

SPOTLIGHT ON

Change



*An Essential Skills
Upgrading Program
For Women Over 40*

Marianne Paul & Lindsay Kennedy

Funded by the Office of Literacy and
Essential Skills (HRSDC)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people, mostly women, to thank. The idea for this project—like many great project ideas—came from a focus group discussion about local demographics and emerging employment trends. Someone noticed that “unemployed women over the age of forty” seemed to be an underserved demographic. From there the discussion moved on to the service needs of this “market segment” – what would their learning needs be and what services could they access in the community? It was soon clear that there was a need to create program content specifically for unemployed women over forty, in fact, for any woman over forty.

Anne Ramsay at Project READ Literacy Network saw the potential for this type of program and volunteered to develop a project proposal. The project application, to the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, was successful. Our thanks to OLES for the project funding that led to the development of the *Spotlight on Change* curriculum.

The work of the project was guided and supported by a team of great people. Business people and staff from community organizations in several different communities helped the project consultants, Lindsay Kennedy and Marianne Paul, create the framework on which this resource took shape. The advisory team helped us see what the whole program would look like – and its potential to put the *Spotlight on Change*.

Members of the advisory team were:

- Christine Bearinger, Northern Lights Canada Ltd.
- Carole Formica, Barrday Incorporated
- Olga George-Cosh, Focus for Ethnic Women
- Amneh Hamdan, YMCA Cross Cultural and Immigrant Services
- Teresa Morgan, Conestoga College
- Karen Morgan-Bowyer, The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region
- Carole Risidore, The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region
- Carol Simpson, Waterloo-Wellington Training and Adjustment Board
- Pam Tetarenko, The Training Group Douglas College

Early on we conducted key informant interviews with a number of recently unemployed women over forty. These women had worked in the automotive industry for many years. Their comments about their experiences with traditional job search and résumé writing programs were extremely insightful.

We also consulted with Dr. Lorraine Vander Hoef from the Women's Studies program at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her perspective was a valuable contribution to the shape and direction of the curriculum framework.

Field testing played an important role in the final development of the content. In fact, it is the women who volunteered to be participants in the field tests to whom we owe the most. In B.C., Pam Tetarenko arranged for us to use a college setting to test the full program. In Ontario, Olga George-Cosh provided us with a community-based setting. Both of these women were extremely supportive. Each of them worked with enthusiasm to overcome the challenges that the delivery of this curriculum created. The field testing of the full curriculum happened because they could see the value of an Essential Skills program for women over forty.

At both field test sites, the entry requirements for participants were identical: women over forty who were out of work or who had been out of the workforce for a period of time. At each location flyers were circulated to community organizations and groups. Over 20 women participated in the two field test sites.

The field test facilitators were:

- ❶ Barb Grant at Focus for Ethnic Women
- ❶ Jane Keresztes at Douglas College

Many thanks to Barb and Jane for their willingness to take on untried content and run with it. Their facilitation styles suited our approach to women-centred learning perfectly.

During the full field test period each facilitator collected and documented feedback on a regular basis. After the field testing we conducted in depth face-to-face interviews with program participants and the program facilitators. This dual process of data collection was invaluable in shaping the final content. Many thanks to the women participants: we bow to their strength and applaud their courage for taking the journey that allowed them to put the spotlight on the changes they felt ready to make.

The content was also tested in a different way at three other locations: The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region (Kitchener and Cambridge, Ontario) and at YMCA Cross Cultural and Immigrant Services in Cambridge, Ontario. At these locations, agency staff picked specific activities or units to try out. We then met with them to collect their feedback. This approach, which involved an additional 20 participants, helped to ensure that it would be possible for instructors to browse through the content and use individual activities or units without having to provide the whole program. Our thanks to Karen Morgan-Bowyer, Nancy Cowan and Amneh Hamdan for trying this approach and for providing us with their feedback.

About the cover: the quilt square on the front cover was taken from a larger quilt made by the participants at the Focus for Ethnic Women field test site. You can see an image of the whole quilt at www.projectread.ca/spotlightonchange.

This has been a truly gratifying project to work on!

Sincerely,
Lindsay Kennedy and Marianne Paul

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SPOTLIGHT ON

Change

Introduction and Overview

COURSE OUTCOME

As a result of taking the *Spotlight on Change* program, the participant better understands herself, her skills, her goals, and her community as they relate to finding work. She applies the Essential Skills required for work, learning and life to enact change and to move closer to her employment goals.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

COURSE OUTCOME:

As a result of taking the *Spotlight on Change* program, the participant better understands herself, her skills, her goals, and her community as they relate to finding work. She applies the Essential Skills required for work, learning and life to enact change and to move closer to her employment goals.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Spotlight on Change*! We are delighted to offer this Essential Skills training program for women aged forty plus who are seeking employment. This manual is written for the facilitator, and it outlines the learning progressions, women-centred activities, and hands-on worksheets for the course participants.

Older women, especially immigrants, experience higher rates of unemployment than the general population. Often they are challenged in their job search by a lack of formal education and low literacy. In response to the economic climate and needs voiced within our own community, we developed a curriculum for older women who are low-skilled and unemployed. The program is designed to help participants increase their Essential Skills and their confidence so that they can build employability skills.

We field-tested *Spotlight on Change* within and outside our community, in group and one-to-one settings, with immigrant and non-immigrant women, and have listened intently to the feedback. The participants have told us how vital it is to have curriculum directly based on the needs of older learners, that honours how women learn, and acknowledges the challenges they face when seeking employment.

Many of the women had participated in other employment training sessions that included both males and females, and a large “catch-basin” of people at various ages and life-stages. They felt lost and dissatisfied, and their lack of comfort and success underscores the need for a different approach.

We've chosen to start and end the units with participant quotations, so you can read what the women had to say in their own words. They speak to the needs and challenges facing older women workers much better than we could (as authors of the *Spotlight on Change* program). We've also included tips and comments from facilitators and participants about specific activities and program content – what worked from their perspectives and suggestions for delivery.

As a result of participation in *Spotlight on Change*, it is our hope and intent that each woman will better understand herself – and her unique blend of skills, strengths, needs and interests as they relate to finding work. It is also our aim that each woman better understands her community, its unique makeup, employment needs, and the opportunities it offers her specifically.

Does *Spotlight on Change* promise the participant she will find employment at the end of the course? No, it can't do that. Neither can you as the facilitator. The program isn't designed as a job-search or job-training program. What we can promise is that each woman will explore Essential Skills for work, learning and life, and move closer to her employment goals. She will gain a clearer understanding of the job she wants, and how she will get it. She will make decisions based on what is best for her in consideration of her skills, interests, and life situation, and will formulate these decisions into an Action Plan. And she'll do all that within a supportive environment.

The curriculum is written to help you, the facilitator, guide participants as they take steps towards their future and gain the self-awareness and community awareness to make employment decisions that are a best-fit for their individual situation.

HOW SPOTLIGHT ON CHANGE IS ORGANIZED

The curriculum consists of two main modules, each consisting of eight units, and a third wrap-up section consisting of one unit. Here's the breakdown:

- Module One: Exploring Myself
- Module Two: Exploring My Community
- Creating My Action Plan: Exploring My Future

The content has been developed to encourage the participant to first **look inward** to discover her strengths and interests, to explore her past experiences, and to acknowledge and overcome her challenges and barriers.

Next, the content provides the opportunity for each woman to **look outward** to explore her community to gain a better understanding of the resources and opportunities she can find there and the support available to her. It is designed to help her examine the employment landscape where she lives, and explore her skills and interests in light of her discoveries.

In the final section, the participants will **look forward** using the skills and knowledge they have gained as a result of their participation in the learning activities to **develop an Action Plan** for the future. This is an extremely important part of the program as it encourages participants to synthesize what they've learned about themselves and their community to enact change in their lives.

Each woman is also asked to **initiate a step of her choice** from her Action Plan with the support of the facilitator and her peers. This is crucial in helping the individual make a successful transition from the *Spotlight on Change* program towards her plans for the future. For example, a participant might:

- Apply for an apprenticeship program or other learning or training opportunity.
- Visit a college and talk to a counsellor about enrolling.

- Search job banks and apply for a job in the field she has chosen.
- Improve a specific Essential Skill area required by her occupation choice by completing related learning activities.
- Write a résumé.

The seventeen units that make up the two modules and the Action Plan are all organised in the same manner with a consistent layout:

- A unit outcome
- The Essential Skills for work, learning and life that the women will be practising while participating in the unit activities
- Resources and websites that supplement the key learning of each unit
- Get Ready activity for the participant to help prepare for the unit
- Get Ready activity for the facilitator to help you think about the unit's content from the perspective of the learners, that is, to apply to your own life some of the thinking that you'll be asking the participants to do
- Suggestions and tips for facilitation and delivery of the unit
- Activities to present the core content
- Participant worksheets that correspond to the activities
- Follow-up activities that are suggested if time and participant interest permits
- Learning Journal and Portfolio ideas
- Wrap-up discussion including gathering feedback

PARTICIPANT WORKSHEETS

Approximately seventy **participant worksheets** and handouts have been embedded into the manual, along with Action Plan worksheets in the final sections. We've put these worksheets in close proximity to the related activity for your ease of reference. For ease of printing, we've also gathered the participant worksheets together in one document. You can find the participant worksheets on the Project READ website or on the memory stick you have received.

You are welcome to print the worksheets for use in *Spotlight for Change* sessions. We ask that you respect the copyright of the original creators of excerpted portions as stated on the worksheet or on their website, and credit/use their work accordingly. We have made concerted efforts to locate permissions and cite references, and urge you to contact us if we have made omissions. Where no source is cited, Project READ Literacy Network is the copyright holder and has created the materials.

Two learning tools have been incorporated into the content. These include a **Learning Journal** and a **Portfolio**. The Learning Journal, in particular, was a favourite with field-test participants and we encourage you to make it part of your sessions. We have also provided computer options, and encourage you to provide computer opportunities for participants as part of their learning.

THE SPOTLIGHT ON CHANGE APPROACH

While the goal of the project was to create curriculum, we have not created a lock-step process. Rather, we've provided suggestions and approaches to learning. The program promotes an approach that is flexible and easily adaptable to a variety of settings.

While we've built flexibility into the curriculum in terms of timelines, setting, and the number and choice of activities to use, there are other aspects that are not negotiable. These are the cornerstones of the *Spotlight on Change* program, and are integral to your delivery and facilitation in order to meet the needs of the target group.

These cornerstones include:

- **Culturally sensitive:** The program honours and draws upon the background of the women. It explores and values their needs, challenges, and experiences in making the transition from where they are now to where they want to be in the future.
- **Age and life-stage relevant:** The program focuses upon the perspectives and issues of women seeking to gain or strengthen employability skills at mid-life. As such, it is rooted in the **principles of adult education**. This means it is based in the needs of the *individual* woman learner, it is participatory, it draws upon her experiences, skills and knowledge to construct new learning and, it supports her so she can take ownership of her plans for the future.
- **Linked to Essential Skills:** The program focuses upon the Essential Skills needed for work, learning and life and specifically, the combination of skills that will help women see how they can make employment-related transitions based on individualized goals. Each participant initiates change in her life in ways important to her. The curriculum has been designed to accommodate participants with low literacy proficiency, and its associated lack of confidence. It encourages women with higher skill levels to help those who are struggling.
- **Woman-centred and gender-based:** The program respects and is firmly situated within the perspectives and “ways of knowing/learning” of women, while at the same time recognizing and making room for individual differences. Ideas for delivery are offered below, based on our research about how women learn.

We've also structured the learning environment to respect the principles of adult education and we promote a level of interaction between the women that may not be found in other curriculum. To do this we used the following set of guiding principles.

Cooperative and collaborative learning - we have provided situations and activities that promote opportunities for the women to interact, work together to solve problems and make decisions, and learn from each other. We have set up the activities so that the sharing of ideas and experiences is facilitated through small groups and partnering.

Group discussion and conversation is an embedded learning strategy. Reaching a 'single/absolute answer' isn't the primary goal, rather the expression of opinions and ideas through the exploration of the issue at hand, and the building of communication skills and self-confidence is valued more highly.

Opportunities for **mentoring** play a key role in all the activities and interactions. It is this interaction between a more experienced person and a less experienced person that will provide all the participants with additional opportunities for learning and growing.

The activities are **learner-centred and participatory**. They have been designed so that you, as the facilitator, act as a guide and "mid-wife" to the women's thinking/learning. Each opportunity for learning is clearly centred on individual and group needs so that the participants take **responsibility for, and influence**, the planning and delivery of lessons and content.

There is a great deal of **knowledge and experience in the community**. In several of the units we suggest that you create opportunities for the women to learn from and interact with women in the community who have found success in work. This interaction takes the form of guest speakers, panel discussions, job-shadowing, mentoring, networking, volunteer placements and field trips.

Learning from women from the community helps to ensure that the **context is real** – that the activities and learning are situated in applied contexts. This will help to create personal connections to what is being learned and why: "How does this relate to my life, and benefit me in a concrete, useful and real way?" Using narratives such as case studies, learning journals, portfolios, role-playing, first-person stories and examples, and true-life articles and accounts (on-line & print media) also provide a powerful opportunity to make the context real and relevant.

Drawing upon the participants' **experiences** and helping them **apply critical reflection** to create meaning and knowledge fosters a cyclical learning process that employs experience-reflection-experience to integrate what is learned back into real-life situations. Critical reflection, as an ongoing approach to learning, will help to enact change (transformative learning), and to develop metacognitive (learning how to learn) skills.

Above all, the curriculum, and our approach to it, is **holistic**. Acknowledging the importance of relationships, connectedness, caring and "feeling" to how women learn will provide a learning environment that is safe emotionally as well as physically. Choosing activities that position learning to the whole-person and the multi-faceted nature of the individual will ensure that "Women's voices are not gender related, but also rooted in class, race, age, sexual orientation, and family status." (Cafferella, 1992).

MORE ABOUT ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) define Essential Skills as "the skills needed for work, learning and life." They consider these skills to be the foundational skills for all other learning and needed to "enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change."

More and more employers understand and use Essential Skills. It is becoming a common language for both employers and employees. By linking the Essential Skills to the activities in *Spotlight for Change* we can assist participants to not only become familiar with the language, but also give them a way to see the skills they already have in a new way. This new understanding builds confidence as well as helping the participant discover employment areas that correspond with her interests and skill strengths.

There are many useful resources and tools available online from the HRSDC Essential Skills website, and it is worthwhile to become familiar with the site, especially when it comes time for participants to explore the Essential Skills required for the employment opportunities in which they are interested.

Nine Essential Skills have been identified, and considerable work has been done to link the Essential Skills to nearly every occupation.

1. Reading Text
2. Document Use
3. Numeracy
4. Writing
5. Oral Communication
6. Working With Others
7. Computer Use
8. Thinking Skills
9. Continuous Learning

Thinking skills are divided into six different types of cognitive functions:

- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Critical thinking
- Job task planning and organizing
- Significant use of memory
- Finding information.

Numeracy has also been divided into a number of subsets. For more information about numeracy visit HRSDC's website:
www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/oles/olesindex_en.shtml.

ASSESSMENT

The field test sites that facilitated *Spotlight on Change* with groups of women (approximately ten participants per group) were required to use formal pre- and post testing assessment as “bookends” to the program. The assessment tool chosen for this was the PDQ developed by Educational Testing Service. PDQ is a full-length, on-line assessment that consists of a short set of background questions plus three sets of Prose, Document and Quantitative Essential Skill tasks (hence PDQ).

This assessment can be used to provide a profile of an individual’s literacy skill or to determine whether skills have improved over time as the result of some intervention. The scores, reflective of the 500 point International Adult Literacy Survey levels across five levels of literacy proficiency, describe an individual’s strengths and weaknesses with respect to the types of literacy tasks they can perform.

PDQ is not recommended for individuals who are ESL, but neither are other Essential Skill assessments. However, the results from a pre- and post assessment should still show an improvement with intervention. What makes this assessment feel less intimidating is that it is not timed. Instead, individuals can work at their own pace within a reasonable period of time, a valuable approach to the women in this target group.

Both groups in our field test showed marked improvement in their PDQ test scores across the board. We found that although the *Spotlight on Change* program wasn’t designed to directly focus on increasing literacy-related skills, this is exactly what happened. The women’s confidence levels with language and the Essential Skills grew as they used these skills within a supportive group to explore their strengths and needs, and learned about the Essential Skills embedded in the jobs that they choose to pursue as a result of their work in the program.

It is not necessary to do formal pre- and post skills assessment to offer the *Spotlight on Change* program, although our experiences doing so were positive for the participants, and we would recommend it. As with any learning program, regardless of the assessment tools you choose, you will want to establish a baseline for the participant’s skills at the start so that she can see her progress, and can better understand her strengths and needs as these relate to finding employment.

TIMELINES AND GROUPINGS

Spotlight on Change is designed to be adaptable and flexible. We field-tested the curriculum with two groups that met for about a ten-week period, five days a week, three hours a day. One group met within a college setting, and another within a community-based agency setting. We also field-tested the program with smaller groups and one-to-one tutoring matches, asking facilitators to incorporate activities from the curriculum into their teaching sessions.

We found that the curriculum is adaptable to a variety of settings and timelines. You are invited to use the *Spotlight on Change* materials in the ways that best suit the group of women you are serving. This means you may choose to run the whole program from start to end as it is presented, or select specific activities and units in support of your regular learning sessions and programs.

We did not assign overall time guidelines to the *Spotlight on Change* program as a whole, nor to specific activities. We found that the length of many of the activities were dependent upon the skills and interests of the women in the group. Discussions lasted a lot longer in many cases than the facilitators had thought they would, as the women shared and learned from each other, and expressed their emotions and experiences. This “sharing time” was instrumental to the success of the program, and the learning of the women.

Both of the larger field-test groups completed the program in its entirety in an eight to ten week time span, meeting approximately twelve to fifteen hours a week. In general, *Module One: Exploring My Self* took about three to four weeks to complete. *Module Two: Exploring My Community* took four to five weeks, and the final piece, *Creating My Action Plan: Exploring My Future*, about a week. We’ve purposely provided a wide range and choice of activities – core activities as well as follow-up activities – from which you may select to suit the learners’ needs and your program’s timelines.

FEEDBACK

We've included the evaluation form that we asked participants to fill out at the end of each unit during the field-testing stage. This provided us with the feedback we used to revise the curriculum. You may wish to use it during your delivery of *Spotlight on Change*.

Gathering feedback and encouraging participants to express their opinions, and thereby shape the delivery and content of the program, is essential. It is important that you provide plenty of opportunities for both oral and written feedback, expressed both as part of the group and individually.

We hope you enjoy facilitating *Spotlight on Change*, and that it is a positive and life changing experience for the women who participate. We welcome your feedback, ideas and questions. You can contact us through Project READ Literacy Network, Waterloo-Wellington (Ontario), www.projectread.ca.

PARTICIPATION EVALUATION

Please tell us what you thought about the work that you did in this unit.

1. What was a positive message in the unit for you?

2. Was there anything you would have liked to learn more about? If yes, what would that be?

3. How would you rate the activities that you did? (Circle one)

Very useful	Useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
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4. What 3 things did you like the most about the unit?

1.

2.

3.

5. What 3 things did you like least about the unit?

1.

2.

3.

6. Which ideas or statements really made you think during the unit?

7. Is there something that you will do differently as a result of this unit? If yes, what will that be?

8. Is there anything else you'd like to say about this unit?

SPOTLIGHT ON

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Module 1: Exploring My Self

OUTCOME

The participant creates a skill, knowledge and personality profile and uses the profile to identify areas of employment that reflect her interests and strengths.

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GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

"It was very helpful to hear how other women within my own age thought, felt and dealt with circumstances in their lives. In the act of observing my classmates, in hearing what they had to say, I was able to change my perspective on many things. My emotions and feelings regarding my own situation and my experience began to make room to take in a new way of seeing myself, and this is exactly what I needed to move forward."

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

As a result of this unit, the participant is introduced to other women in the group. She understands how they will work together to support each other in pursuing their employment goals. She feels comfortable (or more comfortable) with her participation within the group, and is clearer on the purpose of the program.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Oral Communication
- Writing
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to

inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect upon these situations and questions:

- *Identify an event where you moved outside your comfort zone, such as attending a group with people you didn't know. What emotions did you feel? Was there anything you did, or someone else did (such as a group leader) that made you feel more comfortable or less comfortable?*
- *If you could have your ideal job, what would it be? Is this ideal job more suited to you than your current job? How?*

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *If you could have any job at all, without any obstacles standing in your way, what would it be? What is it about the job that appeals to you?*

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Service Canada** ~ www.servicecanada.gc.ca.

- **Service Canada Employment Services For You** ~ Visit the Service Canada website, and follow the menu link for Employment to reach the web page.
- **Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)** ~ Visit the home page at www.hrsdc.gc.ca and follow the menu link to the Essential Skills web pages, or access www.hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills.

A variety of employment-related information is available on these web pages. You will benefit from exploring the sites to find web pages that provide information specific to the needs of the participant. Depending upon her computer and language/literacy skill, the participant will also benefit from checking out the site to become familiar with what it may offer her.

Insights & Tips

"It helped to list the websites on the whiteboard for easy reference."

"The women I worked with preferred staying at tables, but positioned the tables close to each other."

~ Field-test facilitators

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *Make the setting inviting* – a circle arrangement of chairs is inclusive, encourages conversation and sharing, and aids sight and hearing.
- *Present yourself as a guide*. Encourage the women to learn from each other and from other sources, as well as from you. Help them become independent learners, gaining confidence in their own abilities to carry out their job search.
- *Participate in the activities*. The women will sense and appreciate your authenticity. Your sharing will serve as a model for how they might participate.

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the women to each other. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

1. *Welcome participants.* Introduce yourself. Ask each woman to introduce herself to the person sitting on one side of her, then the other, so that each woman will know the names of three people from the start – you, and two peers. Explain the locations of the washrooms, the basic agenda for the day such as break and lunch, and other information that is important to know from the start. Focus on building relationships and a friendly atmosphere.
2. *Give out blank nametags.* Ask each woman to write her name on a nametag and put it on. Pair participants. Here's one way: Have participants "number off," and pair up with the person with the same number. For example, if you have 8 participants, the numbering will be 1, 2, 3, 4; 1, 2, 3, 4. The two 1s get together, the two 2s, etc.
3. *Have each pair sit down and chat* until they discover two things they have in common – maybe they are mothers of teenagers or grown children, or their aged parents live with them, or they belong to a common religious or cultural group, have a similar country of origin, or have been recently laid-off.
4. *Write on a flip chart* the words: "We share...."
Return to the bigger circle. In turn, each woman introduces herself, tells who she was partnered with, and what they have in common by completing the sentence: "We share..." Record the commonalities on flip chart.

Insights & Tips

"Exercises 3 & 4 proved to be great icebreakers. We spent almost an hour chatting in pairs and with the larger group."

~Field-test facilitator

5. *Draw attention to the commonalities.* What do most group members have in common? Relate the commonalities to the program design and composition: **women, age 40+, unemployed and wanting to find work.** Emphasize the women will explore common ground as part of this course, but also focus on their own unique needs.
6. *Explain the outcome or the end result.* Through participation in the course, each woman will gain a better understanding of herself – what kind of work suits her, and what jobs and training are available in her community. She will create an Action Plan to help her gain the skills to be ready for the job.
7. *Briefly outline how the course will work.* Hand out materials that clarify the basic elements of the course such as schedule, learning journals and portfolios.
8. *Describe the role of learning journals or scrapbooks –* for the participant to learn more about herself. The learning journal or scrapbook is a tool that will be used throughout the program to explore and record thoughts and feelings. Compare the process to a diary. Explain that it is for the woman's personal use, and will only be shared with the facilitator to help them create plans for the future.
9. *Explain the purpose of the portfolio –* to help each woman develop job-related items that support her personal job search, and that demonstrate her progress.

Insights & Tips

"Some things shared: loss of our fathers, swimming, dancing, jealous husbands, love of shopping, over 40 years of age, unemployment."

~ Field-test participants

Insights & Tips

"We provided complimentary pens, paper and journals. The women loved the journals!"

~Field-test facilitator

10. *Introduce the nine Essential Skills*, and briefly relate the topic of Essential Skills to what the women will learn in the program. You may wish to review the section “More about Essential Skills” found in the Introduction or the information about Essential Skills found in Appendix 2.
11. *Collaboratively establish ground rules or norms for participation.*
12. *Answer questions from the group.*
13. *Review the day's agenda.* Use a flip chart and post the unit agenda so the participants may refer to it. Note that each unit will follow the same format: 1) Getting ready or introduction to the topic, 2) Group discussion and group work, 3) Break, 4) Individual work and/or peer work, 5) Wrap-up.

Insights & Tips

I waited until Day Two to talk about Essential Skills – it was all too much for the first day... Also, I found it helpful to have each woman research an Essential Skill, and report back to the group. I compiled the info into a little package and distributed it.”

~Field-test facilitator

↪ LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills, her ability to work with others and her approach to continuous learning. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips**Guidelines/Norms Established by one field-test group**

- *Listen.*
- *One person to speak at a time.*
- *Be on time – call if possible if you will be late.*
- *Turn cell phones to vibrate.*
- *Stay positive.*
- *Respect each other.*
- *What is said in the room stays here.*
- *Parking lot sheet for unfinished business - large sheet with “stickies” to add items.*

~Field-test facilitator

GETTING DOWN TO WORK

**Activity 1: Dream Jobs**

Introduce the “Getting Ready” question: **Dream Job** - *If you could have any job at all, without any obstacles standing in your way, what would it be?* Start with yourself. Describe your dream job. Then go around the circle. Emphasize that there are no wrong answers – no matter how out-of-reach the job may seem. Make a flip chart list of the dream jobs.

1. Ask participants to reflect about why they'd like the job – what makes it a dream job. Then go around the circle again, starting with yourself. Use your answer to model the kinds of things group members may consider when talking about their reasons.

2. Make a list on flip chart paraphrasing/categorizing the answers: e.g., flexibility, being the boss, helping people, working with

Insights & Tips

“Some women found it hard to envision a dream job being so new to Canada. We brainstormed the criteria to choosing a job – what is important to you – and then recorded the answers on chart paper.”

~Field-test facilitator

children or the elderly, job security or benefits, working outdoors, getting to travel, good pay, the hours, etc. Ask clarifying questions to help the women examine and communicate their thoughts.

3. *Read the list aloud.* What do the items on the list tell group members about what is important to them in a job? Ask each woman to pick the top factor on the list for her personally. Then ask her to pick the least important factor. Share and discuss as a group.
4. *Point out that each person is different,* so the right job – or the factors that make up the right job - will be different for each person. The task for each woman, and what this course will help to do, is to identify the right job, or job areas, that suit **her**.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a document to her portfolio.



Activity 2: My Dream Job

Follow up the group discussion by handing out **Worksheet 1**. Have the participant copy the flip chart list to Column A. Next have her fill in Column B by renumbering or ranking the items on the list according to her needs and interests - with #1 being the most important factor, #2 being the second most important factor, and so on to the least. Then in Column C, have the participant rewrite the list in the new order so that

it better represents initial ideas about what the individual wants in a job.

Gather in small groups. Have each woman share the highlights of her list with her peers and talk about why she made these choices. Encourage the women to ask questions to learn more about each other.

Insights & Tips

"Participants did the worksheet individually and then discussed it in pairs. Some completed it as homework. Some common factors included flexible hours, stability, good pay and holidays."

~ Field-test facilitator

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her skills in terms of document use, writing and working with others. You may wish to review the Dream Job Worksheet with each participant and make a note of the Essential Skills you feel it demonstrates. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 3: Setting Up My Portfolio

Have each woman set up and personalize her portfolio. Revisit the purpose of the portfolio: to help the individual develop and collect items that will help in her personal job search, and that show her improvement and progress towards skills required for the job of her choice. If you have done Activity 2, then make Worksheet 1 the first item to be stored in the portfolio.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her skills in terms of document use and writing. You may wish to review the Dream Job Worksheet with each participant and make a note of the Essential Skills that it demonstrates for the individual. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 1

My Dream Job

1. Copy the list from the flip chart you created in class into **Column A**
2. In **Column B** renumber the list according to what is important to you. # 1 would be the thing that is **most important** to you.
3. When you've re-numbered all the items that are important to you, re-write the list in **Column C**.

Here's an example: "flexible hours" is number three on the flip chart but it is what is most important to me, so I put the number 1 beside it in column B. In Column C, I've re-written the list so it shows what is most important to me.

Dream Job Worksheet - Example				
	Column A list from Flipchart	Column B Your needs or interests		Column C Write the list in your new order
1	Short bus ride	3	1	Flexible hours
2	Working alone	2	2	Working alone
3	Flexible hours	1	3	Short bus ride

Turn this page over to use the worksheet. When you are finished put the worksheet in your portfolio. You may wish to discuss the completed worksheet with the facilitator.

DREAM JOB WORKSHEET			
	Column A list from Flipchart	Column B Your needs or interests	Column C Write the list in your order
1			1
2			2
3			3
4			4
5			5
6			6
7			7
8			8
9			9
10			10
11			11
12			12

Why did you make these choices?

When you are finished put the worksheet in your portfolio. You may wish to discuss the completed worksheet with the facilitator.



Activity 4: Getting To Know Yourself

Write the following statement on the flipchart and post where it is easily viewed and read: "The more you know about yourself, the better prepared you'll be to find a job."

- *Relate the statement to the previous discussions and work, where participants spent time getting to know each other. Now, each woman will spend some time getting to know herself.*
- *Brainstorm ideas as a group:*
 - What does it mean, getting to know more about yourself?
 - How can "knowing yourself" help you with your job search?

Insights & Tips

"Good activity! A lot of the women felt they didn't know themselves very well."

"A positive activity. The group was very encouraging."

~ Field-test facilitators

Write the following statement on the flip chart: "Here's one thing I know about myself for sure: I am"

- *Do a "go-around" with each woman finishing the sentence. Listen to what each woman has to say. Talk about the importance of looking at one's attributes and skills in a positive way. Repeat the "go-around", helping the participants restate or rephrase the sentence to focus on their strengths.*



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 5 and Activity 6 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a comment to her learning journal or scrapbook, and one that provides the opportunity to use a computer.



Activity 5: My Learning Journal or Scrapbook

Emphasize the purpose of the learning journal or scrapbook— for the participant to learn more about herself. You may also wish to discuss the difference between a journal and a scrapbook, and ask the women to choose which they'd like to do. Compare to a diary and explain that the writing is for the woman's personal use, and will only be shared with the facilitator to help them together create plans for the future.

Ask each woman to work independently to write her first entry. Have the writing reflect what has been explored during the unit. Here are some ideas:

- *Describe your dream job.* What is it about the job that appeals to you?
- *Write down the statement from the flipchart* in your learning journal: “The more you know about yourself, the better prepared you'll be to find a job.” What do you want to find out about yourself that might help you with your job search?
- *Write down the statement from the flipchart* in your learning journal: “Here's one thing I know about myself for sure: I am” Finish the statement. Then expand upon it. Add other things you know about yourself for sure.

Insights & Tips

“The participants loved the idea!! Some had never journalled before.”

~ Field-test facilitator

- Personalize the learning journal or scrapbook. Put your name and contact information on it, but you might also add illustrations or other notes.
- Create a list of positive things using the following as guidelines:
 - Three things I have made
 - Three things I have fixed
 - Three things I could show someone else how to do

Insights & Tips

"The hardest for the women was to create a list of things they had fixed before."

~ Field-test facilitator

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

While the purpose of the learning journal is not to be assessed in terms of writing ability, you should be able to gain a sense of her writing skills, as a result of her participation in this activity. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 6: Using the Computer

Show the computers and workstations available for use during the course. Recognize that there will be a range of computer awareness and comfort within the group. Some women may have had no exposure to computers at all, and you'll need to help them with computer basics. Others will have used computers at home or in another setting, and will know how to use a computer for email, social networking sites, or other purposes.

Accommodate various skill and comfort levels. Here are some ideas:

- Demonstrate basic information participants need to know to operate the computers at your site such as log-ins. Have participants turn

on the computer and log-in. Keep explanations simple and positive.

- *An email address* is useful for group work and communication. Have participants share email addresses and create a contact list or address book. Help those who don't have an email address set one up.
- *Those women who are familiar with computers* may choose to do the portfolio and/or learning journal or scrapbook on the computer. Encourage participants to bring a storage device for a back-up file so they can transfer their work between home and school computers.
- Ask each participant (or pair) to research online a different essential skill, and report back to the group. Help participants access the HRSDC website to find related web pages.
- Use **Worksheet 2** as a handout to guide the Essential Skills online research and presentation.
- **Worksheet 3** is a hard copy of the HRSDC web page, "What Are Essential Skills?" Help the participants put the information into their own words, and use examples from their own lives.

Insights & Tips

"Some of the women were beginners with computers, so I had to spend time teaching them how to click on a mouse and call up websites, etc. One participant had no experience with computers at all."

~ Field-test facilitator



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her skills in terms of computer use. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 2

Essential Skill Research

1. Complete the chart for the Essential Skill you are researching.
2. Use the chart to record notes during presentations about other Essential Skills. Put the notes in your own words.

Essential Skills	Typical Applications	Workplace Examples	Community Examples

WORKSHEET 3

What are Essential Skills?

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) define the Essential Skills as “the skills needed for work, learning and life.” They consider these skills to be the foundational skills for all other learning and needed to “enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change.”

Below you’ll find information about each of the nine Essential Skills and some examples of how you could use those skills at work or in your everyday life.¹

Essential Skills	Typical Applications	Workplace Examples	Community Examples
Reading Understanding materials written in sentences or paragraphs (e.g., letters, manuals).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan for information or overall meaning. • Read to understand, learn, critique or evaluate. • Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources or from complex and lengthy texts. 	If you were working as an airline sales agent you might read notices on a computer screen, such as special handling requirements or weather information.	You may use this skill to understand a lease agreement for a new apartment.
Document Use Finding, understanding or entering information (e.g., text, symbols, numbers) in various types of documents, such as tables or forms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read signs, labels or lists. • Understand information on graphs or charts. • Enter information in forms. • Create or read schematic drawings. 	If you were working as a bricklayer you would need to interpret blueprints to determine the height, length and thickness of walls.	You may use this skill when referring to a bus schedule to plan an outing.
Numeracy Using numbers and thinking in quantitative terms to complete tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make calculations. • Take measurements. • Perform scheduling, budgeting or accounting activities. • Analyze data. • Make estimations. 	If you were working as a payroll clerk you would monitor vacation entitlements to prepare budget and scheduling forecasts.	You may use this skill to calculate deductions on personal tax forms.

¹ Taken from http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/pdfs/awareness/what_are_es.pdf.

Essential Skills	Typical Applications	Workplace Examples	Community Examples
Writing Communicating by arranging words, numbers and symbols on paper or a computer screen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to organize or record information. • Write to inform or persuade. • Write to request information or justify a request. • Write an analysis or a comparison 	If you were working as a human resources professional you would need to write recommendations on issues such as workplace health and safety.	You may use this skill to complete an application for a credit card.
Oral Communication Using speech to exchange thoughts and information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide or obtain information. • Greet, reassure or persuade people. • Resolve conflicts. • Lead discussions. 	If you were working as an office clerk you would take messages and share information by phone and in person.	You may use this skill to explain a food allergy to a server at a restaurant.
Thinking Finding and evaluating information to make rational decisions or to organize work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and resolve problems. • Make decisions. • Find information. • Plan and organize job tasks. • Use critical thinking. • Use memory. 	If you were working as a paramedic you could diagnose a patient's condition based on medical charts and your own observations. Paramedics use their judgement to start an appropriate treatment plan.	You may use this skill to research and select courses at your local adult learning centre.
Computer Use Using computers and other forms of technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different forms of technology, such as cash registers or fax machines. • Use word processing software. • Send and receive emails. • Create and modify spreadsheets. Navigate the Internet. 	If you were working as a telephone operator you would use customized software to scan databases for telephone numbers or long distance rates.	You may use this skill when withdrawing or depositing money at an automatic teller machine (ATM).
Continuous Learning Participating in an ongoing process of improving skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn on the job. • Learn through formal training. • Learn through self-study. • Understand your own learning style. • Know where to find learning resources. 	If you were working as a retail sales associate you would improve your skills and knowledge by attending sales training and reading product brochures.	You may use this skill when taking a first aid course at a community centre.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Gather oral & hard copy feedback.* Bring participants back together in the circle formation. Discuss the day's work. How did they feel at the start of the unit? How do they feel now? Is there something they'd like to change to make them feel more comfortable? Were the activities and discussions enjoyable and useful?
- *Encourage each participant to express her opinion.* Tell how you, as the facilitator, felt about the unit.
- *Distribute a simple form for individual feedback and comments.* Ask each woman to fill out the form and leave it for you. A generic Participation Evaluation form is offered in the Introduction section.
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit.* Ask if there is something the women would like to add or make sure they talk about – either as part of the topic or in response to today's unit.
- *Read aloud the "Getting Ready" activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below). Explain that it is an exercise to help participants reflect upon the topic ahead of time. It won't be marked and isn't meant to take up a lot of time.
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

"Most women felt excitement and anticipation about participating in the program.

Expectations the women identified included:

- *Improve communication*
- *Learn about jobs*
- *Identify their skills*
- *Know themselves*
- *See what level of commitment they could maintain to figure out if they are ready for work outside the home."*

~ Field-test facilitator

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- *Bring an object to share with the group (may be a photograph, ornament, keep-sake, etc.) that means a lot to you and represents what is important in your life today.*

CLOSING WORDS

“This course gave me understanding about myself, what my dreams are and what qualities I need to fulfil my dreams. Now I am able to understand the abilities and skills I already have. I start thinking to make some changes in my life.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

THE VIEW FROM HERE – LIVING MY LIFE

[In other courses I took] the age range was well across the board – early twenties to mid sixties. Some people were on disability, some on EI, some simply looking for work, and some dealing with significant emotional challenges. How could a nineteen-year-old know what it feels like to be fifty-five, a mother, a wife, a breadwinner for a family without a father? How does a sixty-year-old man know what a middle-aged woman feels like competing with a twenty-five-year-old as she sits in an interview experiencing hot flashes? The wide mix of ages made it difficult to bond, share, and listen with any true level of interest. We were just too far apart in our experiences, our goals, our attitudes.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant shares her life experiences (e.g., raising a family, taking care of aged parents, coping with an illness or disability, immigrating to Canada), and through examination of these experiences gains insight into her strengths, skills, interests and values.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Oral Communication
- Working with others
- Thinking Skills
 - Critical Thinking
 - Significant Use of Memory

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these questions:

- *Bring an object from home* as described in the “Getting Ready” activity for the participants. How does the object represent what you value in life, and what is important to you?
- *Participate in the activity* and model the type of information that you want the group to share – the kinds of influences that shape and “rule” your life today, your life experiences.

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *Bring an object from home* (may be a photograph, ornament, keep-sake, etc.) to share with the group – one that means a lot to you and represents what’s important in your life today.

Insights & Tips

“This turned out to be a very heart-warming activity – everyone participated and a deeper understanding of each other was gained!”

~ Field-test facilitator

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

Service Canada (www.servicecanada.gc.ca) has a variety of job-search quizzes described as a starting point in self-discovery. Participants are invited to explore their abilities, interests and preferences related to making decisions about employment. From the main menu, follow the links to reach these Service Canada web pages:

- Career Navigator and Quizzes
- Work Values Quiz.

Insights & Tips

"I found these quizzes to be excellent resources."

~ Field-test facilitator

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- Focus on participants viewing themselves, their peers, and their situations in a positive and non-judgemental way. Respect the differences in people's lives and life experiences. Acknowledge the unique life situation within which each woman finds herself. As a group, identify factors that will help each woman find job opportunities that match her current situation, needs and values.
- Relate how self-exploration and self-discovery benefit each woman's personal job search. For some, pursuing a job that she chooses based on her needs and interests will be a new and even frivolous concept. Getting a job – any job – may be the past pattern for finding work, particularly when the family is dependent upon her

Insights & Tips

"This session was HIGHLY emotional and the group was amazingly supportive of each other. Luckily I had brought Kleenex. A lot of open discussion occurred – great activity!"

~ Field-test facilitator

income. In some family situations, the needs of the woman are not central, and so such a discussion may be unfamiliar and challenging.

- *Be prepared for emotional responses from participants.* Sometimes asking a person to reflect upon her life experiences may bring emotions to the surface. Acknowledge such feelings. Communicating them is part of the risk-taking involved in working within a group, and enacting change in one's life. Recognize the limits of your skills as a facilitator and suggest professional help in situations that call for it.

Insights & Tips

"Participants often face multiple, complex issues. These challenges may include looking for work with limited education or training, having to leave children in inadequate daycare, trying to find a home when you are faced with being homeless, and often, attempting to leave abusive or non-supportive relationships. Individually, these can be incredibly trying; together they will seem overwhelming."

~ Anson Green, Ready to Work! p. 35

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Review names.* Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since the last unit, and to share their thoughts about the previous unit now that they've had the time to think more about it.
- *Review the current unit's outcome* – the desired results. Discuss the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Make changes to the agenda to suit the group.
- *Review the ground rules or norms that the group set the previous session.* Would participants like to add anything, or do they want

clarification? Focus particularly on those ground rules that involve confidentiality, respecting personal opinions and differences, and discussions.

Link to Essential Skills

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: What I Value

Present the "Getting Ready" activity. Start by asking for volunteers. If no one offers, then share your item, and tell how it symbolizes what you value in life, your life experiences, and/or your interests. Ask each woman to show the group the item she has brought from home. Have her share why it means a lot to her and how it represents what's important in her life today and/or her past life experiences. Recognize that some of the women may find it difficult to speak in front of the group, and others may find it easy.

Foster discussion, critical thinking, and conversation by having group members ask questions of the woman about what she has brought to the class and has told the group about the item and herself. Listen for underlying issues and statements. Draw out and paraphrase for clarification – "You brought a photo of your elderly mother. It's obvious you care for

Insights & Tips

"I had planned 20 minutes for this activity and the women actually spent an hour on it. It worked well – different perspectives from different countries."

~ Field-test facilitator

your mother a lot. Do you look after her at home? What does that involve?" or "You've brought the Qur'an. I see that your religion is central to your life..."

At the end of the activity, have each woman put her item in front of her. Give the start of a statement and ask participants to finish it for each woman in the group: "This is what I've learned about you today..." Ask participants to offer their thoughts and observations about each woman in turn, based upon what she has told them and the item she has brought to share. Stipulate that all statements must be voiced in a positive way. Here are some examples:

- This is what I've learned about you today.... you are compassionate and family is important to you.
- This is what I've learned about you today... you are a great cook and you like to make people happy.
- This is what I learned about you today... you are a survivor – your story about fleeing your home country tells me that.

Insights & Tips

"One participant asked 'what is critical thinking?', and as a result we had an impromptu group discussion around this."

~ Field-test facilitator

Link to Essential Skills

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Suggested Follow-up Activities

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a comment to her learning journal.



Activity 2: My Passions, Values, Skills and Interests

Have each woman relate the “Getting Ready” discussion from the above activities to her personal passions, values, skills and interests as they **apply to searching for a job**. Use yourself as a model – relate an aspect of your current job to your values and interests. Ideally (but not necessarily) what you model will have flowed from the item you brought to class. For example, “I am happiest when I’m working with others – I’d be really unhappy in a job where I was totally alone. I need a job where I interact with people. That’s why I brought the group photo of myself with my past students...”

Insights & Tips

“Talents were acknowledged by peers even if the participant thought they were nothing. For example, a woman might say ‘I sew my husband’s shirts and put buttons on,’ and someone would respond, ‘Not everyone can do that.’ Some women felt their value was less than it should be, but left feeling better about their accomplishments and themselves.”

~ Field-test facilitator

Continue the conversation as a group. Help each woman to connect what is important to her, or what she values in life, or her life experiences to potential employment. Focus on interests, skills and values rather than specific jobs. Be sure that by the end of the discussion, each woman, with the help and input of her peers, has identified at least one element that is integral to her future employment and job satisfaction. For example:

- I tend a community garden plot and grow all the family’s vegetables. I like working outside... can’t imagine being stuck in an office all day. I’d go insane...

- I'm good with my hands and I like detail – as you can see from the cross-stitching pillow I've brought. I'd want a job where I can use my hands and where I work alone...
- Whatever job I get – it's got to be flexible enough that I can pick up my grand-daughter after school. There's no one else to take care of her. I give her dinner and help her with her homework until her mom gets home from work. I guess I need a job that lets me do that – nights maybe, or early mornings.
- I'm the one who fixes things around the house. I just changed the old faucets in the bathroom for new ones... I like fixing things, figuring out how things work.

Link to Essential Skills

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 3: Here's Something I Learned About Myself

For a learning journal entry, ask each participant to write a note on what she has learned about herself during this unit – a passion, interest, skill, need, or value that she possesses. How could what she has learned help her with her job search?

Link to Essential Skills

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her skills in terms of writing. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 4: Work Values

Write the following statement on the flipchart and post where it is easy to see:

“Job satisfaction doesn't usually happen by chance. It requires careful assessment of your passions, interests, talents, skills, and preferences. The more you know about yourself, the better prepared you'll be to find a job that suits you and enriches your life.”

*Source: Look At Me,
Service Canada Website, Training and Careers*

Read the statement aloud. Note that each woman will be spending a lot of time over the next few units exploring her passions, interests, talents, skills and preferences. She started that process earlier in the unit with the group, and now she will continue it during the second part of the unit on her own.

Hand out **Worksheet 4**. Explain that the purpose of the quiz is to help each participant start to identify her passions, interests, talents, skills and preferences. State and credit the source of the quiz: Service Canada, Work Values Quiz.

Complete the quiz in the best way to suit the literacy levels of participants. Here are some ideas:

- *Read a statement aloud.* Have each participant answer the statement on her Worksheet. Encourage participants to ask question to clarify the statement's meaning.
- *Take turns having group members read aloud* a statement, and then have individuals mark their choices on the Worksheet.

Insights & Tips

“I read each question aloud as it seemed to be challenging for the participants to do the quiz on their own.”

“The women in the group found it easier to answer True or False, or Yes/No/Maybe to the Work Values Quiz.”

~ Field-test facilitators

- *Have participants work through the quiz in pairs.* Team women with good reading skills with those who need help with language and reading.
- *Have each participant do the quiz independently,* turning to her peers first, and then yourself, for help if she needs clarification.

When participants have completed the quiz, have them use a highlighter to note their response from the “Important” column. They should put their completed quizzes in their portfolio for further reference.

Link to Essential Skills

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, and depending on which approach you take with the quiz, you should have a sense of her skills in terms of document use and writing. You may wish to review the Work Values Quiz with each participant and make a note of the Essential Skills you feel it demonstrates. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 4

*Work Values Quiz*²

Your values are important clues to what kind of work and work conditions you would like. The *Work Values Quiz* can help you determine your work motivations, your preferred work setting, how you like to interact with others, and your work style. There are 4 parts to this quiz.

PART 1: MY WORK MOTIVATIONS	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
The idea of making money motivates me a great deal.			
I'm motivated by work that allows me to help other people, either individually or in small groups.			
I'm not interested in managing other people. I'm motivated by work that allows me to manage just myself.			
Money is not as important to me as a personal sense of satisfaction.			
I want work that absorbs me, even if it takes up my leisure time.			
I'm motivated by work that will improve the world.			
It's important to me to get public recognition for the work that I do.			
I'm motivated by work that will lead to a management position.			
I want work that leaves me leisure time for my family and friends.			

² Taken from Service Canada, Work Values Quiz. www.jobsetc.ca/toolbox/quizzes/values_quiz.do?lang=e

PART 2: MY PREFERRED WORK SETTING	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
I would like to travel and experience different cultures and places.			
I want a calm, peaceful work setting.			
I would like to work outside all or some of the time.			
I like work that is physically challenging.			
I prefer indoor work.			
I want work that challenges my intellectual capacities.			
I want work that doesn't involve travel.			
I enjoy a workplace with lots of fast-paced activity.			

PART 3: HOW I LIKE TO INTERACT WITH OTHERS	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
I like to work independently with little or no supervision.			
I like work that lets me persuade or negotiate with others.			
I like to compete and put my skills and abilities against others.			
I would like to work with the public.			
I want work where I set and meet my own personal goals.			
I want work where I get to interact with a team of other people.			
I prefer to work away from the public.			
I want work where I can influence the attitudes or opinions of others.			

PART 4: MY WORK STYLE	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
I like work where I can solve problems and decide how things should be done.			
I enjoy work that has fixed hours and a set schedule.			
I want work with responsibilities that change frequently.			
I want work that lets me use my creativity to think up new ways to do things.			
I want the freedom to work to my own schedule.			
I enjoy work that requires attention to detail and accuracy.			
I prefer a work situation where my responsibilities are the same every day.			
I want a work situation that's exciting and high-pressured.			

Suggested Follow-up Activities

Activity 5 and Activity 6 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a comment to her learning journal.



Activity 5: Computers and Working Online

Here are two ideas from which to choose:

- *Have each participant do the Work Values Quiz online* (instead of doing the hard copy Worksheet). For those women who are comfortable and familiar with computers, provide the URL to the quiz or the home page of the Service Canada site, or have them “Google” it.
- *Have each participant go online and enter the information from the hard copy* into the online quiz. This will help them gain experience with using computers to complete a work task.

Note: Service Canada has a feature to the online Work Values Quiz where the participant’s choices are organized by the headings: important, somewhat important, not important.

For those women who are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with computers, walk them step-by-step through the Work Values Quiz, or have a peer helper provide assistance. This allows them to gain experience using a computer to enter data. Have each woman print up the results for further discussion and reference, and store the hard copy in her portfolio.

The results of this quiz, and other Service Canada quizzes, may also be stored and accessed online. Participants can click on the log-in button and set up a user ID at the Service Canada website. For those

Insights & Tips

“We did the activity in partnerships, and focused on the nine Essential Skills.”

~ Field-test facilitator

women who are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with computers, “walk” them step-by-step through logging in and accessing the Work Values Quiz, or have a peer helper provide assistance.

Link to Essential Skills

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her skills in terms of computer use. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 6: Writing It Down – My Work Values

For a learning journal entry, ask each participant to write a note on what she has learned about herself as a result of completing the quiz.

- How does she feel about what she has discovered?
- Has it changed her thoughts about what kind of job she might seek?



Link to Essential Skills

While the purpose of the learning journal is not to be assessed in terms of writing ability, you should be able to gain a sense of her writing skills, as a result of her participation in this activity. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Debrief from the Work Values Quiz.* Ask the group members to share their thoughts about the results. Did anything about the results surprise them? Did they learn something they didn't know before about themselves? Can they see a way to use the results in their job search?
- *Gather oral & hard copy feedback.* Ask specific questions to help you plan future units. For example, "how did using the computers go for you? Would you like to do more computer use? Less? Did you enjoy the quiz? Are quizzes a good way for you to learn? How was the reading level? Hard? Okay?"
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit.* Ask if there is something the women would like to add or make sure they talk about – either as part of the topic or in response to today's unit.
- *Read aloud the "Getting Ready" activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below).
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

"I liked this unit because it reminded me that I have many skills. I liked getting to know the other women better and identifying with others as a mother."

~ Field-test participant

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- *Think about a job you had* in the past. What did you do? What was a typical day at work for you? Be prepared to share this information with the group.

CLOSING WORDS

“I made many friends who are in similar situations as me. We are all over 40 years old, women who have lots of experiences and skills, yet we don’t have a job.”

~ *Spotlight on Change Participant*

WHAT I GAINED FROM MY PAST WORK

“Being an immigrant, I have [had] to sacrifice my past job and experience. I always feel something missing in my life in Canada. It’s not only missing my family and friends but also my self-confidence, too. I felt already retired, and as if my entire past job experience was worthless.”

Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant explores her **work experiences** and through examination of these experiences, gains insight into her strengths, skills and interests.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Oral Communication
- Reading
- Writing
- Computer Use

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these situations and questions:

- *Think about a job you had in the past*, preferably one very different from what you do now as a teacher of adults. What skills did you need to do the job?
- *How have the skills from your past job been transferred or applied to your current job?* Think of at least one way.

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *Think about a job you had in the past.* What did you do? What was a typical day at work for you? Be prepared to share this information with the group.

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. These resources are Canadian and offer not only job listings, but also job advice. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Service Canada Job Bank** ~ www.jobbank.gc.ca.
- **For Her Success** ~ Job Postings for Women, www.forhersuccess.com.
- **The Retired Worker** ~ www.theretiredworker.com.

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *Help each woman look beneath the surface of her past job* to explore the skills that she used, and what she can take or transfer from her past job to new job opportunities.
- *Listen carefully.* Ask clarifying and probing questions so that participants examine and communicate job details, not just job titles or categories. Draw out and note aloud skills, talents, and experiences. Breaking down a job to discover what skills lie beneath it may be challenging for some participants; they may not recognize that they've gained valuable or marketable skills, or they may underestimate their own skills, lacking self-confidence or self-esteem. "I never graduated from high school, what do I know?" or "I worked in a factory that makes tires and now the factory is shut down. That's all I've ever done, so I'm looking to find the exact same job."
- *Encourage each participant to articulate her thoughts*, even those that may appear on the surface to be negative. For example, even a job that a woman hated tells her what she doesn't want in her next job, and what she personally needs for job satisfaction.
- *Be flexible in your definition of what constitutes work.* Some women in the group may never have had paying jobs, staying at home to raise their children, or may not view tasks they did as part of

Insights & Tips

"We did PDQ assessment near the start of the course. As a follow up, we met with each person individually to review her scores, and where possible identified jobs and skills together that interested her. The women felt this was a BONUS and such a concrete piece of info for them in terms of identifying skills and strengths."

~ Field-test facilitator

Insights & Tips

"When I felt almost ready to give up on getting a job, this unit refreshed me, encouraged me to be positive. It reminded me of my past experiences, and motivated me a little more than I felt motivated before."

~ Field-test participant

family life (for example, working on a family farm) as employment or real work. Focus on skills.

- *This is the first time in the group setting* of the course that the women have been invited to talk about their past work. For example, if a woman has worked at the same job in the same factory for many years and the factory has recently closed, then she may be experiencing fear, anger, anxiety or sorrow over the job loss. Acknowledge emotions, and allow time for them to be expressed.
- *Once participants are able to give voice* to one or two skills, talents, and experiences that lie beneath past jobs, have them practice stating or rephrasing these in a positive and assertive way that can be used as sound bites to prepare for job interviews or writing a résumé or job letter.

Insights & Tips

Expert Advice

"These days, it seems like dreaming just to think about finding a job that will fulfil our personal goals. Getting a job that pays the bills is challenge enough. Some of us end up in jobs that do not allow us to use the skills we have. Many employers are breaking jobs into job tasks and competencies. These are more precise ways of measuring what people do and how skilled they are at doing it. Measuring job skills in this way means that it's not enough to say, 'I'm a receptionist' or 'I'm a machine operator.' You must show that you have a range of skills you can put to work."

~ Jennifer Stephen, Choosing Training? p. 5

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the session's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous session now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the unit outcome – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.*
- *Accommodate personal goals/needs and facilitate independent work.* As the participant becomes more familiar with the group and her personal job search, she will be more confident in voicing what she wants to work on, particularly during the individual work portion of the agenda. Respond accordingly. It is not necessary (or desirable in a learner-centred environment) for everyone to work on the same activities.

Insights & Tips

"Accommodating participants' differing needs and goals became even more important as the course progressed, partly due to differing skills levels, for example, with computers."

~ Field-test facilitator

↪ LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: A Typical Day at Work

Present the “Getting Ready” activity. Ask each woman to share with the group a past job she has had, and to describe what she did during a typical day at work. Would she want to find work in the same or a similar field? Or is she ready for something completely different?

Encourage questions and comments from the group.

Relate the “Getting Ready” discussion to skills that the women have gained through the job experiences they have described. Some participants may find it difficult to make the bridge between tasks that they did at their previous work, and the skills that make up the tasks.

This difficulty may be particularly true for tasks that the women consider easy or did without conscious thought – they may underestimate what they **can** do.

