

# The ESSENTIALS™

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1) Is each module a curriculum or a lesson?

The ESSENTIALS™ instructional modules are not a traditional, sequential curriculum, nor is each module just a single lesson plan. Each module contains a session outline, or script, designed to help facilitators introduce the topic of the module and how to use the core module tool and/or strategy in their life. A session takes about 45-60 minutes, delivered either as one lesson or divided into multiple shorter lessons.

Once a tool is taught and practiced in the introductory experience, facilitators need to give participants multiple opportunities to continue practicing their skill beyond the initial session. To this end, each module includes several extension activities that help structure such additional practice. Many of the extension activities contain directions for embedding the tool or strategy into core classroom content; others include ideas for consistently using the tool to guide practice of the skill outside the classroom. For additional information, see this [brief video introduction by Dr. Davidson](#).

### 2) What is included in each module?

Each module contains (1) Facilitator Guide, (2) Session PowerPoint slides, and (3) Participant Workbook, plus the Excellence with Integrity TOOLS as separate files. All resources are delivered digitally. Facilitator Guides and Participant Workbooks are delivered in the format of fillable PDFs: they have interactive fields that can be typed in and saved for future use. The PowerPoint files are unlocked and can be edited by facilitators to match their environment and structure of implementation. The TOOLS are included in PNG format, and can be printed out or displayed onscreen.

The Facilitator Guide starts with a Session Outline that guides the initial experience in conjunction with the PowerPoint slides and the Participant Workbook. In addition to the session outline, the Facilitator Guide contains sections that explain how the module aligns to an SEL competency and one or more of the Six Pillars of Character®, detail extension activities, include directions on coaching the skill using the CHAMP Approach, and provide additional information and bibliography on the research and knowledge about the focus area and the development of the competencies of the module.

### 3) How do I choose which modules to purchase?

There are many ways to choose which modules best meet your needs. Think about what skill or skills your students (or your program/activity participants) need to develop or improve, or which skills will best enhance the course, curriculum, or environment in which the modules will be used. Then, find the right module(s) for you by looking at module focus area, SEL competency, and Six Pillars of Character alignment. Finally, samples of each module are available for [preview in the CHARACTER COUNTS! store](#).

### 4) How many modules do I need?

The number of modules needed depends on many different variables. Successful implementation requires time spent teaching the skill detailed in each module, and offering multiple practice opportunities for skill development over time (a quarter, semester, school year, and beyond). In other words, you should purchase the number of modules you can fully implement in the time you have available. We will be happy to help you determine which modules best meet your needs. Contact us at [customerservice@charactercounts.org](mailto:customerservice@charactercounts.org).

### 5) How long does it take to teach each module?

The introductory experience described in the Session Outline in each Facilitator Guide generally takes 45-60 minutes to complete. The flexible design, however, allows for the session to be broken up into shorter chunks and delivered as a series over multiple sessions, or it can be expanded to become a longer experience, with additional time devoted to some of the components of the session. Facilitation Notes are included in each Session Outline to suggest alternative ways of delivery of session components.

Each module also contains extension activities for additional instructional and practice opportunities which are essential for mastery of the module skill(s). You should plan for at least three to six additional experiences that can range from 15 to 60 minutes each.

### 6) How do I use the modules in my class? Are there certain classes better suited to implementing the modules than others?

Successful implementation requires dedicated time to teaching the skill, as outlined in the Facilitator Guide. Some schools use a homeroom or advisory period to teach the initial lesson. Others will do this instruction in a studies skills class, business class, study hall, or other dedicated class. Still others ask core content teachers to dedicate time to teaching the module within their class time. Whatever initial instruction environment you choose, it is critical that students are given multiple opportunities to practice their skill. For example, a school may determine to teach the initial lesson in a homeroom or advisory period, but ask each classroom teacher to use the tool or strategy from

that module two or more times each semester within their classroom content. If students take eight classes, and each class provides two practice opportunities per skill, that's 16 practice opportunities per semester, without asking teachers to do significant prep work!

### 7) Can I customize any components of the module?

The ESSENTIALS modules are designed for flexible implementation and educators are encouraged to choose how they will use the materials to suit their unique needs and contexts. To this end, session outlines include multiple suggestions for alternative ways of implementing session activities (Facilitation Notes). Facilitators can add, hide, or re-order slides in the Session PowerPoint. They can also add additional handouts, resources, and create their own activities (using, for example, Background Briefs and Bibliography for additional information).

### 8) Are the modules aligned to any standards or competencies?

Each module is aligned to an SEL competency and at least one of the Six Pillars of Character. Check out [the CHARACTER COUNTS! store](#) to learn which modules are aligned to which SEL competency and Pillar of Character.

You can review the theory and research behind these instructional resources in [The ESSENTIALS Series Introduction](#).

### 9) What is the research base for The ESSENTIALS modules?

The ESSENTIALS series is the culmination of nearly 25 years of applied research and development in various K-16 education settings, and diverse workplace and sport environments. The Excellence with Integrity Institute's R&D took its origins from the *Smart & Good High Schools* national study (2005), and has since been dedicated to translating and evolving that original vision into research-based instructional deliverables.

