

# BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY'S JOB COACHING PROGRAMME

## INTRODUCTION TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS



Essential skills are the skills we all need to succeed in life and work. They are transferable skills relevant to all roles and sectors, and therefore it is important for job seekers to develop essential skills to be able to thrive in the constantly changing world of work.

The [Skills Builder Universal Framework](#) has been designed to help build essential skills at all stages of life. It can be used by school children, job seekers and employers alike. The Skills Builder Universal Framework lists the eight essential skills:

The eight essential skills are defined in more detail in the appendix, as the framework breaks down each of the eight essential skills into sixteen tangible, teachable and measurable steps.

To help clients have greater confidence in recognising and using their essential skills, we will be using the Skills Builder Universal Framework throughout the Boost coaching sessions.

Skills Builder have created a useful short video which gives a concise introduction to the framework:

[Skills Builder Intro](#)

## DEVELOPING ESSENTIAL SKILLS THROUGH JOB COACHING

### Session one: Introducing essential skills

In session one, you will introduce the idea of essential skills, explaining the eight different essential skills. There are conversation prompts in the session plan to help with this. The Skills Questionnaire will give the client a chance to share how confident and experienced they feel in each of the skills, so it is important you have introduced the essential skills before completing the questionnaire.

## **Session two: Identifying skills to focus on**

In session two you will be setting goals with the client, which should include identifying which essential skills to focus on in sessions three, four and five. To help prepare for this, you should consider your client's responses to the Skills Questionnaire to identify the skills which they feel are less developed.

In conversation with your client, together you can agree which skills to focus on in the following weeks. This could be their two or three weakest skills, or it may be a skill they feel more confident in but is most relevant to the type of roles they are applying for. Likewise, if a client's responses to the questionnaire indicate that they have a similar level of confidence and experience across all skills areas, you can ask them which skills they think would be most helpful to develop.

Use the Skills Builder Universal Framework to talk through definitions of the skills and use your coaching techniques to explore what previous experience the client has of this particular skill to help establish the support they need. For example, if the client has chosen teamwork, this may be because they have not worked in a team before, e.g. they could have been a delivery driver and worked alone. However, they may have participated in a team sport or volunteered for an organisation where they had to work with other people.

Talk through examples of jobs where these skills are important so that the client understands the link between the skill and a real-life application.

## **Session three, four and five: developing essential skills**

As sessions three, four and five are designed to be flexible to meet the needs of the client you will need to decide how much time to spend on essential skills. To help the client develop their essential skills, we recommend the following approach:

### **Identify the skill level using the framework steps**

The Skills Builder Universal Framework is easy to navigate and lists the 16 steps within each skill. You can talk through this with the client over the phone, but if the client has access to a device it may also be helpful for them to [access the link](#) at the same time so you can work through the steps together.

Taking one skill at a time from the two or three you have chosen to focus on, read through each step, starting at zero. Ask the client whether they feel they are at that level. When you reach a step that the client does not feel confident in, click "build it":

## Example: Listening Skills

**Step 0** - 'I listen to others without interrupting'. If yes, move on to the next step and so on. If the client is unsure or answers no, pause at that step and click 'build it':



At that step, work through the definitions and discuss the hints and tips with the client, using your own examples where you can. Share the advice for individuals and have a look at the skills challenges to try on the Home Learning Hub under 'Build This Step'.

### Top Tips for coaches

- Get familiar with the framework before you begin coaching sessions. You won't be able to read through every step, however being familiar with the 'build it' part of the framework will help you feel more confident in guiding the client through the activities at this stage.
- Focus on the 'Advice to Individuals' for each step for context and practical guidance.

You can repeat this for any skills you choose to focus on, either in the same session or a subsequent session.

### Session six: Reflecting on progress

In session six, there will be the opportunity for the client to reflect on their essential skills with the closing questionnaire.

