



# Shaping Your Soft Skills

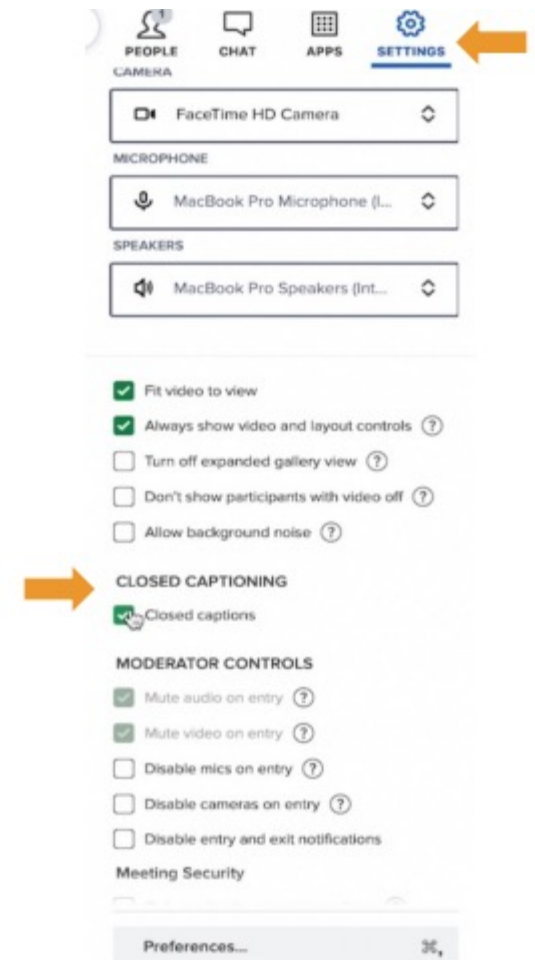
# Workshop Guidelines

- + Please be courteous and respectful to the host and other participants
- + This is an interactive session – we welcome you to ask questions at any time by sending questions in the chat
- + The workshop presentation and other materials will be sent to all participants who provided an email address
- + Follow up with your nearest Oakland County Michigan Works! service center for additional assistance

# Turning on Closed Captioning

To turn on live closed captioning:

1. Download the BlueJeans app on your desktop or mobile device
2. Select 'Settings' at the top of your screen
3. Scroll down to the 'Closed Captioning' option and select the option



<https://www.oakgov.com/workforce/employers/Pages/Business-Workshops.aspx>

# What Are Soft Skills?



- **Soft skills** – personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people
- Transferrable from job to job
- In a [2016 study](#) from the assessment company Wonderlic, 93% of employers said that soft skills are either an “essential” or “very important” factor in hiring decisions

# Soft Skills vs. Hard Skills

## Examples of soft skills:

- Critical thinking
- Team Collaboration
- Communication

## Examples of hard skills:

- Microsoft Office
- Data Analysis
- Marketing
- Speaking another language

### Hard Skills



Refer to teachable skills or **job-specific abilities** that can be quantified or measured.

### Soft Skills



Refer to an individual's **social ability** and how they relate to and interact with other people.

# Why Are Soft Skills Important?

- **Career Longevity**
  - According to LinkedIn's [2019 Global Talent Trends](#) report, 89% of recruiters say when a hire doesn't work out, it usually comes down to a lack of soft skills.
- **Competitive Advantage**
  - In a [2015 study](#), LinkedIn found that 59% of U.S. hiring managers said it is difficult to find candidates with soft skills.
- **Positive Reputation**
  - Your actions are a reflection of your company's values. If you have strong soft skills, it looks good on both you AND your employer.
- **Leadership Opportunities**
  - Successful leadership commonly encompasses strong soft skills that enable leaders to motivate and inspire their teams.

# Most Wanted Soft Skills

## MOST-WANTED SOFT SKILLS

### What are the top skills employers are looking for?

A survey of 3,100 recruiters from the U.S., Canada, the U.K., France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden revealed the most in-demand skills:



Dependability



Teamwork/  
collaboration



Problem-solving



Flexibility

Source: *The Future of Work 2021: Global Hiring Outlook*, Monster.

### The three soft skills U.S. employers have the most trouble finding:

36% Critical thinking

36% Communication

34% Creativity

Source: *Reimagining the Workforce 2021: Closing the Skills Gap Through Education*, Wiley Education Services.

