

Competencies for

Living, Learning and Working Well:

Toolkit for Workers and Work Seekers

2021

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Getting Started	1
Acknowledgements	2
Competency Profile at a Glance	3
Self-Assessment & Reflection	4
Thinking	14
Self-Awareness	15
Problem Solving	17
Creativity & Innovation	19
Entrepreneurial Mindset	21
Critical Thinking	23
Decision Making	25
Connecting	27
Social Awareness	28
Social Support	30
Communication	32
Collaboration	34
Global Citizenship	36
Managing	38
Self-Management	39
Wellness	41
Lifelong Learning	43
Career Transition	45
Work Ethic	47
Financial Literacy	49
Technological Fluency	51
Competency Snapshot	53
Action Plan	54
Enhancing Strengths	54
Focus Areas for Development	54

Introduction

Are you ready for what's next for you when it comes to school, work and life in general? What strengths do you already have? What knowledge, skills and attitudes are most important for you to develop in order to build the life you want to live?

The world is changing. So too are the competencies Atlantic Canadians need to successfully manage learning, work and transitions. This toolkit was developed to help you inventory your existing competencies and to identify areas that, with some development, could help you to thrive in the face of technological, global and regional changes.

This toolkit outlines 18 competencies that are foundational to successful living, learning and working. Developed to support lifelong career development, these competencies cluster into 3 general categories: **thinking**, **connecting** with others and **managing** yourself, learning, money and work.

This toolkit will help you to:

- understand the 18 competencies
- assess yourself on each of them
- read about Atlantic Canadians like you who are using these competencies to help them achieve their goals
- identify specific ways that you already can and do demonstrate each competency
- recognize competencies you want to further develop
- design a realistic plan to strengthen those competencies you've identified as priorities for development.

You have unique gifts – knowledge, skills and attitudes that make you uniquely who you are. As an Atlantic Canadian you have something important to offer your community and your world. We hope that this toolkit helps you to know your own leading edge, build key competencies and be ready to create your preferred future.

Getting Started

This toolkit is not designed to be worked through all at once. You'll get the most out of it by:

- Familiarizing yourself with the *Competency Profile at a Glance* (p. 3)
- Choosing **2-3** specific competencies (e.g., Global Citizenship and Work Ethic) to start with
- Using the *Self-Assessment & Reflection* (p. 4) to prioritize areas for development
- Reviewing the detailed descriptions of your priority competencies
- Reading stories of Atlantic Canadians that illustrate your priority competencies
- Reflecting on how well you've demonstrated specific competencies
- Identifying a plan for going forward
- Planning to revisit this toolkit regularly as your competencies and new priorities emerge

Acknowledgements

The Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) contracted with the Canadian Career Development Foundation to develop a framework containing competencies to help Atlantic Canadians to navigate and propel learning, work and transitions throughout their lives.

In creating this toolkit, we wanted to be sure that it reflects the rich diversity of people living in Atlantic Canada and the realities of our region. With this in mind, we met with and integrated the perspectives of many people across the Atlantic Provinces, including youth and young adults, employers, educators and counsellors in high school and post-secondary settings, youth service providers and provincial government representatives. We especially wanted to hear and include the perspectives of those from Indigenous communities, LGBTQ+, immigrants, newcomers and refugees, Black Nova Scotians, persons with a disability and those living in poverty. Throughout the toolkit, vignettes (testimonials) have been developed based on those consultations and incorporate the preferred pronouns he, she and they to reflect the diversity of Atlantic Canadians.

We want to thank all who so actively shaped and contributed significantly to this framework, toolkit and the accompanying guides for families, educators and employers.

Competency Profile at a Glance

The career development competencies introduced in this toolkit can and will be developed as you progress in work, life and learning.

This framework includes competencies (what you know, can do and show others) that help you to navigate and propel learning, work and transitions across the lifespan. Together, these competencies contribute to your lifelong career development – your capacity to know yourself, be aware of educational and labour market opportunities, make informed decisions, access and maintain work, balance life roles and, with resilience, manage transitions and unexpected events. Although these are all individual competencies, recognize that they are developed and nurtured in context, through partnerships with educators, employers, parents and community members.

The framework is clustered into three categories: **thinking**, **connecting** and **managing**.



Self-Assessment & Reflection

As you begin to consider your strengths and opportunities for development, you may find this assessment helpful. Review each statement and circle your current competency level on a scale of 1-4. If you're struggling to self-assess, you may want to check out a more detailed description of each competency area (starting on page 14 of this toolkit). You can also talk about your ratings with someone you trust as this can sometimes help to confirm your own self-assessment. Your ratings don't have to be perfect; the self-assessment is meant as a starting point for reflection and development.

For each competency area, record your total score and circle either **Area for Development** or **Area of Strength** based on your score. You can also revisit this assessment throughout your career journey to track your progress and development.

1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Usually	4 Always
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Thinking

Self-Awareness	I engage in realistic self-appraisal: I know what I'm good at, care about and like to do; I know my limitations	1	2	3	4
	I am confident and positive about my identity	1	2	3	4
	I identify skills, interests, talents and attitudes that I have developed through diverse life/work/learning experiences	1	2	3	4
	I envision myself in the future and I take responsibility for getting there	1	2	3	4
	I describe necessary education/training and/or other experiences to prepare for my preferred future	1	2	3	4
	I invite, evaluate, reflect upon, and, when appropriate, integrate feedback from multiple sources	1	2	3	4
	I initiate discussions with others to expand my thinking on my preferred future	1	2	3	4
	I recognize the interconnectedness of my personal identity, life roles and community	1	2	3	4
	I confront my personal biases, recognizing their impact on myself and others	1	2	3	4
	I recognize how my feelings, thoughts and actions influence each other	1	2	3	4
	I recognize when I am <i>not</i> ready for work, school or additional responsibilities	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 33 / Area of Strength = 33 and over

1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Usually	4 Always
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Problem Solving	I understand that problems may be simple or complex	1	2	3	4
	I determine the specific problem that I need to solve	1	2	3	4
	I explore and integrate various sources of information (e.g., people, online, my past experiences) to identify possible solutions, taking into consideration multiple perspectives	1	2	3	4
	I analyze information to assess its credibility and accuracy	1	2	3	4
	I examine the pros, cons, ethics and impact on others of potential solutions	1	2	3	4
	I try out solutions; reflect on how they work and how my approach might be improved next time	1	2	3	4
	I apply learning from one situation to other situations	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 21 / Area of Strength = 21 and over

Creativity and Innovation	I understand what it means to be creative and innovative	1	2	3	4
	I use my imagination and curiosity to look for new ways to think, do things and tackle problems	1	2	3	4
	I stretch beyond my comfort zone in imagining what's possible	1	2	3	4
	I persist through challenges and learn from mistakes	1	2	3	4
	I critically reflect on and refine creative and innovative works and processes	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 15 / Area of Strength = 15 and over

