

Developing Your Help Seeking Skills

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Have you ever faced that awkwardness of asking for help and for some reason you planned not to go for it?

We all might have come across such situations in our life. However, seeking help when required is not just a choice, instead, it is an important social skill that we all should inculcate.

Help-seeking is a skill that helps us to know - when to ask for help, what kind of help is required, the right place to get the required help, and most important – Its application in the future.

WHY THE HESITATION?

There might be many reasons behind our hesitant behavior toward seeking help. Here are some of them:

- **UNAWARENESS** – You do not know the right person to reach out to, or you are unaware of the resources that are available for you.
- **PAST EXPERIENCES** – In your past, you might have approached the wrong method/person for help and eventually it did not work out. This may now discourage you from asking for help.
- **DISCOMFORT** – According to Excellence in School Counselling, asking for help does not come naturally for many of us. We might not feel comfortable in sharing our problems with someone due to many external factors. However, if you keep things to yourselves, they can become even more difficult to resolve.
- **FEAR and SHYNESS** – You feel afraid to do it because of the possible outcomes, or you are just shy.

HOW TO DEVELOP HELP-SEEKING SKILLS?

- **REALIZATION** – Knowing when you need to stop exhausting yourself and realizing

that 'I need help' plays a significant role in your journey to develop help-seeking skills.

- **NORMALIZING IT** – Stepping up to ask for help can make you more comfortable. You will come to realize that 'it's not a big deal.' Also, by doing that you will create a safe space for others around you. They will be encouraged to ask for help.
- **KNOWING THE RIGHT APPROACH** – Now that you have realized that you need help and you are even ready to ask for it, it is important that you know the right person/place to approach to. Seneca has many resources (listed below) to help and support you.
- **COMMUNICATION** – Communicating your problems clearly enhances better understanding of the problem. It will help you to overcome your second thoughts and build trust and respect. Effective communication will even help you produce creative solutions.
- **LEARNING FROM OTHERS** – Learning from others' experiences can not only help you with your situation but can also help to save up your time and energy.

DIFFERENT CONTEXTS WHERE YOU CAN SEEK HELP & RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT SENECA

Asking for help can take many different forms depending on your particular issue. Once you have identified what it is you need help with, finding the right resource/support becomes a lot easier. Here are some of the resources available at Seneca:

Academic Help – You might be struggling with assignments or having a challenging time in understanding a concept; or you are having second thoughts about your program. You want to explore a different career path but all you require is a push.

Consider reaching out to:

- **Learning Centre** – For those who need help with their courses, it provides various approaches to learning support, including workshops, tutoring, 1:1 session, exam preparation and online learning support.
- **Academic Pathways** – For exploring a different career path, it provides assorted options to/within/beyond Seneca.

Emotional Help – You might be facing problems with expressing your feelings and emotions. You are afraid to do it because of the possible outcomes; and are hesitant to reach out to your loved ones for help. You feel worried, sad, depressed, anxious, or not yourself.

These are some of the signs indication you should seek external help.

Seneca offers the following resources:

- **Personal Counselling and Accessible Learning Services** – To offer support to students in managing the complexities of college life and are confidential and free of cost.
- **Morcare - Student Wellness Program** – If you have Morcare health insurance, you and your dependents can be provided with short-term therapy, lifestyle counselling, courses, tools, and events to improve mental and physical health.

Social Help – Socializing can become a big barrier, especially for students from a different culture. You might have a tough time socializing with people; and you tend to become uncomfortable when you are surrounded by strangers.

For this, you can try joining clubs of your interest where you can find like-minded people. The Seneca Student Federation has several clubs that you can join. Also, if you are unable to find a club of interest to you, you may also form your own club. Click [here](#) for more details.

You may also want to consider Seneca's **Peer Mentoring Program**, if you are a new student a mentor can assist you with navigating through the first few months of post-secondary life. If you are an existing student (past first semester) consider becoming a mentor and helping a new student. Many mentors and mentees stay in touch, long after the program ends.

Cultural Help – Many students, especially those who come from a foreign country, go through the phase of "Culture Shock." The drastic change in your environment can be very overwhelming. Although it is good to give yourself some time to adjust, it is also important to know when you need external help or support.

You can read more about culture shock and other issues facing international students in the **Homesickness and Loneliness Among International Students** blog on this page.

Financial Help – The inflation is high, and it is expensive to support yourself. Check out this [blog](#) by Spring Financial on how you can save money in Canada.

Also, Seneca offers a variety of financial assistance options like bursaries, scholarships, and OSAP (Ontario Student Assistance Program). Click [here](#) to know how you can apply for it.

MY TAKE AS A STUDENT

Developing help-seeking skills will not only help us overcome our problems and maintain our overall well-being, but it will also help us to build our careers. Therefore, it is essential that we learn how to develop it and start implementing it in our daily lives.

The content was adapted from the following resources:

- [Excellence In School Counseling](#)
- [Carnegie Mellon University](#)
- [Graduate Programs](#)
- [Helpful Professor](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#)
- [Queensland Government](#)
- [Haiilo](#)



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