Listen attentively to each speaker as she shares past job experiences. Model the concept of skills through comments or questions. For example:

- You must have good math skills making change at the convenience store. You’re comfortable with cash registers then?
- You had to deal with a lot of different things happening quickly – it’s obvious you can keep your head in high-pressure situations and that you can multi-task!
- In your job at the factory, you had to pay attention to detail and use fine motor skills–those are skills you can definitely use in other jobs!

Open the “skills challenge” to the group. Ask the women to think of the job stories and experiences described by their peers. From what they

Insights & Tips

“This activity took almost an hour. The women really enjoyed sharing their past experiences.”

~ Field-test facilitator

heard, what are other members of the group good at? What are their strengths?

Be sure that each woman receives feedback or the thoughts of the group—help participants voice their comments as skills and strengths.

Insights & Tips

"Is there something that I will do differently in the future? I will see myself in a more positive light – what I am capable of and not what I cannot do."

"I discovered that I've done a lot of innovative tasks in my past career."

~ Field-test participants

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a document to her portfolio.



Activity 2: Three Personal Strengths

Divide the group into small groups or pairs. Participants may feel comfortable choosing whom they work with according to friendships they've forged. However, you may also wish to choose pairings or groupings to develop specific peer/mentor relationships, or to help the success of the activity by ensuring a strong leader is part of each group. Ask each pair or grouping to chat with each other about past jobs, and through their conversations, identify two or three strengths that each woman possesses. Hand out **Worksheet 5**. Have the women help each other fill it out stating these strengths.

With the worksheet as a reminder or tip sheet while she speaks, ask each woman to describe her strengths to her partner or group, using an example from her past job to show or illustrate the strength. Participants may choose to put their completed worksheet in their portfolio for further reference.

Insights & Tips

"Very useful worksheet, particularly for participants working to improve their English skills. It was simple to follow and complete."

~ Field-test facilitator

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, and depending on which approach you take, you should have a sense of her skills in terms of document use and writing. You may wish to review the completed worksheet with each participant and make a note of the Essential Skills you feel it demonstrates. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 5***My Strengths***

What I Did (Tasks)	My Strengths



Activity 3: Role Play

Start with a group discussion. Together identify 3 “top/hot tips” for communicating strengths when talking to a potential employer. Write the tips on a flip chart. For example:

- Say what you **can** do. State things in a positive way.
- Give an example from your past job that shows your strengths.
- Be assertive. Don’t worry that you’re bragging. It’s not bragging to say what you can do!

Use role-play for participants to practise describing skills and strengths to a future employer. Break into pairs. Have participants take turns describing their strengths and skills to each other, with one being the employer and the other the person in a job interview, and then switching roles. At the end of each “interview” have partners provide feedback, using the “3 top/hot tips” list to guide their suggestions. Repeat the role-playing, with partners integrating the suggestions.

Insights & Tips

“One participant had an interview after class and we decided to do a mock interview to help her out, as she hadn’t been to a job interview in years. Rather than I being the interviewer, I asked a classmate of hers who did a fabulous job. We used an ad that I had selected from the paper. The class watched, critiqued, clapped and added positive feedback to both ‘actors.’ It was a great experience for us all, and one of those ‘teachable moments’ that fit in so well.”

~ Field-test facilitator



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 4: Strengths Employers Look For

The purpose of the activity is to acquaint participants with the language that is commonly used by employers in terms of skills, abilities and strengths. Focus on skills and strengths, rather than job title. Use the task to build confidence; for example, descriptors such as “hard worker” to describe valued strengths are not dependent upon education, but life experiences and values.

- Bring print or hard copy job ads from a variety of newspapers or other sources to the session. Offer variety and multiple samples.
- Ask participants to go through the ads and highlight words that describe skills and strengths desired in the job candidate. Give an example from an ad to start off the activity: “hard worker”, “self-starter”, “excellent typing skills”, “communication skills”, “mature” (yes, being older can be a strength!), “detail-oriented...”
- Ask participants to make a list of ten skills or strengths that employers are asking for in the ads, and share the list with a partner.
- Have each woman choose a few of the words that apply to her, and give an example from her past work or other experience that demonstrates it. Participants may choose to put their completed lists in their portfolio for further reference.

Insights & Tips

“I brought to the session six classified job ads cut out from the newspaper. I divided the class into three groups. Each group selected someone to record the skills and a reporter to tell the class what skills the group had identified in the ad. It really worked well.”

“This activity was helpful in learning the language regarding ‘strengths and skills.’ For example, what is a self-starter? What does continuous learning mean?”

~ Field-test facilitators

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to work with documents (job ads) and her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"We related the job ads to the nine Essential Skills. For example, an employer asking for passionate energetic people to sell theatre subscriptions through the telephone was looking for people with good oral communication skills."

~ Field-test facilitator

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activities 5, 6 and 7 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a comment to her learning journal and one activity that involves using the computer.



Activity 5: Building Blocks

Each participant creates written and personalized "building blocks" that may be used for a future résumé, letter of application, or a script for an interview - based on the skills and strengths she has identified throughout the session. Here's one "building block" idea.

- Ask the participant to complete the statement in writing:
 - I am _____ (a hard worker, a self-starter, good with numbers, etc...).

- *Encourage her to use the same language she has read in the job ads.*
- *Then have the participant write one sentence that demonstrates the skill or strength she has chosen to describe herself – using a past job or life experience.*
- *Repeat the exercise for other strengths and skills.*
- *Have the participant store the “building block” information in her portfolio for future reference.*

Insights & Tips

“This activity worked well. It helped the participants describe their skills in new ways and with new words.”

“Participants did the activity changing the sentence to read: I have experience.”

~ Field-test facilitator

Higher Level Learners: Participants with higher literacy skill levels may transfer what they've learned about their skills and strengths directly to a project they identify as important to their personal job search, such as a résumé or cover letter. Be sure to provide time and opportunity for this type of activity.

Participants may choose to put their completed documents in their portfolio for further reference.

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her writing and her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 6: Computers and Working Online

Use online job banks and employment ads to complete the two previous activities (Activity 4: Strengths Employers Look For and Activity 5: Building Blocks). Instead of using print ads provide links to a reputable job bank site for participants to use.

- *Check the links ahead of time* to ensure they are still running and current, and to problem-solve difficulties participants may have navigating the site.
- *The Reaching Out – Supplementary Resources* section in this unit provides some job bank websites.
- *Your local newspaper* may also have job ads online.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her skills in terms of computer use. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 7: My Reflections about a Past Job

Have the participant write in her learning journal her thoughts and feelings about a past job.

- Did she like the job?
- Did she dislike the job?
- What do her thoughts and feelings tell her about the kind of job she wants in the future?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

While the purpose of the learning journal is not to be assessed in terms of writing ability, you should be able to gain a sense of her writing skills, as a result of a woman's participation in this activity. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Debrief from the “skills and strengths” activities.* Ask the group members to share their thoughts. Can they now give voice to a personal strength or skill? Is it hard for women to talk positively about their strengths?
- *Gather oral & hard copy feedback.* Were participants satisfied with the unit? Did they learn at least one thing they can use in their personal job search?
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit.* If a guest speaker on volunteerism has been arranged for the next session, prepare participants by letting them know who will be attending.
- *Read aloud the “Getting Ready” activity* to do before the next unit (see below). Briefly discuss hobbies and volunteer work so that participants are comfortable completing the activity, and understand what is expected. For example:
 - A hobby is something you do in your spare time. You do it because you enjoy it. Volunteering is a bit like a hobby – it is something you do because you enjoy helping others.
 - Volunteering is also described as unpaid work. Other types of unpaid work include chores you do around the house – you might not enjoy doing it but it is something that needs to be done.
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

“What ideas or statements really made me think during the unit?”

- *What am I doing now?*
- *Who I am!*
- *What do I want to be...”*

~ Field-test participant

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- *Share your hobby* or other non-paid activities in which you participate, with the group.

For example:

- If you do yoga, tai chi or dance with a cultural group, demonstrate some stretches or movements.
- If you like to read, bring in the book you are currently reading and explain the story and why you like it.
- If you bake, sew or do a craft bring in something you've made.
- If you participate in a charitable group or event, bring information about it, or something that represents it, such as a poster or a photo.
- *If you don't have a hobby*, do you volunteer somewhere – perhaps at your place of worship or a school? Tell the others what it is you do and how it makes you feel. If you don't have a hobby and don't volunteer, think about the types of things you might do if you had the time or energy!

CLOSING WORDS

“This course gave me a chance to get out of the house and learn about myself. Finding out about myself turned out to be a big help for my family and me. I found courage and confidence. I find within me that I can do a lot for myself and my family, and I can be independent because I have all the skills to find and do work.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

SKILLS LEARNED THROUGH UNPAID WORK

“[Participating in] this course actually encouraged me to spend more energy to be an active person doing something useful in this life, helping myself, serving others by volunteering in different places.”

~Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant explores **volunteering, hobbies, or unpaid work**, and through examination of these experiences gain insight into her strengths, skills and interests.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Reading Text/ Document Use

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these situations and questions:

- Do you volunteer?
- If you were to volunteer to do something you've never done before, what would you do? Why?
- Do you think of unpaid activity as work? Do you value unpaid work as much as paid work?

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *Share your hobby*, or other non-paid activities in which you participate, with the group. For example:
 - If you do yoga, tai chi or dance with a cultural group, demonstrate some stretches or movements
 - If you like to read, bring in the book you are currently reading and explain the story and why you like it
 - If you bake, sew or do a craft bring in something you've made
 - If you participate in a charitable group or event, bring information about it, or something that represents it, such as a poster or a photo.
- *If you don't have a hobby*, do you volunteer somewhere – perhaps at your place of worship or a school? Tell the others what it is you do and how it makes you feel. If you don't have a hobby and don't volunteer, think about the types of things you might do if you had the time or energy!

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Research the organizations in your community that match up volunteers with agencies, organizations, or individuals that need assistance. Here's one idea:

- **Volunteer Canada** ~ www.volunteer.ca. This website provides links to community resource and volunteer centres in every province. The linked sites often provide listings for volunteer opportunities, as well as related information about volunteering.

Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

Insights & Tips

"Volunteering is an integral and significant part of our way of life. People's reasons for volunteering range widely and might include skill development, giving back to the community, a chance to use their knowledge, as a way to meet people or simply because it's fun. Volunteer opportunities range as well from short term to long term, in terms of duties and tasks, and locations and skills that are required. One thing stays true, and that is that volunteering is critical to the work that can and is achieved in our local non-profit sector."

*~ Change in My Community
United Way of Cambridge
and North Dumfries*

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *Know your own values* – do you perceive non-paid work as meaningful and important? Respect the experiences of participants and acknowledge non-paid accomplishments and activities. Many participants will have gained valuable skills and experiences through unpaid work, and made contributions that are as important as, or more important than, work done by other women within paid jobs.

- *Much in Canadian society* in general focuses on the importance of money and materialism. Some women may not think of their unpaid work or volunteer contributions as “real work”. Draw out their skills and strengths for this type of work in the same way you did for paid employment.
- *Recognize that the concept of volunteerism may be unfamiliar* to some participants. They care for family, friends and community as a way of life and as part of their culture, not as an “extra” activity that is outside their day-to-day responsibilities. Don’t assume everyone in the group has the same understanding or experiences with volunteerism as you.
- *Search out and become aware of volunteer bureaus* and how a participant may access volunteer opportunities in her community. Be ready for questions you may be asked, and/or to facilitate volunteer actions that a participant would like to explore.
- *The activities in this unit offer a range of ways to explore volunteer opportunities*, and require different commitments for the individual and the program. These include:
 - Examining past and current volunteerism to identify personal skills and interests.
 - Searching out volunteer opportunities with the individual so she can gain new skills and/or job experience by volunteering outside the classroom.
 - Participating as a group in a volunteer field trip or opportunity as part of the program to practise and/or gain new work skills.
- *Choose or “mix and match” the unit’s activities* to meet the needs and time availability of the individual, the interests of the group, and the resources of your program. Some of the activities will

Insights & Tips

“We had a general discussion on volunteering and it became apparent that volunteering in Canada is different from other places. Women just helped out wherever needed, but didn’t call it volunteering.”

~ Field-test facilitator

mean expanding the volunteer focus beyond one unit, either as a one-time event, or as an ongoing part of an individual's participation in the program.

Insights & Tips

Volunteer Background Facts...

- ♦ ***Ninety-five per cent of volunteers report that they believe in the cause supported by the organization.***
- ♦ ***Eighty-one per cent say that volunteering allows them to use their skills and experiences.***
- ♦ ***More than 40 per cent of Canada's 78,000 registered charities have no paid staff and rely exclusively on volunteers to carry out their missions.***
- ♦ ***People between 45 and 54 are most likely to volunteer.***
- ♦ ***Fifty-four per cent of volunteers are women.***

~ *Source: Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration*

Insights & Tips

"Volunteers not only assist their community when they help others, they enhance their own lives in ways that may not seem obvious at first glance. People who volunteer learn new tasks and discover new strengths. They learn how to work in teams. They improve their customer service skills by serving the public. They develop skills that they already have by using their talents in new situations. They gain confidence in themselves, discover new interests and open new doors. Employers today are interested in well-rounded individuals. Volunteering can be a life-changing decision, leading to an enhanced résumé and increased employability. Volunteering is truly a win-win situation for everyone involved."

~ ***Leslie Bamford
Coordinator of Volunteers
City of Kitchener***

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news* that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous unit now that they've had the time to think more about it.
- *Review the unit outcome* – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.
- *Guest speaker* – review who is coming, and how she relates to the unit. Together set some basic guidelines for interaction with the guest speaker. For example, will questions/comments be left to the end of the presentation or be made during it? If so, how do we keep the presentation on track? Ask participants what they'd like to learn from the guest speaker – what questions do they want to ask?
- *Introduce questions* for group discussion to spark thinking about the unit's topic: "What do you do that is 'unpaid' work for your family and friends? Does society value a woman's unpaid work? What are these same skills and tasks worth in the workplace?"
- *Accommodate personal goals/needs and facilitate independent work.* Check in briefly with individuals about what they'd like to work toward or accomplish during the unit.

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of the woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: Identifying Transferable Skills

Present the “Getting Ready” activity. Ask each woman who has a hobby to talk about her hobby and to demonstrate it, or show what she has brought. “Show and tell” will let the participants share their experiences. At the same time, it will introduce them to the different perceptions, environments, and interests of the other participants.

- *Encourage questions and comments.*
- *Transferable skills* – during the discussion, draw out the skills involved in the hobby, and relate these to skills used in the workplace. You may wish to begin to use the term “transferable skills” to talk about strengths and skills that can be applied in a different setting or to complete a different task than originally learned.

Insights & Tips

“Pulling the transferable skills out of their hobbies was interesting for the women. We came up with such things as:

- ♦ *Sewing - good hand-eye coordination; following patterns/directions.*
- ♦ *Baking - creativity; following directions.*
- ♦ *Yoga - ability to focus and concentrate; good coordination; patience.*
- ♦ *Artwork - hand-eye coordination; creativity; patience.”*

~ Field-test facilitator

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR ACTIVITY 1

“Show and tell” will introduce participants to the different perceptions, environments and interests of the other participants. Here are two optional activities.

- *Whole group demonstration:* If the group is interested, you could schedule a more in-depth presentation of some of the hobbies. For example, if you are in a location with access to a kitchen, you could set up a food demonstration.

- *Peer-to-Peer Teaching:* one or more participants could teach a small group of other participants some of what she knows (a tai chi movement, a dance step, how to fold origami, cooking tips or a recipe).

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of her participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a document to her portfolio and one that allows her to add a comment to her learning journal.



Activity 2: My Transferable Skills

Have participants document the skills and knowledge gained through volunteer work, hobbies, and other unpaid activities. Relate this activity to building a résumé. Use **Worksheet 6** as a guide.

1. *Starting with point form,* ask participants to list basic details such as what they did, where and for how long.
2. *Next have participants expand* what they wrote to include a brief description of related skills. Participants may search job banks and the volunteer listings for examples of how skills are presented and the language used to describe them.
3. *Ask participants to rewrite and present* the information in order. Here are two choices:

- Chronologically, starting from the most recent.
 - The most important skills gained presented first (those the woman would like to emphasize).
4. *For those participants who are ready*, have them use the lists they've created as an outline for writing a paragraph in sentence form, or the body of a job letter, describing their volunteer work, unpaid work, or hobbies, and the skills involved.

Participants may choose to put the completed worksheet and any other documents they create into their portfolio for future reference.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to enter information onto a simple document and her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"Transferable skills the women came up with:

- ♦ *Being a mother – Decision making; critical thinking; multi-tasking; oral communication; working with others (husband, kids, teachers, doctors, etc.).*
- ♦ *Running a household - numeracy (banking, shopping, balancing household budgets); document use (bank statements, mortgage/ rental papers, etc.)*
- ♦ *Volunteering in a school - working with others; oral communication; reading, numeracy; critical thinking."*

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 6

Identifying My Transferable Skills

For each volunteer or unpaid work placement you've done answer the questions below.

What did you do?

Where did you do it?

How long were you there?

Describe the skills that you used

Put the completed worksheet(s) in your portfolio for future reference.



Activity 3: Valuable Work Experience

Learning Journal. Ask the participant to write an entry in her learning journal about an unpaid work experience (e.g., as a stay-at-home mom, working in a family business, helping out a neighbour or an individual in the community, or volunteering for a charity). What did she learn from it that she could apply to a job?

Insights & Tips

"Talking about my past volunteer work brought back good memories of myself – and made me realize how much I had in common with other women in the group from other countries."

~ Field-test participant

- Has the participant also been the recipient of another person's help?
- How did she feel about both experiences – volunteering and receiving?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her writing and critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 4: Volunteers Needed

Have participants read **Worksheet 7** independently or with a partner.

- *If you are working with women with low literacy skills, then pair a stronger reader with a less skilled reader, and ask the women to read the advertisements aloud.*
- *You might also use the ads to design a literacy-specific activity, such as identifying/circling common "employment" words and key points embedded in the ads.*

After the reading of the volunteers ads, hand out **Worksheet 8**. Ask the participants to answer the questions listed on the worksheet.

- *When working in pairs*, the questions may be first answered as a discussion between the two women: What job posting attracts each one the most? The least? Why? What skills would be involved in the jobs? Does the woman have those skills? Would she like to develop them?
- *Independent workers may answer* the questions in written form.

You may wish to bring the participants back into the larger group to continue discussing the ads, and flip chart responses to the questions from **Worksheet 8**.

Insights & Tips

"This activity sparked the interest of the women to do volunteer work. Many of them viewed it as an exciting prospect and a good way to practise their English language skills."

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 7

Volunteers Needed

Read the volunteers needed ads. Please note the positions listed are not current. The contact information has been removed and the descriptions are offered as *samples* only.

- **Ten Thousand Villages**, a non-profit, fair trade organization, is recruiting volunteers to assist in their retail and distribution centre operations. Join them in helping to provide vital, fair income for artisans in developing countries by selling their handcrafted items and sharing their stories. Applications are available.
- **Do you have talent in the aesthetics department? Christian Horizons is in need of a volunteer** who would like to enhance their professional career by offering their services to individuals with exceptional needs. Services can include: manicures, pedicures, makeovers, and others that the volunteer has experience with. Make a difference in someone's life by helping them feel better about themselves!
- **The Alzheimer Society needs Volunteer Companions for people with Alzheimer's disease or dementia.** Volunteers develop a warm and friendly relationship by going to a person's home and participating in activities that help to maintain their dignity and build their self-esteem. This allows the caregiver to leave the home knowing that their loved one is safe in the care of a trained companion. Compassion, patience and a willingness to learn are required for this position.
- **Langs Farm Village Association** is in need of Resource Centre Volunteers for Monday evenings 5-8 pm. Answer phones and provide administrative support to programs.
- **Community Support Connections** is looking for an individual who can support our frozen meal program for seniors by unpacking stock and hand packing orders to be delivered by our volunteers each week. Day needed is Wednesday's from 12:30 – 3:00.

- **KidsAbility Centre for Child Development** working with children with Special Needs is looking for Volunteers to help out with our Adapted Aquatics Therapeutic Recreation Program as well as a Swim Program for our Junior Kindergarten Classroom. Program takes place in the YMCA pool.
- **Pride Stables** is a therapeutic horseback riding program for children and adults with disabilities. We are seeking daytime volunteers to lead horses and side-walk for our riders between the hours of 9:00 and 2:00. These hours are flexible. Horse experience is not necessary. We will train. If you love horses and children, please contact us.
- **Memorial Hospital** needs Patient/Family volunteers to assist on the Medicine Unit. Volunteers will assist visitors as they enter and exit the unit to ensure a smooth flow of people on the unit during visiting hours. They will assist staff in ensuring infection control procedures are followed by all visitors and family members. Light admin duties to help the staff will be required periodically. The shifts are 2 pm to 5 pm and 5 pm to 8 pm seven day per week. Volunteers will be asked to come in one shift per week.
- **The Bridges Shelter Corporation** is looking for a total of 2 volunteers to help prepare, serve and clean up (including doing dishes) for our community breakfast held Thursday mornings. The shift runs from 7:00 am until 10:00 am.

WORKSHEET 8

Volunteering Jobs

Read the volunteer advertisements in Worksheet 7. Next pick a volunteer job that interests you and then answer the questions below.

Volunteers Needed

What is the job? Describe it in your own words.

What skills or strengths are needed for the job?

Which of the skills do you feel you have?

If you were in an interview for the position, what would you say to let the interviewer know you wanted the volunteer position? Why do you think you are a suitable candidate for the placement?

Volunteers Needed

What questions would you ask the interviewer?

Put the completed worksheet in your portfolio for future reference.

SUGGESTED PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

Here are two programming options for you to consider:

- *Set up volunteering as a program requirement*, where each woman chooses a volunteer opportunity to gain skills and experiences that she can apply to her personal job search. For example, a requirement may be 6 hours of volunteer work, any place and in any time-commitment combination that suits the individual.
- *Present individual volunteering as an option* and support each woman who wishes to volunteer in choosing the opportunity that suits her needs, and in taking the steps to make it a reality.

Participants may also identify volunteer opportunities themselves, perhaps through personal contacts and community involvement. Encourage personal searches.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Two follow-up activities are provided for the suggested programming options. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to use her reading and critical thinking skills.



Activity 5: Local Volunteer Opportunities

Identify current volunteer opportunities in the community. Provide listings in hard copy form, including full contact information. Gather these listings from the local volunteer bureau, or other places where volunteer jobs are listed.

- *Ask participants to search through the listings* to see if there are placements they'd like to research further, and/or apply for.

- *Have each woman make a list of the key components of the volunteer job she has chosen and analyze them to ensure the placement suits her needs, and she meets its needs – e.g., time requirement, day of the week, etc.*

If she thinks the specific placement seems right for her, then ask her to identify how she would apply for the position, and make a plan for doing so. For example:

- *Is an application required?* Where does she get one? Can she get to the location to pick it up?
Would she like to bring it back to class to work on it?
- *Is a résumé required?* Does she have one or does she need to create one?
- *Does she contact a specific person* to set up an interview? Who? How does she contact the person? Telephone? Email? What are the details?

Insights & Tips

"We had a rep from our local volunteer centre come in to do a presentation on the centre's services. She guided the women through their website so that they could find volunteer positions of interest. This presentation was very beneficial in that it gave the women a starting place and took the mystery out of volunteering."

~ Field-test facilitator

Support the participant as she works independently on materials required to apply for the volunteer position, such as drafting an email, filling out an application, and contacting the organization.

The participant may choose to keep copies of written documents in her portfolio.

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her reading and critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 6: Volunteer Opportunities Online

Have participants access local volunteer opportunities online, through their own online search, or by providing links to volunteer organizations or resource centres in your community. If a woman finds a placement that interests her, then ask her to complete the same kinds of “question and answers” as presented in **Worksheet 6**.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her reading and critical thinking skills and her skills in terms of computer use. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

“I turned this activity into a short online research project. We had 3 groups, each researching one of the following topics:

- ♦ *The local Volunteer Action Centre*
- ♦ *The benefits of volunteering; www.givingandvolunteering.ca*
- ♦ *Using volunteer work on your résumé; www.servicelocator.org.*

The women made info packages for each participant, and the groups presented their findings to the class. Through the activity we worked on computer skills, working in groups, and research and presentation skills!”

~ Field-test facilitator

OPTIONAL UNIT ACTIVITIES

Below are three optional activities. Please note that links to Essential Skills are not provided. Refer to the Essential Skills web site or similar activities if you wish to link these to Essential Skills.



Activity 7: Guest Speaker

Invite a guest speaker to talk about volunteering as a way to gain job experience or job skills. Ideally, the speaker will be a woman in the same general age category as the participants. If the group consists primarily of immigrant women, or newcomers to Canada, then the speaker should ideally be an immigrant woman or a newcomer. Look for a guest speaker who is volunteering in the community and ask her to talk about her experiences, and the skills she has gained through volunteerism.

- *You may also wish to present the activity as a panel:*
Include two speakers who volunteer in very different positions and have gained different skills, and/or a person who works with a volunteer agency and can tell them about current opportunities.
- *Before the speaker(s) arrive,* brainstorm with the participants a list of things they would like to learn about being a volunteer. Have them phrase their thoughts and requests as questions.
- *Schedule the activity* so there is ample opportunity for the women to ask questions of the speakers and offer their thoughts. Be sure the speakers understand the time limits – and do not talk too long! Review with them ahead of time the kinds of experiences and information you'd like them to share.

Insights & Tips

"Our guest speaker was from Somalia. She is a mother of four children and is in her forties. She told us about her experiences with volunteering: how she started; how her multiple languages (e.g., Urdu) were a real asset to her community; her work with the community centre; and how she was offered job opportunities because of her volunteer work and motivation."

~ Field-test facilitator



Activity 8: Group Discussion

Follow up the guest speaker with a group discussion. Begin by providing the opportunity for the participants to share personal experiences with volunteering – either as the person doing volunteering, or the recipient of a volunteer act.

- *Move the conversation towards discussion of whether the participants feel that volunteering is something they would like to do to improve their employability skills, gain experience, or simply to help an organization or person.*
 - What kind of volunteer work might they like to do?
 - How could that help them gain skills or experience?
- *Suggest participants follow up, during the independent work portion of the unit, on their personal options and volunteer opportunities. Provide the tools for them to do so.*

Insights & Tips

"Some of the women expressed concerns that they were too old to volunteer, or that their English skills weren't good enough. As a group we were able to talk about and address their concerns."

~ Field-test facilitator



Activity 9: Field Trip

Plan a one-time or short-term group volunteer field trip. Check with the local volunteer bureau to see what tasks are available and suitable for group participation; many bureaus now offer group volunteer opportunities. For example, the group may volunteer for a block of time at a soup kitchen, food bank or co-op, or at a charitable event. If feasible, offer choices so the participants may choose the ones that best fit their common needs and interests.

- Ask participants to identify volunteer opportunities, and to take charge of the planning and actualization of the field trip. Use the event (pre-event and post-event) to explore skills and experiences required and gained through the activity, and for each woman to relate what she has learned to her individual job plan and search. Potentially, the activity could become a group interactive project that spans several units, and facilitates the practice and learning of a variety of Essential Skills.
- Another idea for a related field trip is to visit a volunteer fair as a group, checking out the booths and gathering brochures and other information.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- Ask the group members to share their thoughts about the session, particularly concerning transferable skills. Did they learn something that they didn't know about themselves? Can they see a way to use this in their job search?
- Gather oral & hard copy feedback. If a guest speaker has been part of the unit, ask the women what they thought of her presentation, and if they would like you to arrange other speakers. Ask for suggestions.
- Find out if there was a volunteer opportunity presented during the unit that the group or an individual would like to follow up on. Plan briefly how future units may support or facilitate it.
- Distribute a simple form for individual feedback and comments. Ask each woman to fill out the form and leave it for you. A generic Participation Evaluation form is offered in the Introduction section.
- Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit. Ask if there is something the women would like to add or make sure they talk about – either as part of the topic or in response to today's unit.

- *Read aloud the “Getting Ready” activity to do before the start of next unit (see below).*
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- In your experience, thinking about your own life, what are the good things about growing older?
- In your experience, thinking about your own life, what are the most challenging things about growing older?
- Is there an older person you admire? What is it about her that you like?

CLOSING WORDS

“I like this course because I interact with other people. I discover my other skills and I [now] have other ideas about me. This course helped me to find places where I can have new opportunities and that permit me to volunteer. [I learned] about our community and the opportunities it has for me.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

MY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

"I was a really afraid person when I started the course – very stressed and unsure of myself. I sincerely believed I was too old to learn new things, and that I have very few skills to offer an employer. I no longer feel this way."

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant identifies strengths and challenges of **aging**, **culture**, **gender** and **family needs** as they relate to her exploration of job opportunities.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Oral Communication
- Thinking Skills
 - Problem solving
 - Critical thinking
 - Job task planning and organizing
- Computer Use

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these situations and questions:

- Do you treat older adult learners differently than younger adult learners?
- At what age do you think a woman is “older?” Do you consider yourself “older?”
- Do you find that society in general, or your workplace, is treating you differently as you age?

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- In your experience, thinking about your own life, what are the good things about growing older?
- In your experience, thinking about your own life, what are the most challenging things about growing older?
- Is there an older person you admire? What is it about her that you like?

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report** ~ From the Statistics Canada (www.statcan.gc.ca) website: "Statistics Canada has produced *Women in Canada* an updated and expanded version of the original publication, first released in March 1985. This report analyzes the situation of Canadian women by exploring their demographic and cultural characteristics, living arrangements, income, labour force activity, health and criminal and victimization characteristics." To access the report, click the publications link on the Statistics Canada home page.
- **Ontario Women's Directorate** ~ Includes links to related sites in other provinces and areas of Canada. Provides a variety of information (www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/owd) concerning employment issues, pay equity, women's centres, and health and wellness.

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *Encourage the women to share experiences, information and strategies so that they mentor and support each other – what has worked or helped one woman may work or help another.*
Help each woman give voice to the challenges she faces based on the realities of her life, and her own perspectives towards aging, gender issues, family and culture, specifically as these affect her search for employment. Remember that solutions aren't always necessary, or even possible in all situations. It is often a relief to know that others have felt or face the same issues – the participant is not alone in how she feels.
Acknowledgement of a challenge or difficulty may be enough, even when there are no obvious or easy solutions.

Insights & Tips

"A world-wide research study on 2 million people, from 80 nations, reveals an extraordinarily consistent international pattern in depression and happiness levels. Amazingly, researchers discovered depression and unhappiness is more common during middle age for all cultures."

*~ Middle-Age Blahs are Universal
Ric Nauert, Ph.D.*

- *Recognize that not all participants* will face the same issues or think about them in the same way, although they share and face many of the same experiences as others in their demographic group. Some may see aging as a challenge. Some may view women's health issues such as menopause or peri-menopause as a challenge. Some may view their family situation as a challenge – children still at home, or grandchildren, or aged parents. Others may face the same issues but not see them as difficulties or obstacles, or have the circle of support in place to help them.
- *Be flexible in your planning and teaching/facilitation* so that you can focus efforts on those issues or situations that the women introduce during the discussion – those that they choose to talk about – rather than needing to talk about "all" the related issues.
- *When possible, help the participant give voice* to the positive aspects of the situation, or coping responses that have worked for her. For example, aging presents specific challenges such as slower recall of information and short-term memory; however, experts in learning also say that because older adults have a much deeper bank of experiences to draw upon, their problem-solving and creative abilities are much more developed than younger adult learners. And although older adults sometimes have trouble with recall, they often excel at multiple-choice situations, or other learning strategies, where the choices give them a hint which helps them pull the information out of their memory.
- *Have community contact information*, resources and organizations available to respond to a variety of situations that may arise; for example, information about a community women's health clinic, elder care respite, the food bank or women's shelter. A participant may choose to use it or not – depending on her situation and needs.
- *Be aware of, and acknowledge, the challenges* that immigrant women face when searching for work. The statistics support anecdotal experiences that immigrant women may share in the group such as difficulties finding work, or finding work with adequate or good pay.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Here is some additional information, from a variety of sources, to help you increase your understanding of some of the challenges that the participants may face. You can also use this information to create discussion points or topics.

Insights & Tips

"In our group, many of the women expressed worry for their children. We also had an interesting discussion around aged parents in India, China, Philippines and Europe – how they take care of their family and the elderly."

~ Field-test facilitator

What Women Worry About

Worry about health care and family weigh heavily on women ages 35 to 54. Here are the results of one survey:

- Concerns about an aging parents care or well-being: 65%
- Worry about not having enough time to help, support a family member: 59%
- Difficulty managing stress: 55%

Sources: National Association of Social Workers & New York Academy of Medicine

Later in Life

Later marriages, later child-bearing and longer life spans are forcing more women into taking responsibility for their kids and their parents, says social demographer Janice Wassel of the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. The "sandwich" years don't even go away by the 60s anymore. "We've got these 60-year-olds who take care of 92-year-old parents and 16-year-old kids."

Source: Marilyn Elias, USA TODAY

Ill-health and Poverty

Melannie Hogg once owned a successful catering business in Toronto. Then multiple sclerosis and arthritis reduced the 39-year-old Kitchener woman to a life of poverty. She lives on a disability pension of \$746 a month.

"I am the face of poverty," Hogg told about 70 people at a forum on poverty. "I am your daughter, sister, cousin, friend and neighbour. I am

not the stereotype, not what you would normally think of when poverty comes to mind. I didn't choose to be poor. I chose to be a productive member of society."

Source: Frances Barrick, The Record

Underemployed

- Immigrant women identify access to suitable employment as a key issue in their lives.
- After their arrival in Canada, three out of five women work in an occupation different from their field prior to immigrating.
- Recent immigrants make significantly less than other women. In 2000, women who immigrated to Canada in the previous decade had an average income of just \$16,700.
- In 2000, 35% of women who immigrated to Canada between 1991 and 2001 were living in a low-income household.

Insights & Tips

"The experiences of the immigrant women in the group were similar to the statistics – many could not find work in Canada in their fields of experience and education."

~ Field-test facilitator

Source: ACTEW ~ A Commitment to Women and Training

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous unit now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the unit outcome – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.*

- Note that people often learn and gain from sharing their thoughts, experiences, and emotions. It is hoped that during this unit participants will share with each other their reflections upon being women, 40 plus, and looking for work, as well as explore other commonalities, such as being immigrant women within Canada, and dealing with life's realities and challenges.

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: Growing Older – The Joys and Frustrations

Present the "Getting Ready" activity. Introducing for discussion the topic of aging and the changes it brings may, in itself, generate conversation without too much other prompting from you as the facilitator. Ask participants to share their thoughts about the **positive aspects** of aging, and also the challenges. Start with your own experience, if necessary.

Go with the flow of the conversation, pulling out themes that are common, and expanding upon them. Note prevalent issues and concerns for follow-up, either for individual or small group work. Encourage participants to relate their comments to incidents or experiences in their lives, so that their answers move from the general to the specific. For example:

Insights & Tips

"There was a general consensus from the women in the group who had emigrated to Canada that they did it for their children. Without them, they may have decided to stay in their home country. They looked to Canada for a better life."

~ Field-test facilitator

- “My daughter is married and has left home, and my son pretty much takes care of himself – so I have more time to do some things for me. And I can look for work without worrying about finding day care, or the babysitter being sick and having to find a replacement or call in sick myself. That’s what it was like when the kids were babies, I’d have to call in sick.”
- “I dropped by a lot of places looking for work after I lost my job. Then I finally got a call back for an interview at a video store. The person interviewing me was half my age! Could have been my son! He hired a young woman straight out of high school instead of me. It’s harder to get a job, now that I’m in my forties. Employers want someone young...”
- “I feel so stretched for time. I’m busier now than I ever was... this thing about having more time the older you get doesn’t apply to my life. I still have a child at home, and I’m also trying to take care of my parents. Dad had a stroke and we’re looking for a nursing home for him. Mom wants to stay living in her house, but I don’t know how she can do it. She’s getting more frail, and forgetful. I try to help as much as I can, but there’s only so much time...”
- “I lose my temper with my family more often and I have mood swings. I’ve been carrying around a little fan to deal with the hot flashes when they strike – right out the blue. And I find myself feeling sad a lot...”

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a document to her portfolio and one that allows her to add a comment to her journal.



Activity 2: Can Do!

Post the following quotation on a flip chart. Have participants read the quotation silently, and then have someone read it aloud to the group.

“A woman’s life is tough, and largely unappreciated. It’s only in their 40s that they realize that they need to and CAN strike out and focus on themselves. I love seeing women in their 40s and 50s living it up. Finally they are giving themselves the attention they have always deserved.”

~ Mini Mathur, TV personality
The Times of India

Discuss: Does the comment represent their experiences of being a woman? And then being a woman aged 40 plus?

Together break the quotation into its two main messages: one which tends to focus on challenges and one which focuses on the positive aspects of aging and gender. Ask group members to share their thoughts and experiences. Move from personal experiences, to thinking about larger groups and the role of women.

Message One: “*A woman’s life is tough, and largely unappreciated.*”

- Does that statement “ring true” for the women in the group?
- For the participants as individuals?

- As a general perspective of Canadian society?
- As part of the participant's specific cultural group?
- Does the statement apply to their job search?
- Do participants think it's harder for a woman to find a job than a man? Is it harder for a woman to work at some jobs? Are women treated differently in the work force? Is it harder for an immigrant woman to find work in Canada than others? What experiences back up their thoughts?

You might also want to share and discuss the quotations on the previous pages by Melannie Hogg about the "face of poverty" and by Janice Wassel about the "sandwich years," as well some key findings from the ACTEW fact sheet on Immigrant Women and Employment.

Insights & Tips

"It was productive to identify the challenges of being a woman. I think the activity also helped the women identify their commonalities and therefore become closer. For example, some participants spoke about unsupportive husbands."

~ Field-test facilitator

Message Two: *"It's only in their 40s that they [woman] realize that they need to and CAN strike out and focus on themselves."*

- Is that true in the experiences of the woman in the group?
- For them personally, and/or for women in general?
- As part of Canadian society as a whole, or the women's specific cultural group?
- Does the statement apply to their job search? Are there skills they have now or a different perspective from when they were younger that can serve them in their job search?

 **LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

**Activity 3: Living It Up!**

Focus on the last part of Mathur's statement: "[Women 40+ realize] that they need to and **can** strike out and focus on themselves."

Have the women work as a larger group, or divide them into smaller groups or pairs. Ask them to work together to make a list on flip chart of what they are doing **now** in their lives to focus on themselves. Ask them to be specific – something that they *do*. Encourage each woman to try to think of at least one thing – it might be as simple as taking time to meet with a friend or neighbour for tea or coffee or it might be something "larger", such as being in this program.

Insights & Tips

"The women in the group discussed how it isn't until the 40's and 50's that we have a little time for ourselves – those who recently emigrated here were in a different situation as they felt they were starting over again."

~ Field-test facilitator

After the list is completed ask the women to think about and share with each other their wishes for the **future**. Again, encourage each woman to try to think of a least one thing.

- *What would she like to do to focus on herself, based perhaps on some of things she's learned about herself in the course to date?* Again, ask for specifics.
- *Once the women have had a chance to share their thoughts, ask them to compile a list of the things they plan to do for themselves in the future.*

- *Post both lists* – current and future - about the room. If you've been working in small groups or pairs, gather together as a larger group and share the lists.

You may wish to follow up the activity, either as a group or independently, with a planning exercise – encouraging each woman to attach a specific date or action to her item on the list – when she will start doing it or when she will take a concrete step towards actualization.

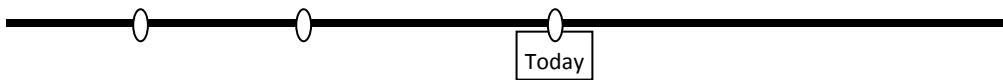
LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 4: Lifeline Map³

Have the participant draw a straight line on a piece of paper and then put points on the line that show major events in her life. For example, she might include the birth of a child, her marriage, or arrival in Canada.



- Now ask the participant to think about the major events in her life. Redraw the line making "peaks" and "valleys" to show the ups and downs – the challenging times and the good times. She might use the same points, or add new ones.

³ See Alternate Activity – Employment and Education Map, page 123.

- *Beneath each point, ask the participant to write something she has learned from that time in her life, perhaps a skill, or a character or values trait, that she can bring into her job search.*
- *Now ask her to think of the future, and then continue the lifeline, using a different colour pen, adding major events or accomplishments she'd like to see happen.*

Have volunteers share their lifelines. This can be done with the whole group or in pairs. You may want to do your own lifeline and be prepared to share it with the group.

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to think critically about her past. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"We did this exercise as a circle as well as a straight line. Interesting methods of drawing the life line came out. The lifeline map was an excellent activity – it put their journey in focus, but also created a lot of emotion. This is an activity that needs a lot of time, almost a unit unto itself."

"One of the women cried during 'the future' part of the activity as she was unsure of what the future holds for her (she is a recent newcomer to Canada). The group really came together and supported her."

~ Field-test facilitators

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 5 and Activity 6 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a comment to her journal.



Activity 5: What Do I Worry About?

Distribute **Worksheet 9** featuring statistics about “What Women Worry About”.

- *Ask the participant to reflect upon what she worries about - whether they are the same concerns as the women polled, or different concerns – and then write about her worries in her learning journal.*
- *Next ask the participant to start thinking about the changes she could make at some point in the future. She doesn't have to write them down at this point, just think about them.*



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to think critically about her past and her ability to put her thoughts on paper. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 9

What do I worry about?

Read the information in the box and then respond to the question.

WHAT WOMEN WORRY ABOUT

Concerns about health care costs and family weigh heavily on women aged 35 to 54. Percentage affected "a great deal" or "somewhat" in their personal lives by:

- ⦿ Concerns about an aging parents care or well-being: **65%**
- ⦿ Worry about not having enough time to help or support a family member: **59%**
- ⦿ Difficulty managing stress: **55%**

Sources: National Association of Social Workers and the New York Academy of Medicine.

1. Think about your own life. What do **you** worry about?

2. Write about it in your learning journal.



Activity 6: Life Experiences

Distribute **Worksheet 10** and **Worksheet 11**. Ask each participant to choose the article that is of most interest to her, or the one that speaks to her life experiences. Have her read it to herself and highlight key points or words.

Be sure to note the *various reading levels required* for each worksheet, and plan accordingly, based on the literacy abilities of the participants. You may wish to substitute the full articles with shorter easier-to-read quotes, such as those presented in the unit section, “Additional Information”.

- *If the participant wishes*, have her pair up with another woman in the group to share her concerns and experiences, and listen to her partner’s personal concerns and experiences.
- *Provide brochures and contacts* for finding community support and help, and make these available for the participants to read and take home if they wish.
- *Ask participants to record* their thoughts and feelings in their journals.
- *Computer Option:* As a group exercise or individually, have participants create a “search” list of key words related to the issue that they can “Google” to gain more information.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her reading, critical thinking skills and writing skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

“These articles were difficult for some of the ESL students, particularly the vocabulary. I’d suggest using them with students with higher level reading skills.”

“We had some good group discussions around the articles, although the women found them a bit sobering!”

~ Field-test facilitators

WORKSHEET 10

Reducing poverty possible, forum told⁴

'I am the face of poverty . . . I am your daughter, sister, cousin, friend and neighbour'

October 27, 2008

FRANCES BARRICK

RECORD STAFF

WATERLOO REGION

Melannie Hogg once owned a successful catering business in Toronto.

Then multiple sclerosis and arthritis reduced the 39-year-old Kitchener woman to a life of poverty. She lives on a disability pension of \$746 a month.

"I am the face of poverty," Hogg told about 70 people at a forum on poverty. "I am your daughter, sister, cousin, friend and neighbour. I am not the stereotype, not what you would normally think of when poverty comes to mind.

"I didn't choose to be poor. I chose to be a productive member of society."

The gathering Friday in Cambridge brought together social activists who want to reduce poverty in Ontario by 25 per cent in five years.

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty has pledged to introduce a poverty-reduction strategy by the end of this year.

Peter Clutterbuck of the Social Planning Network of Ontario, which is promoting the goal of a 25 per cent cut in poverty, said he's encouraged the Liberal government is still committed to the fight, despite economic uncertainties.

"Poverty remains on the agenda," he said.

The question, he said, is how quickly the government will implement poverty-reduction initiatives and how much money is allocated to them.

About 320,000 children live in poverty in Ontario, Clutterbuck told the forum

⁴ Reprinted with permission. The Record, Waterloo Region.

at Cambridge City Hall. A 25 per cent cut would mean 80,000 fewer children who are poor.

"It is not an ambitious program," he said. "It is actually an achievable program."

Ways to reduce poverty include increasing the minimum wage to \$11 an hour, providing more affordable housing, and offering child-care and transit subsidies to the poor, he said.

Anne Tinker, executive director of The Bridges, said the 40-bed homeless shelter in Cambridge is more than full every night.

On Thursday night, nine people slept on the floors.

Now, a growing number of seniors are seeking shelter, including two people in their 80s who arrived at The Bridges one night last week.

Like many other speakers at the forum, Tinker urged the community to get behind the poverty-reduction movement.

"If we don't work together to find an answer, it is going to get worse before it gets better," she said.

Source: Frances Barrick, The Record
fbarrick@therecord.com

WORKSHEET 11

Middle-aged women are less likely to be happy⁵

By Marilyn Elias, USA TODAY

Women from the mid-30s to mid-50s are less likely than Americans overall to be very happy, and many are racked by worries about aging parents and other family members, a national survey reports Monday.

Money, time and health concerns loomed large in the poll by independent pollsters Pursuant Inc. of more than 1,100 women who have at least one living parent. About 20% said they were very happy, compared with 34% for the U.S. population overall in another survey by the Pew Research Center this year.

More than half of the women were concerned about an elderly relative's health. Those who had ailing relatives — usually a mother or father — were much more likely to feel depressed and to worry about having enough time for family members. They also had more trouble managing stress. About two out of three women were employed.

The poll of women ages 35 to 54, commissioned by the New York Academy of Medicine and the National Association of Social Workers, has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The bleak scenario doesn't surprise Deb Rubenstein, a social worker who counsels "sandwich generation" women, those who have children at home and aging parents, at IONA Senior Services, a social-service agency in Washington, D.C.

"I've had women burst into tears in my office. They say 'Not only is my father in the hospital, and they're calling me at work saying, "Figure out where he's going next because he's not going home," but the school's calling to say my learning-disabled child has developed another problem.' "

Typically, when emergencies with aging parents hit, "these women already have their plates 110% full," she says. Women do about 70% of the care giving for elderly relatives with chronic illness, national studies have shown.

Counseling and referrals to assisted living facilities or other resources for the

⁵ Taken from http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2006-11-12-women-study_x.htm. Used with permission as per information on USA Today's website, March 2010.

elderly can help, she says. About one out of four women surveyed said they or relatives had sought help from aging services experts.

Later marriages, later child-bearing and longer life spans are forcing more women into taking responsibility for their kids and their parents, says social demographer Janice Wassel of the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. The "sandwich" years don't even go away by the 60s anymore.

"We've got these 60-year-olds who take care of 92-year-old parents and 16-year-old kids," she says.

Providing elder care was linked to feeling overworked in a study of employed adults last year, but taking care of children was not, says Ellen Galinsky of the Families and Work Institute, which did the study.

Such overwork may be common. In another institute study, 35% of U.S. employees said they had elder care responsibilities during the last year. "It can be episodic, unpredictable and very stressful," Galinsky says.



Alternate Activity: Employment and Education Map

Follow the directions for the “Lifeline Map” described in **Activity 4**, but have the participants plot previous work (including paid and non-paid) and education and training.

Use the map as a tool to build a résumé, either in this unit, or for the participant to store in her portfolio for future reference.

Also use the exercise to map out plans for the future, using a different colour pen to show steps, goals and accomplishments.

Insights & Tips

“The women found the mapping exercises to be useful and thought-provoking. Great activity!”

~ Field-test facilitator

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES



Activity 7: Guest Speaker

Invite a woman who works at a job that is traditionally held by men – such as a carpenter, welder, plumber or mechanic – to come to the group and talk about her choice of profession including the pathway she took to achieve it.

Make available brochures or other information about apprenticeship and training opportunities for women in non-traditional jobs. Encourage the women to take copies of the information to read during the independent work portion of the unit, or later at home.

For those interested in further researching non-traditional jobs for women, ask them to keep the information in their portfolio for future reference.



Activity 8: Group Planning

Have the group plan and invite a woman as a guest speaker who works in a non-traditional field to an upcoming unit. Research the possibilities together, and choose what kinds of non-traditional jobs for women the group would like to find more about, along with programs, training and apprenticeship opportunities in your communities. Make brochures and other information available.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Debrief from the various activities and discussions.* Be aware that the discussion may have touched upon difficult issues for some of the women. Be sure to bring positive closure to the unit – either by ensuring follow-up and referrals, and/or talking in brief to each woman individually.
- *Refer to the “focusing on oneself” activity spurred by the Mini Mathur’s statement.* Challenge the participants to remember to do something in the time between this and the next unit to focus on themselves – even something simple.
- *Gather oral & hard copy feedback.* Ask the group members to share their thoughts about the unit, and whether they would like to continue discussion about any of the topics in upcoming units.
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit.* If a guest speaker has been arranged for the next unit, prepare participants by letting them know who will be attending.

Insights & Tips

“I realized during this unit that we’re not alone in our aging and that there are many positives in aging.”

“I will concentrate more on my goals – try to visualize them.”

“This unit made me think about my life – what I had and what I want to have.”

~ Field-test participants

- *Read aloud the “Getting Ready” activity to do before the start of next unit (see below).*
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- If you were to take a trip to a place you’ve never visited before, how would you go about finding out about it?
- If you had an afternoon free just for you, and no other responsibilities, how would you spend it? Would you watch a movie, read a book, write a letter, listen to music, go for a walk, visit friends, or would you do something else?

CLOSING WORDS

“My husband was not agreeing for me to get out and do this course. I have lot of work to do at home like cooking, cleaning, laundry, picking up kids from school. With the help of this course I was able to pay a babysitter to pick up my child and take care of him until I come home but [the] other kid need to be picked up from school. I ignore my husband’s anger and make sure he will pick up the kid. Only in coming and being committed to this course did I find the courage and confidence to ask things like that of my husband for the first time in my life.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

HOW I WORK AND LEARN

"I really love this course where [I can] explore and spotlight my character. It makes me wake up in the morning, to get me up from sleeping, and depression and giving up finding a job. Now I have hope to have my own business and [go] back to school to have [an] art degree. "

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant explores her **learning style** and **multiple intelligence strengths**, and applies the information to future employment and training possibilities.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Continuous Learning
- Thinking Skills
- Computer Use

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these situations and questions:

- *You've probably tried learning style inventories* in the past (if not, go to the Government of Canada site listed in the resources section and try one). What is your preferred learning style?
- *What is your area of strength* when it comes to the theory of Multiple Intelligences? If you don't know, try the multiple intelligence inventory at the Government of Canada website.
- *Is your career choice a good "fit"* for you when you reflect upon the results of the inventories?

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- If you were to take a trip to a place you've never visited before, how would you go about finding out about it?
- If you had an afternoon free just for you, and no other responsibilities, how would you spend it? Would you watch a movie, read a book, write a letter, listen to music, go for a walk, visit friends, or would you do something else?

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Service Canada** offers two online quizzes that relate to the content of the unit. Visit the website (www.servicecanada.gc.ca) and follow the menu links through to the following “toolbox” quizzes:
 - Seeing, Hearing, Doing Quiz
 - Multiple Intelligence Quiz
- **VARK**, a guide to learning styles ~ Visit the VARK home page (www.vark-learn.com) and follow the menu link to the web page Questionnaire for an online learning styles quiz.
- **Learn More Now, 10 Simple Steps to Learning Better, Smarter and Faster**, Marcia L. Conner, published by John Wiley and Sons, 2004. This book provides plenty of simple exercises and activities to appeal to a wide range of learners and learning styles.

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *Keep the discussion of learning styles and multiple intelligences as simple as possible.* Have fun with the inventories and the discoveries. Emphasize that there are no “right” and “wrong” answers, nor is there one way of learning that is better than the others - there are only different ways. We are all unique human beings, and put our own “stamp” on how we learn or perceive things.
- *Help the women make discoveries about themselves.* Be sure that each participant leaves the unit with a better understanding of her personal preferences and strengths so that she can apply this understanding to her day-to-day life, to her job search, to her training, and to her job.

Apply the discoveries not only to education, but also to employment situations – how she might use the information to go about her job search or identify career areas and opportunities that

Insights & Tips

“We also discussed how information is shared in the participant’s own culture, e.g., music, song, dance, the arts, etc.”

~ Field-test facilitator

are a good match for her. She might even perform her future job more effectively by knowing her preferred learning style and "intelligences" and shaping her environment accordingly.

- Remember to point out that the inventories help us to identify our **dominant or preferred style**, but that we use all of the styles in our daily lives. The point isn't to avoid our weaker learning styles (indeed, we can develop them), but to be aware of how we process information to gain the most out of our efforts, and to reinforce learning. If one approach for handling information or learning something new doesn't work for you, try another approach!

Insights & Tips

So, what are learning styles?

Think about this first: how do you like to learn new information? Do you like to read it or do you prefer to listen to someone else explain ideas? Do you prefer to jump right into a new activity and learn by trial and error? Do you like to move around and listen to music or do you prefer a quiet environment when studying?

Your answer to these and similar questions will help you begin to identify your preferred learning style.

~ *The Adult Literary Learner*
Lindsay Kennedy and Marianne Paul

- Clarify what is meant by learning style – it is the way in which an individual tends to understand and remember information. Another way of saying it - a learning style is how one takes in, processes, stores and then uses information. There are many ways of looking at and categorizing learning style preferences. One popular and simple way is to decide whether a person is a **visual, auditory, or tactile** learner.

Profile #1 – Visual Learner

Charlotte almost flunked out of school because she drew pictures and maps instead of writing or reading her assignments. She never did find a way to succeed in academia, but she now makes a good living as a commercial realtor where she can draw floor plans and help her corporate clients visualize how a space will look when they move in.

~ *Learning Styles on the Job*
Marcia L. Conner

Profile #2 – Auditory Learner

Henrietta, owner of a growing leasing business, talks her way through nearly every meeting. She even talks to herself when she's alone in the car. An auditory learner who processes information best by verbalizing it, she keeps track of details this way and figures out what needs to happen next by giving voice to her thoughts. She sometimes has trouble with colleagues, who doubt her abilities, because they assume she talks to herself because she's nervous. Actually, she talks more when she's comfortable, and talking helps her to understand situations in more meaningful ways.

~ *Learning Styles on the Job*
Marcia L. Conner

Profile #3 – Tactile Learner

Faye, an energetic residential realtor, loves her job most when she's walking around houses, running her hands over the walls, or touching the upholstery of a couch. Although she learns a little from her clients when they set up their appointment on the phone, she knows she will understand them better when they walk around a home together.

~ *Learning Styles on the Job*
Marcia L. Conner

- *Multiple Intelligence Theory*, developed by Howard Gardner, is another way to look at a person's strengths, and how she perceives and handles the world about her. Gardner believes that multiple intelligences are influenced by both biological and cultural factors, and that each of us has a referred category from which to learn and use information.

- As with all the self-discovery exercises in this module, Multiple Intelligence (MI) is presented here to help the participant give voice to her own abilities and preferences in order to enhance her employment opportunities and job satisfaction. The categories of intelligence include: logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical, linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, existentialist, naturalist.

ARE YOU...

- Number & Reasoning Smart? (Logical/mathematical)
- Picture Smart? (Visual/Spatial)
- Body Smart? (Bodily/Kinesthetic)
- Music Smart? (Musical)
- Word Smart? (Linguistic)
- People & Relationship Smart? (Interpersonal)
- Self Smart? (Intrapersonal)
- Deep-Thinking Smart? (Existentialist)
- Nature Smart? (Naturalist)

- You may wish to present the unit over two or more days, focusing first on learning styles and then on MI. As always, modify the plans and activities to suit the needs and interests of the participants, the program, and the time available.
- Design and adapt learning activities to appeal to a variety of styles and intelligences, that is, present the same information or have a participant complete a task in ways that suit how she takes in and gives out information. Give participants a choice for how they complete an outcome – there are many roads to reach the same destination!