Entrepreneurial Mindset	I recognize that an entrepreneurial mindset involves embracing change, being resilient and demonstrating grit	1	2	3	4
	I find ways to incorporate an entrepreneurial mindset into my learning, work and life	1	2	3	4
	I take calculated risks, validating ideas and accepting constructive feedback	1	2	3	4
	I reflect on, and learn from, successes, mistakes and failures	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 12 / Area of Strength = 12 and over

1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Usually	4 Always
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Critical Thinking	I reflect on my beliefs and values, and how they shape how I think and reason	1	2	3	4
	I analyze information to assess its credibility and accuracy	1	2	3	4
	I understand logical connections between ideas, information and arguments	1	2	3	4
	I recognize that various points of view may or may not be valid	1	2	3	4
	I ask questions that clarify various points of view	1	2	3	4
	I detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning	1	2	3	4
	I evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs	1	2	3	4
	I draw conclusions based on thorough analysis	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 24 / Area of Strength = 24 and over

Decision Making	I examine how I make decisions	1	2	3	4
	I understand ethical considerations when making decisions	1	2	3	4
	I recognize the influence of personal qualities, culture and context in making informed career, life and educational decisions	1	2	3	4
	I make an informed decision by evaluating ideas, solutions and opportunities	1	2	3	4
	I take responsibility for my actions and decisions	1	2	3	4
	I reflect on and refine my own decision-making process	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 18 / Area of Strength = 18 and over

1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Usually	4 Always
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Connecting

Social Awareness	I demonstrate acceptance of and respect for diverse ways of thinking and being	1	2	3	4
	I show understanding of, and empathy, for others	1	2	3	4
	I understand and value Indigenous traditions and knowledge, including the belief in the interconnectedness of everything	1	2	3	4
	I understand, value and take pride in the contributions of diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups, including my own, to Canada	1	2	3	4
	I understand how culture, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, language, national origin, race, ethnicity and religion affect personal identity and influence lives and opportunities	1	2	3	4
	I recognize that privilege, prejudice and oppression are widespread and damaging	1	2	3	4
	I promote and demonstrate fairness, social justice, human rights, equity and respect for all	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 21 / Area of Strength = 21 and over

Social Support	I establish, maintain and nurture a supportive network of healthy relationships	1	2	3	4
	I seek support from others (e.g., friends, family, Elders, teachers, role models, mentors, coaches)	1	2	3	4
	I support others' learning by being a positive and encouraging role model, mentor, coach or tutor	1	2	3	4
	I identify and seek appropriate support to address harassment, bullying and mistreatment in all its forms	1	2	3	4
	I take appropriate steps to support others who are struggling with physical, emotional, mental, environmental, social and/or spiritual challenges	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 15 / Area of Strength = 15 and over

1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Usually	4 Always
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Communication	I recognize non-verbal communication cues in myself and others, including tone of voice, facial expressions, posture and use of hands	1	2	3	4
	I respectfully consider the ideas, thoughts and feelings of others through listening, reading, and viewing	1	2	3	4
	I know and ask for what I want in a reasonable and specific way	1	2	3	4
	I clearly express my ideas, thoughts and feelings through speaking, listening, writing, reading, viewing and other ways of representing	1	2	3	4
	I communicate clearly and confidently in public	1	2	3	4
	I recognize and respect that there are many languages used in Canada	1	2	3	4
	I continuously improve and refine my English and/or French language skills	1	2	3	4
	I communicate respectfully and effectively across linguistic and cultural differences	1	2	3	4
	I recognize the advantages of being multi-lingual, continuing to practice languages to stay fluent	1	2	3	4
	I communicate using different forms of media	1	2	3	4
	I tailor communication, considering my purpose and audience	1	2	3	4
	I recognize that accepted terminology shifts over time	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 36 / Area of Strength = 36 and over

Collaboration	I interact respectfully and purposefully with others, as part of a team/group in formal and informal environments	1	2	3	4
	I clearly share my own beliefs and values while respecting and appreciating those that differ	1	2	3	4
	I celebrate the benefits of working with others, recognizing the value of collaboration	1	2	3	4
	I understand and respect others' needs	1	2	3	4
	I recognize privilege and challenge discriminatory behaviour in myself and others	1	2	3	4
	I compromise in working towards common goals	1	2	3	4
	I constructively negotiate and resolve conflicts with others, acknowledging and addressing biases	1	2	3	4
	I am prepared to reassess my position based on new information and/or the input of others	1	2	3	4
	I engage in collaboration using a variety of media/tools	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 27 / Area of Strength = 27 and over

1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Usually	4 Always
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Global Citizenship	I volunteer, participate in and contribute to community-building activities and projects, locally, regionally, nationally and/or internationally	1	2	3	4
	I take environmental and social responsibility to make my learning or work environments, community and the world better	1	2	3	4
	I recognize the political, environmental, economic and social realities of living in a global world	1	2	3	4
	I engage with diverse cultures, places, experiences and people to learn about the world	1	2	3	4
	I use a global perspective to create opportunities and address challenges	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 15 / Area of Strength = 15 and over

1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Usually	4 Always
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Managing

Self-Management	I identify and manage my emotions and actions	1	2	3	4
	I am adaptable, open to and ready for change	1	2	3	4
	I develop strategies to effectively manage transitions within learning, home, support communities, work and life	1	2	3	4
	I engage in self-advocacy by understanding my own needs for accommodations and requesting them as necessary	1	2	3	4
	I anticipate and prepare for challenges and potential barriers (e.g., transportation, finances, personal or family responsibilities, health, criminal record checks)	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 15 / Area of Strength = 15 and over

Wellness	I recognize that <i>everyone</i> faces challenges	1	2	3	4
	I care for my physical, emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual wellbeing, seeking help when needed	1	2	3	4
	I am resilient and persistent when faced with biases, disappointments, setbacks and pressure from others, understanding that they are a normal part of life	1	2	3	4
	I recognize that managing life transitions includes challenges, new learning, and sometimes, culture shock	1	2	3	4
	I follow appropriate health and safety policies and procedures	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 15 / Area of Strength = 15 and over

Lifelong Learning	I approach every experience as a learning opportunity	1	2	3	4
	I continue to learn throughout my life	1	2	3	4
	I learn from diverse people and develop cross-cultural and cross-generational understanding	1	2	3	4
	I am open to feedback and see mistakes as opportunities for learning	1	2	3	4
	I use effective strategies to support lifelong learning	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 15 / Area of Strength = 15 and over