### Talking about skills when applying for a job

Now you have identified the skills the client has and those they are developing, highlight the importance of talking about these skills on a CV, job application and interviews. This is also a helpful activity to do before or alongside developing employability skills in areas such as CVs, cover letters and preparing for interviews.

You could ask the client to share a job advert or job description for a role they would like to apply for, or if they have expressed an interest in a particular sector or role you could find one online to look at together. Go through the job description and support the client to identify which of the eight essential skills they would be using in the job, and that they would need to include in their application.

### Identifying potential roles and careers based on skills

- The [National Careers Service](#) has a helpful 5-10 minute [skills assessment](#) with simple multiple choice questions which help to identify sectors or roles based on the answers given. The skills featured correspond with the eight essential skills.
- [Barclays LifeSkills Wheel of Strengths](#) is another helpful resource which can be used to identify potential roles based on a combination of essential skills, interests and personality.
- [Barclays LifeSkills Job Board](#) helps you think about what jobs you might be interested in.

### Other activities and resources to try between sessions



- [Skills Builder Benchmarking Tool](#) can be completed to benchmark the client against the Skills Builder Universal Framework to understand strengths and development areas in each of the eight essential skills. This is a more sophisticated (but time-consuming) way for the client to identify which step they are at in each skill. This can be used if a client would like to spend more time between sessions on their essential skills or to focus across all eight skills.
- [Skills Builder Home Learning Hub](#) features lots of resources and videos that can be used to develop essential skills in your own time.

### Noticing progress

Think about how you can incorporate skills development into your sessions, for example listening, speaking and problem solving as well as staying positive. You will likely be using these skills even when not focusing on specific activities to develop certain essential skills. Every session there will be a chance to reflect back to the client on any progress you have noticed as you complete your sessions together. You can use the session log to make note of any positive progress.

## APPENDIX:

### Essential Skills definitions

	<p><b>Listening</b></p> <p><i>The receiving, retaining and processing of information or ideas</i></p>	<p>This skill is all about being able to effectively receive information - whether it comes from customers, colleagues or stakeholders.</p>
	<p><b>Speaking</b></p> <p><i>The oral transmission of information or ideas</i></p>	<p>This skill is all about how to communicate effectively with others, being mindful of whether they are talking to customers, colleagues or other stakeholders and in different settings.</p>
	<p><b>Problem Solving</b></p> <p><i>The ability to find a solution to a situation or challenge</i></p>	<p>This skill focuses on how to solve problems, recognising that while part of Problem Solving is technical know-how and experience, there are also transferable tools that individuals can develop and use.</p>
	<p><b>Creativity</b></p> <p><i>The use of imagination and the generation of new ideas</i></p>	<p>Creativity is the complement to Problem Solving and is about generating innovations or ideas which can then be honed through the problem-solving process.</p>
	<p><b>Staying Positive</b></p> <p><i>The ability to use tactics and strategies to overcome setbacks and achieve goals</i></p>	<p>This skill is all about individuals being equipped to manage their emotions effectively and being able to remain motivated, and ultimately to motivate others, even when facing setbacks.</p>
	<p><b>Aiming High</b></p> <p><i>The ability to set clear, tangible goals and devise a robust route to achieving them</i></p>	<p>This skill is about being able to plan effectively - both to achieve organisational goals, and also to set their own personal development targets. Initially, this is about knowing when something is too difficult, and having a sense of what doing well looks like for an individual.</p>
	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p><i>Supporting, encouraging and developing others to achieve a shared goal</i></p>	<p>This skill is relevant not only for individuals in positions of management with formal power, but also for individuals working with peers in teams.</p>



## Teamwork

*Working cooperatively with others towards achieving a shared goal*

This skill applies to working within both formal and informal teams, and also with customers, clients or other stakeholders. Initially, this is about individuals fulfilling expectations around being positive, behaving appropriately, being timely and reliable and taking responsibility. This extends to understanding and respecting diversity of others' cultures, beliefs and backgrounds.