# Teaching Networking Skills:
Paving a Way to Jobs and Careers

By Allison Fleming, Cecilia Gandolfo, & Colleen Condon

Teaching Networking Skills: Paving a Way to Jobs and Careers

Authors

Allison Fleming, Cecilia Gandolfo, & Colleen Condon

Special contributors: David Temelini & Quinn Barbour

NEW ENGLAND REHABILITATION CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

NERCEP

A project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston

ICI UMASS BOSTON

For more information, contact

Publications Office
Institute for Community Inclusion
UMass Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, Massachusetts 02125
617/287-4300 (voice); 617/287-4350 (TTY)
ici@umb.edu

This manual is an update to: Gandolfo, C., Gold, M., Marrone, J., & Whelan, T. (1996)
Building Community Connections: Designing a Future that Works. Institute for
Community Inclusion, Children's Hospital Boston and UMass Boston.

www.nercep.org • www.communityinclusion.org

Table of Contents

Introduction and Purpose

School-to-work transition for youth with disabilities has gained significant attention since the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, when transition planning became mandated as part of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. Students and their families often rely on the help of school or adult service professionals to help explore career options and find a job. While this is a good starting point, solely relying on these professions may limit opportunities for the young adult.

Promising practices in transition programs highlight the role of friends, family members, and neighbors as key stakeholders in the career development process as they may be able to help introduce the individual to additional opportunities to explore.

Networking, or connecting with people who may be able to help with career exploration or point to others who may help, is a learned skill that most students need to develop. Students are frequently reluctant or don't think to tap into their networks for assistance and guidance. This curriculum helps students to develop and refine their networking skills in order to approach these important sources of information for career exploration and job possibilities. Students should be encouraged to develop good habits in social interaction and take interest in their community, and to practice networking as well.

Paid employment during high school exposes students to the world of work, but more importantly, it provides an opportunity to develop skills and gain experience and a feeling of competence that will be required for success later on. Work experience has also been associated with improved social skills, independent living skills, and better jobs with higher wages. While some students know what will be next for them after high school, they can benefit from discussing those plans with the people in their network and by starting to explore additional opportunities and resources. Many students, however, do not have a clear picture of their future. For them, their network of connections can be an invaluable resource to explore opportunities, learn about required training and education, identify necessary skills and experience for certain fields, and seek options for hands-on experience through work, internship, and mentorship.

This manual, designed to be incorporated in school-to-work transition programs, also applies to other groups of individuals with limited work experience. Through this curriculum, students practice and put into use networking skills such as: identifying their own network, approaching others, talking about their skills and interests, learning about what employers look for, exploring careers and job options, and exhibiting good business etiquette. Activities vary to accommodate diverse learning styles, and the trainer can select the lessons that best fit the needs of the group.

Running the workshops

Student participation is an important learning dynamic in this curriculum. The more interactive and engaged the students are, the more they will gain from the workshop content. Of course, some will become more involved than others. Trainers may need to supportively pull the quieter students into participation and facilitate even discussion among the total group.

Sessions are structured around discussion, group exercises, and homework. Each unit focuses on one or two major topics in networking and career exploration; the homework is designed to help the students put the discussion into practice. The first page of every unit lists the discussion, the homework, and the materials needed. Below those core activities are optional exercises that trainers may select based on the needs and interests of the group members. Some of the optional exercises are more advanced and are geared toward students who like numbers and statistics. Other optional exercises are for students who need to break down the larger discussion into a more focused presentation on a certain topic- for example, why someone would take a tour of a business and how to set one up.

This curriculum is meant to be flexible, allowing the trainer to customize the group experience. The original intent in developing this manual was to focus on students with disabilities. However, the pilot phase included groups of students and then adults with limited work experience. The materials and discussions are easily modified to replace school-based examples with situations that adults will identify with. For instance, one of the discussions about what employers look for includes a question to the group about hiring a new teacher for the school. That example can be changed to ask about hiring for a job that the group members will more readily relate to.

There are "samples" of some of the exercises that have been completed for you. These should be used at the trainer's discretion. Some students might like the example handouts to help them follow along, while others, such as those with limited reading capacity, may not find them useful, or even may consider them distracting.

Use of a flip-chart or whiteboard is helpful in keeping the group on topic and acknowledging good ideas for follow-up. These are particularly useful during individual brainstorming; trainers can record ideas on flip-chart paper and then hand the page to the student at the end of the session to serve as a reminder of all the suggestions offered during the brainstorming. In addition, trainers should try to connect with other people involved with the student to help him or her follow through on any leads or ideas generated by the group.

The use of this curriculum can be a helpful starting point for students as they begin to explore potential careers or jobs for their future. It encourages students to take initiative and self-advocate. While this self-direction will serve students well, it is important to support them as they gain momentum and make sure they have access to help needed in taking the next steps. This should lead to the development of stronger skills and capacity to become more independent in career exploration and with job pursuits in the future.

Unit #1

Overview
&
Introductory Exercise

Goals

To have students and trainers get to know each other and provide an overview of what to expect to learn about networking.

Unit Plan #1

Exercise: Interesting and Exciting Jobs
Materials: "Interesting and Exciting Jobs" handout
Materials: "Interesting and Exciting Jobs" flip chart outline

Presentation: Goals of the Workshop
Materials: "Goals" handout

Homework: How Did You Get Your Job?

Optional Exercise: Best/Worst Job
(target audience: students who have had some employment experience and are able to talk about what they liked and did not like about certain jobs)
Materials: "Best Job/Worst Job"
Materials: "Best Job/Worst Job" flip chart outline

Optional Exercise: Which of These Jobs?
(target audience: students who learn best visually and who need to explore career options)
Materials: "Which of These Jobs?" handout

Introduction to the Workshop

Key Point

Introduce the workshop to the group.

Facilitator's Directions

- Have packets ready for students and give them out as participants enter the room.
- Point out the "Interesting and Exciting Jobs" exercise and ask students to begin working on it as you wait for everyone to get settled.

Suggested Script

Welcome to the networking training. As we prepare to begin, please take a few moments to go through the packet you have received. Please write your first name on the name tag and read through the agenda. This will tell you what to expect during each chapter.

In this workshop, we will be talking about using the people you know, as well as the people they know, in order to learn about career or job interests. We will spend time helping you understand how these people can help you with your career choices.

In order for you to benefit from this workshop, it is important for you to be an active participant. That means you should feel free to ask questions and to add your thoughts and ideas relating to networking at any time.

Throughout each chapter we will be using the terms "networks" and "personal connections." When we use these terms, we are referring to the people you see and interact with in all the activities you do (and have done) at work, in school, at home, and in your community. They may include family or close friends, former bosses or co-workers, professionals, and people working in stores you frequent. We all know people, and we all have networks. These people may be able to offer you helpful information relating to your career exploration and job search. Talking to people about the work they do now, or have done in the past, helps you learn about the range of options open to you in your career exploration.

Interesting and Exciting Jobs

Key Point

It is important to have a dream job and learn about other jobs.

Facilitator's Directions

- Hand out the "Interesting and Exciting Jobs" worksheet and have the group fill in the boxes.
- Have each student introduce themselves, including their name and answers to the four questions.
- Record all of the answers on a flip chart as follows:

Name	Interesting/Exciting Job…	More Info About…	Jobs I Have Had	Dream/Fantasy Job…
Carla	Lion Tamer	Veterinarian	School Cafeteria	Animal Trainer
Anthony	Train Designer	Working for Amtrak	Haven't had a job yet	Train Conductor
Sean	Trainer for Boston Bruins	Physical Therapist	Volunteer in School Library	Hockey Player

Trainer's Tip

When possible, give the group the "Interesting Jobs" exercise prior to the start of the unit, so they arrive at the first class with some ideas. If this is not possible, expect that this exercise may take longer.

Students should be encouraged to develop a dream job. This does not have to be based in reality. In fact, it is best when it is a real stretch! If the group is getting stuck, give examples such as rock star, hockey player, fire chief, President of the United States, or owner of a record company. Ask the students to think about when they were younger and people asked them what they wanted to be when they grew up. What was their answer?

The trainer and other professionals in the room should go first in this exercise and try to use interesting examples. The dream or fantasy job works best if the trainer admits an honest fantasy job, because it encourages students to do the same.

If students have extensive work experience, limit jobs they talk about to one or two.

Suggested Script

In a few minutes, we will all introduce ourselves. When you introduce yourself, state your name, the most interesting/exciting job you have ever heard of, a job you would like to find out more information about, any jobs that you have had, and what your dream job is. Take a couple of minutes now to fill in the "Interesting and Exciting Jobs" handout.

Interesting Jobs

My Dream or fantasy job

A job that I would like more information about

The most interesting job I have ever heard of

Jobs that I have had

Goals of the Workshop

Key Point

Networking is important for career development.

Facilitator's Directions

• Explain the importance of networking and hand out the "Goals" outline.

Suggested Script

Throughout the workshop we are going to spend much of our time talking about networking, career exploration, and employment. The main goal of each chapter is to get you more and more comfortable with the concept of networking.

This workshop is designed to help you begin to use the most effective method of getting jobs and doing career exploration: identifying and using personal connections, or "networking." If you actively explore different careers and job opportunities, and learn how to reach out to people you need for help, you will have a better chance of finding a job that matches your interests and preferences. This is not to say that the role of a teacher or counselor becomes unnecessary. These professionals work in partnership with you. The more effort you put into the process, the more efficient it will be for you.

GOALS FOR TRAINING

To Learn:

• What networking is

• How networking can help you

• How to network

• To talk positively about yourself, what you are good at, and what is good about you

• To ask for what you need

• What employers look for in a person they are going to hire

GOALS FOR TRAINING

To Learn:

- What networking is

- How networking can help you

- How to network

- To talk positively about yourself, what you are good at, and what is good about you

- To ask for what you need

- What employers look for in a person they are going to hire

How Did You Get Your Job?

Key Point

People get jobs many different ways.

Facilitator's Directions

- Explain that after each chapter students will have homework to complete.
- Give each student at least two copies of the "How Did You Get Your Job?" handout.
- Before the next session, have students ask at least two people the questions on the sheet.
- Have students practice asking the questions during the session.

Suggested Script

You will have homework to complete after each chapter. It is very important that you complete these, for we will be talking about them at the following session. These assignments will help you to understand the material better and teach you how networking can help you in exploring career options and looking for a job.

Before the next session, please ask two people you know the questions on the handout. You can ask anyone you know: for example, parents, friends, relatives, teachers, or neighbors.

Take a minute now and get into pairs. Practice asking the questions of your partner.

How did you get your jobs?
(ask 2 people you know the following questions)

❑ What was the first job you ever had?

❑ How did you get that job?

❑ Did you like that job?

❑ What was the best job you ever had?

❑ How did you get that job?

❑ Why did you like it?

❑ What was the worst job you ever had?

❑ How did you get that job?

❑ What did you not like about it?

How did you get your jobs?

(ask two people you know the following questions)

❑ What was the first job you ever had?

_____

  ❑ How did you get that job?

  _____

  ❑ Did you like that job?

  _____

❑ What was the best job you ever had?

_____

  ❑ How did you get that job?

  _____

  ❑ Why did you like it?

  _____

❑ What was the worst job you ever had?

_____

  ❑ How did you get that job?

  _____

  ❑ What did you not like about it?

  _____

Best Job/Worst Job

Key Point

To have the group start to talk about their work experiences, good and bad, to articulate their dream jobs, and to think about what type of job they are going to look for at this time.

Facilitator's Directions

- Have each student complete the "Best Job/Worst Job" handout while waiting for the section to begin.
- If possible, provide them with the handout the day before so they will come to class prepared to discuss their experiences.
- Ask each student to read his or her answers aloud.
- The information should be recorded on a flip chart and kept nearby, as it is often helpful to refer back to people's responses and offer concrete examples relating to specific students.

Target Audience:

Students who have had at least a few jobs or work experiences.

Suggested Script

Use the Best Job / Worst Job sheet to introduce yourself. Tell us your best job, worst job, and how you got them. Also tell us your dream job and what you would like to do next.

Example of flip chart outline for Best Job/Worst Job Exercise:

Name	Best Job (How job was found)	Worst Job (How job was found)	Dream Job/Career	Current Job Search
Maria	Newspaper Delivery (friend)	Bussing Tables (Newspaper)	Tour the World as a Travel Agent	Stock Clerk
Justin	Class Project on Modern Art (school)	Cleaning Bedroom (home)	Professional Hockey Player	Job in Sports Stadium
Anthony	Activities Assistant Volunteer (aunt)	McDonalds (walk-in)	Phys. Ed. Teacher	Health Club Staff

Best Job
Worst Job
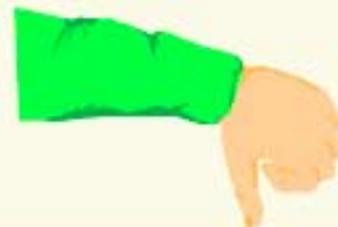
☺ What is the best job you've ever had?
(If you have never had a job, you can use the best school project you've worked on, volunteer position, chore you do at home, etc.)

     ☺ What made that job so good?

     ☺ How did you get that job?

☺☹ ☺☹ ☺☹ ☺☹ ☺☹ ☺☹ ☺☹ ☺☹ ☺☹
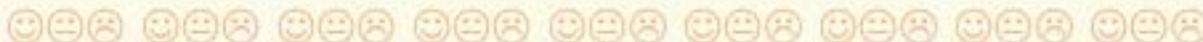
☹ What is the worst job you've ever had?
(Again, you can use the worst school project you've worked on, volunteer position, chore you do at home, etc.)

     ☹ What made that job so bad?

     ☹ How did you get that job?

Ideal Job
Current Search

☆ What is your dream/fantasy job?

☆
☆
☆
☆
☆
☆

↪ What job are you looking for now?

↪
↪
↪
↪
↪
↪

Best Jobs & Worst Jobs

Name	Best Job (How job was found)	Worst Job (How job was found)	Dream Job/Career	Current Job Search
Maria	Newspaper Delivery (friend)	Bussing Tables (Newspaper)	Tour the World as a Travel Agent	Stock Clerk
Justin	Class Project on Modern Art (school)	Cleaning Bedroom (home)	Professional Hockey Player	Job in Sports Stadium
Anthony	Activities Assistant Volunteer (aunt)	McDonalds (walk-in)	Phys. Ed. Teacher	Health Club Staff

Which of these Jobs

Key Points

To develop a list of jobs that the students want to learn more about.

Exercise Directions

Pass out the "Which of these jobs would you like to learn more about?" handouts.

Ask everyone to look at the pictures on the handout. Ask if any of these jobs look interesting to them.

When a student answers that one looks interesting, probe with questions such as:

- Why do you think that this job looks interesting?
- What do you think that you would do in a job like this?
- Where do you think you could do this job (type of business)?
- Does anyone know someone who does a job like this?
- Are there other jobs similar to this one?
- What do you need to know to do this job?

If anyone in the class knows someone who does that job, ask if you can call the person to arrange for an informational interview or tour.

Trainer's Tip

Think of the types of jobs that students might be interested in and create your own handouts accordingly. Develop a collection of photographs or magazine pictures of people working. Continue to repeat the exercise with the different handouts as long as the students are benefiting from the exercise. You may even want to start each session with looking at one picture and asking questions about it.
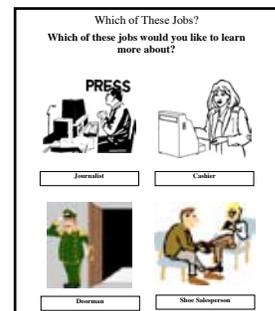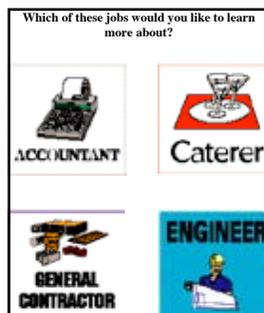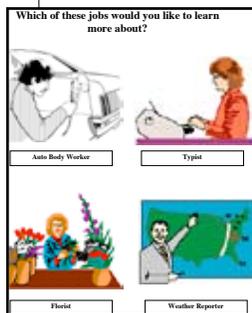
Which of These Jobs?

Which of these jobs would you like to learn more about?

| Auto Body Worker | Typist |

| Florist | Weather Reporter |

Which of These Jobs?

Which of these jobs would you like to learn more about?

TRAVEL AGENT

ATTORNEY AT LAW

TAILOR

Scientist
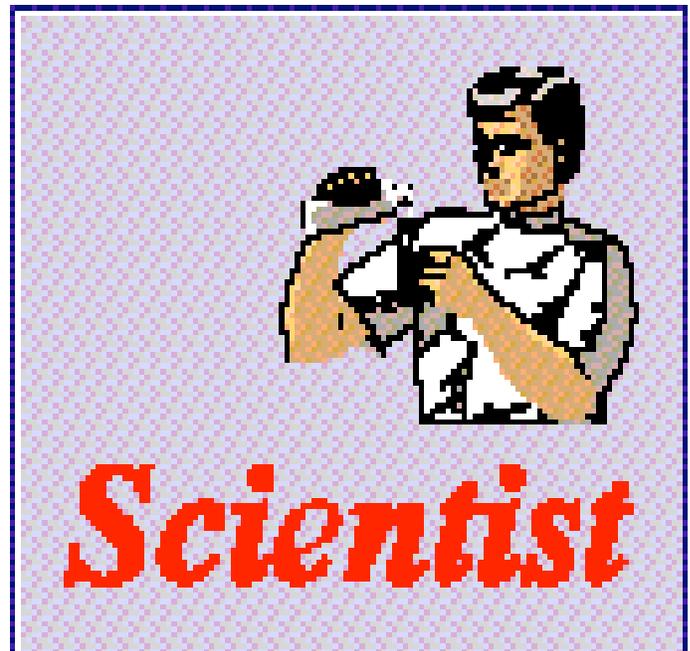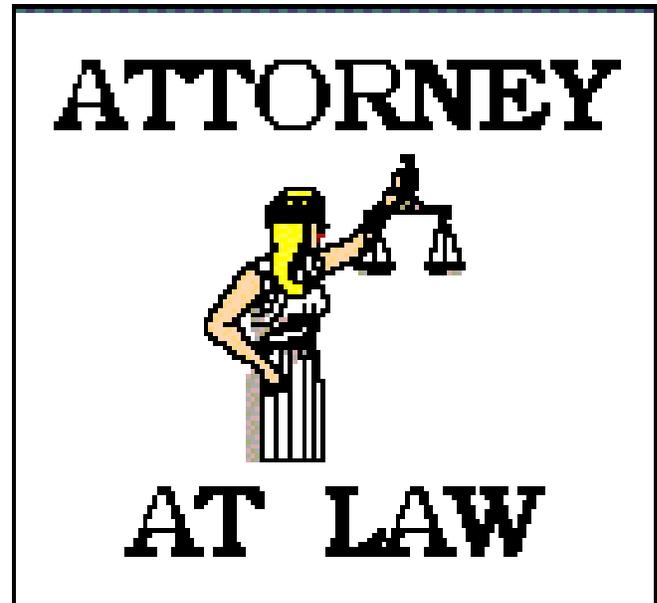
Which of These Jobs?