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous unit now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *When reflecting about the previous unit, remind the women of the challenge that was given to them – to do something solely for themselves between the units. Did they do it? What? How did it make them feel? Will they try to incorporate moments for themselves into their lives? How will they go about it?*
- *Review the unit outcome – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.*
- *Accommodate personal goals/needs and facilitate independent work, particularly as the course progresses. In this unit, there are several opportunities for the women to learn about their personal strengths and preferences through inventories that may be done in a variety of ways – independently with paper and pencil/hard copies, independently through the computer and online work, or through group discussion and small group work. Adapt and present the unit accordingly, preferably with a combination of methods.*



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: My Best Learning Style

Present the “Getting Ready” activity. Throw out the question to the group for brainstorming ideas: If you were to take a trip to a place you’ve never visited before, how would you go about finding out about it? Flip chart responses.

Next, draw a large circle on flip chart paper. Divide the circle into three parts or slices. Label each slice with one of the following: Visual, Auditory and Tactile; and then ask each woman to say under which category or “slice” her response best fits.

Repeat the activity with the second question: If you had an afternoon free just for you, and no other responsibilities, how would you spend it? Would you watch a movie, read a book or write a letter, listen to music, go for a walk, or visit friends? Or do something else altogether? Graph the responses.

- *Have each woman analyze her responses.* Do all or most of her responses show up under the same category or slice? What do the answers tell her about herself?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication and critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

“This was a fun activity – it elicited good participation!”

“Afternoon free: much discussion about being with a friend, another woman, and walking and talking about their lives. We discussed the benefits of being a woman and having that bond with other females.”

“Interesting outcome – 80% of the women said they’d go straight to the Internet to research a travel spot. A few said they’d consult with friends or a travel agent.”

~ Field test facilitators

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

A number of activities have been provided as follow-up to the discussion. Select the methods that match the skills, abilities and interests of the women. Completed questionnaires could be placed in a portfolio. “Links to Essential Skills” are **not provided** for these activities.



Activity 2: Learning Style Quick Test

Hand out **Worksheet 12**, the “Learning Style Quick Test”, to each participant. Have her answer the questions independently. Explain there are no right or wrong answers. She should check or tick off the statement that best describes how she would react. If necessary, do the first set of questions with the whole group to show how the quick test works.

- *Have each woman add up the check marks at the end of the inventory. What is her preferred learning style? (Note: you may wish to hand out the “results” section of the activity separately; you may also want to print off and hand-out more information about what each of the learning style categories mean).*
- *Bring the group together. Do a quick poll by raising hands. Who is a visual learner? Who is an auditory learner? Who is a tactile learner? Graph the results in a pie chart. Have each woman put her name in the slice that represents her preferred learning style.*
- *Discuss the results. Do they ring true for each woman? Can the participants think of other examples in their lives that support or don’t support their “quick test” learning style preference?*

Insights & Tips

“Learning styles – I had never really thought about that before – I learned everyone has different learning styles and that is normal and okay. I will make an effort to pay attention to my learning style.”

~ Field-test participant

WORKSHEET 12

Learning Style Quick Test⁶

Put a check mark beside each statement that describes what you would most likely do or how you'd respond to a situation.

The Challenge...	A	B	C
<i>To operate new equipment I would:</i>	Read the instructions	Listen to an explanation	Try it out
<i>To find travel directions I would:</i>	Look at a map	Ask for spoken directions	Follow my nose
<i>To cook something new I would:</i>	Follow a recipe	Call a friend and ask for an explanation	Follow my instinct, tasting as I cook
<i>To teach something to someone I would:</i>	Write out instructions	Explain verbally	Show them and let them try it
<i>To return faulty goods I would:</i>	Write a letter	Phone	Take it back to the store
<i>I'd say...</i>	"I see what you mean."	"I hear what you're saying."	"I know how you feel."
<i>I'd say...</i>	"Show me."	"Tell me."	"Let me try it."
<i>I'd say...</i>	"Watch how I do it."	"Let me explain."	"You have a go."
<i>Continued on next page</i>			

⁶ Quick Test information adapted from: <http://www.businessballs.com/vaklearningstyletest.htm>. All other information taken from *The Adult Literacy Learner*. L. Kennedy and M. Paul, 2005.

The Challenge...	A	B	C
<i>Leisure</i>	Museums and galleries	Music and conversations	Physical activities
<i>Buying gifts</i>	Books	Music	Tools and gadgets
<i>Shopping</i>	Look and imagine	Discuss with shop staff	Try on and test
<i>Choose a holiday</i>	Read the brochures	Listen to recommendations	Imagine the experience
<i>Choose a car</i>	Read the reviews	Discuss with friends	Test drive
Add up the check marks in each column:			

Transfer your results to the next page.

Now enter the number of check marks into the table below:

A	B	C
Visual	Auditory	Tactile

The column with the greatest amount of check marks gives an indication of your ***preferred*** learning style. This means the way you learn best most of the time.

Visual—needs to be able to see the instructor and learn best from visual displays.

Auditory—listens to what others say and learns best through verbal lectures.

Tactile/Kinesthetic—prefers to actively explore the physical world and learns best through a hands-on approach.



Activity 3: Online Learning Style Inventories

Computer Option – Those participants who are comfortable with computers, or who want to practise their computer skills, can do learning style inventories online. There are many learning style inventories online that will also automatically calculate the results.

Participants may do an online search to identify some; however, you may simply wish to provide the URLs to ensure the tests are from valid sources, and match the literacy skills of the women.

Check out the following two inventories found at the websites listed in the resources section at the front of this unit:

- Seeing, Hearing, Doing Quiz – Government of Canada website.
- VARK*, A Guide to Learning Styles.

You'll note that the VARK Inventory presents four learning styles rather than three, adding the Read/Write style. If you wish, hand out **Worksheet 18** to review the four learning styles, and discuss how people learn best based on their learning style.

* VARK is an acronym for learning preferences: Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic.

Insights & Tips

"The women reported to me that they found the inventories (in class and online) exciting and interesting! Discovering their learning styles was a favourite activity."

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 13

The VARK Learning Styles⁷

The VARK Inventory presents four learning styles rather than three, adding the Read/Write style.

Visual Learning Style means you learn best when you:

- Use books with diagrams and pictures
- Have graphs and flowcharts
- See lots of space on a page of text
- Interact with people who use gestures and lots of description
- See words that are highlighted or are in different colours.

Aural Learning Style means you learn best when you:

- Attend lectures
- Attend tutorials
- Discuss topics with other students
- Discuss topics with the facilitator
- Explain new ideas to other people
- Use a tape recorder
- Remember the interesting examples, stories, jokes
- Describe the overheads, pictures and other visuals to somebody who was not there
- Leave spaces in your lecture notes for later recall and 'filling'.

⁷ This version of the VARK was taken from *The Adult Literacy Learner*. L. Kennedy and M. Paul. Algonquin College, Sault College, Conestoga College and Project READ Literacy Network, 2004. Used with permission.

Read/Write Learning Style means you learn best when you:

- Make lists
- Use headings
- Use dictionaries, glossaries definitions
- Have a handout
- Read a textbook
- Instructors or facilitators use words well and have lots of information in sentences and notes
- Write your own notes and read manuals.

Kinesthetic Learning Style means you learn best when you:

- Can use all your senses – sight, touch, taste, smell, and hearing
- Go on field trips
- Have instructors, facilitators or lecturers who give real-life examples.
- Can use a hands-on approach
- Try it for yourself (trial and error)
- Can collect things and put them in order
- Have exhibits, samples, photographs.



Activity 4: Learning Style Profiles

Use **Worksheets 14, 15, and 16** to create three workstations in different parts of the room. Ask the participants to move from station to station, reading each of the profiles, and the tips about how to make the most out of the preferred learning style.

Once the participants have visited each station, have them gather around the station that best matches how they like to work and learn. Gathered into small groups according to learning style, the women should work together to answer the questions at the bottom of the worksheet. What can they do to reinforce their learning in light of their learning style?

Add to the challenge by making a pile in the centre of the room of items that appeal to various learning styles – CD player or iPod, paper and pen, crayons, magazines, tickets to a movie, dance shoes, DVD, text book, musical instrument, model kit, telephone, etc. Ask participants to choose and take the items to their station that best match their learning style.



Activity 5: Learning Style Profile Alternative

As an alternative to Activity 4, and for women with stronger literacy skills and who prefer to work independently, hand out **Worksheet 17**. Have the participants read the article entitled, *Career Know-How, Learning Styles on the Job*, by Marcia L. Conner, and answer the related questions.

Insights & Tips

"Some of the women reported that they found these two activities helpful as it showed them that one learning style is not better than another."

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 14

Charlotte's profile⁸

Charlotte almost flunked out of school because she drew pictures and maps instead of writing or reading her assignments. She never did find a way to succeed in academia, but she now makes a good living as a commercial realtor where she can draw floor plans and help her corporate clients visualize how a space will look when they move in.

If you're a visual learner like Charlotte, you prefer to look at what you're learning. Pictures almost certainly help you understand ideas and information better than text or verbal explanations. Rather than listen to what someone says, you may find yourself watching the speaker. Telephone conversations might be difficult because you're so accustomed to getting visual cues from people while they talk. To learn, don't just stare at a page. Move your body and your eyes to heighten your visual perception and your comprehension.

Put this to work today: If your primary learning style is visual, draw pictures in the margins of books you're reading, look at the graphics, and read the text that explains the graphics. Online, envision the topic in your thoughts.

Ask yourself:

1. Are you a visual learner? What do you have in common with Charlotte?
2. What are some jobs that might be a good match for visual learners?
3. How might you shape your job search to take into account your learning style strength?

⁸ Adapted from: *Career Know-How, Learning Styles on the Job*, Marcia L. Conner. Reprinted under the Creative License Agreement, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>. Visit <http://www.marciaconner.com> for further information.

WORKSHEET 15

Henrietta's profile⁹

Henrietta, owner of a growing leasing business, talks her way through nearly every meeting. She even talks to herself when she's alone in the car. An auditory learner who processes information best by verbalizing it, she keeps track of details this way and figures out what needs to happen next by giving voice to her thoughts. She sometimes has trouble with colleagues, who doubt her abilities, because they assume she talks to herself because she's nervous. Actually, she talks more when she's comfortable, and talking helps her to understand situations in more meaningful ways.

If you're an auditory learner like Henrietta, you prefer listening or talking when you're learning. The auditory listener, learns by listening to other people and may even carry on mental conversations and resolve problems by thinking back on what people have said. A less common type of auditory learner is the verbal processor. She likes to say what she is thinking. If you're a verbal processor, you may know intuitively that until you say something aloud or at least move your lips, you're not quite certain of your thoughts or their implications.

Put this to work today: If your primary learning style is **auditory**, listen to the words you read. Try to develop an internal conversation between you and the text. Don't be embarrassed to read aloud or talk through the information.

Ask yourself:

1. Are you an auditory learner? What do you have in common with Henrietta?
2. What are some jobs that might be a good match for auditory learners?
3. How might you shape your job search to take into account your learning style strength?

⁹ Adapted from: *Career Know-How, Learning Styles on the Job*, Marcia L. Conner. Reprinted under the Creative License Agreement, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>. Visit <http://www.marciaconner.com> for further information.

WORKSHEET 16

Faye's profile¹⁰

Faye, an energetic residential realtor, loves her job most when she's walking around houses, running her hands over the walls, or touching the upholstery of a couch. Although she learns a little from her clients when they set up their appointment on the phone, she knows she will understand them better when they walk around a home together.

If you're a tactile/kinesthetic learner like Faye, you incorporate information through touch and movement. As a result, you may not thrive in traditional work environments because there aren't enough opportunities to hold things or move around. In school, classroom discussions and written materials probably frustrated you, but you most likely caught up and even jumped ahead during lab time.

Put this to work today: If your primary learning style is tactile/kinesthetic, in printed text use a pencil or highlighter pen to mark passages that are meaningful to you. From online text, take notes, transferring the information into your journal. Doodle. Whenever possible, walk around as you read. Feel the words and ideas. Get busy—both mentally and physically.

Ask yourself:

1. Are you a tactile/kinesthetic learner? What do you have in common with Henrietta?
2. What are some jobs that might be a good match for tactile/kinesthetic learners?
3. How might you shape your job search to take into account your learning style strength?

¹⁰ Adapted from: *Career Know-How, Learning Styles on the Job*, Marcia L. Conner. Reprinted under the Creative License Agreement, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>. Visit <http://www.marciaconner.com> for further information.

WORKSHEET 17

Learning Styles

Read the article below. While reading, think about these questions:

1. Do any of the people described in the article remind you of yourself? Who?
 2. Do you learn or tackle tasks in a similar way?
 3. What is your learning style?
 4. What strategies used by the people in the article to match their learning style could you use? Highlight them with a highlighter pen.
-

Career Know-How

Learning Styles on the Job

by Marcia L. Conner¹¹

In the past ten years my husband and I have moved across the country four times and built then sold as many homes. With each move, we meet terrific realtors seeking the best ways to market our property and edge out the competition. Because my work focuses on helping people understand the role that learning plays in personal productivity and success, I have shared this perspective with our realtors who have commented that they are overwhelmed with an increase in new information to read and learn. By assessing how you learn, you'll understand how you are likely to respond under different circumstances and how to attain information in a way that best addresses your particular needs. The more you discover about your natural way of learning, the easier it will be to overcome information overload and communicate with other people.

We each have a personal learning style that we rely every day even if we have never examined how we learn best. In their simplest terms, we take in information and learn through sight (visual), by sound or speech (auditory), or by touch and movement (tactile/kinesthetic). We favor one of these senses and process information most effectively through it although we can benefit

¹¹ Marcia L. Conner is a facilitator, coach, and writer living in Virginia. She is author of *Learn More Now: 10 Simple Steps to Learning Better, Smarter, and Faster* (Wiley, 2004) and *Creating a Learning Culture* (Cambridge, 2004). You can reach her directly at www.marciaconner.com.

from information that comes to us through other means too. If you're a visual learner, you prefer to look at what you're learning. Pictures almost certainly help you understand ideas and information better than text or verbal explanations. Rather than listen to what someone says, you may find yourself watching the speaker. Telephone conversations might be difficult because you're so accustomed to getting visual cues from people while they talk. To learn, don't just stare at a page. Move your body and your eyes to heighten your visual perception and your comprehension.

Charlie almost flunked out of school because he drew pictures and maps instead of writing or reading his assignments. He never did find a way to succeed in academia, but he now makes a good living as a commercial realtor where he can draw floor plans and help his corporate clients visualize how a space will look when they move in.

If you're an auditory learner, you prefer listening or talking when you're learning. The most common type of auditory learner, the auditory listener, learns by listening to other people and may even carry on mental conversations and resolve problems by thinking back on what people have said. The less common type of auditory learner, the verbal processor, likes to say what he or she is thinking. If you're a verbal processor, you may know intuitively that until you say something aloud or at least move your lips, you're not quite certain of your thoughts or their implications.

Susan, a young mortgage broker, spends the early morning reading the newspaper and then adds another dimension to what she has read by listening to the news on the radio. By using two different auditory techniques together, she remembers more and can use one method to help her focus on the other.

Henry, owner of a growing leasing business, talks his way through nearly every meeting. He even talks to himself when he's alone in the car. An auditory learner who processes information best by verbalizing it, he keeps track of details this way and figures out what needs to happen next by giving voice to his thoughts. He sometimes has trouble with colleagues, who doubt his abilities, because they assume he talks to himself because he's nervous. Actually, he talks more when he's comfortable, and talking helps him to understand situations in more meaningful ways.

If you're a tactile/kinesthetic learner, you incorporate information through touch and movement. As a result, you may not thrive in traditional work

environments because there aren't enough opportunities to hold things or move around. In school, classroom discussions and written materials probably frustrated you, but you most likely caught up and even jumped ahead during lab time.

Faye, an energetic residential realtor, loves her job most when she's walking around houses, running her hands over the walls, or touching the upholstery of a couch. Although she learns a little from her clients when they set up their appointment on the phone, she knows she will understand them better when they walk around a home together.

Put this to work today

- If your primary learning style is visual, draw pictures in the margins of books you're reading, look at the graphics, and read the text that explains the graphics. Online, envision the topic in your thoughts.
- If your primary learning style is auditory, listen to the words you read. Try to develop an internal conversation between you and the text. Don't be embarrassed to read aloud or talk through the information.
- If your primary learning style is tactile/kinesthetic, in printed text use a pencil or highlighter pen to mark passages that are meaningful to you. From online text, take notes, transferring the information into your journal. Doodle. Whenever possible, walk around as you read. Feel the words and ideas. Get busy—both mentally and physically.

By appreciating your own style, you can also begin to look from other's perspectives and more easily help everyone learn. None of us learns in only one way but by honing in on our strengths and preferences, we can remember more of what we learn and make learning and meeting with others more efficient, effective, and enjoyable.



Activity 6: More than One Way to Learn

Introduce the Multiple Intelligences Theory, and the idea that learning styles is just one way to look at our strengths. Howard Gardner organized another way, describing an individual's strengths in these areas of intelligence: logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical, linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, existentialist, naturalist.

Insights & Tips

"The MI quiz was well-received by the participants – they made comments to the effect that it was a practical exercise and they were excited to see what careers they were matched to."

~ Field-test facilitator

Challenge the participants to find out their areas of intelligence through a MI inventory. Here's one online suggestion:

- Multiple Intelligence Quiz, Service Canada website, Career Navigator tools.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 7 and Activity 8 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a comment to her journal. These activities have not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 7: MI Inventory

Hand out **Worksheet 18 - Connect** multiple intelligence, learning style, and career/training areas to create a sense of completion for the unit, and to have the participant to begin to analyze her employment choices based on her strengths and preferences.

Insights & Tips

"This is a really good worksheet & list, and tied together a lot of what we had been talking about in class."

~ Field-test facilitator

- Ask participants to identify the row(s) that correspond with her areas of intelligence as identified in the MI inventory, and read the corresponding jobs and careers.
- Do any appeal to her? Which ones? Why?
- How do they relate to the inventories and what she has found out about herself?
- Ask the participant to highlight the jobs that appeal to her for further research and file the results of the learning style and MI inventories in her learner portfolio.



Activity 8: My Learning Journal

Have the participant write in her learning journal her thoughts about her learning style and multiple intelligence self-discoveries. Questions she could consider:

- Does she feel more confident knowing her strengths?
- How will she use her new knowledge to reach her goals?

Insights & Tips

"Knowing my own learning style – I felt comforted because I was often disappointed with myself, I didn't understand why I didn't learn new things as easily as other people. Now I understand myself and others too."

~ Field-test participant

WORKSHEET 18

Based on Howard Gardner's MI Model

Linking Multiple Intelligences to type of Work¹²

Intelligence type	Typical Job Roles	Preferred Learning Style
<i>Linguistic</i>	Writers, lawyers, journalists, speakers, trainers, copy-writers, English teachers, poets, editors, linguists, translators, PR consultants, media consultants, TV and radio presenters, voice-over artists	Words & language
<i>Logical-Mathematical</i>	Scientists, engineers, computer experts, accountants, statisticians, researchers, analysts, traders, bankers bookmakers, insurance brokers, negotiators, deal-makers, trouble-shooters, directors	Numbers & logic
<i>Musical</i>	Musicians, singers, composers, DJ's, music producers, piano tuners, acoustic engineers, entertainers, party-planners, environment and noise advisors, voice coaches	Music, sounds, rhythm
<i>Bodily/Kinesthetic</i>	Dancers, demonstrators, actors, athletes, divers, sports-people, soldiers, fire-fighters, performance artistes; ergonomists, osteopaths, fishermen, drivers, crafts-people; gardeners, chefs, acupuncturists, healers, adventurers	Physical experience and movement, touch & feel

¹² Adapted from: <http://www.businessballs.com/>. Used with permission.

Intelligence type	Typical Job Roles	Preferred Learning Style
<i>Spatial-Visual</i>	Artists, designers, cartoonists, story-boarders, architects, photographers, sculptors, town-planners, visionaries, inventors, engineers, cosmetics and beauty consultants	Pictures, shapes, images, 3D space
<i>Interpersonal</i>	Therapists, HR professionals, mediators, leaders, counsellors, politicians, educators, sales-people, clergy, psychologists, teachers, doctors, healers, organisers, advertising professionals, coaches and mentors	Human contact, communications, cooperation, teamwork
<i>Intrapersonal</i>	Counsellors, helpers, translators, teachers, actors, poets, writers, musicians, artists, and also any other role to which people can bring emotional maturity , which commonly manifests as adaptability, flexibility, facilitation, reflection, and other 'grown-up' behaviours.	Self-reflection, self-discovery

What do you think?

1. What was the result of the Multiple Intelligence inventory you took as part of this course? Look at the corresponding typical job roles. Do they appeal to you? If so, which one or two appeal to you the most? Would you like to pursue it?
2. What would be typical job roles for the intelligences that Gardner later added to his list – the Naturalist and the Existentialist?

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Debrief from the learning style and multiple intelligences inventories.* Ask the group members to share their thoughts. Did they know before the unit that they had a preference for how they perceived and used information? Did they know they had specific areas of strength or intelligence? Does clarifying their preferences and strengths give them ideas or direction for their personal job search or plans for career or training?
- *Gather oral & hard copy feedback.* Were participants satisfied with the unit? Did they learn at least one thing they can use in their personal job search?
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit.*
- *Read aloud the “Getting Ready” activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below).
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

“I will now be able to express myself in a better way to find a suitable job for myself.”

~ Field-test participant

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- *Ask five people you know – relatives, friends, peers - to describe your personality in a single word. Write down the five answers and bring them with you to the next unit.*

CLOSING WORDS

"I met new people who – I hope – will be my friends. Women of a similar age as myself, and then our problems and experiences arising from life in Canada, are similar. Thanks to this course, I created a profile of my skills, knowledge, personality, and I was more self-confident."

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF MY PERSONALITY

"It is good to participate in a useful program like this one to learn about jobs, job searching, computer training, and to explore our hidden parts of characters which maybe we don't notice, and to look at what kind of jobs match our personalities."

~Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

Participant explores her **temperament** and **personality** and applies the information to future employment and training possibilities.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Oral Communication
- Continuous Learning
- Computer Use

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these questions:

- *Ask a colleague or friend* what she or he thinks from knowing and working with you: Are you an extrovert or an introvert?
- *Take one of the online personality inventories* featured in the resources section, or search out another one. Does what your colleague or friend says match the results of the inventory?
- *Reflect upon the different personality types* – do you have a bias towards a certain type? Do you think it's better for a student to be an extrovert rather than an introvert, or vice versa?

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *Ask five people you know* – relatives, friends, peers – to describe your personality in a single word. Write down the five answers and bring them with you to the next unit.

Insights & Tips

"Some of the women found it difficult to approach five people. Three might be an easier number...."

~ Field-test facilitator

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Personality Pathways** ~ www.personalitiypathways.com. This website offers a simple explanation of personality types and has a self-scoring introductory quiz.
- **Humanmetrics** ~ www.humanmetrics.com. This website offers an online personality questionnaire and scoring. Follow the main page links to the Jung Typology Test, Jung Career Indicator.
- **True Colors** ~ www.truecolorscareer.com. This website includes a simple introductory online personality quiz. Follow the links from the homepage to *Kalil's Personality Test - Follow Your True Colors*.
- **Discovery Health** ~ This webpage offers a simple online quiz. Check out the following web page to access the *Emotional Intelligence Test* ~
http://discoveryhealth.queendom.com/questions/eiq_abridged_1.html

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *Recognize and emphasize that one personality or temperament isn't better or more desirable than another.* Examine your own preferences and biases to ensure that you accept each woman in the group for her unique mix of personality traits. Explain to the group that the purpose of identifying personality types is to know and understand ourselves better, and to find greater satisfaction in life and work. It helps us take full advantage of our strengths, preferences, natural tendencies and special abilities.

Insights & Tips

"If I do not want what you want, please try not to tell me that my want is wrong.

Or if I believe other than you, at least pause before you correct my view.

Or if my emotion is less than yours, or more, given the same circumstances, try not to ask me to feel more strongly or weakly.

Or yet if I act, or fail to act, in the manner of your design for action, let me be.

I do not, for the moment at least, ask you to understand me. That will come only when you are willing to give up changing me into a copy of you."

~ Please Understand Me II, Temperament, Character, Intelligence

David Kiersey

Insights & Tips

"These words by David Kiersey are so powerful. I photocopied and distributed them to participants to keep in their binders. I also posted them on chart paper."

~ Field-test facilitator

- There are many ways of exploring our strengths and preferences, and then describing the results – we've presented a few different and popular inventories within this unit for variety and fun. Pick and choose among them according to the literacy skills and interests of participants. Some of the inventories and explanations are more complicated in terms of concepts and language than others. We've attempted to identify some of the simpler options for ease of use and discussion.
- Familiarize yourself with the basic theories of understanding personality tendencies, but recognize that they are just that – theories! Personality temperament has been categorized and communicated through a variety of inventories, some of which may seem to have no more apparent validity than reading horoscopes, or looking to astrological signs and descriptions! (Now there's a fun alternative introductory activity to the topic of personality and characteristics – ask participants to name their astrological sign. What are the characteristics of the sign? Do they see those characteristics as accurately describing themselves?)

- *The personality theories and inventories* presented in the resource listings, around which unit activities have been designed, are based upon and grow from the work of Carl Jung. Jung theorized about conscious and unconscious preferences or outlooks that describe how individuals tend to perceive the world and to make decisions. His psychological types propose two perceiving functions, **intuition** and **sensation**, of which one would be dominant within the individual; and two judging functions, **feeling** and **thinking**, of which one would be dominant. Influencing each of these functions are also two attitude types – introversion or extroversion.
- *In popular culture, the words “introverted” and extroverted”* have become part of our lexicon. Jung’s theories were later further explored and developed to produce the popular inventory, The Myer-Briggs Type Indicator. In the Myer-Briggs inventory, the participant answers a series of questions. The mixture of the answers are calculated and fall into one of sixteen categories that are labelled as a combination of four letters, for example, ESTJ (Extraversion, Sensing, Thinking, Judging).

Insights & Tips

Favorite world: Do you prefer to focus on the outer world or on your own inner world? This is called Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I).

Information: Do you prefer to focus on the basic information you take in or do you prefer to interpret and add meaning? This is called Sensing (S) or Intuition (N).

Decisions: When making decisions, do you prefer to first look at logic and consistency or first look at the people and special circumstances? This is called Thinking (T) or Feeling (F).

Structure: In dealing with the outside world, do you prefer to get things decided or do you prefer to stay open to new information and options? This is called Judging (J) or Perceiving (P).

~ Source: The Myer-Briggs Foundation
www.myerbriggs.org

- Relate discussions and personal tendencies and traits back to future employment, and how knowing one’s own personality temperament can help the participant identify career/training areas and potential

jobs to explore – it can point her in a career direction and help her refine her search. Use the results of the inventories and discussion to help the participant sort out the kinds of jobs where she may feel most comfortable, and that fit her preferences. However, do not use the results alone to discard a job choice that the participant has expressed an interest in exploring - instead help her analyze the job in light of what she has learned about herself during the unit, and look at ways to approach or accomplish tasks related to the job in ways that suit her, or that will maximize her success.

Insights & Tips

"Knowing your temperament helps in your search for a career or job, but it only serves as a guide, rather than giving you any fixed answer. Think of temperament as analogous to "culture" in terms of influence. If you are of certain culture, then you will tend to feel most comfortable in your culture, and you can operate well in that culture. But that does not mean that you cannot be happy and prosperous living in a culture that isn't your original culture. The same is true with your career or job, you can find happiness and satisfaction in many careers or jobs that are not "natural" ones for one's temperament. On the other hand, if you aren't happy or you don't think you are as effective as you could be in your current situation, then it would be useful in examining the match between your temperament and your current job or career."

*~ Essay on Work
David Kiersey*

- Spend the majority of the unit allowing the participant to explore her own personality tendencies and temperament through hands-on use of inventories, and reflecting about the results and how they might impact upon her personal job and career choices. Online inventories are often fun and easy to use, since the results are tabulated and returned instantly to the participant. Participants, as part of the unit work, might identify other inventories as well as those identified here in this resource. Be aware that some online inventories will have registration/log-in requirements, and request or require payment. We recommend viewing inventories as a springboard to discussion and a doorway for a participant to explore career choices that suit her, and not as the only focus of the unit.

- *For a more in-depth and validated analysis, consider inviting a guest speaker or workshop leader who is trained and accredited in the administration and interpretation of a specific inventory.*
- *Emotional Intelligence (EI) may also be introduced in this unit to identify another way in which the women may explore their abilities and strengths, and communicate their attributes and skills in their job search. Work towards using these inventories to expand the way the women view themselves in a positive way – they have a lot to offer employers and often in areas they may not have previously considered.*

Insights & Tips

"At this point in the course onward, I made a point to relate the information and learning to the jobs that individuals felt their skills and strengths matched."

~ Field-test facilitator

Please note: In the final unit of this module we've used the metaphor of quilting to illustrate the concept of bringing the various pieces of each unit together. **You will need to give each participant a square of material** as part of the "Getting Ready" activity for Unit 8.

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas!

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous unit now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the unit outcome – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.*

- Emphasize that most of the unit will be spent exploring one's own personality type and preferences independently through inventories. Have fun! Some of the language used in the inventories and explanations may be new and unfamiliar, as well as the questions and the situations described. Participants should feel free to ask for clarification or for a simpler inventory if the one they've accessed online seems too difficult or unclear.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: My Personality – Part 1

Present the "Getting Ready" activity. Ask each woman to share the words that she collected from friends and family that describe her personality as they "see" her.

- Do you agree with the perception of others? Do you think the words describe you?
- Does the group agree that the words reflect the participant's personality?

Have the participants brainstorm to generate additional words (adjectives) that describe character or personality traits. Refer to **Worksheet 19** (Personality Traits & Characteristics). You may need to suggest some words or phrases. Flip chart the words.

Introduce the concept of personality temperament, types and inventories. Let the women know they will have the opportunity to explore some of these inventories throughout the unit.

As an illustration, make two columns on a flip chart, one with the heading “introversion” and one with the heading “extroversion” (as used in the Meyer-Briggs inventory). Place one or two of the words you’ve heard to describe the women in the corresponding column.

Insights & Tips

“The worksheet list of words and phrases to describe characteristics was also helpful for use in résumé writing! And great for ESL students!”

~ Field-test facilitator

Ask the group:

- Can other words you’ve heard to describe people mean “introversion” and “extroversion”?
- Do you think personality type has a role to play in making good job choices and decisions?

Emphasize that there is no good or bad when it comes to the discussion of personality tendencies. Learning more about our personality traits can help us make better job decisions, and help us shape our job choices to give us greater satisfaction.

At the end of the discussion you may wish to give everyone a copy of **Worksheet 19**.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 19

Personality Traits & Characteristics

The following words and phrases are often used to describe personality traits and characteristics. Which ones describe you?

- Adventurous – risk taker
- Ambitious – go-getter
- Analytical – logical thinker
- Artistic – creative, into the arts painting, music, sculpture, dance
- Assertive – bold, self-assured
- Businesslike – efficient, practical, level headed
- Cautious – careful, restrained
- Compassionate – feel the pain and sorrow of others
- Complacent – pleasant, compliant, happy with the way things are
- Concrete – realist, practical, realistic thinker
- Conformist – likes and follows conventional rules
- Creative – artistic
- Critical – finds fault with or judges people and ideas
- Curious – a question asker, eager to learn or know things
- Dedicated – wholly committed to something or someone

- Discreet – modest, shows wise self-restraint, keeps confidences
- Disloyal – untrustworthy, doesn't keep obligations
- Domineering – holds power over others
- Driven – energy and initiative, goes for a goal passionately
- Easygoing – calm, unworried, laid-back
- Extroverted – life of the party, very social, not afraid of the public
- Focused – strong ability to concentrate
- Goal-directed – actions are the result of set goals
- Honest – tells the truth
- Humble – modest, puts others first, courteously respectful
- Idealistic – desires perfection in things and situations, not realistic
- Impulsive – makes decision and actions without thought, reckless
- Insensitive – not considering the feelings of others
- Introverted – focus on self, not comfortable with the public, not social
- Intuitive – understanding others thoughts and feelings without being told
- Kind – nice, friendly, generous
- Loyal – being true to others, country, causes, ideals
- Methodical – ordered, systematic habits or behaviour

- Optimistic – sees the best in everything
- Orderly – neat, tidy
- Pessimistic – expecting the worst
- Practical – realistic, level headed, efficient
- Quick Learner – learns things fast
- Risk-taker – not fearful, willing to do things without reserve
- Self-confident – believes in own abilities and ideas
- Self-starter – begins and completes things on their own, competent
- Sense of Humour – finds the funny side of things easily
- Sensitive – understands the attitudes, feelings, or circumstances of others
- Shy - timid, distrustful of others
- Strong Work Ethic – believes in the value of working, hard worker
- Supportive – giving or able to give help
- Tactful – considerate and discreet
- Team Player – works well with others
- Trusting – believes in and readily confides in others
- Upbeat – happy, cheerful

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2, Activity 3 and Activity 4 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows participants to explore their personality traits in an informal manner. Activity 4 has not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 2: How Do My Peers See Me?

Create two circles so that half the participants form an inner circle and the other half an outer circle around them. If you've set it up right, then participants in the two circles should be facing each other in pairs. If you haven't done so already, hand out **Worksheet 19** (Personality Traits & Characteristics).

Ask a partner in the inner circle to describe the personality traits of the person facing her based on interaction in class. You might want to give an example, and encourage wording of the descriptions in a positive way.

Insights & Tips

"This was a wonderful activity to connect with each other (and expand vocabularies)! Also practical for interviews, communicating one's strengths, etc."

~ Field-test facilitator

Next have the outer circle repeat the activity. Once both people in the pair have exchanged their thoughts and observations, then have the outer circle move one person to the right to repeat the activity with a new partner.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 3: What Jobs Do My Peers Think Suit Me?

Sometimes friends, peers and colleagues “see” positive aspects of us that we don’t recognize in ourselves. Repeat the above circle/pair activity, assigning the task of describing and sharing other insights as well as personality traits, for example, skills and competencies. Connect these insights to potential job suggestions. For example, partners may finish the following statement about each other:

- “From what I’ve seen from you in class, including personality traits, I think you’d be great at this job or career:

.”



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

“We completed a similar activity as well. Each participant wrote her name on a sheet and her peers jotted down words and characteristics to describe her. It was very supportive and positive.”

~ Field-test facilitator



Activity 4: Personality Quick Test¹³

Each question must be answered as quickly as possible. Have each woman write one or two words to capture the first things that she thinks of after you ask the questions.

1. Ask them to picture an **enormous** white room - like a school gym. In this room, there is a cube.
 - a. What colour is the cube?
 - b. What size is the cube?
 - c. Where is it located in the room? (e.g., Is it floating, or on the ground?)
2. Next, ask them to imagine flowers inside of this room.
 - a. Where are the flowers located?
 - b. How large are the flowers?
3. Ask them to imagine a ladder inside of the white room.
 - a. Where in the room is the ladder?
 - b. What size is the ladder?
4. Next, ask them to imagine a horse in the white room.
 - a. Where is the horse?
 - b. Name three personality characteristics of the horse (mean, funny, sad, happy, etc).
5. Finally, ask them to imagine a rainstorm inside the room.
 - a. Where is the rainstorm located?
 - b. How large is the rainstorm?

¹³ Adapted from <http://www.personality-and-aptitude-career-tests.com/cube-personality-test.html>.

Please Note: This personality test has no known scientific origins, and has not been independently validated. It is presented as a fun way to learn more about your own personality and the personalities of the women in the group.

What does it all mean?

Remember – this isn't meant to be scientific. It is meant to be a way for the women to think about themselves. If they disagree with the interpretation of the results, engage them in a discussion about perceptions – their perceptions of themselves, and also the perceptions others might have of them.

- *The white room represents our lives.* Inside the white room, there is a cube.
- *The cube is a representation of how we see ourselves.* If your cube is small, it means that you are modest in your opinion of yourself. If your cube is large, it means that you have a fairly good opinion of yourself. If your cube is coloured, it can mean that you hide who you really are from people. A white or clear cube means that you are pretty straight forward – what they see is what they get. If the cube is on the ground, it means that you are well grounded in your views, and “down to earth”. If the cube is floating, it may mean that there is change happening in your life and perhaps a certain amount of upheaval or uncertainty in your life right now.
- *The flowers in the room represent your family and friends.* If there are a lot of flowers in the room, it means that you like to be surrounded by friends and family. If the flowers are only a few, it means that you like to be surrounded by only a few close friends. If your flowers are near the cube, it means that you are close to your friends. If your flowers are further away, you tend to keep a distance between your friends.

Insights & Tips

“The participants LOVED this exercise – they had a lot of fun with it. We did all the inventories and quizzes together as a group. I read and clarified the questions for them.”

~ Field-test facilitator

- *The ladder inside the room represents your life's goals and ambition.* A small ladder means that you aren't sure what your goals are right now or that you find it necessary to keep your goals small and real. If your ladder is large, it means that your goals and expectations for yourself are set higher than average. If your ladder is far away from your cube, it means that right now you are not working on your goals. If your ladder is on top of your cube, it means that your goals and ambitions are very important to you at this point in time.
- *The horse inside of the room is your spouse or significant other.* The three characteristics of the horse apply to your spouse, or what you like to see in your spouse. If your horse is close to the cube, it means that you are close to your spouse. When you see a beautiful horse it shows your beautiful experience with your spouse.
- *The rainstorm inside of the room is life's problems.* If your rainstorm is large, it means there is a lot going on in your life right now. If the rainstorm is near another object (for instance, the horse), it means that that object is causing problems in your life. If you see small rainstorm that means you are currently not facing too many difficulties or you able to keep them under control.



Insights & Tips

"The women thought this test great fun, and the self-discovery it brought enlightening and useful."

~ Field-test facilitator

Activity 5: My Personality – Part 2

Hand out **Worksheet 20**. Use this hard copy inventory as a simple introduction for the participant to learn about, and potentially identify, her personality type. The worksheet is also useful for those participants who would find following online descriptions and instructions a barrier to completing and using an inventory.

Follow up by handing out **Worksheet 21**. Relate the personality type to job and career areas. To encourage discussion, and provide peer

reading/writing mentors, you may wish to have the participants work in pairs.

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her reading and critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"I also found descriptions of each personality type online and handed these out."

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 20

*Cognitive Style Inventory*¹⁴

1. Try the following inventory to get an idea about your personality type.
 2. Work with a partner if you'd like.
 3. When you've discovered your personality profile, find out more about the specific profile by looking it up online, or by reading the other worksheets.
-

Please note: the Cognitive Style Inventory is a self-scoring inventory and should **not** be considered a substitute for taking an MBTI® or any type of personality traits inventory. The author, Ross Reinholt, recommends taking a *bonafide* MBTI inventory from a person qualified to administer it as the best way to get an accurate measure of your Personality Type.

To learn more about Myers-Briggs Personality Type go to:
www.personalitypathways.com/type_inventory2.html

¹⁴ *Cognitive Style Inventory*. Ross Reinholt. Taken from www.PersonalityPathways.com. Used with permission. **For use as part of the Spotlight on Change curriculum only.** All other copying and/or distribution is strictly prohibited.

Which is your most natural energy orientation?¹⁵

Every person has two faces. One is directed towards the **OUTER** world of activities, excitements, people, and things. The other is directed inward to the **INNER** world of thoughts, interests, ideas, and imagination. While these are two different but complementary sides of our nature, most people have an innate preference towards **energy** from either the OUTER or the INNER world. Thus one of their faces, either the **Extroverted (E)** or **Introverted (I)**, takes the lead in their personality development and plays a more **dominant role** in their behavior.

Extroverted Characteristics (E)	Introverted Characteristics (I)
<input type="checkbox"/> Act first, think/reflect later <input type="checkbox"/> Feel deprived when cutoff from interaction with the outside world <input type="checkbox"/> Usually open to and motivated by outside world of people and things <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy wide variety and change in people relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Think/reflect first, then act <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly require an amount of "private time" to recharge batteries <input type="checkbox"/> Motivated internally, mind is sometimes so active it is "closed" to outside world <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer one-to-one communication and relationships

Which fits best, E or I?

¹⁵ *Cognitive Style Inventory*. Ross Reinhold. Taken from www.PersonalityPathways.com. Used with permission. **For use as part of the Spotlight on Change curriculum only.** All other copying and/or distribution is strictly prohibited.

Which way of perceiving or understanding is most "automatic" or natural?¹⁶

The **Sensing (S)** side of our brain notices the sights, sounds, smells and all the sensory details of the **PRESENT**. It categorizes, organizes, records and stores the specifics from the here and now. It is **REALITY** based, dealing with "what is." It also provides the specific details of memory & recollections from **PAST** events. The **Intuitive (N)** side of our brain seeks to understand, interpret and form **OVERALL** patterns of all the information that is collected and records these patterns and relationships. It speculates on **POSSIBILITIES**, including looking into and forecasting the **FUTURE**. It is imaginative and conceptual. While both kinds of perceiving are necessary and used by all people, each of us instinctively tends to favor one over the other.

Sensing Characteristics (S)	Intuitive Characteristics (N)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mentally live in the Now, attending to present opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Using common sense and creating practical solutions is automatic-instinctual <input type="checkbox"/> Memory recall is rich in detail of facts and past events <input type="checkbox"/> Best improvise from past experience <input type="checkbox"/> Like clear and concrete information; dislike guessing when facts are "fuzzy" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mentally live in the Future, attending to future possibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Using imagination and creating/inventing new possibilities is automatic-instinctual <input type="checkbox"/> Memory recall emphasizes patterns, contexts, and connections <input type="checkbox"/> Best improvise from theoretical understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable with ambiguous, fuzzy data and with guessing its meaning.

Which fits best, S or N?

¹⁶ *Cognitive Style Inventory*. Ross Reinhold. Taken from www.PersonalityPathways.com. Used with permission. **For use as part of the Spotlight on Change curriculum only.** All other copying and/or distribution is strictly prohibited.

Which way of forming judgments and making choices is most natural?¹⁷

The **Thinking** (T) side of our brain analyzes information in a **DETACHED**, objective fashion. It operates from factual principles, deduces and forms conclusions systematically. It is our logical nature. The **Feeling** (F) side of our brain forms conclusions in an **ATTACHED** and somewhat global manner, based on likes/dislikes, impact on others, and human and aesthetic values. It is our subjective nature. While everyone uses both means of forming conclusions, each person has a natural bias towards one over the other so that when they give us conflicting directions - one side is the natural trump card or tiebreaker.

Thinking Characteristics (T)	Feeling Characteristics (F)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Instinctively search for facts and logic in a decision situation. <input type="checkbox"/> Naturally notices tasks and work to be accomplished. <input type="checkbox"/> Easily able to provide an objective and critical analysis. <input type="checkbox"/> Accept conflict as a natural, normal part of relationships with people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Instinctively employ personal feelings and impact on people in decision situations <input type="checkbox"/> Naturally sensitive to people needs and reactions. <input type="checkbox"/> Naturally seek consensus and popular opinions. <input type="checkbox"/> Unsettled by conflict; have almost a toxic reaction to disharmony

Which fits best, T or F?

¹⁷ *Cognitive Style Inventory*. Ross Reinhold. Taken from www.PersonalityPathways.com. Used with permission. **For use as part of the Spotlight on Change curriculum only.** All other copying and/or distribution is strictly prohibited.

What is your "action orientation" towards the outside world?¹⁸

All people use both ***judging*** (thinking and feeling) and ***perceiving*** (sensing and intuition) processes to store information, organize our thoughts, make decisions, take actions and manage our lives. Yet **one** of these processes (**Judging or Perceiving**) tends to **take the lead** in our relationship with the **outside world** . . . while the other governs our inner world. A **Judging (J)** style approaches the outside world **WITH A PLAN** and is oriented towards organizing one's surroundings, being prepared, making decisions and reaching closure and completion. A **Perceiving (P)** style takes the outside world **AS IT COMES** and is adopting and adapting, flexible, open-ended and receptive to new opportunities and changing game plans.

Judging Characteristics (J)	Perceiving Characteristics (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plan many of the details in advance before moving into action. <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on task-related action; complete meaningful segments before moving on. <input type="checkbox"/> Work best and avoid stress when able to keep ahead of deadlines. <input type="checkbox"/> Naturally use targets, dates and standard routines to manage life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable moving into action without a plan; plan on-the-go. <input type="checkbox"/> Like to multitask, have variety, mix work and play. <input type="checkbox"/> Naturally tolerant of time pressure; work best close to the deadlines. <input type="checkbox"/> Instinctively avoid commitments which interfere with flexibility, freedom and variety

Which fits best, J or P?

¹⁸ *Cognitive Style Inventory*. Ross Reinhold. Taken from www.PersonalityPathways.com. Used with permission. **For use as part of the Spotlight on Change curriculum only.** All other copying and/or distribution is strictly prohibited.

Now, fill in your four personality type LETTERS:

--	--	--	--

Then:

1. Go online to a website that tells you about personality types – your instructor can help you find one.
2. Look up the description of your personality type. Match the letters above.
3. Read the description. Do you think it describes you?
4. Write down 5 things the description says about your personality type:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

WORKSHEET 21

Suggested Careers for Myers-Briggs Type¹⁹

1. Circle the job or career area that corresponds with your personality type based on the inventory results.
 2. Read the job suggestions. Underline the jobs that appeal to you for further research.
 3. Explore the general job areas; i.e. "manager". Do an online search or look through newspaper job classified ads or other job sources. Identify 2 specific job titles that fall into the general area.
 4. Put the page that lists the corresponding jobs in your portfolio for future reference, along with your research.
-

The list is made up of recommended careers for certain personality types.

Please note: Any personality type can do any job. This list is not a list of the "only jobs you can do", but simply a guide to which career utilizes the natural talents of each type. Special thanks to [www.personalitypage.com](http://www.personaliltypage.com) for some of the information on this page. Visit the careers section at the website for more detailed information on possible careers for your type.

ESFJ - Home economists, nurses, teachers, administrators, child care workers, family practice physicians, clergy, office managers, counsellors, social workers, bookkeepers, accountants, secretaries, organization leaders, dental assistants, homemakers, radiological technologists, receptionists, religious educators, speech pathologists. *They do best in jobs where they can apply their natural warmth at building relationships with other people.*

ISFJ - Interior decorators, designers, nurses, administrators, managers, secretaries, child care/early childhood development workers, social workers, counsellors, paralegals, clergy, office managers, shopkeepers, bookkeepers, homemakers, gardeners, clerical supervisors, curators, family practice physicians, health service workers, librarians, medical technologists, typists. *Tradition-oriented and down-to-earth, they do best in jobs where they can help people achieve their goals, or where structure is needed.*

¹⁹ Source: www.geocities.com/lifexplore/mbcareer.htm and www.personalitypage.com.

ESTJ – Members of the military, business administrators, managers, police, detectives, judges, financial officers, teachers, sales representatives, government workers, insurance agents, underwriters, nurses, administrators, trade and technical teachers. *Natural leaders, they work best when they are in charge and enforcing the rules.*

ISTJ - Business executives, administrators and managers, accountants, police, detectives, judges, lawyers, medical doctors, dentists, computer programmers, systems analysts, computer specialists, auditors, electricians, math teachers, mechanical engineers, steelworkers, technicians, members of the military. *Similar to the ESTJ, they have a knack for detail and memorization, but work more behind the scenes instead of up front as a leader.*

ESTP - Sales representatives, marketers, police, detectives, paramedics, medical technicians, computer technicians, computer technical support, entrepreneurs, comedians, agents, race car drivers, firefighters, members of the military, auditors, carpenters, craft workers, farmers, laborers, service workers, transportation operatives. *They have a gift for reacting to and solving immediate problems, and persuading other people.*

ISTP - Police, detectives, forensic pathologists, computer programmers, system analysts, computer specialists, engineers, carpenters, mechanics, pilots, drivers, athletes, entrepreneurs, firefighters, paramedics, construction workers, dental hygienists, electrical engineers, farmers, military, probation officers, steelworkers, transportation operatives. *With the ability to stay calm under pressure, they excel in any job that requires immediate action.*

ESFP - Actors, painters, comedians, adult entertainers, sales representatives, teachers, counsellors, social workers, child care, fashion designers, interior decorators, consultants, photographers, musicians, human resources managers, clerical supervisors, coaches, factory supervisors, food service workers, receptionists, recreation workers, religious educators, respiratory therapists. *Optimistic and fun-loving, their enthusiasm is great for motivating others.*

ISFP - Artists, musicians, composers, designers, child care workers, social workers, counsellors, teachers, veterinarians, forest rangers, naturalists, bookkeepers, carpenters, personal service workers, clerical supervisors, secretaries, dental and medical staffers, waiters and waitresses, chefs, nurses,

mechanics, physical therapists, x-ray technicians. *They tend to do well in the arts, as well as helping others and working with people.*

ENFJ - Teachers, consultants, psychiatrists, social workers, counsellors, clergy, sales representatives, human resources staff, managers, events coordinators, politicians, diplomats, writers, actors, designers, homemakers, musicians, religious workers, writers. *They have a gift of encouraging others actualize themselves, and provide excellent leadership.*

INFJ - Counsellors, clergy, missionaries, teachers, medical doctors, dentists, chiropractors, psychologists, psychiatrists, writers, musicians, artists, psychics, photographers, child care workers, education consultants, librarians, marketers, scientists, social workers. *Blessed with an idealistic vision, they do best when they seek to make that vision a reality.*

ENFP - Actors, journalists, writers, musicians, painters, consultants, psychologists, psychiatrists, entrepreneurs, teachers, counsellors, politicians, diplomats, television reporters, marketers, scientists, sales representatives, artists, clergy, public relations, social scientists, social workers. *Very creative and fun-loving, they excel at careers which allow them to express their ideas and spontaneity.*

INFP - Writers, artists, counsellors, social workers, English teachers, fine arts teachers, child care workers, clergy, missionaries, psychologists, psychiatrists, scientists, political activists, editors, education consultants, journalists, religious educators, social scientists. *Driven by a strong sense of personal values, they are also highly creative and can offer support from behind the scenes.*

ENTJ - Business executives, CEOs, organization founders, business administrators, managers, entrepreneurs, judges, lawyers, computer consultants, university professors, politicians, credit investigators, labour relations workers, marketing department managers, mortgage bankers, systems analysts, scientists. *They are born to lead and can steer the organization towards their vision, using their excellent organizing skills and understanding of what needs to get done.*

INTJ - Scientists, engineers, professors, teachers, medical doctors, dentists, corporate strategists, organization founders, business administrators, managers, military, lawyers, judges, computer programmers, system analysts,

computer specialists, psychologists, photographers, research department managers, researchers, university instructors, chess players. *They have a particular skill at grasping difficult, complex concepts and building strategies.*

ENTP - Entrepreneurs, lawyers, psychologists, photographers, consultants, sales representatives, actors, engineers, scientists, inventors, marketers, computer programmers, comedians, computer analysts, credit investigators, journalists, psychiatrists, public relations, designers, writers, artists, musicians, politicians. *Very freedom-oriented, they need a career which allows them to act independently and express their creativity and insight.*

INTP - Physicists, chemists, biologists, photographers, strategic planners, mathematicians, university professors, computer programmers, computer animators, technical writers, engineers, lawyers, forensic researchers, writers, artists, psychologists, social scientists, systems analysts, researchers, surveyors. *Highly analytical, they can discover connections between two seemingly unrelated things, and work best when allowed to use their imagination and critical thinking.*

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 6 and Activity 7 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose to not use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows participants to add a comment to their journals. Activity 6 has not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 6: My Thoughts on This

Have the participant write in her learning journal her thoughts and feelings about the results of her personality inventory, and the areas of her life where she feels the greatest satisfaction and comfort. Ask her to reflect on a past job.

- Did she feel satisfied and comfortable in it?
- Has the work we've done so far in this unit shed any light on why or why not?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking and writing skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 7: Online Personality Inventories

Have participants complete one or more online personality inventories. Several choices are offered in the resource section. You might also identify alternate online inventories, or have the participants search them out. It is useful to have spent time prior to the class trying the inventories yourself, and choosing ones that are reputable, suitable for the participants, and that can be used to promote awareness that can lead to better job choices. One advantage of online inventories is that they offer immediate tabulation.

Many online sites will offer links or pages that flow from the tabulation results and that explain the findings in terms of the individual, and her temperament/traits, and related career areas. Once the participant has identified her personality type, have her follow the various links to learn more about it.

Myer-Briggs is a commonly used and well-known inventory, and it is an important one for participants to explore, if you only have time for one inventory. We've also offered other inventories, both for fun and self-discovery. Have the participants print and file the results of the personality inventory and the explanation of the result in their portfolios for further reference.

Insights & Tips

"We did a quiz purely for fun and as a springboard to discussion where participants identified their personality with a shape – a square, circle, triangle, or a diamond."

~ Field-test facilitator

OPTIONAL UNIT ACTIVITY

Below is an optional activity. Please note that links to Essential Skills are not provided. Please refer to the Essential Skills web site or similar activities if you wish to link this activity to Essential Skills.



Activity 8: Guest Speaker

Invite a guest speaker qualified to administer a personality type inventory to host a mini-workshop or class unit on personality types and related careers. If you belong to or work within a larger organization, such as a college or school board, you may access to staff members, career counsellors, or others who are accredited and trained in the delivery and interpretation of specific personality inventories.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Debrief from the “personality inventory” activities.* Ask the group members to share their thoughts. Did the inventories tell them something new about themselves, or clarify something for them? Do they now have some new ideas and thoughts about the type of job where they’d feel comfortable and gain satisfaction?
- *Gather oral & hard copy feedback.* Were participants satisfied with the unit? Did they learn at least one thing they can use in their personal job search?
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit.* Let participants know that they are now drawing to the close of the first section of the course, and that in the next unit they will be working on pulling together what they’ve learned about themselves so that they can communicate their strengths, preferences and abilities.
- *Read aloud the “Getting Ready” activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below), and hand out a square of material. Emphasize that the activity is for fun – the quilt piece they make isn’t expected to be elaborate! The participants will work together to make a quilt or collage to illustrate what they’ve learned about themselves, and represent themselves as a group.
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

“This unit was so important for me. Now I know a lot more about my personality, my characteristics, and what is the better job for me.”

~ Field-test participant

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit your needs. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- *Tell something about yourself* by decorating the quilt square given to you by the facilitator. Be creative! Use whatever materials you want to illustrate whatever aspect of yourself you’d like. Quilt, stitch, sew, fabric paint, staple on a photo, do appliqué, glue or stitch on small pieces – the choice is yours. Bring the illustrated square to the next class.

Insights & Tips

“Some participants were a bit intimidated by the task. As the facilitator, you might want to bring your own square to show them – make it simple! Or you might want to ask participants to think about the task ahead of time to have some ideas, bring in some items such as fabric glue, and do it as a group activity in class.”

~ Field-test facilitator

CLOSING WORDS

“This course gave me clear ideas and I understood my personality, what I can do in the future. It was important for my life because it showed me how to find other opportunities for a job and I discovered in me other skills in areas that I didn’t have. My challenges in this course have been my English. Even though for me it is difficult, I continue to try day by day.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

STITCHING THE PIECES TOGETHER

“Today I went to a job interview all because of this course. The job interview teaches me another experience of life. I might not be able to get this job but it was a good experience. I can imagine myself working in [the] future finding jobs, doing volunteer [work] standing on my feet. With confidence.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant analyzes and brings together what she has learned about herself throughout the module, and communicates her skills and strengths **verbally** (in practice for a job interview) and **in prose form** in a paragraph or two (in practice for a job application, résumé and a letter of application).

