

# FINAL REPORT

KEY FINDINGS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS



## SUMMARY

This overview presents the Skills Quest for Success project development, implementation, and major findings. It highlights the program's success and its impact on participants. The project significantly enhanced participants' skills and confidence. The findings underscore the program's effectiveness and provide a roadmap for further development and broader implementation to maximize its positive outcomes.



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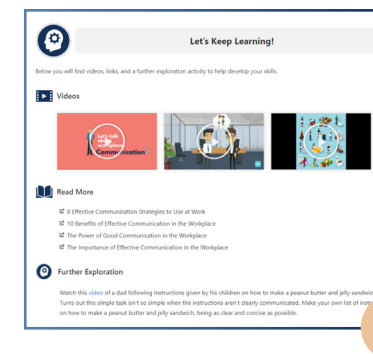
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**Note:** Seeing a  on an image means you can click to see an expanded version.

# PROGRAM BACKGROUND



Reading



Writing

**Overview:** Skills Quest for Success (SQ4S) was a research project aimed at developing and testing a six-week online interactive gamified program, as well as creating an asynchronous stand-alone Skills for Success training model. This training covered nine foundational skills for success identified by the Government of Canada—adaptability, problem-solving, creativity & innovation, communication, collaboration, reading, writing, digital skills, and numeracy—alongside employment and daily life skills. The training was built using a gamified platform called Bytedeck. The project spanned 15 months from January 02, 2023, to March 31, 2024. A two-week extension was granted, allowing the program to continue until April 15, 2024.

**Target Group:** This program was designed for Persons with Disabilities, aged 16 and older, residing in Alberta and British Columbia. Applicants were unemployed or precariously employed, legally entitled to work in Canada, and aiming to improve their foundational, employment, and life skills. To participate in the program, individuals were expected to possess a required level of digital skills. Additionally, qualified participants received a living allowance and Chromebook.



Numeracy



Digital



Problem Solving



Communication



Collaboration



Adaptability



Creativity &amp; Innovation

**Objectives:** The goal of SQ4S was for 154 participants to complete the six-week online program, improving their foundational and transferable skills. This preparation was aimed to better equip individuals to meet on-the-job demands and facilitate their entry or re-entry into the workforce.



Objective 1: Conduct research by collaborating with employers to gather input that would assist in developing curriculum, focusing on the nine skills for success as well as other valuable life and employment skills.



Objective 2: Within five months, design and develop an online, gamified Skills for Success training model tailored for Persons with Disabilities.



Objective 3: Implement the Skills Quest for Success training program by engaging 154 Persons with Disabilities to participate and complete training. Additionally, gather feedback from participants to evaluate and improve the program.



Objective 4: Demonstrate that participants experienced growth in the nine skills for success and satisfaction with the program. Additionally, show that participants experienced improved mental health, confidence, and computer literacy.

