

**ATHLETE
LEADERSHIP**

*Special
Olympics*



Leadership Lessons

Personal and Professional Development

“Getting Started” Overview



Welcome!



Welcome to the “Getting Started” Overview document for the Personal and Professional Development Lessons in the Special Olympics Leadership & Skills Curriculum. Before you begin, you deserve a high-five for taking the time to gain skills and knowledge so you can live your daily life as a friend, athlete, employee, and leader better than ever before. After reading through this “Getting Started” Overview, you can download the different lessons on the website:

<https://resources.specialolympics.org/ppd>



This “Getting Started” Overview will explain what each topic and lesson will cover.

There are a total of 15 different lessons within the Personal and Professional Development suite of resources.

The 15 lessons are split into 5 different topics (listed below) with 3 Levels in each topic. The Levels are designed to start out easier and get more difficult as you progress.

- 1. Communication
- 2. Handling Disappointment
- 3. Setting Goals
- 4. Healthy Relationships
- 5. Advocacy



Here are a few tips to help you as you learn more from this suite of Personal and Professional Development resources:

1



Topic Descriptions start on **page 4** to help you understand all the topics and levels.

2



A **Pre-Skills Assessment** on **pages 9-16** will help you decide where to start.

This **optional** resource will help you see your strengths and weaknesses, which will help you to identify which of the 5 Personal and Professional Development topics you should start with.

You even have the **option** to ask someone else who knows you well (like a coach or a family member or a mentor) to complete the pre-skills assessment, providing feedback to help you better determine what lesson to start with.

3



Within each lesson, you will see this graphic below, which encourages you to **pause** your learning and decide what to do next.

Lesson Checkpoint
Check-in with yourself to see what you might need next.

- Any of these choices are okay! It is healthy to make a choice that is best for YOU!
- Circle what you are going to do next!

A red outline icon of a clock face with hands.	A red outline icon of two hands, one larger than the other, with fingers spread.	A red outline icon of a circular arrow with a dot in the center.	A red outline icon of a hand with the index finger pointing up, with three small circles above it.	A red outline icon of a person walking with an arrow pointing to the right.
Take a break	Ask for help	Come back to this another day	Try another level	Keep going

You made the right choice! You are AWESOME!

4



Each level takes approximately **30-45 minutes** to complete, but it is okay if **you take a longer or shorter time**. Also, you do not have to complete a full level in one sitting. You can complete these levels at your own pace - even over the course of a few days, weeks, or months.

5



This resource is meant to be **self-guided**, which means you should be able to do them by yourself. But if you need help, do not be afraid to ask someone to **assist you** in completing them!

6



The content for each level is on the same topic (for example: **Healthy Relationships** or **Communication**) but the way each of the 3 different levels asks you to participate is different. Some levels ask you to write your answers, while others ask you to draw your answers; it is up to you how to complete them

Alright, are you ready to begin?

**We are very excited that you are starting this journey with us!
We believe in you - let's go!**

Topic descriptions and what you should expect

In total, there are **5 different handbooks** covering **5 different topics**. Each topic will have **3 different lessons** in it.

The 5 topics and the 3 lessons within those 5 topics are listed below.



Topic 1: Communication



Level 1

Starting a Conversation

It is important to know how to talk to other people.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ Steps for how to start a conversation with someone
- ➔ Different topics that you could use when starting a conversation



Level 2

Appropriate and Inappropriate Conversations

It is important to know what is okay or “appropriate” and what is not okay or “inappropriate” when having conversations with others.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ When to start a conversation and when to wait
- ➔ When to say something and when you should only think it
- ➔ What are appropriate topics for work or school?



Level 3

Active Listening Skills

Good communication involves both speaking and listening. If you do not practice “active listening” skills, it can lead to misunderstanding and miscommunication.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ What “active listening” is
- ➔ Why listening is a very important part of communicating
- ➔ 3 ways to practice “active listening”



Topic 2: Handling Disappointment



Level 1 Emotions and Safe Actions

Learning how to handle your emotions is important.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ Safe and unsafe ways to handle difficult emotions
- ➔ Tips to help you when you have difficult emotions



Level 2 What to do when you feel disappointed

An emotion that can be challenging is disappointment.