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Thinking Skills
- Oral Communication
- Writing

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

- *Take a square of material*, and stitch or decorate it in such a way that it represents or tells something about you. For example, if you like to garden and have good gardening skills, then stitch or draw a flower on it, or glue on a photograph of you amongst your flowers.

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *Tell something about yourself* by decorating the quilt square given to you by the facilitator. Be creative – use whatever materials you want to illustrate whatever aspect of yourself you'd like. Quilt, stitch, sew, fabric paint, staple on a photo, do appliqué, glue or stitch on small pieces – the choice is yours. Bring the illustrated square to the next class.

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are some online resources that you, as the facilitator, or the participants may use to support the work of unit. Remember that web addresses often change, so if links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Service Canada, Career Navigator, Abilities Quiz ~**
This quiz helps participants identify their abilities, and then tabulates the answers to suggest jobs and careers that match those abilities. Go to:
http://jobsetc.gc.ca/eng/toolbox/quizzes/quizzes_home.do.

Insights & Tips

"Good quiz! Worthwhile checking it out."

~ Field-test facilitator

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- Connect the unit's activities and discussions to the concept of synthesis, or bringing together learning from past units to form a unified whole. Help participants make sense of, and unite, what they've discovered about themselves to create an overall picture and understanding of their skills, abilities, interests and needs as they apply to their job search.
- We've used the metaphor of quilting to illustrate the concept of bringing various pieces together in several of the activities. It is a metaphor you may wish to continue throughout the unit to help explain the idea of stitching various "patches" or pieces of information together to create a product or new understanding from the parts. It also illustrates the idea that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" – that by looking at her strengths, interests and abilities as a whole rather than as separate parts, the participant will gain a greater appreciation for her talents, potential and possibilities for the future.
- Some of the participants at the field-test sites loved the Getting Ready activity for this unit and the follow-up exercise of making the quilt from their individual squares. The women were hesitant at first, but then got into it when they realized the quilt pieces were meant to be simple. They didn't have to be expert sewers or quilters. Another interesting aspect of the exercise was that it gave those who were good with their hands and were artistic the opportunity to shine, by showcasing their skills to the group. Making the quilt became a peer mentoring activity as well, with experienced sewers helping less experienced sewers. Another field-test group balked at the activity, and the facilitator did an

Insights & Tips

"We made the quilt during class times. It was a great 'working-with-others' exercise! People's talents emerged! We hung the finished quilt in the classroom and took a photograph. Many women's squares reflected pride in their culture and also being Canadian or living in Canada."

~ Field-test facilitator

alternate exercise. The women made a group collage from illustrations or art that each individual created to represent or describe herself. Both activities served the same outcome – be willing to try different approaches to suit the preferences of your group members.

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas!

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous unit now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the overall Exploring My Self module outcome as well as the unit outcomes.* Module Outcome: The participant creates a skill, knowledge and personality profile, and uses the profile to identify areas of employment that reflect her interests and strengths.
- *Note that this is the last unit in this module.* Talk about the meaning of the word *synthesize* – that the goal of the unit is to “stitch” together or unify the parts from other units to form a whole. They'll work to bring together the most important things they have learned about themselves as a result of the work they have done through the “Exploring My Self” units, so that they can use it to move forward in their job search.
- *Review the agenda* as it relates to these outcomes. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: My Quilt Square

Introduce the “Getting Ready” Activity. Have participants do a group go-around where each woman shows her personalized quilt square and talks about how the piece represents her.

Then have participants lay out the squares out on a table and arrange them to form a quilt – have extra squares available to ensure a perfect square or rectangle without gaps. Provide time and materials for women who didn’t complete the project as a home task to do as part of the unit.

Ask for volunteers who have sewing skills to put the quilt together – either at home to bring back to class, or during the course of the program. Hang the quilt on the wall as a group project to represent the skills, abilities, interests and special qualities of the individuals in the group, and the strengths of the group as a whole.

Insights & Tips

“The group HATED the idea of making a quilt! So we didn’t. Instead we did a collage. The women enjoyed this alternate activity immensely.”

“This joint work [of making the quilt] brought us very much closer to each other, allowed us to better know each other, taught us to help each other and demonstrate our skills.”

~ Field-test facilitators

Alternate Activity

Instead of making a quilt, make a collage:

- Have each woman create a simple piece of art on a single page that reflects them and what is important in their lives.
- Draw, paste on items, cut pictures from magazines, use photographs – be creative!
- Then ask participants to create a mural or a collage by putting all their individual pieces of art together.

 **LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a document to her portfolio and one that allows her to add a comment to her learning journal. Activity 3 has not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions.

**Activity 2: What I've Learned About Me!**

Hand out **Worksheet 22, Building Your Skill, Knowledge and Personality Profile**. Have each woman use her portfolio to explore and analyze what she has learned about herself during the *Exploring My Self* Module.

Use the worksheet to guide her reflections, and help her synthesize the decisions and findings she has made during each unit into a "whole".

Insights & Tips

"Excellent worksheet! Participants really took their time completing this, and I found it an excellent summary of the complete module. I read through and commented upon each individual's worksheet, and noted skills and attributes they could use on résumés. At this time, I also started to discuss résumés, and participants were eager to apply what they had learned about themselves to a résumé."

~ Field-test facilitator

 **LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 22

Building Your Skill, Knowledge and Personality Profile

1. Look through your **portfolio** and **learning journal** to pull together the self-discoveries you made during the “Exploring My Self” module.
 2. Fill in the worksheet below to create a skill, knowledge and personality **profile or snapshot** of your job needs and preferences.
 3. Your ideas might have changed over the course of the module. That’s okay! Fill in the worksheet to reflect your thoughts now.
-

MY IDEAL JOB

Review Worksheet 1.

The right job for me will incorporate these “most important” factors:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Here is something else that is also important to the right job for me:

MY VALUES

Review Worksheet 4.

Here's what I **value most in my family and daily life**:

This is what I found out about my **work values** (fill in the most important factor in your own words):

My work motivation:

My preferred work setting:

How I like to interact with others:

My work style:

WHAT I LEARNED FROM PAST WORK

Review Worksheet 5.

Here are skills I've demonstrated that I possess through my past work experience(s):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I'm very good at:

Here's a personal strength that I can apply to a future job:

WHAT I GAINED FROM NON-PAID ACTIVITIES

Review Worksheet 6.

Here is a hobby, volunteer work, or an activity I like to do in my free time:

Here are skills I've learned or gained, or something I can DO because of my hobby, volunteer work, or free time activities:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Here's how I can use these skills in a job:

If I could volunteer my time doing anything at all, I'd like to:

LIFE EXPERIENCES

Review Worksheet 9.

Here are positive things I've learned from my life's experiences - from the tough times and the good times:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Here are some skills, abilities, and character traits that I can bring to a new job based on my lifetime of learning and living:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

The biggest challenge I face is:

Here's how I can take that challenge into consideration during my job search:

MY LEARNING STYLE

Review Worksheet 12.

My preferred learning style is _____.

Here are some strengths of my learning style:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

When it comes to multiple intelligences, here's my strongest area of intelligence:

Here's another area of intelligence where I am strong:

Here are a few jobs or job areas that interest me based on these strengths:

MY PERSONALITY TYPE & AREAS OF INTELLIGENCE

Review Worksheet 20.

Here are some important things about my personality type and temperament:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I'll be happiest in a work environment or situation where:

Here are a few jobs or career areas that interest me based on my personality traits and natural preferences:



Activity 3: Exploring My Self Quilt

Create personalized “Exploring My Self” diagrams or “quilts” by using the personal profile completed in the above activity.

Ask each participant to complete **Worksheet 23** by filling in each square with a key word or phrase that describes what she’s discovered about herself. Here’s how:

- *In the first two rows* of the quilt, describe skills, abilities, interests, learning preferences and styles, and personality.
- *In the third row*, describe needs and challenges that impact upon job choice or career decisions.
- *In the fourth row*, write down hobbies and work experiences – whether paid or unpaid – past jobs, volunteer experience or experiences gained through daily living.
- *In the final row*, write down potential jobs and career areas that the participant is interested in pursuing further and that “fit” with the information in the other squares.

Insights & Tips

“I made a larger photocopy of the quilt worksheet, and distributed it to the women. They had a difficult time understanding the directions, so I led them through the exercise and that worked well.”

~ Field-test facilitator

Just in Case:

If a participant cannot completely fill in the first two rows of the “Exploring My Self” quilt activity, suggest that she return to the Service Canada, Career Navigator and Quizzes (see resources listed at the start of the unit) to identify her skills, interests and abilities.

If a participant cannot completely fill in the last row, suggest that she do further research about jobs. One idea is to identify and then explore through online searches some of the jobs listed in past worksheets.

WORKSHEET 23

Exploring My Self Quilt

1. Use the Exploring My Self Quilt diagram on the next page (you may want to redraw it on a larger piece of paper).
2. In the first two rows of the quilt, describe skills, abilities, interests, learning preferences and styles, and personality.
3. In the third row, describe needs and challenges that impact upon job choice or career decisions.
4. In the fourth row, write down hobbies and work experiences – whether paid or unpaid – past jobs, volunteer experience or experiences gained through daily living.
5. In the final row, write down potential jobs and career areas that the participant is interested in pursuing further and that “fit” with the information in the other squares.

	Exploring My Self						
	Exploring My Self						
	Exploring My Self						
	Exploring My Self						
	Exploring My Self						
	Exploring My Self						
	Exploring My Self						



Activity 4: Communicating My Skills Verbally

Working in pairs, have participants share their completed “Exploring My Self” quilts or diagrams with each other. Then have each member of the pair take turns asking questions of her partner. Encourage at least one or two questions pertaining to each row of the quilt.

Have the participant use the activity to practise expressing her strengths, skills and job goals in preparation for interviews. Ensure that partners give each other encouragement and suggestions for communicating information about themselves in a positive and confident manner.

If time permits, you may wish to build upon the activity by switching or combining pairs, so that participants receive further practice in giving information about themselves orally, and speaking in front of larger groups (since some interview situations may have more than one interviewer).

Insights & Tips

“Here are skills I’ve gained from my past experiences:

- *I am a good communicator*
- *I have empathy*
- *I am strong. I have physical and moral strength.”*

~ Field-test participant



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 5 and Activity 6 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to add a document to her portfolio and one

that allows her to add a comment to her learning journal. These activities have not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 5: My Skills and Strengths

Have the participant work independently or with a peer mentor to write a paragraph or two using the *Exploring My Self* quilt as a guide towards synthesizing what she'd like to communicate about herself and her strengths.

Encourage drafts (if needed, over a few sessions), working on shaping the information into a form that would be suitable for use in a letter of application or email (e.g., proper spelling and grammar) or another job-search written task, such as a job application form or a résumé.

Have the participant store the results of the unit's work, her personal profile and *Exploring My Self* quilt, in her portfolio for future reference.

Insights & Tips

"Through my past work experiences I've demonstrated I possess these skills:

- Accuracy
- Attention to detail
- Organization
- Good time management."

~ Field-test participant



Activity 6: My Thoughts on This

Have the participant write in her learning journal her reflections and feelings about the *Exploring My Self* module and what she has learned about herself. Have her thoughts on what she'd like to do in her future changed?

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Debrief from the personal profile and quilt activities.* Do participants feel they are starting to synthesize or stitch together their understanding of themselves as it applies to their job search? Did today's activities help?
- *Extend the conversation to bring a sense of conclusion to the Exploring My Self module.* Review the module outcome: "The participant creates a skill, knowledge and personality profile, and uses the profile to identify areas of employment that reflect her interests and strengths."
- *Ask for feedback* – do the participants feel as if they have met or demonstrated that outcome? Note that participants have covered a lot of ground in their self-explorations over the past eight units. What is the most important thing they personally learned about themselves? Are there other areas or something the group touched upon that they'd like to explore later in the course?
- *Introduce the focus of the next module: Exploring My Community.* Share the module outcome, "The participant creates a profile of the employment and training opportunities in her community and identifies options that match her interests, strengths and needs."
- *Read aloud the "Getting Ready" activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below).
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

"I am stronger than I think I am; I am smarter than I think I am; I am always cheerful, even at the worst times; I am very honest and very dependable."

"Repeating and reviewing everything from all the last units made me understand how I can put my skills, abilities, and strengths to work for me."

~ Field-test participants

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit your needs. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- Chat with someone who is in your personal circle of acquaintances - a friend, relative, a neighbour, or mentor. Ask the person for suggestions about a job – if she or he knows someone who may be hiring in the future, or hiring now. (Note: The suggestion doesn’t have to be a sure-fire thing, or very complicated – just an idea for a lead or contact).

CLOSING WORDS

“This course gave me clear ideas, what I can do in the future.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

SPOTLIGHT ON

Change

Module 2: Exploring My Community

OUTCOME

The participant creates a profile of the employment and training opportunities in her community and identifies options that match her interests, strengths and needs.

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MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS, MY CIRCLES

“Spotlight is a journey into change, an opportunity for mature women to learn about and take advantage of the connections and assistance that abound within our communities to help make new choices as we consider changing a career or returning to the work force.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

As a result of this unit, the participant identifies her **immediate and extended community** (family, religious, cultural, other), gives voice to its core elements and values, and integrates these into her employment goals and choices in ways that are important to her.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these questions:

- *If you were to draw a circle, and write inside it the names of people you consider your closest family – whether related to you by blood or not – who would you include in the circle?*
- *What other “families” do you belong to? Do you have a work family? A spiritual or religious family? A cultural family? A best friend family? A support group family? An online social networking family?*

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *Chat with someone who is in your personal circle of acquaintances – a friend, relative, neighbour, or mentor. Ask the person for suggestions about a job – ask if she or he knows someone who may be hiring in the future, or hiring now.*

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Literacy and Essential Skills Toolkit** ~ The Literacy and Essential Skills Toolkit is a series of free and easy-to-use tools that help address different literacy and Essential Skills challenges. Go to the Humans Resources and Skills Development Canada website (www.hrsdc.gc.ca) and follow the “Topics” menu link to the Essential Skills link. During this module, you’ll want to focus directly on the Essential Skills, and how they relate to specific employment, training and career opportunities for the individual.

- **Going to Canada** ~ This is a government of Canada website for newcomers to Canada (www.goingtocanada.gc.ca). The site includes job search information, as well as a variety of other information: facts about Canada; immigration; taxes and benefits; labour trends and labour markets in different geographical regions and cities; and challenges to working in Canada.
- **Guide to Working in Canada, Printable Version** ~ This resource provides a series of PDFs on a variety of work-related topics. The information is specifically written for newcomers to Canada; however, the language and information is relevant and accessible to a broader range of readers. Follow the publications link from the main menu of the Going to Canada site, or try http://workingincanada.gc.ca/public_html/print_guide.jsp.
- **The Learning Edge** (www.thewclc.ca/edge) ~ This website is an online interactive resource for adult literacy learners presented as a series of newspapers. Click on *Issue 5* to learn more about networking.

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *This module focuses upon community*, the many forms community can take in a person's life and the role these communities play in our lives – from providing support, to being a network for finding and keeping work, to defining who we are, and identifying the values that are ingrained in us and need to be reflected in the work we find.
- *Recognize that community is personal and individual*. Support each woman in identifying the communities that play a part in her life. For example, one woman may feel a strong connection to her religion, and the people who have the largest impact upon her everyday life and daily activities may be those associated with her place of worship. Another woman may belong to a large extended family, and this is her primary community. Another woman may not have relatives living in the area, or may be

estranged from them, and will have developed a different kind of family, perhaps through groups she belongs to, whether support groups or therapy, a hobby or fitness activity, a charity, school, or past work.

- *A circle is a powerful image to use when exploring* communities and overlapping circles are a good way to demonstrate interaction and connection. We are all part of many circles of friends and acquaintances, some of which are interconnected and others that stand alone. Indeed, research on how women learn more effectively points to the importance of social interaction and conversation. Interestingly, research also shows that the same preference for social interaction is important in how women find jobs. Present this preference as a key strategy in the participant's own job search.
- *The discussion of communities, circles, and the hidden job market segues into the concept of networking.* A network is another way to describe community, and networking is simply the interaction that occurs within a community. It is a group of people connected to an individual through family, friendship, work, education and community.
- *Relate the exploration of immediate and extended communities and circles to the concept of the hidden job market.* It is a surprising statistic, but labour market experts tell us that 80 - 85% of all available jobs never reach visible public advertising sources such as newspaper classified ads, job boards, or job search networks and websites

Insights & Tips

"My family, my friends, my circles – they are a very important part of a woman's life."

~ Field-test participant

Insights & Tips

"Some of the women who were recent immigrants found it hard to relate to a discussion about community and networking in general – they could talk about the topic with respect to their country of origin, but felt that wouldn't be helpful to their search for a job in Canada."

~ Field-test facilitator

(McGill University). This large “iceberg” portion of jobs is known as the **hidden job market**. Present networking as a way to find out about those jobs that aren’t advertised and are filled through informal and personalized contacts.

- *Be sensitive during discussions* that not all communities to which a woman belongs or has belonged are necessarily positive. This discussion may stir up negative emotions or memories. As well, not all women will belong to large communities, and some may feel ostracized and lonely. In these cases, an approach might be to help the participant identify groups she might join, or connections she might make in the community that will help her to build personal circles.
- *Explore other communities and networks, such as virtual communities, and also “real-time” circles that span across personal history.* The participants in the group are 40+ years, and in that time, have developed many layers of circles and friendships, some of which may have become dormant due to geographical distance, changes in relationships and interests, changes in jobs, children growing up, and other factors. Do not limit the concept of community to current acquaintances and relationships. Many people have also developed online profiles and social-networking communities. These virtual circles and families often provide company, support, networking, and shared information.
- *Interesting stats:* Since 2007, MySpace’s average age demographic has risen to 35 and above. In general, females outnumber males on social networking sites 55% to 45%. As well, women tend to use networking sites for nurturing and social interaction, whereas men use them first and foremost for transactions. Inclusion of online communities in discussion and activities offers the opportunity to introduce topics of online and media literacy and “tech savvy” – including among others, issues of privacy, confidentiality, and the ability to detect “phishing” and prevent online victimization.

Insights & Tips

Female workers get by - and earn more - with a little help from their friends, a new study shows, but men don't enjoy the same boost from their social networks.

Women who found their current job through a close relative like a parent or sibling earned \$32,691 a year on average, researchers found, while those who landed a job through a close friend earned \$28,546. Those with no previous connection to their employer pulled in just \$19,415 annually.

Men, meanwhile, didn't enjoy any salary benefits from their personal grapevine.

"I was expecting that males would be getting a much higher return for their social networks, but the study actually shows quite the opposite," says Michael Aguilera, an associate professor of sociology. "Social networks are very important for female job-seekers, whereas they are not so important for male job-seekers."

~ Shannon Proudfoot
CanWest News Service

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous unit now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Congratulate participants on the fact that they have now moved along to the second module. Let them know that they will build upon what they've learned about themselves to gain more information and understanding about the job or career area that suits them. Note that this module will focus on the following:*
 - **Community** – Gaining a better understanding of the place where participants live and want to work – and how this place affects their job search choices.

- **Essential Skills** – Working with the nine Essential Skills that are required in today's workplace to be able to perform work tasks successfully. These Essential Skills are present in every job, although in different combinations and in different ways or "strengths".
- *Review the unit outcome* – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group. Note that throughout this module, individuals will be working independently for greater lengths of time. During their job searches and explorations they will be looking at the Essential Skills required for the employment and career area they are "zeroing in" on.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of the woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: My Community

Present the "Getting Ready" activity. Write the title "My Community" across the top of a flipchart page. Then ask each woman to talk about whom she chatted with about potential jobs and what suggestions she was given. Also ask how she would describe or label her relationship to each person with whom she chatted. For example, was it a friend, neighbour, close relative such as sister, brother, aunt, husband, advisor (spiritual or

Insights & Tips

"We did a brainstorming exercise where we created a list of our networking opportunities."

~ Field-test facilitator

cultural leader), member of a club or hobby group, past co-worker, or someone she interacts with in a service or business way, such as a hairdresser? Jot down the answers under the “My Community” title.

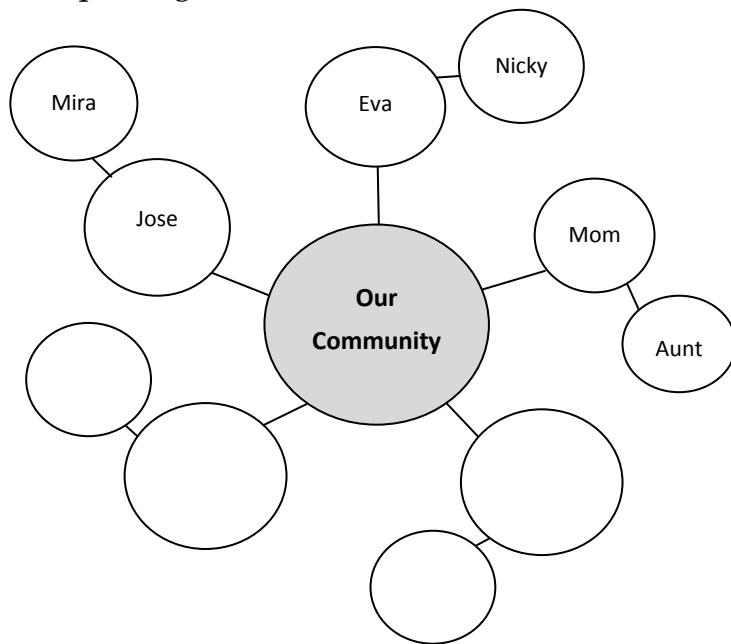
Relate the discussion to the unit’s topic – exploring our community or “circles” of friends and acquaintances – and why that is important to our job search. Our community helps us define our core values – what is important to us, and what we want in our future job. It also provides us with a social network to support us in our job search.

Mind-Mapping:

To visually demonstrate the concept of networks, take the information gathered under the “My Community” title on the flipchart from the discussion and illustrate it as a “Mind Mapping” graphic.

1. In the main circle, put the title: OUR COMMUNITY.
2. Branching out from the main circle, draw a series of connected circles, each with the name of a participant inside it.
3. Next have each of these circles branch out to give the name of the person she contacted as part of the Getting Ready activity.

Note that each of us belongs to several communities, networks or circles of friends/acquaintances. The group will now spend some time identifying and exploring these circles.



Hand out **Worksheet 24**, “My Circles of Family & Friends.” Talk about the fact that some of us have very small family circles, and others have very large family circles with many extended members – each of us will have different ways of defining family, and different ideas on who makes up our family. Pose the question:

- Does family have to be related to you by genetics/blood? Discuss the various forms family may take, bringing up the fact that many women – those who live far away from their relatives or children, are estranged, or are separated or divorced, for example – often create new family circles where their close friends become their immediate family.

Have each participants fill in the worksheet in the way that reflects her reality and concept of family, starting with the centre circle of immediate family, and expanding outward. Return to the larger circle to share the worksheets, or share in smaller groups or pairs.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication and writing skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

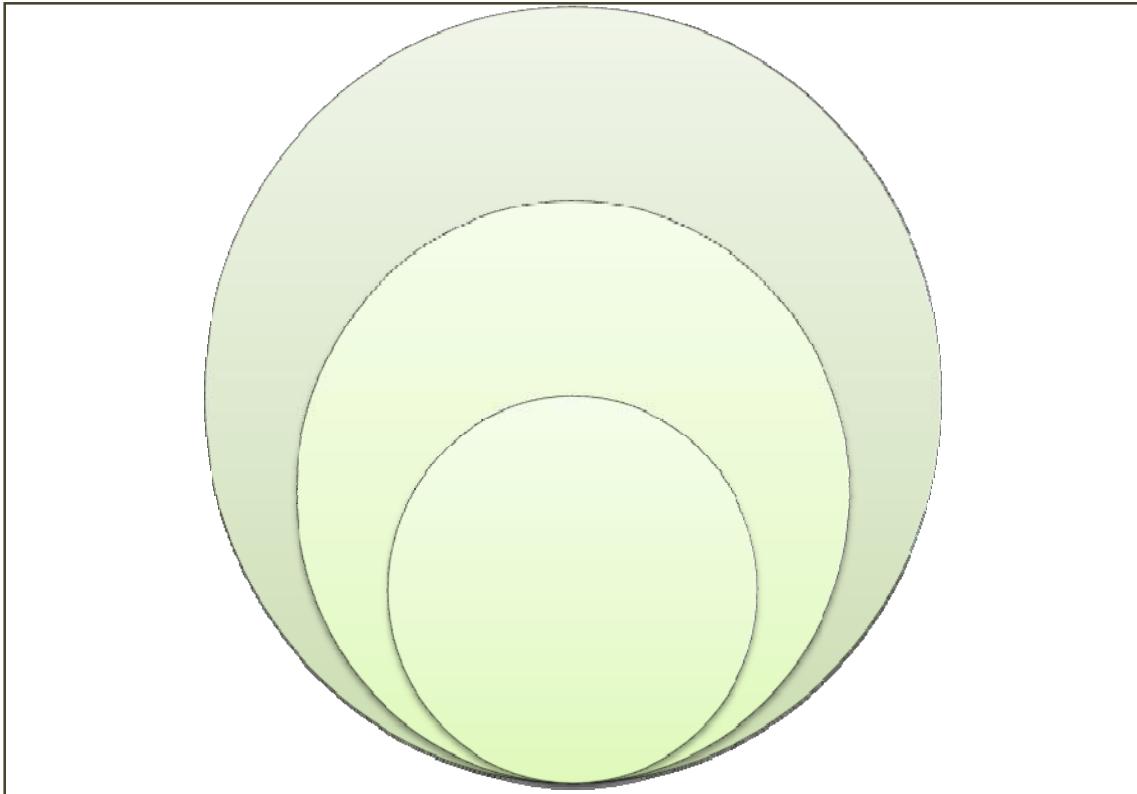
“The circle activities worked well! The women discovered they had more social connections than they had realized, and they filled in more circles than they thought they would.”

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 24

My Circles of Family & Friends

1. In the inner circle, put the names of your immediate family.
2. In the next circle, put the names of your extended family.
3. In the outer circle, put the names of your friends.
4. Outside the circles, write the names of other people you know – acquaintances or people you come across in your daily life.



SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to explore her social and personal networks. Activity 3 has not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 2: My Networks

Hand out **Worksheet 25**. Read the article aloud as a group, in pairs, or individually. Answer the questions at the end of the article about culture, personal history, family and support groups. Discuss how these circles have shaped Geri Duguid's career choices and are helping her meet her goals. Complete as a group discussion or a written assignment.

Insights & Tips

"I would love to follow Duguid's path starting now. Knowing that I was not alone in my journey to better my education is what I liked most about this unit. I wish I knew more about my traditions, being an Aboriginal person myself who attended Residential school in my first nine years of life."

~ Field-test participant

Follow up by handing out **Worksheet 26**. Ask each participant to reflect upon groups or circles that are important or central to her life, and to fill in the "ring" to reflect the communities to which she belongs. Then expand the discussion of circles of family and friends to include social networks and online groups. Ask them:

- Do you belong to Facebook or other networks? If so, which ones?
- What has been your experience with these networks?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her reading and document use skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 25

A second shot at education²⁰

Barbara Aggerholm, Record Staff

When Geri Duguid was 18, she turned down an offer of admission to university to raise her baby son as a single mother.

Thirty-seven years later, Duguid is pursuing that post-secondary education with her grown son's help.

Last month, Duguid was awarded an Aboriginal Education Incentive Award from Canada Post, given to 16 Canadians who conquer adversity to go after their dream of an education.

Soft-spoken and articulate, Duguid, 56, is in her second year of a demanding social services program at Conestoga College. After she graduates in April, she hopes to study for a bachelor's degree in social work, then a master's degree in social work in the aboriginal field of study at Wilfrid Laurier University.

She didn't know she could do it, until she attended an aboriginal healing lodge and found the courage to get out of an unhappy marriage.

It was the end of a 31-year marriage, but the beginning of a life of study, independence, and a peace she hadn't known for a long time. She began investigating her aboriginal traditions, traditions she hadn't learned because her mother didn't teach them, and her father, forced as a child to attend a residential school, didn't know them.

He "expressed regret for not being able to pass on to us our native language and traditions; things that were taken away from him in the residential school," Duguid wrote in an essay for the award. A gentle man who battled alcoholism, her father died at age 44 when her baby was only eight months old.

Duguid was born in Detroit, Mich., the third child in a family of 10. She is a member of the Turtle clan, Cayuga tribe of the Six Nations. Her father was a high steel construction worker, and the family moved wherever there was

²⁰ Waterloo Region Record, Sat. Dec. 20, 2008. <http://news.therecord.com/Life/article/>. Used with permission.

work. When she was eight, they came to Six Nations Reserve near Brantford to stay.

When her son was two, she trained as a key punch operator in Hamilton, getting a job right away at an insurance firm. Later, she married the manager who hired her. They moved to Kitchener; had two more children, and she worked for placement agencies, then out of their home for the computer consulting firm established by her then-husband.

She struggled to keep the house – a house filled with light and wood, with aboriginal art and masks on the wall – when they divorced last year.

"This is where my children grew up. This is where my memories are," she says. It's a warm place to study for hours, to write endless papers and to eat the meals cooked by her firstborn son, Tony Duguid, now 38.

She draws on her experience as a mother, an employee, a former volunteer for Meals on Wheels, a bone marrow donor who gave once and will do it again if she's asked.

She's the oldest in a class of mostly 20-something students, and Duguid is able to share her experience in discussions and at work placements where people are facing challenges of their own. Her placement at the Small Steps to Success program in Cambridge, a pre-employment program for women aged 25 and over, is rewarding.

"There are mature women who are looking to go back to school, find a job," she said. "I'm their age and I've gone back to school. It's possible."

She found help with The Healing of the Seven Generations in this area, which aids people suffering from the effects of the residential school legacy.

Today, Duguid is on the board of directors of the K-W Urban Native Wigwam Project, which provides geared-to-income housing for native people. On a drum decorated with a granddaughter's handprints, she drums and sings with the Good-Hearted Women Singers, an aboriginal drum circle. For a woman with a soft voice, there's a feeling of "incredible" power when she raises it in song.

"It's empowering to connect with healthy, positive aboriginal women," she says.

And it feels good to show her grandchildren – Dylan, ten; Jaci, nine; Ally, five; and Kylie, one – what she can do.

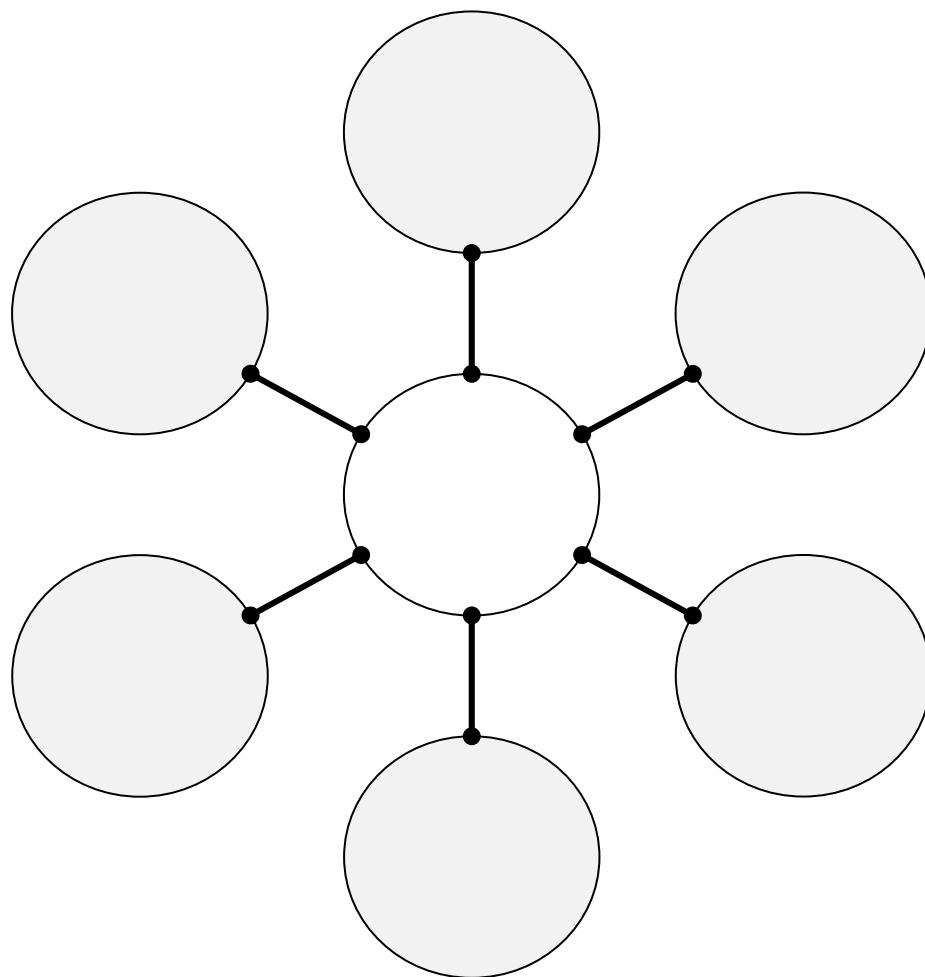
"They've been very understanding when grandma can't come out to play because she has too much homework to do. . . . They know I'm at school and they're all very proud of me."

Group Discussion or Written Assignment:

1. What "circles" are part of Geri Duguid's life?
2. How have these circles affected her career choices?
3. How have they supported her?

WORKSHEET 26***My Social Network***

1. Write your name in the centre circle.
2. In each of the circles, write the name of a group to which you belong and that is important to you. For example, a religious or cultural circle, an organization in which you participate, a support group, a “movie” or “coffee” group, or whatever!
3. You don’t need to fill in all of the circles. If you wish, you can add more circles.



Insights & Tips

"Reading the article [Worksheet 25] made me think of my Auntie Myrtle Appleyard, who passed on years ago. She went back to school in her fifties to complete her education. All her children were grown. She graduated and became a social worker in Kelowna. One of her clients was my sister who loved her very much. Auntie Myrtle was a caring, loving person. She was my foster mom's sister. I know that I have to be really brave, and not be afraid to do as Auntie Myrtle did. She is my mentor. She went on with her new career up until she retired. God bless her."

~ Field-test participant

**Activity 3: My Changing Networks**

Use this activity to explore past networks and friendships as they span the woman's life. To introduce the topic, ask the group:

- What were you doing thirty years ago?"
- Twenty years ago?
- Ten years ago?
- Five years ago?
- Have your "circles" changed in those times?

Relate to life stages and life experiences – sometimes our circles and networks change according to where we are in our lives – perhaps we moved, changed jobs, divorced, or our children grew up...

Hand out **Worksheet 27**. Ask participants to fill in the graph based on the "layers" or stages of their life, and the circles or communities with which they were associated at that time, or would like to be part of in their future.

Insights & Tips

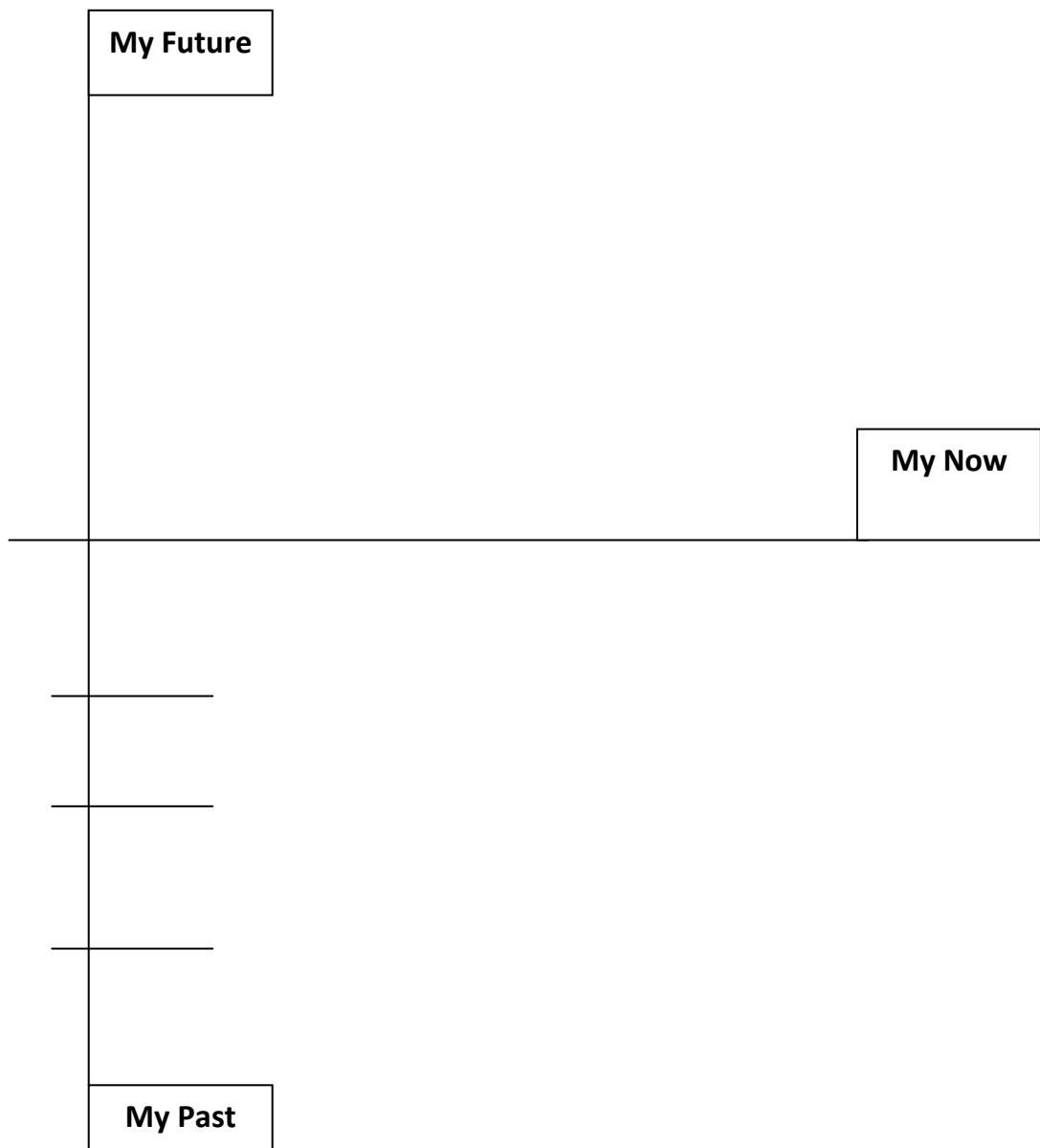
"I liked the graph activity – reflecting upon past, present, future."

~ Field-test participant

WORKSHEET 27

Past, Present, Future

1. Think of the different stages or “layers” of your past.
2. Graph below the “circles” or groups/people who were important to you or influenced you at that time in your life.





Activity 4: The Hidden Job Market

Post the following information on a flipchart page and then draw a pie chart to illustrate the information:

"Advertised positions account for only 10-20% of all job openings at any given time" and "80 - 85% of all available jobs are never advertised."

Ask:

- How do you think these 'hidden jobs' being filled?
- Why do you think employers don't advertise these jobs?
- How do job-seekers find out about these jobs?

Insights & Tips

"The group was quite intrigued with the info about hidden job markets. The participants noted that three of our guest speakers had included networking aspects in their presentation, and the importance of networking in finding a job. To date, we've had two entrepreneurial women visit us, plus a woman who has volunteer experience."

~ Field-test facilitator

Next post or read the following quotation from an article written by Shannon Proudfoot, CanWest News Service:

"Social networks are very important for female job-seekers, whereas they are not so important for male job-seekers." (*Career Resource Network*)

Ask:

- Why do you think social networks are so effective for women job-seekers?
- How might the personal circles and communities you've explored today help you with your job search?

Hand out **Worksheet 28**, the full text of the article by Shannon Proudfoot. Have participants read the article independently or in pairs

(for those who have literacy skills that allow them to do so) and answer the questions at the end of article.

Dependent upon the make-up of the group, you may wish to discuss the observations and facts related to racial minorities and marginalized groups, and the impact upon job search and wages.

Compare the article's statements to the following statement from Statistics Canada:

"Newcomers may have trouble finding out about jobs in the hidden job market because they do not have an established network of contacts."

- Does the statement reflect participants' experiences?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication and writing skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"I initially assigned the article as an independent reading activity. However, a few participants told me they didn't understand it. So instead, we did the handout as a group – taking turns reading aloud – so we could discuss the meanings of certain words/expressions. The women found the article thought-provoking."

~ *Field-test facilitator*

WORKSHEET 28

Women enjoy better pay with their social network²¹

Shannon Proudfoot

Female workers get by – and earn more – with a little help from their friends, a new study shows, but men don't enjoy the same boost from their social networks.

Women who found their current job through a close relative like a parent or sibling earned \$32,691 a year on average, researchers at the University of Oregon found, while those who landed a job through a close friend earned \$28,546. Those with no previous connection to their employer pulled in just \$19,415 annually.

Men, meanwhile, didn't enjoy any salary benefits from their personal grapevine.

"I was expecting that males would be getting a much higher return for their social networks, but the study actually shows quite the opposite," says Michael Aguilera, an associate professor of sociology. "Social networks are very important for female job-seekers, whereas they are not so important for male job-seekers."

The study buttresses previous research from a University of British Columbia professor who found that the lower incomes of racial minorities can be attributed largely to the fact that they are less likely to have friends in their workplace.

Marc-David Seidel, an associate professor of commerce at UBC, found that the difference between a person's initial offer from a new employer and the starting salary bumped up by 4.5 per cent if they knew someone in the organization.

Members of racial majorities are more likely to have friends in a potential workplace than minorities because of sheer numbers, he says, and that difference accounts almost entirely for the gap between the wages of racial minorities and non-minorities.

²¹ Source: Canwest News Service. <http://working.canada.com/resources/story.html?id=7a1cbc6d-116e-4156-a94e-33f201c63622>, December 24, 2008.

Knowing someone on the inside means better "information and reputation" when job hunting, Seidel says. Employers may be willing to offer more money to a candidate who comes with a recommendation from within the company and seems like a safer bet, he says, and candidates with a friend at the company know more about the hiring and negotiation process.

"They can get information on what the actual salary range might be, how desperate the company is to hire someone in to the position, how many other good candidates there are - in other words, how much bargaining power they have," he says.

That's especially important for would-be workers from marginalized groups who might not otherwise get their foot in the door for an interview, says Aguilera, and might further explain why this effect is seen with women and not men.

"Is it that employers discriminate against females and that they actually need social networks to help them feel better about hiring females because of their stereotypes about female productivity?" he suggests.

His study, published in the September issue of the journal Social Stratification and Mobility, was based on the 2002 General Social Survey in the U.S. and analyzed the responses of 468 people, a little over half of them men.

In 16 years of running Winnipeg-based Picante Advertising, president Laura Hawkins says she's never placed an ad to fill a position, relying instead on recommendations and networking to find the right employees and new clients. The finding that women's paycheques benefit from networking and men's don't is "bizarre," she says, but she's seen firsthand the power of who you know.

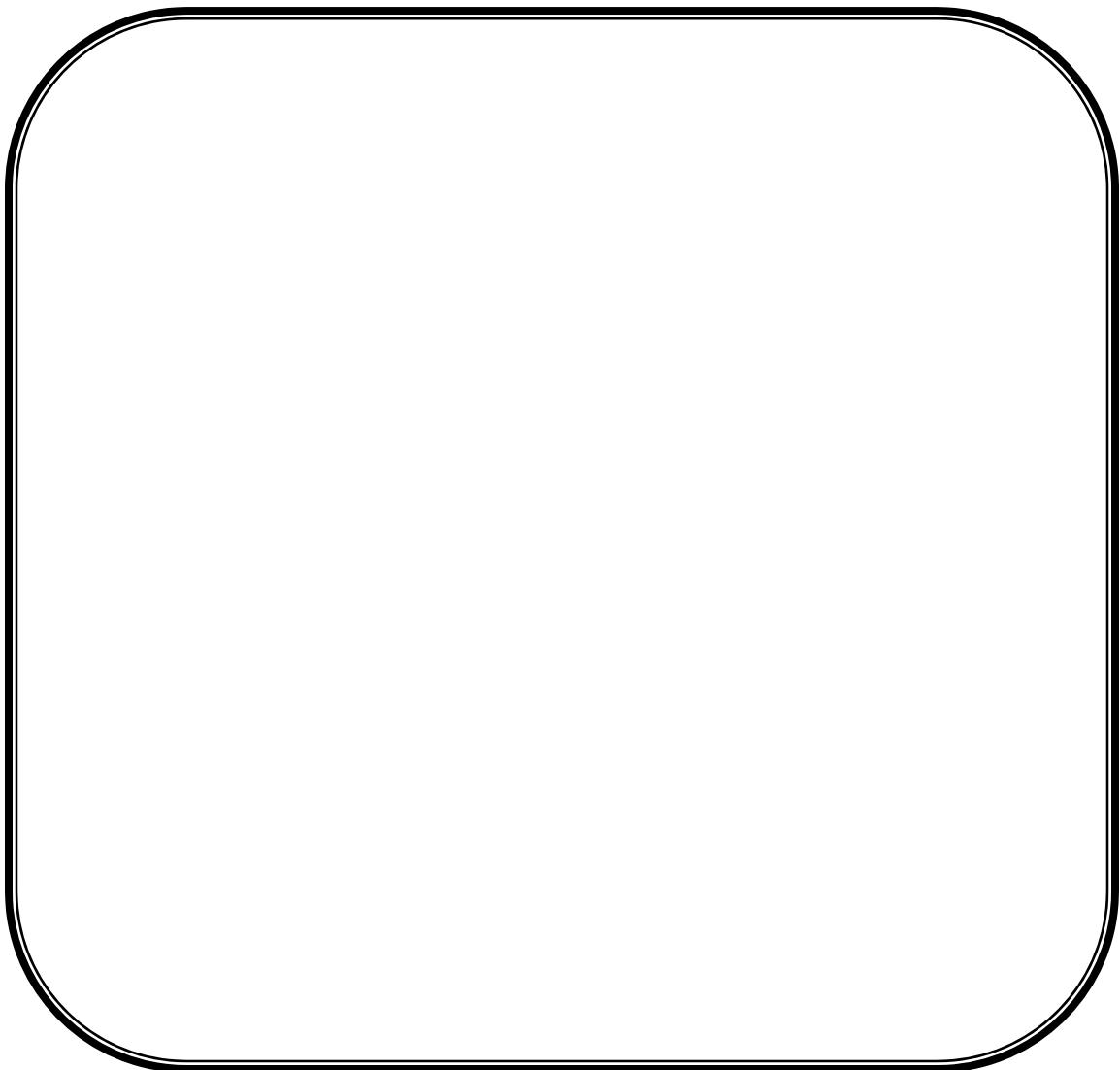
"I certainly believe that if you know people and somebody is a friend of a friend and they're hiring you, they're going to be a little more gracious on the scale of what they're willing to offer because the word might get back to the person they know," she says.

Hawkins is currently working with an aboriginal group "trying to break through their glass ceiling" in the workplace, she says, and they're amazed by the stories she tells of the way women were treated in business just a couple of decades ago.

"We've come a long way in 20 or 30 years. Their jaw drops and they can't believe it, but when I say that, it's not like it's equal," she says. "We've still got a long way to go."

What do you think?

1. What does this story tell you about social networks?
2. How can you apply the information in the article to your own job search?
Jot your ideas down here:

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a thick black border, designed for students to write their answers to the questions posed in the previous section.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 5 and Activity 6 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to complete a skills profile and one that allows her to add a comment to her journal. Activity 5 has not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 5: My Essential Skills Profile

Acknowledge the fact that group members have examined their skills in an informal way as part of the past module, "Exploring Myself". Now they will build upon or more clearly define their skills by relating them to the nine Essential Skills. These skills have been identified as those required in the Canadian workplace, and vital to daily life.

Explain that today, participants will simply start by filling out an inventory or answering some questions that will help them become more familiar with the nine Essential Skills and how they use these skills in their everyday life. In later units, we'll look at how the Essential Skills are used in the jobs or career areas that they are exploring for themselves.

Hand out **Worksheet 29**, and have participants answer the questions independently in written format.

For those with literacy levels that do not allow them to complete the assignment in this way, have them answer the questions orally, working in pairs with a peer mentor who has good writing skills, and can record their answers.

Have participants store the completed Essential Skills Profile in their portfolio for future reference, along with the worksheets that describe their social networks and communities.

Insights & Tips

"This activity was familiar to the women, as we did a similar one during registration and our initial assessment process. Completing the worksheet was a good review and orientation to Essential Skills."

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 29

My Skills Profile

To help you get a better sense of the skills you bring to job search or self-employment exploration, please answer the following questions.

My skills profile

READING

What do you read regularly for pleasure? Please list everything you can think of:

NUMERACY

In what ways do you use numbers every day? Please list everything you can think of:

Are you comfortable working with numbers? Would you like to work on these skills?

Yes	No	Yes	No
-----	----	-----	----

DOCUMENT USE

What documents do you use at home? For example, phone bills, report cards, etc. Please list everything you can think of:

WRITING

Do you write every day?	Yes	No
-------------------------	-----	----

My skills profile

If you do write every day, what do you write? Please list everything you can think of:

Are you comfortable with your writing skills? Would you like to work on this skill?

Yes	No	Yes	No
-----	----	-----	----

ORAL COMMUNICATION

When you are speaking with other people, do you think they understand the point you are making?

I don't know	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
--------------	-----------	------------------	--------

Is being able to speak comfortably in a group something you'd like to work on? Yes No

Have you worked in jobs where you needed to discuss work related issues with others, or where you needed to give instructions to other employees?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

If yes, please describe the skills you have because of this:

COMPUTER USE

How would you rate your computer skills?

Excellent	Not Bad	Good	Not very good	None
-----------	---------	------	---------------	------

What software programs can you use? Please list everything you can think of:

Do you use the Internet? Do you use email?

Yes	No	Yes	No
-----	----	-----	----

My skills profile

Do you use Messenger or a similar instant messaging program?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
THINKING SKILLS		
Do you feel you think clearly and quickly?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you find it easy to solve problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you consider yourself to be creative?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
WORKING WITH OTHERS		
Do you enjoy working with others or do you prefer to work alone?	<input type="checkbox"/> With Others	<input type="checkbox"/> Alone
Is there anything you find difficult about working with others? Give an example:		
CONTINUOUS LEARNING		
Continuous learning is all about the ongoing improvement of the skills you already have and your plan for gaining new skills and knowledge.		
Besides this program, do you have a plan for gaining skills and knowledge in the future?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If you do, what is your plan?		



Activity 6: My Social Network

Have the participant write in her learning journal her thoughts about networking. What has she learned about herself, and her personal communities and networks?

Ask her to respond to these questions:

- How do you feel about asking your friends or neighbours to let you know about potential job openings?
- What would you say?
- Using bullet points, how would you describe your top three skills? How would you tell someone about these skills?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her writing and critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"I created and assigned a computer activity around networking. I divided the participants into four groups, each with a different networking topic. I gave each group the URL to an online article, and asked the group to pull out the important points from the website, and create a small package to present to the class.

We made copies of each package for the participants' learning portfolios.

Topics included:

- *How to Network: Tips for Shy People*
- *How to Network to Find a Job*
- *How to Network Effectively*
- *How to Network Successfully.*

~ Field-test facilitator

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Gather oral and hard copy feedback.* Bring participants back together in the circle formation. Is there an aspect of the unit that they'd like to talk about further before they leave? Do they have a better idea of their personal communities and social networks? How did they feel about the Essential Skills Profile activity?
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit.* Ask if there is something the women would like to add or make sure they talk about – either as part of the topic or in response to today's unit.
- *Read aloud the "Getting Ready" activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below).
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

"Writing out our social networks was useful and made us realize that we have more connections than we first thought!"

~ Field-test participant

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- *What is special or unique about the community where you live?*
Bring a photo that illustrates this feature, or a “post-card size” picture or graphic download from the web. Think of one specific thing – a geographic setting, or a festival or event, or a major industry or business, or something else altogether – that you think makes your community stand out.
- *If the right job opportunity came along in another community, would you move?*

Insights & Tips

“The idea of hidden jobs and networking was new for me. I would like to learn more about it and get more practice.”

~ Field-test participant

CLOSING WORDS

“Many years ago, I was busy with my children taking care of them, but now I have free time to do something. I would like to be productive and make good use of my time.. I liked this course, because it might give me better opportunity to find a job and to change my life. It is good to make a change. I hope I can find a job in the future, since finding a job is about luck and knowing somebody.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

THE EMPLOYMENT LANDSCAPE

“Because, I take this course, I decided to go out of my home, meet new people, improve my English, and challenge my skills. I [now know] the type of work and training that are available in my community.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

As a result of this unit, the participant explores the **greater community** in which she lives and identifies its dominant characteristics and features, gaining an understanding of the area where she wants to find employment. Participant analyzes the **labour trends** and current events in her community, and identifies jobs and careers in demand.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this session directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Document Use
- Reading Text
- Thinking Skills
- Computer Skills

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these questions:

- *Would you relocate to a different community* if you were offered a new job? Let's say a position that is more suitable to your skills and experiences, or your long-term goals? Or one that offers you other advantages – increase in pay, prestige, higher-ranking title, more responsibility (or less)? Better pension?
- *If the answer is no, why not?*

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

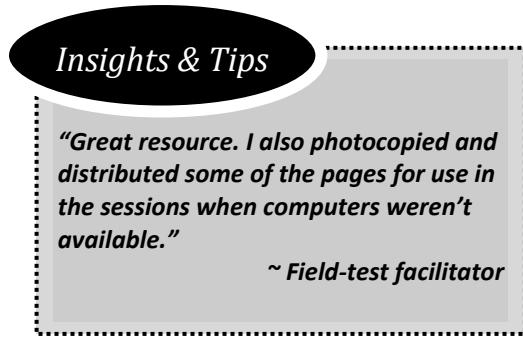
This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the session by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the session to suit her needs.

- *What is special or unique* about the community where you live? Bring a photo that illustrates this feature, or a "post-card size" picture or graphic download from the web. Think of one specific thing – a geographic setting, or a festival or event, or a major industry or business, or something else altogether – that you think makes your community stand out.
- *If the right job opportunity* came along in another community, would you move?

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Working in Canada Tool** ~ Visit the Working in Canada website (www.goingtocanada.gc.ca) and follow the main menu links to access the Working in Canada Tool, an interactive tool that is designed to help newcomers to Canada make well-informed decisions about where to live and work. The tool produces a report that “contains information on job descriptions, wages, skills, language training and job opportunities tailored to their needs”.
- **Labour Market Information Service** ~ Check out www.labourmarketinformation.ca to access information that is easy to navigate, and suitable for learners and new computer users. It is interactive and focuses on specific geographical areas, allowing users to explore labour market facts as they relate to communities across Canada, and specific jobs.
- **The Daily** ~ This Statistics Canada bulletin is posted daily and provides current highlights on a variety of topics important to Canadians, written in an easy-to-read way focusing on key points. Visit the StatsCan website (www.statscan.gc.ca) and follow the links. You can also receive the bulletin as a RSS feed according to topic.
- **Statistics Canada Community Profiles** ~ Based upon the 2006 Canadian Census, these Statistics Canada profiles present community-level data for 5,418 communities. They provide a variety of information, such as population, demographics, language spoken, education attained, and much more, including maps. Follow the links from the Statistics Canada home page, or use the website search engine.
- **Looking Ahead, A 10-Year Outlook for the Canadian Labour Market, (2006-2015)**, Human Resources and Social Development Canada. Available online at the HRSDC website, this report



Insights & Tips

“Great resource. I also photocopied and distributed some of the pages for use in the sessions when computers weren’t available.”

~ Field-test facilitator

attempts to answer the following questions: How many jobs will be created over the next decade? In which industries and occupations will the new jobs emerge? What will be the impact of retirements on job openings? What kind of education is required to fill the new positions? Will the new supply be sufficient to meet this new demand? What occupations will face significant labour market pressures?