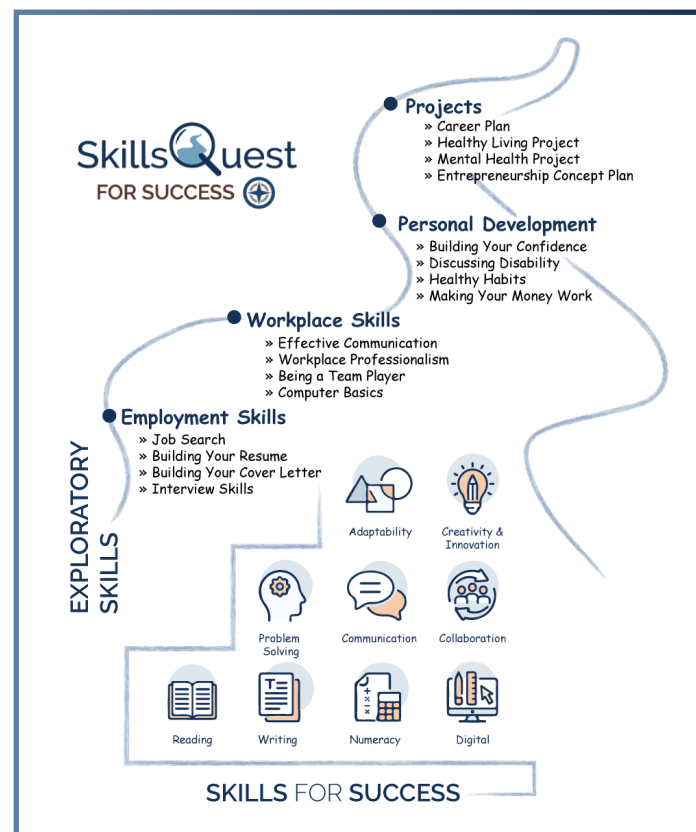
## RESEARCH



A survey was conducted with employers to identify the most sought-after employment skills and to assess any perceived skill gaps among job applicants and employees. The survey, distributed via email, returned responses from fifty employers. The survey questions encompassed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, with respondents providing ratings on the relevance of various skills for success and offering qualitative comments. Additionally, experienced program staff were surveyed to provide insight for developing training topics. Both sets of data, quantitative and qualitative, were thoroughly analyzed, revealing key topics crucial for employee success as identified by employers and staff. The results from this research-driven approach ensured that the training program covered essential and highly valued skills.



# DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT



SQ4S campaigns

## Content Development

The results of the employer survey, combined with input from program staff, informed the development of the SQ4S training. Both groups reinforced the value of all nine skills for success in both work and in life. Based on these findings, staff designed a comprehensive program aimed to equip participants with practical knowledge for daily life and work applications. The program also included specialized information tailored specifically for Persons with Disabilities.

[Objective 1 attained]

## Build

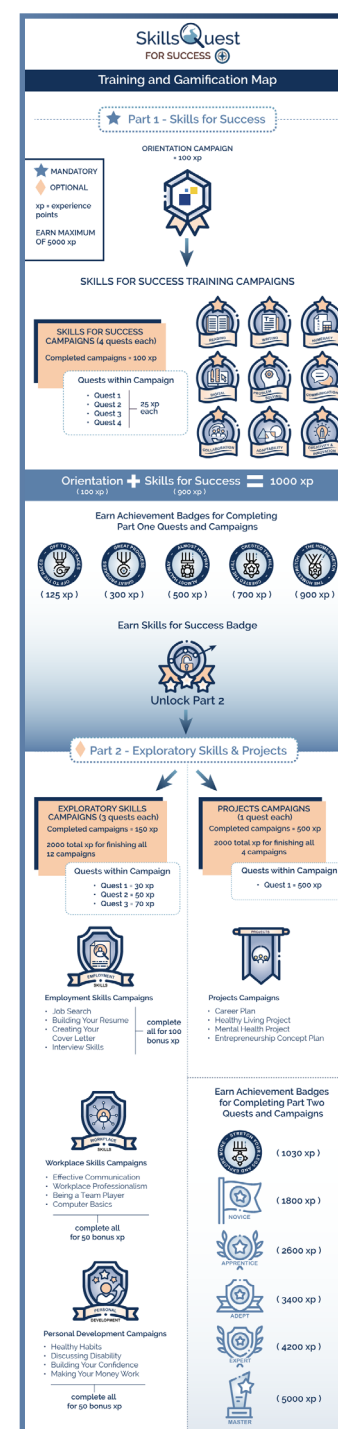
The program was built on a gamified training platform called Bytedeck. Learning was structured into campaigns (similar to units) containing 3-4 quests (similar to lessons).

## Learning Content

The training consisted of two parts. The first part included mandatory foundational campaigns focused on the nine skills for success. The second part included exploratory campaigns and projects aimed at life and employment skills development. Participants earned experience points upon completing quests. The content encompassed formats such as written text, videos, graphics, web links, resources, spotlights, stories, and submission questions. The concepts were grounded in practical, real-life scenarios and emphasized personal application.