1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Usually	4 Always
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Career Transition	I understand and leverage the influence of family, friends, culture, government policies and regional economic development on my career exploration and choices	1	2	3	4
	I use a variety of strategies and sources of information to explore options for learning and work	1	2	3	4
	I identify possible career paths through research (e.g., print, participation, online)	1	2	3	4
	I actively pursue and engage in work experience (e.g., job shadowing, co-ops, internships, youth apprenticeship, volunteering)	1	2	3	4
	I embrace opportunities to get, combine or create work (e.g., apprenticeship, part-time, full-time, self-employment, “gigs” and contracts)	1	2	3	4
	I recognize what impacts, and is impacted by, seasonal work	1	2	3	4
	I examine how rural and regional economies can impact career opportunities and decisions	1	2	3	4
	I create my own personal marketing strategy (e.g., write targeted resumés and cover letters, interview with confidence)	1	2	3	4
	I gather and evaluate detailed information resulting from my career exploration process	1	2	3	4
	I discuss, share and evaluate my career options with others	1	2	3	4
	I explain my reasons for choosing a career pathway based on who I am, the opportunities I have explored, and labour market information	1	2	3	4
	I am resilient and able to maneuver through transitions, always having a Plan B (and C and D...)	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 36 / Area of Strength = 36 and over

1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Usually	4 Always
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Work Ethic	I understand what is meant by, and demonstrate, integrity	1	2	3	4
	I am loyal, dependable and accountable so that others can count on me	1	2	3	4
	I prioritize commitments	1	2	3	4
	I observe, support and model expected attitudes and behaviours	1	2	3	4
	I meet or exceed reasonable expectations by doing the best I can in school, extracurricular activities, volunteering and work	1	2	3	4
	I show and take initiative when appropriate	1	2	3	4
	I respect those with whom I live, learn and/or work	1	2	3	4
	I demonstrate leadership skills	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 24 / Area of Strength = 24 and over

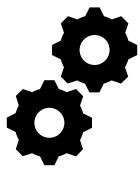
Financial Literacy	I understand what is meant by financial literacy and its importance	1	2	3	4
	I recognize that financial literacy is a lifelong endeavor	1	2	3	4
	I identify the costs and funding sources associated with various education and career pathways	1	2	3	4
	I develop a personal financial plan to support the achievement of education, life and career goals and set short- and long-term financial goals to support making healthy financial decisions that lead to financial security (e.g., saving and investing money, debt financing and sources, contractual obligations)	1	2	3	4
	I know how to develop and manage a budget	1	2	3	4
	I know how to keep personal information safe and secure, to prevent and protect against fraud and financial abuse	1	2	3	4
	I maintain financial records, as required, to assist with calculating, submitting and supporting reports (e.g., income tax, loan applications, requests for financial assistance)	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 21 / Area of Strength = 21 and over

1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Usually	4 Always
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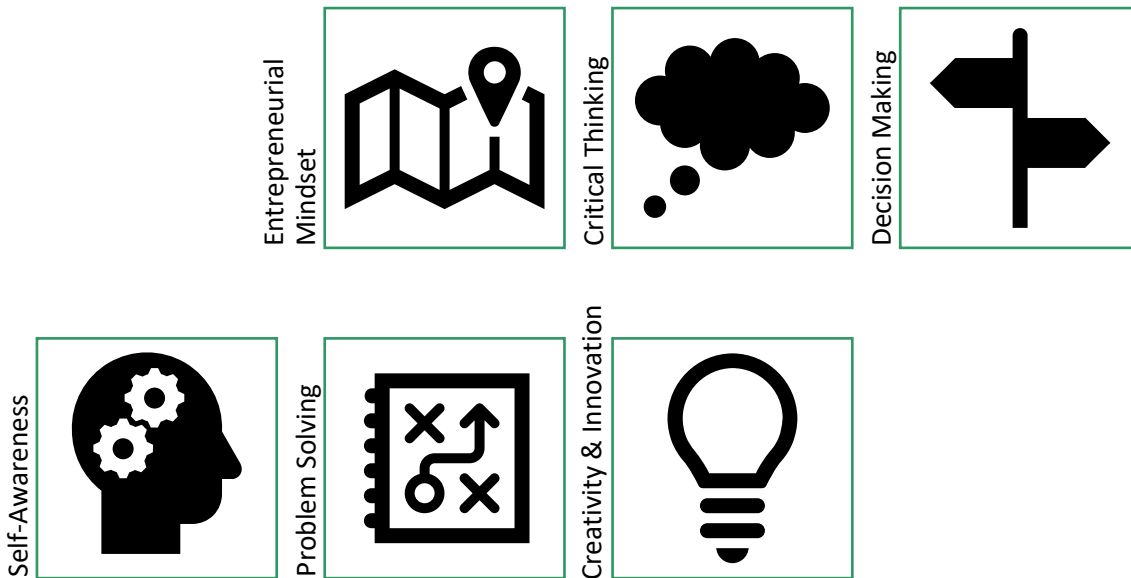
Technological Fluency	I use technology in a respectful, legal, safe and ethical way	1	2	3	4
	I access and critically evaluate online information and resources	1	2	3	4
	I manage social media presence responsibly and safely	1	2	3	4
	I create a positive digital footprint, recognizing the permanence of online data	1	2	3	4
	I recognize the benefits, limitations and challenges of using technologies	1	2	3	4
	TOTAL				

Area for Development = Less than 15 / Area of Strength = 15 and over



Thinking

This cluster of competencies relates to how you engage in self-reflection, think, make decisions and develop creative approaches to solving problems. It includes:



In the following pages, you will see how each of these competencies are used at school, at work and in other life roles. For each competency, you will have a chance to reflect on how you have already used it effectively and how you might like to strengthen it in the future.



Self-Awareness

Recognize and articulate personal strengths, limitations, goals, biases and emotions and assess personal readiness for responsibilities and challenges in diverse life roles.

You can demonstrate your **self-awareness** through:

- Engaging in realistic self-appraisal (i.e., knowing what you're good at, care about and like to do; and knowing your limitations)
- Being confident and positive about your identity
- Identifying the skills, interests, talents and attitudes that you develop through diverse life/work/learning experiences
- Envisioning yourself in the future and taking responsibility for getting there
- Describing necessary education/training and/or other experiences to prepare for your preferred future
- Inviting, evaluating, reflecting upon, and, when appropriate, integrating feedback from multiple sources
- Initiating discussions with others to expand your thinking on your preferred future
- Recognizing the interconnectedness of your personal identity, life roles and community
- Confronting your personal biases, recognizing their impact on self and others
- Recognizing how your feelings, thoughts and actions influence each other
- Recognizing when you are not ready for work, school or additional responsibilities

Jas has been working as an engineer for the past 10 years and enjoys almost all aspects of the work. However, recently, Jas has been craving a bit more of a challenge. As a technical specialist, they have reached the top level in the organization. Despite feeling a bit bored, Jas feels a great deal of loyalty to their manager and the company overall. Jas has been grappling with how to grow “in place” rather than leave. Discussions with colleagues, managers and the HR team have surfaced several projects that Jas could take on.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you were self-aware. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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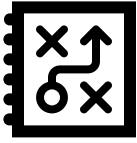
Reflect on a time that you wished you had been more self-aware. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **self-awareness** is:

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Problem Solving

Use a range of sources to gather, evaluate, organize and effectively use information to solve problems.