- **Provincial Government and Territories Websites** ~ Provincial and territorial government websites are a good source for labour market trends, happenings, and other specific information about local communities. The following Government of Canada web page provides a list of links to the home pages of provincial and territory government websites: <http://canada.gc.ca/othergov-autregouv/prov-eng.html>.
- **Municipal and Regional Websites** ~ Don't overlook the municipal and regional websites of your specific community. These websites contain invaluable information to build a community profile, and often labour market information as well.

Insights & Tips

"An innovative initiative to utilize Internet technologies to deliver job search curriculum that I found very useful, was www.passporttowork.ca. Check it out!"

~ Field-test facilitator

Insights & Tips**ACROSS CANADA****Jobs in demand...**

Currently, the largest number of occupations showing signs of shortages at the national level is concentrated in management occupations and in the health sector. Pressures are particularly acute for physicians, therapy and assessment professionals (e.g. physiotherapists), head nurses and nurse aides. Other health occupations, such as registered nursing assistants, audiology technicians, physiotherapy technicians and medical radiation technologists, are also facing pressures.

Among other occupations showing signs of shortages are those related to oil and gas drilling and services, homebuilders and renovators, contractors and supervisors in trades, computer engineers and software engineers.

Dropping demands...

Occupations deemed to be currently in excess supply are mostly in low-skilled categories facing deteriorating labour demand conditions. For example, organizational restructuring, automation and advances in computer technology are reducing the demand for office equipment operators. For machine operators in textile processing and industrial sewing machine operators, international competition is the main contributor to declining demand. Finally, the difficulties experienced in forestry, agriculture and electric and electronic equipment industries have had a negative impact on some occupations in those sectors.

*~ Looking-Ahead: A 10-Year Outlook for the Canadian Labour Market (2006-2015), Highlights
Human Resources and Social Development Canada*

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *Research market labour trends and create a profile of your community – the primarily geographical region where the participants live and plan to work. Customize the session to meet the specific needs of the participants. Each community is unique, and although it will often mirror what is happening across the country as a whole, or the province or territory within which it is located, it will have its own features and current issues that affect the economic welfare of its residents and the employment landscape. Your community will have its particular combination of factors – geographical, demographical, main industries and businesses, political, cultural and artistic among others – that*

define it and drive it. You'll need to research and present those key factors important to your community and ultimately, important to the participants in your group and their individual job search. It is important that you have, in preparation for facilitating this unit, an understanding of the main factors influencing employment for the specific community.

- *Build together a profile or overview* of the community to discover its characteristics and employment potential, trends and possibilities. A community profile might include a variety of factors: predominant geographical features, seasonal activity, demographical mix, population, primary industries and businesses, learning institutions such as research centres or universities, major festivals or events, special talents of the residents – for example, a high percentage of artisans - culture, ethnicity, history, or other factors that impact upon the community. Any one of these factors could play a part in discovering the employment opportunities that will resonate with an individual participant and shape her job search and future. The specific factors will be unique to the community, and these factors are what you'll need to research, present and explore during the unit.
- *Keep your labour market trends* and other economic information simple. It's not necessary to present large amount of data or great detail. Rather, choose the information you present carefully and focus on key points, highlights, and overviews. You'll want to be careful not to "bog down" participants with facts that are difficult to understand or that do not impact upon this stage of their job search, particularly those with lower literacy levels who may have difficulty using the information you present. Although the focus of the session is the participant's local community, especially as it relates to her skills and job interests, you will also

Insights & Tips

"We talked a lot about the demands in healthcare & tourism, and the decline in manufacturing & construction."

"We used brainstorming to discuss our community. One area hard hit in our community that we discussed was the auto industry."

~ Field-test facilitators

find it useful to be able to put this information in a national context – what is happening across the country, and also provincially or territorially. Again, keep the information as simple as possible, and focus on key findings.

- *Encourage individuals to do independent research* in those areas where further information is needed for their personal job explorations, and provide direction as to where to look for that information. Help the participant know her community better so that she can plan and optimize her future employment opportunities. Set up activities and lines of questioning that help the participant analyze her own job choices and goals in light of the information she has discovered about her community and about its labour market trends. Ultimately, the questions that each participant should ask herself and answer are: Does my community support the jobs I have chosen to pursue? If so, what are the details? Are there other jobs and training opportunities suited to my skills and interests that are more likely to result in employment in my community?
- *Support the individual as she creates* and analyzes the community profile and trends. Compare the findings to the job plans she is shaping for herself. This may mean helping the participant change direction, sometimes taking a sharp turn towards a new goal, and other times taking a subtle turn to refine her plans. Some participants may not be as attached to staying in the specific community as others, and may be willing to move to find employment in their desired career area. The “Getting Ready” activity will help you gauge whether a woman might want to relocate, and whether her family and other commitments will facilitate such a move. For these individuals, the exploration of community might be shifted to focus on other locations outside the one where she currently lives. Are there other communities where her employment and/or training needs are more likely to be met? What do the related profiles and trends indicate? What are the opportunities?
- *Employ a project-based approach* to this unit. Encourage the women to work with partners or in small groups, and then pool their findings to create a more complete picture of their community.

- Set up situations that facilitate each individual taking what she has learned or information she has gathered from participating in the group, and bring it to bear on her independent work and employment plans. Recognize that a “project-based” approach may mean the topics touched upon in this unit and the related activities expand over more than one session – that you’ll need to allow time for people to search out information, whether online or by making personal contact and planning “field trips” to gather information for themselves.

Insights & Tips

“One of the women shared a story about her husband – how he decided upon what community he wanted to work in, and then researched the appropriate local companies and presented them with résumés.”

~ Field-test facilitator

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit’s outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous session now that they’ve had the time to think more about it.
- Review the session outcome – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.
- Guest speaker – If you’ve arranged for a guest speaker to come to talk about the community and provide related labour market trends and other insights, review who is coming and how her

information will relate to the desired outcome of the session. Ask participants what they'd like to learn from the guest speaker – what questions do they want to ask?

- *Emphasize that it is the participant's responsibility* to make sure that she gets information about the community that is important to her personal job search. She'll need to ask questions, and focus on researching those areas important to her and the job(s) she is interested in pursuing.
- *Accommodate personal goals/needs and facilitate independent work.* Be available to help the individual find the information she needs during independent work – offer suggestions and guidance.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: *The Place Where I Live*

Present the "Getting Ready" activity. Ask each woman to share what she views as a unique or special element/feature of the community in which she lives and/or plans to work, and to pass along information about the photograph or illustration.

1. *Ask questions to encourage elaboration and detail.* For example, if the participant mentions a community festival, has she attended it? How many people in general attended? What did the festival promote? What events or activities were involved? Who would she recommend attend? What would other participants like to

know to gain a clearer knowledge of it, or do they have information to add?

2. *Make a list of the features/elements* to begin the process of creating a community profile. Ideally, each member of the group will have outlined a different aspect of community. If not, be ready to ask questions to draw out others areas left unmentioned. Post the photos to illustrate each item on the list, or use the photos to build a collage.
3. *Introduce the second part* of the “Getting Ready” activity: would participants leave the community to follow an employment opportunity? Make note of the responses in order to support individuals in building their employment plans. Many women will have roots in the community and won’t want to move, or may have responsibilities that will not allow it. Other participants may not have the same attachments to the specific community, and be willing to explore relocating for training or employment. Support these participants in looking at opportunities “further afield” when researching and creating their personal employment plans.

Insights & Tips

“We learned about the place where we live, using the map and finding information about the community that is useful to newcomers.”

~ Field-test participant



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 is suggested as a follow-up activity. If you choose not to use this activity, then please create an activity that allows the participant to explore her community.



Activity 2: Creating Our Community Profile

Roll out or unfold a map of the community on a large table and tape down the edges so the map lies flat, or stretch it across a wall or a large bulletin board.

- *Post the photos* from the “Getting Ready” activity to the map to illustrate the corresponding feature or location.
- *Further build the visual profile* of the community by having participants add icons, or graphics to denote other or related features of the community. Most simply, this might mean highlighting main geographic locations by circling them with markers and then labelling them. Participants might draw symbols to communicate specific aspects. For example, trees to denote a wilderness area, or a blue line to indicate a river, or buildings or stars to denote major industries, colleges or universities, health or research centres, or other elements important to the specific community.
- *Add the names of surrounding cities*, transportation links such as a major highway or bus/train routes, or other features or factors that the participants deem important to their job search or employment training.

Refer to **Worksheet 30 & Worksheet 31** for topic areas that participants may consider and research when building a community profile.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"We put a map on the whiteboard and the participants brought in images to place on it. Many of the women were familiar with the resources already, but this was a very good activity to get started in thinking about the community at large, and there was much discussion around different aspects of the community. We were able to add to the map as time went on, as well as refer to it throughout related activities."

"I created a vocabulary sheet for words to go along with the worksheet. For example:

- Statistics: Numerical facts
- Demographics: Statistics about populations, esp. things like average age, income, & marital status.
- Labour: work
- Labour force: Total number of people who are either employed or available for employment
- Market: This is the demand for something you sell or a service you offer.

~ Field-test facilitators

WORKSHEET 30

Creating a Community Profile²²

This checklist offers some broad topic areas to consider when creating your community profile. See if you can include a fact, statistic or event/location that refers to each item when you create your community map or during your discussions.

Social Characteristics

- Demographic profile and special populations
- Community issues and attitudes
- Community facilities and services

Economic Characteristics

- Labour market trends & labour force characteristics
- Major employers and industries

Geography and Growth Trends

- Unique geographical features
- Growth trends and issues
- Transportation

Notable Characteristics

- Cultural aspects
- Aesthetic nature of the community
- Historic resources

Other Features

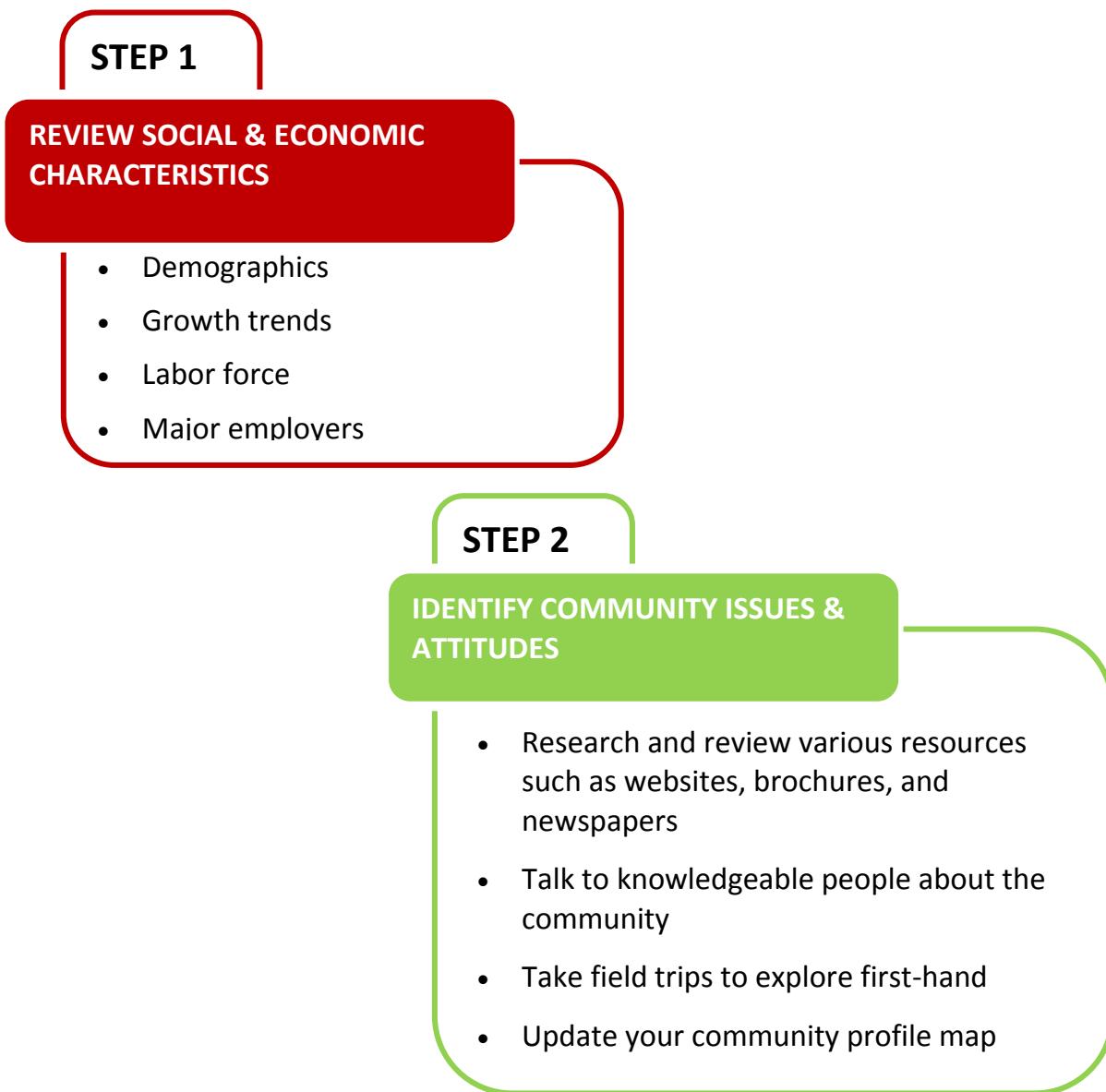
-
-
-

²² Adapted from: *Community Impact Assessment Handbook* (Chapter 4 - Developing a Community Profile). Florida Department of Transportation. Retrieved from: www.cutr.usf.edu/pubs/CIA/chapter_4.pdf.

WORKSHEET 31

Process for Developing a Community Profile²³

Here are **four steps** to help guide your research when you are working with others to gain a better understanding of your community. Use the steps to guide your actions, and then check to see if you've considered all of the main areas.



²³ Adapted from: *Community Impact Assessment Handbook* (Chapter 4 - Developing a Community Profile). Florida Department of Transportation. Retrieved from: www.cutr.usf.edu/pubs/CIA/chapter_4.pdf.

STEP 3**CREATE AN INVENTORY OF AREA FEATURES**

- Community facilities & services
- Existing businesses & major businesses
- Land use & transportation characteristics
- Aesthetic and cultural resources

STEP 4**SUMMARIZE FINDINGS**

- Report to group
- Post related key facts and locations on the community map
- Create a written summary for your portfolio

OPTIONAL UNIT ACTIVITIES

Activity 3 is suggested as an optional activity. This activity has not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 3: Guest Speaker

Invite a guest speaker, or arrange a field trip for the group to interview a person who has expert and working knowledge of the local community. Check out local colleges and universities, municipal offices or government, employment agencies or labour boards, or your local literacy network for ideas or suggestions for locating a suitable speaker.

Ask the speaker to provide an overview of the current “state of the community”; for example, key statistics and facts about the local area, labour trends, job market, areas of greatest job gain, areas of greatest job losses, skills in demand, demographics, and community issues.

Be sure to brief the person ahead of time on the kinds of information that would be useful, and the degree of complexity needed for the discussion. Remember the focus should be on the **key facts** rather than providing too much information.

Before the speaker arrives, brainstorm with the participants a list of questions they would like answered – or if the participants are conducting an interview off-site, questions they will ask. You might also ask permission to video or audio record the speaker for future reference by the participants as they continue to create their employment plans.



Activity 4: More about the Place Where I Live

Assign the community profile map as an ongoing project. Working independently or with partners, have participants add or update locations, events, features, and post pertinent facts based upon their research. For example, post information about the number of new jobs created or the number of jobs lost because of a closure or downsizing in an area.

Assign different topic areas to each individual or pair, and ask participants to report back to the larger group key facts and statistics. Provide related websites to help “kick start” research, particularly local websites. Check out the resources section for other ideas.

Here are some topic questions and areas that participants might explore, and then pool their findings:

- What is the population of the community? Is it growing?
- Are there more females or males living in the community? Are there more females or males working in the community? How do wages compare? What type of jobs do women have?
- What percentage of the population makes up each age group or demographic? What is the largest demographic? To which demographic do the majority of the participants belong?
- What are the labour sectors that are fastest growing in terms of employment in the community? How does this compare to the country as a whole, and to our province?
- What are the jobs most in demand in our community? How does that compare to the country as a whole, or the province?
- What are sectors that have lost the most jobs? What percentage of the local population is unemployed? How does that compare to the country as a whole, or the province?

One good source of information is the local section of your community newspaper – use hard copies or online versions. Another good source is your local municipality website.

Give participants the time they need to research independently, and then have them share the information with the group in a short presentation.

As well as sharing it verbally, you might ask the participants to present the information they've gather in chart form to illustrate the statistics graphically. See **Worksheet 32**.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"I turned this activity [#4] into a large computer project / group work assignment. I provided relevant local websites and step-by-step instructions. I divided the questions up, and assigned them to pairs, so that everybody didn't have to focus on all the questions. Then the pairs joined together, so that each group considered all the questions. We set a minimum four-page limit for the finished project. I encouraged participants to be creative in putting together their packages, for example, directing them to a website that would allow them to create charts and graphs. Although the women found this topic challenging at first, they produced very professional-looking projects and were pleased to have the information they researched."

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 32

Process for Developing a Community Profile

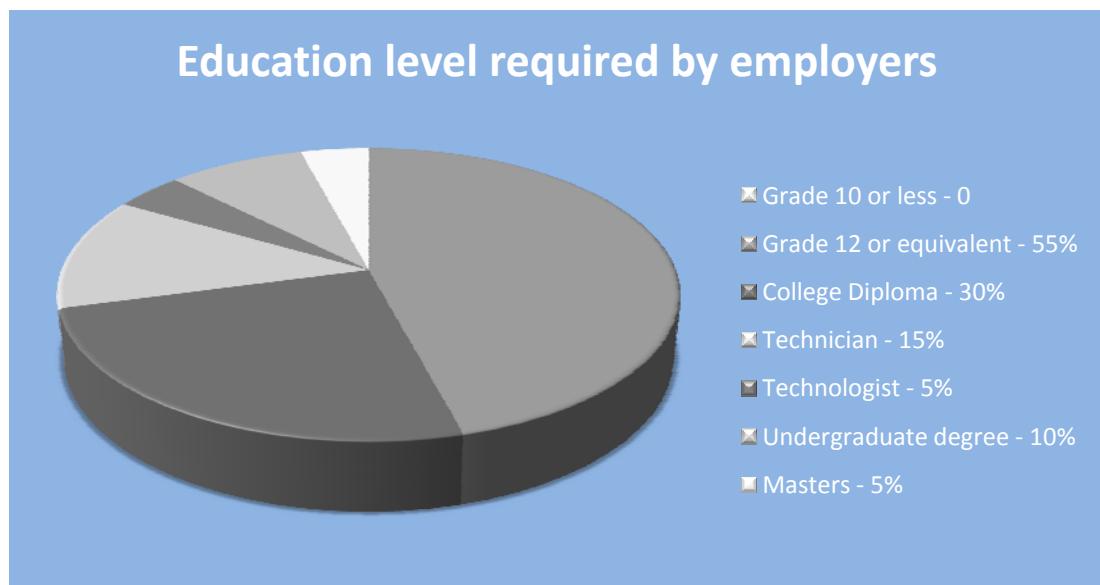
Below are samples of ways you can communicate statistics and information as graphs and charts. Use the samples as models to create charts and graphs of the important statistics you've gathered about your community.

In a List:

A report from Ontario indicates that in a 2007 survey employers were asked about the level of education they look for when hiring. Here's what they said:

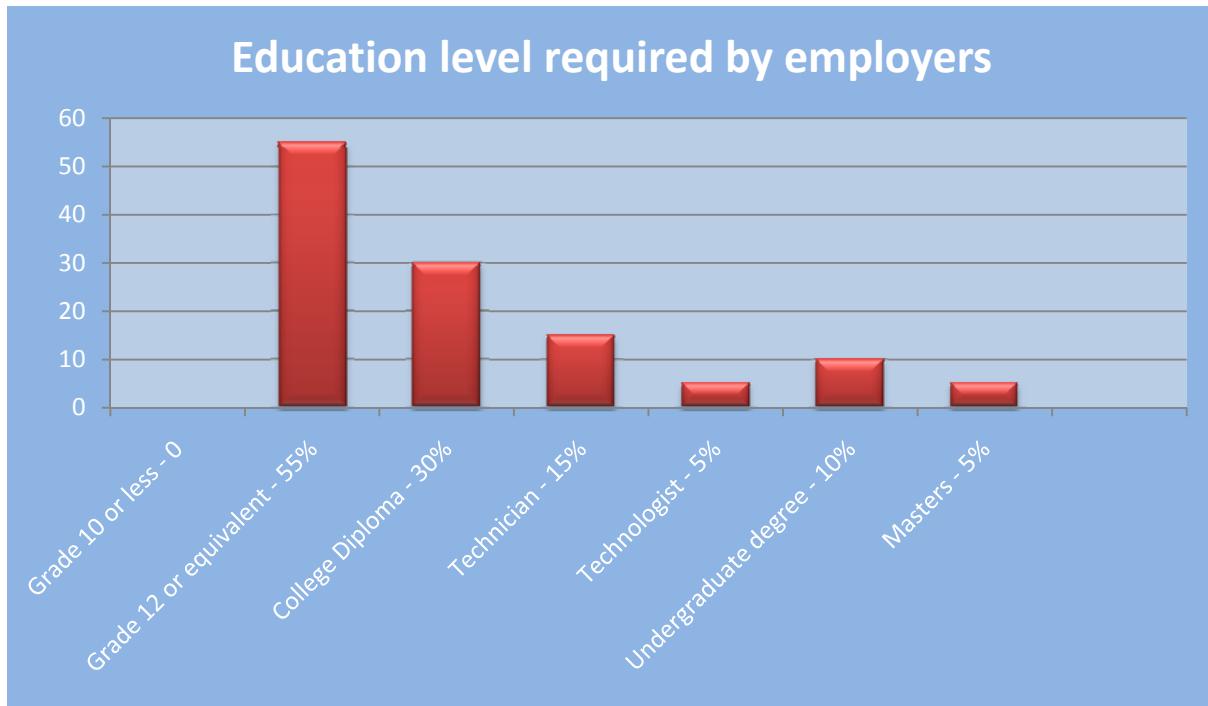
- 0% Grade 10
- 55% Grade 12 or equivalent
- 30% College Diploma
- 15% Technician
- 5% Technologist
- 10% University Degree (undergraduate)
- 5% Masters Degree

Here's what this information looks like in a graph called a **pie chart**:

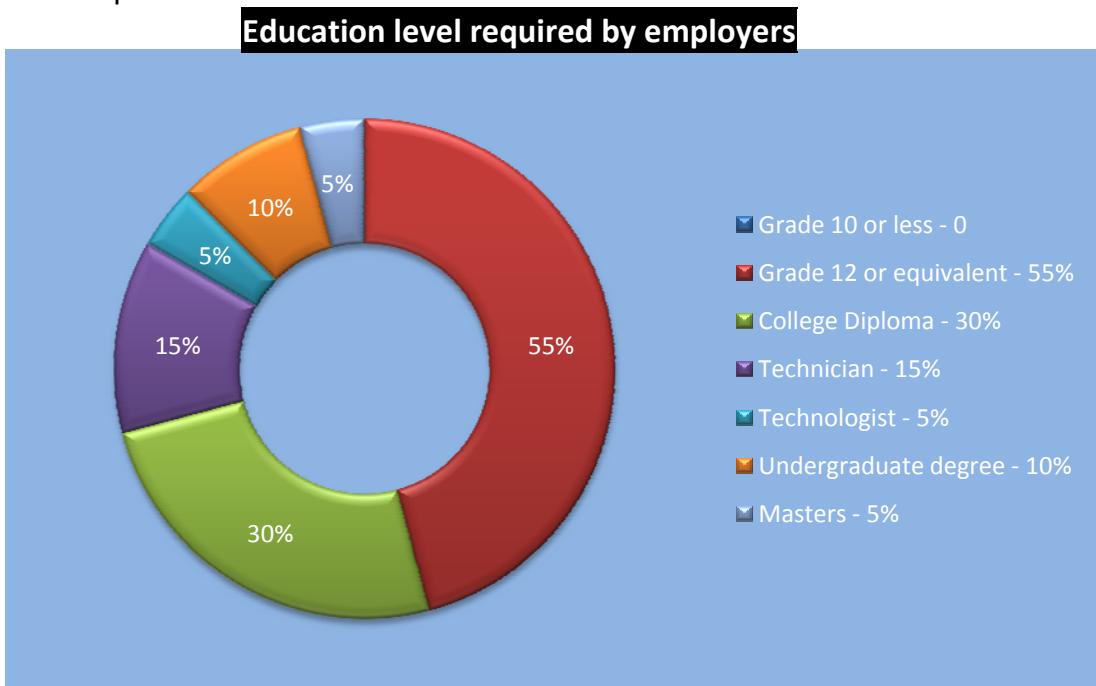


Here are two other ways to show information or data.

Bar Graph:



Donut Graph:



Suggested Follow-up Activities

Activity 5, Activity 6, Activity 7 and Activity 8 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please select at least one activity that allows the participant to link her information currently in her portfolio to the local labour market.



Activity 5: Making Links

Have each participant apply the findings from their research and the group presentations to her own job search/career areas.

Ask her to refer to her portfolio and to consider these questions:

- *What jobs and career areas* did she choose for herself based on her interests, personality and skills?
- *How does what she has learned* so far in the unit - during the group presentations, the community profile activities or from the guest speaker – apply to the specific jobs listed in her personal profile?
- *What other information* does she need to research about her community and the specific job in order to make informed career decisions?

Hand out **Worksheet 33** and have the participant use it to organize her thoughts and reflect. Help her analyze and refine her previous job choices. For example:

- *Have her thoughts changed* about the job she wants to pursue based on what she has learned?
- *Are there other labour sectors and jobs* where she is more likely to find stable employment in her community because demand is high?
- *How do these match* her skills, interests and personality?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking and document use skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"Some of the women reported that their career choices have changed since they started this course, based on the discoveries they've made."

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 33

Reflecting on My Career Areas

Take a look at the personal profile you created in a past session and that is stored in your portfolio. Reflect upon each job or career area you chose for yourself in light of what you've learned about your community. Here's how....

1. Job title or description:

2. Related statistics or facts I learned about my community:

3. Based on that information, here are my current thoughts about the job or career area I had picked for myself:

4. I still need more information. Here's what I plan to research:

My Conclusions:

- This job remains a strong possibility for me. I want to pursue further employment planning in this areas
- I've changed my mind about this job – it's not for me.
- Based upon my community research, I'd like to add the following job or career area to my future planning:



Activity 6: Online Data about My Community

Independent online research by the participants will be a large part of this unit. Encourage and help them locate current and reliable information. The resources and links suggested at the start of this unit should be useful, particularly the interactive websites.

Also search out those sites relevant to your province, region, and municipality. If you live in Ontario, for example, here are some useful provincial websites and pages that may be accessed through online searches:

- Your Community in Profile, The Ontario Trillium Foundation Knowledge Sharing Centre
- Labour Market Information, Government of Ontario
- Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
- Local Boards Networks of Ontario.

Insights & Tips

"I learned how to use the computer, and how to get information from the computer. I became independent to get information, and the computer opened my eyes about what's going on in the world. We can get information very fast. This idea pushed me to search and look at the information from the computer."

~ Field-test participant

Alternative computer activities:

- Have the participant identify the address/location of the photo that she brought for the "Getting Ready" activity and look it up on Google Maps or Google Earth. Try using the satellite option to zoom in on specific areas and locations.

Insights & Tips

"I enjoyed using Google, and also searching out information and people through YouTube, and using the computer to find out news."

~ Field-test participant

- If you have the technology available, you might project the image onto a large screen for group viewing.
- Another possibility is to bring a hand-held GPS or similar device to search out locations and explore other information, such as routes and landmarks.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her reading and critical thinking skills and her skills in terms of computer use. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 7: Labour Market Information that I Need

Ask the participant to examine the labour market statistics, worksheets and computer print outs from her research, and choose only those pieces that directly relate to her personal job search to add to her portfolio.

Help her to be selective – to choose and highlight the information and insights that she needs to integrate into her continued planning during future units.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 8: What I've Learned about My Community

Ask the participant to write a short reflective passage in her learning journal as a response to the unit:

- Has what she learned about her community changed her thoughts about the job or career area she will pursue?
- How has what she learned about her community brought her plans into clearer focus?

Insights & Tips

"I am planning to have my own cooking school. In addition, I'd like to open up a restaurant too."

~ Field-test participant



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her writing and critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Touch base with participants* about "where they are" in the independent and group research projects. Do they need more time? How would they like to plan the next session to accommodate their planning needs? Is there some area where they need help gathering specific community information, for example, labour market trends? How can you support them in getting that information, and what's the next step in how they might gather the information themselves?

- *Changing plans or taking a different direction* is sometimes difficult for people, especially if they've invested emotionally in taking a certain pathway. Encourage the women to reflect upon things they've learned about their community that might have surprised them, and how that information impacts upon their personal employment planning. For some women, the information they've gathered will have helped to clarify their job choices and confirmed their plans. Others may find that the job they thought they might pursue is not the best option in that community.
- Ask participants *how they feel about their current plans* – do they have to “rethink” them based on what they’ve found out? Do they feel more confident or less confident about finding the right job for them? If necessary, how can the group sessions work to build confidence and help a woman shift/refine plans based on the community profile?
- *Gather oral feedback and hard copy feedback.* What did participants find particularly useful? How could the activities and discussions have been more useful to their needs?
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit or session.* Ask if there is something the women would like to add or make sure they talk about – either as part of the topic or in response to today’s session.
- *Read aloud the “Getting Ready” activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below).
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.



Insights & Tips

“I was surprised to find how jobs in demand have changed throughout the years.”

“When I was learning about myself [in the last module] I had different choices of job, but when I learned about my community and found out information about what’s in demand, it made me think, and change my choice, which I think is important.”

~ Field-test participants

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit.

- *A few sessions ago you completed a questionnaire asking you how you use the nine Essential Skills in your daily life. Those skills are: reading, writing, working with documents, working with numbers, working with others, oral communication, thinking, using computers and technical items, and continuous learning. Reflect upon those skills. Which do you feel most confident about? Why is that?*

CLOSING WORDS

“As most of the women have been home with their children for many years, this was an opportunity for them to get out of the house, make some personal connections and explore their community. They built support and trust within the group which gave them a safe place to explore themselves, each other, and their community, and the confidence to grow and increase their Essential Skills levels.”

~ Spotlight on Change Facilitator

MY ESSENTIAL SKILLS

"At the age of sixty, through this course, I made an assessment of my Essential Skills and got awareness of the training and education opportunities in this community. I came to know how to prepare an action plan for my future life."

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

As a result of this unit, the participant identifies the Essential Skills she has gained in life and in work, and **transfers or applies these skills** to new employment opportunities.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Reading
- Document Use
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Computer Use

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these questions:

- *Reflect upon your own strengths.* Which of the nine Essential Skills is your strongest? How do you know?
- *Which of the nine Essential Skills* is your weakest? How do you know?

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *A few sessions ago you completed a questionnaire* asking you how you use the nine Essential Skills in your daily life. Those skills are: reading, writing, working with documents, working with numbers, working with others, oral communication, thinking, using computers and technical items, and continuous learning. Reflect upon those skills. Which do you feel most confident about?

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Literacy and Essential Skills Toolkit** ~ We've mentioned this site before in this module, and are mentioning it again as an "essential" source of learner and practitioner tools. Access the Humans Resources and Skills Development Canada website (www.hrsdc.gc.ca) and follow the menu links to the Essential Skills pages. The site has been recently redesigned, so rather than list specific links and web pages here, we suggest you surf the

Skills pages. The site has been recently redesigned, so rather than list specific links and web pages here, we suggest you surf the site to locate information relevant to the unit activities. You may also order print copies of the tools and other Literacy and Essential Skills publications through the HRSDC website, Publication & Research section. Here are some of the web pages and tools we think you'll find particularly useful:

- **The Essential Skills Indicator** ~ This contains a series of short quizzes that will provide an indication of a participant's skill strengths and areas that may require improvement. It is designed to help gain a better understanding of Essential Skills levels to guide training decisions and career planning.
- **Authentic Workplace Materials** ~ These provide materials (forms, tables, graphs, brochures, regulations, etc) that are actually used in many jobs across Canada. It has been assembled to encourage the use of a variety of materials in classroom learning activities. The skills illustrated here are transferable. They can be used in many different jobs as well as in many situations other than work.
- **Workplace Survey** ~ This survey is designed to help employers identify potential Essential Skills issues or areas of strength in the workplace. The statements included in this tool are divided into nine sections; one for each of the nine Essential Skills. We've adapted the tool for use in this program and rewritten the statements to address the participant directly. You can find the adapted document as part of the unit worksheets.
- **Job Profiles** ~ This tool allows participants to search more than 300 job profiles to see how the Essential Skills are needed and used in the workplace, and within specific occupations and career areas. You may also search the profiles by: occupation, key words, skills levels and National Occupation Classification Code (NOC). You can also search for Authentic Workplace Material samples sorted by Essential Skills required.

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- Spend time exploring the Literacy and Essential Skills pages of the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website before you deliver the unit. This curriculum is current at the date it was published. New developments and website changes from HRSDC after the date of publication will give you up-to-date information and options. As well, several of the tools offer interactive elements where a participant customizes the information according to her interests and skills. Knowing what is available online, and how to navigate the tools, will help you provide the direction participants need so that they can move forward in their individual job search plans.
- Plan the schedule to allow plenty of time for participants to work independently on the Essential Skills quizzes and self-assessment surveys, whether online or using paper-based worksheets. Facilitate peer mentoring and partnering as a way to help with interpreting and understanding the surveys and the Essential Skills indicator statements. Encourage participants to share insights, encouragement, and reflections. Recognize that participants will not all work through the quizzes and surveys at the same pace – some women may need more than one session to work through the nine Essential Skill areas of the surveys, and the activities presented in the indicator. Accommodate individual needs, so that participants work at a pace that suits them.

Insights & Tips

"The surveys helped me think about, and self-assess, my abilities when using the Essential Skills in the workplace. I also thought more about how I use the Essential Skills in my daily life."

~ Field-test participant

Insights & Tips

"I photocopied and distributed the Essential Skills Dispatcher example, as well as The Nine Essential Skills list. The review focused the session at the onset, and showed how specific Essential Skills are key to specific jobs."

~ Field-test facilitator

- *Provide examples to illustrate the nine Essential Skills* that reflect the specific interests of the women. By now, as facilitator, you will have an understanding of each woman's interests, skills, and the potential occupations that she has identified. Help her view the Essential Skills in light of her choices. Refer to and build upon the "My Skills" profile that the participant previously completed (Worksheet 29), where she reflects upon and outlines the ways in which she currently incorporates the nine Essential Skills into her daily life.

THE NINE ESSENTIAL SKILLS²⁴

These skills are used in nearly every occupation and throughout daily life in different ways and at different levels of complexity.

1. Reading: understanding materials written in sentences or paragraphs (e.g. letters, manuals).
2. Document Use: using and understanding labels, graphs, signs and other similar materials.
3. Numeracy: using and understanding numbers.
4. Writing: writing text or typing on a computer.
5. Oral Communication: using speech to share thoughts and information.
6. Working With Others: interacting with others to complete tasks.
7. Thinking: reviewing information to make decisions.
8. Computer Use: using computers and other technical tools (e.g. fax machine).
9. Continuous Learning: participating in an ongoing process of gaining skills and knowledge (e.g. workplace training).

²⁴ Through extensive research, the Government of Canada and other national and international agencies have identified and validated nine Literacy and Essential Skills.

Insights & Tips**An Essential Skills Example: Dispatcher**

Dispatchers operate radios and other telecommunication equipment to dispatch emergency vehicles and to co-ordinate the activities of drivers and other personnel. They are employed by police, fire and health departments, other emergency service agencies, taxi, delivery and courier services, trucking and utilities companies, and other commercial and industrial establishments. Radio operators receive, transmit and record signals and messages using radios and other telecommunication equipment. They are employed by transportation companies, mining, forestry and other industrial establishments, and by the armed forces. The most important Essential Skills for Dispatchers and Radio Operators are:

- ✓ *Oral Communication*
- ✓ *Problem Solving*
- ✓ *Decision Making*

~ Source: HRSDC Website

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous session now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the unit outcome* – the desired results. As a result of this unit, the participant identifies the **Essential Skills** she has gained in life and in work, and **transfers or applies these skills** to new employment opportunities.
- *Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome.* Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group. Note that this unit has more time set aside for independent work – the participants will use various tools and questionnaires to explore their personal mix of Essential Skill strengths.

- *Introduce or review the nine Essential Skills.* You won't need to spend a lot of time doing this, since the activities and surveys will help the participants gain a better understanding of each Essential Skill. A very brief overview or explanation will set the stage for the unit and further exploration.
- *Accommodate personal goals/needs and facilitate independent work.* Check in briefly with individuals about what they'd like to work toward or accomplish during the unit.

Insights & Tips

"Participants in my group were quite comfortable and familiar with the Essential Skills from past work in other units so they didn't need a review. We got right to work."

~ Field-test facilitator

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: What I Can Do!

Present the "Getting Ready" activity. Keep the exercise focused on the positive – what the individual **can** do. Encourage each woman to talk freely about the Essential Skill in which she feels the most confident. Ask her to tell why she feels that way – what has given her confidence in that area? A past job? Are they tasks she does in her everyday life? Or do tasks in these areas just seem easier for her?

Next have participants reflect upon another Essential Skill in which they also have a fairly high level of confidence – if they were to rank them, which Essential Skill would they list as second in terms of confidence? Third? Why? What examples can they give from their lives about how they use these skills?

Introduce the idea that various occupations have different concentrations of skill requirements. There will be many jobs that have the Essential Skill with which they feel the most confident as the most important skill to do that job.

Relate to the concept of **transferable skills**. They can take the skill with which they feel the most confident, and transfer it to a variety of new job settings and occupations.

Insights & Tips

"I put the unit outcome on the whiteboard and used it as a lead-in to the Getting Ready activity."

"This was a good exercise. We did it at the start of the session immediately after presenting the unit outcome"

~ Field-test facilitators

↪ LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

Activity 2 is suggested as a follow-up activity. If you choose not to use this activity, then please create an activity that allows the participant to explore occupation profiles that are linked to the Essential Skills. This activity has not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 2: Essential Skills for Occupations

Demonstrate how to access and navigate the Literacy and Essential Skills pages of the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website, or have one of the participants who is comfortable with computers demonstrate. Here are some tasks to do online at the website:

1. *Have participants research the Essential Skill with which they are most comfortable, bringing up a list of related occupation profiles that list that specific skill as most important. Relate the wide variety of occupations requiring that Essential Skill to the concept of transferable skills, and to the participant's own job search.*
2. *Next, choose one of the occupations from the list and view the entire profile to demonstrate how participants can learn more about an occupation and the Essential Skills vital to it.*
3. *Follow up the demonstration by dividing the group into partners or groups of three. In each group, be sure to include a participant who is comfortable navigating computer screens to act as a mentor or peer trouble-shooter to support participants who have few computer skills.*
4. *Ask the small groups or partners to use the website search engine to help each individual choose two jobs based on the Essential Skill with which she is most confident. Use Worksheet 34 for the participant to record the occupations.*

Insights & Tips

"This was a practical and useful activity. The women were excited to find out there were 300 job profiles online at the Literacy and Essential Skills site."

"We didn't use the Literacy and Essential Skills website for this activity, since the website was under construction. Instead we did the activity through group discussion."

~ Field-test facilitators

WORKSHEET 34

My Most Important Essential Skills

When you are at the Literacy and Essential Skills web site, write down the occupations that are of interest to you that match the essential skill you feel most confident about. You'll have time later to do more research about each of the occupations.

My Most Important Essential Skills		
	List the skills you feel confident about	List occupations that match these skills
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		



Activity 3: Workplace Essential Skills Survey

Explain that for the remainder of the unit, they will be working to gain a deeper understanding of their Essential Skills strengths. Hand out **Worksheet 35**. Ensure that the participants realize that this is not a test. It is a survey to help them think about, and self-assess, their abilities when using the nine Essential Skills in the workplace.

- *Together read the instructions* and the ranking method or score in each area. Have each participant work through the survey at her own speed. Encourage peer help with the survey – those with stronger skills can offer explanations and assistance as required.
- *Discuss the results of the survey*, either as a group or individually.
 - What did the survey reveal?
 - In what Essential Skill area (s) did she have the highest ranking?
 - How did this compare with what she had said in the “Getting Ready” activity?
- *Participants may choose* to follow up the activity by further exploring occupations online based upon the results of the survey, and adding to their list of occupations on Worksheet 34.
- *Participants might also like* to try the self-assessment quizzes and questionnaires that are part of the Essential Skills Toolkit.

Insights & Tips

“We did the survey question by question. Some of the women needed assistance to answer the questions. Also, some were overwhelmed by the task of so much reading. The women all reported that they really liked these kinds of tests/ self-assessments as they learn a lot about themselves.”

“The worksheet provided a good focus on Essential Skills.”

~ Field-test facilitators

 **LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking and document use skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 35

Survey of Your Essential Skills for the Workplace

Fill out the survey. This is not a test. The purpose is to help you think about, and *self-assess*, your abilities when using the nine Essential Skills in the workplace. When you are ready:

1. Read the statements in each section.
2. Circle the number that matches what you think about yourself:
1 means that you strongly **disagree** with the statement and 4 means you strongly **agree**. You might think, for example, “this isn’t me at all!”, so you would circle 1.
3. For each section add up the numbers you have circled. For example, if you strongly disagreed with all four statements in a section, then the total for that section would be 4.
4. When you’ve added up the totals for all the sections then use the rating guide to help you understand what the number means. Keep in mind that your score is just a guideline.

Rating Guide	
16-20	This is a high score. It suggests that you have this skill and know how to use it effectively.
11-15	This is a medium score. It suggests that you may need to work on this skill, if it is one you need for a specific job or task.
1-10	This is a low score. It suggests that you don’t have the essential skill. That could mean that you wouldn’t be able to do the job or task effectively.

SECTION 1: READING	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable dealing with written materials	1	2	3	4
I can read and understand emails and/or memos	1	2	3	4
I am comfortable receiving instructions in writing	1	2	3	4
I can follow clearly written instruction with few or no mistakes	1	2	3	4
At work, I can read and understand safety directions in manuals and on signs	1	2	3	4
Subtotal				

Total Section 1

SECTION 2: DOCUMENT USE	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am comfortable using workplace documents	1	2	3	4
I can use and understand charts and graphs	1	2	3	4
I can understand timesheets and pay stubs	1	2	3	4
I can enter information in documents with few or no mistakes	1	2	3	4
I understand gauges, clocks, manuals, blueprints or schedules	1	2	3	4
Subtotal				

Total Section 2

SECTION 3: WRITING	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can request information or services in writing	1	2	3	4
I am comfortable with writing production reports or other reports necessary for work	1	2	3	4
I can write memos or notes as a way to communicate with others at work	1	2	3	4
I make few or no spelling or grammar mistakes when I write	1	2	3	4
I use the right sentence structure, punctuation, wording and tone when I write notes or memos at work	1	2	3	4
Subtotal				

Total Section 3

SECTION 4: NUMERACY	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can make calculations, take measurements or make an estimate	1	2	3	4
I make few or no mistakes when I work with numbers	1	2	3	4
I can take measurements and record the results	1	2	3	4
I am willing to take part in training to improve my numeracy skills	1	2	3	4
I understand the information on my pay stub	1	2	3	4
Subtotal				

Total Section 4

SECTION 5: ORAL COMMUNICATION	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can give information and instructions clearly and accurately	1	2	3	4
I can follow detailed verbal instructions or explanations	1	2	3	4
I can speak professionally with suppliers or clients	1	2	3	4
I can use workplace terminology correctly and confidently	1	2	3	4
I participate actively in staff meetings or training sessions	1	2	3	4
Subtotal				

Total Section 5

SECTION 6: THINKING	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can find solutions to common workplace problems	1	2	3	4
I can make decisions on my own	1	2	3	4
I know how to plan my work to make quality products and to meet deadlines	1	2	3	4
I try to find solutions to problems	1	2	3	4
I can follow routine procedures	1	2	3	4
Subtotal				

Total Section 6

SECTION 7: WORKING WITH OTHERS	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can coordinate work tasks or share information with other employees	1	2	3	4
I can work with others to successfully complete a task that requires cooperation	1	2	3	4
I can take part in team meetings or group projects	1	2	3	4
I am good at not letting personal differences get in the way of my work	1	2	3	4
I know how to work as part of a team	1	2	3	4
Subtotal				

Total Section 7

SECTION 8: COMPUTER USE	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I don't have a problem with learning new computer software	1	2	3	4
I have good computer-related skills	1	2	3	4
I can complete computer-related tasks in a timely and effective manner	1	2	3	4
I am comfortable using electronic devices, instead of manual devices	1	2	3	4
I can computer-related equipment like printers, fax machines and scanners	1	2	3	4
Subtotal				

Total Section 8

SECTION 9: CONTINUOUS LEARNING	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am always willing to take part in training at work	1	2	3	4
I can gain skills and knowledge from my co-workers	1	2	3	4
I think it is a good idea to have a learning plan so I can grow on the job and off the job	1	2	3	4
I am always interested in applying for positions within the same business	1	2	3	4
I respond positively to change at work	1	2	3	4
Subtotal				

Total Section 9

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 4, Activity 5 and Activity 6 are suggested as follow-up activities. These activities have not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 4: Essential Skills Indicators

Have participants use the online Essential Skills indicator from the HRSDC Literacy and Essential Skills website to further refine their understanding of their Essential Skill strengths, using specific questions and tasks based on workplace examples.

We've offered as worksheets in this unit an adaptation of the paper-based indicators from the Literacy and Essential Skills site. **You will find each of the indicator "tests" in Appendix 1 at the end of this unit.** Handout **Worksheet 36**, **Worksheet 37** and **Worksheet 38** (but not the "correction" sheets) before giving them the matching indicator test document.

You may decide to use the paper-based format exclusively, or a combination of online and paper-based. The paper-based indicator looks at three Essential Skills – Numeracy, Document Use and Reading – at Level 1 and Level 2.

If you choose to present all of the questionnaires, you may want to complete the activity over a series of sessions. As an alternative, present only those areas relevant to the participant's individual job search and interests.

Insights & Tips

"The group chose to do the paper-based indicator to give themselves a break from the computers. We had spent a lot of time at the computers during the previous unit. The women all seemed to agree that the most difficult Essential Skills indicator test was Reading. Some of them decided that they needed more practice reading English, i.e., they should take Level 6 in ESL."

"I was pleased to discover the Essential Skills Indicators can be ordered in booklet form from HRSDC."

~ Field-test facilitators

WORKSHEET 36

Essential Skills Reading Indicator

The Essential Skills Reading Indicator is **not a test**. The purpose is to help you think about and self-asses your reading skills. The questions are typical workplace tasks for a variety of occupations. There are 10 questions. The first five questions are at Essential Skills level 1, the last five are at Essential Skills level 2. When you are ready:

1. Write your answers directly on the Indicator in the space provided.
2. When you are finished ask your facilitator for the answer correction sheet for Reading.
3. If you want to give yourself a mark, give yourself one point for each correct answer.
4. Allow yourself no more than 20 minutes to complete all the questions.

READING

Correction Sheet

Once the program participant has completed the Reading indicator worksheet, hand out this correction sheet.

READING-LEVEL 1

1. “The grey filing cabinet contains all the customer files.” The key words customer files must be included in the marked text.
2. “Remove excess grease and fat from the grill bowl with a wooden scraper.” The key word scraper must be included in the marked text.
3. “After taxes, I am usually left with a total of \$935.” The key number 935 must be included in the marked text.
4. “My arrival date is Tuesday, June 13, 2007 [...]” The key word Tuesday must be included in the marked text.
5. “5) After 20 minutes, clean the surface with a sponge.” The key words 20 minutes must be included in the marked text.

READING-LEVEL 2

6. “Section 5: Said property is not to be removed from the golf course and is to be returned promptly to the Lessor after use.” The key words Section 5 must be included in the marked text.
7. “8. You shall carry valid photo identification showing the inmate(s)’s photograph and register number.” The key words photo identification must be included in the marked text.
8. “If a patient’s treatment is expected to cost more than \$300, the client’s dental care centre must submit a treatment plan to Apple Insurance.” and “If the treatment is expected to cost more than \$1,000, the dental care centre must also submit x-rays.” The key words treatment plan and x-rays must be included in the marked text.
9. “Code White” and “Code Grey” The key words white and grey must be included in the marked text.
10. “Providing information to customers” and “general administrative duties” Both boxes must be checked off, with the “preparing written reports” box left unchecked.

WORKSHEET 37

Document Use Indicator

The Essential Skills Document Use Indicator is **not a test**. The purpose is to help you think about and self-assess your document use skills. The questions are typical workplace tasks for a variety of occupations. There are 10 questions. The first five questions are at Essential Skills level 1, the last five are at Essential Skills level 2. When you are ready:

1. Write your answers directly on the Indicator in the space provided.
2. When you are finished ask your facilitator for the answer correction sheet for Document Use.
3. If you want to give yourself a mark, give yourself one point for each correct answer.
4. Allow yourself no more than 20 minutes to complete all the questions.

DOCUMENT USE

Correction Sheet

Once the program participant has completed the Document Use indicator worksheet, hand out this correction sheet.

DOCUMENT USE – LEVEL 1

1.



CLASS E

Corrosive Material

2. Brandon

3. 19

4. \$44.50

5. 506-555-6000

DOCUMENT USE – LEVEL 2

6.

Employee ID	Cheque Number	Amount (\$)
52369	1359	1256.00
62041	1147	1305.00

7. 7

8. 8

9. Oliver

10. K. Ling

WORKSHEET 38

Numeracy Skills Indicator

The Essential Skills Numeracy Skills Indicator is **not a test**. The purpose is to help you think about and self-asses your numeracy skills. The questions are typical workplace tasks for a variety of occupations. There are 10 questions. The first five questions are at Essential Skills level 1, the last five are at Essential Skills level 2. When you are ready:

1. Write your answers directly on the Indicator in the space provided.
2. When you are finished ask your facilitator for the answer correction sheet for Numeracy Skills.
3. If you want to give yourself a mark, give yourself one point for each correct answer.
4. Allow yourself no more than 20 minutes to complete all the questions.

NUMERACY SKILLS

Correction Sheet

Once the program participant has completed the Document Use indicator worksheet, hand out this correction sheet.

NUMERACY-LEVEL 1

1. 10
2. 24
3. -4 or 4
4. 7.50
5. 15:00 or 3:00 PM

NUMERACY-LEVEL 2

6. 400
7. 60
8. May 17
9. 88.65
10. 0.20



Activity 5: My List of Occupations

Have participants file **Worksheet 34** – their list of occupations that match their Essential Skill strengths – in their portfolio. Also have participants keep the results of the Skills indicator and Workplace Survey for future reference.

Encourage participants to compare these occupations to those jobs and career areas listed in past exercises, and discuss their choices with a partner, or write a paragraph about the comparison:

- Are there similarities or patterns in their choices?
- Do they feel they are “narrowing” down their search for a job or occupation suited to them?



Activity 6: My Essential Skills Strengths

During this unit, we've talked about the participant's confidence in terms of Essential Skills. Now ask the participant to broaden her reflections about her confidence, both in terms of her Essential Skill strengths, and in terms of her participation in the course and her job choices she is making.

- Ask her to write a journal piece about how she is now feeling about her Essential Skills, her job choices, and the decisions she is making.
- Can she relate her thoughts and feelings to her confidence levels?
- What can she do to increase her confidence?
- Is there something that can be done as part of this course to increase her confidence levels? What?

Insights & Tips

"I liked going to various websites and doing the tests on the websites. After taking some of the skills tests I felt much more confident of myself."

~ Field-test participant

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Gather oral feedback.* Bring participants back together in the circle formation. Discuss their thoughts about the Essential Skills activities, and their understanding of their own personal mix of Essential Skill strengths. Ask if the independent activities confirmed their Essential Skill strengths as they presented them during the “Getting Ready” activity, or if the results pointed to different strengths. Had they changed or narrowed their job choices based on the occupations that matched their Essential Skill strengths?
- *Distribute a simple form for individual feedback and comments.* Ask each woman to fill out the form and leave it for you. A generic Participation Evaluation form is offered in the Introduction section.
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit.* Let participants know that they will now be looking more closely at the Essential Skill of the jobs that interest them, and searching out opportunities to learn more about these jobs in their community.
- *Read aloud the “Getting Ready” activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below).
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

“There was a huge emphasis in this unit on skills, without enough consideration of motivation, desires and lifestyles. I found the unit expanding the list of careers to consider rather than helping me narrow it down.”

“I loved this unit. It gave me a clear idea of what I can do in the future. This unit was very interesting because I learned a lot of things such as Essential Skills for occupations, workplace Essential Skills, my Essential Skills strengths, and I found a list of occupations [that suited] me.”

~ Field-test participants

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- Observe someone who is at work – maybe a server at a coffee shop, a clerk at a grocery store, a receptionist at a place where you are waiting for an appointment, your hairdresser, a salesperson, a road crew worker or the person who delivers your mail... the list from which you might choose is endless.
- What are the main **tasks** that the person performs? In your opinion, what is the most important **Essential Skill** for that job? The second most important skill?

CLOSING WORDS

“The continued support [of my Spotlight facilitator and peers] kept my mind motivated to keep me going, to drive me to the next interview, the next set of challenging questions about who I am and what it is I am capable of achieving.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

APPENDIX 1

**Essential Skills Indicator Handouts
(For use with Worksheets 36, 37 & 38)**

Reading Indicator

LEVEL 1

Question # 1

Look at the e-mail below.

What does the grey filing cabinet contain?

Circle or underline your answer in the text.

Jennifer,

Please note that the DuBarry file has been placed in the wrong filing cabinet. The blue filing cabinet should only contain receipts. The grey filing cabinet contains all the customer files. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

John

Question # 2

Look at the instructions below for cleaning a gas grill.

What should be used to remove grease and fat?

Circle or underline your answer in the text.

Gas Grill Cleaning Instructions

- 1) Remove cooking grid and burner before full cleaning.
- 2) Remove excess grease and fat from the grill bowl with a wooden scraper.
- 3) For cleaning other residue, use hot soapy water and a cloth or a nylon-bristled brush.
- 4) When finished cleaning, replace burner and cooking grid.
- 5) Check burner operation after reassembly.

Question # 3

Look at the e-mail inquiry below.

What is the employee's usual paycheque amount (after taxes)?

Circle or underline your answer in the text.

Good afternoon,

I have a question about this week's paycheque. Every two weeks I earn \$1,200. After taxes, I am usually left with a total of \$935. This week an extra \$25 was taken off, leaving me with a total of only \$910. Can you please explain why this paycheque is different from the others?

Thank you,
Julie

Question # 4

Look at the hotel fax below.

On which day of the week is the client scheduled to arrive at the hotel?

Circle or underline your answer in the text.

FAX

To: Journey Hotel
416-555-4567

From: Lucy Smith
416-555-8910

Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2007

Pages: 1

I would like to make a reservation for a hotel room. My arrival date is Tuesday, June 13, 2007, and my departure date is Thursday, June 22, 2007.

I would like to reserve a non-smoking room with two beds and a view of the ocean. You may contact me at the following phone number: 416-555-6235.

Thank you,

Lucy Smith

Question # 5

Look at the instructions below.

How long must floor installers wait before cleaning the surface with a sponge?

Circle or underline your answer in the text.

GROUT

Instructions for Use

- 1) Prepare 1.8 kilograms of grout. When the spacing between tiles is 3.2 millimeters or more, use sanded grout. When the spacing is less than 3.2 millimeters, use unsanded grout.
- 2) Mix the grout with 500 milliliters of water in a large bucket.
- 3) Spread the grout and scrape off any excess grout. The grout will begin to harden after about 15 minutes.
- 4) After 20 minutes, clean the surface with a sponge.
- 5) After 40 minutes, wipe the surface with a paper towel.