Disappointment can happen when you want something to happen and it does not happen. It can also happen when you expect someone to do something and they do not do it.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ Examples of disappointment
- ➔ What are “expectations” and how do we handle them?
- ➔ What to do when you feel disappointed

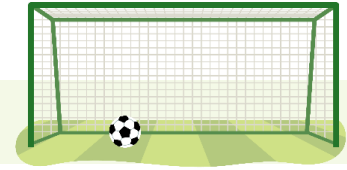


Level 3 Accepting who you are

It is important to practice self-acceptance, especially when facing disappointment. This lesson will help you handle and cope with disappointments in a positive way.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ How to use self-acceptance to deal with disappointment
- ➔ The importance of positive self-talk
- ➔ Specific strategies for managing emotions / self-acceptance



Topic 3: Setting Goals



Level 1

The Basics of Setting Goals

Learning to set goals helps you get better.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ What is a goal?
- ➔ How to set a goal for yourself



Level 2

Setting SMART goals

Setting a goal is a great way to stay focused on achieving something in the future. This lesson will help you set a goal and create steps to help you meet that goal.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ What is a SMART goal?
- ➔ The difference between a goal and a SMART goal.
- ➔ How to set a SMART goal for yourself



Level 3

Overcoming Obstacles

This lesson will help you build on your understanding of SMART goals and how to overcome challenges.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ How to learn and grow with your goals
- ➔ Why it is important to prepare for failure
- ➔ Why it is important to keep going and follow through on your goals



Topic 4: Healthy Relationships



Level 1 Understanding Relationships

Learning about relationships is important.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ What it means to have a relationship with someone
- ➔ The difference between a healthy relationship and an unhealthy relationship
- ➔ What to do if you have an unhealthy relationship



Level 2 Healthy Relationships and Boundaries

It is important to have healthy relationships in your life. One important part of a healthy relationship is having boundaries.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ What are different types of relationships?
- ➔ What are different types of boundaries?
- ➔ How to set your own personal boundaries



Level 3 Conflict Resolution

It is important to know how to solve problems and disagreements in your relationships.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ What conflict is and how to identify it in relationships
- ➔ Effective ways to prevent conflict
- ➔ Strategies to resolve conflict when it happens



Topic 5: Advocacy



Level 1

Discovering Yourself

It is important to know more about yourself because that helps you to better advocate for yourself and the things you care about.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ What it means to “advocate”
- ➔ Ways to learn more about yourself
- ➔ Why knowing yourself helps you advocate better



Level 2

Strengths and Weaknesses

Being able to name your strengths and weaknesses can help you know how to advocate for yourself and for others.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ How to identify your strengths and weaknesses
- ➔ Ways to use your strengths to help others
- ➔ Ways to ask others to help you improve your weaknesses



Level 3

Self-advocacy

It is important to know how to advocate for yourself. Through “self-advocacy” you can make choices that shape your life.

Here is what you will learn in this lesson:

- ➔ What “self-advocacy” is and why it is important
- ➔ Examples of self-advocacy in real-life situations
- ➔ Steps to practice self-advocacy

Personal and Professional Development Lessons

Pre-Skills Assessment

Skills-Assessment for athlete learner



Directions

This **optional** assessment will help you know where to begin your learning journey. If you would rather go through each topic and level in your own order, that is okay, too.

The statements below describe situations you might encounter in your daily life as a friend, athlete, employee, and leader. For each statement select a number between 1 and 3 to indicate your current confidence level, where:

1 = I am not at all confident 2 = I am somewhat confident 3 = I am completely confident

How confident are you that you can...

Not at all Confident	Somewhat Confident	Completely Confident
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Topic 1: Communication ●●●

I can start up a conversation with people I do not know.	1	2	3
I can ask questions when I want to learn more about what someone is saying.	1	2	3
I can pay attention well to what others are saying to me.	1	2	3

Communication total score:

How confident are you that you can...

Not at all Confident	Somewhat Confident	Completely Confident
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Topic 2: Handling Disappointment ●●●

I can express my emotions in a way that is safe for me and others.	1	2	3
I can handle disappointment.	1	2	3
I can accept myself for who I am.	1	2	3

Handling Disappointment total score:

How confident are you that you can...

Not at all Confident	Somewhat Confident	Completely Confident
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Topic 3: Setting Goals ●●●

I can set goals for myself and follow a plan.	1	2	3
I can adjust my goals when I am faced with failure or obstacles.	1	2	3
I can set goals to challenge and push myself outside of my comfort zone.	1	2	3

Setting Goals total score:

How confident are you that you can...

Not at all Confident	Somewhat Confident	Completely Confident
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Topic 4: Healthy Relationships



I can make and keep healthy relationships.	1	2	3
I can work through conflict with other people without hurting their feelings.	1	2	3
I can set boundaries with friends and respect when friends set boundaries with me.	1	2	3

Healthy Relationships total score:

How confident are you that you can...