You can demonstrate your **problem solving** through:

- Understanding that problems may be simple or complex
- Determining the specific problem that you need to solve
- Exploring and integrating various sources of information (e.g., people, online, your past experience) to identify possible solutions, taking into consideration multiple perspectives
- Analyzing information to assess its credibility and accuracy
- Examining the pros, cons, ethics and impact on others of potential solutions
- Trying out solutions; reflecting on how they work and how your approach might be improved next time
- Applying learning from one situation to other situations

As a social worker in a community struggling with homelessness, addictions and unemployment, **Selena** spends most of her days helping other people solve problems. However, this time the problem is personal and she's feeling stuck. Selena's dad is no longer able to live on his own. He has moved in with Selena and her partner as a short-term solution, but six months later, his presence in their home is causing daily tension and arguments.

Selena doesn't want to damage the relationships with her partner or her dad. Recalling a time when she was a teenager and her mom's sister lived with them for a while, Selena decides to ask her dad what that was like for him. He remembers that it had been very challenging – partly because of the extra expenses but also, to be honest, partly because he found it hard having her there even though he loved her. In telling the story, he recognizes the same pattern in their current situation and asks Selena to help him explore short-term housing options that would work for him until a room in one of his preferred residences becomes available.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you were an effective problem solver. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

Reflect on a time that you wished you had been a more effective problem solver. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

Going forward, my plan to enhance my **problem solving** is:



Creativity and Innovation

Actively engage in, and demonstrate openness to and respect for imaginative, creative and innovative approaches.

You can demonstrate your **creativity and innovation** through:

- Understanding what it means to be creative and innovative
- Using your imagination and curiosity to look for new ways to think, do things and tackle problems
- Stretching beyond your comfort zone in imagining what's possible
- Persisting through challenges and learning from mistakes
- Critically reflecting on and refining creative and innovative works and processes

As a Red Seal carpenter, **Ivana** can work right across Canada. Although she loves coming home to the Atlantic Provinces, her expertise in restoring heritage buildings has resulted in interesting projects from coast to coast. Ivana started her own business 5 years after she completed her apprenticeship. She has built an amazing team of creative people, including an architect, a designer and several carpenters. Ivana has found innovative solutions for building her business, including accessing funding for heritage projects, hiring apprentices and, on occasion, purchasing and renovating neglected heritage homes.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you were creative or innovative. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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Reflect on a time that you wished you had been more creative or innovative. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **creativity and innovation** is:

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Entrepreneurial Mindset

Embrace the qualities of an entrepreneurial mindset in learning, work and life.

You can demonstrate your **entrepreneurial mindset** through:

- Recognizing that an entrepreneurial mindset involves embracing change, being resilient and demonstrating grit
- Finding ways to incorporate an entrepreneurial mindset into your learning, work and life
- Taking calculated risks, validating ideas and accepting constructive feedback
- Reflecting on, and learning from, successes, mistakes and failures

Khalid was self-employed and ran small businesses for 15 years, starting as a teenager. As his family grows, however, Khalid wants more time at home. He sells one of his businesses, a profitable catering company, and mentors a talented employee in his social media company to take on a more active leadership role. Khalid is offered an enticing position in a start-up company, where his entrepreneurial mindset and expertise will be highly valued. Although he enjoyed juggling multiple gigs over the years, he's keen to focus on this one position at this stage of his career. Khalid begins referring consulting offers to other colleagues, keeping doors open in case he decides to return to that work in the future.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you were entrepreneurial. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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Reflect on a time that you wished you had been more entrepreneurial. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

--	--

Going forward, my plan to enhance my **entrepreneurial mindset** is:

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Critical Thinking

Think clearly and rationally about what to do and what to believe.

You can demonstrate your **critical thinking** through:

- Reflecting on your beliefs and values, and how they shape how you think and reason
- Analyzing information to assess its credibility and accuracy
- Understanding logical connections between ideas, information and arguments
- Recognizing that various points of view may or may not be valid
- Asking questions that clarify various points of view
- Detecting inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning
- Evaluating evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs
- Drawing conclusions based on thorough analysis

Jonah has enjoyed working for the past 5 years with an organization that fits with his personal values and welcomes his ideas for innovation and improvement. A couple of months ago, he was assigned to a complex project that involved making sense of rules and regulations across several communications platforms, supervising the work of a new team and managing several clients with different perspectives and priorities. He quickly had to organize and make sense of a lot of technical information, assess the capacity of his team members and consider the conflicting views of clients. He realized that one team member who could not be counted on, and was jeopardizing the whole project, had to be let go. By creating some new protocols, he was able to build consensus among his clients and get his team on track to successfully completing the project.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you were a critical thinker. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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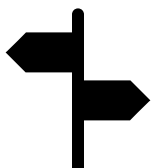
Reflect on a time that you wished you had been a better critical thinker. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **critical thinking** is:

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Decision Making

Make decisions, evaluate outcomes, be accountable for choices and reflect on how personal priorities, beliefs and culture influence decisions.

You can demonstrate your **decision making** through:

- Examining how you make decisions
- Understanding ethical considerations when making decisions
- Recognizing the influence of personal qualities, culture and context in making informed career, life and educational decisions
- Making an informed decision by evaluating ideas, solutions and opportunities
- Taking responsibility for your actions and decisions
- Reflecting on and refining your own decision-making process

Maddy knows from past experience that, when it is time to make a big decision, she prefers to gather lots of information and talk through her options with close friends and family members. After working for 10 years with her employer, Maddy is offered the chance to start up a branch location in a city that is 3 hours away. She feels honoured – but scared. A move right now would disrupt the life she has carefully constructed as a single mother. She has solid relationships in her co-op and her son is thriving at school. On the other hand, the promotion offers a significant salary increase and the new location has much more affordable housing.

Maddy discusses her concerns with her family, friends and employer. Her parents offer to help Maddy and her son during the transition, even renting a place near her in the new city for a couple of months if needed. Her employer offers to pay for a 2-day visit for Maddy to explore the new city, meet with a realtor and visit potential schools for her son. Her employer also assures Maddy that, after the first year of getting the new branch established, there would be a position available in her current location if she wanted to return.