# Dependability

- **Time Management**

- + Meet deadlines and fulfill the obligations of your role on time
- + Set check points to make sure you are staying on track with projects or tasks
- + Try setting specific chunks of time on your calendar to work and take breaks

- **Follow Up**

- + Keep your supervisor or coworkers in the loop on the status of your tasks
- + Respond to requests and take action in a timely manner

- **Follow Directions**

- + Pay attention to the details
- + Ask for clarification if directions aren't clear

- **Take Accountability**

- + Everyone makes mistakes - Take responsibility for your mistakes and do what you can to correct them



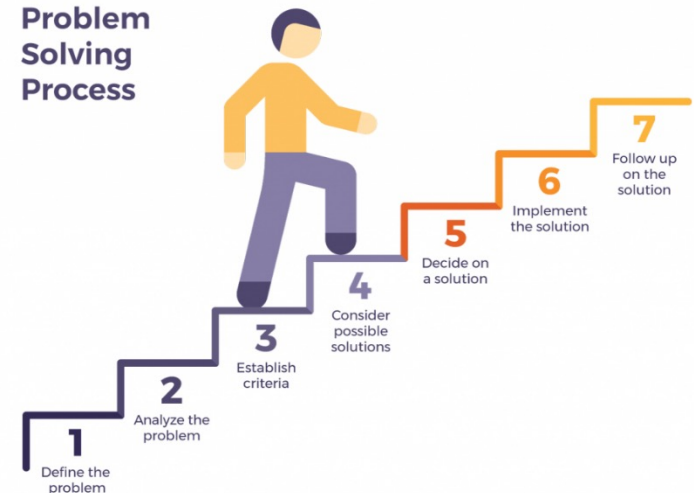
# Teamwork/Collaboration

- **Ask Questions**
  - + If unclear on a task, ask for clarity rather than doing the task incorrectly
- **Seek Assistance from Fellow Coworkers**
  - + Take advantage of their knowledge by shadowing, borrowing notes, sharing training documents/best practices, etc.
- **Have Clear and Consistent Communication**
  - + Communicate with team members on goals and expectations
  - + Seek out opportunities to check in on progress and troubleshoot issues
- **Practice Active Listening**
  - + Eye contact
  - + Open body language
  - + Paraphrase and summarize what the speaker is saying to show you understand

# Problem-Solving

- **Obtain More Job-Related Knowledge**
  - + Having extensive job knowledge makes solving problems easier
  - + Can be obtained through additional training
- **Observe Others**
  - + Coworkers may be able to offer best practices for problem-solving
  - + Two brains can often be better than one when solving complex problems
- **Practice Makes Perfect**
  - + Role-play scenarios in which you might have to use problem solving skills and practice how you might handle the situation

## Problem Solving Process



# Flexibility

- **Be Open-Minded**
  - + Policy, procedural, and staff changes are inevitable
  - + Roll with the punches and come up with new solutions to changes
- **Flexible Environment**
  - + If it makes sense for your workplace, try to negotiate a flexible work arrangement
  - + Be realistic about what flexible options are available at your workplace
- **Get Out of Your Comfort Zone**
  - + Take on new responsibilities
  - + Be open to learning new tasks you haven't learned before
- **Be Confident**
  - + Confidence in your abilities can make you feel more secure in your decisions
  - + When you're confident in yourself, you can handle any change that comes your way

# Adding Soft Skills to Your Resume – Skills Section

- Picked up by a company's Applicant Tracking System (ATS)
- Should match the skills the company is looking for
- Needs to be backed up by your work history
  - *Don't tell me – show me*

## SUMMARY

Highly trained Registered Nurse with strong clinical abilities and a successful career in both Medical and Dentistry facilities. Proactive and organized with passionate commitment to first-rate patient care. Licensed in California with expertise in Nursing.

## SKILLS

- Medicine and Dentistry
- Learning Strategies
- Systems Analysis
- Critical Thinking
- Active Learning
- Equipment Selection
- Psychology
- Healthcare
- Patient Care
- Management
- Complex Problem Solving
- Administration
- Active Listening

*Williams Memorial Hospital, Williamson NY*

- Modify patient treatment plans as indicated by patients' responses and conditions.
- Administer local, inhalation, intravenous, or other anesthetics. Direct or supervise less-skilled nursing or healthcare personnel or supervise a particular unit.

**NURSES ASSISTANT** *Sept 2010–Jan 2012*

*Sacred Heart Hospital, New York NY*

- Consult and coordinate with healthcare team members to assess, plan, implement, or evaluate patient care plans.
- Monitor all aspects of patient care, including diet and physical activity. Observe nurses and visit patients to ensure proper nursing care.
- 

**NURSES ASSISTANT** *Sept 2001–Jan 2009*

*Williamson Hospital, New York NY*

- Assess patients' medical histories to predict anesthesia response.
- Modify patient treatment plans as indicated by patients' responses and conditions.

