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## Life Skills - Key to Success

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### Introduction

Life skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior which enable the individuals to deal effectively with the challenges and stress of everyday life. Cognitive skills are used for analyzing information, personal skills help in self-management and inter-personal skills are needed for good communication and effective social interaction [1]. These skills can be developed through scientific professional training. Life skills empower the adolescents to choose the best values and behaviors which are essential for positive health. Students who acquire life skills become better adjusted to the school environment and their academic performance will definitely improve. Their self esteem increases and they become capable of coping with the demands and challenges of daily life. Through repeated practicing, individuals can develop mastery over these skills. They learn to apply life skills in all problematic situations in real life and gain control over stressful situations easily.

### Important life skills

Self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, effective communication skills, interpersonal relations, coping with emotions, coping with stress, and empathy are the important life skills required for success in life and career.

Self-awareness includes the recognition of our strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. Those who acquire self awareness, become consciously aware of their emotional states and their relationships with others in the family and society. Self-awareness is a very important skill which helps in alleviating emotional distress and leads to self-development and emotional well being [2]. Individuals with self awareness overcome the performance related stress easily.

Critical thinking is the skill needed to analyze experiences in an objective manner and to recognize the factors influencing attitudes and behaviours. Critical thinking skills should be acquired for proper analysis of stressful situations and for the correct decision making [3].

Problem-solving enables children and adolescents to deal effectively with the day to day challenges of life. Problem-solving skill is dependent on prior specific experiences and detailed conceptual

knowledge applicable to the problematic situation [4]. Creative-thinking will help children to explore the available alternatives as well as the consequences of their actions and respond adaptively to the various situations in life. Creative thinking skill enables to develop leadership qualities among students [5].

Adolescents with decision-making skill will actively make correct decisions in life by scientifically assessing different options. Compared to adults, adolescents have lower level of decision-making competence [6].

Barriers for acquiring competence in decision-making include attitudinal constraints, peer group pressures and breakdowns in family functioning [7]. Hence scientific guidance should be provided for adolescents to develop the decision making skill.

Interpersonal-relationship skills help individuals to relate in positive ways with other people, which enable them to keep good relationships, which are needed for social well-being. This also includes the ability to end certain relationships constructively using assertiveness skill. In the process of applying assertiveness skill, the nature of the problem should be recognized and scientific solutions should be suggested. The behavior which leads to the problem must be identified and the feelings about the problem should be expressed. Messages with clear statement should also be given regarding the consequences [8].

Effective-communication skill makes the individuals competent to express themselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in the most appropriate way in all situations of life. Good communication is essential for success in career. It will enable a person to effectively negotiate with individuals. Effective communication is an important leadership quality [9].

Empathy is the capacity to place oneself in another person's position and to understand the feelings of others, which will definitely improve the social interactions. Empathy involves appreciating a person's emotions and expressing that awareness to the person [10].

Coping with emotions include the skills required for managing the emotions in the proper way. The skills which are required to cope with stressful events of life are fundamental aspects which emerge over the course of development from childhood to adulthood [11]. Individuals who acquire the skill for coping with stress will take actions to reduce the sources of stress. They also learn to relax during situations of unavoidable stress, so that the emotional distress will not lead to health problems.

## **Conclusion**

Life skills will definitely help individuals to make correct decisions, solve problems in life scientifically, think critically and creatively, cope with stress and manage their life in a highly productive manner. Knowledge and application of life skills will also enable persons to take leadership roles.

Life skills training for the students will definitely improve their adjustment with peer group, teachers and parents. By increasing the empathy, communication skills and interpersonal relationships, their social interactions becomes much better. Self efficacy and self-confidence will also increase through life skills training, which will empower the children and adolescents for best performance in future life.

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