After her visit to the city, Maddy carefully weighs her options and decides that they are ready for the new challenge and that the risks are reasonable. She agrees to accept the new role.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you were an effective decision maker. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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Reflect on a time that you wished you had been a more effective decision maker. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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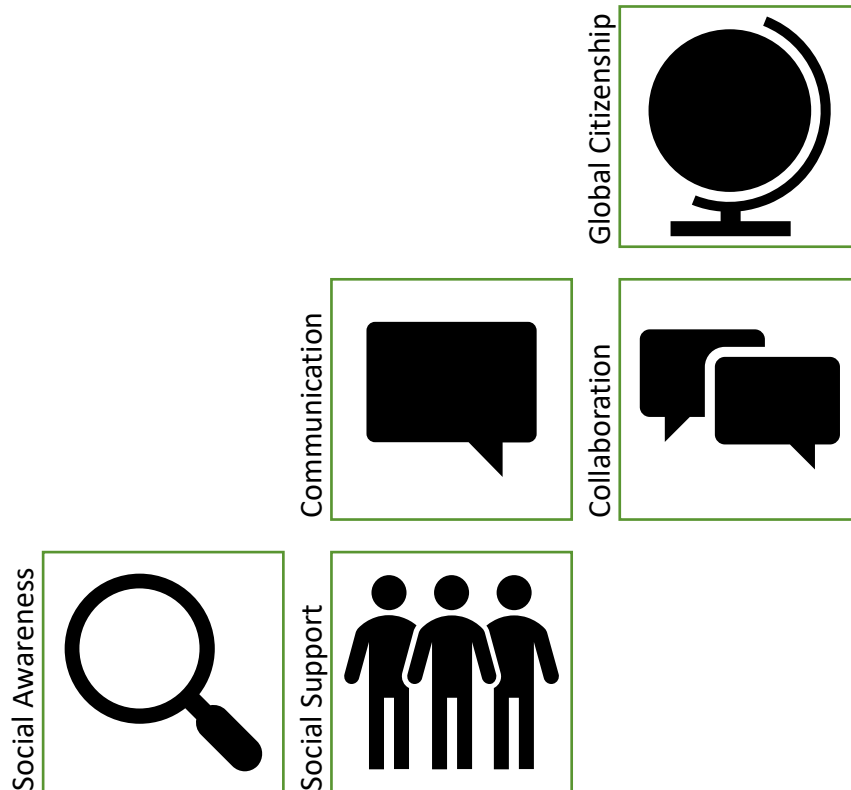
Going forward, my plan to enhance my **decision making** is:

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CONNECTING

This cluster of competencies supports relationships with others. It includes:



In the following pages, you will see how each of these competencies are used at school, at work and in other life roles. For each competency, you will have a chance to reflect on how you have already used it effectively and how you might like to strengthen it in the future.



Social Awareness

Demonstrate interactions with others that show respect for, openness to and appreciation of diversity.

You can demonstrate your **social awareness** through:

- Demonstrating acceptance of and respect for diverse ways of thinking and being
- Showing understanding of, and empathy for, others
- Understanding and valuing Indigenous traditions and knowledge, including the belief in the interconnectedness of everything
- Understanding, valuing and taking pride in the contributions of diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups, including your own, to Canada
- Understanding how culture, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, language, national origin, race, ethnicity and religion affect personal identity and influence lives and opportunities
- Recognizing that privilege, prejudice and oppression are widespread and damaging
- Promoting and demonstrating fairness, social justice, human rights, equity and respect for all

Samantha has been working for 20 years in a community services agency and is now the Executive Director. She has earned the respect of clients, staff, funders and other social service providers in town. A recent change in government, however, has caused her significant concern. She understands that funding is limited. However, the current funding priorities seem to privilege a few high-profile groups, leaving almost nothing for many other people who also really need supports.

Sam hasn't been sleeping well and is anxious about writing her agency's upcoming funding proposal. She believes in the work that her agency does and is proud of her team. They are all counting on her to write a winning proposal. On the other hand, a winning proposal, in this case, may have to go against her deeply held values; it would need to focus on providing targeted services that would leave many people in her community even more disadvantaged than they are currently. Sam has called a special meeting of her Board of Directors to express her concerns and to discuss the risks of actively advocating for changes to the terms of the call for proposals.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you were socially aware. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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Reflect on a time that you wished you had been more socially aware. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **social awareness** is:

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Social Support

Establish, maintain and call upon healthy supportive relationships as needed.

You can demonstrate your **social support** through:

- Establishing, maintaining and nurturing a supportive network of healthy relationships
- Seeking support from others (e.g., friends, family, Elders, teachers, role models, mentors, coaches)
- Supporting others' learning by being a positive and encouraging role model, mentor, coach or tutor
- Identifying and seeking appropriate support to address harassment, bullying and mistreatment in all its forms
- Taking appropriate steps to support others who are struggling with physical, emotional, mental, environmental, social and/or spiritual challenges

Dylan, a certified Automotive Service Technician, likes to give back to his community. He has coached youth soccer for the past 15 years, always has an apprentice working with him and participates in fundraising events with his recreational hockey team.

Five years ago, his youngest child was diagnosed with a developmental disability. Through parent support groups, Dylan has learned about the challenges that many young people face as they enter the workforce, as well as the benefits of a diverse workforce. He has become a vocal advocate for hiring individuals who have disabilities and, recently, his auto repair shop was recognized as “Employer of the Year” for their advocacy work and inclusive work experience opportunities.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you had supportive relationships. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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Reflect on a time that you wished you had better social support. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **social support** is:

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Communication

Demonstrate effective and positive communication and social skills.

You can demonstrate your **communication** through:

- Recognizing non-verbal communication cues in yourself and others, including tone of voice, facial expressions, posture and use of hands
- Respectfully considering the ideas, thoughts and feelings of others through listening, reading, and viewing
- Knowing and asking for what you want in a reasonable and specific way
- Clearly expressing your ideas, thoughts and feelings through speaking, listening, writing, reading, viewing and other ways of representing
- Communicating clearly and confidently in public
- Recognizing and respecting that there are many languages used in Canada
- Continuously improving and refining English and/or French language skills
- Communicating respectfully and effectively across linguistic and cultural differences
- Recognizing the advantages of being multi-lingual, continuing to practice languages to stay fluent
- Communicating using different forms of media
- Tailoring communication, considering your purpose and audience
- Recognizing that accepted terminology shifts over time

Yara was shocked to be laid off from her community newspaper job after 11 great years. Although she knows there have been huge changes in print publishing, she also knows she was doing amazing work; just last year, she'd won the Atlantic Journalism Award for Best Community News Story. She is good at reading body language and can tell her manager was devastated to deliver the layoff news. Although the manager wasn't able to say anything directly, Yara is convinced that she too disagreed with the decision.