SQ4S lesson content

A project extension was granted, allowing the program to continue for two additional weeks. Along with this extension, a new exploratory skills category called Special Topics was introduced. Within this category, two new campaigns were developed specifically for mature workers and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The titles of the two new campaigns were "Career Change for Mature Adults" and "Pride in the Workplace".



Gamefication map

SQ4S lesson resource section

## Testing

Throughout the development process, the training model underwent rigorous testing on ByteDeck, with iterative refinements made to enhance content and user experience. This iterative approach ensured that the final product met the needs of the target audience and provided an engaging and impactful learning experience.

[Objective 2 attained]

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Learning Journey

Upon program admission, participants began six weeks of asynchronous training on Bytedeck. They underwent a mandatory Bytedeck orientation and completed the nine Skills for Success campaigns, which consisted of 36 quests. Subsequently, participants unlocked 12 exploratory campaigns (comprising of 36 quests) and 4 projects. In the final month of the program, two specialized campaigns were added to the exploratory section.



SQ4S learning pathway

Throughout the training, participants received oversight from program staff who responded to submission questions, provided feedback, and ensured quest completion. Successful completion of quests earned participants experience points, fostering ongoing engagement and progress.

### Submission Instructions

**Task:** In this quest, you learned how to write a letter of interest. Now it's your turn to try it out!

Imagine you are searching for a job and inquiring with a company to see if they have any openings that match your skills and qualifications. Based on what you've learned, write a draft letter of interest to a company of your choosing.

Cut and paste your letter into the Quest Submission Form and use the editor tools to format your answer, or you can attach your letter as a file. Submit once complete.

Sample quest submission question learning pathway

## Measurement

A post-program survey assessed participants' ratings of improvement in self-confidence, digital skills, transferable skills, and overall satisfaction with the program. Comments were collected from both participants and staff. Staff provided reflections focused on program effectiveness and areas for improvement. Objective metrics included campaign completion rates, most frequently completed campaigns, program completion rates, dropout rates, and the number of applications received.

[Objective 3 attained]

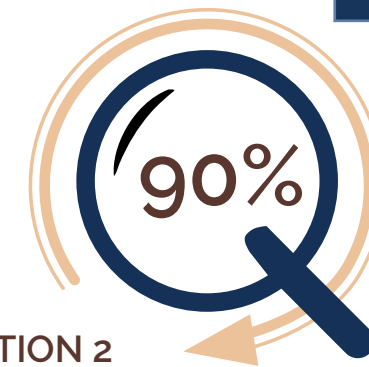
# RESULTS

## KEY OBSERVATION 1 Program Interest

The program attracted significant interest with 611 inquiries. Demand for the program was particularly higher in British Columbia compared to Alberta.