Which of these jobs would you like to learn more about?

ACCOUNTANT

Caterer
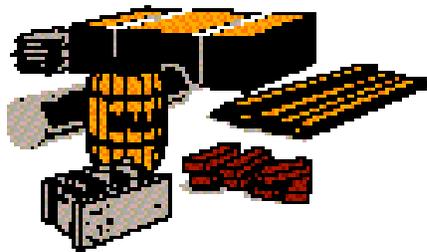
GENERAL CONTRACTOR

ENGINEER

Which of These Jobs?

Which of these jobs would you like to learn more about?

Journalist

Cashier

Doorman

Shoe Salesperson

Unit #2

Finding
Good
Jobs

Goals

Students will engage in a dialogue about good jobs and ways to get them.

Unit Plan #2

Exercise: Three Things that Matter Most
  Materials: "Three Things That Matter Most" handout

Homework Review: How Do People Find Their Jobs?
  Materials: "How Do People Find Their Jobs" flip chart outline

Presentation: Research to Prove Networking Works

Homework: How Would You Describe Me?

Optional Exercise: Ways to Find a Good Job
  (target audience: students who have had job search experience)
  Materials: "Ways to Find a Good Job" handout

Optional Presentation: Job Seeking Statistics
  (target audience: students who like research and numbers)
  Materials: Department of Labor "Methods" pie chart

Optional Discussion: What Does it Take
  (target audience: students who need to understand career patterns and job search efforts)
  Materials: "What's it Take?" & "Typical Patterns" handouts

Things that Matter Most

Key Point

Different things matter to different people. Before someone can decide on a career, they need to find out what is important to them.

Facilitator's Directions

- Complete the exercise.
- Discuss what makes a job good.
- Talk about what people generally want from their jobs.

Suggested Script

Last time, we talked about some of your work experiences, your dream job, what careers you think sound interesting, and what job you might be looking for now. Today we are going to try to figure out what makes a job a good one for you.

People have different ideas about what makes a job or career a good one, so we may have different ideas from one another and that's ok. We like to do different activities and we all value different things. For example, one person may be looking for a career that pays lots of money, no matter how much work and pressure may come with it, while another person might want to be in a job working with nice people in a relaxed environment. By figuring out what matters to you in a job, you will be able to start looking at different careers as options.

Exercise Directions

Give students a copy of the exercise and ask them to record three things that are important to them in a job. Have each student read one answer aloud.

The three things that matter most to me in a job:

PROMOTION!

1.

2.

3.

Trainer's Tip

When people are asked what they generally want from their jobs, the following come up most often:

- jobs with good pay and benefits
- employers that respect their employees
- involvement in the workplace and community
- opportunities for career growth
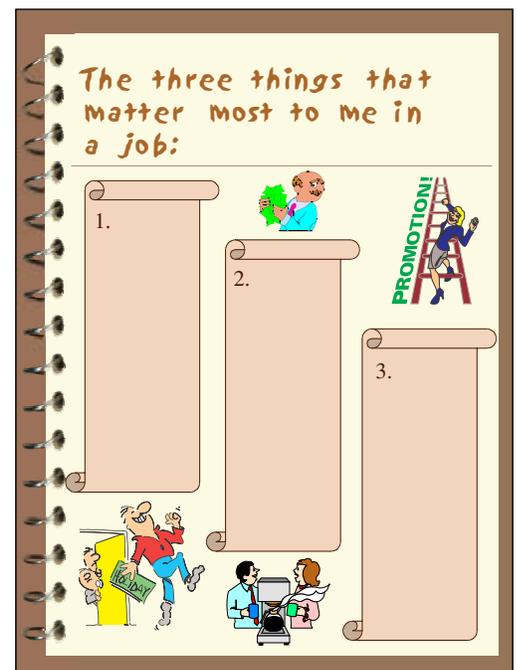
The three things that matter most to me in a job:

1.

2.

3.

How Do People Find Their Jobs?

Key Point

People find jobs in a variety of ways, but the most effective way is through networking.

Facilitator's Directions

- Review Homework from Unit 1 and record answers on flip chart.
- Discuss with students how the majority of favorite jobs were found.
- Discuss how to get someone to look at your resume.

Example of what flip chart should look like:

student examples ↓	Friend's First Job/How found	Friend's Best Job/How found	Friend's Worst Job/How found
Sue	Ice Cream Shop/ neighbor worked there	Camp Counselor/ through High School Guidance Counselor	Fast Food Restaurant/ walked in and filled out application
John	Babysitting/worked for Cousin	Candy Shop/brother worked there	Library Aide/program at school
Paul	Stock at Food Store/ walked in and filled out application	Sell hot dogs at Fenway Park/Father knew someone that worked there	Bagger at grocery store/Mother set job up

Homework Review

Ask each student to share information from the person that they talked to with the best job. Go through each question and record answers on the flip chart as outlined. Discuss how the majority of jobs were found.

Suggested Script

In order to get a job, you usually need to have an interview. In order to have an interview, you usually need to submit a resume or job application. Sometimes when an employer runs an ad in the paper they get 500 or more resumes! How do you get someone to look at your resume or application when they have such a huge stack to go through?

Trainer's Tip

For some groups that are not as talkative, try the following exercise:

Pull out a large stack of paper (an entire ream) and place it in front of the group.

Last week I placed a help wanted ad in the paper. These are all resumes that came in for the job I have open. My boss told me that I better hire someone good and hardworking. How do you think I might choose which ones to call in for an interview? You really want this position. How are you going to get your resume chosen from this pile?

Spend some time problem solving on these questions while building on the overall question of "When you want to find a job, what do you do?" Encourage the group to come to the conclusion that networking would be the best way to help get their resumes seen and eventually find a job.

Research to Prove Networking Helps

Key Point

Research shows networking is an effective job search tool for all people.

Facilitator's Directions

- Review facts one, two and three below with students.

Fact one:

People with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed than people without disabilities. Approximately 36% of people with disabilities are employed, compared with 79% of people without disabilities (American Community Survey, 2006). The rate of employment for people with disabilities has remained steady in recent years despite changes in the economy. There are factors that influence these numbers that go beyond the inability to secure a job. Though some people with disabilities may choose not to work, there is a big difference between the unemployment rates of the general public and the population of individuals with disabilities.

Fact two:

People with disabilities are more likely to rely on professionals to help them find employment. Research on how people get jobs clearly indicates that it is personal connections that help most people find work. It is also logical that the more methods tried when looking for a job, the better the odds of finding one. When people with disabilities solely rely on professionals for job placement help, they are limiting their opportunities and decreasing their chances of being employed.

Fact three:

A national survey was completed at The Center on Promoting Employment (RRTC) at Children's Hospital Boston which examined job search practices for persons with disabilities. The research looked at people who had recently gotten jobs, and it asked what methods were utilized to successfully secure employment. The networking approach was commonly used, but most importantly *networking helped job seekers*:

- find jobs with better wages
- secure jobs with more hours
- shorten the length of their job search
- become thirteen times more likely to be successful than someone using want ads (Darling, 2003).

Describe Me

Key Point

Job Seekers need to know positive traits about themselves.

Facilitator's Directions

- Give each student two copies of the "How would you describe me?" handout.
- Before the next session have each student ask two different people that know them well the questions on the handout.

Suggested Script

When looking for a job it is important for you to be able to talk about the positive traits you have. Sometimes it is hard for us to think of positive things about ourselves. Before the next session, you are going to talk to two different people that you know well and ask them to describe you. This will help you start to build a list of positive traits about yourself. You should use the questions on the handout to guide you through this process.

Let's quickly practice asking the questions.

(Choose one of the students in the class and ask them the following questions about you)

> # How would you describe me?
>
> ✓ What would you say are some positive things about me?
>
> ✓ What are the first three words that come to mind when you think of me?
>
> ✓ If you had to describe me to one of your friends who does not

Record your answers on the handout provided.

Does anyone have any questions on the homework? Next time we meet we will talk about what you found out.

How would you describe me?

✓ What would you say are some positive things about me?

✓ What are the first three words that come to mind when you think of me?

✓ If you had to describe me to one of your friends who does not know me, what would you say?

✓ What do you think others might think of me when they first meet me?

Ways to Find a Good Job

Key Point

Job seekers should not limit their job search activities to one method.

Target Audience:

Students who have had job search experience

Facilitator's Directions

- Complete exercise on ways to find a good job.
- Present on not limiting job search activities.

Exercise Directions

Give each student a copy of the exercise. Ask the group how they would go about finding a job. As they come up with an item, ask what is good and bad about using that way.

- How do we go about finding the jobs we want?
- Has anyone ever used any of these ways to find a job?
- What was good/helpful about it?
- What was bad/frustrating about it?

(Go through each item on the handout)

Suggested Script

One mistake that many job seekers make is that they limit their job searches to one activity such as responding to online advertisements. By using your networks and varying your job search strategies, you will have a better chance of being considered for a position. For example, you may want to send out a few resumes to ads that you find in the newspaper, go to the local One-Stop Career Center to look through their resources, walk around your neighborhood and apply for open jobs that you see, ask a few friends about opening where they work, as well as look up openings on the Internet. By using all these methods you will have a better chance at finding a job faster than if you only used one.

Resource Tip

One-Stop Career Centers were developed to bring together employment and training services that work with all people into one place and make it easier for job seekers and employers to use their services. See appendix for "One-Stop Career Centers: A Guide for Job Seekers with Disabilities," which is helpful for students who plan on using a One-Stop Career Center.

Ways To Find a Good Job

Ways to Find a Good Job	What's Good About Using This Way	What's Bad About Using This Way
Newspapers		
Job Postings		
Internet		
Yellow Pages		
Friends / Family		
Job Fairs		
Walk-In Places		
Job Counselor		
Mailing Resumes		

Job Seeking Statistics

Key Point

Employers like to know who they are hiring and look positively on employee referrals.

Facilitator's Directions

- Present on hiring practices of employers.
- Discuss methods that job seekers use to find a job.

Suggested Script

Let's look at some research that has been done regarding the best way to find a job.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, more than half of people who are working found their jobs through someone they know- for instance, a friend, family member, teacher, or neighbor. Even though some job openings are advertised on the internet or in the newspaper, over 80% of available positions are not advertised. Employers fill those positions by promoting current employees, asking for referrals from employees and business associates, or hiring someone that has already expressed interest in working for the company (McConnell, 2002).

Employee referral programs have become much more popular in recent years. Employers now rely on their current employees to introduce them to good people that want to work for the company. Employers with strong referral programs report that between 20-40% of their hiring is accomplished through referrals (Cluff & Associates, 1998). What do you think the benefit is to the employer?

The Internet has been another place to go to look for a job. However, even though there may be many jobs posted, it isn't always the most efficient way to find a job. Bolles (2004), author of the book What Color is your Parachute *estimated that the average rate of success for someone looking for a job on the Internet is 4%. That means that out of every 100 people looking for a job on the Internet, 4 will get hired. In some of the high-tech industries it is more effective to look for a job online, but for other companies you are better off trying a different method.*

Another way to find employers that are hiring is by attending job fairs. Has anyone ever been to a job fair? Job fairs vary in size, and can be set up so that all of the employers are within the same industry, or include companies of all kinds. Some job fairs are small enough that employers can hold interviews on the spot; others are so large and busy that employers are not even able to accept applications. Some employers come to job fairs looking to pick out workers; others come when they don't have openings just to see what kind of prospective employees they meet. Bolles (2004) estimated that 8% of people who go to job fairs are successful in getting hired.

This is probably due to the lack of face to face contact with perspective employees. The low number of employers that utilize job fairs may be due to the cost of renting a booth at a job fair or the lack of availability of a human resources representative to go to the fair. Companies usually do not have a HR department until they reach 75 - 100 employees, and then there is generally one HR representative for every 50 employees. Therefore, it would be a stretch for a small company to send someone to a job fair. Most companies at a job fair are the larger employers in the area, such as universities, financial Institutions, hotels and large chains, hospitals and high tech companies.

This does not mean that job fairs should not be utilized. Job fairs are great for people seeking jobs in the industries represented. They also are great places to practice interacting with employers. However, it does send a caution out to individuals who may rely only on one or a small number of techniques for finding a job. The survey results emphasize that face to face contact, along with employee referrals, are effective since both methods reduce the "unknown" aspect of the person's resume.

Want Ads
14%

Agencies
12%

Other
11%

Informal
63%
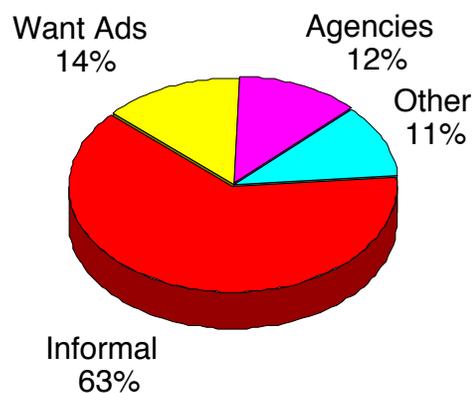
Methods of finding a job

The Department of Labor (DOL) "Methods" pie chart looks at job searches from the applicants' perspective. In this survey, a group of individuals who recently secured employment were asked which job search technique yielded their job. According to the survey, 63% of the respondents got their jobs through informal means such as contacts within the company or direct employer contact, 14% through want ads, 12% through private agencies, and 11% through other means including job fairs, civil service testing, or public agencies.

Trainer's Tip:

What do all these statistics mean to the job seeker? While some techniques seem to be more effective than others, it is crucial not to rely too heavily on one approach. The more strategies you use, the better your odds are of finding a good job that you want.

METHODS

Want Ads
14%

Informal
63%

Agencies
12%

Other
11%
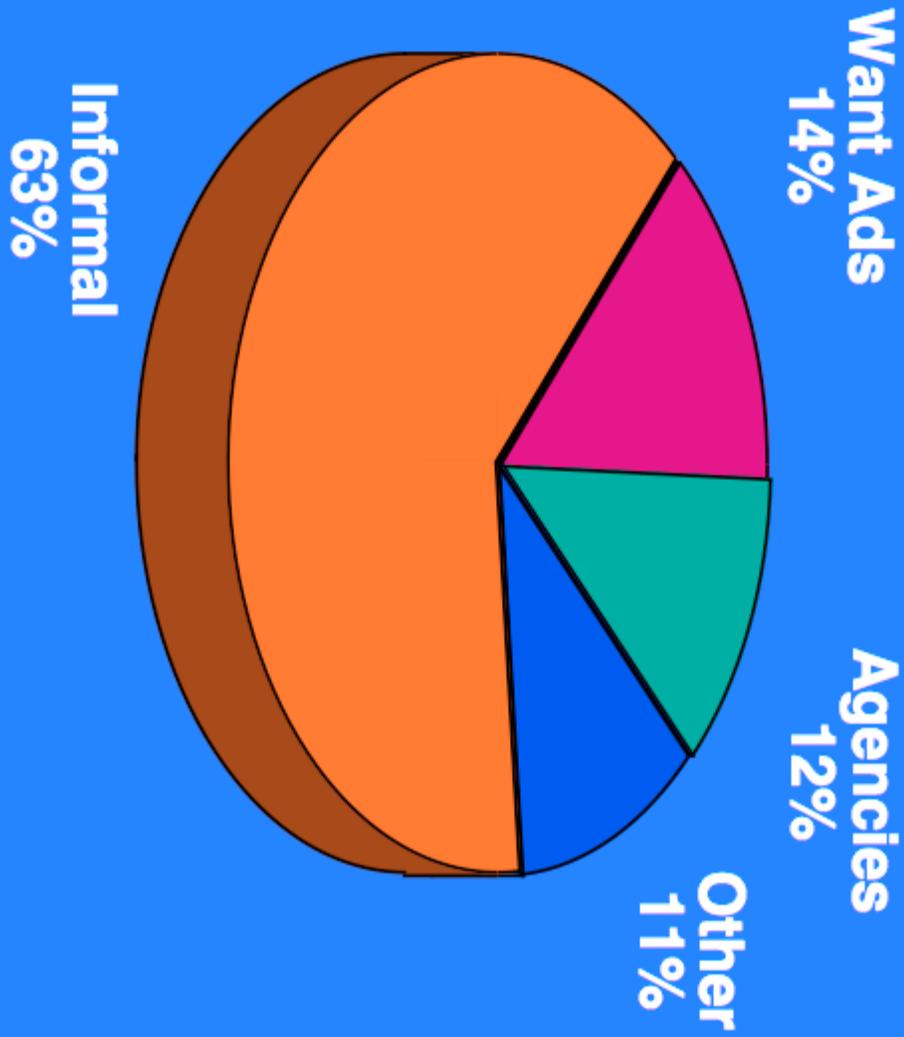
What Does It Take To Get A Job?