After her layoff, Yara signs up for a career exploration workshop. Through a process of self-reflection and talking with others, she recognizes that several of her best skills have been underutilized recently. She recalls how much she enjoyed public speaking when she was younger; lately she's been reporting on public speakers but never taking the stage herself. Last fall, Yara had been a guest speaker for a class of journalism students and loved it. Although she had considered becoming a teacher before she pursued journalism as a career, nothing about being in a classroom with high school students appeals to her now. However, maybe teaching at a college would be interesting? Yara decides to check into that a bit more.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you communicated effectively. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

Reflect on a time that you wished you had communicated more effectively. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

Going forward, my plan to enhance my **communication** is:



Collaboration

Embrace the benefits of working together, resolve conflicts, accept personal responsibility for your own behaviour and, respecting diversity, negotiate acceptable compromises and solutions.

You can demonstrate your **collaboration** through:

- Interacting respectfully and purposefully with others, as part of a team/group in formal and informal environments
- Clearly sharing your own beliefs and values while respecting and appreciating those that differ
- Celebrating the benefits of working with others, recognizing the value of collaboration
- Understanding and respecting others' needs
- Recognizing privilege and challenging discriminatory behaviour in self and others
- Compromising in working towards common goals
- Constructively negotiating and resolving conflicts with others, acknowledging and addressing biases
- Being prepared to reassess your position based on new information and/or the input of others
- Engaging in collaboration using a variety of media/tools

As an RCMP officer, **Tyler** has moved around quite a bit. His twin girls are in their third small community and, at 12 years old, are generally quite resilient. However, the latest town doesn't offer much for teenagers and, as a result, there have been problems with youth crime, mental health issues and teen pregnancy. In his role as a police officer, but also as a father, Tyler wants to use his time at this posting to make it a better place for youth.

Socially, Tyler has connected with the high school principal, the youth pastor from their church, a couple of local business owners and the bank manager. All of them are community-minded and either work with, or are parents of, pre-teens or teens. Through informal conversations, they realize that they have a shared vision of creating positive opportunities for youth and they bring a variety of experiences from previous work and volunteer activities. Tyler and his friends recognize the importance of inviting youth, themselves, into the planning process. Together, they decide to host a town-hall meeting to begin an informal discussion about what youth would like to see in their community. Out of that discussion, they hope to generate some specific ideas to explore and to form a non-profit society to try to secure funding for one or more of those ideas.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you collaborated effectively. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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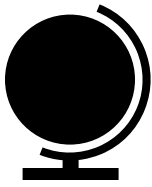
Reflect on a time that you wished you had collaborated more effectively. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **collaboration** is:

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Global Citizenship

Actively participate in and contribute to local, regional, national and/or international initiatives.

You can demonstrate your **global citizenship** through:

- Volunteering, participating in and contributing to community-building activities and projects, locally, regionally, nationally and/or internationally
- Taking environmental and social responsibility to make your learning or work environments, community and the world better
- Recognizing the political, environmental, economic and social realities of living in a global world
- Engaging with diverse cultures, places, experiences and people to learn about the world
- Using a global perspective to create opportunities and address challenges

Alex has had a fascinating career, working for the past 15 years on not-for-profit community development projects throughout the Atlantic region and also internationally. Recently, Alex was approached by one of the big multinational oil companies to lead a new team focused on social responsibility and environmental impact. This was especially surprising, as Alex has been very vocal about the potential for environmental disasters as a result of off-shore drilling. Two exciting things about the project would be the global reach and leading an international team. However, Alex wonders whether there is enough fit with the organization's values. Is this role a logical next career move, an opportunity to have a positive influence in a new way – or a distraction from the work that Alex is really meant to do?



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you were an effective global citizen. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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Reflect on a time that you wished you had been a more effective global citizen. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

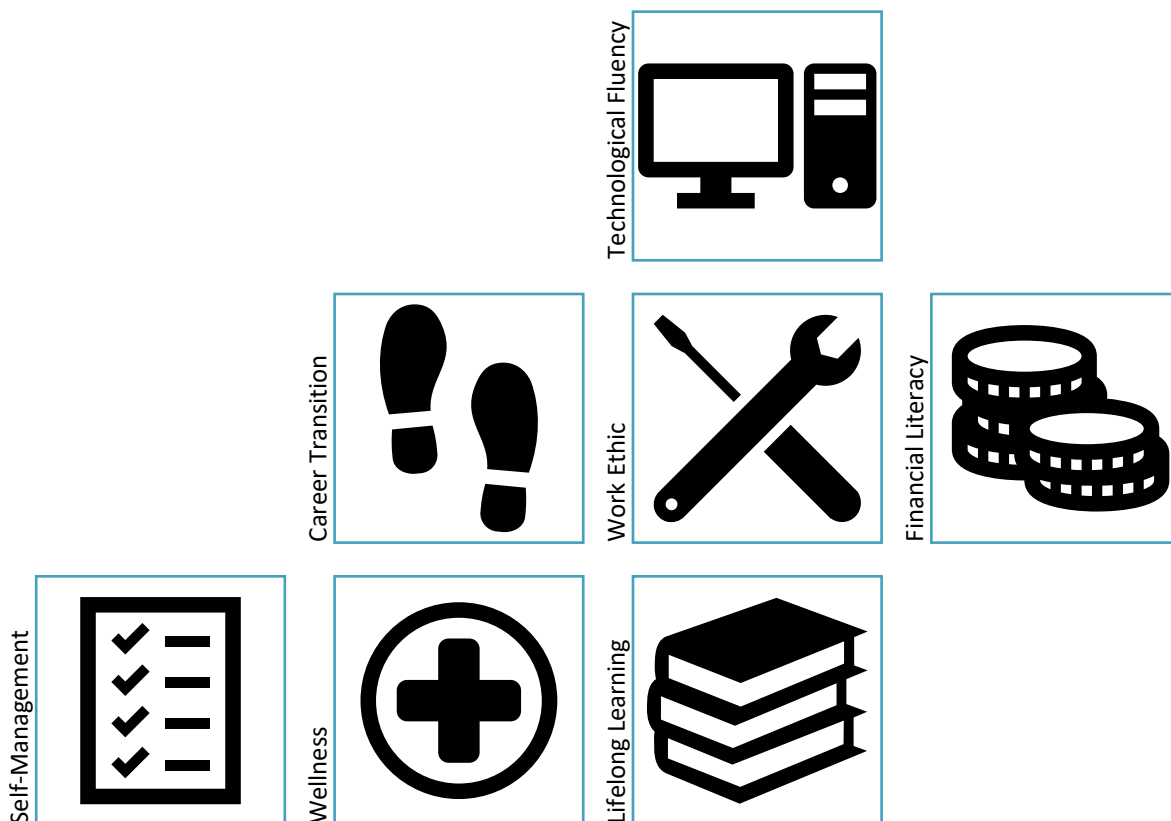
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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **global citizenship** is:

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MANAGING

This cluster of competencies relates to how you take responsibility for your thoughts, feelings and behaviours to maintain health and wellbeing and how you navigate school, work and other life responsibilities. It includes:



In the following pages, you will see how each of these competencies are used at school, at work and in other life roles. For each competency, you will have a chance to reflect on how you have already used it effectively and how you might like to strengthen it in the future.