One of the early manifestations of instructional materials, called *Power2Achieve Foundations*, was developed through a collaborative partnership of the Institute's design team, and incorporated input and feedback from many current and former educators, administrators, policy experts, researchers, parents, coaches, and students. In subsequent years, we expanded our theoretical framework, designed and tested new assessment approaches, and received feedback from many more individuals and organizations who implemented our work. The ESSENTIALS series is a new iteration of our ever-growing knowledge and experience presented around research-based "tools" that distill theory and research into replicable guides for thinking and behavior.

## 10) Can The ESSENTIALS modules be utilized by individuals who aren't specifically teaching character or SEL?

Yes, The ESSENTIALS modules are applicable to a variety of environments — athletics, college and career readiness classes, extra-curricular activities, and after-school programs. They can support equity and inclusion initiatives, and enhance a positive climate and culture at your school, program, or organization. Any of the staff that work in these areas will benefit from The ESSENTIALS resources. Elements of these resources (for example, TOOLS) can be shared with families for additional practice and reinforcement of the competencies at home.

## 11) How often will you release new modules?

CHARACTER COUNTS! will continue to work with the Excellence with Integrity Institute to develop and periodically release new modules and will have at least one module for each focus area. Sign up for our free newsletter by contacting us at [customerservice@charactercounts.org](mailto:customerservice@charactercounts.org) to learn about new modules as they are released!



# Excellence with Integrity Competencies

## ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES

### EXCELLENCE



#### Committing to high standards and continuous improvement through work ethic and self-management

- Adhere to strong internal standards of excellence.
- Exhibit the positive attitude and persistent effort needed to continuously improve.
- Seek external support and incorporate feedback effectively.



#### Committing to goal achievement

- Develop, pursue, monitor, and modify goal achievement action steps.



#### Exhibiting critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and innovation

- Maximize the potential of available resources.
- Consider different perspectives, approaches, and possibilities when solving problems.
- Leverage individual and collective strengths to overcome performance challenges.
- Utilize effective decision-making across diverse social and professional contexts and situations.

### INTEGRITY



#### Demonstrating emotional intelligence, integrity, and responsibility

- Demonstrate ethical conscience and competence.
- Exhibit personal accountability for responsibilities and obligations.
- Act with integrity according to a well-formed ethical code of conduct.
- Hold self and others accountable.



#### Leading and serving others

- Use one's talents and skills to serve the good of the group/team.
- Use interpersonal and group management skills to lead others effectively.
- Motivate and empower others.
- Commit to shared goals and the collective good.



### TEAMWORK



#### Communicating and collaborating with efficiency and effectiveness

- Clarify and verify understanding.
- Express views and ideas effectively.
- Use effective communication strategies in diverse contexts, settings, and situations.
- Recognize and respond to the feelings and perspectives of others.



#### Developing teamwork through positive and productive relationships

- Adapt to new roles and changing strategy in pursuit of a team goal.
- Exercise flexibility and willingness to make necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal.
- Recognize and balance diverse beliefs and perspectives to reach effective solutions.
- Work efficiently and effectively with others.

### SELF-DEVELOPMENT



#### Managing priorities and time

- Identify factors that contribute to (drivers) or detract from (preventers) effective time management.
- Organize, prioritize, plan, and execute tasks effectively.



#### Overcoming obstacles, focusing on growth, and reducing stress

- Implement productive strategies for reducing stress.
- Use failures, disappointments, and setbacks as opportunities to learn and improve.





#### Living a purposeful, balanced, and healthy life

- Pursue multidimensional life-goals, interests, and aspirations.
- Work to develop personal strengths and overcome personal challenges.
- Live a safe, balanced, and healthy life.

## Current Modules

The ESSENTIALS™ FACILITATOR GUIDE

### Shaping Group Norms: The Compact for Excellence



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**CHARACTER COUNTS!**

Matthew L. Davidson, Ph.D. and Vladimir T. Khmelkov, Ph.D.

The ESSENTIALS™ FACILITATOR GUIDE

### Preparing to Communicate



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### Mastering Care-Frontation



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The ESSENTIALS™ FACILITATOR GUIDE

### Developing the Growth Mindset to Overcome Adversity and Manage Stress



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The ESSENTIALS™ FACILITATOR GUIDE

### Building the Habits for Excellence



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### Mastering Goal Achievement



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### Attitude + Effort = Improvement



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The ESSENTIALS™ FACILITATOR GUIDE

### Putting Integrity into Action

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The ESSENTIALS™ FACILITATOR GUIDE

### PROBLEM SOLVING ESSENTIALS: Brainstorming Creative Solutions




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### PROBLEM SOLVING ESSENTIALS: Stimulating Innovation






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### Core Leadership Practices



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### Leveraging Strengths and Opportunities: The Character SWOT

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# The **ESSENTIALS™**

are designed and delivered by



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and



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## **ABOUT THE CONSORTIUM**

More than a decade ago, the Excellence with Integrity Institute and The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University, home of CHARACTER COUNTS!, created a consortium partnership to advance our respective visions and missions. Together, we pursue strategic opportunities in youth leadership, employment and STEM readiness, athletics, education, and organizational development in community and workplace environments.

The Institute's main focus is on research and development of instructional resources, assessment solutions, and tools and strategies for organizational culture development.

The Ray Center's main focus is on coaching, training, and expanding our collaborative implementation projects across Iowa and the nation.