Key Points

People will have many different jobs in their lifetime. It takes time and effort to find a good job.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss the typical number of jobs and careers people have.
- Discuss the number of interviews and calls it takes to get a job.

Suggested Script

How many jobs do you think you will have in your lifetime?

Any book on job searches shows it takes a lot of time and effort to get a job. It also shows that people often change jobs and even careers. The average person will hold eight to 10 jobs and have two to three career changes in his/her lifetime. So if you are looking for one of your first jobs right now, think of it as a way to explore career options. I don't know too many people who have only had one job during their lifetime. If it is not the job that you want to stay at for five, 10, 15 years, that's ok! Now is the time to try out different areas that you are interested in.

If you do not know anyone in the company, how many phone calls do you think it takes before you get a job interview? How about if you know someone there?

How many interviews do you think it takes to get a job?

As a general rule, it takes 10-20 cold calls to land one interview, and seven-10 interviews to get a job. This means 70-200 calls to get just one job! This process includes a lot of "No's" and rejection along the way. While no one can totally eliminate that, we can improve the odds of at least getting an interview by using personal connections to search for a job. Everyone knows people who can be helpful to you and others, and this help includes assisting you in your job search.

TYPICAL PATTERN

- 8 - 10 JOB CHANGES
- 2 - 3 CAREER CHANGES

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

- 10 - 20 COLD CALLS = AN INTERVIEW
- 7 - 10 INTERVIEWS = A JOB

Target Audience:

Students who need to understand career patterns and job search efforts

TYPICAL PATTERN

ν **8 - 10 JOB CHANGES**

ν **2 - 3 CAREER CHANGES**

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

10 - 20 COLD CALLS

= AN INTERVIEW

7 - 10 INTERVIEWS

= A JOB

Employment Objectives

- **Jobs with good pay and benefits**

- **Employers that respect employees**

- **Involvement in the work place & community**

- **Opportunities for career growth**

Unit #3

Networking & Positive Things About Me

Goals

Students will come up with a definition of networking and start to identify positive traits about themselves.

Unit Plan #3

Exercise: Networking Definition

Materials: "What is Networking?" handout

Flip Chart for Group Brainstorm

Homework Review: How Would You Describe Me?

Discussion: Creating Positive Perceptions

Exercise: First Impressions

Materials: First Impressions Exercise

Exercise: What's Good About Me?

Materials: "What's Good About Me?" handout

Homework: What's Good About Me?

Optional Presentation: Career Development Network

(target audience: students who need further explaination of how networking can help them find a job)

Materials: "Career Development Network" handout

Networking Definition

Key Point

There are many definitions of networking. You need to decide what networking means to you.

Facilitator's Directions

- Brainstorm on what networking means.
- Decide on a definition of networking as a group.

Exercise Directions

Pass out the "Networking Definitions" exercise to each student. Ask students to generate a list of terms or explanations of networking and record these ideas on a flipchart or blackboard. Come to a consensus on a definition of networking. Have students write it on the "What is Networking?" handout and start the remainder of the chapters with a review of this definition.
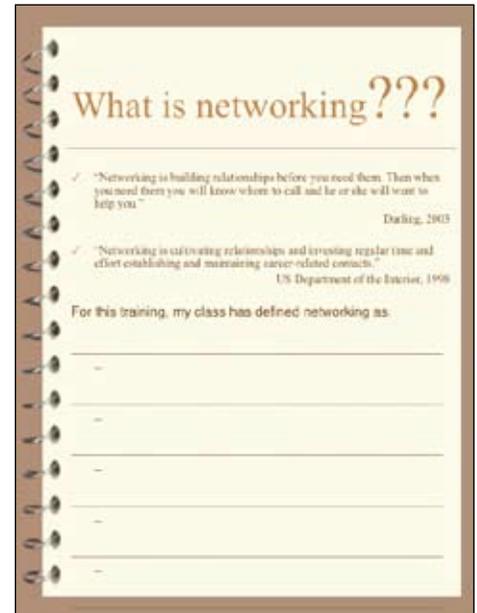
Suggested Script

In the past two sessions, we have been discussing good jobs and how to find them. We have also talked about the fact that networking has been proven to be the best way to get a job.

As a group, let's come up with our own definition of networking that we will use throughout the rest of the chapters. What do you think of when I use the term "networking?"

Discussion Tip

If the group is having a hard time coming up with a definition, try talking about the following networking definitions that other people have come up with:

1. "Networking is building relationships before you need them. Then when you need them, you will know whom to call and s/he will want to help you." –Darling, 2003

2. "Networking is cultivating relationships and investing regular time and effort, establishing and maintaining career-related contacts." –U.S. Department of the Interior, 1998

What is networking???

✓ "Networking is building relationships before you need them. Then when you need them you will know whom to call and he or she will want to help you."

<div align="right">Darling, 2003</div>

✓ "Networking is cultivating relationships and investing regular time and effort establishing and maintaining career-related contacts."

<div align="right">US Department of the Interior, 1998</div>

For this training, my class has defined networking as:

_____

–

_____

–

_____

–

_____

–

_____

–

_____

How Would You Describe Me?

Key Point

In identifying our positive traits, it often helps to ask others for opinions about us.

Facilitator's Directions

- Review Homework from Unit 2.

Suggested Script

Please take out the handouts that you filled in for homework.

Let's look at the positive things that others said about you. Would someone like to volunteer to share some of the things others said about them? Were there any things people said that surprised you?

How would you describe me?

✓ What would you say are some positive things about me?

> Great personality, funny, likes to help people, always on time

✓ What are the first three words that come to mind when you think of me?

> Friendly, smart, responsible

✓ If you had to describe me to one of your friends who does not know me, what would you say?

> That you are someone who is helpful, a hard worker, and dependable.

✓ What do you think others might think of me when they first meet me?

> Sometimes you are quiet when you first meet someone, so they may think that you are shy or that you don't want to talk to them for some reason.

Creating Positive Perceptions

Key Point

To learn about why we are attracted to other people.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss what attracts you to someone.
- Discuss how long it takes to form an initial impression of someone.

Discussion Points

What makes you like someone?

- appearance
- personality
- shared problems
- friendliness

- curiosity
- sense of humor
- honesty
- similar situations

Discussion Questions

- How do you engage people to become interested in some aspect of your life?
- What attracts you to someone?
- What makes you want to get to know someone?
- How long do you think it takes to form an initial impression of someone?

Suggested Script
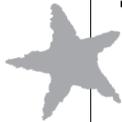
Many things attract people to each other. Developing networking relationships is similar to developing new friendships. It involves presenting yourself in a way which is positive. How a person talks, looks, shakes hands, makes eye contact, etc., all influence our perception of them.

When we meet a person for the first time, we form opinions right away. In fact, it is said that the initial impressions are made within the first 30 seconds to three minutes of meeting someone. We check if they are friendly, have something you need, smile, are listening to us, and are courteous.

Increasing the chances of creating a positive perception of yourself takes planning. You may begin by considering how you perceive yourself. Do you perceive yourself as the poor job seeker who will only get a job out of charity? Do you feel uncomfortable or unworthy of asking for assistance? This will come across when you meet people.

You may not be able to affect all aspects of how people perceive you, but you do have some control. You cannot predict what others will do, say, or think, but you can control yourself and your reaction. By becoming aware of possible bad first impressions that you may make, you can prepare yourself to emphasize your positive qualities in order to make the best possible first impression. While we cannot control every aspect of a first meeting, becoming aware of how we present ourselves can help us to create a more positive first impression.

First Impressions

Key Point

To get feedback on the kinds of first impressions we make to others and to compare this to our perceptions of ourselves.

Facilitator's Directions

- Complete the "First Impressions" exercise.
- Discuss the findings as a group.
- Discuss ways to convey a good first impression to employers.

Exercise Directions

Hand out the "First Impressions" sheet.

Depending on the reading abilities of the group, you may need to read each word aloud and describe what it means.

Have each student place a check mark next to three to five words that they think reflect themselves best.

Next, pass the "First Impressions" sheet to another participant in the group. Have them circle three to five words that describes their first impression of that person.

Suggested Script

Look over all the words on the sheet. Which words do you think best describe you? Place a check mark next to three to five words that you think reflect yourself best.

Next, pass the "First Impressions" sheet to someone else in the group. Have them circle three to five words that describe their first impression of you.

What is important to get from this exercise is that you may not be aware of how you come across. You may give off negative messages without knowing it, but now you can offset that first impression.

Trainer's Tip

If members of the group do not read enough sight words to use the sheet, act out different "first impressions" and have the group come up with words to use when they pair up to give feedback. For example, you can act out a person who is shy by coming in and sitting down without looking up at the group, speaking softly, and not introducing yourself. Show examples to help the group come up with their own describing words.

Discussion Questions

- Did how you perceive yourself match how others perceived you?
- What is the same, what is different?
- How do you come across, and how do you want to come across?
- Does everyone agree with their first impression summaries?

Trainer's Tip

With some groups you may need to explain that none of the words on the form are necessarily positive or negative. For example, if you were looking to hire a librarian, you would probably look for someone who is "laid back." But if you were looking to hire a car salesman, you would generally NOT want to hire someone who is laid back.

If the group is not able to evaluate each other, give your first impression of each person. This will be a good first impression of each person, especially if you have just met him or her.

Suggested Script

Getting feedback from a group of individuals who have not known you long can provide accurate information on initial presentations.

One thing everyone needs to do is to help professionals, employers, and others you meet get past any negative first (or past) impressions. Getting jobs through connections is more than just increasing the number of contacts you make with people in business. Making this process truly effective is also about getting people to perceive you as someone who has talents and skills from which others can benefit.

If you struggle to see yourself in a positive light, one trick that has worked for many is to describe how others have seen you positively. For example, one could say, "I've been described as motivated and hard-working. I have frequently received feedback in my performance reviews commenting on my motivation." What this does is offer positive statements without feeling like you are boasting.

Discussion Questions

- What does it take to make a good impression on an employer?
- How do you think that you might convey these traits in a quick meeting with an emloyer?

First Impressions

__Respectful

__ Hard Working

__Doesn't care

__Disorganized

__Mature

__Impatient

__Shy

__Smart

__Eager

__Patient

__Outgoing

__Can't sit still

__Friendly

__Motivated

__Honest

__Polite

__Serious

__Nervous

__Neat

__Lazy

__Confident

__Silly

__Considerate

__Teacher's pet

__Responsible

__Laid back

__Quick to answer

__Organized

__Sloppy

__Angry

__Interested

__Smooth Talking

__Quick to act

__Curious

__Easy Going

__Good salesperson

•Pick 3-5 words that best describe you and put a check mark on the line next to each word

•Ask someone who does not know you well to circle 3-5 words that describe his or her first impression of you.

What's Good About Me?

Key Point

Job seekers need to know that they have a wide range of positive traits.

Facilitator's Directions

- Fill in as many bubbles as possible on the handout.
- Discuss why it is important to know what is good about you.

Exercise Directions

Pass out the "What's Good About Me?" exercise. While the group is filling this out, the trainer should be filling in as many bubbles for him/herself on the flip chart or blackboard. These should range from general things such as "good hair," to activities such as "excellent chess player," to work related attributes such as "organized." Encourage students to look at their homework from the last unit for ideas.

Suggested Script

To be an effective networker, it is important to present yourself in a positive way. This is easier for some than others. Most of us do not feel comfortable saying positive things about ourselves because it feels like we are bragging. Nonetheless, in order for people to assist you with career exploration, they need to know what it is that you are good at, what you can offer to an employer, and where you think you would fit into a company.

In a job interview you only have a few moments to discuss why you are a good candidate for the job. Talking positively about yourself is a skill that is very important when you are searching for a job.

Discussion Tip

If students get stuck and cannot come up with anything, ask questions such as: "What would your friends say about you? What would your family members say about you? What would your teachers or supervisors say about you?"

What's good about me?

Discussion Tip

In some groups, it may be helpful for the trainer to get the group motivated to do this activity. For individuals who are having a hard time coming up with positive traits about themselves, the trainer can present the following scenario:

I am the owner of a business in town and am looking to hire someone. I pay really well and offer great benefits. You will make $100/hour, get four weeks vacation, have all summer and every holiday off, and get great health insurance. My workplace is really nice, clean and fun. I can only hire one person. Of all of these people knocking down my door, why should I hire you?

Go around the group and ask each person, "Why should I hire you?" Have everyone stand up and shake your hand when introducing him or herself to you. This is an ideal time to begin encouraging good eye contact and a firm handshake. If there are specific questions about the nature of the job, it is fine to make up details for each individual which differ from the others. The goal of this exercise is for you to have a job that every student wants and will encourage them to "sell themselves" to the best of their abilities.

What's good about me?

What's Good About Me?

Key Point

Job seekers need to be able to talk about a wide range of their positive traits.

Facilitator's Directions

- Before the next session, have students continue to fill in as many bubbles as possible on the handout.
- Students should also write back-up statements (on the back of the handout) for each positive trait that they identified.

Suggested Script

Before our next session, I would like you to continue to fill in all the bubbles on the "What's Good About Me?" handout. Once you have completed filling in all the bubbles, I would like you to think about back up statements for each of the traits you wrote down. These are statements that prove that this is something positive about you. For example, if I write "organized" in one of my bubbles, my back up statement for that could be "I am always able to find everything in my desk."

Does anyone have any questions on the homework? Next time we meet we will talk about what you wrote down.

Career Development Network

Key Point

Networking means more than just talking to the people that you already know.

Facilitator's Directions

- Give the "Career Development Network" handout to each student.
- Read through each column and explain the steps that networking involved (how meeting each person led to meeting another).
- Explain how Jose was able to expand his network from 5 to 12 people and ended up with two possible opportunities.

Suggested Script

Jose wants to explore nursing as a career option. This handout shows the networking that he did to find out more information about this career.

The top row contains the words: Priest, Neighbor, Cousin, Teacher, & Friend. Below each of these is an arrow pointing downward to either another name or a "0" signifying a dead-end:

- *The priest points to a church member (who is a social worker) who Jose calls, and this leads to a friend of theirs (who is also a social worker), who leads to a dead-end.*
- *The neighbor leads to a friend (who is a nurse) for an informational interview, who leads to a friend (who runs a nursing home) who phone interviews Jose and then meets him in person and offers him a volunteer opportunity.*
- *The cousin leads to a dead-end.*
- *The teacher leads to a neighbor (who worked in Human Services) who has a phone conversation with Jose. The neighbor leads to another friend (who works in a residence) who talks on the phone with Jose, who then leads to another friend (who manages an agency) who interviews Jose and offers him a volunteer slot.*
- *Finally, the friend leads to a dead-end.*

Though some of these contacts have lead to a "dead-end," Jose has gained useful information about nursing and has let many people know of his interest in this field. In the future, if any of these connections hear about a job in that area, they might call Jose and let him know.

- *Look at Jose's initial contacts. How many did he have? (answer: 5; Priest, Neighbor, Cousin, Teacher, Friend): How many contacts did he have after networking? (answer: 12; everyone on the list)*

As you can see, Jose more than doubled the number of people that can now help him with career exploration.

Career Development Network

Jose wants to explore nursing as a career option

Priest	Neighbor	Cousin	Teacher	Friend
→ Church Member (Social Worker)	→ Friend (Nurse)	→ Ø	→ Neighbor (Worked in Human Services) (Phone call)	→ Ø
(Phone call) → Friend (Social Worker) (Phone call)	(Info interview) → Friend (runs nursing home) (phone interview)	→	→ Friend (Case Manager residence) (Phone interview)	→
→ Ø	→ (Interview)	→	→ Friend (Manages agency) (Interview)	→
→	→ VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY	→	→ VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY	→
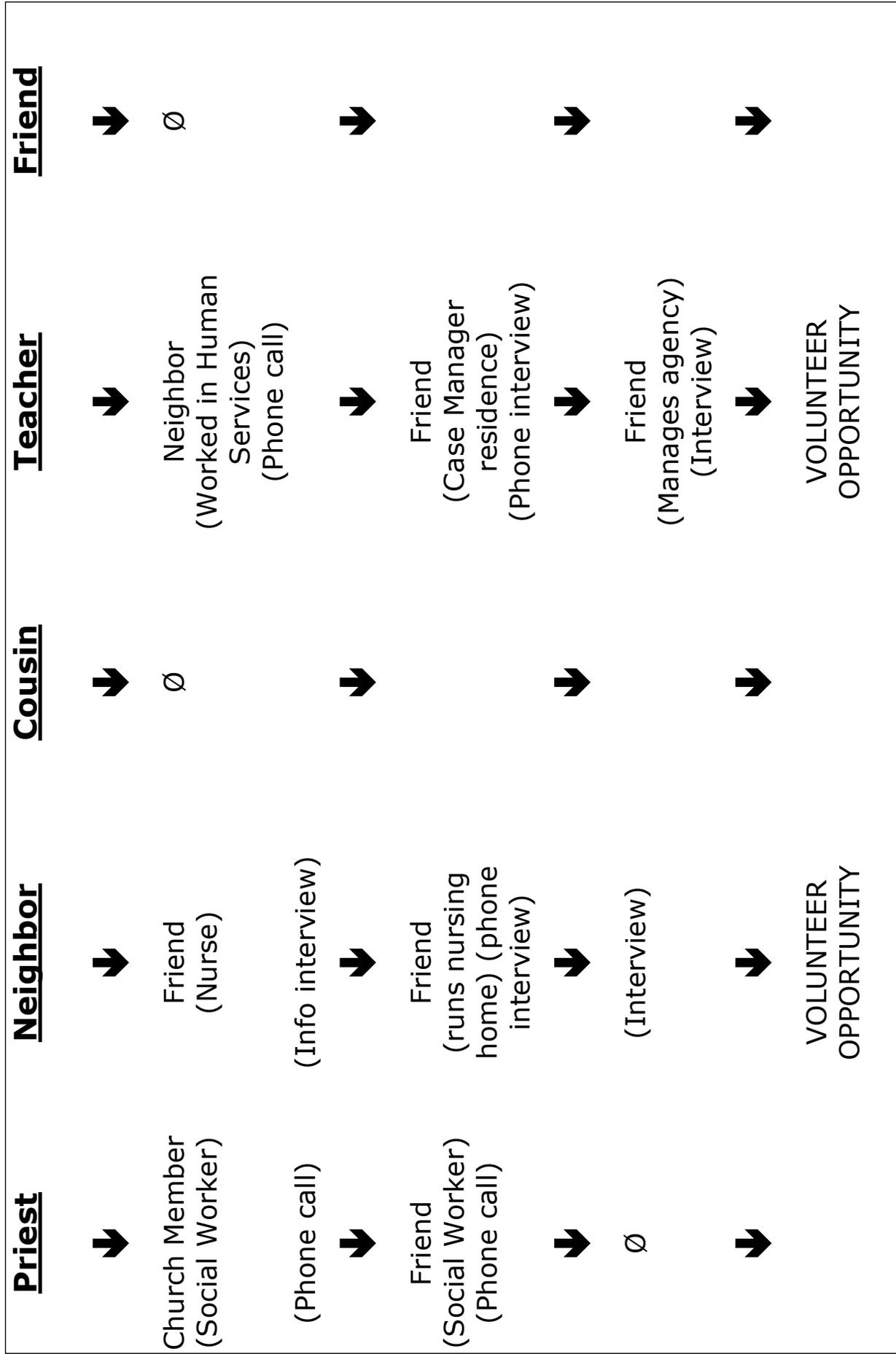
Why Hire Me?
&
Who You Know

Goals

Students will continue to identify their positive traits and begin to talk about the people they know.