## EDUCATION

**BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING** *Sept 2004–Jan 2008*

*San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA*

**MSN - NURSE PRACTITIONER** *Sept 2001–Jan 2004*

*New York University, New York NY*

# Adding Soft Skills to Your Resume – Work History Section

- Use this section to tell your story
- Identify accomplishments where you used soft skills in your past job(s)
- “Assess clinical education needs...using a variety of methods” – example of critical thinking skills
- “Consult and coordinate with healthcare team members” – example of communication skills
- “Direct or supervise less tenured personnel” – example of leadership skills

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### REGISTERED NURSE *Sept 2017– Jan 2019*

*Strong Memorial Hospital, Williamson NY*

- Demonstrate patient care in clinical units of hospitals.
- Assess clinical education needs and patient and client teaching needs using a variety of methods.
- Inform physician of patient's condition during anesthesia.

### REGISTERED NURSE *Sept 2012– Jan 2015*

*Williams Memorial Hospital, Williamson NY*

- Modify patient treatment plans as indicated by patients' responses and conditions.
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# How to Answer Soft Skills Questions in Interviews


## Example of a S.T.A.R. Interview Question and Answer

 Tell me about a time you showed initiative and took the lead. 

**S**  **Situation**  
During my last semester of school, I completed an internship at Memorial Hospital in the Human Resources department. I was the first and only intern the department had ever, and they decided to continue the internship program.

**T**  **Task**  
In order to successfully launch this program, my supervisor asked me to create a training curriculum for the new, incoming interns.

**A**  **Action**  
To complete this task, first, I outlined all the procedures the new interns would need to learn about the hospital standards, how to operate the different scheduling systems, and how to use the health record and storage system. Next, I created a 3-day training agenda covering these topics. Finally, I facilitated it to four new interns.

**R**  **Result**  
The training was a huge success. On a survey completed after the training all the interns rated the program a 10 out of 10 in the areas of usefulness and creativity. In addition, each intern rated my communication and leadership styles as "Excellent."

- **“What is your biggest strength?”**
  - This question is a chance for you to discuss the skills that you excel at
- **“What is your biggest weakness?”**
  - This question is a chance for you to highlight a skill that you are working to get better at
  - Discuss the steps you are taking to turn this weakness into a strength
- **“Tell me about a time when...”**
  - Employer is trying to determine how you would act – *or what you would do* – in a specific situation
  - Use the STAR method

# *“What is your biggest strength?”*

Choose an attribute asked for within the first 3-4 bullets of the job description. These skills are normally the most sought-after, critical skills to a particular job.

Candidates can find it hard to verbally express their strengths. They don't want to sound boastful or arrogant. One way to feel more comfortable talking about your strengths is to use speech softeners . For example:

*"I have always been told that ....."*

*"I like to think that ..."*

*"My colleagues comment on ..."*

*"My manager appreciates ..."*

[www.best-job-interview.com](http://www.best-job-interview.com)



# “What is a weakness of yours?”

Never talk about a real weakness unless it's something you've defeated. And most hiring managers are annoyed by overused responses, such as,

*‘My biggest weakness is that I work too hard, so I need try to take it easy once in a while.’*

The best answer is to discuss a weakness that you've turned around!

*“I tend to get caught up in the little details, which can get distracting at times. When I was a junior web designer at Harold LLC, I was asked to revamp our size guide and make it more fun and visually interesting. Unfortunately, I became so fixated on finding the perfect font that I almost lost track of the project deadline. These days, I break each project down into mini-tasks, each with their own deadline. If I spend too long on an individual thing, I set it aside and move on to the next one. Usually, by the time I come back to the imperfect piece, I can be more objective about whether or not it needs more work.”*



# “Tell me about a time when....”

In your answer, demonstrate how you attempt to attain high performance and correct substandard performance. Remember when answering example-related question, use the STAR Method!

*“Early on in my last role, I was placed on a team with very senior level staffers. These were seasoned professionals that had a lot to offer to the project and I found myself constantly questioning my contributing power. **(Situation)***

*I decided to meet with my manager to establish a plan of action for improvement and set very specific targets for myself to be met on a monthly basis **(Task)**. I worked hard to meet these targets and got myself paired up with one of my team members to mentor me more closely. I constantly monitored my own performance and asked for regular feedback from the group on any other ways they felt I could support them or things I could improve on. **(Action)***

*And after six months, I finally felt like I was contributing at a level that was truly reflective of my skills and what I’m capable of.” **(Result)***