LEVEL 2

Question # 6

Look at the golf cart rental agreement below.

The player who rented the cart would like to take it to a different golf club.

*Circle or underline the **section** of the agreement which **forbids** him from doing so.*

Golf Cart

Rental Agreement

Section 1: Not more than two persons and two golf bags shall be in the said car at any one time.

Section 2: Lessee expressly acknowledges personal liability to pay Lessor costs to repair all damages to said property and Lessor's costs including attorney fees incurred in collection of payments due from Lessee hereunder.

Section 3: Lessee represents that he is familiar with the use and operation of said property.

Section 4: Lessee agrees to keep said property in the same condition as when received.

Section 5: Said property is not to be removed from the golf course and is to be returned promptly to the Lessor after use.

Section 6: Lessee agrees to keep said property in Lessee's custody and not to sublease or re-rent the same.

Question # 7

Look at the inmate escort procedures for correctional officers below.

What item must correctional officers keep in their possession when escorting **two inmates?**

Circle or underline your answer in the text.

Red Lakes Institution Inmate Escort Procedures

1. You are responsible for the safe custody and discipline of this (these) inmate(s). You shall under NO circumstances allow inmate(s) in your custody out of your sight.
2. You shall ensure that the inmate(s) is wearing a standard issue uniform clearly displaying the inmate register number.
3. When escorting more than 3 inmates, you shall carry a firearm and pepper spray.
4. You shall sit directly behind the driver during an escort in vehicles lacking appropriate protective shields.
5. You shall apply handcuffs and leg irons. Other restraint equipment must be authorized by the Warden or officer in charge.
6. You shall notify the officer in charge of the institution or Duty CS upon return of the inmate(s).
7. You shall check bathroom facilities thoroughly prior to use by the inmate(s).
8. You shall carry valid photo identification showing the inmate(s)'s photograph and register number.
9. You shall report any contraband seized during the escort to the Warden.
10. You shall ensure the safe custody of the inmate(s) under your responsibility while maintaining the protection of the public.

Question # 8

Look at the brochure from an insurance company below.

A patient's treatment is expected to cost more than \$1,000. What does the patient's dental centre need to submit to Apple Insurance?

Circle or underline your answer(s) in the text.

Apple Insurance
5589 Bank Street Suite 200
Ottawa, ON
K1K 2K2

Apple Insurance

Your health is our primary concern

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT CHANGES TO YOUR POLICY

Please note that there have been amendments to the Dentalcare Plus plan, effective immediately.

If treatment is expected to cost less than \$300, the dental care centre does not need to notify Apple Insurance in advance.

If a patient's treatment is expected to cost more than \$300, the patient's dental care centre must submit a treatment plan to Apple Insurance.

If the treatment is expected to cost more than \$1,000, the dental care centre must also submit x-rays.

The reimbursement limit for dental procedures will increase on May 31, 2007. The new reimbursement limit is \$1,500 per year, including spouses and/or dependents.

Question # 9

Look at the Emergency Code Manual below.

A patient at a hospital is angry and has thrown a dangerous chemical product onto the floor.

*Circle or underline the **two** codes that the nurse aide must transmit over the intercom.*

Emergency Code Manual		
Emergency Code	Description	Immediate Action(s)
Code Pink	A child has been abducted.	Contact Security to provide a description of the abducted child.
Code White	Hazardous materials have been spilled.	Cordon off the area. Contact maintenance to clean the spill.
Code Yellow	The hospital will be receiving a large number of patients at once.	Activate the disaster plan.
Code Grey	A patient or other individual is being combative.	Contact Security. If possible, contain the individual in an isolated area.
Code Purple	An adult patient is missing.	Contact Security to provide a description of the missing patient.
Code Red	There is a fire in the building.	Pull the fire alarm. Close all doors and windows.

Question # 10

Look at the employment application form below.

A small business owner wants to fill a position which requires work experience in three areas. Which of the job requirement(s) does the applicant meet?

Check all that apply.

- Providing information to customers
- General administrative duties
- Preparing written reports

Employment Application Form

Position applying for: General Office Clerk

Name: Chantal Perry

Address: 1544 Drake Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1G 0K0

Phone Number: 613-555-3239

Employment History

1. **Former employer:** Canadexx Software Inc.

Position held: Administrative Assistant

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Verified and processed payment plan applications using computerized and manual processing systems.
- Performed various administrative duties, including contract administration and payroll.

2. **Former employer:** Hannah's Day Care

Position held: Early Childhood Educator Assistant

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Led and monitored activities designed for young children, such as storytelling, singing, and arts and crafts.

3. **Former employer:** The World Traveler

Position held: Receptionist

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Greeted and directed customers to the appropriate employee.
- Provided information in person and by phone to customers.
- Updated financial records.

Document Use Indicator

LEVEL 1

Question # 1

Which symbol represents corrosive material?

Circle or underline your answer in the hazardous materials table below.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS					
				CLASS A Compressed Gas	CLASS B Flammable and Combustible Material
				CLASS D-1 Poisonous and Infectious Material (material causing immediate and serious effects)	CLASS D-2 Poisonous and Infectious Material (material causing other toxic effects)
				CLASS E Corrosive Material	CLASS F Dangerously Reactive Material

Question # 2

Which sales clerk recorded the highest number of transactions for the month of December?

Circle or underline your answer in the graph below.



Question # 3

What is Rodney Walsh's new apartment number?

Circle or underline your answer in the address notice below.

Change of Address Notice	
Personal Information	
Last Name: Walsh	First Name: Rodney
Previous Address	
Street Number: 1553	Street Name: Queen
Apartment Number: 1002	City: Windsor
Province: Ontario	Postal Code: K1J 8G3
New Address	
Street Number: 208	Street Name: Beechwood
Apartment Number: 19	City: Windsor
Province: Ontario	Postal Code: K1J 5P3

Question # 4

What is the price of a one-hour massage for a part-time student?

Circle or underline your answer in the price list below.

Sunlight Wellness Centre					
Physiotherapy Price List			Massage Therapy Price List		
Status	Visit	Price (\$)	Status	Visit	Price (\$)
Full-time student	First visit	60.50	Full-time student	Thirty minutes	28.25
	Following visits	40.95		One hour	39.99
Part-time student	First visit	65.25	Part-time student	Two hours	59.99
	Following visits	49.99		Thirty minutes	32.15
Adult	First visit	69.99	Adult	One hour	44.50
	Following visits	60.50		Two hours	64.50
Employee	All visits	35.00	Employee	Thirty minutes	35.97
				One hour	47.50
			Employee	Two hours	59.99
				Thirty minutes	15.00
			Employee	One hour	27.25
				Two hours	42.75

Question # 5

What is the phone number for customer service at H&E Wood Inc.?

Circle or underline your answer in the sales slip below.

INVOICE H&E Wood Inc.		
SHIP TO		BILL TO
Wood Experts Inc. 898 Truro Avenue Fredericton, NB 506-555-4885 Customer ID BBE4456		Wood Experts Inc. 898 Truro Avenue Fredericton, NB 506-555-4885
ORDER DATE		ORDER NUMBER
August 1, 2006		239
ITEM NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
WT-05-338	Hardwood	12
AF-05-897	Ironwood	8
WT-06-112	Carpathian Elm	6
BJ-07-389	Unedged Timber	20
CF-05-349	Roundwood Logs	7
Please contact customer service at 506-555-6000 with any questions or comments. Thank you for your order!		

LEVEL 2**Question # 6**

Look at the paycheques below.

Complete the missing information in the chart.

		Cheque Number 1014 Date: December 29, 2006
Pay to the order of:	Sarah Brown	\$ 1495.00
One thousand four hundred and ninety-five dollars.....XX /100 DOLLARS		
MEMO: Employee ID 65087		

		Cheque Number 1147 Date: December 29, 2006
Pay to the order of:	Daniel Spencer	\$ 1305.00
One thousand three hundred and five dollars.....XX /100 DOLLARS		
MEMO: Employee ID 62041		

		Cheque Number 0987 Date: December 29, 2006
Pay to the order of:	Karen Green	\$ 1315.00
One thousand three hundred and fifteen dollars.....XX /100 DOLLARS		
MEMO: Employee ID 64623		

		Cheque Number 1359 Date: December 29, 2006
Pay to the order of:	Dave Campbell	\$ 1256.00
One thousand two hundred and fifty-six dollars.....XX /100 DOLLARS		
MEMO: Employee ID 52369		

Financial Report December 2006

Employee ID	Cheque Number	Amount (\$)
64623	0987	1315.00
65087	1014	1495.00
52369	1359	
	1147	1305.00

Question # 7

How many bandsaw gears were shipped?

Circle or underline your answer in the packing slip below.

Packing Slip

Prov Acop Inc.
846 McCrimmon Cres.
Whitehorse, YT
Phone: 867-555-5654
Fax: 867-555-5655

ORDER DATE	September 29, 2006	PACKAGING DATE	October 12, 2006		
ORDER NUMBER	34567	CUSTOMER CONTACT	Foundry Department		
PURCHASE ORDER	PO9983-1129-03	CUSTOMER ACCOUNT	109		
SHIP TO	Metal Ware Inc. Attn: Foundry Department 1234 Main Street Timmis, ON	BILL TO	Metal Ware Inc. Attn: Finance Department 1234 Main Street Timmis, ON		
PART NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	UNIT TYPE	NUMBER ORDERED	BACKORDERED (Still to be shipped)	NUMBER SHIPPED
323A7-D892	Bandsaw gears	Set	9	2	7
390D1-J349	Mould 54919	Individual	4	0	4
208R4-Q289	Rubber BBType 00-6	Package	6	3	3
890C4-B299	Metal AG555-06	Package	6	2	4

Comments: Backordered items will be shipped as they become available.
Thank you for your order!

Question # 8

What is the item number of the **least** expensive camera flash?

Circle or underline your answer in the price list below.

ITEM NUMBER	ITEM NAME	PRICE (\$)
1	V3 18-200 mm Super Wide-Angle - Telephoto Lens	999
2	Alma 70-200mm f/2.8L USM Camera Lens	1,199
3	Totto 200mm f/2.8 Camera Lens	1,799
4	Diaz 300MM F4 to 5.6 IS USM EF Telephoto Zoom Lens	699
5	Vershna 10-20mm Wide-Angle Lens	459
6	Totto 10-20mm Wide-Angle Lens	799
7	Vershna 580EX Camera Flash	449
8	Bonata 5600HS Camera Flash	249
9	Diaz Camera Dock 6000	29
10	V3 Camera Dock	49
11	BJ 7900 S-Series Camera Dock	59
12	Totto Ultra Fast AAA Battery Charger	19

Question # 9

Which nursing home resident has high cholesterol?

Circle or underline the name of the resident in the report below.

Personal Information				
Room Number	Resident Name	Age	Gender	Bed Number
B15	Stanford	92	Male	316
B88	Rose	82	Female	389
B36	Fawzi	89	Male	347
A19	Bertha	96	Female	312
A39	Shereen	91	Female	349
A24	Ginette	87	Female	339
A34	Nadia	89	Female	384
A87	Oliver	78	Male	318

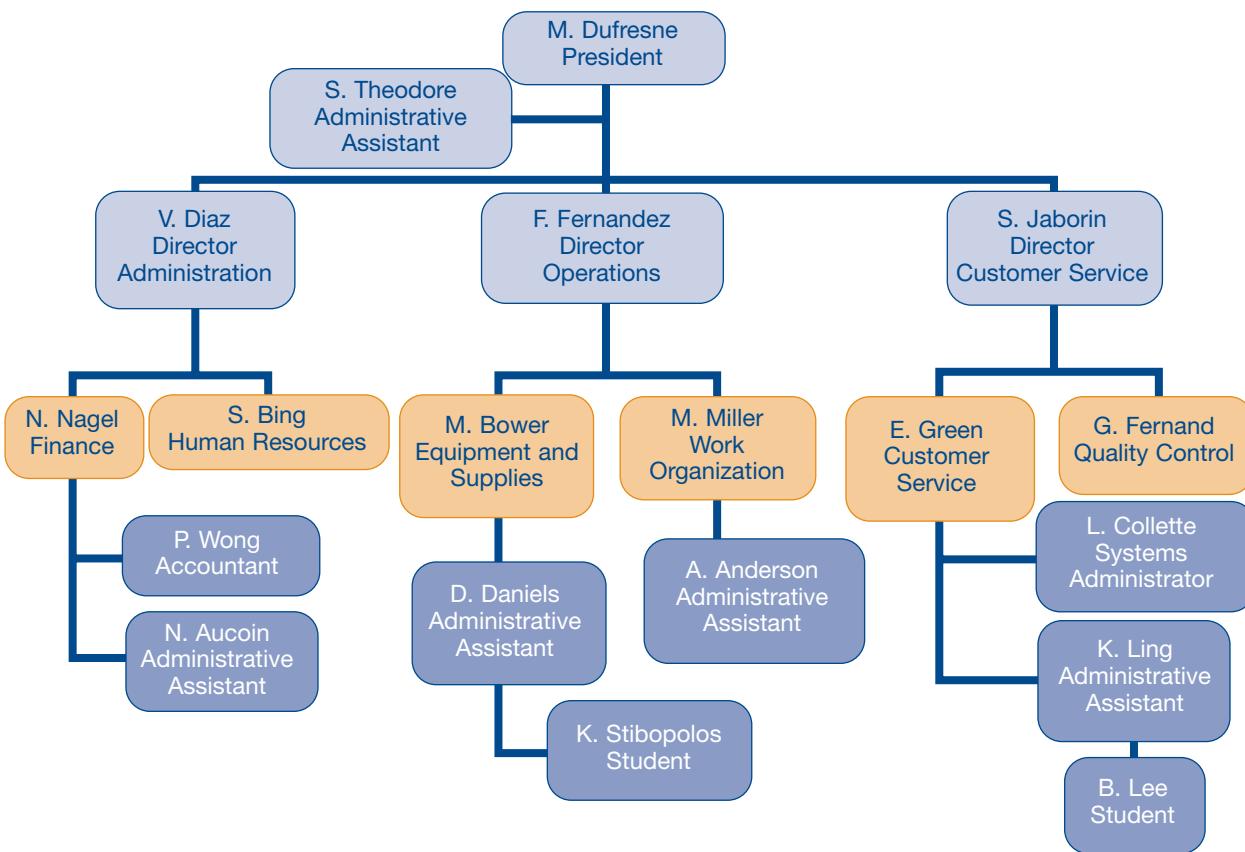
Medical Information				
Room Number	Diagnosis	Medical History	Diet Type	Allergies
A19	Alzheimer's	Breast cancer, bladder problems	D	Shellfish
A24	Mobility impaired	Knee operation	D	Soy, fish
A34	Semi-blindness	Head injury	A	
A39	Stroke	Thrombosis	B	
A87	Diabetes	Hypertension, high cholesterol	E	Wheat
B15	Depression	Seasonal affective disorder	A	
B36	Mobility impaired	Anemia	B	
B88	Broken hip	Osteoporosis	C	Peanuts

Question # 10

Who does the student in Customer Service **directly** report to?

Circle or underline your answer in the organizational chart below.

Excel Action Inc. Organizational Chart



Numeracy Indicator

LEVEL 1

Question # 1

An office uses 2 packages of paper per day.

How many packages of paper will the office use in a 5-day work week?

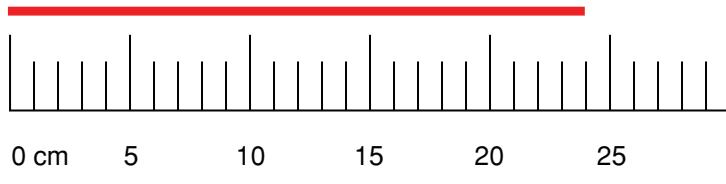
packages

Question # 2

Look at the red line in the diagram below.

What is the length of the line?

cm



0 cm 5 10 15 20 25

Question # 3

A boilermaker is reading pressure gauges to ensure they are within a normal range.

The normal operating range for water pressure is 25 to 35 psi (pounds per square inch). If a boilermaker finds that the water pressure gauge reads 39 psi, by how much must it be reduced so the psi reading is back within the normal range (35 psi)?

psi

Question # 4

Look at the library report on overdue books below.

Enter Sandra Roy's total late fee in the space provided.

Overdue Books Sandra Roy		
Book Title	Days Overdue	Late Fee
How to Paint in Watercolour	5	\$3.75
Lakes of Canada	3	\$2.25
World Travel	2	\$1.50
Total		\$

Question # 5

An airline sales agent has just been advised that a flight will be delayed by 2 hours. Flight DG386 was originally scheduled to arrive at 13:00.

What is the new arrival time for Flight DG386?

LEVEL 2

Question # 6

Look at the table below.

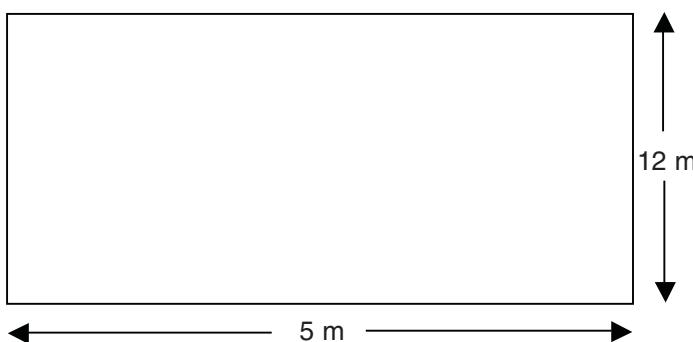
Enter the total value of chips received by Henry Rogers in the space provided.

Henry Rogers			
Chip Colour	Value Per Chip (\$)	Number of Chips	Total Chip Value (\$)
Red	10	20	
Black	50	4	
		TOTAL	\$

Question # 7

Look at the diagram below.

What is the area of the room?

 m²

Question # 8

A motor vehicle assembler is scheduling the ordering of car parts. The deadline for receiving the fan belts is the end of the business day on May 25.

Fan belts take 7 days to deliver, starting from the day the order is placed, up to and including the day of delivery. Delivery time does not include weekends (Saturday and Sunday).

Circle the **latest date** that the motor vehicle assembler can order the fan belts on the calendar below.

May 2006						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Question # 9

A hotel guest would like to pay her bill using American currency. The hotel bill is \$100 Canadian.

Look at the currency converter to the right.

How much does the guest owe in American currency?

\$

Currency Converter

Canadian Currency	American Currency
\$1.00	= \$0.8865

Question # 10

Look at the vitamin information chart to the right.

What is the price of each pill?

\$

Re-Gen Vitamin Pills

Vitamin A (per pill)	1000 I.U.
Vitamin C (per pill)	90 mg
Vitamin D (per pill)	400 I.U.
Iron (per pill)	10 mg
Number of pills per package	60
Cost per package	\$12

ESSENTIAL SKILLS IN THE JOBS THAT INTEREST ME

“I gleaned a lot of information from those people [guest speakers, employers and workers] who came to speak with us on a number of subjects. The visitors offered real world examples and experiences which is quite valuable.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant identifies the **Essential Skills of jobs** that interest her, and gains a deeper understanding of these jobs in the community through at least one of the following: volunteering, job shadowing, or interviewing a woman who currently works in the field.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Oral Communication
- Computer Use
- Continuous Learning
- Thinking Skills

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these questions:

- *Go to a “virtual job shadowing” site that provides links to videos (several are listed in the resources section of this unit). Choose a career (other than your current job) that interests you and watch the video.*
- *Now think of what you saw and heard in terms of Essential Skills. What Essential Skills does the job require? Do you have those Essential Skills?*

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *Observe someone who is at work – maybe a server at a coffee shop, a clerk at a grocery store, a receptionist at a place where you are waiting for an appointment, your hairdresser, a salesperson, a road crew worker or the person who delivers your mail... the list from which you might choose is endless.*
- *What are the main tasks that the person performs? In your opinion, what is the most important Essential Skill for that job? The second most important skill?*

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **National Occupation Classification (NOC)** ~ The National Occupational Classification is the nationally accepted reference on occupations in Canada. It organizes over 30,000 job titles into 520 occupational group descriptions. It is used to communicate information about occupations and to understand the jobs found throughout Canada's labour market. To access the online NOC, visit the Human Resources Skills and Development Canada site and follow the links, or use your search engine, or visit www.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/. Print copies and a CD-Rom are also available for ordering.
- **The Career Handbook**, Second edition ~ This document is available as a PDF for downloading. A print copy and CD-Rom are also available for order through the Human Resources Skills and Development website. The *Career Handbook* provides 923 occupational profiles for counselling based on NOC 2001 occupations.
- **Nextsteps.Org** ~ www.nextsteps.org. ~ This virtual job-shadowing site is written for youth; however, many pages are useful to the participants in this course. The Canadian-based career information site features a limited number of career videos that average about 90 seconds in length. In addition there are 20 – 30 minute video interviews with successful people in various careers. There are also many career profiles, written as feature news articles, that shed light on specific jobs and occupations. This site is sponsored by Industry Canada.
- **Careersvideo.com** ~ www.jobstvnews.com. This Canadian site provides more than 600 'reality' insights into job and career choices featuring people at work.
- **Myplan.com** ~ www.myplan.com. This American site is designed for a younger audience. However, it also features a library of approximately 500 short career videos that can be accessed from the home page menu.

Insights & Tips

"The Nextstep website was a good resource."

~ Field-test facilitator

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- Focus the unit primarily upon the participant gaining a clear understanding of the essentials skills required in the career areas and jobs in which she has shown an interest, and that she is self-identifying as suitable for her. Relate the unit activities to the woman's own search and choices. For example, while watching virtual job-shadowing videos have her search out the clips and online profiles closest to the occupation area she has targeted. Allow plenty of time for independent work and peer-mentoring/partner work so that each woman has the opportunity to explore her own job choices, and the Essential Skills most important to those choices.
- The National Occupation Classification (NOC) is a tool that is used to classify occupations according to their Skill Type and Skill Level. A four-digit code, called the "NOC code", identifies the occupation. Each digit of this code reflects an important trait of the occupation it represents. Become familiar with the NOC website and occupation classifications before the session begins, so that you can help participants find the information they need. It isn't necessary for the participant to understand the classification system in detail. A very basic understanding of the skill type and skill level as it relates to her occupation interests can help her search out *related opportunities* that she might not have otherwise considered. If you use the NOC codes with the participants, keep the explanations simple, and relate them to the individual's personal search and interests.
- The first digit of the NOC code designates the Skill Type. Skill Type is based on the type of work performed, but also reflects the field of training or experience that is normally required for entry into the occupation. The second digit of the NOC code represents the Skill Level of an occupation. Each Skill

Insights & Tips

"Many of the women wanted to understand the NOC codes better, so I photocopied and distributed the "Skills Type" list – the 0 – 9 codes and what they mean. They appreciated the details!"

~ Field-test facilitator

Level is intended to reflect commonly accepted paths to employment in an occupation. The major groups, which are identified by the two-digit numbers reflecting Skill Type and Skill Level, are then broken down further into minor groups with three-digit numbers and unit groups with four-digit numbers or codes. Each digit of the NOC code helps to further specify an occupation. To give an idea of how the NOC codes work, the Skill Types and corresponding digits are shown below. Remember that Skill Type is shown through the first number of the code.

- o SKILL TYPES

- 0 Management Occupations
- 1 Business, Finance and Administration Occupations
- 2 Natural and Applied Sciences and Related Occupations
- 3 Health Occupations
- 4 Occupations in Social Science, Education, Government Service and Religion
- 5 Occupations in Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport
- 6 Sales and Service Occupations
- 7 Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators and Related Occupations
- 8 Occupations Unique to Primary Industry
- 9 Occupations Unique to Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities

Here's an example:

NOC code 3414 includes workers who provide services and assistance to health care professionals and other health care staff. They are employed in hospitals, medical clinics, health care offices, nursing homes, optical retail stores and laboratories, pharmacies and medical pathology laboratories.

Insights & Tips**Expert Words**

"Counsellors should note the difference between the definitions of an occupation and a job when using the NOC and the Career Handbook. An occupation is a theoretical concept that includes specific types of skills and responsibilities held in common by those who work in an occupation. A job on the other hand, is defined as a specific position in a particular establishment. An occupation is a collection of similar jobs. The list of example titles within each NOC unit group provides a frame of reference for the boundaries of that occupational group. The jobs within the group are characterized by a homogeneity or similarity of skills."

To make sense of current trends in the labour market, it is important to focus on occupations rather than jobs, and on skills rather than the specific tasks of individual jobs. Identifying the fundamental similarities of skills within an occupation allows users to examine concepts such as occupational mobility, transferability of skills and career shifts in today's labour market

~ Source: HRSDC NOC Website

Insights & Tips

"We talked as a group about the concept of jobs vs. occupations."

~ Field-test facilitator

- *A primary focus of the unit is to help each woman prepare to participate in an out-of-classroom activity that allows her to gain insight into the work choices she is making. In this "practicum", the participants may choose to do volunteer work, carry out a conversational interview with someone working in her field of interest or participate in a job-shadowing experience. Help each participant to decide upon a course of action that will help her learn more about the job or occupation that she wants to pursue. She needs to gain a deeper insight into the practical application of the Essential Skills that make up the kind of work she is strongly considering. Would she like to talk to a woman who has pursued a similar career or training path? Would she like to watch a person who already works at the job or career, and then ask her advice? Would she like to volunteer her services in an area that is similar to the one she wants to pursue? Would she like to volunteer her services in an area that will help her gain the Essential Skills she will need?*

- *View the unit's activities as an opportunity* for each participant to make plans. The actual implementation may happen at a later date, depending upon your timelines and how you set up the requirements. In the meantime, each participant can take steps to identify a person working within a field that corresponds to her interests, plan what to say, make contact, set a date, time and location time to meet, and figure out transportation. The level of support you will need to provide to assist the participant in setting up her volunteering, job shadowing or interview will vary from woman to woman, depending upon her confidence, literacy skills, and contacts/networks. Be ready to give the support required by each individual to ensure a positive learning experience. Provide the direction required by the individual so that she can complete the task successfully.
- *Be aware of the plans that the women are making* – with whom, what job, what company or worksite, and full contact information. Know when and where each job shadowing, interview or volunteer opportunity will take place. Keep this information on file, whether your organisation is taking a large part in planning the community opportunity or the participant is setting it up independently. You might also encourage working with partners, so that two or more participants are job-shadowing, conducting interviews, or volunteering at the same location at the same time. In this sense, the activity is a field trip during class time. Also view the task as an opportunity for participants to practise other skills that will serve them well in their job search. For example, oral communication skills will come into play during an informational job interview, or when calling someone to set up the date and time. These are important practice situations for job search events and job interviews. Where needed, provide activities to help the women prepare.

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous unit now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the unit outcome* – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.
- *Point out that a large part of the unit's activities are dependent upon computer use* – encourage the women to ask for help from their peers or you if they get stuck. Ask those who are comfortable with computers to take time from their independent work to offer assistance and be a peer mentor.
- *Mention that by now, the women probably have a good idea* of at least some of the jobs or career fields that they feel suit them, and they want to pursue further. In the remaining part of the course focus on gaining a deeper understanding of the Essential Skills involved in these occupational areas – you want them to leave the unit feeling confident
that they know what
Essential Skills are required
for those jobs. It is also time
for them to start thinking
about what skills they need
to learn or improve so they
can carry out the duties in
that job or occupation. In
future units we will explore
how or where the participant
can get that skill training
within their community.

Insights & Tips

"One participant suggested that we put the Essential Skills knowledge we had collected to practical use to create something concrete, so we spent time as a group on résumés. We surfed various websites for ideas, discussed different kinds of résumés, and then began to scratch down ideas/ thoughts/ words / Essential Skills. The results brought great joy for those women who had never done a résumé in Canada."

~ Field-test facilitator

- Mention that in keeping with the “Exploring My Community” theme of this unit, participants will also make plans to move out of the classroom and into the community to take a practical look at these jobs in action by talking to, or observing, someone who works in them.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: What I Learned About a Job

Present the “Getting Ready” activity. Ask each woman to share her observations about the worker she watched or informally “job-shadowed”:

- What was the job?
- What did it involve?

Keep the conversation focused on skills and tasks, and make sure the activity does not become an informal “job evaluation” of the person and how she performed.

Insights & Tips

“This activity worked well! It helped the participants break down the Essential Skills.”

~ Field-test facilitator

Once the participant has shared her observations and reflections, ask the group to restate what they have heard in terms of Essential Skills.

- What Essential Skill is most important to the job?
- What other Essential Skills are secondary, but still required?

Talk about other approaches to gain practical insight into specific jobs, and introduce the ways participants will be asked to learn more about the jobs they are personally interested in:

- Carry out a conversation or conduct an informational job interview with someone who works in the field.
- Set up and participate in a formal job shadowing experience.
- Volunteer to do a job that requires similar skills (for example, with a charity or non-profit group).

Emphasize that which opportunity to choose is up to the individual, and that she will also be taking responsibility for arranging the details with the support of group members and yourself. Give general information and answer general questions about what is involved – the logistics of how the activity fits into your program - but let participants know they'll figure out the details as part of their ongoing activities.

Talk a bit about the informational job interview. Ask participants to think of it as a conversation with a purpose – a chance to talk to someone who has first-hand knowledge about a specific job. Brainstorm a list of generic questions that would be useful to ask someone about his or her work.

NOTE: Keep time parameters reasonable and respectful of the worker volunteering to help out. The tasks don't need to take a lot of time! An informational interview might be ten minutes to a half hour. A half hour to an hour may be sufficient during job-shadowing to view firsthand the tasks and responsibilities of the job. The short time length may also be easier for the participant to handle as well.

Insights & Tips

"Throughout the unit, we began planning each individual's job shadow, volunteer or interview times. We had a fair amount of discussion and helped each other brainstorm ideas about where they would like to carry out their practicum. I recorded their choices and helped them (or at least began helping them) to make connections with their workplaces of choice. I did the cold-calling and set up appointment times for them to job shadow."

~ Field-test facilitator



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to acquire skills and knowledge as a result of the observation of others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use Activity 2, then please create an activity that allows the participant to explore job shadowing, interview or volunteer opportunities.



Activity 2: Learning More about a Job

Have participants further explore the job-shadowing, interview or volunteer opportunities by filling in **Worksheet 39**. From there, have each person (independently or in pairs/small groups) create a customized question list based on her specific occupation or job area choices. The individual might refer to the generic list the group created in Activity 1, revise it as required to suit her needs, and add new questions.

Next have participants bounce ideas off each other about which opportunity they might like to pursue, offering each other suggestions, and contact/job site ideas. Then, have them take turns (in pairs or small groups) reading their customized questions aloud as if conducting an interview, or asking questions during a job

Insights & Tips

"We made a list of interview questions together and I helped individuals with specific career questions."

"One of the participants did an informational interview via email. The rest job-shadowed, or went to volunteer orientations, or did both."

~ Field-test facilitators

shadowing activity. Have peers offer presentation and oral communication suggestions. Finally, have participants create and practise an introductory statement, script, or set of actions that could be used at the start of their interview, job shadowing or volunteering.

Here's some "expert advice" you may wish to share with participants to give them ideas.

Insights & Tips

The Information Interview

"You have arrived and are greeted by the individual at the front desk. When the interviewee comes out to meet you, introduce yourself. Thank your contact for his or her willingness to meet with you, and reemphasize that you are there to learn and gather information about his or her career field. Use an informal dialogue during the interview"

~ Informational Interviewing Tutorial
QuintCareers

Call participants back together into the large group. Ask for volunteers to role-play or act out the introductions they've created and practised. Talk together about what makes a good introduction, and devise some communication tips.

Repeat the role-playing with a volunteer pair doing an informational job interview using their list of questions. Again, have the group provide feedback, and then design key interview tips.

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her thinking, writing and document use skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 39

Learning More about Occupations and Jobs

I'm interested in finding more out about this job or occupation:

Choice #1 _____

Choice #2 _____

Here's how I'd like to find out more about it:

- Interview a person who currently works in the job or occupation
- Job shadow or observe a person who works in the job or occupation
- Work as a volunteer doing a task that involves the same or similar skills as the job or occupation

Here are questions I'd like to have answered about the job or occupation:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____



Activity 3: *The Best Things about Me!*

Ask participants:

- Do you, like many women, have trouble promoting yourself or communicating your skills?

Challenge participants with this task:

- Pat yourself on the back in words. Write a paragraph for your learning journal that describes the best things about you! Brag a little!



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her thinking and writing skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 4: *Learning Still More about a Job*

Depending on computer availability and the skill levels and interests, have the participants explore virtual job shadowing links and sites. Rather than working independently, you could pair individuals looking for similar jobs, exploring similar career or occupation fields, or who share similar Essential Skills strengths and challenges. You could also pair up experienced computer users with inexperienced computer users.

Assign participants the task of searching and viewing job shadowing video clips for three to five jobs that are similar to, or match, the jobs in which they have expressed an interest. For each of the jobs, have each participant record her observations and reflections on **Worksheet 40**.

Also have the participant seek out a video clip from at least one job or career area that she hadn't originally considered, but still one that suits her skill strengths and interests. Have her record her observations and reflections about this new opportunity, too.

Follow up by handing out **Worksheet 41**. Have the group read the article, and then discuss possible job shadowing, interview, or volunteer situations in their community that they might like to explore further.

- What would be involved?
- What would they need to do to set up the opportunity?

Draw out the steps that need to be taken, and help the group (or individuals) initiate the process by taking responsibility for one or more of the steps.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her thinking and writing skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"The women LOVED job-shadowing. One of them pursued employment out of it (at the regional Children's Museum)."

"The women in my group didn't want to job shadow. They were new to Canada, and the idea of job shadowing seemed difficult for them. They were much more comfortable with Informational Interviews, so we planned those as a group."

~ Field-test facilitators

WORKSHEET 40

Learning Still More about a Job or Occupation

Add pages if you need more room to write down your thoughts and observations or if you've done more than 4 virtual job-shadowing tours.

1. I took a “virtual job-shadowing” tour of this job:

Here are my thoughts and observations:

2. I took a “virtual job-shadowing” tour of this job:

Here are my thoughts and observations:

3. I took a “virtual job-shadowing” tour of this job:

Here are my thoughts and observations:

4. I took a “virtual job-shadowing” tour of this job:

Here are my thoughts and observations:

WORKSHEET 41

Researching Companies and Careers through Job Shadowing²⁵

Definition of Job-Shadowing

"Job shadowing is a work experience option where students learn about a job by walking through the work day as a shadow to a competent worker. The job shadowing work experience is a temporary, unpaid exposure to the workplace in an occupational area of interest to the student. Students witness firsthand the work environment, employability and occupational skills in practice, the value of professional training and potential career options. Job shadowing is designed to increase career awareness, help model student behavior through examples and reinforce in the student the link between classroom learning and work requirements. Almost any workplace is a potential job shadowing site."

~ Paris, K., & Mason, S. (1995). *Planning and Implementing Youth Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, Center on Education and Work.

That's the premise behind job-shadowing – it's an activity that enables a person to spend some time observing a professional on the job. If you know you want to change careers but are not sure what career is right for you, job-shadowing can give you a taste of what various careers are like. By experiencing a workplace first-hand, you can learn a great deal more about a career than you can through research in print publications and on the Internet.

What exactly is job-shadowing and what does it entail? Job-shadowing is a close cousin of the informational job interview in which career-explorers or job-seekers conduct short interviews with people in their prospective professions to learn more about those fields. Many of the same rules apply to job-shadowing as apply to informational interviewing, from preparing for the experience, to scheduling it, getting the most out of it, and following up on it.

²⁵ Adapted from: *Research Companies and Careers Through Job Shadowing* Katharine Hansen, Ph.D. Retrieved from http://www.quintcareers.com/job_shadowing.html February 2009.

During your job-shadow experience, you follow the professional you're shadowing through his or her work day. You observe the rigours of the job, the company culture, and ask lots of questions.

Setting up a Job-Shadowing Experience

1. **Whom should you shadow?** Ideally, someone who is in the type of job that you think you would like to have or one you aspire to in the not-too-distant future.
2. **Once you've located someone to shadow,** write a letter or send an e-mail, allowing several weeks' lead time in advance of when you'd like to do the shadowing. Follow up with a phone call about a week later to pin down a date. Be prepared to be very flexible. The worker you're shadowing is probably busy and going out of his or her way to accommodate you for the period of time you're asking for. While the idea is for the worker to go about business as usual while you observe, it's obvious that he or she may feel a bit restricted by your watchful eyes, so he or she is doing you a big favor.
3. **Research workplaces where you plan to shadow.** While your best research will come from the actual shadowing, find out enough about the workplace so that you won't seem ignorant to the person you're shadowing.

Getting the Most out of the Job-Shadowing Experience

- Dress as you would for a job interview with the company or at least at the level of dress others in the company wear.
- Arrive on time and be polite, courteous, and enthusiastic. Show the person you're shadowing how much you appreciate the time and opportunity to learn.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions, but don't bombard the worker with so many questions that he or she can't get any work done. Any question that can be asked in an informational interview can be asked while job-shadowing. Take a notepad or even a small tape-recorder to record observations and answers to your questions.

- While your aim is to observe a typical work day, be open to unexpected opportunities such as attending a trade show or meeting of a professional organization.
- Be open to meeting as many people as possible during the experience. If you'd especially like to meet people in certain job functions, be sure to ask if your professional will introduce you.
- Observe everything! Note what technology is used in the job. Identify the must-have tools without which your worker can't function. Observe the surroundings. Notice how people dress and how casual or formal the atmosphere is.
- Notice the communication channels in the workplace. Is most communication done by e-mail? Do co-workers frequently communicate with your worker by dropping by his or her workspace? Is communication primarily phone oriented?
- Be aware of the worker's and the organization's needs as you're shadowing, and do your best not to interfere with the normal workflow.

After the Job-Shadowing Experience

1. Be sure to write a thank-you note to the person you shadowed. Remember, he or she made a significant time and energy investment in you, and it's just common courtesy to say thank you.
2. You will certainly want to reflect on the shadowing experience, and you may want to do so in a guided or formal way.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 5 and Activity 6 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use Activity 6, then please create an activity that allows the participant to explore job shadowing, interview or volunteer opportunities. Activity 5 has not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 5: Exploring the Essential Skills Website

Assign participants the task of independently, or with partners, exploring the HRSDC Essential Skills website in more depth than past sessions. Focus on the occupational profiles for the career areas that they have identified based on their skills, needs and interests. For each of their personally “top-rated” job choices, have participants identify the occupational profiles mostly matched to it, the NOC code, and the Essential Skills. Record the information on **Worksheet 42**.

Insights & Tips

“This was a well-received activity!”

~ Field-test facilitator

Participants might also look up the occupational profiles, corresponding NOC codes, and the Essential Skills for the jobs they explored through virtual job shadowing. See **Worksheet 40**.

You may wish to offer a very simple explanation of the NOC codes, looking primarily at the first two numbers and how these relate to the Skill Type and Skill Level. Have participants identify other occupational profiles requiring skills similar to those they’ve already identified by typing the first two numbers of the NOC codes in the related search field.

Finally, have participants compare, even if only in a basic or introductory way, the Essential Skills required for the occupations

Insights & Tips

“I liked learning to get on the website and find choices in job opportunities and find the Essential Skills needed for these jobs.”

~ Field-test participant

they've listed on their worksheet with their personal Essential Skills strengths as discovered in past activities.

- Which occupations match the individual's Essential Skill set most closely?
- Which Essential Skill areas must she improve in order to be able to work successfully in the occupation?

Insights & Tips

We devised questions for those things we wanted to learn through the job shadowing or informational interview, and put the responses on a flipchart:

- ***What training do you have?***
- ***What are your main duties?***
- ***Do you need a license or certificate?***
- ***Are you full or part time?***
- ***How many people do you work with?***
- ***How did you get this job?***
- ***Do you have advice for me?***
- ***Do you work alone or as part of a team?***
- ***What are your hours? Overtime? Weekends? Evenings?***
- ***What things do you like about this job?***
- ***What are your least favourite parts of this job?***
- ***What regulations do you work under?***
- ***How many vacation days do you get?***
- ***Do you travel with this job?***
- ***Is there room for job mobility?***

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 42

Exploring the Essential Skills Website

You will need to use a computer connected to the Internet for this activity. Photocopy the worksheet so you can fill in one copy for each occupation or job you research.

I researched this occupational profile:	The NOC code is:
The most important Essential Skills for this occupation include:	
Some ways the occupation would require me to use these Essential Skills:	
Looking at my own Essential Skill strengths, what I still need to improve to do the job:	



Activity 6: How I Will Get More Information

Hand out **Worksheet 43**, a checklist to guide the participant through the tasks required for setting up and completing her job shadowing, informational job interview, or volunteer activity.

Have the participant self-monitor her progress and self-direct her plans by checking off what she has accomplished and using the worksheet to plan her next steps.

Ask the participant to put the checklist in her portfolio. She will be able to use it, during future units, as a check in that she is taking the necessary steps towards her goals.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her thinking and writing skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 43

How I will get more information

I've decided to participate in this activity:

- Job-shadow Interview a worker Volunteer

Here's how I'm feeling about the activity:

- I need help finding a worksite and a contact person. I will talk to my teacher and peers to help me.
- I'm confident I can find a worksite and a contact person, and will make my own plans.

I've taken these steps:

- I've identified the job or occupation I want to learn more about through this activity.
- I've reviewed my plans with my teacher and am keeping her informed about whom I contact, when we are meeting and where, and how to get in touch with the worker and site.
- I've contacted a worker or workplace, or a volunteer organization, and explained what I want to do.
- They've agreed to help me, and we've set up a time and date.
- I know the worksite or place where I'm going.
- I've researched the job and worksite, and know what things I want to learn. I know if I have to bring something with me, or wear something special, like safety boots.
- I've completed the activity. I've followed up by thanking the worker, worksite, or volunteer organization.
- I've thought about how the experience has affected my future plans, and have modified my plans accordingly.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Gather oral feedback.* Bring participants back together in the circle formation. Are they leaving with a better understanding of the skills needed by the jobs in which they are interested? Do individuals have any questions about the practical assignment – making plans to job shadow, volunteer or interview a worker?
- *Distribute a simple form for individual feedback and comments.* Ask each woman to fill out the form and leave it for you. A generic Participation Evaluation form is offered in the Introduction section.
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit.* Ask if there is something the women would like to add or make sure they talk about – either as part of the topic or in response to today's session.
- *If you organized a guest speaker,* talk about who is coming, and how her presentation ties into the next unit. Ask if there is something in particular participants would like to hear about from the speaker. Divide up any tasks associated with the visit – introducing the speaker, thanking her, etc.
- *If you've organized an off-site trip,* review plans and be sure everyone is aware of where and when to meet, or other details, such as transportation.
- *Read aloud the "Getting Ready" activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below).
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

"I have to focus on gaining the Essential Skills for the job I observed. I know I can get ready for this job."

~ Field-test participant

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

Pick one of the following:

- If you were to run your own shop, what would you sell? If it is something you make, bring a sample of it to show.
- If you were to run your own business, what service would you provide? If it is something you do, come ready to give the group a quick demo. If there is something you can show us, bring that along.
- If you could be hired in a job traditionally held by men, what would the job be?

CLOSING WORDS

“I am a vibrant peaceful individual and I deserve the great new job I have, a job very suitable for my personality. Age is no longer my cage...”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

IS ENTREPRENEURSHIP OR A NON-TRADITIONAL CAREER FOR ME?

"Having time for discussion was invaluable and I think one of the reasons that this course was so effective was that the women were given a lot of time to discuss things, and to write and think about their lives – also the positive feedback they received from each other throughout the exercises was invaluable. The participants really felt this course was designed for them (women 40 years and older)."

~ Spotlight on Change Facilitator

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant explores job alternatives such as entrepreneurship and non-traditional careers for women, and decides if these areas of employment suit her interests, strengths and needs.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Oral Communication
- Continuous Learning
- Computer Use

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these situations and questions:

- *Do you have an “entrepreneurial spirit”?* Maybe you set up a successful lemonade stand as a child, or earned extra money at school by offering a tutoring or a dog-walking service, or raised a hefty sum for your favourite charity through making and selling batik scarves or...
- *Think of an event from your life* that demonstrates your entrepreneurial spirit. If you’re not entrepreneurial, how do you know that?

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

Pick one of the following:

- If you were to run your own shop, what would you sell? If it is something you make, bring a sample of it to show.
- If you were to run your own business, what service would you provide? If it is something you do, come ready to give the group a quick demo. If there is something you can show us, bring that along.
- If you could be hired in a job traditionally held by men, what would the job be?

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Canada Council on Learning** ~ <http://ccl-cca.ca>. This website offers an abundance of relevant information, including profiles, success stories, learning reports and statistics. Click on “Lessons in Learning” and search for a fact sheet, **Reports and Data, Apprenticeship Training in Canada**, to learn why the skilled trades offer women good opportunities for employment in Canada, particularly in respect to Canada’s aging population, and the related labour shortage as older workers retire.
- **Campus Starter. Your Source for Apprenticeship Information in Canada** ~ www.apprenticeshipprogramsincanada.com. From the University of Alberta, a great site for those participants who wish to research and pursue apprenticeship programs in Canada, providing a range of information from trades and apprenticeship programs, to tips for evaluating them, to scholarship and funding info.
- **A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women** ~ www.actew.org. An Ontario-based organization, ACTEW is a network of agencies providing community-based employment and training services for women. A lot of the information is relevant to women across Canada.
- **Women’s Enterprise Centre** ~ www.womensenterprise.ca. A British Columbia based website, it offers a variety of information, links and articles on entrepreneurship, ranging from success stories to a multi-media gallery. The profiles, success stories, and other information are useful to women across Canada.

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *What is a non-traditional job for woman?* A common definition of a non-traditional job for woman is one where less than 25% of those working at it are women.
- *Demographics make the skilled trades an area of high job demand, and offer good opportunities and prospects for women interested in finding work, or training, in a trade.* Canada Council on Learning tells us “the skilled trades workforce is aging more rapidly than the overall workforce. Among many of the skilled trades (with the exception of electricians) the proportion of workers aged 55 or over is greater than in the overall workforce. The average age is also higher and the number of young workers available to replace retiring older workers is lower than in the overall workforce.”
- *Although participants will have completed interest and skill inventories during the first module, we've included quizzes and questionnaires in this unit to help them consider whether non-traditional occupations or self-employment may suit them.* Some participants may choose to explore these job alternatives further as a result of this unit, and modify or reshape their plans, for example, following a new job shadowing opportunity. Accommodate these new or revised plans, and encourage participants to explore the related occupational profiles on the HRDSC Literacy and Essential Skills website.
- *Be aware of opportunities for training for skilled trades and non-traditional jobs for women in your community, such as apprenticeship programs and/or funding sources.* These opportunities may be specific to your province, territory, and geographical region – conduct your own research and support participants in their search as they identify opportunities of interest to them.

Insights & Tips**What is Apprenticeship?**

Apprenticeship is an agreement between an individual who wants to learn a skill and an employer who needs a skilled worker. It is a combination of in-school training and on-the-job experience. An apprenticeship can last 2-5 years, depending on the program. As an apprentice, about 90% of your time is spent learning practical skills on the job, while supervised by a qualified journeyperson. The rest is spent learning theoretical and technical aspects of your trade. Over time, the apprenticeship system of training has proven to be one of the world's most successful ways to learn

~ Source: Conestoga Connect Life and Learning.
Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Program for Women

- *Entrepreneurship and self-employment is another job alternative for women and one with its own required skill set. For those women who would like to explore a self-employment or a business idea further, point them in the direction of small business experts, women mentors, organizations and training opportunities in the community to help them build their plans on a solid and well-informed base.*

GUEST SPEAKERS AND FIELD TRIPS

Women & Job Alternatives – Role Models

In this unit, more than any other, it is important that you organize (or support the participants as they organize) guest speakers and field trips that provide role models of women who have successfully entered non-traditional occupations, and women who are entrepreneurs successfully running their own businesses.

If possible, have this activity spread over several sessions, perhaps a week, rather than make it a onetime event. In other words, have more than one woman visit – show a range of job alternatives in which women are working – and a range of women who are willing to talk

about their jobs and experiences. **Allow plenty of time and opportunity for interaction and questions.** If possible, encourage demonstrations of tasks and/or specialized equipment, being sure to follow all safety requirements, and provide a safe environment.

Encourage each guest speaker to talk about the job itself, and also the career path she took to reach her employment goals – how she got to where she is today. Ask her to talk about her experiences, and wherever possible, visually demonstrate aspects of the job, related tasks, or bring and show related tools, required dress such as helmet and safety boots, and/or what it is she builds or sells. Facilitate and encourage interaction – an exchange of questions and answers. Build confidence – “if this woman can do it, so can I.” Also help participants search out and read profiles of successful women who have chosen self-employment or non-traditional careers. Watch your local newspaper for success stories.

Having guest speakers come to the classroom is one option – the other is visiting women experts in their places of work in the community. Arrange to visit a worksite where women work at non-traditional jobs, or a tour of a business a woman has set up and runs herself. Still another option is to visit a college or school setting where women are enrolled in a skilled trades course, and have participants watch and ask questions of the women. Any opportunity for participants to actually try an element of the specific occupation – perhaps a hands-on activity taught and led by the skill trade instructor – would give them a clearer understanding of the occupation, and its suitability for them.

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit’s outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous session now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the unit outcome* – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.
- *Guest speaker* – review who is coming, and how she relates to the session. Ask participants what they'd like to learn from the guest speaker – what questions do they want to ask? What topics do they want to make sure are covered? Make a list and post it as a reminder. Ask for a volunteer to thank the speaker at the end of the session.
- *Accommodate personal goals/needs and facilitate independent work.* Check in briefly with individuals about what they'd like to work toward or accomplish during the session.

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: Is Self-Employment or A Non-Traditional Job for Me?

Present the “Getting Ready” activity. Ask each woman to tell the group which option she chose and to give details of her choice. Use the presentation as a springboard to discuss job alternatives for women, and to introduce general concepts surrounding being an entrepreneur or working in a non-traditional occupation.

- What skills and characteristics does the group think a woman might need to be self-employed? Make a skill list and post.

Facilitate the same kind of discussion and list around non-traditional occupations for women, building the conversation from the jobs that come up during the “Getting Ready” activity.

Next ask the women to reflect upon their personal skills and characteristics as compared to the lists.

- Do participants think that entrepreneurship or a non-traditional job might suit them?

Emphasize that individuals have gained more related skills in these areas than they may think – that skills are transferable – that while many non-traditional jobs require specific skills, these skills can be gained in a variety of ways. Hand out **Worksheet 44**, and ask participants to complete it.

Bring the group back together to discuss answers. What skills or activities have group members checked off? Brainstorm how each skill or activity can be transferred to a non-traditional job.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills, her ability to think critically about her choices and her ability to acquire skills and knowledge as a result of the observation of others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

“I once built a coffee table for my mom. I’ve used hand or power tools, and have followed directions for sewing, and recipes for cooking. I’ve done handiwork such as knitting.”

“I’d run a café, a bakery with a bread machine, or a hotdog stand. And if I could work in a job traditionally held by men, I’d chose drywall and taping.”

~ Field-test participants

WORKSHEET 44

Are Your Skills Transferable to a Non-traditional Job?

Check which skills or activities you have done in the past. While many non-traditional jobs require specific skills, these skills can be gained in a wide variety of ways. The following survey²⁶ will assess if your skills are transferable to non-traditional jobs.

Have You...

- Worked in a non-traditional job before as a paid worker, volunteer, or as a hobby.
- Received a high school diploma or a GED.
- Obtained your driver's licence.
- Traveled and enjoyed going from place to place.
- Used hand or power tools.
- Worked on your car or someone else's car.
- Done handiwork such as knitting, embroidery, or other crafts.
- Followed a pattern in sewing.
- Regularly participated in a sport or worked-out.
- Planted and maintained a successful garden.
- Fixed a broken television, radio, or computer.
- Used a manual to determine what was wrong with an appliance.
- Entered/completed a trade school program for a vocational skill.
- Driven/fixed farm machinery or a school bus.

²⁶ Taken from: <http://www.iseek.org/sv/10109.jsp>. Used with permission.

- Built or repaired items in your home or apartment (built a bookcase or fixed a leaky faucet).
- Followed a recipe.
- Worked independently, with little supervision.
- Served in the military.
- Worked outdoors for long periods of time.
- Assembled a child's toy or furniture.

Insights & Tips

"We completed Worksheet 44 in a different way. We read each line out loud, and identified who in the class the statement applied to – it was fun and entertaining. The activity promoted good communication skills & working with others."

~ Field-test facilitator

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use Activity 2, then please create an activity that allows the participant to explore non-traditional occupations or starting her own business.

**Activity 2: Self-Assessment**

Hand out **Worksheet 45** and **Worksheet 46**. Both are self-assessment questionnaires to help the women think about whether being an entrepreneur, or pursuing a non-traditional occupation for women, interests them. Here are two options for delivery:

- *Work through the questionnaires together* as a group, reading the questions aloud and having the individual check off the answer that best describes her. Doing the questionnaires in this manner allows you to continue the discussion and presentation of the key elements – skills and characteristics – required by these jobs.
- *Pair the women*, and have them work through the questionnaires together, reaching their own answers, but discussing their thoughts about each question, using examples from their own lives to illustrate their answers. Have the women add up and analyze their questionnaire results. What do the results tell them about themselves? Do they agree? Do the results open up new possibilities that they would like to explore further?

 **LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to think critically about her choices and her ability to use documents, such as the checklists. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"My entrepreneur quiz score was high, and I was taken aback by the results. Was I ever an entrepreneur and did not know I was, because I was held back to show my skills [in that area] when I was worried more about family and paying the rent and putting food on the table? Or was I just not able to see who I could have been?"

~ Field-test participant

WORKSHEET 45

*Does a Non-traditional Job Interest You?*²⁷

For each question check the answer that best describes you. When you are finished, add up your score.

<i>Does a Non-traditional Job Interest You?</i>			
Do you like to:	A Yes	B I'd be willing to	C No
1. Work with your hands?			
2. Make repairs around the house?			
3. Fix outlets, radios, or stereos?			
4. Work outdoors?			
5. Drive cars, vans or farm equipment?			
6. See concrete results from your work?			
7. Solve technical problems or puzzles?			
8. Work from a pattern, blueprint, or diagram to construct or make things?			
9. Paint, wallpaper, or fill holes in the walls?			
Total number of each letter			
Multiply each total by the number shown.	X 3 =	X 2 =	X 1 =

²⁷ Adapted from: <http://www.iseek.org/sv/10108.jsp>.

Now, add your numbers together. Here's an example:

Total number of each letter	2	3	4
Now multiply each total by the number shown.	$\times \underline{3} =$ 6	$\times \underline{2} =$ 6	$\times \underline{1} =$ 4
Total score	16		

In this example the score is 16 of a possible score of 27.

The higher your score, the more likely you'd be interested in a non-traditional job or you have an attitude that says you're willing to try it.

Enter your score here:

MY SCORE IS _____ out of 27.

WORKSHEET 46

Am I an Entrepreneur?²⁸

The following list of personal characteristics is designed to help you self-assess or determine if you have what it requires to become a successful entrepreneur. Analyze yourself carefully and honestly as you answer each question. *There are no right or wrong answers in this checklist.*

Am I an Entrepreneur?	YES	NO
1. Do I really have the desire to be my own boss rather than work for someone else?		
2. Am I a self-starter?		
3. Do I have management skills (managing finances, employees, and other aspects of the business)?		
4. Do I have experience in the type of business I am interested in owning and operating?		
5. Can I accept the responsibility of seeing things through to the end?		
6. Am I a well-organized person?		
7. Do I have the desire to lead and direct others?		
8. Can I make decisions quickly if I have to?		
9. Do I have good health and the high level of energy necessary to be an entrepreneur?		
10. Do I have the financial resources, as well as future credit resources I need to begin?		
11. Can I sustain my business through the early, formative years?		