Unit Plan #4

Homework Review & Exercise: Why Hire Me
Materials: "Why Hire Me?" handout, "Why Hire Me?" flip chart

Exercise: Who Do You Know
Materials: "Who Do You Know" handout, "Who Do You Know" flip chart

Homework: Consumer Guide to Networking

Optional Exercise: Consumer Guide to Networking
(target audience: students who would benefit from a closer review of the Consumer Guide to Networking)

Why Hire Me!

Key Point

Job seekers need to be able to support statements about their positive traits with examples.

Facilitator's Directions

- Review "What's Good About Me?" homework.
- Complete "Why Hire Me?" exercise.

Exercise Directions

Pass out the "Why Hire Me?" handout.

- Ask the group to take out the "What's Good About Me?" homework from Unit 3 so they can refer back to it while doing the next exercise.
- Have the group fill in the three boxes under "Anything Good About You" as well as come up with statements to back them up.
- Next, have each attendee read three items and give examples to substantiate them.
- Record these attributes in the first column on the flip chart as demonstrated below. You will be referring back to their attributes many times, so it is very important to list them on the flip chart.

Suggested Script

Today, we are going to continue to talk about the positive traits you have. This will help you to be better prepared to talk with others about your career ideas, go to an interview, and discuss your positive traits with your networking contacts.

Take a few minutes to write down three of the positive things you listed during the "What's Good About Me?" exercise onto the "Why Hire Me?" sheet. They can be anything at all that is good about you. At this point do not be concerned about whether or not they are work related; simply start to think about yourself in a positive manner.

Next, come up with a proof statement for each of these. These can be taken directly from the homework you completed from Unit 3.

Facilitation Tip

If individuals are having a hard time coming up with proof statements, ask them: "Why would you say that about yourself?" or "Give me an example of when you were _____." Some individuals will struggle with this exercise. You may need to facilitate further brainstorming or encourage the individual to think of more examples, as some people devalue themselves. It is very important that each person's traits be truthful. If someone gives an answer identical to another person, and you know that it is not applicable to him or her, assist the person to think of another answer. If the student gives a statement such as "I'm not bad at…" or "I'm okay at…" help them to turn these into more definite and empowering positive traits.

Example of what flip chart for Why Hire Me! should look like:

Student Examples	Anything Positive	Work Related	Specific Skills
Susan	→ Outgoing → Try new things → Have good hair		

What's Good About Me?

General positives

- Friendly
- Outgoing
- Nice Smile
- Nice Hair
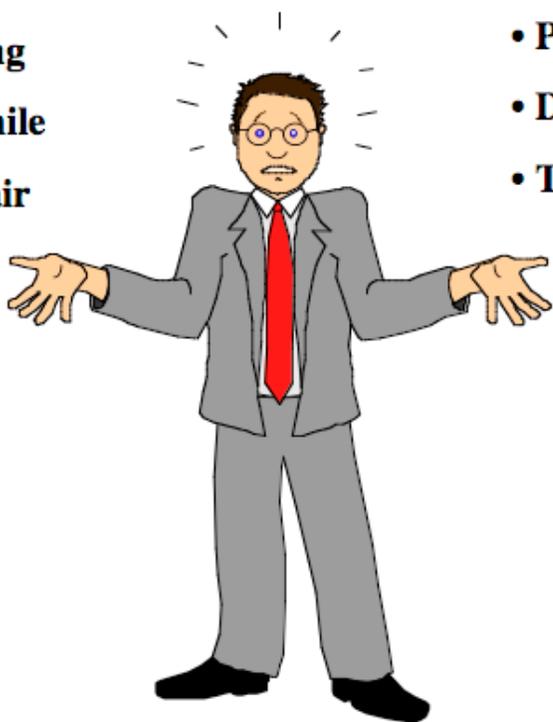
Work Related

- Hard Working
- Punctual (On Time)
- Dependable
- Team Player

Skills

- Computer Skills
- Typing/Data Entry
- Phone/Message Taking
- Customer Service

- Laundry
- Cooking/Food Prep
- Delivering Mail
- Cleaning/Maintenance

Why Hire Me?
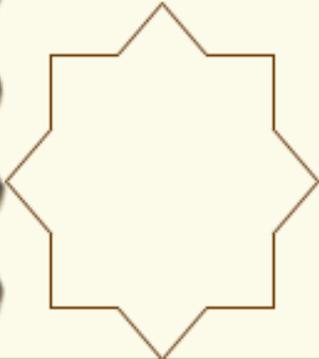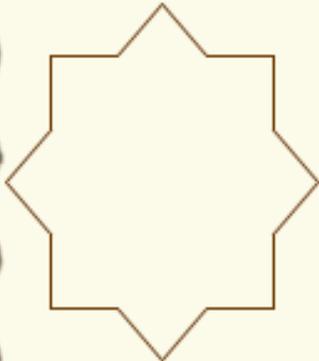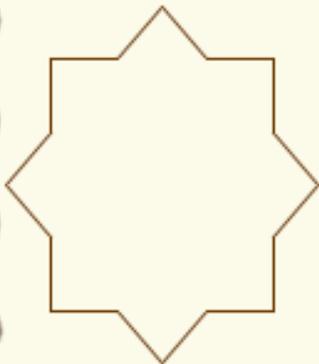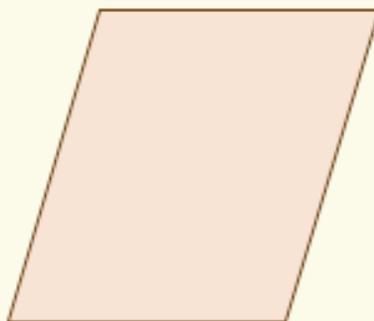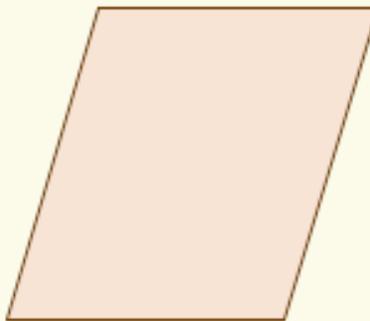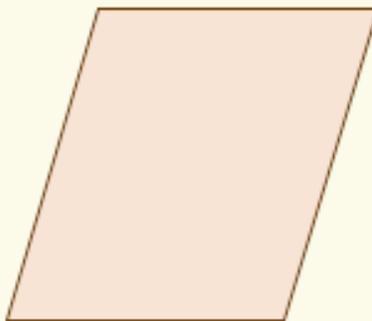
Anything Good About You	Good Work Related Traits	Things You Can Do
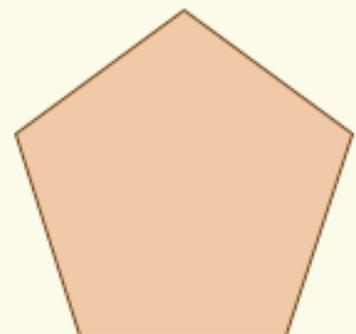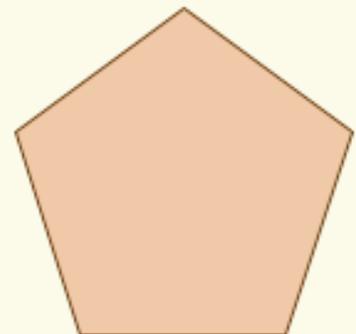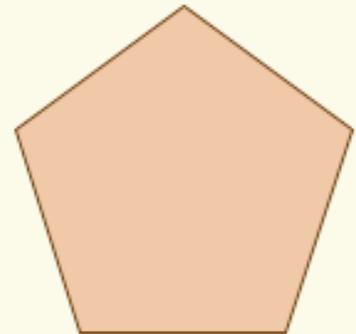
Why Hire Me?
Give one example to support each positive trait / skill listed.

Anything Good About You

☆ _____

☆ _____

☆ _____

Good Work Related Traits

◇ _____

◇ _____

◇ _____

Things You Can Do

⬠ _____

⬠ _____

⬠ _____

Why Hire Me?

**Anything Good
About You**

Outgoing — I know I am an outgoing person because I am always out talking with people.

Try new things — I like to try new things… this summer I am taking a sailing class.

Have good hair — People have told me that I have nice hair and they ask me where I get my hair cut.

Why Hire Me?

**Good Work
Related Traits**

Punctual — I am always on time or early for my classes.

Organized — My locker is neat and I can always find everything I need.

Work as part of a team — In my art class this year I worked on a team that built a pyramid.

Why Hire Me?

Things You Can Do
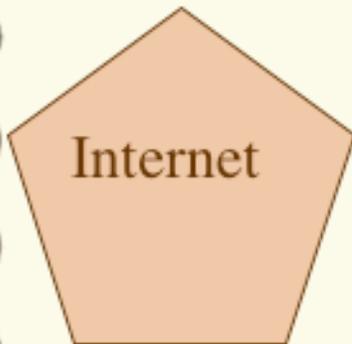
Internet
I can find information about anything on the Internet.

Wash Dishes
I help my mom at home with washing the dishes every night.

Scoop Ice Cream
Last summer I worked at Ice Cream Palace where I was voted "Best Sundae Maker."

Who Do You Know?

Key Point

It's not what you know, it's WHO you know that can help you with your search.

Facilitator's Directions

- Review the networking definition that the group came up with.
- Complete the "Who Do You Know?" exercise.

These People Know Me Well Enough To Say Hi

These People Know Me Best
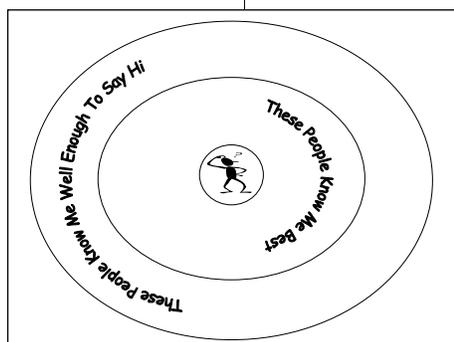
Exercise Directions

Give everyone a copy of the "Who Do You Know" handout.

Explain the difference between the two categories and instruct students to work on putting together a list of all the possible people that could fit into either of them. Write your list on the board or flip chart so the group can refer to it when they start to put together their own personal networking list.

Suggested Script

Usually when we ask people to come up with a list of people in their "network," the list is short. One reason is that most people think, "Who do I know who can hire me?" or, "Who has a job I might be interested in doing right now?" Remember that personal contacts extend far beyond those people who provide a direct link to a job. At this stage, when you are simply identifying your networks, think of everyone you possibly can. This list should be as long as possible.

Who are the people who know you really well? Who are the people who sort of know you? Who are the people who you know well enough to start a conversation with? Say "hello" to?

We are now going to come up with a list of the types of people who know you well and the types of people who you know well enough to start a conversation with. For example, if you have a sister, she probably knows you very well and the person at the coffee shop where you go every day probably knows you well enough to start a conversation. Think about who says "hi" to you as you go out shopping or running errands.

On the inside circle, write down all the people that know you well. On the outside circle, write the names of the people who you know well enough to start a conversation with. Often it is the people in the outside circle that provide the best new leads.

Many people do not consider stores they use as networking resources. Remember, you give these places your business. It is very likely that the people who work there know you. Think of all the places that you go to often; the people who work there could be very helpful resources for you.

Who Knows You Well?

- Family

- Friends

- Neighbors

- Classmates

- Teachers (past & present)

- Present & past co-workers

- Past employer

- Volunteer or internship Sites

- Coaches, tutors, music/dance instructors

- After school/summer activities, camp

Who Knows You Well Enough?

Services You Use
- Bank
- Counselor/Therapist
- Tutor
- Doctor/Dentist/Veterinarian
- Stores (Food, Video, Pharmacy)
- Hair Stylist
- Restaurants
- Gym

Associations, Groups
- Church/Temple
- Teams
- Clubs
- Camps
- Boy/Girl Scouts
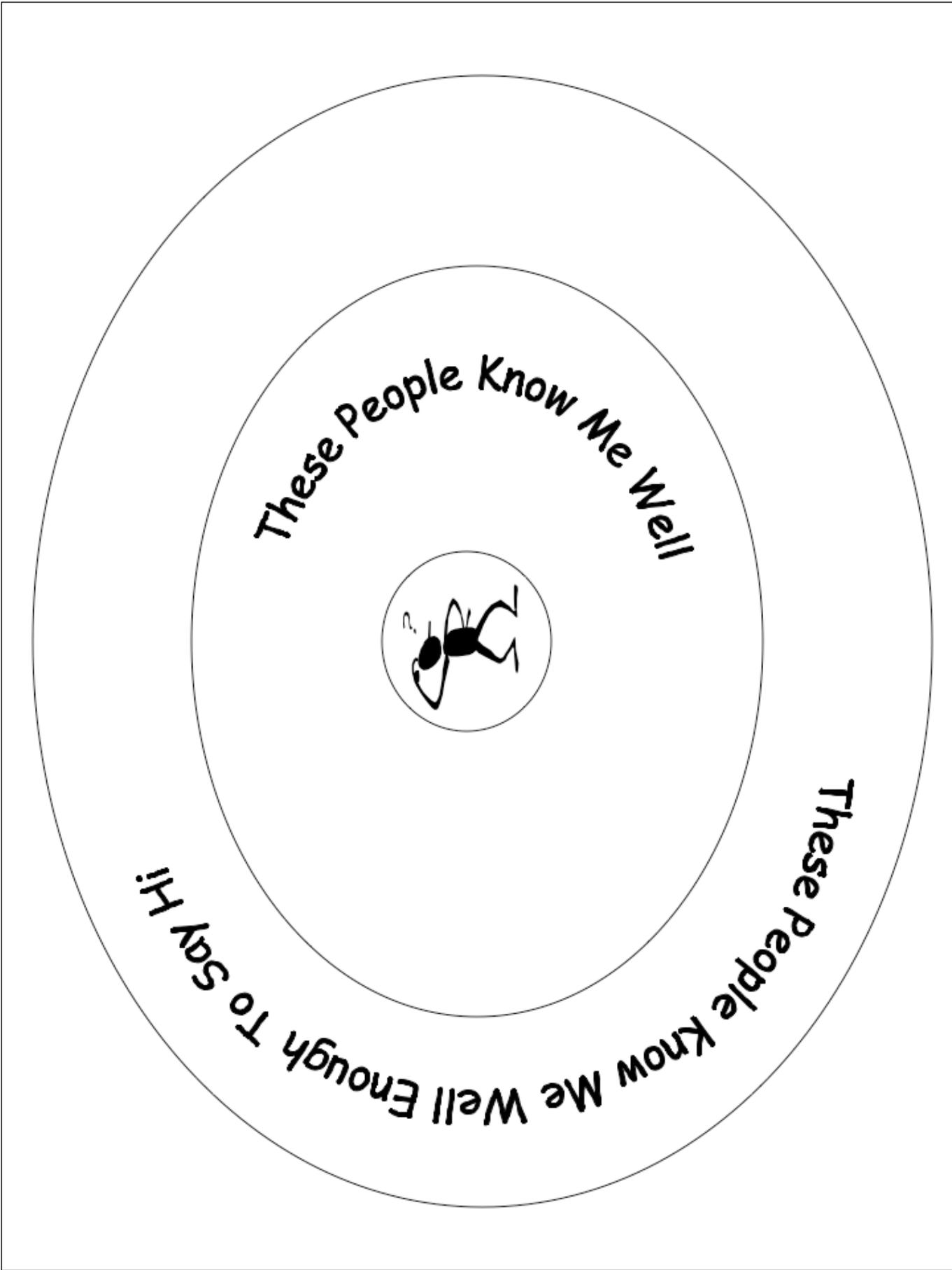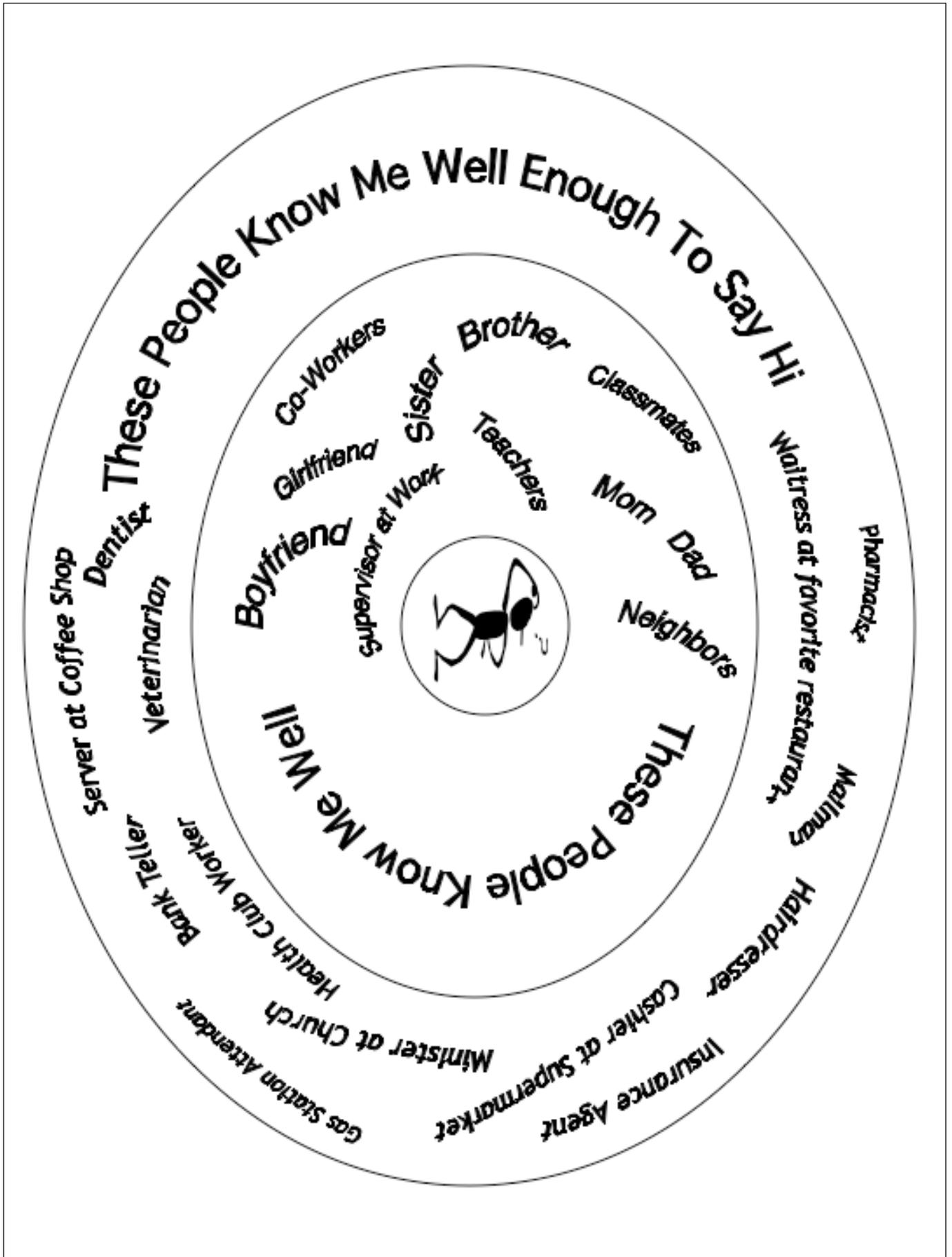
These People Know Me Well

