

Show enthusiasm

An enthusiastic approach to learning and skills development is a good indicator of someone who is committed to improving their skills and building their career.

Have a can-do attitude

Look for chances to say 'I can' or 'I will' rather than responding negatively to problems or issues at work. A positive attitude is a useful attribute.

Find positive influencers to associate with

Associate with others who have a positive attitude to learning and skills development. Look for people who you think are going places in your organisation and associate with them.

Look for and create opportunities

Find out what opportunities exist to build your skills and show you are a person who wants to achieve them and learn from them. Remember, opportunities don't just happen – sometimes you need to make them happen.

Example

Strategies for ongoing improvement

Max is looking forward to meeting with his manager to reflect on his first year of work. He has loved every minute of his work and is excited to share some of his successes and talk about what challenges may come up next. He has already completed a review document to give examples of how he believes he has performed against the performance indicators of his role and the values statement of the organisation.



When he and his manager meet he is pleased to discover that his manager has also given him a very similar evaluation for most areas of competency. Together they discuss what Max has achieved and talk about some professional development opportunities that may be useful. His manager suggests that he may like to consider doing some training in business writing to help him develop his report-writing ability. This is one area where they both agree that Max needs more skill development.

His manager compliments Max on his honest approach to his review and the development of his new goals for the next six months. He says that with Max's commitment to increasing his skills and knowledge, he is sure he has a long and positive career ahead of him.



Practice task 6

Question 1

Give **two** examples of professional development activities that could help with skills development.

Question 2

Which of the following are things you can do to continually improve your self-awareness? Select all that apply.

- Show initiative and ask to talk to people who know what they are doing.
- Be enthusiastic about opportunities to learn something new.
- Have a positive attitude to learning.
- Only associate with people who are positive.
- Ask to go to conferences and other activities to get out of work tasks.



Summary

- Applying self-awareness at work will give you insight into your behaviours, the reactions you get from people and why you react the way you do.
- Writing your ideas down in an action plan can help you process your thoughts, and define your goals and objectives.
- Feedback from others can provide insight into how you are seen through the eyes of others and can be used to shape and improve yourself.
- Identify your patterns of thinking and behaving, and the triggers that make you react, and question if these patterns should be changed.
- Personal skills such as self-esteem, self-confidence and self-reliance help you make decisions, lead or direct others, complete tasks or communicate with and ask questions of others.
- Your action plan may need to be altered if new issues arise or some of the objectives that were once important become unimportant or difficult to implement.
- Always be honest and open in your assessment of yourself.
- Self-improvement is a commitment you make to yourself because you understand the benefits that it will bring.
- Improvements in your work will become evident to those who you work with and your supervisor.



Learning checkpoint 2

Apply self-awareness at work

Part A

1. Part of applying your self-awareness skills is identifying and reviewing your personal strengths and weaknesses. Give **two** examples of how this can assist you to improve your work.

2. How can an action plan be used to help you improve your self-awareness skills?

3. Why is it a good idea to explain and revise your action plan under the guidance of your supervisor or manager?

4. Give **two** examples of activities you could do that would improve your ongoing personal development.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

A manager, Sally, meets with one of her team members, Leon. Here is the discussion that takes place.

Sally: 'Leon, it's been noticed that you're not getting along too well with Xiang. This is causing problems within the team.'

Leon: 'Why are you blaming me? What about Xiang?'

Sally: 'I have observed you both. Do you think that there is a cultural clash? I want to talk openly about this.'

Leon: 'I don't feel like the rest of the team trust me – particularly Xiang. I don't trust him either.'

Sally: 'The distrust needs to stop. There needs to be mutual respect between each other and the team.'

Leon: 'I want that too, but I don't know how to go about it.'

Sally: 'It's part of my role to help you. So let's meet tomorrow and get started.'

You can also watch the case study video here.



1. Identify **three** issues that are causing a problem in this situation.

2. What advice could Sally give Leon to improve the situation by using his self-awareness skills?

3. Why is it important that Sally is involved in this interaction? What can she hope to achieve?

4. Suggest **two** strategies Sally could offer Leon to help build his self-awareness skills.