²⁸ Adapted from www.iseek.org/sv/10109.jsp. Original Source: Based upon Sandra Winston, *The Entrepreneurial Woman* (New York: Newsweek Books, 1979), Pickle, H.B. & Abrahamson, R.L., *Small Business Management* (5th Edition, 1990).

Am I an Entrepreneur?	YES	NO
12. Can people (customers and employees) trust what I say?		
13. Do I have the need to set and achieve difficult goals and move on to other challenges?		
14. Do I have the desire to be innovative and creative?		
15. Do I prefer having a plan of action (business plan) before I begin an activity?		
16. Is my partner and/or family supportive of my plan?		
17. Am I on time for appointments?		
18. Am I willing to work the long hours it takes to be an entrepreneur?		
19. Do I have the desire to stick with the business even in troubled times?		
20. Am I willing to do all the tasks necessary for the successful operation of the business?		
21. Even though it's scary to try something new, am I the kind who tries it?		
22. If I want something, do I ask for it rather than wait for someone to notice and just give it to me?		
23. Even though people tell me it can't be done, do I have to find out for myself?		
24. I want to be financially independent.		
25. I'll speak up for an unpopular cause if I believe in it.		
26. Can I take risks with money, that is, invest, and not know the outcome?		
27. Have I taken a risk in the last 6 months?		
28. Do I like trying new food, new places, and totally new experiences?		

Am I an Entrepreneur?	YES	NO
29. Can I walk up to a total stranger and strike up a conversation?		
30. Have I ever intentionally travelled on an unfamiliar route?		
Add up the number of times you answered "Yes."		
Add up the number of times you answered "No."		

Think about your answers...

- If most of your answers are “Yes”, you probably have what it takes to become an entrepreneur.
- If you answered “No” to about half of the questions, you may need assistance to reinforce the areas where you are weak.
- If the majority of your answers are “No”, then entrepreneurship is likely not for you.

Do you think you have the personal characteristics to be an entrepreneur?
Write a few thoughts here about why or why not:



Activity 3: Common Myths & Misconceptions about Non-Traditional Jobs for Women

Hand out **Worksheet 47**. Work through the first statement with the whole group and then have them work in small groups or in pairs to discuss and jot down their thoughts. Do they agree with the statement? What have they seen, heard or experienced to back up their thoughts?

After participants have had adequate time to discuss all of the statements, bring them back into the larger group. Hand out **Worksheet 48**. Discuss each statement together, and then read aloud the “Reality” below it. Ask participants: How do their experiences and perceptions compare to the “reality”?

Point out that there is a labour shortage in the skilled trades in Canada, and that there is a growing rise of women in non-traditional fields. Ask the women to consider the benefits of non-traditional jobs for the women and the challenges. Make a list of both based on the discussion.

Finally, hand out **Worksheet 49**. Are there benefits/ challenges on the worksheet they hadn’t considered? Do they think the benefits outweigh the challenges? Or vice versa?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to think critically about her choices and her ability to use documents, such as the checklists. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

“We explored the meaning of the words ‘myth’ and ‘misconception’. It was a good exercise for ESL participants.”

“We discussed non-traditional jobs as a group, and roles/jobs for women in other countries. Some very sad stories were told, for example, one woman told about her experiences in Iran. She viewed her story as a success story, because she had left her country of origin for Canada.”

~ Field-test facilitators

WORKSHEET 47

Common Myths and Misconceptions: What do you think?

Read each statement and then decide if you agree with it. Why do you agree with it? If you don't agree, why?

Statement #1: Blue-collar work or heavy, physical labour is non-traditional for women. Historically, women haven't done these jobs.

Agree Disagree

Statement #2: Women are not strong enough to do heavy labour.

Agree Disagree

Statement #3: Non-traditional jobs are too dirty, noisy and dangerous for women.

Agree Disagree

Statement #4: Women do not have the mechanical or mathematical aptitude for skilled trade work.

Agree Disagree

Statement #5: Women won't like trade work.

Agree Disagree

Statement #6: Women on a job site make it difficult for men to concentrate; they are too distracting.

Agree Disagree

Statement #7: Women will lose their femininity if they work in a trade.

Agree Disagree

Statement #8: Certain jobs are "men's work" and other jobs are "women's work."

Agree Disagree

WORKSHEET 48

Common Myths and Misconceptions: Reality Check²⁹

Statement #1: Blue-collar work or heavy, physical labour is non-traditional for women. Historically, women haven't done these jobs.

Reality: Many jobs now thought to be non-traditional for women have been performed by women in the past. Throughout history, women have done heavy labour on the farm and in the fields alongside men, and during World War II, over 6 million women entered the labour force to build ships, airplanes and factory goods.

Statement #2: Women are not strong enough to do heavy labour.

Reality: The strength requirements for non-traditional jobs are often exaggerated. Many non-traditional jobs are less physically demanding than housework, and many traditional women's jobs, such as nursing and waitressing, are just as physically demanding as some non-traditional jobs. In addition, mechanization continues to decrease the level of physical demand of many jobs. Finally, while the average man is stronger than the average woman, some women are stronger than some men. Women have excellent lower-body strength and with training can develop strong upper-body muscles as well.

Statement #3: Non-traditional jobs are too dirty, noisy and dangerous for women.

Reality: Non-traditional jobs are often dirty and sometimes dangerous. However, both men and women must weigh the hazards with the benefits of taking certain jobs. In addition, many traditionally female jobs, like mothering and nursing, are dirty and messy, and some also have health hazards, such as computer terminal radiation and carpal tunnel syndrome. Many women do not mind getting dirty when they are paid a good wage, and with proper safety instruction, all workers can minimize the danger they experience on the job.

Statement #4: Women do not have the mechanical or mathematical aptitude for skilled trade work.

Reality: There is no difference in women's and men's innate skills and potential to justify existing occupational segregation. A study conducted by the Johnson O'Conner Research Foundation Human Engineering Laboratory found no

²⁹ These statements have been adapted from: *Non-Traditional Jobs for Women, Common Myths and Misconceptions*, Retrieved from <http://www.iseek.org/sv/10126.jsp> February 2009.

difference attributable to gender in 14 of 22 aptitude tests given to men and women. In the eight remaining tests, women excelled in six tests and men scored higher in two.

Statement #5: Women won't like trade work.

Reality: Many women enjoy working with their hands and outdoors. They take great pride in knowing that they have helped to build or create something. As a result, researchers have found that most tradeswomen have a high degree of job satisfaction.

Statement #6: Women on a job site make it difficult for men to concentrate; they are too distracting.

Reality: It will be different, at first, to have a woman on a work site if an employer has never hired one before. Employers can ensure workers' productivity by telling employees that a qualified woman has been hired and that harassment will not be tolerated. While sexual harassment can happen in any work environment, it can be particularly harsh for women working in non-traditional occupations. The problem that must be stopped is the harassing behaviour, not women's entrance into the workplace.

Statement #7: Women will lose their femininity if they work in a trade.

Reality: Women can encounter offensive language anywhere, not just on the job site. While women need to be physically prepared for non-traditional jobs, there is nothing unfeminine about being physically fit. Finally, many women find that earning the good wages that non-traditional jobs pay enables them to buy the things that make them feel feminine.

Statement # 8: Certain jobs are "men's work" and other jobs are "women's work."

Reality: Attitudes about which jobs are appropriate for men and which ones are appropriate for women are the result of tradition and socialization. The vast majority of job requirements are unrelated to gender.

What are your thoughts?

WORKSHEET 49

Non-traditional Jobs – Benefits and Challenges³⁰

“There are many misconceptions about women working in non-traditional jobs. It is important to recognize the significant benefits and potential challenges.”

What do you think? Do the benefits of a non-traditional job or occupation outweigh the challenges for **you**? Read and reflect upon the following chart, and then write down your thoughts in your learning journal.

Benefits	Challenges
High wages	Hazardous workplaces, requiring safety protocols, special equipment and protective clothing
Good benefits	Discrimination and/or harassment
Variety and mobility	Sense of isolation if one of few women at workplace
Casual dress	Non-supportive family and friends
Outdoor work	Transportation and childcare
Job satisfaction	Weather, heat, cold, dust, dirt, noise in some workplaces
Opportunities to learn while you earn	Physical requirements
Career ladders	Shift work
Enhanced quality of life	Seasonal layoffs
New skills that can be used in many jobs.	Work and skills you need might be unfamiliar

³⁰ Adapted from *Non-Traditional Jobs for Women, Common Myths and Misconceptions*. Retrieved from www.iseek.org/sv/10126.jsp. February 2009.



Activity 4: A Closer Look at Non-Traditional Jobs

Hand out **Worksheet 50**. Explain that the worksheet outlines jobs that are considered to be non-traditional for women – where less than 25% of those who work at it are female. Ask the participants to work independently or in pairs to identify from the worksheets:

- *At least one job that they do not know what it is, or are totally unfamiliar with it.*
- *At least one job that they have a fairly good idea about what it involves, and definitely would be interested in pursuing.*
- *At least one job from each of the categories that they are curious about and want to learn more.*

For each job they choose, have participants research online and then describe the job in a short paragraph or in point form. They'll need enough information so that they can describe the job to a partner or the group as a whole.

Depending upon the skill level of the participants, guide the online search. Encourage participants to use the HRSDC occupational profiles, and/or other relevant websites, such as those they surfed for job shadowing video clips.

As well as the basic job description, have participants list the **Essential Skills** required by the job or a related occupation. Ask them to share what they've found out with a partner, or present the information about one of the jobs or occupations to the larger group.

Insights & Tips

"We went on the computer, found the NOC codes and listed the skills that are needed or a description."

~ Field-test facilitator

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY

Have participants create job or occupation “chains”. For example, make a visual graph linking jobs or occupations that are not on the worksheet lists, but that are related to a job or flow from one that is on it.

Here's an example:

**Gardener → Landscaper → Groundskeeper → Nursery Worker →
Florist → Herbalist → Organic Chef →**



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to think critically about her choices and her writing skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

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WORKSHEET 50

What are Non-Traditional Jobs for Women?³¹

This worksheet lists jobs that are considered to be non-traditional for women. That means that less than 25% of those who work at it are female.

The jobs have been are divided into the following five categories:

1. Skilled Trades/ Apprenticeships
2. Technical Jobs
3. Service Jobs
4. Public Service Jobs
5. Professional Jobs

From the tables on the following pages, identify:

- At least one job that that you know nothing about – you don't know what it is or you've never heard of it.
- At least one job where you have a fairly good idea about what it involves, and you would definitely be interested in pursuing.
- At least one job *from each of the five categories* (therefore five more jobs in total) that you are curious about and want to learn more.

³¹ Adapted from *Non-Traditional Jobs for Women, Common Myths and Misconceptions*. Retrieved from www.iseek.org/sv/10126.jsp. February 2009.

Table 1: Skilled trades/apprenticeships

<input type="checkbox"/> Boiler Maker	<input type="checkbox"/> Meat Cutter
<input type="checkbox"/> Bricklayer	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal Fabricator
<input type="checkbox"/> Building Inspector	<input type="checkbox"/> Millwright
<input type="checkbox"/> Bulldozer Operator	<input type="checkbox"/> Painter
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpenter	<input type="checkbox"/> Paperhanger
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpet Layer	<input type="checkbox"/> Pipefitter
<input type="checkbox"/> Cement Mason	<input type="checkbox"/> Plasterer
<input type="checkbox"/> Drywall Finisher	<input type="checkbox"/> Plumber
<input type="checkbox"/> Electrician	<input type="checkbox"/> Printer
<input type="checkbox"/> Elevator Constructor	<input type="checkbox"/> Roofer
<input type="checkbox"/> Glazier	<input type="checkbox"/> Sheetmetal Worker
<input type="checkbox"/> House Painter	<input type="checkbox"/> Stonemason
<input type="checkbox"/> Insulation Worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Tile Layer
<input type="checkbox"/> Ironworker	<input type="checkbox"/> Weatherproofing
<input type="checkbox"/> Lathe Operator	<input type="checkbox"/> Welder
<input type="checkbox"/> Locksmith	

Table 2: Technical Jobs

<input type="checkbox"/> Air-Conditioning Mechanic <input type="checkbox"/> Air Traffic Controller <input type="checkbox"/> Airline Mechanic <input type="checkbox"/> Airline Pilot <input type="checkbox"/> Appliance Repairer <input type="checkbox"/> Audio Engineer (TV and Radio) <input type="checkbox"/> Automobile Mechanic <input type="checkbox"/> Business Machine Repairer <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Repairer <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Mechanic <input type="checkbox"/> Drafter <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Sign Repairer <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Technician <input type="checkbox"/> Film Set Designer <input type="checkbox"/> Film Soundperson	<input type="checkbox"/> Forestry Technician <input type="checkbox"/> Gem Setter <input type="checkbox"/> Grip <input type="checkbox"/> Ground Radio Operator <input type="checkbox"/> Motion Picture Projectionist <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle Mechanic <input type="checkbox"/> Operating Room Technician <input type="checkbox"/> Press Photographer <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Repair Technician <input type="checkbox"/> Rigger <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Installer <input type="checkbox"/> Television Lighting Director <input type="checkbox"/> Television Repairer <input type="checkbox"/> Television Set Designer <input type="checkbox"/> Watch Repairer
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Table 3: Service Jobs

<input type="checkbox"/> Bellhop <input type="checkbox"/> Exterminator <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture Mover <input type="checkbox"/> Gardener <input type="checkbox"/> Milk person <input type="checkbox"/> Organ Tuner/Repairer <input type="checkbox"/> Service Station Attendant	<input type="checkbox"/> Truck Driver (Local Delivery and Long-Haul) <input type="checkbox"/> Tailor <input type="checkbox"/> Taxi Driver <input type="checkbox"/> Theatre Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Tow Truck Operator <input type="checkbox"/> Train Conductor
---	--

Table 4: Public Service Jobs

<input type="checkbox"/> Ambulance Driver <input type="checkbox"/> Detective <input type="checkbox"/> Firefighter	<input type="checkbox"/> Guard <input type="checkbox"/> Police Officer
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Table 5: Professional Jobs

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Engineer	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital Administrator
<input type="checkbox"/> Announcer	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Chemist
<input type="checkbox"/> Archeologist	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge
<input type="checkbox"/> Architect	<input type="checkbox"/> Lawyer
<input type="checkbox"/> Astronomer	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing Researcher
<input type="checkbox"/> Banking Officer	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematician
<input type="checkbox"/> Biologist	<input type="checkbox"/> Meteorologist
<input type="checkbox"/> Chemist	<input type="checkbox"/> Oceanographer
<input type="checkbox"/> Chiropractor	<input type="checkbox"/> Physician
<input type="checkbox"/> City Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Physicist
<input type="checkbox"/> Dentist	<input type="checkbox"/> Podiatrist
<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomat	<input type="checkbox"/> Political Scientist
<input type="checkbox"/> Engineer	<input type="checkbox"/> Politician
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Specialist	<input type="checkbox"/> Rehabilitation Counsellor
<input type="checkbox"/> Film Director	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious Leader
<input type="checkbox"/> Food Scientist	<input type="checkbox"/> Sportswriter
<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Service Officer	<input type="checkbox"/> Supermarket Manager
<input type="checkbox"/> Funeral Director	<input type="checkbox"/> Surveyor
<input type="checkbox"/> Geographer	<input type="checkbox"/> Television Director
<input type="checkbox"/> Geologist	

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 5, Activity 6 and Activity 7 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please create activities that allow the participant to find and use information about women who have been successful entrepreneurs, and also to think critically about her own pursuit of non-traditional employment. Activity 7 has not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 5: Success Stories

Provide positive women role models through presenting and sharing success stories. Give participants the task of searching out profiles and articles found in print form (such as in the local newspaper), or online through website blogs, articles, newspapers, video clips and audio podcasts. Use the success stories to help the participants build confidence in their own possibilities and potential – but also as an activity to chart career paths. Ask:

- How did the role models get to where they are today?
- What steps did they take?
- Is there something that the role model did to realize her success that the participant may emulate?

Distribute **Worksheet 51**. Have participants read independently the story of entrepreneur, Dianne Smith, and her journey to owning and operating a business. Also hand out **Worksheet 52, Dianne's Steps to Success**. Participants may supplement the print article by viewing Dianne's story as a video clip on the HRDSC site, along with other success stories.

Have participants envision their own employment success story. What would they like to be doing or have accomplished in their future? Say, one, two or five years down the road? Ask participants to write about it

– to create their own future story or profile as a success story reported in the newspaper or featured online. What job or occupation would they like to be doing? What steps would they have taken to get there? What challenges would they overcome? Use Dianne’s story as a model for how to write a profile, and include quotes and other background information.

You might also assign the questions as a learning journal entry.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to think critically about her choices and her ability to use documents, such as the checklists. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

“We read the profile together. Then with partners, participants discussed the personal characteristics that Dianne Smith demonstrated. We gathered together as a group, and created a master list.”

- *Courage to do*
- *Perseverance*
- *Energy*
- *Discipline*
- *Drive/desire/ambition*
- *Commitment*
- *Intelligence*
- *Hope*
- *Vision*
- *Role model*
- *Caring*
- *Independence*
- *Wisdom*

“Dianne’s story had a huge impact on the participants. They felt inspired by her.”

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 51

An Entrepreneur's Success Story

Read the story about Dianne Smith, and her journey to operating her own business. You can also watch a video clip of Dianne at the HRSDC website: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/corporate/success_stories/literacy/2008/dianne_0425.shtml. We've included the text from the video at the end of this handout.

You can learn more about Dianne and other learner leaders by going to: <http://www.literacy.ca/themes/mcl/learners/index.html>.

As you read about Dianne, think about the steps she had to take to reach her goal. How did she “work smarter” rather than “work harder”?

.....

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island—Dianne Smith is a flourishing entrepreneur who worked her way up the ladder of success, one step at a time.

The first step started with an important conversation that she had with a volunteer literacy worker while working at a farmers’ market.

Dianne learned about a local literacy skills upgrading program, funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada’s Office of Literacy and Essential Skills and delivered by the Prince Edward Island Literacy Alliance. She says that, had she not followed the advice that the volunteer tutor gave her years ago, she would not be enjoying the standard of living that she has now.

Prior to enrolling in the literacy program, Dianne had been holding down three jobs to support her family. She had been doing manual work and was getting older. She knew that she could not keep up that pace. Dianne realized that she had to start “working smarter, rather than working harder,” as she puts it.

Dianne's efforts at school finally paid off. She obtained her Grade 12 certificate on the eve of her 50th birthday; this gift to herself meant a more positive future and a secure retirement.

Improving her literacy levels has also opened new doors for Dianne. It has enhanced her self-esteem and helped her to establish her own licensed community care facility in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

Dianne is happy that her children followed her example and also pursued their education. Their successes constantly remind Dianne of how important her efforts were, not only for herself, but for them. All of her children are gainfully employed and successful in their careers.

Now, as a board member of the Prince Edward Island Literacy Alliance, Dianne is involved in a number of volunteer activities. She often gets the opportunity to speak to government officials about the literacy challenges that adults face in her community.

"I am so glad that I had the courage to take a risk and trust that things would work out for me. I am no longer doing menial tasks and being poorly paid," says Dianne. "I have never been happier."

Here is text from the video:

Dianne: I'm Dianne Smith, owner-operator of Smith Lodge in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. I was at the farmer's market for 17 years...I had a house cleaning business (which) I cleaned 2 houses a day.... also in the Fall of the year I plucked wild geese.

Dianne's Brother: Dianne's a very capable person, she always had a great deal of energy and enthusiasm when it came to work ...it was if she got into a situation where she had to get into academic type things where she would feel sort of insecure.

Dianne: My reading skills were awful, so I needed to get a program where I was taught the proper punctuation and syllables and break down the words so I'd be able to read them and sound them out.

Dianne's Brother: The Literacy Enhancement Program that Dianne participated in gave her that self-confidence to go out there and promote herself and to do more.... with the assurance that yes, she could achieve, without the doubt.

Dianne: The day before my 50th birthday I got it...my grade 12 certificate...and now I have people working for me. Instead of me doing all the work, I have a staff of 14, and have 27 residents, and 2 puppies.

Smith Lodge resident: If I didn't have Dianne, I would be in a home where I wouldn't be this happy.... I'm very lucky to have her.

Dianne: It may not be much of an accomplishment to a lot of people, but I get a big lump in my throat, and tears come to my eyes and you'd think I'd won the 649.

WORKSHEET 52

An Entrepreneur's Success Story

1. Outline the **steps** Dianne took to reach her goal:

2. What **personal characteristics** does Dianne demonstrate that help with her success as an entrepreneur?



Activity 6: I Want To Find Out More...

Ask participants if their research into non-traditional jobs or entrepreneurship during this unit's activities resulted in them finding a job or business idea they really want to pursue.

If the answer is yes, ask each of them to expand upon the basic information they have gathered. Here's one idea:

- The participant creates a report for her portfolio that includes more information about the job. For example, she might gather more detail in these areas:
 - Skills or certification/training required
 - Related labour trends
 - The need for related workers in her community
 - Where she might get training
 - Who she might talk to in the community about the job
 - Other information she deems important to helping her with her employment goals.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to think critically about her choices and her writing skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 7: Is Entrepreneurship or a Non-Traditional Career for Me

Ask the participant to choose one of the statements presented in **Worksheet 48**, and write her reflections in her learning journal.

Here are some other topics for the participant to write about:

- Would her family support her working in a field traditionally considered “men’s work”?
- How would she feel about working at a non-traditional job?
- Do the positive elements of a non-traditional job or occupation outweigh the challenges? What strategies might help her handle the challenges?

Insights & Tips

“This unit was a wake-up call. I was always leaning from the start to upgrade in office administration because I was educated in the field. But my computer skills are not good and my typing is not where it was 20 years ago. I always told my son, ‘Don’t say you can’t do it,’ and here I am saying it to myself. I hope I can just be happy, because that’s what I would like my children and grandchildren to see more of in me.”

~ Field-test participant

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Gather oral feedback.* If a guest speaker has been part of a session, ask the women what they thought of her presentation, and if they would like you to arrange other speakers. Ask for suggestions in terms of non-traditional occupations for women – is there a job, based on the activities or what they've learned or discussed, that they would like to know more about? Do they have ideas on how they'd like to learn more about it – a field trip or speaker or another idea?
- *Ask whether participants' thoughts have been changed* in terms of the possibilities, and their own employment goals, re: women in non-traditional jobs, or women as entrepreneurs. Do they have any "closing" reflections they'd like to share?
- *Distribute a simple form for individual feedback and comments.* Ask each woman to fill out the form and leave it for you. A generic Participation Evaluation form is offered in the Introduction section.
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit or the next session.* If a field trip or another activity is planned, review details and be sure everyone is aware of changes from the usual meeting time, place, and schedule.
- *Read aloud the "Getting Ready" activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below).

Insights & Tips

"My favourite part of the unit was having a speaker talk on starting your own business, and the discussion on non-traditional jobs. I am going to keep an open mind about the future and my possibilities in my own business one day."

"For me, the positive message in the unit was that I confirmed that I'm NOT interested in a non-traditional career!"

~ Field-test participants

- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- *Did you like school* when you were a child or a teenager? What is your best memory of school? What didn’t you like about school?
- *Would you go back to school* as an adult to get further training or education if it meant you had a better chance of finding the job you wanted? If the answer is no, can you say why? If the answer is yes, what would you need to help you go back to school?

CLOSING WORDS

“I sensed that this group needed a fair amount of time to chat about issues related to the course, themselves, their families and the world at large.”

~ Spotlight on Change Facilitator

LEARNING AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

“By attending this course I feel much more confident and I got to know women from different ethnic groups and have learned a lot of new things from them. I shared information about job search and training facilities provided by different agencies in this community.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant gains an awareness of training and education opportunities in the community, such as apprenticeship, upgrading, and job-specific courses, as well as continuous learning opportunities, such as interest courses.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Continuous Learning
- Oral Communication
- Thinking Skills

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the information and activities in the unit, reflect on these situations and questions:

- What is the last course you took as an adult? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not? Did you meet your learning goals?
- Would you go back to school to upgrade or get additional certifications or training if it meant a promotion at work or a new job?
- What would be the benefits? What would be the challenges? Would one outweigh the other for you?

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- Did you like school when you were a child or a teenager? What is your best memory of school? What didn't you like about school?
- Would you go back to school as an adult to get further training or education if it meant you had a better chance of finding the job you wanted? If the answer is no, can you say why? If the answer is yes, what would need to help you go back to school?

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web addresses often change, so if the links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Movement for Canadian Literacy** ~ www.literacy.ca. Follow the main menu “Learner” button on the MCL website to access information written specifically for learners. One web page features a map of Canada, where users may click onto a province or territory and learn about the related literacy organizations.
- **ABC Life Literacy Canada** ~ www.abclifeliteracy.ca. A national charity, ABC raises public awareness of literacy issues, and works to foster an environment where all adults have access to opportunities that increase their literacy skills and prepare them to realize their full potential.
- **Explore Training/Learning Options** ~ www.jobsetc.gc.ca. These Service Canada web pages offer links to a variety of adult learning opportunities in Canada, ranging from apprenticeship to online learning.
- **CanLearn** ~ www.canlearn.ca. This website offers a range of information about lifelong learning in Canada, including an online counsellor, program search, and financial tips and tools. Check out the Continuing Education - Lifelong Learning button on the main menu of the home page.

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *During this unit, help the participant look to the future.* What next step might she take to help her gain the skills and training required for her future job? What are the intermediary stages to get from where she is now to being employed in the job or occupation that she has chosen for herself (or at this point, is strongly considering)? The thinking and research the participant begins now are really the starting stages of formulating her Action Plan, the main task in the final part of this course, *Exploring My Future*. In order to create an Action Plan for accessing the education and training to reach her employment goals, the participant will first have to become aware of the possibilities – what training is available to her in the community in the skill area that she needs.

- *Begin with a broad-based view of the adult education and training programs* – often, adults aren't aware of training and upgrading programs that they may access, and in other cases, they may have misconceptions about eligibility, target group, age, entry requirements, costs, location, hours, or what the program offers. For those who have tried to navigate the maze of possibilities, the vast array of options is often confusing. What to consider and why? Help participants explore the facts so that they have the information they need to make good choices. To do this, you'll want a solid overall grasp yourself of the opportunities for learning and training in the community.
- *Accommodate the range of skill and training needs required by group members* – each person will have her own set of skill needs, “starting points” and employment goals. Offer information relevant to the individuals in the group that will point them in the direction that allows them to access the learning they need or that interests them. For example, through her research a participant may find that the occupation she wants to pursue has certification or diploma requirements – she needs to gain the required education or training to be qualified for a job in that field. Learning about the details of getting the training will be an important part of this unit for that woman. Another participant may find that she needs to take specific steps **before** she can meet the entry requirements for training, perhaps she needs to upgrade her math or computer skills, and she'll want to know about these learning options. Still another may find that her skill needs can be met through informal settings and interest classes; for example, perhaps there is a “Self-Help” Business Centre with a drop-in component for those who need help with such tasks as writing a business plan, or perhaps there is a workshop offered at a community centre in an area related to the participant’s employment goals. Participants who choose not to “go back to school” for training or upgrading may still gain valuable insight

Insights & Tips

“I believe that learning is never too late. Gaining knowledge helps everybody to feel confident in life.”

~ Field-test participant

from the unit, discovering other options for continuous learning. Emphasize the importance of continuous learning, regardless of the form it takes.

- *Look up the adult literacy and training network or umbrella group in your community* as it can provide program information, websites and literature such as catalogues, brochures, and agency contact names. Such a network will have information about the adult literacy and training programs in your geographical region, and should be able to provide you and the participants with referral and other information. We've included information about provincial and national organisations in the resource section. You and the participants might also contact educational and training agencies directly, requesting training and educational catalogues and other print materials to share in the sessions. Also draw upon the experiences of group members. It might be that a participant has attended a learning setting that another group member wants to know more about and can offer a first-hand perspective.
- *Incorporate a skills-assessment into the unit, even in an informal way*, if you have not already done so at the top end of the course. Set up situations where participants look at their skills, knowledge, and education in relationship to that required by the occupation or job. This will help them prepare to create their Action Plan, focus their search for next-step learning situations and help participants set realistic or achievable goals and plans.
- *As with previous units, role models are vital to providing confidence* and "I can do it too" perspectives among the women. This interaction may be accomplished through field trips, and guest speaker visits from women who reached their employment goals through education, or women who are currently in the

Insights & Tips

"Throughout the course we have had several guest speakers who served as excellent role models, all of which (except for one) were immigrant women, all were successful businesswomen, and all have taken courses and went back to school to attain their goals."

~ Field-test facilitator

process of reaching their goals by taking further education and training. Try to match the career paths of the role models, training, and educational settings to those being considered by the participants. Another good idea is to set up peer mentors. For example, plan a field trip to an adult education setting in the community. Arrange ahead of times for women currently in the program to be paired with participants from your program to give them a tour of the facility, and answer their questions about learning in this setting.

- *Listen for and identify personal barriers to participating in education and training programs*, and help the participants find solutions or support so they can gain the skills needed to pursue the job of their choice. Be sensitive to negative feelings or reluctance among the participants to pursue further education. This might be prompted by negative experiences with past schooling. The fact that the women are participating in the program demonstrates that they are willing to overcome challenges in order to realize their employment goals. Recognize, however, that they may need support to continue beyond this course.
- *Emphasize that continuous learning is important to gaining skills and qualifications to find a job*. It is also important to keeping a job and staying up-to-date. Participants may decide not to take further training and education as their “next step” but will still benefit from exploring adult learning programs and interest courses in the community for reasons of continuous learning. One of the activities we’ve presented is setting up a workshop or course during this unit that demonstrates continuous learning in a practical way and results in the women gaining a certification they can put on a résumé, such as CPR or First Aid certification. Taking the course with their peers – a group with which they now feel comfortable – will also help participants develop self-efficacy.

Insights & Tips**Persistence**

"Why do some people stick to their learning and others not? One of the most important factors, the researchers discovered, was self-efficacy. Adults needed to feel that they were able to accomplish the task. They could experience success with their schooling. It would be a lot of hard work, but success was within their reach. A learner role model was one successful strategy that strengthened the new student's self-confidence. Peer support and mentoring not only provided personal evidence of successful learning, but also a model of overcoming difficulties through hard work and persistence. Researchers emphasized that peer support (as well as support from family, friends, and instructor) must happen early on in their participation or interaction with the new program."

*~ Yvonne Roussy-Heninger and Marianne Paul
Reaching Out*

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous unit now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the unit outcome – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.*
- *Emphasize that in this unit, group members will be exploring learning opportunities in the community that will help each participant gain the skills she needs to reach her employment goals. For some, that will mean further education and training. For others, that will mean continuous learning workshops or interest courses to help them be more "marketable" for the job they want, or better able to contend with it once they are in the job. The path a*

woman chooses should suit her individually – what's best for her?

- Ask each group member to ensure that by the end of the unit, she has a clear understanding of the skills or qualifications needed for the jobs she wants, and where she can get this training. That will help her considerably when it comes to creating her personal Action Plan in the final part of this course, *Exploring My Future*.
- If you have planned for a guest speaker, mentoring experience, or a field trip, review these plans with the participants, and ask what they would like to gain from these activities, and what they would like to learn from the people who will be joining them.
- Accommodate personal goals/needs and facilitate independent work. Check in briefly with individuals about what they'd like to work toward or accomplish during the unit.

Insights & Tips

"Through this unit, I found out about learning and training opportunities, and came to a conclusion about what I have to do from here onwards. I now have a definite idea of what my skills are, and what course I need to take to upgrade my skills and find a job."

~ Field-test participant



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: My Experiences with School

Present the “Getting Ready” activity. Ask each woman to talk about her experiences with school – either as a child, teenager, or an adult. Listen carefully to understand the positive feelings and experiences each individual may have had with past education, and also negative and difficult experiences. Ask probing questions to explore the stories and comments so that you may get a better understanding of the reasons behind the feelings, and if an individual’s hesitation to consider attending further education or training is related to these past experiences.

Note the challenges and preconceived positions why individuals might not want to continue their education. For example: “I’m too old to get my high school diploma and I can’t imagine going back to school with all those kids” or “I can’t afford it” or “I’m not good with book learning...” or “I need to take the fastest route to getting a job – I don’t have the time to go back to school.”

Insights & Tips

“A lot of time needs to be set aside for this activity, particularly in those cases where women are sharing emotional memories and stories about past learning experiences. In our group, a lot of sharing occurred about education in Iran and China, and also Canadian experiences where woman had sad school experiences.”

~ Field-test facilitator

Respect each person’s perspective and feelings, but work to present a positive image of adult education. Talking about solutions to barriers when going back to school, or taking further training, is a necessary and desirable step on the way to reaching her employment goal.

- *How has schooling changed since the participants attended elementary school, high school, college or university?*
- *What might the adult expect in today’s adult educational settings?*

Call upon members of the group to share stories about positive experiences with learning as an adult. If they can, have them talk about local adult education and training programs from their perspective. Compliment the women on the fact that they are taking **this** course. It is an example of today's adult education setting, and the kinds of opportunities they may take advantage of. This unit is designed to help them discover other opportunities suited to their job search and goals.

For those women who are already considering further training and education:

- Do they have an idea of what and where?
- Is there a particular program, setting, school or occupation training they'd like to find out more about during this unit?

Make a list of their answers, and be sure to facilitate further research into these areas throughout the unit. Regularly touch base throughout the activities to ensure the women find the information they need.

MORE IDEAS

- *Create a resource centre using a variety of program catalogues, such as those from local libraries, community centres, art galleries, art centres, community college, adult high school, or other places that offer adult education and lifelong learning.*
- *Assign each participant the task of identifying and dropping by a place of adult learning close to where she lives to inquire about programs. Ask her to bring back written materials such as catalogues or brochures to add to the collection.*

Insights & Tips

"This was a great practical exercise. I provided brochures and catalogues from various teaching institutions in the community. All participants found courses of interest to them that they thought they might like to pursue."

~ Field-test facilitator

- *Have participants, with partners or small groups, go through the materials to find courses that interest them and that they may like to pursue individually or as a group project. Participants may also further research adult programs through online searches, “Googling” local organizations, community centres, or schools to find out about courses offered.*
- *Ask each set of partners or small group to present its “Top Choices” for further education, training, or interest courses. See **Worksheet 53** for an outline of the kinds of information to present.*
- *Post a large map of the community. During the presentation, have participants flag the location of their “Top Choices” – where adult programs or training take place in their community. Note bus routes, or other relevant information.*

Discuss the importance of continuous learning. Mention that further training and education may mean “formal” courses such as working to get one’s secondary school diploma, or taking a specific skills training for certification. Continuous learning can also mean less formal courses, such as interest courses, a seminar, a workshop, or a one-time class or lecture. These experiences also help with building a set of skills for future employment, both directly and as transferable skills.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 53

My “Top Choice” Learning Opportunity

Use this worksheet to help you select your top choice learning opportunity.

Name of the Program:

Location:

THE DETAILS

- What I'd learn:
- How what I'd learn fits with the skills or training I need:
- Dates & Times:
- Cost:
- Entry requirements:
- How to enrol:
- Who I'd contact to find out more & the contact info:
- Other info that makes this a good choice for me (e.g., easy to get to, on main bus route, provides financial support, etc.):

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please create activities that allow participants to see the usefulness of continuous learning and to also think critically about her own pursuit of non-traditional employment. These activities have not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2



Activity 2: Continuous Learning

Demonstrate the concept and usefulness of continuous learning by inviting a facilitator or trainer to present a practical hands-on workshop, ideally with the outcome of the women earning a certificate or qualification that they may use on a résumé. One idea relevant to any job setting is First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training. Courses can be presented and completed in a short time period and might fit into your regular unit sessions. Here are some ideas:

- The *Canadian Red Cross Society* offers a variety of first aid courses, ranging from “Community First Aid and CPR” to “Workplace First Aid and CPR”.
- *St. John Ambulance* also offers first aid and CPR training across the country.

Insights & Tips

“We had a good group discussion around certification courses and their applicability to different job locations.”

~ Field-test facilitator



Activity 3: Mentoring and Role Modelling

Set up situations that facilitate mentoring and role modelling by women who have “been there” – who have followed a pathway of further education and training in order to reach their employment goals. This may be accomplished in a variety ways – choose what works best for the participants and program setting.

- **Field Trip:** Arrange a group or individual field trip to a “next-step” educational or training program relevant to the participant’s employment goals. It’s not necessary that the mentor or role model has already attained her goal of employment, but rather that she is pursuing further education or training in the community as a stepping stone. Mentoring also helps a participant prepare to make the transition to a next-step education setting or program, by providing a strategy for familiarization and support in the early stages when a learner is most at risk of dropping out. To promote this kind of mentoring, plan a field trip where the participant is paired with an existing student at the place of further learning. See **Worksheet 54** for suggestions to guide the mentoring activities.

Insights & Tips

“As a further mentoring activity, I provided handouts of success stories of local business people. We discussed the reasons behind their success, e.g., continuous learning, commitment to customer service, creativity, networking...”

~ Field-test facilitator

- **Peer Mentors:** It’s not necessary that the role model or mentor be from outside the course setting or location – for example, if you are in a college setting, there might be women participating in other learning opportunities on-site who could serve as mentors or role models. If you are working within a community based program, there may be a learner who has taken tutoring or small group learning with your agency, and has moved along to another educational setting, perhaps a high school credit program or upgrading. If you have offered this program

previously, then a woman who has previously taken this course and implemented her Action Plan to continue her learning may act as a mentor. You might plan an informal get-together and lead a discussion, encouraging questions and answers, and providing refreshments.

WORKSHEET 54

Peer Mentor Check List³²

Give this worksheet as a guide to the peer mentor to ensure you get the information you want from the tour. Add to it things you want to see or find out.

Here's how you can help me learn more about this program:

- Take me on a tour of the facility.
- Point out the things you wanted to know when you first came here.
- Take me on a tour of a classroom.
- Show me where I'd be working or studying.
- Tell me how the class usually operates.
- Tell me a bit about your own learning experiences in the program, and offer me any advice to help me be successful here.
- Introduce me to other people involved in the program, maybe a teacher, the registrar, or whoever else I should know.
- Show me anything else you think I should see or know about the program.
- Here's what else I'd like to know:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

³² Adapted from *Reaching Out*. Yvonne Roussy-Heninger & Marianne Paul. Project READ Literacy Network: 1998.



Activity 4: My Training and Education Report

Assign each participant the task of preparing a personalized report on the training or education she needs for the occupation or job she has chosen to pursue. See **WORKSHEET 55** for guidance. Encourage the participant to branch out from the worksheet to include other information she wants to know that is relevant to her situation.

- *Begin by having the participant identify or clarify the certificate, diploma, education, or skills she needs for the jobs she wants to pursue. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as:*
 - checking the occupation profiles on the Essential Skills pages of the HRSDC website
 - doing online searches
 - checking out job ads
 - looking through college catalogues
 - talking to a counsellor at the local college
 - asking an employer in the field.

For those participants who have not yet narrowed down their job choices, and are still considering two or more options, have them identify and compare requirements for each job and use this information to help with decision-making. Training availability and suitability for the individual (e.g., close to her home, program dates fit, funding is available) may be the deciding factors between one option and another.

Insights & Tips

"This activity was well-received as the women felt a sense of accomplishment (through this unit in general) for identifying the courses they want and/or need to take. Many felt that they were taking practical step now, and it was a good lead-in to creating their individual Action Plans."

"Five of the women in the course actually signed up for training with the local community-based literacy agency as a result of our field trip there. Another woman became a tutor."

~ Field-test facilitators

- *Next, have the participant identify the delivery particulars – from what school or setting may she get this training? Where is the training located? Is it available locally or only outside her community? What is the cost? Is there financial support available? When are the program dates? Times? Length? What are the admission requirements? How does one apply? What would be the first step the participant would need to take to pursue this training?*
- *From there, ask each participant to analyze the information – based on what she has learned, would she like to pursue further education or training for a specific job or occupation? Is it feasible? What barriers or challenges might be in the way? If the participant indicates that she'd like to attend further training or education, but barriers stand in her way, then help her give voice to these challenges and work through possible solutions.*

Those participants who have decided they have no need or desire for further education or training in a formal “school” setting may also take part in the activity by identifying an interest course, or other kind of program or training, that will help improve their job search. Relate this to the importance of continuous learning. Although this is an independent project, you may also expand it to be part of a follow-up group session where participants share with each other what they've discovered, and the decisions they are making or have made.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to find information and her approach to learning and applying new knowledge. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 55

Getting Training for the Job I Want

This worksheet is designed to help you think about how you can get the training you need. Fill out the worksheet for each occupation or job you are considering for yourself. Use it to help you put together your personal *Training & Education Report*.

Occupation or Job Title:

The Essential Skills needed for this job:

The certificate, diploma, or education needed for this job:

To get ready for this job, I still need to (check off what applies):

- upgrade or improve my Essential Skills
- get a specific certificate, diploma or education

Here's the place or program where I can get or learn what I need:

Here are details important for me (e.g., cost, dates, length of program, ability to get there – anything that helps **you** make a decision...)

My Decision:

- Yes, I want to pursue further education or training in this program
- No, this program is not for me, and here's why...

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 5 is suggested as a follow-up activity. If you choose not to use this activity, then please create activities that allow each participant to see the usefulness of continuous learning and to think critically about training and education needed to meet employment goals.



Activity 5: What My Skills Assessment Means To Me

Throughout this course, the participant has completed tasks and reflections to help her identify her current skills. Some programs will have assessed the participants upon entry. Use a variety of activities, both those that look at skills informally as well as those that look at skills in a more formal way, to help the participant formulate a clear and realistic picture of her current skills. Have the participant turn to her portfolio to review and understand the information she has gathered during the course activities.

Insights & Tips

"I liked this unit because it made me understand about myself and my community and the next steps to be taken. It made me think, and I realized I needed some upgrading to get my dream job."

~ Field-test participant

In this module, the participant has been working on identifying the skill requirements for the specific jobs or occupations she is interested in pursuing. Help her compare these requirements to her current skill levels so that she can make informed decisions for her future.

For those participants who have identified a place of further education and training to gain the skills they need, ask them to compare their current skill levels to the admission requirements:

- *Does the participant need upgrading to meet these entry requirements, or are they ready now?*
- *If they need to take steps to be ready, what are they?*
- *Where can they get this training or help?*

WORKSHEET 56 will help guide the participants through the process in a simple way. If you find the participant needs a more in-depth assessment in light of her employment goals and training/education plans, you may decide to arrange that assessment on an individual basis.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to find information and her approach to learning and applying new knowledge. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"Doing this activity made the participants feel as if they were taking a step closer to their goals by narrowing down their needs in terms of reaching their employment goals."

~ Field-test facilitator

WORKSHEET 56

Looking at My Skills

This worksheet is designed to help you think about your skills. Do you need to improve them to get the job you want?

Step 1

I've looked at what I've collected in my portfolio. Here's what I know about my skills. I can do these kinds of tasks very well:

Step 2

I've thought about my Essential Skills in general, and looked at activities in my portfolio, and other assessments I've done during this program. I've checked off the Essential Skill areas where I feel confident, and those where I need help to increase my confidence.

<i>I'm confident with...</i>	<i>I need help with...</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Text
<input type="checkbox"/> Document Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Document Use
<input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy	<input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Oral Communication
<input type="checkbox"/> Working with Others	<input type="checkbox"/> Working with Others
<input type="checkbox"/> Thinking Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Thinking Skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Use
<input type="checkbox"/> Continuous Learning	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuous Learning

Step 3

I've looked at my portfolio, and thought about the skills required for the job I want. I've thought about the tasks I need to be able to do. I've compared the skills and tasks needed for the job to the skills and tasks I can do right now.

- I have the skills to do the job right now. I can do the tasks required for the job.
- I need to get a specific piece of "paper" (certificate or diploma) to be qualified for the job.
- I need to upgrade my skills in order to do the tasks required for the job, or do them better. **In general**, this is what I need to learn, or the Essential Skills areas I need to improve:

Step 4

I've researched the places in my community where I can get the training and further education I need for the job. Here's what I've found out:

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Activity 6, Activity 7 and & Activity 8 are provided as optional activities. These activities have not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions in Appendix 2.



Activity 6: Computer Option

Make the *My Training & Education Report* activity computer-based. Ask the participant to do a paper-free report – researching online, including downloading specific program information, catalogues, etc. – whatever information she requires. Also have the participant write the report online, storing and submitting the report to you digitally.

Insights & Tips

"I gave the choice to the participants as to which optional activity or activities they would complete. A few women chose the computer option, while most worked with hard copies (paper tasks), dependent upon their comfort level with computers."

~ Field-test facilitator



Activity 7: Adding to My Portfolio

Ask the participant to build on the *My Training and Education Report* by obtaining a hard copy of the application form for the specific program and completing a first draft of it. Have her store this first draft in her portfolio for future reference.



Activity 8: My Thoughts on Going Back to School

Ask the participant to write her thoughts about going back to school for further education and training:

- What challenges might she face?
- Is there a friend or another person who might support her, and help her meet or overcome these challenges?

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- Ask the participants if they have gained a clear insight into their skills, and the skills required for the jobs and occupations in which they are interested. Do they feel confident that they know how to get the training that they need? Or would they like to spend more time exploring learning opportunities?
- Distribute a simple form for individual feedback and comments. Ask each woman to fill out the form and leave it for you. A generic Participation Evaluation form is offered in the Introduction section.
- Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit. Ask if there is something the women would like to add or make sure they talk about – either as part of the topic or in response to today's session.
- Read aloud the "Getting Ready" activity to do before the start of next unit (see below).
- Answer questions. After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

"I liked this unit so much because I had learned that I need to go back to school to study English and other courses that will be interesting and useful if I am to go to college and realize my dreams."

~ Field-test participant

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- *Tell us about a community group or organization that others in the group might find helpful, that either helped you in a time of need or challenge, or has helped others you know.*
- *Bring a brochure or print off some information from the web. Be sure to include contact information, or how people can get in touch with the group.*

CLOSING WORDS

“I like how this course has taken me step by step in learning and helping me find the ways to achieve the goal I have made. Job shadow helped me to learn that nothing is impossible if you have the will and passion in you and a lot of sources are available in this community to help us find the way toward the goal.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

FINDING THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT I NEED

"I had to face challenges in order to get out of the house. My husband was not agreeing with me to get out of the house and do this course. I have a lot work to do at home like cooking, cleaning, laundry, picking up kids from school. With the help of this course I was able to pay a babysitter to pick up my child and take care of him till I come home but [my] other kid needs to be picked up from school. I ignored my husband's anger to make sure he would pick up the kid. Only in coming and being committed to this course did I find the courage and confidence to ask things like that of my husband for the first time in my life."

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant gains an awareness of support agencies and those in her community who can provide help or knowledge about issues important to her, especially where these relate to her employment goals.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Thinking Skills
- Continuous Learning

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the activities and information in the unit, reflect on these situations and questions:

- *Think of a time when things were tough* in your life, and you faced challenges. Did you get help or support from an agency or an organization in the community?
- *What do you remember* about the experience?

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *Tell us about a community group or organization* that others in the group might find helpful, that either helped you in a time of need or challenge, or has helped others you know.
- *Bring to the group* a brochure, or print off some information from the web. Be sure to include contact information, or how people can get in touch with the group.

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web pages often change. If links are not current use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Community resources** ~ Research the social services and health agencies in your community that offer assistance and information. Do not identify each and every agency, but rather know how to find appropriate support if a need arises. For example, is there a counselling service associated with the organization that is offering *Spotlight on Change*? Colleges often have counselling and health service available to students. Community-based organizations are often housed with other “helping” agencies. Some communities have an “umbrella” group that offers information/referral services for social services. Many communities have a Community Information Centre that can give information, and may even publish a directory. Telephone books often list emergency numbers, as well as community agencies and health services that can help. “Googling” or using a search engine on the computer with key words and your city or community will usually also bring up a useful list of local associations and agencies willing to help with specific situations and challenges.
- **Canadian Mental Health Association** ~ www.cmha.ca. This website offers a variety of information about emotional wellness, stress, mental illnesses, specific disorders, and coping and support strategies. Particularly useful for this unit are the pages attached to the menu button, Support Centre, offering topics such as Getting Help, and Programs and Services links.

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *The purpose of this unit is to give participants the information and contacts that will help them respond positively to their challenges and barriers, and allow them to continue with their education, job search, or future employment. Focus on participants learning how to find support within the community when they need it to cope, continue with schooling, or be successful with their job. Help each woman gain the skills to take charge of her own situation, knowing how and where to look for assistance.*

- You want each participant to leave the session knowing, first and foremost, that it is okay to ask for help. For some, that may be a difficult hurdle to overcome. Second, you want participants to know that help can be found within the community. Access to agencies, organizations, charities, health groups, religious groups, professionals and volunteers, is possible for anyone needing help. The challenge may be finding the assistance that best suits the needs of the individual woman, and overcoming the reluctance to seek help.
- Encourage the participant to gain confidence and assertiveness to be proactive in searching out the support she needs. Emphasize that seeking support to meet challenges is imperative to success in both the workplace and further schooling and training. One positive strategy is to identify the barrier and seek a solution at the front-end of the challenge
 - not to wait until the challenge feels too difficult to overcome. Another positive strategy is to anticipate the challenge or barrier before it happens and plan for it. Based on the needs and life situation of the individual, what challenges may possibly, or even probably, arise? What solutions might be ready and in place if the challenge does arise?
- Participants may require different levels of support to access community agencies such as a health service or food bank, or to make the transition to a next-step organization such as a new training/education setting. For some women, it might be enough to have a brochure

Insights & Tips

Some Community Resources...

- *Faith and cultural communities*
- *Schools*
- *Municipalities or regional government*
- *Health-related or specific illness organizations*
- *Self-Help groups*
- *Counselling services*
- *Government programs such as public health departments*
- *Community centres*
- *Women's groups*
- *Social services agencies*
- *Charitable organizations such as food banks*
- *Community activist groups*
- *Employers*
- *Libraries*
- *Local stores and other businesses*

~ Adapted from: *New Health Partnerships*

tucked away that she may refer to in the future if needed. Others may require more direct and immediate support, dependent upon the need and urgency. Be ready to offer the degree of support required by the individual.

Insights & Tips

Asking for Help

There's so much to accomplish throughout the day that it can become overwhelming. Getting help is often the solution, but asking for help can be difficult. Some feel like it will bruise their ego to ask for help, while others are just too shy or feel awkward. Learn to take the pressure off yourself and ask for what is needed. You'll save yourself from stress and gain more time.

Know to ask for help before frustration and anger take over. This is the first and most important step. If you're an "over-doer" and want to handle things by yourself, it may not be as easy to identify what exactly you'll need help with. Take a few minutes to ponder this.

Leave behind feelings of shame and embarrassment. Just because you're asking for help doesn't mean you're a failure. It's actually wise and a very successful strategy because it will save stress and time.

~ Source: How to Ask for Help
eHow – How to Do Just About Everything

- *Support becomes particularly important as participants enter the final section in this course, where they build their Action Plan and take a self-defined step toward their employment goal. The challenge is to provide the necessary support so that the individual is able to successfully take the step as independently as possible, and to ensure the participant has a support plan in place – including family and organizations – when this course is over.*
- *Provide opportunities for participants to help each other. Encourage participants to share stories, experiences, and solutions/ responses: "This is what worked for me, or my family. This is whom we contacted for support, and this is how they helped us. This is what I'd suggest..."*

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous unit now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the unit outcome* – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.
- *Individualize.* Ask participants to ensure that by the end of the unit, they have identified how they can find community support for personal challenges they may encounter – whether current challenges or future challenges.
- *Note that challenges will be as varied as the individuals in the group.* Each person will be creating a different response or support structure to help her be able to continue with her job search, employment, or training and education.
- *Accommodate personal goals/needs and facilitate independent work.* Check in briefly with individuals about what they'd like to work toward or accomplish during the unit.

Insights & Tips

"The positive message for me was how to manage and balance life so I can work and get more education."

~ Field-test participant



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: Community Groups I Recommend

Present the “Getting Ready” activity. Ask each woman to share with the group, the brochure or other information she has about an organization or agency in the community that provides help or support when people need it.

- What services does the agency offer?
- How does it help people who need support to get through a tough time?
- Where is it located and how can people get in touch?

Listen for anecdotal stories that the participants share voluntarily (rather than you asking) about their own experiences. Encourage conversations, questions, and peer support to provide information about support services. For example, a woman who has had breast cancer and has undergone treatment may offer advice and talk about her own experiences in response to a question asked by another participant, or a brochure brought in from the local Cancer Society. Another woman may have had experiences with a hospice when a member of her family was ill, and can talk about grief counselling or a support group she found to help her deal with the death of a loved one.

Insights & Tips

“This unit’s topic triggered an emotional response from our ‘newest’ newcomer to Canada. As a group we talked with her for some time and tried to offer support to her. Deeper bonds were established within the group, and as a group.”

~ Field-test facilitator

Be compassionate and aware of the emotions some women may feel discussing challenging times in their lives. Understand that some of the women may be experiencing these challenges in the present.

Follow up the activity by asking:

- Are you a person who will seek out help from others when you need it?

Discuss together the different responses, and why some women are reluctant to ask for help. Emphasize that everyone goes through rough patches in her life, or will go through them. Some of us have a strong support system of family and friends. There may be times and situations, however, when we need more support than our families and friends can give us – maybe professional support, financial support, information, advice, or respite. Sometimes it is simply good to talk to someone who has “been there” and understands.

Seeking out help is a positive response to stress and challenges. Knowing how and where to go to access help when it is needed is an important step in coping with whatever gets thrown your way.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Suggested Follow-up Activities

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please create activities that allow participants to find out where and how they can seek out support within their community. These activities have not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 2: Creating a List of Community Support Programs

Create a list of the support agencies and related challenges introduced during the “Getting Ready” Activity, and post.

- Ask the participants if there are other life situations or challenges that are not addressed by these agencies on the list. For example, are they taking care of an aging parent who has been diagnosed with early stages of dementia? Would they like to know about the Alzheimer Society in the area? Do they, on occasion, suffer from feeling “very blue” or depressed, and would like to know more about the services of the Mental Health Association? Add these challenges/situations to the list using a different colour of marker.
- Ask for volunteers to research support agencies or organizations that respond to these situations. Have participants report their findings to the larger group.
- Build a resource library of the brochures and print outs for participants to access when making plans for meeting their own needs and personal challenges. Include community directories. Draw attention to Community Information Centres that can provide an array of information about services available.

Insights & Tips

“We were able to come up with quite a few community support groups together. I typed up the list and gave everyone a copy.”

~ Field-test participant



Activity 3: Visiting a Community Support Program

As a group, visit an organization that provides support in the community. Combine the field trip with a volunteer opportunity. For example, food banks need volunteers to shelf and package food for distribution and a local nursing home may appreciate visits with their elderly residents. Helping out is a good way for participants to become

familiar with services available in the community that they may need to access, and makes the introduction easier for those who find it difficult to seek help.

More Ideas

- *Participate in an awareness or fundraising event* presented by an organization such as the local shelter for women, or the local Cancer Society. Have the group research upcoming community events through a local community calendar, and decide which event and organization they would like to support, and make plans to attend together.
- *Ask the group to choose a charity or support agency* that is important to them, and to plan an awareness activity and/or fundraising event to support it. Encourage the group to keep plans simple – they might distribute agency brochures, put up posters where the course is being run, or collect donations of clothing or others items for an agency. Use the activity as an opportunity for participants to develop and practice planning, communication, and leadership skills.

Insights & Tips

"We took a field trip to visit some important places of support, the public library, The Literacy Group, and The Working Centre which offers free employment support in terms of job search, résumé-writing, computers, free legal aid, assistance with housing issues, cooking classes, ESL conversation classes, employment counsellors, etc., as well as many volunteer opportunities."

~ Field-test facilitator



Activity 4: Stress-Busting Tips for Everyday Living

Pair participants:

1. Ask participants to share with their partner reflections and experiences about how they handle stress in their everyday life: What do they do to alleviate stress?
2. Have the pair make a list of “stress-busting” tips, and then share their list with another pair. Create a Master List.
3. Where relevant and possible, have participants plan and carry out one of the stress-busting tips with their peers. For example, if a group member does yoga, tai chi, meditates or knows massage, have her share her skills with her peers.