These People Know Me Well Enough To Say Hi!

These People Know Me Well Enough To Say Hi

These People Know Me Well

Co-Workers
Brother
Sister
Girlfriend
Classmates
Teachers
Boyfriend
Supervisor at Work
Mom
Dad
Neighbors
Dentist
Waitress at favorite restaurant
Pharmacist
Server at Coffee Shop
Veterinarian
Mailman
Bank Teller
Hairdresser
Health Club Worker
Cashier at Supermarket
Insurance Agent
Gas Station Attendant
Minister at Church

Consumer Guide to Networking

Key Point

Networking is one of the most effective ways to conduct a job search.

Facilitator's Directions

- Assign each student a section of the ICI Tools for Inclusion publication: "Networking: A Consumer Guide to an Effective Job Search." (see appendix)
- Before the next session, have students read the assigned section and write down an important point on the handout provided.

Suggested Script

Before the next session, please read your assigned section of the Consumer Guide to Networking. Using the form provided, write down the important points that were mentioned in your section. Try to write down at least three to four points.

Does anyone have any questions on the homework? Next time we meet we will talk about what you found out.

Networking: A Consumer Guide to an Effective Job Search

➡ Section I read:

_____

_____

➡ Most important things I learned from reading this section:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Networking: A Consumer Guide to an Effective Job Search

Section I read:

_____

_____

Most important things I learned from reading this section:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Guide to Networking

Key Point

Students will become more familiar with the concept of networking.

Facilitator's Directions

- Choose a section of the guide to read out loud with the students.
- As a group, discuss the questions for that section as outlined below.

Trainer's Tip

Depending on the group, you may want to go through all of the sections or just a few of them.

Target Audience:

Students who will benefit from a closer review of the Consumer Guide to Networking

Example of Section Outline:

Section	Questions
Introduction	→ What does networking mean? → What are three ways that networking helps people with disabilities
Networking really is okay!	→ Do most people seeking employment use networking? → When asking for help, what should you be sure that your requests are?
How do you network?	→ What phrase is the basis for the networking strategy? → Who should you include when identifying your network?
Using your network	→ What is the next step after identifying your network? → What are three things that you can find out about from your network?
What do I say and do?	→ What are two things that you can say to a contact? → What are two things that you can ask a contact to do for you?
Informational Interview	→ What are two benefits of an informational interview? → How do you set up an informational interview?
Maintain a positive relationship with people in your network	→ What is one very important way for you to follow up with a contact? → What should you ask someone before following up with them by phone?
Tips for maintaining energy and progressing in your job search and networking	→ How are you going to keep track of your networking activities? → After how long should you re-work your resume?
Self-Advocacy	→ What does it mean to be a self-advocate? → What are two ways that you can advocate for yourself?
Conclusion	→ When you find a job, whom should you contact? → If you know someone who is looking for a job after you have found one, what should you do?

Unit #5

Using Your Network

Goals

Students will use the group to identify who is in their network and how to use their network.

Unit Plan #5

Homework Review: Consumer Guide to Networking
Materials: Networking Guide: Questions for discussion

Exercise: Using Networks
Materials: flip chart or blackboard

Exercise: Identifying Your Network
Materials: "Networking Exercise" handout

Homework: Continue Networking Exercise and Asked Me for Help
Materials: "Asked Me for Help" handout

Optional Presentation: Job Development Network
(target audience: students who need further clarification as to how networking can assist them in finding a job)

Consumer Guide to Networking

Key Point

Networking is one of the most effective ways to conduct a job search.

Facilitator's Directions

- Review the networking definition that the group decided upon.
- Have each person read the main points of the section that they were assigned in the consumer guide.
- Briefly discuss points that the group brings up.

What is networking???

✓ "Networking refers to a process of informal exchange, and creating channels to gather information, build support and get things done."
Gold & Harder, 1993

✓ "Networking is cultivating relationships and investing regular time and effort establishing and maintaining career-related contacts."
US Department of the Interior, 1998

For this training, my class has defined networking as:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Institute For Community Inclusion
Boston, MA

Section	Questions
Introduction	→ What does networking mean? → What are three ways that networking helps people with disabilities
Networking really is okay!	→ Do most people seeking employment use networking? → When asking for help, what should you be sure that your requests are?
How do you network?	→ What phrase is the basis for the networking strategy? → Who should you include when identifying your network?
Using your network	→ What is the next step after identifying your network? → What are three things that you can find out about from your network?
What do I say and do?	→ What are two things that you can say to a contact? → What are two things that you can ask a contact to do for you?
Informational Interview	→ What are two benefits of an informational interview? → How do you set up an informational interview?
Maintain a positive relationship with people in your network	→ What is one very important way for you to follow up with a contact? → What should you ask someone before following up with them by phone?
Tips for maintaining energy and progressing in your job search and networking	→ How are you going to keep track of your networking activities? → After how long should you re-work your resume?
Self-Advocacy	→ What does it mean to be a self-advocate? → What are two ways that you can advocate for yourself?
Conclusion	→ When you find a job, whom should you contact? → If you know someone who is looking for a job after you have found one, what should you do?

ICI Tools for Inclusion
Networking Guide
Questions for Discussion

Introduction:

- What does networking mean?

- What are three ways that networking helps people?

1.

2.

3.

Networking really is okay!

- Do most people seeking employment use networking?

   Yes   or   No

- When asking for help, what should you be sure that your requests are?

   _____ and

   _____

How do you network?

- What saying is the basis for the networking strategy?

- Who should you include when identifying your network?

Using your network:

- What is the next step after identifying your network?

- What are three things that you can find out about from your network?

1.

2.

3.

What do I say and do?

- What are two things that you can say to a contact?
1.

2.

- What are two things that you can ask a contact to do for you?
1.

2.

Informational Interview:

- What are two benefits of an informational interview?
1.

2.

- How do you set up an informational interview?

Maintain a positive relationship with people in your network:

- What is one very important way for you to follow up with a contact?

- What should you ask someone before following up with them by phone?

Tips for maintaining energy and progressing in your job search:

- How are you going to keep track of your networking activities?

- After how long should you re-work your resume?

Self-Advocacy:

- What does it mean to be a self-advocate?

- What are two ways that you can advocate for yourself?

1.

2.

Conclusion:

- When you find a job, whom should you contact?

- If you know someone who is looking for a job after you have found one, what should you do?

Exercise

Using Networks

Key Point

Networking is not difficult. It is effective and can help you in many ways.

Facilitator's Directions

- Complete the discussion exercise.
- Discuss why networking works.
- Discuss how students can use their networks.

Exercise Directions

Start a problem-solving discussion using the following situation about moving to a new neighborhood and trying to make new friends.

As the group offers you suggestions, be sure to ask if they know anyone in particular that you could talk to. For example, if someone suggests a gym, ask if they know anyone who belongs to that gym so you can find out what type of equipment they have.

Suggested Script

Listen to the following situation. Try to help me out...

I have recently moved to this neighborhood and really want to make new friends. I will be starting at your high school next week, and I do not know anyone in the area. I think that there are two teenagers who live next door to me, but I have not spoken to them yet.

I was wondering if any of you have some ideas as to where I could go to meet people and make new friends. Do you have any thoughts about places I could go, clubs I could join, or activities I can do that will help me make new friends (i.e. join a gym, take a class)? Where do students hang out around here? (record answers on flip chart)

As you can see, once we got started, it was easy for you to generate ideas of places I could meet new people. That's networking! You were all able to give me suggestions and now it is up to me to follow through with them.

Why Networking Works

Discussion Points

Some of the advantages of using your networks to make work contacts are:

- You have credibility because someone knows you.

- Your contact has a relationship within the organization.

- Your contact may be able to help you avoid initial screening and help you to be considered by the actual person hiring.

- It is easier to request support or help on the job when there is a connection.

- Having a connection may help to get your resume pulled out of a large stack.

Suggested Script

Getting job leads through your connections opens up more employment opportunities because many of the good jobs in good companies are never advertised; even if they are, the people who are hired often have some connections to the company. To have a chance at being considered in (or even finding out about) this hidden job market, one needs to work through other people.

As you become a more effective networker, you will begin to define who in your network is best able to help you. Your needs will change over time, and as a result, you may focus on different people in your network at different times.

Using Your Network

Discussion Points

Your network contacts can be used in many ways:

- They may help with career planning and exploration as you try to discover what areas are of interest to you and learn more about those fields.

- They may help you arrange informational interviews or tours.

- They may sometimes lead to actual job opportunities.

- They may frequently lead you to other people, all of whom offer new leads and connections.

NETWORKING HELPS JOB SEEKERS …
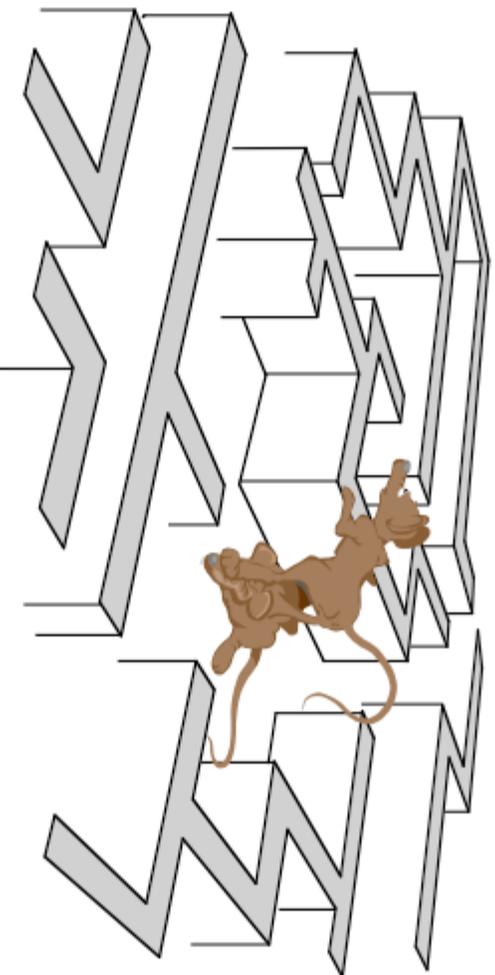
- FIND JOBS WITH BETTER WAGES
- SECURE JOBS WITH MORE HOURS
- SHORTEN LENGTH OF JOB SEARCH

Using Your Network

- **Career Planning**

- **Career Exploration**

- **Informational Interviews**

- **Tours**

- **Specific Job Leads**

- **Tapping into Other Networks**

Identifying Your Network

Key Point

To identify as many people in your network as possible.

Facilitator's Directions

- Complete the "Networking Exercise" handout.
- Be sure to emphasize the fact that the students should be writing down as many names as possible, not just those leading to possible employment connections.

Exercise Directions

Pass out the "Networking Exercise" handout.

Have students work on filling in as many names as possible in the time allotted. They will continue to work on this for homework.

NETWORKING EXERCISE

Family	Friends and Neighbors	School Connections (teachers, classmates, etc.)	Work or Volunteer Contacts (former and present)	Clubs or Groups (after school activities, sports, gyms, etc.)

Institute for Community Inclusion (UAP) B 37

NETWORKING EXERCISE
(continued)

Religious Groups	Stores or Restaurants (hairdresser, coffee shop, cobbler, food store, etc.)	Doctors & Other Medical Professionals (PT, OT, therapist, veterinarian, etc.)	Other

Institute for Community Inclusion (UAP) B 37

Suggested Script

We will now begin to identify your networks. Try to name as many people as you can who fit into each category. Remember the following points:

- *Include everyone you can think of- put specific names down if possible*
- *The purpose is to get information and contacts, not just direct job leads*
- *You won't know how useful a particular contact is until you ask*
- *You won't know how willing someone is to help until you ask*
- *Don't forget former employers, co-workers, classmates and teachers.*

NETWORKING EXERCISE

Family	Friends and Neighbors	School Connections (teachers, tutors, classmates, clubs etc.)	Work or Volunteer Contacts (Past & present)	Clubs or Groups (after school activities, teams, dance, music, gyms, etc.)

Institute for Community Inclusion

NETWORKING EXERCISE
(continued)

Religious Groups/ Spiritual activities

Stores or Restaurants
(hairdresser, video/music store, sub shop, food store, etc.)

Doctors & Medical Professionals
(speech therapist, dentist, allergist, counselor, veterinarian, etc.)

Other- What did we forget?

DISCOVERING YOUR COMMUNITY

- NEWSPAPERS
- DIRECTORIES
- LIBRARIES
- CHURCHES
- PARKS & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
- PEOPLE IN YOUR NETWORK
- PEOPLE WHO KNOW EVERYONE

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- GROUPS YOU HAVE HEARD OF OR PARTICIPATE IN?

- LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS OR CLUBS?

- ARE YOU INVOLVED IN ANY CHURCH OR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS? ARE THERE ANY GROUPS OR CLUBS YOU'RE INVOLVED IN OR KNOW ABOUT?

- ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL INTEREST CLUBS YOU, YOUR FAMILY, OR FRIENDS ARE INVOLVED IN?

- WHAT ABOUT INFORMAL GROUPS? DO YOU GET TOGETHER WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS

- HOW ELSE DO YOU FEEL A PART OF OR GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Identifying Your Network

Key Point

To continue identifying as many people in your network as possible, not just those that you think have a possible employment connection.

Facilitator's Directions

- Before the next session, have students add as many names as possible to their "Networking Exercise" handout.

Suggested Script

Before our next session, continue to work on filling in the networking sheet with as many names as possible. Try to think of all the people you know and write their names down. If you cannot think of someone's name, write down how you know them (i.e. the counter person at the coffee shop).

Does anyone have any questions on the homework? Next time we meet we will talk about what you found out.

Discussion Tip

For some groups it is helpful to make this homework assignment into a contest. You can award small prizes for the most names in a particular category, the most names overall or the most creative/innovative contact ideas.

Asking for Help

Key Point

To have students realize that they can not only ask others for help, but that they can help others as well.

Facilitator's Directions

- Give each student a copy of "Asked Me for Help?" handout.
- Before the next session, have students think of three times that someone has asked them for help and how it felt to be asked.

⭐ Suggested Script

Think of three times when someone has asked you for help with something.

It can be anything–for example if your mom asked you to help your little brother pick up his toys, your friend asked you to get his/her homework because he/she was out sick, or your neighbors asked you to pick up their mail while they were on vacation. How did it feel to be asked for help or advice?

Before our next session, write these answers down on the "Asked Me For Help" sheet.

Does anyone have any questions on the homework? Next time we meet we will talk about what you found out.

Three Times When Someone Asked Me For Help...

❶ _____ asked me to help him/her with
_____.
It made me feel _____ to help
him/her, because _____.

❷ _____ asked me to help him/her with
_____.
It made me feel _____ to help
him/her, because _____.

❸ _____ asked me to help him/her with
_____.
It made me feel _____ to help
him/her, because _____.

