

Chapter Two - The Developing Profession/Professional

Box 2.2. Assessing Your Personal Qualities as a Family Life Educator

Listed below are qualities seen as critical for effectiveness as a family life educator.

Rate yourself on the following scale:

- 1 Needs much improvement
- 2 Needs some improvement
- 3 Average, but not well developed
- 4 Above average, moving toward competency
- 5 Competent in this area

General intellectual skills. Ability to gather, read, and process information and to apply it to a topic and to group needs; to articulate concepts and ideas; to organize materials and stay on track when presenting them; to hear and incorporate ideas of others.

Self-awareness. Ability to recognize and articulate one's own personal opinions, attitudes, and cultural values and not to assume that they are everyone's opinions, attitudes, and values; to understand personal tendencies to assume certain roles in a group, such as caretaker, controller, placater, dominant authority; to acknowledge one's own strengths and limitations.

Emotional stability. Ability to recognize one's own level of emotional comfort or discomfort in a given situation; to express emotions in appropriate ways and at appropriate times; to maintain calmness in the face of crisis or confrontation and to refrain from personal attack on another person, either verbally or physically.

Maturity. Ability to handle success, disappointment, frustration, or confrontation with dignity and understanding; to acknowledge one's own mistakes and weaknesses and not blame others; to move past grievances and continue to see each person as someone with value and potential.

Empathy. Ability to put oneself in another person's place; to reflect the feeling to the other person; to understand her or his dilemma.

Effective social skills. Ability to feel comfortable and enjoy the company of others; to share in group activities; to engage in conversation and to actively listen to others.

Self-confidence. Ability to speak and act decisively in personal conversation or in front of a group; to accept the challenge of one's ideas without defensiveness and to state one's position with enthusiasm and documentation, not personal criticism or attack; to acknowledge personal strengths and accept words of appreciation graciously.

Flexibility. Ability to adapt plans to suit a changing situation; to recognize when change is needed and be willing to try a new approach.

Understanding and appreciation of diversity. Ability to acknowledge differences in others' values, attitudes, and lifestyles; to respect and appreciate cultural and ethnic differences in dress, customs, and language; to understand socioeconomic differences in income, education, and status and how these differences affect lifestyles and decision making; to actively resist gender, racial, and socioeconomic biases or stereotypes.

Verbal and written communication skills. Ability to speak articulately, convincingly, and concisely; to write clearly in language that is not "over the head" of one's audience; to use illustrations and examples that support one's points; to know when an audience has been "overloaded" with information.

Ability to relate well with all ages and groups and on a one-to-one basis. Ability to talk with and not down to any group or person; to resist judgmentalism and boredom; to appreciate humor and sharing; to practice patience in listening and interacting.

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Lane H. Powell, CFLE and Dawn Cassidy, CFLE

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