Dealing with Greater Stresses

Hand out **Worksheet 57**. Ask participants to read the article, “Getting Help: Where and When,” reprinted from the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Depending upon skill level, you may wish to pair participants, and have them take turns reading the article aloud to each other. The article may also be accessed online at the CMHA website.

Insights & Tips

“I am thinking about my situation and challenges. I hate to think about troubles, because it is stressful. I found out how to find the help I need, and what kind of help is available.”

~ Field-test participant

Have participants follow up the reading assignment by answering the questions at the end of the article about how they might recognize stress in their lives and know when to seek help.

Take the time to talk to each woman individually about her challenges and stresses. If she indicates, or if you suspect, that she is depressed or can’t handle her challenges/stresses, suggest she get professional help. Offer to help her with the information and referral process so she gets the support she needs.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY

Plan a group “stress-busting” session. For example, invite a yoga instructor or meditation/relaxation facilitator to deliver a practical lesson to participants, with a focus on exercises that they can do at home or at work to alleviate stress.

**LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 57

Getting Help

Read the article below reprinted from the ***Canadian Mental Health Association***.

1. What steps and suggestions are made in the article for responding to stress? Is there a suggestion you can use in your life?
 2. How do you know when stress is building up so much that you need help?
-

GETTING HELP: WHEN & WHERE

Most of us go through life solving our day-to-day problems without needing help to cope with our feelings. But sometimes, things get out of hand. A severe illness, an accident or an emotional crisis can overwhelm us, at least temporarily, and suddenly we need help.

How do you know if you need help?

Sometimes the need for help is obvious, and getting it is as simple as phoning for an ambulance or a fire truck. At other times, it can be hard to admit help is needed. This is especially true when your emotions are involved. The problem may be anything from what to do about an aging and increasingly helpless parent to a serious emotional problem such as depression. Here are some of the reasons you may decide you need help:

- You find yourself feeling overwhelmed by feelings of anger or despair, and you cannot enjoy life anymore.
- You used to be healthy, but now you are always feeling a bit sick and you are missing more and more time from work.
- Your finances are out of control, and you are worried about being able to pay the next month's rent or mortgage payment.
- You cannot "get over" the death of someone you loved very much.
- There is too much conflict at home. You are afraid your marriage may break up.
- You are drinking too much or having some other kind of drug problem.
- You are feeling suicidal.

How to find the help you need

Most communities, especially cities and large towns, have many different sources of help, such as:

- If you feel desperate and need help immediately, you can phone or go to the emergency department of your local hospital.
- The front page of your telephone book may have the phone number of a community service referral agency.
- Your telephone book may also have the number of a crisis hotline that you can call.
- Your family doctor can help you find the professional help you need. First, he/she should start by giving you a thorough physical check-up: your problems may not be "all in your head."
- A community organization which provides information services may be able to direct you to a mental health clinic in your area.

What kind of help is available?

There are many different kinds of assistance available, and you should be able to find the help you need within your community through the following sources:

Psychiatrist: Your family doctor may refer you to a psychiatrist who is a medical doctor specially trained in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses. He/she may treat your problems with medication or by psychotherapy (sometimes called "talk therapy"), or a combination of both.

Psychologist: You may decide to seek help from a psychologist, and you do not need a referral from your family doctor to do so. A psychologist will have a doctoral degree from a university but not a medical degree. He/she will use counselling and other methods that do not involve the use of medications. If you plan to see a psychologist, you should remember that his/her services are not necessarily fully covered by public health insurance. You may want to find out if some coverage is available through private insurance (for example, your company benefits plan) or through social assistance. You can often find a psychologist by calling your provincial psychological association.

Other Therapist: Your family doctor or a psychiatrist may refer you to a therapist such as a social worker with specialized training. Again, you should be aware that the services offered may not be covered by an insurance plan.

Self-help Group: You may find it helpful to join a self-help group. These groups provide the mutual support of people who have all had similar experiences. For example, there are groups for people suffering from depression, grief, the trauma of sexual assault, eating disorders, and phobias (a phobia is an irrational, crippling fear of an object, animal or situation). Your local Canadian Mental Health Association branch or another community agency can tell you if there is a local self-help group that can meet your needs. You can also find out if there is a national organization dealing with your problem and request its newsletter.

Other Community Services: You may find that some of your problems can be solved by assistance from agencies outside the mental health system. Sometimes, practical help, such as home nursing care, Meals On Wheels or subsidized door-to-door transportation for people unable to walk, will greatly reduce the stress in your life, either as a care-giver or as a disabled person.

Help From Friends And Others: Sometimes, the help of a trusted family member, a close friend or a member of the clergy for your religion can be a source of support. People close to you can also point you in the direction of the help you need.

How you can learn more

Many communities have information centres that produce lists of available services, which you can view at social service agencies or public libraries. Other sources of information include:

- Books about your problems, available at your public library or local bookstore
- Films, videos and audio tapes
- Courses and workshops offered through community centres, secondary schools, colleges and universities.

Do you need more help?

If you need more information about the resources in your area, contact a community organization, such as the Canadian Mental Health Association, which can help you find additional support.

Here is a situation in my life that causes me stress:

1. Here is a suggestion from the article that I can apply to my life right now:
2. Here is how I will know that my stress has reached the point that I need to seek out more support and help:

Suggested Follow-up Activities

Activity 5, Activity 6 and Activity 7 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use Activity 5, then please create an activity that allows the participant to think about some of the challenges she may be facing and create a plan to help her overcome the challenges. Activity 5 has not been linked to the Essential Skill descriptions provided in appendix 2.



Activity 5: Creating a Support Plan

Present the fact that sometimes, when difficult challenges enter a woman's life they can be so overwhelming that she is unable to keep up other aspects of her life, such as her job, job search, school or further training. In fact, adults are susceptible to quitting or dropping out of programs because of outside stresses, or from falling so far behind it is difficult to continue.

Similarly, life's challenges can negatively affect job performance and a woman's ability to complete her responsibilities and tasks with her normal care and attention. One strategy is to have in place plans for dealing with situations that very well may arise in an individual's life – based on her circumstances – and be ready.

Insights & Tips

"I will have to work on my life at home and my relationship with my common-law husband. I don't have a good support system there and am reminded about it constantly. I don't want to choose between my husband and my career. So, I hope for a miracle. I really believe that more education would be best for me."

~ Field-test participant

Use Worksheet 58 and Worksheet

59 to help each woman anticipate challenges and create a plan for dealing with these challenges in advance. As part of the activity, ask participants to carry out one step of the plan, or make one useful contact that they can call upon if needed in the future. For example, if a woman is presently in an abusive situation, then she could contact the local woman's shelter to find out what to do and where to go in an emergency when she must leave her house immediately. If a woman is worrying about her elderly parents and their nutrition, and it is a

barrier to her attending a next-step training program full-time, or taking a full-time job, then she might contact Meals on Wheels, and see what services they offer. If a woman is dealing with financial problems such as credit card debt, then she might access an agency that helps her get her finances in order.

WORKSHEET 58

Did You Know

Read “Did You Know” the results from a study about the life demands that keep adults from their learning.

1. Which challenges apply to you? Check them off below. Write any details beside the statement.
 2. Do you feel in control? Do you think you are managing the demands of your life?
 3. When you are ready, complete the personal Support Plan thinking about **your** situation and challenges.
-

Did You Know...

Almost half the adults in a study about persistence in learning said that they had life demands that threatened their ability to continue in a program. Some common challenges included:

- Poor health _____
- Fatigue _____
- Lack of time _____
- Childcare issues _____
- Transportation issues _____
- Family's health _____
- Needs of their children _____
- Lack of money and income _____

“The researchers asked adult students to identify negative forces to their learning. The wide range of responses shows that the learning barriers were highly individualized according to personal circumstances. Adults who persisted with their learning were those who were **managing these demands. They felt in control.**”

*Source: “Problem-Solving”, Reaching Out
Project READ Literacy Network*

WORKSHEET 59

*Personal Support Plan*³³

- STEP 1** Think about your own life situation. What is the one challenge that would **most likely** keep you from pursuing a job, keeping a job, or taking further education or training?

- STEP 2** What support would allow you to **keep up** with your learning, job search, or the demands of a job, in the face of this challenge?

- STEP 3** **Who** could help you so that you **can** keep up, either now or in the future? Name a person, agency, or support group. Include contact details. Ask the facilitator if you need suggestions.

- STEP 4** **What** is the first step to putting the support you need in place? Take that first step. Describe it here:

Repeat the 3 steps for other challenges you face.

³³ Adapted from *Reaching Out*. Yvonne Roussy-Heninger & Marianne Paul. Project READ Literacy Network: 1998.



Activity 6: Challenges I've Already Identified

Have participants refer to past work in their portfolios:

- What challenges or barriers did they identify in the “Exploring My Self” module?
- What networks and people did they state that they could draw upon for support?
- Can these same people and networks help with the challenges that participants have identified in this unit?

Insights & Tips

“Some tough challenges came out of this activity – quite personal, and some culturally specific issues.”

~ Field-test facilitator

If the answer to the last question is yes, then ask participants to add these names to their “Support Plan”, and store the revised plan in their portfolio for future reference.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to find information and her approach to learning and applying new knowledge. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 7: Learning Journal

Ask the participant to write an entry in her learning journal about the challenges she faces:

- What does she do to cope when things get tough?
- Is there currently a challenge in her life that she doesn’t know how to cope with?

 **LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to think critically about her situation. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Here is optional computer activity that you may choose to use. This activity has not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

**Activity 8: Computer Option**

Have each participant search online to identify five agencies and websites that provide information and help for a specific challenge that she faces, or may face in the future. Include online support groups and forums. Ask:

- How will the participant know if what she has accessed online is reliable or legitimate? What does she think about each resource she has identified?

You could also have participants create a computer address book that contains contact information for support agencies that can provide information and help with their specific challenges or needs. Use a standard address book such as that attached to their email program.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Gather oral feedback.* Bring participants back together in the circle formation. Do participants now feel more confident that they can deal with challenges? Do they know who or what agency in the community to contact if they need support? What other information do they need, and how can they gain it, either individually or as part of this course?
- *Distribute a simple form for individual feedback and comments.* Ask each woman to fill out the form and leave it for you. A generic Participation Evaluation form is offered in the Introduction section.
- *Introduce the topic or focus of the next unit.* Ask if there is something the women would like to add or make sure they talk about – either as part of the topic or in response to today's session.
- *Read aloud the "Getting Ready" activity* to do before the start of next unit (see below).
- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

Insights & Tips

"The unit was very useful for me. I can see that there are many community centres that can help me. I liked visiting the different places and we found out a lot of information about their support programs. I learned that the city where I live offers me a lot of support agencies that I didn't know about."

~ Field-test participant

GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT UNIT

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next unit:

- *We've explored community as family, friends and networks.* We've explored community as a geographical location and features. We've explored community as labour and market trends – the jobs it has to offer, its demographics, its services and industries. We've explored community as a support system, the agencies and people who can help us when we face challenges.
- *Think about community,* in light of your own life, situation, and future employment:
 - What does your community have to offer **you**?
 - What do **you** have to offer your community?

CLOSING WORDS

“I was 55 years old, unemployed, without references and feeling incapable of earning a living. My self-esteem was lower than low. I cried for about 10 weeks. I was depressed, stressed out, and burned out. Internal obstacles loaded me down and I could not find my way around them. I took EI stress leave and tried to find myself again.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

MAKING DECISIONS

"I had come from working on my own for most of my working life. I did not have co-workers or an employer in my office. In fact, I had very little contact with people and no teamwork experience at all. Learning to accept people does not come over night. I had to find ways to manage any frustration, irritations, judgements and confusions... whatever... I had to manage my feelings so I could manage the entire [Spotlight on Change] course in a positive successful way. This was an imperative learning curve for me because I also needed this skill in order that I fit in with a new working environment that would include other people. I decided I wouldn't return to the same [past] career and that choice meant including people in my day-to-day life."

~Spotlight on Change Participant

UNIT OUTCOME

The participant reflects about what she has learned, relating the information to her personal job search, and making decisions about her future employment goals.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Writing
- Thinking Skills
- Oral Communication

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the activities and information in this unit, reflect on these situations and questions:

- *Community, in one way, is all about “give and take”.* What do you give to your community? What do you take back from your community – what does it offer you?

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- *We've explored community as family, friends and networks.* We've explored community as a geographical location and features. We've explored community as labour and market trends – the jobs it has to offer, its demographics, its services and industries. We've explored community as a support system, the agencies and people who can help us when we face challenges.
- *Think about community,* in light of your own life, situation, and future employment:
 - What does your community have to offer **you**?
 - What do **you** have to offer your community?

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web pages often change, so if links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- *infed* ~ www.infed.org ~ A website offering articles dedicated to exploring informal education, lifelong learning and social action. The site includes copyright information for using the documents with students in a not-for-profit or educational setting. Here is an article that may be of interest to you as the facilitator about the role of the educator in helping people commit to change: www.infed.org-foundations/commitment.htm.

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *Use this unit as an opportunity* for participants to reflect upon and synthesize their ideas about community in order to make plans for their future, and gather the information they need to build their Action Plan in the final part of the program. Bring together the topics and decisions that participants made during the “Exploring My Community” activities so that they can review and consider them as a whole. Focus upon the individual rather than group responses – how can the individual apply what she has learned to promote her personal employment goals? How can she draw upon her community to support her? What can she gain from her community, but also, what does she offer her community – in other words, what can she give back?
- *Since each woman's situation and challenges are unique*, she will need to design how she will draw upon her community. Set up activities so that the participant summarizes her own needs

Insights & Tips

“What will I do differently as a result of this unit? I will see myself as part of community.”

~ Field-test participant

and works to figure out personal solutions and next steps. One woman, for example, may draw upon her community to help her provide childcare, for either her own children or her grandchildren, so that she can take a job. Another woman may have shifted her job goals from when she entered the course based on community labour and market trends, and now needs to make plans to gain a new set of skills through the local college. We've suggested the quilt exercise and metaphor once again to help participants "stitch" together the various pieces and their individual responses. Help each woman to create her own community "quilt".

- *Encourage participants to use the information they've gathered throughout the course to make decisions and enact change in their lives.* The information gathered and the reflections that resulted are truly useful if the participant applies them to future actions to change her life for the better. Prepare the participants to think in terms of enacting change, which is the focus of "Exploring My Future" (the last section of the course), and purpose behind creating an Action Plan.

Insights & Tips

Wise Words

"I believe that in order to thoroughly understand your community, you have to be involved in it."

"At all times and under all circumstances, we have the power to transform the quality of our lives."

~ Source: <http://www.communityservice.wustl.edu/quotes>

Insights & Tips

"I liked most about this unit going deeper on a personal level, exploring community support, and celebrating our successes."

~ Field-test participant

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous sessions now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the unit outcome – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.*
- *Note that it is now time to draw together all that they've learned, and to apply it to shape their own plans. Ask the participants if they feel ready to make decisions about their future plans. What do they still need to know or figure out to be confident they can make good decisions for their future? How can they get this information? How can you, as the facilitator, support them?*
- *Draw attention to the fact that the last sessions in the course focus upon creating an Action Plan. Each participant should now have gathered enough information and have reflected upon the issues important to her so she can create her Action Plan. Encourage participants to talk to you one-to-one if they need more help. Facilitate independent work, supporting the women as they search out for themselves the information they need and the decisions they need to make. Be a sounding board so that participants can work through the decision-making process. Encourage them to help each other.*



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: My Community

Present the “Getting Ready” activity. Use the activity to review and summarize the various ways you’ve explored community in this module, and what community means to the individual.

1. Ask the first the “Getting Ready” activity question: What does your community have to offer **you**?

- *Draw out a range of answers* based on different aspects and understandings of community. Focus on how the individual can gain support from her community, and reach her goals within it.
- *Help the participants to be specific* rather than to generalize – to offer specific ways in which they can draw upon their network and community.

Insights & Tips

“I liked the Getting Ready activity. I liked going out into the community. I wish job shadowing had been longer. It is a new experience for me and I loved it.”

~ Spotlight on Change participant

- *Follow up by posting and reading this statement:*
 - “I believe that in order to thoroughly understand your community, you have to be involved in it.”
- *What do they think is meant by this?* How might being actively involved in their community enrich their lives, and/or help them reach their goals for the future?

2. Present the second “Getting Ready” activity question: What do **you** have to offer your community?

- Remember to view community in its multiple forms and in a broad way, according to the lifestyle, interests and needs of the individual. For example, a participant might be involved

in her community by bringing meals to a chronically ill friend or family member or driving her to treatment. Another person may volunteer at her child's school or her place of worship. Another person might help promote tolerance by teaching others about her culture or religion.

- Help each person identify something **positive she has to offer** to her community – whether a skill, an action, knowledge, a kindness, or a viewpoint or personality trait. Remember that “offerings” do not have to be time-consuming or large! People enact change in their own lives and in their community through small steps and efforts.

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

“I feel comforted [that] I have many chances to be helped. So I’d like to help others too. I am going to volunteer to help others to have a good community.”

~ Field-test participant



Activity 2: Building My Community Profile

Hand out **Worksheet 60 through Worksheet 64**. Have each participant use her portfolio and learning journal entries to explore and summarize what she has learned about her community as it applies to her job search, her employment goals, and the support she needs and can draw upon to help her meet these goals. Use the worksheets to guide her reflections and decision making, and to prepare for creating her Action Plan.

You may wish to hand out and complete the worksheets separately and over time, rather than complete the task all at once.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to find information and her approach to learning and applying new knowledge. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"This [activity] helped me to change or clarify my ideas about job choice."

~ Field-test participant

WORKSHEET 60

My Community

Look through your **portfolio** and **learning journal** to pull together the discoveries you made during the “Exploring My Community” module.

1. Fill in the worksheet below to create a My Community **profile or snapshot picture** of the people, places, services, and labour market trends that will affect your employment plans, and support you as you move towards your future.

 2. Your ideas might have changed over the course of the module. That's okay! Fill in the worksheet to reflect your thoughts now.
-

MY COMMUNITY

Review Worksheets 24 & 26

Think of people and groups (such as your church, temple or mosque) in your life that make up your personal “community”. Write their names on the chart on the following page, and then write a brief note about how you might draw upon them as resources or support.

Here's an example:

Who?	How Can the Person Help?	Anything else?
My neighbour, Fatima	<i>I can count on her to pick the kids up from school if I need to be somewhere – e.g., a job interview</i>	<i>She's a positive person – when I'm down on myself, she makes me laugh and feel better.</i>

<i>THE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE – MY SUPPORT SYSTEM</i>		
Who?	How can this person help me?	Anything else?

WORKSHEET 61

The People in My Life – My Employment Network

Remember that most jobs are found in the “hidden” job market. Think of people from your past and present who might be able to give you a lead to a job opportunity. Write their names below, and then include a note about how they might help you.

Here's an example:

Who?	How do I know this person?	What job lead might they be able to give me?
Janet	<i>She was laid off at the same time as me....</i>	<i>I heard she started up her own business & it's doing well. Maybe she needs some extra help?</i>

THE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE – MY EMPLOYMENT NETWORK		
Who?	How do I know this person?	What job lead might they be able to give me?

WORKSHEET 62

Working in My Community

Review Worksheets 30 & 31.

Here are some facts about where I live that I need to consider when planning for my future employment:

These occupations are currently in demand in my community:

These skills are in currently demand in my community:

Here's how I will use that information in making my own plans for employment:

WORKSHEET 63

Learning in My Community

Review Worksheets 53, 55 & 56.

Review the worksheets in your portfolio that tell you about your Essential Skills, the type of work you might be attracted to or be suited for (entrepreneurial? skilled trades?), and the Essential Skills required for these jobs. Remember that there are many ways you can get training and experience –on the job, apprenticeship, skills training, or going back to school for upgrading or education. What's best for you?

When you are ready, use the table below to help you organize the information.

LEARNING IN MY COMMUNITY		
My job choices for the future	What I still need to learn or do to be ready for the job	Where I can get training, or learn what I need to know or do

WORKSHEET 64

Finding Help in My Community

Review Worksheets 58 & 59.

Think about your own life, challenges, and needs. What outside help is available to you in your community?

Here's an example:

Agency or organization	How to contact them	When I might need their help or why.
The Literacy Group	<i>The office is located on Frederick Street.</i>	<i>I have trouble with reading. They'll match me with a tutor.</i>
The Women's Shelter	<i>The telephone # is:</i>	<i>I'm afraid of my husband.</i>

Finding Help in My Community

Agency or organization	How to contact them	When I might need their help or why.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 3 and Activity 4 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use Activity 4, then please create an activity that allows the participant to think about some of the challenges she may be facing and create a plan to help her overcome them by drawing upon her community.



Activity 3: Exploring My Community

Have each participant create personalized *Exploring My Community* “quilts” by using the personal profile completed in the above activity, in the same manner that *Exploring My Self* quilts were created in Module One, Unit 8.

Ask each participant to complete **Worksheet 65** by filling in each square with a key word or phrase to describe what she has learned about her community and her job search. This will now bring together the information she needs to create her Action Plan in the final sessions. For example:

- People or groups who support her, and she can call upon for advice or information
- Agencies or organizations where she can get help or guidance
- Key facts about her community that affect her job search or future plans: e.g., demographics, labour trends, cultural or geographic factors
- Job(s) she plans to pursue based on community need
- Places or ways she'll get the training or experience she needs
- How she gives back to her community, or will give back in the future.

Stitching it all together!

Next ask each participant to examine and reflect upon the two “quilts” she has done during the course as a whole – the one that summarizes the *Exploring My Self* discoveries, and the other that summarizes the *Exploring My Community* discoveries.

Have the participant write down a minimum of five key points drawn from the “quilt patches” that relate to the jobs she is most strongly considering, or has decided to pursue. How do these key points demonstrate the reasoning behind her job choice? In other words, how do they **directly connect** the decisions she is making for the future to what she has learned about herself and her community? Ask her to place the completed work in her portfolio.

Insights & Tips

“I made a larger copy of the ‘quilt’ worksheet, and I helped the women get oriented to the activity.”

~ Field-test facilitator



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

“What I liked best was job-shadowing, exploring community services, and building my community quilt.”

~ Field-test participant

WORKSHEET 65

My Community Quilt

Make an *Exploring My Community* quilt to help you synthesize and summarize what you've learned in this module:

1. Use the “Exploring My Community” quilt diagram on the next page (you may want to redraw it on a larger piece of paper).
2. Fill in the squares with information that describes **your** community.
3. For example: write the names of people, groups, agencies, and places of learning or training programs that can help you reach your employment goals; key facts about the town or city where you live (e.g., labour trends, jobs in demand, population), and ways you can GIVE back to your community.
4. Make it a personal “quilt”!

	My Community							
	My Community							
	My Community							
	My Community							
	My Community							
	My Community							
	My Community							
	My Community							
	My Community							



Activity 4: Enacting Change in My Life

Ask the participant to reflect on the following statement:

“At all times and under all circumstances, we have the power to transform the quality of our lives.”

~ Werner Erhard

Ask the participant to write an entry in her learning journal about change – what changes does she now feel ready to make in her life? How will she make these changes happen?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her ability to think critically about her situation. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 5: Exploring My Future

Talk to participants about the Action Plan section of the course, and explain that they are now ready for the next parts of the program, where they will put together their personal Action Plan for the future, and initiate a step towards setting it in motion.

Let participants know that they’ll get help creating their Action Plan. This checklist activity is designed to help them make sure they’ve done the work they need for doing the Action Plan, and to identify any work they still need to do. Hand out **Worksheet 66**.

- *Have participants work through the Exploring My Future Checklist. You may wish to do this individually, in pairs, or as a group – whatever suits the participants.*

- Use the checklist as an opportunity to introduce and prepare the women for the Action Plan they'll complete in the next session(s).
- Ask the women to analyze their checklists. Are there items they couldn't check off? What do they need to do to be able to check off those items in preparation for their Action Plan? How will they go about doing these things?

LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Insights & Tips

"This unit helped demonstrate my reasoning behind my job choice, that directly connect the decisions I am making to what I have learned about myself and my community."

~ Field-test participant

WORKSHEET 66

Exploring My Future

This worksheet is designed to help you decide what you still need to work on to get ready for doing your Action Plan. Check off the items that you have completed. Work on the ones that you haven't completed yet.

- I have participated in one of the following activities:
 - Job shadowing
 - Volunteering
 - Interviewing a worker, student or teacher in a field related to my employment goals.
- I have thought about the information I've gathered in my portfolio and the reflections in my learning journal, and **made a decision about the job or occupation** that I will pursue further.
- I can state **why this job or occupation is a good choice for me**, and have outlined the reasons, either orally or a part of a writing assignment in my portfolio or learning journal.
- I know **what this job or occupation involves**, and the **Essential Skills** that are required to do it.
- I know **what I need to learn** for this job or occupation, and **how and where I can gain these skills** in my community.
- I have made a decision about the **path** I will take to gain these skills, or that will lead me towards employment in this job or occupation.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 6 and Activity 7 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please create an activity where participants share what they learned from their informational job interview, job shadowing, or volunteer experience. These activities have not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2



Activity 6: My Community - What I Learned

In Unit 4 of Module 2, participants were asked to learn more about an occupation or job of their choice through one of the following:

- Carrying out a conversation or conducting an informational job interview with someone who works in the field.
- Setting up and participating in a formal job shadowing experience.
- Volunteering to do a job that required similar skills (for example, with a charity or non-profit group).

Insights & Tips

"Job shadowing made me realize I CAN work. Getting out into the field, going to a real workplace, made me understand [that] better."

I am so excited. It is wonderful to go job shadowing!

~ Spotlight on Change participants

Have participants give a presentation to the group about their experiences:

- What did they choose to do?
- Who did they meet?
- What did they learn? Did their experience change or clarify their ideas about their job choice?

Give participants the opportunity and time to be as creative as they wish – some may want to put together a computer slide show or a video/photo album of their experiences. Others may wish to put together a poster presentation or provide samples from the workplace they visited. Others may talk about their experiences.

Not all participants may be ready to do this activity at this time. Schedule a few presentations at a time according to who is ready and willing. You may also wish to have participants simply share their experiences informally in conversation.

Insights & Tips

"Seven of the participants went out [of the class setting] to do job shadowing or volunteer orientation. One went to a library, one to a community centre, and five to a nursing home. One participant didn't feel ready for a job yet, and as her next step is registering for the LINC program [Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada] and after that plans to volunteer at The Working Centre."

~ Field-test facilitator



Activity 7: Computer Option

Do you know how to download and do a photo slideshow on the computer, or how to put a video clip on the computer? Explore these applications on your computer. Then take photos or shoot a video, and make a slideshow or a video presentation to show the group. Here are some ideas for subject matter:

- Your volunteer, job-shadowing, or informational job interview experience – what you did and what you learned
- The job or occupation you've chosen to pursue
- Your community – what it offers
- Your "job pitch" – why you're suited and qualified for the job you want.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Gather oral feedback.* Bring participants back together in the circle formation. Discuss the module as a whole; do the participants feel they know their community better? How will the information they've explored and gathered better prepare them to find the job they want?
- *Discuss the topic or focus of the next session(s).* Emphasize again that the women will now work to use the information they've gathered, and the decisions they've made, to create a personalized Action Plan. Answer questions about the nature and purpose of the Action Plan. An Action Plan is a blueprint to help them reach their employment goals. They will create a step-by-step plan, and then take one of the steps to bring them closer to their employment goals. It's not necessarily about taking big steps – but some little steps in the direction they want to head – and to enact change in their lives in the ways they want.
- *Note that the final session(s) will also give them the opportunity to put together what they need as individuals to take the next step towards their employment goal – whether that is creating a résumé, completing the application process to a training opportunity, or improving specific Essential Skills related to the occupation they've chosen.* The choice is theirs!
- *Distribute a simple form for individual feedback and comments.* Ask each woman to fill out the form and leave it for you. A generic Participation Evaluation form is offered in the Introduction section.

Insights & Tips

"This unit helped me to prepare for creating my Action Plan. The most useful things were going out into the community, learning what my community has to offer me, and how I will make changes in my life."

~ Field-test participant

- *Answer questions.* After the group disperses, make yourself available to chat and answer questions or concerns that individuals are more comfortable raising one-to-one.

GETTING READY FOR THE ACTION PLAN

This exercise is designed to help you prepare for the next unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage you to think about the topic in advance so you may participate fully. Here is the “Getting Ready” activity for the next (and final) unit:

- Think about a time when you made a big change in your life. For example, maybe you got married, or your child was born, or you decided to come to Canada:
 - How did you go about getting ready for the change?
 - Did you make a plan?
 - Were there steps involved to prepare?
 - If so, what were the steps that made up your plan?

CLOSING WORDS

“The Spotlight on Change program allowed me to explore the skills I have, the type of work I want and the steps I need to take to reach my employment goals.”

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

SPOTLIGHT ON

Change

Action Plan: Exploring My Future

OUTCOME

The participant creates an Action Plan for employment or training based on her needs and goals, and sets this Action Plan in motion by initiating the step of her choice.

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CREATING MY ACTION PLAN

EXPLORING MY FUTURE

"I am more confident now. Learning about myself has been so very helpful."

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

OUTCOME

The participant creates an Action Plan for employment or training based on her needs and goals, and sets in motion this Action Plan by initiating the step of her choice.

SKILLS FOR WORK, LEARNING AND LIFE

The activities in this unit directly promote these Essential Skills:

- Thinking Skills
- Continuous Learning
- Document Use

For more information on the nine Essential Skills, please visit the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada website.

GETTING READY – FOR THE FACILITATOR

This exercise is designed for you to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon your emotions, experiences, values, and thoughts. It is meant to inspire your planning and to help you view the unit from the perspective of the participants.

Before working with the activities and information in this unit, reflect on these situations and questions:

- What is a major change you've made in your life in recent years?
- How did you plan or prepare for that change?

GETTING READY – FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

This preliminary exercise is designed for the participant to prepare for the unit by reflecting upon her emotions, experiences, values, thoughts and hopes for the future. It is meant to encourage her to think about the topic in advance so that she may participate fully and influence the direction of the unit to suit her needs.

- Think about a time when you made a big change in your life. Maybe you got married, or your child was born, or you decided to come to Canada:
 - How did you go about getting ready for the change?
 - Were there steps involved to prepare?
 - Did you make a plan?
 - If so, what were the steps that made up your plan?

REACHING OUT – SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES

Here are resources the facilitator and the participants may use to support the unit and their learning. Remember that web pages often change. If links are not current, use a search engine to find up-to-date information.

- **Ontario Skills Passport (OSP), Skills and Work Habits for the Workplace** ~ <http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca>. This Ontario Ministry of Education, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, offers a variety of resources and tools useful to participants and facilitators. Included is a *Create a Work/Training Plan* tool.
- **Create an Action Plan ~ The Career Planning Programme,** www.careers.ed.ac.uk/CPP/Making_Plans/action_plan.htm. This

University of Edinburgh site offers an easy to read explanation of making an Action Plan, and also provides a downloadable template as another example of how to set up an Action Plan. The home page of the website offers quick links to employment planning information you may find useful. Visit www.careers.ed.ac.uk.

MAKING IT WORK – FACILITATION SUGGESTIONS

- *This final part of the course focuses directly on the participant creating an Action Plan.* “Exploring My Future” provides an opportunity for the participant to bring together the information she has gathered and learned about herself, her community, and her future employment, and create a plan to act upon her decisions. The decisions that participants will need to make to do their Action Plans are not ones they haven’t thought about previously. They’ve gathered and researched the information throughout the program. Refer to related worksheets and previous activities. Encourage participants to look over work they’ve stored in their portfolio and their learning journal.
- *The session is also designed for the participant to set in motion a first step or task of her choice from her Action Plan.* This is an important part of the end stages of the course! It ensures the Action Plan becomes a tool that the participant uses to guide her towards her employment goals. It also serves as a transition, helping to increase the likelihood that she will continue the Action Plan when the program is over.
- *Each person will reach a different conclusion about what she wants for her future,* and there will be an array of pathways and first steps within the group. Your job as facilitator is to support each

Insights & Tips

“Some of the women had decided they needed to improve their basic literacy skills as the first step in their Action Plan. They visited a community-based agency together as part of a field-trip, and signed up for tutoring.”

~ Field-test facilitator

individual in designing and carrying out her chosen plans. Encourage participants to follow their dreams, and help them find ways to do so.

- *More than anything else, you want the Action Plan to be realistic and achievable.* Help the individuals create plans that are workable, and that they can implement within the framework of their lives, and life's demands. Smaller achievable steps are more useful than larger plans that might not be realistic.
- *Schedule class time to allow the participants to complete the Action Plan* and the work involved in taking that first step or action. It is probable that the process of doing the Action Plan, and completing an associated task or step, will span more for than a single session. Plan independent and self-directed time to allow participants to work on their own first steps.
- *The Action Plan process and templates offered are suggestions.* Adapt them to suit the needs of your participants. The Action Plan should bend to the needs of the individual!

GETTING STARTED

The purpose of this segment is to introduce the unit's outcome and agenda, and reach agreement about what participants would like to work on as a group and individually. Here are some ideas for doing that – you, as the facilitator, may have other ideas.

- *Give participants the opportunity to share news that has occurred since they last met, and to reflect upon the previous sessions now that they've had the time to think more about it.*
- *Review the unit outcome* – the desired results. Review the agenda as it relates to the outcome. Adapt according to the wishes and comments of the group.
- *Celebrate that participants have now reached* the point where they are ready to use the work they have completed and the things

they have discussed to make plans for the future. Their work in the program is almost complete – but not quite. There's an exciting and important bit of work still to do. This final part of the course is called "Exploring My Future." Participants will create a personal Action Plan, and then take one first step to setting it into motion. The Action Plan pulls together the decisions each woman has made as part of this course. Emphasize that the activities are designed to help guide participants through the process of creating an Action Plan. At the end of the program, each individual will have a personalized Action Plan to help guide her future actions.

- *Give each woman the responsibility* of making sure she gets the help and support she needs to complete the final tasks. Introduce the following checklist to outline what each participant should aim to accomplish in this last phase of the course:

I HAVE...

- Created an **Action Plan** based on my choices for the future.
- Set in motion my Action Plan by **completing one of its tasks, actions or steps.**



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills and her ability to work with others. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK



Activity 1: Big Plans!

Present the “Getting Ready” activity. Use the activity to draw out from the group the concept of breaking a big task down into smaller tasks in order to make it easier to do, and more manageable.

1. *Ask each woman to share with the group her story about a time when she made a big change in her life. During the conversation, touch upon the following questions:*
 - How did she get ready for the change?
 - Did she make a plan?
 - What were the steps involved?
2. *Pick one or two of the stories as examples to demonstrate the planning process.* Choose a story where the woman had to take three major steps (or so) to plan and initiate the change, or to prepare for the change.
3. *Together outline the major steps* on flip chart paper and post.
4. *Relate, to the process of creating a personal Action Plan,* the idea of breaking a goal or a large task into smaller steps.
5. *Finally, have the women apply what they've discussed to their own story.* Can they break the process of achieving the change into its steps?



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her oral communication skills, her ability to work with others and her thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 2 and Activity 3 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please create an activity that allows the participant to identify the major step(s) she'll need to take to reach her employment goal, and the support and actions that will help her get there.



Activity 2: Step-by-Step

Hand out **Worksheet 67**. Participants may wish to refer to their portfolio to help with their planning.

Ask each participant to think of the employment decisions she has made during this course as she completes the worksheet. Ask:

- What employment decision did you make? What do you want for your future?
- What are the major or “giant” steps you need to take towards your employment goal?

Then ask the participant to view the steps as part of a timeline:

- In what order will she complete the steps?
- What will she need to do in the immediate future, a little down the road, and then further into the future?

Let the participant know that the activity will help her with her Action Plan. Have her store the worksheet in her portfolio.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman’s participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 67

Step-by-Step

What do you want for your future? What occupation or job have you chosen based on what you've learned about yourself and your community?

Write your employment decision in the box below.

Here's what I want for my future:

How will you get there? Write down the major or "giant" step(s) you need to take to reach what you want. Refer to your learning portfolio to help you.

MY STEP(S):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Are the steps in the order that you'll need to take them?
If not, put them in order.

Add more steps if you need them.



Activity 3: Mapping It Out

Use this activity to help the participants prepare in greater detail for their Action Plan by identifying challenges, decisions or smaller tasks they'll need to solve or complete to take the major or "giant" step(s) they've identified.

Hand out **Worksheet 68**. Participants may wish to draw their own worksheet map to better illustrate their thoughts.

Ask participants to brainstorm the things they'll need to do to take their major or "giant" step. Have them write down what "pops" into their head. For example, if the participant wants to go to a specific training and education program, she might need to fill out and submit an application.

Next, hand out **Worksheet 69**. Ask participants to choose one of the items they've identified during the brainstorming activity above, and make specific plans for completing or solving it. For example, if she needs an application, where can she get it? Who can help her?

Insights & Tips

"The participants liked the 'cloud' activity. It helped them give voice to things they needed to think about and address."

~ Field-test facilitator

Touch base with each woman while she does the worksheets. You might find that the activity helps her to identify the task or smaller step she can take to set in motion her finalized Action Plan. For example, the participant who needs to complete and submit an application could decide to do that task as part of the course, taking a step to set in motion her plans for the future.

Use the activities to identify challenges the individual faces before she can achieve her major step and possible resolutions. For example, a woman with mobility issues may need to further research that the place where she will pursue further training and education is easily accessible to her.

Let the participant know that the activity will help her with her Action Plan, and have her store the worksheets in her portfolio. Depending upon the individual's future plans, she may wish to repeat the worksheets for the other major steps she needs to take.



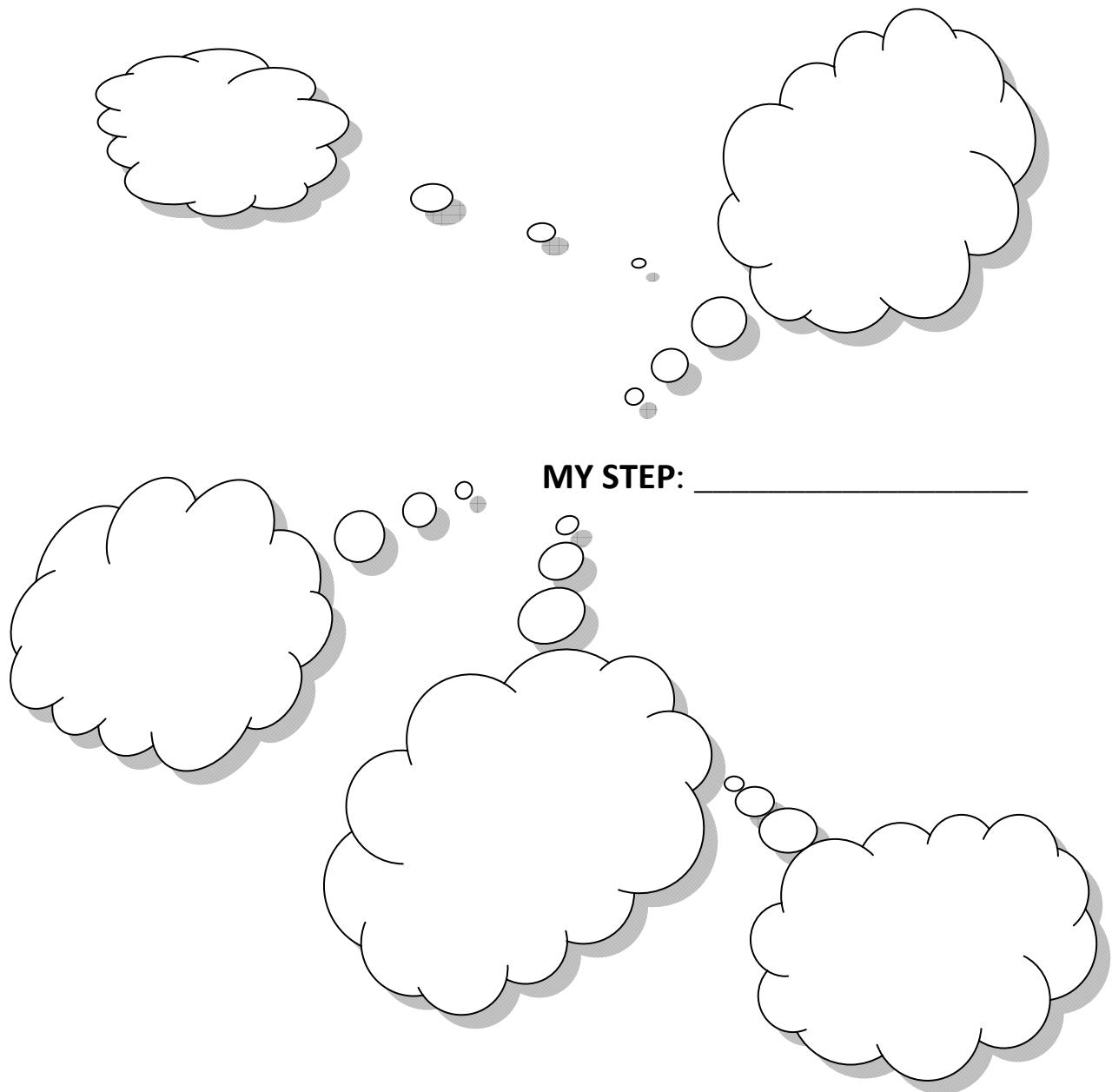
LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

WORKSHEET 68

Brainstorming

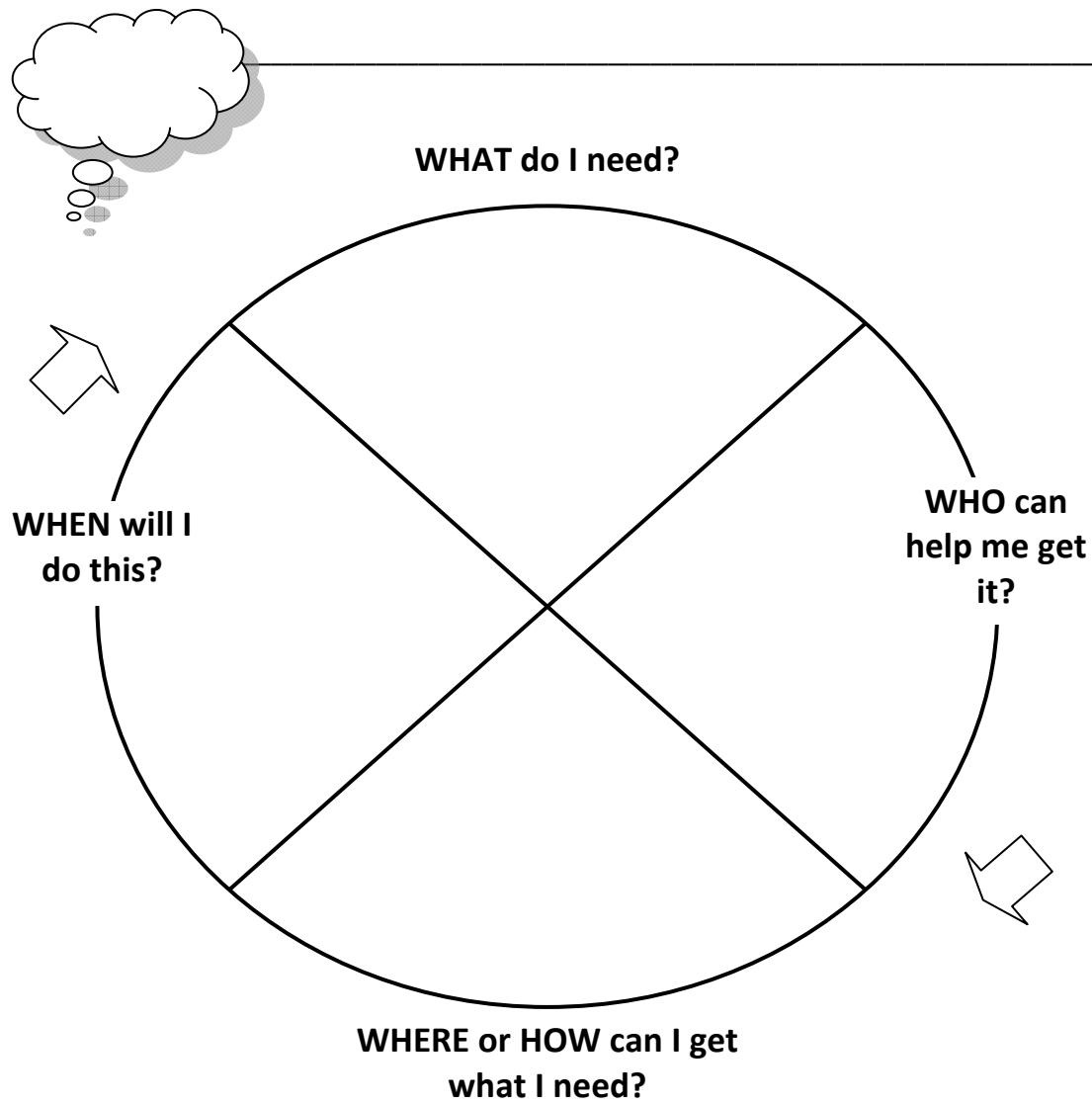
Think about the things you will have to do, learn, or consider, before you take a **major or giant step** towards your future employment goal. Map them out below by writing one thing in each “cloud”.



WORKSHEET 69

What, Who, Where/How and When

Choose an item from your brainstorming activity. Write it down in the space beside the “cloud”. Make plans to solve or complete the item. “Go” around the circle. Write the answers to **what, who, where/how and when** within each quarter. Be specific.





Activity 4: Setting My Plans into Motion

Remind participants of the remaining tasks to be completed during the last stages of the course. Participants will:

- Create an Action Plan based on her choices for the future.
- Set in motion her Action Plan by completing a related task, action or step.

Hand out **Worksheet 70**. Review the list together. Some women may already have completed a task that sets their future plans in motion. Other women may need to complete their Action Plan before being able to identify a task or work on it. That's fine!

Use the worksheet to help the participants identify a useful task that they might complete, or to identify a task they've already completed that they feel has helped them set their future plans in motion. Provide independent work time in class as required, and the support needed by the individual to complete the task.

If participants have done Activities 2 and 3, then they will have some ideas about what they need to do in order to take steps towards their future plans. In these cases, refer to Worksheets 67, 68 and 69.



LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking skills. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

Worksheet 70

Setting in Motion My Plans for the Future

Here are some ideas for you to consider. Check off those that interest you and those that will help **you** set in motion **your** plans for the future.

- Visit your “next-step” school or place of training, and talk to a counsellor about the program, the requirements, and how to enrol.
- Get an application form and apply for an apprenticeship program, or another learning or training opportunity
- Visit a community agency and set in place the support you need to be able to continue with your Action Plan.
- Write a résumé that reflects your experiences and skills related to your job or occupation choice.
- Improve an Essential Skill area required by your job or occupation choice by completing related learning activities.
- Do further research into the opportunities within your community related to your job or occupation choice.
- Do something completely different!

The choice is yours – what step would you like to take to set in motion your Action Plan and move towards your employment goal? How can your facilitator help you?

Here's what I'll do: _____

Here's how the facilitator can help me:



Activity 5: Putting Together My Action Plan

Review with participants some of the major accomplishments and decisions they've made as part of the program. They've come a long way!

- *Participants have now made employment-related decisions based upon their personal needs, life situation, skills and experiences, and their community.*
- *From their work in this program, they know what they need to learn and do to get where they want to be. They know the essential skill areas that are important to the job they want, and whether they need to improve these areas.*
- *They also know the potential challenges or barriers they may face along the way, and have figured out responses to them. They've identified what people and organizations they can call upon for support.*

Insights & Tips

"I found it was important to keep the Action Plan and related tasks simple. I helped participant break the task into smaller steps when the individual needed it."

"It took us about a week of classes, meeting each afternoon for about three hours, to complete the Action Plan, the preliminary exercises leading up to it, and setting in motion a first step."

~ Field-test facilitators

Talk about the fact that the Action Plan is a tool for bringing together this information for easy reference as they take those steps toward their employment goals. When they leave this program, encourage them to keep their Action Plan in a place where they can refer to it often, and use it as a guide as they take those steps.

Hand out the Action Plan, and review the major sections as a group to familiarize participants with the document. Answer questions. Encourage participants to use their portfolio to help them fill in the Action Plan – give assistance as needed. You may wish to do drafts of the Action Plan, so that participants leave the program with a revised and “clean” copy.

Set up individual meetings with each participant to review her completed Action Plan. Help her refine it as necessary and provide support for her to set it in motion.

 **LINK TO ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

As a result of a woman's participation in this activity, you should have a sense of her critical thinking skills, and her ability to use and create a simple document. For more information check out the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.

MY ACTION PLAN

My Name: _____

My **employment decision** - the job or occupation in which I want to find employment:

In general, these are the Essential Skills, education and training, and/or experiences I need to gain to be ready to work in this field:

Essential Skills	Education & Training	Experiences

Here are the **major steps** I will take to get ready to work in the job or occupation of my choice, and the people or agencies I will contact to help me set the steps in motion:

Step 1	Setting the step in motion...
Step 2	Setting the step in motion...
Step 3	Setting the step in motion...

Here are **people and agencies** I can contact, and how to contact them, when I need support or encouragement to reach my goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Here are some **smaller steps or actions** I will take immediately, or in the near future, that will help me get started on my Action Plan:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Timeline - here are key **dates** that I want to note and work towards:

Date	What I plan to have accomplished...

“I know that an Action Plan is just that – a plan. I understand that my plan can be changed along the way. The important thing is to keep moving towards my employment goals – step by step – and to seek support and guidance when needed to be able so I can continue along the path I’ve set for myself.”

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Activity 6 and Activity 7 are suggested as follow-up activities. If you choose not to use these activities, then please create an activity that allows the individual to reflect upon her plans for the future and another activity that facilitates participants celebrating the accomplishments and experiences they've shared. These activities have not been linked to the Essential Skills descriptions provided in Appendix 2.



Activity 6: Reflecting upon My Action Plan

Ask the participant to reflect upon her Action Plan and her plans for the future:

- Does she feel confident that she can make her plans a reality?
- How does she feel about the first step she has taken to set in motion her Action Plan?
- What will she do if she needs help along the way?
- Does she have any other thoughts she would like to write in her learning journal as the program draws to a close?

Insights & Tips

"I think one of the reasons that this course was so effective was that the women were given a lot of time to discuss 'things' and write and think about their lives – also the positive feedback they received from each other was invaluable – the participants really felt the course was designed for them (women over 40 years of age)."

~ Field-test facilitator



Activity 7: Celebrate!

Plan together a celebratory event or closing to the program. For example, you might hold a graduation ceremony, and present each individual with a certificate to mark her participation in the program. Participants might plan a potluck luncheon or dinner. Each woman might take a brief turn at being "valedictorian," sharing her thoughts

and hopes for the future, and reflecting upon the journey they have taken together. Or you might do something else altogether! Brainstorm ideas, and help participants set in motion a celebration that is meaningful to them, and that celebrates their strengths and learning – how far they've come, what they've accomplished, and their plans for the future.

WRAP UP

(Final 30 minutes of the day)

- *Gather oral feedback.* Provide lots of opportunity for the participants to share their thoughts about the session and their Action Plans. Was the process of creating an Action Plan useful? How will they use their Action Plan when they leave the program? Do they have suggestions for improving the Action Plan process and document? Do they feel confident they have set in place the support, resources and other information they need to take steps toward their employment goals? Provide an opportunity for the participants to reflect upon the program as a whole:
 - What do they view as the most important things they have learned about themselves and their communities?
 - What can you do to make the program better?
- *Acknowledge emotions,* and provide time for participants to interact with each other, and share their thoughts and feelings about their friendships and the bonds that have been created

Insights & Tips

"About halfway through the course, I found within me that I can do a lot for myself and my family, and that I can be independent because I have all the skills to find and do work."

"You showed us the tools we have for reaching our goals."

~ Field-test participants

through their common experiences and their learning discoveries.

- *Celebrate successes* - what participants have accomplished together and individually. Make an effort to ensure that each woman leaves feeling positive about herself, her participation in the program, and the gains she has made. Help her recognize and articulate these gains.
- *Meet with each woman individually* to help her reflect upon and draw together the decisions she has made, and to ensure she has the support to take her next steps. Provide support and follow-up as needed.
- *Gather individual hard copy feedback about the program as a whole.* Ask each woman to fill out the form and leave it for you. A generic Participation Evaluation form is offered in the Introduction section.

CLOSING WORDS

"After this course, I will continue to learn."

~ Spotlight on Change Participant

APPENDIX 2

ESSENTIAL SKILLS DESCRIPTIONS

The majority of the activities in this curriculum have been linked to most of the Essential Skills developed by HRSDC. Below are descriptions of each of the Essential Skills referred to in the curriculum. The levels indicated represent the level of skills that is required or may be achieved to successfully complete the activities.

The information in the appendix has been taken from the HRSD website, which you can find at: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/home.shtml.

The Essential Skill of Reading Text is not specifically addressed or linked to the activities in the curriculum. This is because it is not the intent of the curriculum to improve a participant's reading skills. In fact, to be successful a participant will need fairly good reading skills.

Document Use:

- Refers to tasks that involve a variety of information in which words, numbers, icons and other visual characteristics (eg., line, colour, shape) are given meaning by their spatial arrangement. For example, graphs, lists, tables, blueprints, schematics, drawings, signs and labels are documents used in the world of work.

ES Level 2 – Complexity of the document:

Document is simple; multiple pieces of information are provided (e.g., a simple table).

ES Level 2 – Complexity of finding/entering information:

A low level of inference is required; information found or entered in the document matches the information required; the information needed is fairly evident.

ES Level 2 – Complexity of information use:

Information available may be rearranged for entry onto the document.

Writing

Includes:

- writing texts and writing in documents (for example, filling in forms)
- non-paper-based writing (for example, typing on a computer)

ES Level 1 – Length and purpose of writing:

Writing is less than a paragraph and it is done to organize, remind or inform.

ES Level 1 – Style and structure:

Writing is informal and intended for small familiar audiences (e.g., co-workers); pre-set formats are used.

ES Level 1 – Content of the writing:

Writing captures concrete, day-to-day matters of immediate concern (e.g., completing forms requiring only brief written entries).

Oral Communications:

- pertains primarily to the use of speech to give and exchange thoughts and information by workers in an occupational group.

ES Level 1 – Range and complexity of communication:

Content is highly predictable; interaction is with one person at a time, face-to-face on a familiar matter; failure to communicate may result in an unsuccessful interaction, but the interaction is not critical.

ES Level 2 – Range and complexity of communication:

Moderate oral communication demands in basic work-related or social interaction. Includes: exchanging information, obtaining information by asking questions, following multi-step directions, presenting and discussing simple options.

ES Level 2 – Range and complexity of information:

Moderate range of subject matter, familiar topics, usually one main issue. Language is both factual or concrete and abstract; information content is moderately complex and detailed.

Working with Others:

This essential skill focuses on the extent to which people work with others to carry out their tasks in various types of work contexts (working alone, working jointly with a partner or helper, working as a member of a team, participating in supervisory or leadership activities).

Continuous Learning:

This essential skill focuses on the ongoing process of acquiring skills and knowledge. Learning can happen in many situations both on-the-job and off.

Thinking Skills – Critical Thinking:

At this time there is no essential skills description of what critical thinking entails. In general, critical thinking is about how to think, not what to think. Critical thinking refers to evaluating what is read, heard, or observed in order to judge its validity or worth. Learning to use critical thinking skills on a consistent basis can help the participant to become more actively engaged with and involved in the learning environment and process.

Computer Use:

- The variety and complexity of computer use will vary in the workplace from job to job and within levels of some occupational groups.

ES Level 2 –

Tasks will require the use of several, familiar software features such as the simple formatting of text; Software is used for a limited number of functions – such as the production of letters or memos in standard format. Software is set up by someone else and is used with “default” settings.