Self-Management

Manage thoughts, emotions and behaviours in a variety of circumstances and, when appropriate, advocate effectively for self.

You can demonstrate your **self-management** through:

- Identifying and managing your emotions and actions
- Being adaptable, open to and ready for change
- Developing strategies to effectively manage transitions within learning, home, support communities, work and life
- Engaging in self-advocacy by understanding your own needs for accommodations and requesting them as necessary
- Anticipating and preparing for challenges and potential barriers (e.g., transportation, finances, personal or family responsibilities, health, criminal record checks)

Hai had heard the term “sandwich generation” and now he really understands what it means. With teenagers at home, his evenings and weekends are spent driving them to practices, games and music lessons. Hai had come to Canada as an international student and about 5 years ago he sponsored his parents to move here as well. A couple of months ago, Hai’s mom broke her hip in a fall. His dad is too frail to care for her on his own, so Hai stops by daily to help out and runs errands for them. He also needs to take them to appointments as he is their only translator.

There had been a time at university when Hai was overwhelmed and had seen a counsellor. Back then he had learned about self-advocacy, the importance of creating a manageable schedule and how to delegate what he didn’t absolutely have to do himself. Hai recognizes some early indicators that he is getting overwhelmed again, so he begins by taking stock of his responsibilities. The list, when he’s finished writing it, is three pages long. No wonder he feels overwhelmed! Hai identifies things on his list that only he can do; he then crosses out a few things that don’t really need to be done right now.

He has a family meeting to discuss how to divide up the rest of the responsibilities a bit more reasonably and to explore what other supports they could put into place until his mom recovers.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you effectively managed yourself. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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Reflect on a time that you wished you had managed yourself more effectively. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **self-management** is:

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Wellness

Demonstrate personal resilience and the use of effective and safe self-care strategies in managing all dimensions of wellness throughout life transitions, including following health and safety policies.

You can demonstrate your **wellness** through:

- Recognizing that everyone faces challenges
- Caring for your physical, emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual wellbeing, seeking help when needed
- Being resilient and persistent when faced with biases, disappointments, setbacks and pressure from others, understanding that they are a normal part of life
- Recognizing that managing life transitions includes challenges, new learning, and sometimes, culture shock
- Following appropriate health and safety policies and procedures

Taylor is exhausted. She thought life would get easier once the last of her three daughters was in school but that didn't seem to be happening. Between working full-time, trying to keep up with cooking and laundry and getting her girls to 4H activities and playdates with friends, her days are more than full. Their dad has the girls every second weekend, but Taylor spends most of that time running errands, shopping and cleaning the house. She read a blog that said moms, on average, sleep one hour less per night according to the number of children they have. In Taylor's experience, that sounds about right!

At work one day, Taylor just burst into tears when asked if she could stay late to work on a big proposal. Not only does working late feel impossible, but she can't even imagine the added workload if the proposal was to be accepted. She is embarrassed about not being able to hold herself together at work but just has nothing left to give.

Taylor's boss had already been concerned about her as she seemed tense and tired so much of the time. He reminds Taylor of the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) benefits and, when she agrees that she needs help, provides her with a number to call for counselling.

Taylor finds her sessions with the counsellor really helpful. Together, they talk about the current pressures in her life and her tendency to put the needs of others before her own. They make a plan to support better self-care. She finally understands that taking care of herself isn't selfish; in fact, it is essential if she is going to have what it takes to take care of her children, her home and her clients at work.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you effectively managed your wellness. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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Reflect on a time that you wished you had more effectively managed your wellness. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **wellness** is:

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Lifelong Learning

Demonstrate the ability to be an independent learner, engaging in formal and informal learning to effectively navigate changes and transitions.

You can demonstrate your **lifelong learning** through:

- Approaching every experience as a learning opportunity
- Continuing to learn throughout your life
- Learning from diverse people and developing cross-cultural and cross-generational understanding
- Being open to feedback and seeing mistakes as opportunities for learning
- Using effective strategies to support lifelong learning

Brandon, an environmental studies professor, is excited to share his love of learning with his students. He has three of them presenting posters at this year's Science Atlantic Environment conference. He is particularly pleased that one of those posters is focused on "two-eyed seeing" – a term introduced by a Mi'kmaq Elder to describe how to integrate Indigenous and Western world views and ways of knowing. Brandon has integrated this approach into all of his courses but this was the first time that one of his students from the Mi'kmaq community has used the model in her research. Even more exciting, this student was inspired to join his program through the Thinking Green online tool, a review of environmental programs and professions that Brandon had profiled at her school's career fair.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you were an effective learner. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

Reflect on a time that you wished you had been a more effective learner. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

Going forward, my plan to enhance my **lifelong learning** is:



Career Transition

Combine self-knowledge and educational/labour market information to make informed career decisions and to navigate career transitions in today's ever-changing labour market.

You can demonstrate your ability to navigate **career transitions** through:

- Understanding and leveraging the influence of family, friends, culture, government policies and regional economic development on your career exploration and choices
- Using a variety of strategies and sources of information to explore options for learning and work
- Identifying possible career paths through research (e.g., print, participation, online)
- Actively pursuing and engaging in work experience (e.g., job shadowing, co-ops, internships, youth apprenticeship, volunteering)
- Embracing opportunities to get, combine or create work (e.g., apprenticeship, part-time, full-time, self-employment, “gigs” and contracts)
- Recognizing what impacts, and is impacted by, seasonal work
- Examining how rural and regional economies can impact career opportunities and decisions
- Creating your own personal marketing strategy (e.g., write targeted resumés and cover letters, interview with confidence)
- Gathering and evaluating detailed information resulting from your career exploration process
- Discussing, sharing and evaluating your career options with others
- Explaining your reasons for choosing a career pathway based on who you are, the opportunities you have explored, and labour market information
- Being resilient and able to maneuver through transitions, always having a Plan B (and C and D...)

Natalie is trying to rebuild her life. About to be released from prison after serving 3.5 years for theft from her employer, Natalie's employment counsellor is helping her to identify her skills and interests, recognize changes in local work opportunities and find employers who would give her a chance to start over. She had landed a good job through a college internship experience, but Natalie began socializing with a group of co-workers who had found creative ways to order products on the company account and sell them on kijiji. Not long after she joined their team, an internal investigation identified the ongoing thefts – and the rest is history! All of them, including Natalie, were charged and convicted.

