

Fast and Interactive Ways for Using the SkillScan Card Deck

A single SkillScan card deck can be used in a number of ways in counseling sessions or groups to enhance clients' understanding of their skills and connection to the world of work. Add these tips to your portfolio of career counseling tools and strategies.

Expand Skill Vocabulary and Increase Understanding of Strengths

In 1-1 Counseling

- **Quick Sort** - When you do not have time to conduct the full card sort process, have your client pull out skills (from the deck) in which they have basic ability and that they enjoy using. Have them organize the skills into the color categories and then prioritize the categories. Next, have the client provide examples of how they have used their favorite skills (from any category) in work, volunteer, school etc. Provide a written record preferred skills and examples for future reference.
- **Experience to Skills** - Ask your client about an activity (hobby, work experience, school, volunteer work etc.) that they enjoyed doing and were proud of (have them give you some detail about what was involved in performing the activity) – then pull out the skill cards that show the skills they used in performing these activities. Repeat this for a few activities and provide a list of common skills (or most frequently used skills) in their selected activities.
- **General to Specific** - When asking clients about their strengths, a client may say, “I have good communication skills” or “I love working with people.” Pull out and show them the skill cards from the Communication or Humanitarian categories, (or Relationship and Communication categories from Advance Pack) and ask them to select the skills that best describe their distinct preferences. Variation: Use this strategy for any generalized terms such as management, analytical, good with my hands, etc.

In Pairs, Trios or Small Groups

- **Experience to Skills** - In pairs or trios, have the first person share a favorite activity (hobby, work experience, school, volunteer work etc.) that he/she enjoyed doing and was proud of (and provide some detail on what was involved in performing the activity). Then the partner(s) pulls out the skill cards that show the skills that were used in the activity. Repeat this for 3 – 5 additional activities and have the client keep a record of the skills indicated in each activity. Repeat this activity for each person in the pair or trio. At the conclusion, each person reports on the main skills used in all of the activities.
- **Skills to Work** - Shuffle a card deck and then distribute 3 – 5 cards to each participant. Ask the participants to write a paragraph about how an individual would use each of the skills in a work role, extracurricular activities, or volunteer work. Alternative – each participant selects five skills they enjoy using and write or verbally share an example of how they like using each of the skills.
- **Skill Brainstorm** - Give participants a deck of cards and have them pull out 3-5 favorite skills in which they have basic ability. Ask them to brainstorm ways that they have used their favorite skills in the past and ways that they could use the skill in a job or volunteer activity. Have them share their information in small groups or pairs.
- **Skill Connection** - Select a significant historical figure from the news that your participants have a basic understanding of their work and life roles. Ask participants to sort through the card deck and select the skill cards that reflect this individual's abilities. Participants discuss their findings in small groups.

- **Skill Expansion** - Using a brief job description and a card deck, have participants pull out additional skills that needed to perform that job. Arrange the skills into specific skill categories (color categories/competencies) such as Communication, Mental/Analytical, (Professional Pack) etc. Participants share information in whole or small groups.
- **Roles to Skills** - Based on immediate knowledge, have participants select the skills from the deck that are used by their parents or guardians in their respective jobs: paid, volunteer, or parenting roles. Next, have your participant's interview parents/guardians on the skills used in their roles and work activities and report to the group in the next session.

Build Connection between Skills and Work

In 1-1 Counseling

- **Skills to Career Analysis** - When your client has a tentative career option (or two) of interest, ask him/her to select the skills that are required to perform well in each career option, write down the skills required for each career, and then put a check mark next to each skill in the list which uses his/her preferred skills. Discuss the results of this exercise and next steps.
- **Skills to Resume** - In developing a resume, have your client pull out their strongest skills and prioritize them by greatest preference. Examine your client's resume and discern if they are playing up their best skills in the right order. Challenge your client to come up with additional accomplishments or experiences to highlight their greatest selling points.

In Groups

- **Career Analysis** – using a job description, have participants analyze the required transferable skills of a position or career of interest. After reading the description, the participants sort through the deck to identify the skills that reflect job expectations. Have participants discuss the fit between their skills and ways to acquire greater strength and experience in these skills through education, work, hobbies, etc.
- **Past to Future Activity** - have each participant pull out 3-5 favorite skills in which they have used in the past and have basic ability. Then together brainstorm ways that they could use these skills in a job or career that appeals to them.
- **Entrepreneurship: Talent Formation** – in groups of 4-6 participants, explain that they are forming a company that will sell a new type of jeans (or allow them to brainstorm the type of product or business). Each participant then identifies their 5 - 10 strongest/most preferred skills from the card deck and prepares a list of responsibilities that they could perform for the business. Each participant reports back to the group and identify the skills that might be lacking from this team to make the business viable.

Skill Development Suggestions (for 1-1 or Groups)

- **Skill Development** - For individuals who have a tentative job/career idea, have them sort the deck into “skills needing development” and for each skill make a list of ways to develop this skill through training, experience or other activities. Have individuals work in pairs or small groups to help each other brainstorm skill development activities.