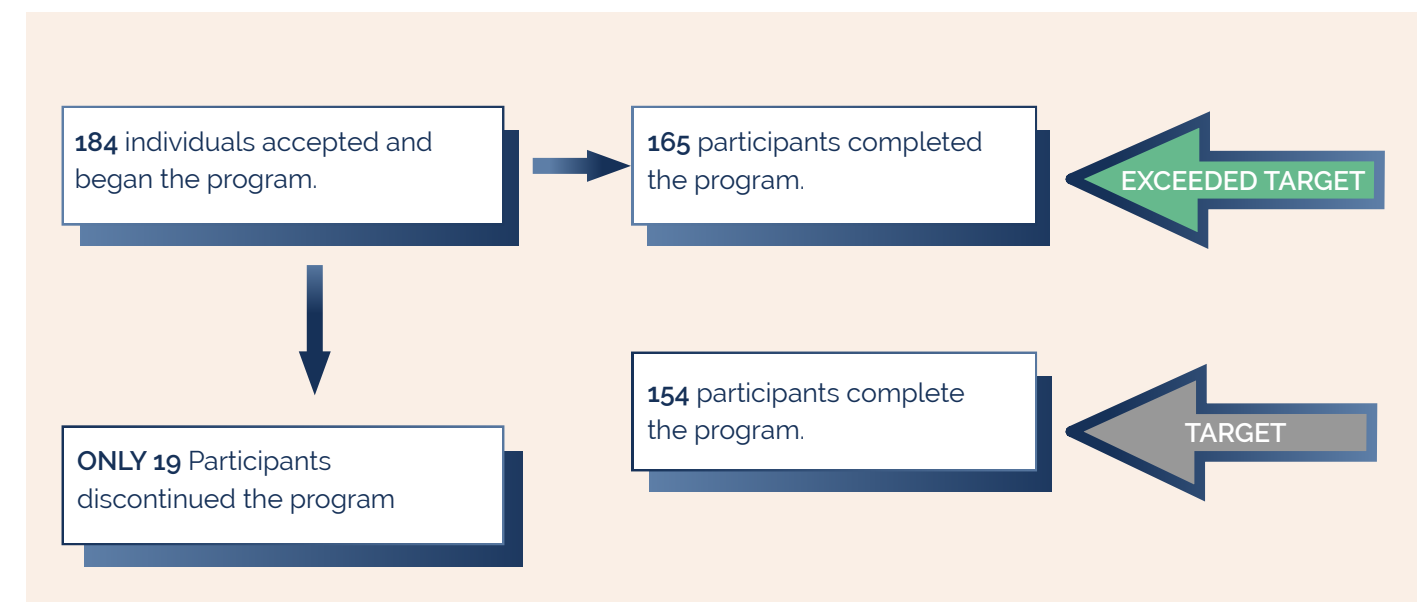


Participant inquiry information



## KEY OBSERVATION 2 Completion Rates

The program achieved a high completion rate, with 90% of participants finishing it. Among the 10% who dropped out, six participants cited reasons such as lack of financial support, lack of interest, work commitments, or other personal obligations. Additionally, thirteen participants (68%) reported mental health issues were the primary reason for not being able to complete the program.







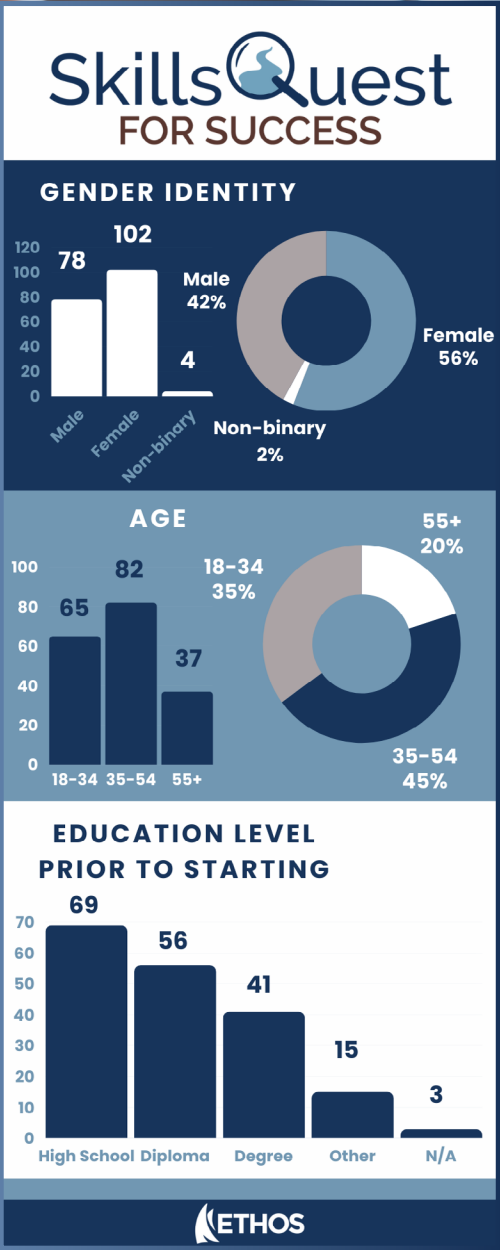
KEY OBSERVATION 3  
Participant Demographics

Among those who completed the program, there were more females than males. The majority of participants (78%) were aged 18-54. Most enrollees had high school diplomas (61%), and a significant number also held post-secondary diplomas.