Keep in Mind

- It is ok to ask for help

- People like helping

- We all need help at some time
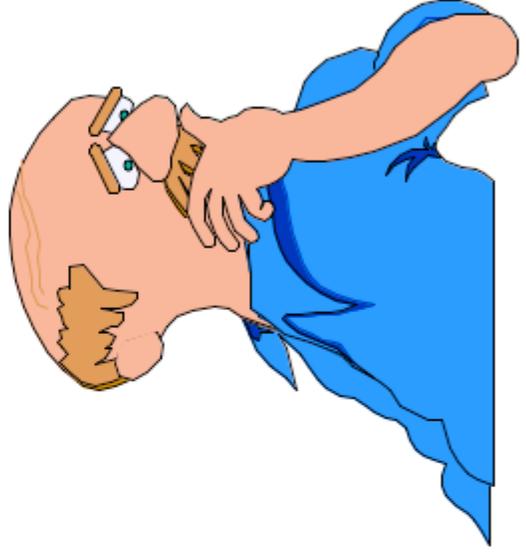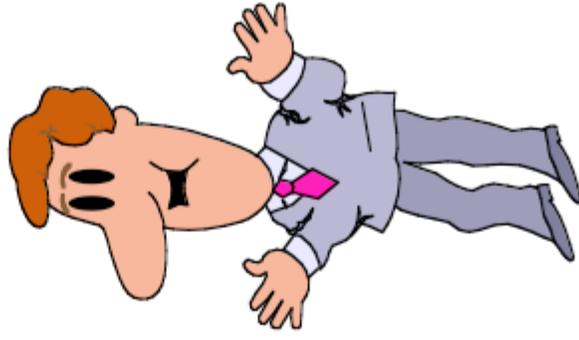
Three Times When Someone Asked Me For Help...

❶ _____ asked me to help him/her with

_____.

It made me feel _____ to help
him/her, because _____.

❷ _____ asked me to help him/her with

_____.

It made me feel _____ to help
him/her, because _____.

❸ _____ asked me to help him/her with

_____.

It made me feel _____ to help
him/her, because _____.

Job Development Network

Key Point

To look further at the "Career Development Networking Tree" that was discussed in the Unit 3 Optional Presentation.

Facilitator's Directions

- Give the "Job Development Network" handout to each student.
- Read down through each column and explain the steps involved in networking.
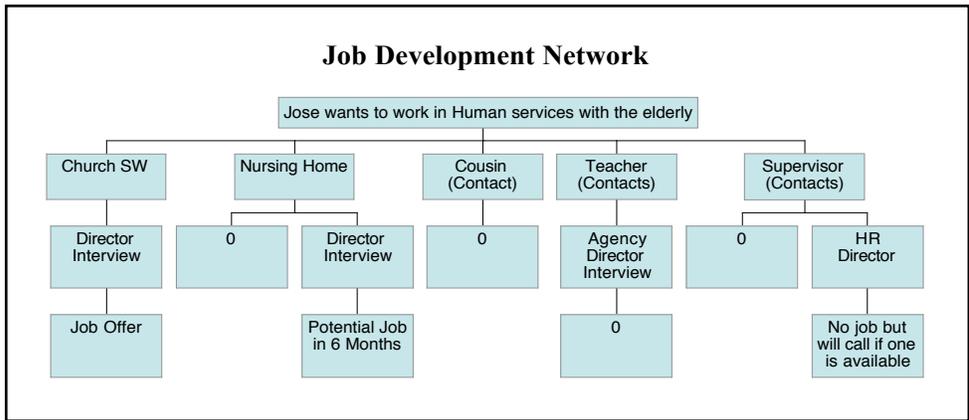
Job Development Network

```
Jose wants to work in Human services with the elderly

Church SW    Nursing Home    Cousin        Teacher        Supervisor
                             (Contact)     (Contacts)     (Contacts)

Director      0    Director   0    Agency         0    HR
Interview          Interview        Director Interview     Director

Job Offer          Potential Job         0              No job but
                   in 6 Months                          will call if one
                                                         is available
```

Suggested Script

The follow-up to Jose's career development overhead is the following job development overhead. Jose got to see what nurses do in his volunteer service job and now wants to work in Human Services with the elderly, but not as a nurse. He returns to his initial network and expands upon it. Remember that Jose ended with 12 networking contacts the first time. This time he chooses five to start networking with. The top row of contacts includes the following: Church Social Worker, Nursing Home contact, Cousin, Teacher and Supervisor.

- *The social worker offers a job lead with the director of a nursing home who interviews Jose and offers him a job.*
- *The Nursing home offers two leads. One is a dead-end lead. The other leads to an interview with the director of an agency, which ends with Jose being told of a potential position in six months.*
- *The cousin again leads to a dead-end.*
- *The teacher leads to the director of an agency and a phone interview, which dead-ends.*
- *The supervisor offers two leads. One is a dead-end. The other directs him to an interview with the HR department of an agency. This ends with a "We'll call you if a job comes up, but we don't have anything open right now."*

How many contacts does Jose have now?

JOB DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Jose wants to work as a Nurse with the elderly.

He returns to his initial network & expands upon it.

Church S.W. (job lead) ← Director (interview) ← Job offer

Nrs. Home (job leads) ∅ ← Director (interview) ← Potential job in 6 months

Cousin (contact) ∅ ←

Teacher (contacts) ← Agency Director (phone interview) ← ∅ ←

Supervisor (contacts) ∅ ← HR Director (interview) ← **No job but will call if one becomes available**
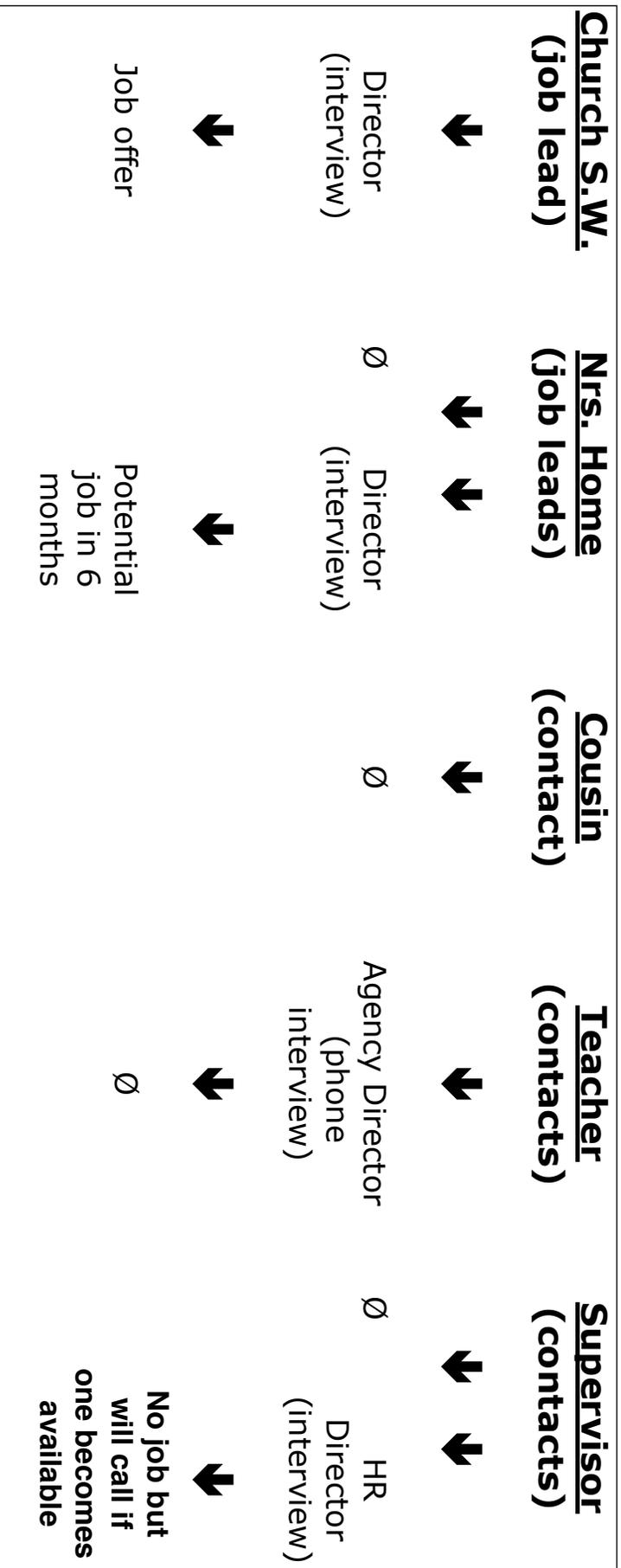
Unit #6

Talking to People in Your Network

Goals

Students will become comfortable with the idea of asking for help and come up with questions for people in their networks.

Unit Plan #6

Homework Review: "Asked Me For Help?" handout

Discussion: Making Contact

Discussion: Talking to People in Your Network
  Materials: "What to Say to a Contact" flip chart outline

Homework: Talking to Your Network

Optional Exercise: Asking for Help
  (target audience: students who seem hesitant to ask others for help)

Asked Me For Help?

Key Point

It is okay to ask for help!

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss what it feels like to be asked for help.
- Review "Asked Me For Help?" homework.
- Discuss why some people may not ask for help.

Discussion Questions

- Has a total stranger ever approached you to ask for directions or for the time of day?
- Does it bother you to be asked for help or information?
- What are some of the things that people have asked you for help with?
- How did it make you feel to be asked for help?
- How did you feel after you helped them?

Trainer's Tip

Throughout the first five sessions you have hopefully asked everyone in the group for assistance with something (i.e. moving chairs around, writing on the flip chart, giving out the handouts, holding your manual). Refer back to those individuals who helped you as you lead the following discussions.

Homework Review

Ask each student to talk about some of the things that people have asked them for help with, as well as how it made them feel to be asked to help someone.

Suggested Script

Asking directly for help and getting individuals interested in your career goals do not have to be the same thing. You can tell people you know about your interests without asking for help. Conversations about your goals can lead to help from a casual acquaintance or a complete stranger. Also, talking to people you know about your goals may lead you to someone they know who has interests/connections/skills that could be of assistance to you.

You now have a list of people who are in your network, but maybe you are still feeling uncomfortable about asking them to help you look at different careers. In general, most people feel good about being asked for help. In many ways, being asked for help is a compliment. It is an indication that the person thinks highly of you.

Have you ever been turned down when you asked someone for help? What happened?

Generally speaking, the outcome will be better than your worst fears. Remember, people will often be flattered by your asking for their assistance. If a reasonable request for assistance is made, most people will try to offer help.

Trainer's Tip

Lead the group in a discussion about what might keep someone from asking the people they know for help. Ask the group if anyone ever been asked by a friend or family member for help in looking for a job and what that experience was like.

Refer to the flip chart with the Interesting Jobs list and ask about times when individuals found their jobs through a contact.

Discussion Points

Keep in mind...

- People choose whether or not to help.
- Rather than being a nuisance, it is often an ego boost to be in a position to help others.
- Most people use personal contacts when conducting a job search. Everyone needs some kind of assistance. Even if you are working with a job counselor, when it comes to getting a job, the more people helping the better.

Making Contact

Key Point

Once you make enough contacts, you will come across someone connected to a business that might have employment opportunities now or in the future.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss what to say when asking someone for help with a job search.
- Refer back to the "Why Hire Me?" exercise for positive traits about each student.

Discussion Questions

- What do you say when you contact someone for help with your job search or deciding on a career path?
- What information should you ask for?
- What information should you tell about yourself?

Suggested Script

When speaking with contacts, ask if they, or anyone they know, work in places that might have the types of jobs you are interested in. You should also ask if they know anyone else with whom you might talk. This could be someone who knows a lot of people and businesses in the community and who might be willing to talk with you.

If your contact has no leads or suggestions for you but seems interested in helping, ask if you could leave your resume and call back in a few days just in case he/she thinks of an idea. Also, ask if they have any suggestions of ways to improve your resume. Be sure to send a simple thank you card to everyone who gives you information or a lead.

Eventually, once you make enough of these contacts, you will come across someone connected to businesses that might have employment opportunities now or in the future. Once you are talking with this contact person, you want to offer them more details about your skills, interests and experiences. Refer back to all the positive things about yourself that you listed on the "Why Hire Me?" form.

⭐ Suggested Script (continued)

Unless the person volunteers information about a specific job, don't ask about job openings at this point. Instead, try to get information about the company, types of jobs available, people they employ, working conditions, and anyone else you might talk with at their company. Ask them if you may use their name as a reference in making further connections.

For those of you who simply want to explore careers, the same principles apply. You want to connect with as many people as possible who can help you explore career options. While you are not actively seeking a job right now, eventually you will, and these people can be helpful at a future point in time.

Discussion Points

- Everyone in your network should know you are looking for a job or doing career exploration.

- Tell people the type of work in which you are interested as well as other information about the setting, such as location and hours.

- See if your contact can refer you to someone else working in this field.

- Try to have your contact introduce you to the person, or ask them to call the contact prior to your calling.

- Keep lots of resumes to hand out.

- Try to expand your contacts. Always ask if the person can refer you to someone else.

- It is best to assume that not all contacts are going to have specific leads or suggestions.

- Ask if you can keep in touch with them.

Talking to People in Your Network

Key Point

To give students an idea of what to say while actively networking.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss what to say when contacting someone from your network.
- Go over some basic networking lines to use.

Discussion Question

- What do you think you will say when you contact someone from your network? (Record these on the flip chart.)

Sample networking lines to use:

- "Tell me a little about what you do."
- "With my interest in _____, skill in _____, or experience in _____, I'm interested in learning more about what you do."
- "I'm in the process of learning more about jobs in _____(field). Do you know anyone who works in _____?"
- "(contact name) suggested I call you."
- "You always seem to have good ideas."
- "You seem to know everybody."
- "When would be a convenient time to meet?"
- "Do you know anyone else I can talk to?"
- "I really value your opinion. Could you look at my resume and tell me what you think?"

Networking Lines to Use

- "Tell me a little more about what you do."

- "With my interest in _____,
  skill in _____, or experience in
  _____, I'm interested in learning a
  little more about what you do."

- "I'm in the process of learning more
  about jobs in the _____
  (field). Do you know anyone who
  works in _____?"

- "(Contact name) suggested I call you."

- "I really value your opinion. Could you
  look at my resume and tell me what you
  think?"

More Networking Lines to Use

- "You always seem to have good ideas."

- "You seem to know everybody."

- "When would be a convenient time to meet?

- "Do you know anyone else I can talk to?"

Making The Initial Contact

* **Let Everyone Know**

* **Describe What You Are Looking For**

* **Does Connection Know Anyone Who Works In That Field / Type of Business?**

* **Will They Call / Can You Use Their Name?**

* **Hand Out Resume / Cover Letter**

* **Ask For Other Contacts Who Could Be Helpful**

* **Ask To Keep In Touch**

Talking to People in Your Network

Key Point

To have students begin to talk with the people in their network.

Facilitator's Directions

- Before the next session, have student contact two people in their network to talk about possible careers or a job search.
- Encourage students to come up with questions to ask this person based on what they know about him or her already.

Suggested Script

For your homework assignment, you are going to get in touch with two people in your network. One of the people that you contact should be someone you do not know as well as the other. Your goal is to talk to them about their jobs/careers and tell each person about your current job or career search. Try to arrange a meeting time with them or someone they know who may be helpful to you in your search. Your goal is to get ideas or suggestions from your contacts that may lead to other people, and eventually, to some potential job opportunities.

If you are unsure about what to say or ask, use this opportunity as a way to get information. Make a list of questions that would fit this particular contact based on what you know about them.

You will be asked to discuss how this went when we meet next time.

Trainers Tip

If the group members need more support with this assignment, ask each person in the group to identify the two people in their network they plan to talk to. Give them a chance to practice what they will say.

Make it Easier

- Bring someone with you

- Start with someone you know and are comfortable with

- Start with a place that is not as important to you

- Pick a comfortable setting

- Talk in person rather than on the phone
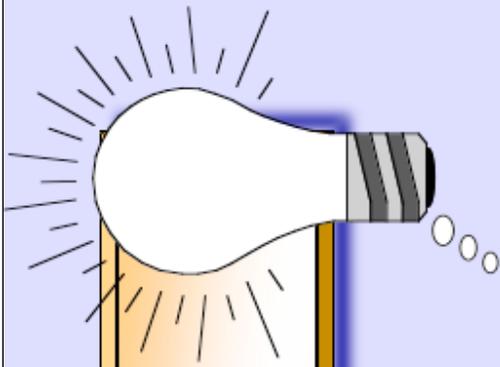
How Do I Know What's Reasonable To Ask?

✔ **How Strong Is Connection?**

✔ **Can the Person Say Yes?**

✔ **How Much Hassle?**

✔ **How Many Breaks In Connection ?**

✔ **How Willing Is The Person?**

Dealing with Contacts

- Use contact name

- Ask, "Is this a good time?"

- Offer to send a copy of your resume

- Ask to meet at contact's convenience

- Call to confirm meeting one day before

- Ask to keep in touch

- Ask contact to pass resume on to others

- Don't ask for a job!

Asking for Help

Key Point

To practice asking for help.

Facilitator's Directions

- Have students practice asking each other for help with something.
- Discuss ways to make asking for help easier.
- Discuss how to decide what is reasonable to ask of a contact.

**Target
Audience:**

Students who seem
hesitant to ask others
for help

Suggested Script

Take a few minutes to try this exercise with the person next to you. Ask him/her for a simple favor (i.e. help with a subject in school, directions to a place you have never been, to be introduced to one of their friends, eat lunch with you).

How did that feel? Was it difficult to ask for help?

Next, request a time to sit down with your partner to discuss the job you are interested in.

What did you say to your partner? Were you able to describe the job you are interested in? How did that feel?

Discussion Points

Helpful Hints to make dealing with contacts easier

- Present the name of the person who referred you to them as you explain why you are calling.

- Ask if it is a good time to talk before you say anything else. If it is a bad time, ask when would be a convenient time to call back.