Although Natalie was devastated to be in prison, she chose to use that time to maximize her chances for a fresh start once she got out. There weren't many relevant programs for her but she read as much as she could and managed to complete a couple of distance learning certificates. As soon as she was allowed out on day passes, Natalie volunteered in the community to get positive work references. Her social worker and employment counsellor used their networks to open doors for her. She worked hard and 5 years after her sentence, Natalie applied for, and was granted, a pardon/record suspension. Finally, she feels the weight she has been carrying for so many years is lifting.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you had an effective career transition. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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Reflect on a time that you wished you had a more effective career transition. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance future **career transitions** is:

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Work Ethic

Understand, explain and demonstrate ethics and follow the expectations, rules and policies where you live, learn and/or work.

You can demonstrate your **work ethic** through:

- Understanding what is meant by, and demonstrating, integrity
- Being loyal, dependable and accountable so that others can count on you
- Prioritizing commitments
- Observing, supporting and modelling expected attitudes and behaviours
- Meeting or exceeding reasonable expectations by doing the best you can in school, extracurricular activities, volunteering and work
- Showing and taking initiative when appropriate
- Respecting those with whom you live, learn and/or work
- Demonstrating leadership skills

As a mid-level manager, **Kyle** finds himself increasingly frustrated with employees and, in some cases, managers who don't seem to share his work ethic. Ever since he was a teenager, Kyle has gone above and beyond at work. He was promoted often and enjoyed most of his roles.

However, recently the organization he has worked for since high school has been acquired by a larger company with very different values. In the past few months, there has been a focus at work on productivity at all costs. Kyle fears that those trying to meet these unreasonable targets may be unable to maintain safety standards, yet he also is discouraged by those on his team who seem to have just given up trying. In his management role, he knows that a leader should model expected attitudes and behaviours. However, in this case, he is struggling to know how to balance his commitment to always striving to meet employer expectations and workplace safety. He realizes that his safety concerns must first be addressed and then, with reasonable targets in place, he can address any outstanding performance issues on the team.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you demonstrated a good work ethic. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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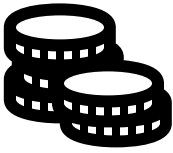
Reflect on a time that you wished you had demonstrated a better work ethic. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **work ethic** is:

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Financial Literacy

Demonstrate financial management knowledge, skills and awareness necessary to navigate school, work, transitions and other life responsibilities.

You can demonstrate your **financial literacy** through:

- Understanding what is meant by financial literacy and its importance
- Recognizing that financial literacy is a lifelong endeavour
- Identifying the costs and funding sources associated with various education and career pathways
- Developing a personal financial plan to support the achievement of education, life and career goals
- Evaluating and setting short- and long-term financial goals to support making healthy financial decisions that lead to financial security (e.g., saving and investing money, debt financing and sources, contractual obligations)
- Knowing how to develop and manage a budget
- Knowing how to keep personal information safe and secure, to prevent and protect against fraud and financial abuse
- Maintaining financial records, as required, to assist with calculating, submitting and supporting reports (e.g., income tax, loan applications, requests for financial assistance)

Ever since learning a tough lesson from running into financial problems as a teenager, **Alyssa** has always been careful with her money. She makes good financial decisions, has savings and has a home with a manageable mortgage. Married for 15 years, with two children in high school, Alyssa is finally at the point where she isn't worried about money.

Then her spouse is in a car accident and, although insurance will likely compensate them later, in the short term expenses are high and it is unclear when, if ever, her spouse will be able to work again. Alyssa watches their savings account melt away. She makes an appointment with her financial advisor to discuss options for reducing monthly payments and restructuring their finances during this unexpected crisis.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you handled your finances well. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

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Reflect on a time that you wished you had been more effective with your finances. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

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Going forward, my plan to enhance my **financial literacy** is:

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Technological Fluency

Integrate and apply technologies to work with others, communicate, learn and solve problems; manage social media presence responsibly and safely.

You can demonstrate your **technological fluency** through:

- Using technology in a respectful, legal, safe and ethical way
- Accessing and critically evaluating online information and resources
- Managing social media presence responsibly and safely
- Creating a positive digital footprint, recognizing the permanence of online data
- Recognizing the benefits, limitations and challenges of using technologies

While she was still in university, **Brooke** and three of her classmates formed a start-up company, providing tech support to help researchers, government policy makers and corporate decision makers to discern and interpret significant trends. However, as the company grew, Brooke, as one of the founders, spent more and more time with administrative responsibilities and rarely got to do the actual tech work that she enjoyed. Although the money she earned was far more than she'd ever imagined, Brooke is finding it harder to get to work in the mornings and, in a meeting last week, realized that she hadn't heard even half of what had been said. She realizes that she's falling behind as technology is ever-changing and she's been too focused on managing her company to keep up. She decides to hire an administrator to take care of the day-to-day operations so that she can get back into research and working with some of the emerging technologies. She reaches out to colleagues internationally and begins to shape a new project for them to work on together.



Reflect on your learning, work and/or life experiences to identify a time when you used technology effectively. Briefly describe it here:

What worked particularly well?

Reflect on a time that you wished you had used technology more effectively. Briefly describe it here:

What would you do differently in the future?

Going forward, my plan to enhance my **technological fluency** is:

Competency Snapshot

Use this summary page to transfer your results from the Self-Assessment & Reflection activity (pages 4-13). When transferring your scores, indicate whether the score represented a strength (+) or an area for development (-). Use the action plan on the following page to prioritize learning activities that will build and strengthen your competencies.

Competencies		Score	+	-	Comments
Thinking	Self-Awareness				
	Problem Solving				
	Creativity and Innovation				
	Entrepreneurial Mindset				
	Critical Thinking				
	Decision Making				
Connecting	Social Awareness				
	Social Support				
	Communication				
	Collaboration				
	Global Citizenship				
Managing	Self-Management				
	Wellness				
	Lifelong Learning				
	Career Transition				
	Work Ethic				
	Financial Literacy				
	Technological Fluency				

Action Plan

Enhancing Strengths

Use this page to build an action plan for competency development. Start by identifying **3 Areas of Strength** which you'd like to further enhance. For each, identify specific goals, action steps and realistic dates for completion.

Competency:

Goal	Action Step	Completion Date

Competency:

Goal	Action Step	Completion Date

Competency:

Goal	Action Step	Completion Date

Focus Areas for Development

Next, consider **3 Areas for Development** to focus on. Just as you did for your strengths, identify specific goals, action steps and realistic dates for completion for each.

Competency:

Goal	Action Step	Completion Date

Competency:

Goal	Action Step	Completion Date

Competency:

Goal	Action Step	Completion Date

Consider what supports will help you to monitor your own progress and achieve your goals...and be sure to reward yourself when you get there!