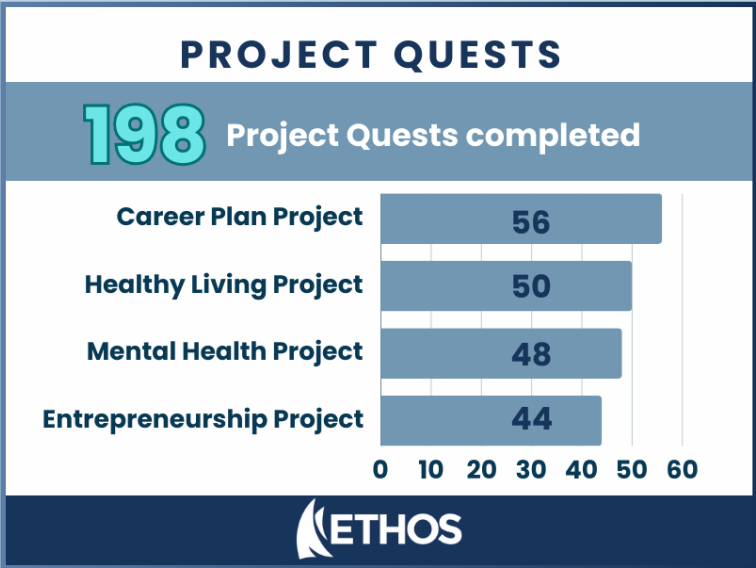
KEY OBSERVATION 4  
Popularity of Topics

The most popular exploratory campaigns included topics such as building confidence, teamwork, computer basics, resume building, and discussions on disability. Workplace professionalism, effective communication, and healthy habits were also popular, highlighting the demand for both employment-focused and personal development topics. There was also a notable interest in the specialized campaigns, despite their late addition in the final month of the program.

The Career Plan project had the highest completion rate, closely followed by the Healthy Living project and the Mental Health project