Not at all Confident	Somewhat Confident	Completely Confident
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Topic 5: Advocacy



I can identify and explain who I am and what I believe in.	1	2	3
I can easily accept that there are things that are out of my control.	1	2	3
I can advocate for what I want clearly and calmly.	1	2	3

Advocacy total score:

Skills-Assessment for Mentor to complete about the Athlete



Directions

This assessment is **optional** and should be completed by a mentor or family member of the athlete leader. The person filling this out should be someone who knows the athlete very well and can provide constructive criticism and positive feedback. Your assessment of them is meant to help the athlete leader see their strengths and weaknesses according to someone else so they can identify where to begin their learning journey.

The statements below describe situations the athlete might encounter in their daily life as a friend, athlete, employee, and leader. For each statement, circle a number between 1 and 3 to indicate where you think the athlete’s confidence level is, where:

1 = not at all confident 2 = somewhat confident 3 = completely confident.

How confident are you that the athlete can...

Not at all Confident	Somewhat Confident	Completely Confident
-------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------

Topic 1: Communication ●●●

Start up a conversation with people they do not know.	1	2	3
Ask questions when they want to learn more about what someone is saying.	1	2	3
Listen well to what others are saying.	1	2	3

Communication total score:

How confident are you that the athlete can...

Not at all Confident	Somewhat Confident	Completely Confident
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Topic 2: Handling Disappointment ●●●

Express their emotions in a way that is safe for them and others.	1	2	3
Handle disappointment.	1	2	3
Accept themselves for who they are.	1	2	3

Handling Disappointment total score:

How confident are you that the athlete can...

Not at all Confident	Somewhat Confident	Completely Confident
----------------------	--------------------	----------------------

Topic 3: Setting Goals ●●●

Set goals and follow a plan.	1	2	3
Adjust goals when faced with failure or obstacles.	1	2	3
Set goals to challenge and push themselves outside of their comfort zone.	1	2	3

Setting Goals total score:

How confident are you that the athlete can...

Not at all Confident	Somewhat Confident	Completely Confident
----------------------	--------------------	----------------------

Topic 4: Healthy Relationships



Make and keep healthy relationships.	1	2	3
Work through conflict with other people without hurting their feelings.	1	2	3
Set boundaries with friends and respect when friends set boundaries with them.	1	2	3

Healthy Relationships total score:

How confident are you that the athlete can...

Not at all Confident	Somewhat Confident	Completely Confident
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Topic 5: Advocacy



Identify and explain who they are and what they believe in.	1	2	3
Easily accept that there are things that are out of their control.	1	2	3
Advocate for what they want clearly and calmly.	1	2	3

Advocacy total score:

Scoring

Add the numbers for each of the five leadership topics.

See the example below:

Topic 4: Healthy Relationships ●●●

Make and keep healthy relationships.	1	2	3
Work through conflict with other people without hurting their feelings.	1	2	3
Set boundaries with friends and respect when friends set boundaries with them.	1	2	3

Healthy Relationships total score: **5**

What is next?

Congratulations! Like everyone, you have a lot of skills, but you also have new things to learn. These lessons can help you gain new skills and improve upon what you already know.

To help you figure out where to start your learning journey, follow these steps:

Step

1

6-1

If you or your mentor/helper gave a total score for any topic of **6 or below**, that topic should be one of the first you think about starting at because that shows you have more to learn on that topic.

For example, the athlete listed above scored a 6 on the other 4 topics but scored a five (5) on Healthy Relationships. This means that it is recommended they start with the **Healthy Relationships** lessons first.

You can find all 5 topics at the Special Olympics resources website (<https://resources.specialolympics.org/ppd>) or you can ask your Program where to find them.

If you scored more than a 6 on all topics, pick which one you are most excited about and start there!



What happens if you and your mentor have scored a topic very differently?

If you and your mentor have different scores for a topic, discuss this with your mentor. Having different scores is an excellent opportunity to **receive feedback** from someone else and learn more about how others view your knowledge and skills in that category.

It is okay if they think that you are lower in a category than you scored yourself. They have a different perspective of your strengths and weaknesses.

There are activities within **Communication**, **Healthy Relationships**, and **Handling Disappointment** that will help you get better with giving and receiving feedback.

2



Continue completing lessons until you have completed all the leadership lessons within the leadership topics that you or your mentor scored 6 or below. Stop after each lesson and give yourself a big round of applause!

3



Take your time and go through one leadership topic or lesson daily so you have time to practice and tell your coach, teammates, and friends what you are learning.

4



After you have completed all the leadership lessons where you scored a 6 or below, complete all the other leadership topics and lessons you are interested in. **Even if you scored above a 6 in them, there is always more to learn, so go through all of them!** Again, you can find all 5 topics and their 15 lessons by visiting the Special Olympics resources website (<https://resources.specialolympics.org/ppd>) or contacting your local Special Olympics staff member and ask for help.