# Tips for Improving Soft Skills

- **Be Open to Feedback**
  - + From supervisors, coworkers, clients, friends
  - + Receive feedback regularly
- **Communicate Often**
  - + Use multiple modes of communication to build well-rounded communication skills
- **Build Positive Relationships**
  - + Connect with coworkers over shared hobbies and interests
  - + Spend time getting to know coworkers outside of work
- **Work through Conflict**
  - + Think of alternative solutions to conflict that maintain the relationship you've built
- **Take on a Leadership Role**
  - + Bring leadership goals to your supervisor's attention
  - + Discuss potential leadership opportunities - big or small
- **Practice, Practice, Practice**
  - + Your soft skills will not significantly improve after one workshop
  - + Seek out ways to practice your soft skills in every area of your life

<https://www.mitalent.org/elearning-soft-skills-program>

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# Oakland County Michigan Works!

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Monday-Friday, except state holidays

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Oak Park, MI 48237  
(248) 691-8437

### PONTIAC

1850 N. Perry Street  
Pontiac, MI 48340  
(248) 276-1777

### SOUTHFIELD

21415 Civic Center Drive, Suite 116  
Southfield, MI 48076  
(248) 796-4580

### TROY

550 Stephenson Highway, Suite 400  
Troy, MI 48083  
(248) 823-5101

### WATERFORD

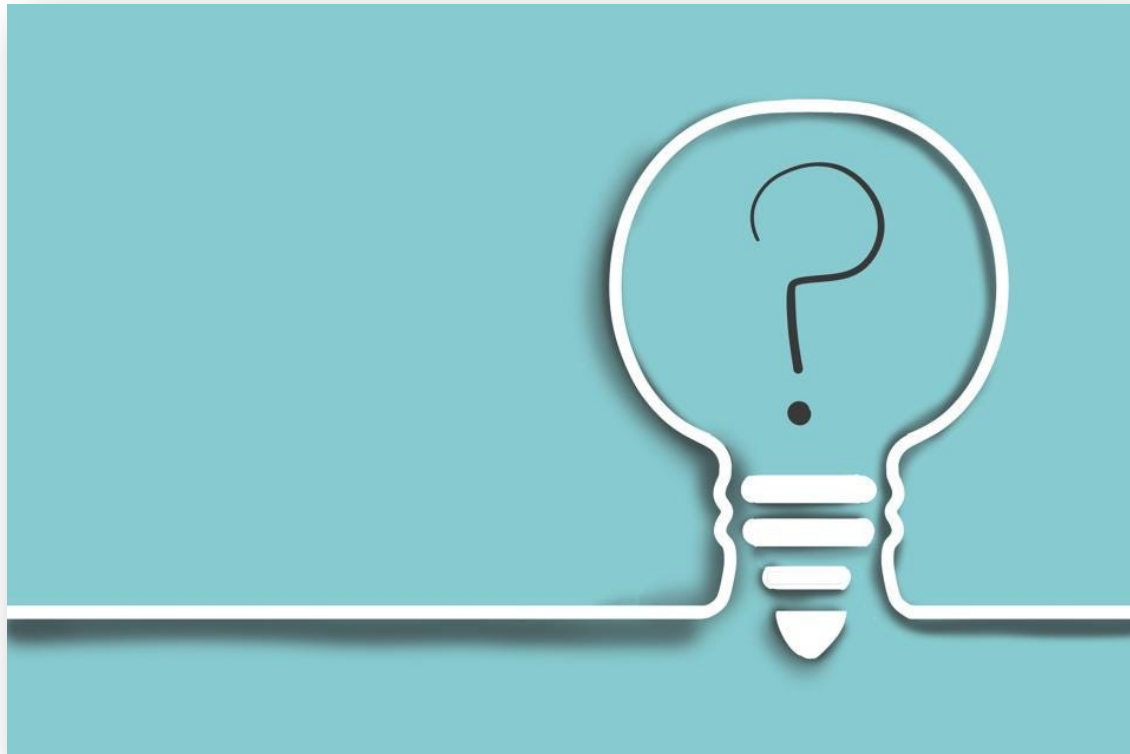
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Waterford, MI 48327  
(248) 617-3600

[OaklandCountyMIWorks.com](http://OaklandCountyMIWorks.com)

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# Questions



# References

- [The Hard Facts About Soft Skills](#)
- [How to Improve Soft Skills](#)
- [16 In Demand Soft Skills](#)
- [Problem Solving Skills](#)
- [Why are Soft Skills Important](#)
- [Leadership Soft Skills](#)
- [LinkedIn 2019 Global Talent Trends](#)
- [Most In Demand Soft Skills](#)
- [Wonderlic Soft Skills Assessment](#)
- [How to Be Flexible at Work](#)