- If you have a resume, offer to mail or fax it to the person before or after you speak with him or her.

- If you feel more comfortable in person than over the phone, ask to set up a time to meet with the person at his or her convenience.

- If you arrange a meeting, call the day before (or that morning) to confirm. This reminds the person about your visit, and it allows the individual to think about the meeting's purpose. If the person has forgotten or mis-scheduled, it allows you to reschedule. This reduces the risk of catching the person off guard and as a result, less prepared to be receptive to you.

- Don't start off by asking directly for a job.

- Always ask if you may keep in touch with them about any possibilities that come up or for further suggestions.

- Leave an extra copy of your resume and ask him or her to pass it on to others who may be of assistance to you.

- Ask for feedback on your resume.

Suggested Script

There are different rules in dealing with each contact. A request may seem reasonable to one contact, while the same request might feel like an imposition to another. In planning interactions, there are some basic questions to ask yourself.

How to Decide What's Reasonable To Ask:

- *Do you know the person very well?*
- *Make sure that your requests are appropriate to the person; not everyone has authority to hire you.*
- *Is this request putting the person out?*
- *The more breaks in the relationship, the less you ask. Is it a friend, or a friend of a friend of a friend?*
- *Some people offer more help than others.*

Unit #7

Informational Interviewing

Goals

Students will understand the difference between informational interviews and job interviews. They will also continue "Why Hire Me?," identifying work-related strengths and skills they have.

Unit Plan #7

Discussion: Informational Interviews vs. Job Interviews
Materials: "Job Interview vs. informational Interview" flip chart

"Benefits of Informational interviews for Job Seeker and Employer" flip chart

Discussion and Exercise: Informational Interviews
Materials: "Questions to ask on an informational interview" handout

Homework: What Can I Do for an Employer?

Optional Exercise: Informational interview script
(target audience: students who need more concrete preparation for an informational interview)

Optional Discussion: Taking a Tour
(target audience: students who would benefit from seeing what goes on at a particular company)
Materials: flip chart

Optional Exercise: Practice Calling
(target audience: students who need more practice with calling and talking to people in their networks)
Materials: "Phone Script" handouts

Informational Interviews vs. Job Interviews

Key Point

Whether we are seeking a job or merely exploring options, informational interviews are a way to gather useful information.

Facilitator's Directions

- Compare and contrast informational interview and job interviews.
- Discuss the benefits of informational interviews for job seekers and for employers.

Trainer's Tip

On the flip chart, compare and contrast informational interviews and job interviews. Have students suggest differences. Below are some possible ideas. If no one has ever had an informational interview, start with "Job Interview" column and use the "Informational Interview" column to teach the concept.

Suggested Script

Who has ever heard of an informational interview? Who here has ever had an informational interview? (Ask someone in the group who has had an informational interview to explain his or her experience to the rest of the group.)

If no one has ever had an informational interview, does anyone know what one is?

How does it differ from a job interview? Who asks most of the questions? What is the main purpose? What is the level of formality expected? How much pressure or stress is there? Is it harder or easier to set up than a job interview?

Is there a difference in how you should present yourself?

Example of what flip chart should look like:

	Job Interview	Informational Interview
Who asks the questions?	Employer	You
What is the purpose?	Get a job (trying to "sell" yourself)	Learn more about possible jobs/careers
What level of formality/dress?	Formal/dress-up	Less formal/casual
What level of pressure/stress?	More pressure/stress on you	Less pressure/stress on you
Hard or easy to set up?	Harder	Easier
How must you present yourself?	Positively	Positively

⭐ Suggested Script

Informational interviews are helpful to both you (the job seeker) and the employer. What are some of ways that informational interviewing can help you when you are deciding upon a career? What are some of the benefits of doing them? (Record answers on the flip chart.)

Why would an employer want to do an informational interview with you? How do you think an employer benefits from doing them? (Record answers on the flip chart.)

Discussion Points

Ideas for Benefits to Job Seeker

- Contact makes you a known person; it gives you an advantage because you have already met them
- Allows better potential for entry into new positions and part-time and temporary work that is not always advertised
- People working there may now think of you as a prospective employee
- Gives you opportunities to meet new people and add to your network
- Can help develop new contacts through the person you are interviewing with
- Provides more leisurely interviewing and a better chance to evaluate the company and the environment to see if it is worth pursuing
- Less stressful than a job interview- you may be able to present better and provide more information as a result

Ideas for Benefits to Employer

- Meet potential employees in a leisurely fashion, rather than during the busy time of intensive interviewing
- Add to a pool of potential applicants who can fill open positions in the future, or who can be used for temporary or seasonal work
- Avoid costly and time consuming advertising and interviewing for positions by filling them with people they have already met
- Meeting new people who offer interesting skills or experiences can help employers identify employment needs or rethink how they currently use their employees' skills and time
- Provides a nice break from the routine of day-to-day work to talk with someone new, or to assist someone in furthering his or her career
- No risk is involved- the employer may find a good person for the future, but they don't have to hurt anyone's feelings by turning them down now

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS:
BENEFITS TO JOB SEEKER

- Increase chance of getting interview

- Head start on competition

- You've met the employer and found out about the company

- Alternative entry into job (P/T, temp, seasonal)

- Face to face contact with people

- Increase networking opportunities

- More leisurely than job interview

- Less stressful – you may be less nervous

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS: BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

- Meet potential employees in a leisurely fashion

- Add to applicant pool for future open positions

- Save money on future advertising needs

- Meet new people who offer interesting skills and experiences

- Break from normal work routine

- No Risk:

  1. May Find Good Person

  2. Nobody Gets Hurt

Informational Interviews

Key Point

It is very important to be prepared for informational interviews.

Facilitator's Directions

- Talk about how to set up an informational interview.
- Come up with a list of questions to ask on an informational interview.

⭐ Suggested Script

For anyone who has had an informational interview, how did you set it up? How did it go?

How do you think you would go about setting up an informational interview?

If you are interested in setting up an informational interview, identify businesses or individuals with whom you would like to connect. Inquire within your own network to see whether anyone has any contacts with those people or places. If so, use these connections.

If you do not have any contacts to a particular business, research the company, including identifying a person who is connected to that company. You should then call to ask if you could set up a time to talk with this person to find out more about the business.

Discussion Tip

Try to get the following two points across to the group during your discussion:

1. Avoid asking directly for a job. Even if the person has job openings, don't ask. You will often get "no" for an answer and your aim at this point is to get to know people and share your interests, skills and experiences with them.

2. Many job searchers use the strategy of informational interviewing to get their foot in the door. You may feel awkward about calling employers to talk with them if they don't have a job available. You are not wasting their time! There are benefits for both you and employers to participating in informational interviewing.

Exercise Directions

Hand out the "Questions to Ask on an Informational Interview" worksheet to the group. Have the group come up with a list of questions that they would ask on an informational interview.

Suggested Script

What questions are you going to ask on an informational interview?

Think about companies and jobs that you want to learn more about. What could you ask them during an informational interview? (Record answers on flip chart and have students write their answers on the handout.)

During these exercises the class should come up with questions to ask on an informational interview. After the class, type up the questions the group thought of and hand them out to the group at the next meeting. Leave space after each question for students to be able to write in answers.

Questions I Am Going to
Ask on an Informational
Interview....

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Questions I Am Going to Ask on an Informational Interview....

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

4. _____

_____

5. _____

_____

6. _____

_____

What Can I Do for an Employer?

Key Point

Students need to know what skills they can bring to the workplace.

Facilitator's Directions

- Give each student a copy of the "What Can I Do for the Employer" handout.
- Before the next session, have students fill in as many bubbles as possible with all the work skills that they have.

Suggested Script

We have discussed many general positive traits about ourselves. Now we need to focus on the skills we have that will be beneficial to an employer. Think about the different things you could do in a work setting

1. What do you do at your current job?
2. What have you done at former jobs?
3. What are your best classes in school?
4. What chores do you do at home?

Before our next session, please fill in as many bubbles as you can with skills you have that would be helpful in the workplace.

Does anyone have any questions on the homework? Next time we meet we will talk about what you found out.

What can I do for an employer?

I can type 30 words per minute in Microsoft Word
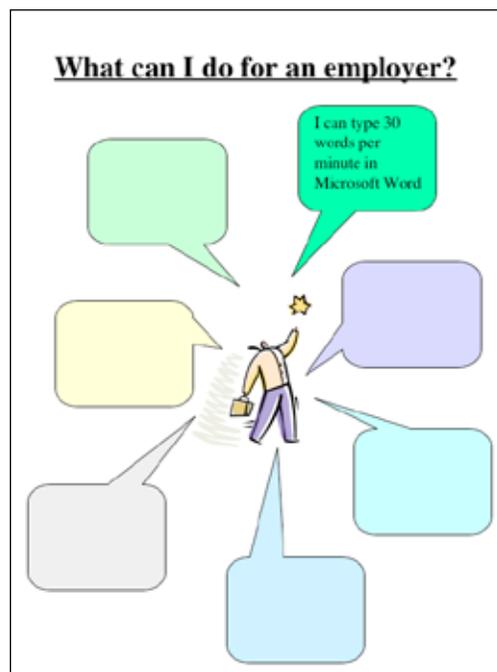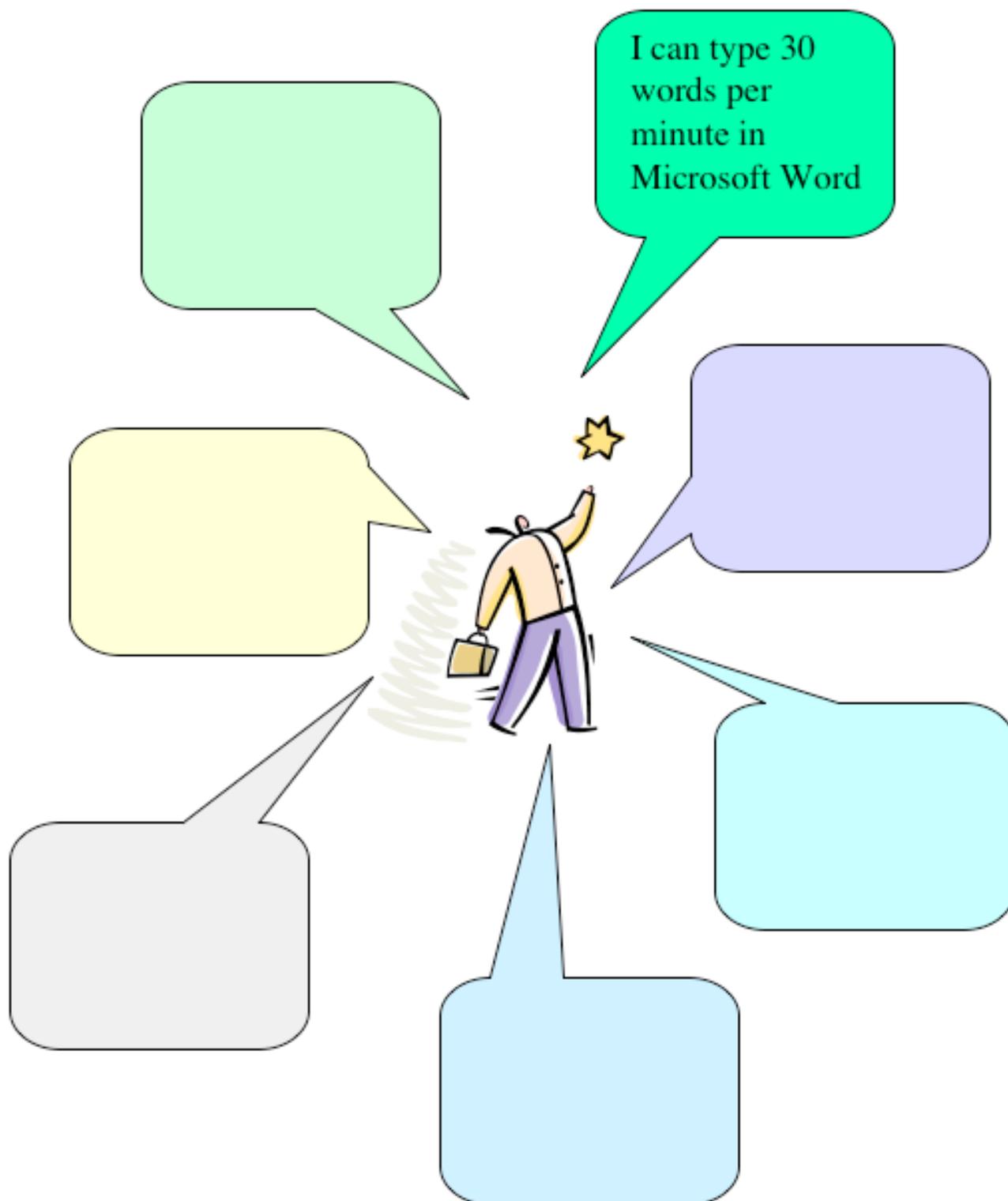
Informational Interview Script

Key Point

To put together a script for an informational interview.

Facilitator's Directions

- Review the differences between informational interviews and job interviews.
- Come up with a script of what students might say on an informational interview.

Exercise Directions

Ask students the following questions as if they were going on an informational interview tomorrow:

- *What will you say when you first get to the interview?*
- *What do you say to the receptionist?*
- *How do you ask for the interviewer?*
- *How do you introduce yourself?*
- *Do you always remember to shake hands with the interviewer?*
- *What types of questions might you ask the interviewer*

Target Audience:

Students who need more concrete preparation for an informational interview

Trainer's Tip

This section works best if you are able to have an informational interview set up for at least one student in the group, and the class can work on figuring out exactly what to say.

Review the differences between informational interviews and job interviews with the group to ensure that they understand the purpose of each. Have the group come up with a definition of each and write them on the flip chart.

Sample questions to ask during an informational interview:

- *What do you do at this company?*
- *What is the best part of your job?*
- *What type of education or training is necessary to do this type of job?*
- *What other types of jobs are there at this company?*
- *Can you tell me more about this company?*
- *How do you apply for a job at this company?*
- *Can you look at my resume and give me some feedback on it?*

Discussion Questions:

What should you do after the interview? What should you do if you are interested in a job at the company where you had an informational interview?

Trainer's Tip

It is very important to send a thank you note as soon as possible after the interview. Stress this as much as possible with the students.

Some Possible Answers:

- *Follow-up with a phone call to the interviewer.*
- *Write a thank you note or email as soon as possible after the interview and mention that you are interested in working for the company.*
- *Ask if you can keep in touch.*
- *Ask if you would need any further training or education to work at that company.*
- *Leave a resume.*

Taking a Tour

Key Point

To understand why you would want to take a tour of a company and how to prepare to do so.

Target Audience:

Students who will benefit from seeing what goes on at a particular company

Exercise Directions

- Discuss why someone would want to take a tour of the company.
- Brainstorm on how to set up a tour. Talk about follow-up after taking a tour.

Discussion Points

Try to touch on the following points when discussing what to do and ask on a tour:

- What tasks appeal to you?
- Ask questions- people like to talk.
- Identify more people for informational interviews.
- Look for someone who could help you.
- What jobs need to be filled most oftten?

★ Suggested Script

- *Has anyone ever taken a tour of a company?*
  If yes, how did you set it up? Was it fun or scary? Was it helpful? What did you learn?

- *If no, have you ever visited someone else's workplace?*
- *Why would you want to take a tour of a company?*
- *What do you think you might gain from that experience?*

In addition to asking the employer questions about the company during an informational interview, you want to have an opportunity to observe the actual work that happens there. Look closely, and talk to people along the way. You may see tasks that need doing, tasks that you have done already, or particular parts of the company or a job that would be suitable to your skills and experience.

- *How do you think that you would go about setting up a tour?*
- *What kind of questions might you want to ask while touring a company?*
  (Record answers on a flip chart.)

To take best advantage of a tour, make sure you pay attention. Try to pick a job or area to ask questions and learn more about. Be sure to get business cards or the names of the people who help you.

After going on a tour, be sure to write a thank you note to everyone that assisted you. This is where the business cards will come in handy. You will have the correct spelling of the names and addresses of everyone who helped you. If there were any jobs that you were interested in, be sure to mention them and find out how you might apply for those positions.

Taking A Tour

- Look for jobs that need doing
- Look for tasks matching your interest & experience
- Talk with workers
- Identify internal connections
- Identify possible champions
- Identify employment needs

Practice Calling

Key Point

To help students gain a better understanding of what to say when contacting someone for the purpose of networking.

Facilitator's Directions

- Give each student a copy of the "Phone Script" exercise.
- Go through the questions with students.
- Use the blank sheet to help students come up with their own scripts.

Exercise Directions

- Hand out a copy of the "Phone Script" exercise.
- Go over each question with the additional questions added below.
- One trainer role-plays by calling a group member to arrange an informational interview.
- Once the basic version is done, students should work on ways to include small talk while promoting personality, interest, and skill.

Target Audience:

Students who need more practice calling and talking to the people in their networks

---

Calling Someone You Know for an
Informational Interview
Or
Career Exploration

1. Hello, may I speak to _____?
    (name of person you are calling)

2. Hi _____. How are you today?
    (name of person you are calling)

3. Is this a good time to talk?
    - If yes, continue with script.
    - In no, ask when a good time would be to call back.

4. I'm taking a class at school where we are talking about different careers. I was wondering if it would be possible to talk with you about your job as a _____ and what you do at _____.
    (job that the person does)   (place where the person works)

5. Is there a good time for you that we could meet?

6. Thank you. I look forward to talking with you soon.

⭐ Suggested Script

Before you even pick up the phone, you should think through what you are going to say. This guide will help you with that process. Remember, this is only a guide. You should feel free to make changes and personalize it so you feel comfortable. Let's go through the questions one-by-one, so you will know what to say.

(continue once you have gone over the questions.)

Everyone should find a partner and pair off. Try one or two of the phone scripts with your partner. Be as clear about your job objective as possible and use this information in the role-play exercise.