Participant demographic information

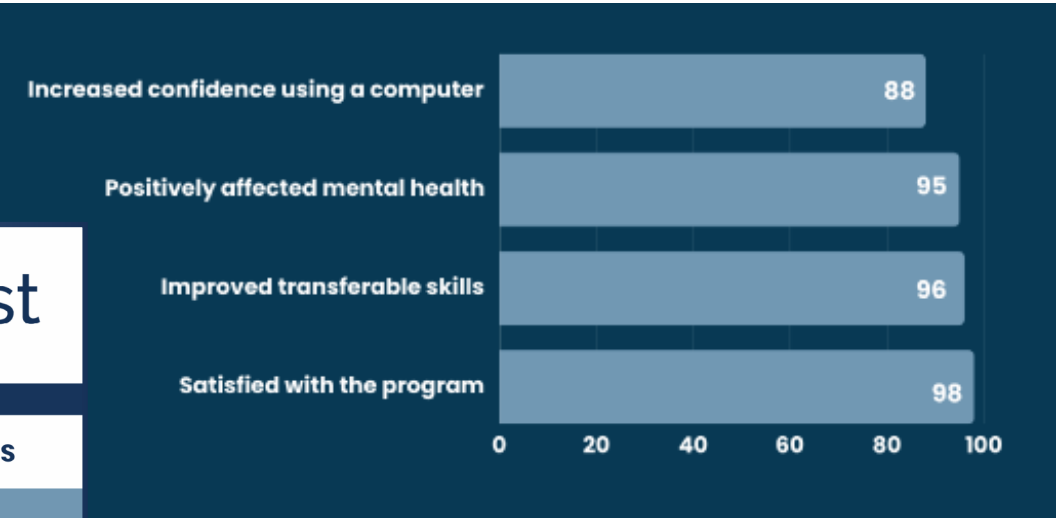


Number of projects completed

KEY OBSERVATION 5  
Survey Results

Quantitative Data: Participants rated the program in four areas aligned with project outcomes using a 1-5 scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. An overwhelming majority of participants were satisfied with the program (98%), felt they improved their transferable skills (96%), and reported a positive impact on their mental health (95%). Additionally, after completing the program, 88% felt more confident using a computer.

[Objective 4 attained]



Quantitative Survey Data (106 responses)

**Qualitative Data:** Comments reinforced the high satisfaction level with the program. Many participants noted that the program enhanced their skills for success, improved their overall life skills, and they felt it changed their life. The survey data included 86 comments, categorized as follows: 90% were positive (77 comments), while 10% highlighted drawbacks or suggested improvements (9 comments). The main areas for improvement were extending the program's length and providing more support.

Top Five Categories of Positive Feedback

- Nature of content (interesting, appropriate, good variety, valuable, relevant, practical)
- Increased skills for success
- Increased life skills (coping skills, self-care, inspired, life-changing)
- Support from staff
- Exploratory quests valuable



Number of exploratory quests competed.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Lengthen the training program to eight weeks.

Participant feedback indicated that six weeks was insufficient to fully explore the content, with many expressing a preference for an eight-week program. This extended duration would allow more time to engage with and absorb the material, as well as delve deeper into the exploratory quests and practice new skills such as healthy living and budgeting. Some participants indicated that this program was their first introduction to these important life skills topics. With 78 quests and four projects, six weeks is insufficient time for meaningful engagement with the course material, completing activities, and receiving ongoing guidance from support staff. Staff members also felt that this extension would provide participants with the necessary time to fully benefit from the program's offerings.

Key Observations	Comments
Key Observation 1: The program attracted significant interest, particularly in British Columbia, where demand was notably higher compared to Alberta. Extending the program's length would allow more participants to benefit fully from the program and could also attract additional participants from Alberta.	<i>I find the program very good. I am enjoying the program. I wish it would last a little longer. - Participant</i>  <i>Participants reported that lengthening the program would provide additional time for the exploratory quests. - Staff</i>
Key Observation 2: The program had a high completion rate, with 90% of participants finishing it. This indicates that participants find the content valuable and engaging enough to complete. Extending the program, therefore, makes sense.	
Key observation 5: The program received high satisfaction ratings, with participants reporting positive impacts, not only on life and employment skills, but also on mental health and confidence. Extending the program would allow more participants to benefit from these impactful outcomes.	

## 2. Provide employment supports for three months post-training.

The primary focus of SQ4S was to equip participants with foundational skills essential for entering or re-entering the workforce. However, both program staff and participants proposed enhancing the program by introducing an employment phase. This phase would involve job searches, interviews, and securing employment, adding another layer of impact to this program. Implementation of an employment component would entail the addition of job coaches to the existing program staff. Staff also recommended supporting

individuals in obtaining certifications such as WHMIS or First Aid certification. Other supports may include providing workplace attire or interview clothing and assisting participants in completing record checks for employment purposes.

Key Observations	Comments
Key observations 3: The program attracted participants aged 18-54, who are in their prime employment years. Adding an employment phase would maximize the impact on this age group.	<i>I would have liked a portion that suggested jobs that would be good for me. - Participant</i>  <i>Some participants felt "cut loose" when the program ended and would have appreciated more help in finding an actual job. - Staff</i>
Key Observation 4: Participants showed particular interest in employment-related campaigns such as Computer Basics, Building Your Resume, Workplace Professionalism, and Communication. The Career Plan project was the most popular project, highlighting the importance of employment to participants.	

## 3. Build in more structured client supports during training.

The SQ4S program was participant-centered, allowing individuals to determine what and when they learned. This flexibility and autonomy fostered empowerment and engagement by making participants active learners in charge of their learning. However, some participants and program staff suggested adding a more structured outline or schedule. This could include regularly scheduled meetings with program staff and optional weekly group meetings. These additional activities would provide more structure while still allowing participants the autonomy to choose their learning paths.

### Supporting Evidence

Key Observations	Comments
Key observation 5: One of the recurring top five comments highlighted the participants' appreciation and satisfaction with staff support. This support, often provided through feedback on quest submissions, opened the door for further discussion and assistance in other areas. The sense of connection with someone from the success team played a significant role in the participants' success, as expressed in their comments.	<i>It would be a good idea to have a weekly meeting with your instructor to get feedback about the program. - Participant</i>  <i>A few of my participants told me they'd like the chance to connect with other participants. A weekly meeting or workshop via Teams would be good to add. - Staff</i>



4. Increased training on confidence-building and personal development content.

As participants progressed through the quests and received feedback from program staff, many experienced significant boosts in their confidence. This enhanced confidence extended beyond the program, improving participants' ability to communicate with professionals, strengthening family relationships, and providing clarity in their future goals. Additionally, there was significant interest in personal life skills topics, particularly with the Healthy Habits campaign and the Healthy Living and Mental Health projects. It is recommended to enhance the program with additional confidence-building and life skills training to further empower participants in achieving their personal and professional goals.

Key Observations	Comments
Key observation 4: The most popular topic in the exploratory section of the training was "Building Confidence". This indicates a significant need among participants, as they prioritized this topic above all others. There was also strong interest in the Healthy Habits campaign, as well as the Healthy Living and Mental Health projects.	<p><i>Prior to this program I was afraid to talk to other people who were bosses, new friends, doctors, community supports... now [I] have new tools... being assertive, having empathy for others' feelings... I have now found ways to go meet my 15yr old daughter who I never ever met now our relationship is so strong... love the lessons for communicating with others, relaxing, deep breathing, meditation, music...thanks for the lessons I am now enrolled in college networking systems administration. - Participant</i></p> <p><i>The cover letter and resume writing segments provided crucial guidance for crafting professional documents. Additionally, the inclusion of mental health skills helped cultivate self-awareness and resilience. Overall, I found the Skills Quest program to be comprehensive and well-rounded, providing an excellent platform for personal and professional growth. - Participant</i></p> <p><i>I'm so happy I came across this program. It's given me such a boost of confidence and motivation to keep moving forward. On top of the curriculum, the extra resources are insanely valuable. - Participant</i></p> <p><i>I definitely gained confidence in myself and some skills I thought were ordinary or unnecessary. This program helped me to find hope in future opportunities for me. Skills for Success has encouraged me. - Participant</i></p>

5. Include training for additional inclusion groups.

The program was initially developed with inclusivity in mind, incorporating inclusive language, examples, and resources. In the final month of the program, two additional exploratory campaigns for mature workers and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community were introduced. These campaigns provided valuable opportunities for discussions and insights on navigating challenges unique to these populations.

Despite their late addition, these quests generated significant interest and positive feedback from both staff and participants. To further promote inclusivity, it is recommended to incorporate training for other marginalized groups.

Key Observations	Comments
Key observation 4: Introduced in the final month, the six additional quests focusing on mature workers and 2SLGBTQIA+ topics accumulated over 70 quest completions. This highlights the demand for demographic-specific material within the program. This also aligns with the popularity of the demographic-specific campaign on discussing disability, which ranked fifth among the participants' preferred exploratory topics.	<p><i>One of my mature participants who has been out of the workforce for some time tried to make jokes about some of the 2SLGBTQIA+ material, and I was able to use it as a learning opportunity with them. It was important to address it, as jokes would not be tolerated within a workplace. - Staff</i></p>







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