Don't forget to tell your parent or the people you live with that you are making these calls. It is important for them to be prepared if they happen to answer when a contact will call you back.

Sample Exercise Questions:

1. Who are you calling?

   How are you going to address this person? (Mr., Mrs., Dr., first name)

2. How did you get the contact?

   Who gave you their name and phone number?

3. What are you going to say when they answer their phone?

   Hello. How are you today?_____ gave me your name and suggested that I call you. Is this a good time to talk?

4. What will you say if you have to leave them a message?

   Be sure to clearly state your name and number where you can be reached. Let them know that you are calling to find out more about their company.

5. What kind of job are you looking for?

   Be as specific as possible. If you do not have a specific job in mind, be able to talk about a career that you think you want to learn more about.

6. What are your skills and strengths?

   What jobs have you had? What are you good at? Look at the "Why Hire Me?" exercise for ideas.

7. What are you going to ask them for help with?

   Can I talk with you about your job or company? I was wondering if you could give me feedback on my resume. Could I get a tour of your office/ company? Do you know anyone else I could talk to? Can you offer me advice on my job search?

8. What do you say when you end the conversation?

   Thank you! If you think of any more ideas, please give me a call. Can I call you back if I have any more questions?

✓ **Calling someone you know for an informational interview / career exploration**

✓ Hello, may I speak to _____.

                                        (name of person you are calling)

✓ Hi _____. How are you today?

                (name of person you are calling)

✓ Is this a good time to talk?

                If yes, continue with script.

                If no, ask when a good time would be to call back

✓ I am taking a class at school where we are talking about different careers. I was wondering if it would possible to talk with you about your job as a

_____ and what you do at

(the job that the person does)

_____.

(the company the person works at)

✓ Is there a good time for you that we could meet?

✓ Thank you. I look forward to talking with you soon.

✓ If you are asked to leave a message: Leave your name, phone number, and reason for calling- politely ask the person to get back to you. Say thank you!

PHONE SCRIPT

CALLING SOMEONE YOU KNOW WELL

Hello _____, this is _____ calling. How are you?

person's name _____ _your name_

I am calling because I am looking for work in the _____ field.

_____ _type of work_

I have experience. I worked at _____ as a _____

_____ _company name_ _____ _job title_

I am trying to get the names of people who may know of opportunities in this area.

I would also love to get to tour a facility. Could you suggest any people with

whom I should meet or talk?

IF PERSON SAYS NO-   Can you offer me any advice in my job search?

Thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

WHEN CALLING SOMEONE YOU ARE REFERRED TO:

Hello, My name is _____.   _____

_____ _your name_ _____ _person who gave you the contact_

suggested I give you a call. How are you today? I hope that I am not calling at an

inconvenient time (If it is, arrange another time to talk or meet). I am interested in

working as a: _____, and I would like to speak with people to learn

_____ _job title_

about any opportunities in this area. I would also love to tour some facilities

to learn more about this area. Would you have any suggestions for me?

Could you recommend any people for me to speak with?

Thank you very much for your time. Good-bye.

CALLING SOMEONE - YOU HAVE NO SPECIFIC JOB IN MIND

Hello, My name is _____.   _____
                         your name   person who gave you the contact

suggested I give you a call. How are you today? I hope that I am not calling at an

inconvenient time. (If it is, arrange another time to talk or meet)   I am interest in

exploring opportunities in the _____ area. I am interested in
                                            name the general field

learning more about various positions. Would it be possible to arrange a tour of your

facility and perhaps discuss some jobs that exist within your company?

If yes- arrange a convenient time.

If no- Do you have any suggestions for me? Could you recommend any people for me
to speak with?

Thank you very much for your time. Good-bye.

Phone Script

Calling Someone You Know Well

Phone Script

Calling Someone You Were Referred

Phone Script

Calling to Set Up a Company Tour

Phone Script

Calling to Set Up
an Informational Interview

Phone Script
Calling Someone When You Have No Specific Job in Mind

First Impressions

Goals

Students will realize the importance of socializing and discuss what makes a good person a good "schmoozer."

Unit Plan #8

Discussion and Exercise: Schmoozing

Exercise: Introduce Yourself

Homework: Writing a Thank You Note
Materials: "Thank You Note" handout

Optional Exercise: Like to Talk To...?
(target audience: students who learn best visually and need a more visual explaination of the concept of a first impression)
Materials: "Which of These People Would You Like To Talk To" handout

Schmoozing

Key Points

To further enhance the concept of networking by introducing the strategy of "schmoozing."

Facilitator's Directions

- Introduce "schmoozing."
- Discuss what makes a good schmoozer.

Discussion Questions

- Can anyone define schmoozing?
- What makes a good schmoozer?

Suggested Script

Making networking a part of your everyday life includes schmoozing.

Engaging people and broadening networks involves an ability to talk with people, but more importantly, being an effective schmoozer.

Some people are born socializers, while others have a more difficult time being outgoing. Developing a network requires that an individual reaches out and talks to people. Schmoozing skills can be developed.

What are some things we can say to people to get friendly conversations started?
- *Start with a greeting and a smile*
- *Comment on the activity*
- *Compliment the person*

How can you tell if a person isn't interested in talking?
- *No eye contact*
- *No smile*
- *Looks busy*

What are some friendly ways to end a conversation?
- *"Very nice to meet you"*
- *"Take care"*
- *"Talk to you soon"*

Discussion Points

The Art of Schmoozing

- Talk about anything
- Be available
- Smile and make eye contact
- Don't just talk, get others to talk as well
- Keep the conversation light and pleasant
- Be sincere and genuinely interested
- Get to know the person
- Ask people about themselves and then listen
- "Please and thank you"

THE ART OF SCHMOOZING

- Talk about anything
- Be flexible and available
- Look like you enjoy the interaction
- Don't just talk, get others to
- Listen to others
- Be sincere
- Have a sense of humor
- Place a value on relationships
- Ask people about themselves
- Keep the conversation light and pleasant

Introduce yourself

Key Point

To further emphasize the importance of starting conversations with new contacts by introducing yourself in a polished manner.

Facilitators Directions

- Discuss strong ways to introduce yourself.
- Review the importance of making a good first impression.
- Have group members practice giving an introduction.
- Have group members practice an entrance for a meeting.

Discussion Points

- Basic aspects of an introduction
- What to say if this is a job interview
- How to enter the room in a way that facilitates a smooth introduction

Suggested Script

Successful networking involves meeting new people. It is one thing to talk to someone that you already know, but when you meet new people your approach is a little different. This takes some practice. Right now, we are going to pretend that we are meeting for the first time as a result of your expanded network. You will all stand up, shake my hand, and introduce yourself to me.

Trainer's Tip

When group members introduce themselves to you, make note of strength of handshake, eye contact, confidence, etc., and give feedback. Once everyone has had the opportunity to try, have them do it again, but have them add one or two sentences about why you should hire them. Once everyone has tried that, model coming in from the hall on your way to a "meeting" with one of the group members. Be sure to do a few things wrong, such as having something in your right hand so that you had to adjust to shake hands, forgetting the name of the person to meet with, or looking disheveled from being outside. Then, have the group critique you, and then ask for a volunteer to do it correctly.

Writing a Thank You Note

Key Point

To stress the importance of thank you notes.

Facilitator's Directions

- Before the next session, have students practice writing a thank you note.

★ Suggested Script

After every interview it is extremely important to write a thank-you note to every person that you spoke with. This is a great chance to make a good impression on an employer.

What do you think are some important things for you to write in a thank you note? How would you start the note?

Let's look at the handout for today's homework and read over the Thank You Note Tips.

Let's pretend that you had an interview today at a company for a job you really want. Before our next session I would like you all to try writing a thank you note to the employer who interviewed you.

Thank You Note Checklist

- ☐ Get the interviewer's business card at the end of the interview.
- ☐ Double-check the spelling of the person's name, title and address.
- ☐ Send the note within 24 hours of the interview.
- ☐ Have someone check the grammar and spelling.
- ☐ Mention something you talked about in the interview.
- ☐ State whether or not you are still interested in the position.
- ☐ Make sure that the appearance of the letter is neat.
- ☐ Check that it is easy to read.
- ☐ Make sure it is simple, short, and straight forward.
- ☐ Add anything you forgot to say during the interview.

Practice Thank You Note

Your address: _____
_____

Date: _____

Name and Address of Interviewer:
_____
_____
_____

Dear _____:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Sincerely,

_____ (signature)

Trainer's Tip

If it would be helpful for the group, give them a name of an employer, the company, and address so they will not spend too much time thinking about that.

Thank You Note Checklist

☐ Get the interviewer's business card at the end of the interview.

☐ Double-check the spelling of the person's name, title, and address.

☐ Send the note within 24 hours of the interview.

☐ Have someone check the grammar and spelling.

☐ Mention something you talked about in the interview that was informative and say how it helped you.

☐ State whether or not you are still interested in the position.

☐ Make sure that the appearance of the letter is neat.

☐ Check that it is easy to read.

☐ Make sure it is simple, short, and straight forward.

☐ Add anything you forgot to say during the interview.

Practice Thank You Note

_____

Your address: _____

_____

Date: _____

Name and Address of Interviewer:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Dear _____:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sincerely,

_____ (signature)

Target Audience:

Students who learn well visually and need a more visual explanation of the concept of a firse impression

Like To Talk To...?

Key Point

To further explore the idea of a first impression.

Facilitator's Directions

- Complete "Like To Talk To" exercise.
- Discuss importance of making a good first impression.

Exercise Directions

- Hand out the "Which of these people would you like to talk to?" handout that you created.
- Discuss why they were interested in talking with a particular person. Discuss why there were not interested in talking with a particular person

Suggested Script

When you look at the people on the handout, which of them would you want to talk to?

What is it about them that makes you want to talk to them?

When you look at the people on the handout, which of them would you not want to talk to?

What is it about them that makes you not want to talk to them?

Why do you think it is important to make a good first impression when meeting someone for the first time?

What do you think that you can do to make your first impression a good one?

Trainer's Tip

Think of the types of people that the students might be interested in talking to and create handouts accordingly. A good idea is to use photographs or magazine pictures of people with very differing looks and facial expressions.

Which of these people would you like to talk to?

Unit #9

Job Interviews & What Employers Look For

Goals

Students will discuss the traits that employers look for in an employee, and identify qualities they have that are desireable to employers.

Unit Plan #9

Homework Review: Thank you note

Discussion: What are Employers Looking For?
  Materials: "Looking to Hire" handout.

Exercise: Reasons to Hire Me

Homework: What Will You Wear? Come dressed for a job interview.

Thank You Note

Key Point

To stress the importance of thank you notes.

Facilitator's Directions

- Have students read their thank you notes to the group.
- Reiterate the importance of a thank you note.

Trainer's Tip

If you think that the students in your group had a difficult time writing the thank you note for homework, have a sample one written out so they can see what one should looks like. Have the students read them aloud and record on the flip chart some of the good points they made in their notes.

Suggested Script

At the end of an interview–either an informational interview or a job interview– it is always a good idea to ask for the interviewer's business card so you can write a thank you note. Can anyone tell me why a thank you note is so important?

Last time for homework you all practiced writing out a thank you note to an employer. Please take those out now so we can read them as a group.

What are Employers Looking For?

Key Point

Most employers are looking for a consistent set of qualities in their employees.

Facilitator's Directions

- Present the scenario outlined below.
- Discuss what most employers look for in their employees.
- Review the basic rules of human relations.

⭐ Suggested Script

The principal has asked your class to assist her in writing a help wanted advertisement to hire a new teacher. You get to choose all the qualifications, skills, and traits that you would like this individual to have. Additionally, you will get to sit in on the interview and ask questions.

What are you going to say in the ad? What are the most important traits that this individual should have?

What questions are you going to ask when you interview the candidates?

Discussion Tip

What do most employers look for in their employees?

Most employers look to hire people who:

- Fit in or get along well with others
- Are dependable
- Have skills and abilities to do the job
- Express interest in how they can help the company

Here are some basic rules of human relations that help to create a positive interaction:

- People enjoy pleasant interactions.
- People like to hear their names. It makes them feel good to be remembered.
- Remember the golden rule... Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.
- Sound as though everything is a pleasure.
- Remember to offer thanks and praise.
- Try to avoid criticism or negatives.
- Remember others' feelings.
- Try to meet when they can.
- What goes around comes around.
- Ask people more about themselves and wait to be asked before spending much time talking about yourself.

Most Employers Look to Hire People Who...

- Fit in at their company

- Get along well with others

- Are dependable

- Have skills and abilities to do the job

- Communicate interest in the company

Looking To Hire

1. You are the owner of a small business. You need to hire a receptionist.

   Job Duties: to answer the phones, greet your customers, and keep a schedule for you.

   What kind of person do you want to hire for this job?

   What kind of skills would you want this person to prove to you they have?

2. You are the manager of a fast food restaurant. You need to hire a cashier.

   Job duties: to take customers orders, work the cash register, and keep the front of the store neat and clean.

   What kind of person do you want to hire for this job?

   What kind of skills would you want this person to prove to you they have?

Looking To Hire

3. You have been chosen to pick the next President of the United States.

> Job Duties: to be in charge of the United States, responsible for the budget, interact with other countries, etc.
>
> What kind of person do you want to hire for this job?
>
> What kind of skills would you want this person to prove to you they have?

Reasons to Hire Me

Key Point

Students need to be able to easily talk about their work-related strengths.

Facilitator's Directions

- Complete the "You Should Hire Me Because..." handout.
- Have students provide a back-up statement for each trait they identified.
- Homework: come to the next group dressed for an interview.

Suggested Script

Earlier we talked about making a good impression. Job interviews are a time when we must be ready and able to present ourselves well. Let's do the "You Should Hire Me Because..." exercise. Let's come up with three work related positive traits about ourselves and back-up statements for each.

(Continue once everyone has come up with traits and examples.)

For next time, I would like everyone to come dressed as if they are going to a job interview.

Trainer's Tip

Have the group spend some time thinking about positive traits they have that are work related. Refer back to the "What is Good About Me" exercise from Unit 3 and pull out those traits that are work related. Remind the group that these examples will all come in handy in informational interviews as well as job interviews.

If students get stuck and cannot think of any, ask them:

- What would your supervisors at work say about you?
- What would your teachers say about you?

NOTE- Allow students to copy ideas from others if they are true. Ideally each student will have more than three ideas, but to keep things moving, students should focus on three.

Examples of work-related back-up statements:

- Punctual: I am always on time or early for my classes.
- Organized: My locker is neat and I can always find everything I need.
- Team Player: I like to work as part of a team, like in my art class when we did a group project on building pyramids.

You should hire me because....

➲ I am _____

_____

➲ I can _____

_____

➲ I know how to _____

_____

➲ I have done _____

_____

➲ I like to _____

_____

➲ I have skills in _____

_____

➲ I am good at _____

_____

Unit #10

Interviewing Part Two

Goals

Students will understand what it takes to interview successfully.

Unit Plan #10

Exercise: Interview Tomorrow Morning
   Materials: "Preparing for an Interview" flip chart

Exercise: Interviewing Part 2

Homework: Tell Me About Yourself

Optional Discussion: Research Before an Interview
   (target audience: students who will be going on job interviews in the near future)

Optional Discussion: Reasons for Being Late
   (target audience: students who have a habit of being late for class)

Optional Discussion: Reasons for Not Going to Work
   (target audience: students who have a poor attendance record)

Interview Tomorrow Morning

Key Point

To help students understand how to get ready for an interview.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss what you need to do the night before an interview to get ready for it.
- Discuss what a job interview is like.

Trainer's Tip

In this exercise the group will be talking through the process of getting ready for an interview. If the group is unable to come up with ideas, try asking the following questions:

- How will you get there?
- How long will it take?
- Who is the interviewer?
- What do you know about the job?
- What do you know about the company?
- What are you going to wear?
- What are you going to say?
- Where is your resume?

Have the group think through all different types of problematic scenarios that could happen and discuss ways to avoid them. For example, wearing brand new shoes could hurt your feet. Forgetting to check bus/train schedules ahead of time may make you late. Or putting resumes directly in your bag, instead of in a folder, may make them messy. This will further reinforce the idea that the more prepared they are for the interview, the better the outcome will be.

Sample Exercise:

You have an interview tomorrow morning at 10 am in a part of town that you are not familiar with. What are some of the things you need to do today to prepare? (Record answers on the flip chart.) Here are some examples:

- get clothes ready (clean and ironed)
- polish shoes
- find out how to get there
- practice getting there
- put together a clean copy of resume and references
- fill out a practice job application
- find out some information about the company

Discussion Questions

Who has ever gone on a job interview?

- What was it like?
- How was it set up?
- Did anyone help you?

Suggested Script

Throughout your job search, you will most likely go on many interviews. The best way to be successful is to prepare ahead of time. There are many things you can do beforehand to ensure that you are ready for your interview.

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

- HAVE PRE-WRITTEN JOB DETAILS

- KNOW TIME & LOCATION OF MEETING

- HAVE RESUME & REFERENCES READY

- KNOW THREE TO FIVE ASSETS

- ID RELATED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

- PROJECT IMAGE OF CAPABILITY
  (ACTION VERBS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS)

- DON'T VOLUNTEER NEGATIVE INFO

- CONTRAST PAST WITH PRESENT

Exercise

Interviewing Part Two

Key Point

To help students understand what they should do on the morning of an interview as well as what to do when they get to the interview site.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss what students need to do on the morning of the interview.
- Discuss what students need to do when they get to the interview site.
- Have students practice introducing themselves and answering the interview question, "Tell me about yourself."

Trainer's Tip

If the group is quiet or unable to come up with ideas about what to do on the morning of an interview, try asking the following questions:

- What time are you going to leave your house?
- How early should you arrive at the interview?
- While eating breakfast, you drip a little food on your shirt. What do you do?
- What about smoking and eating before an interview?

While discussing what to do on the morning of an interview, be sure to touch upon personal hygiene, including showering, shaving, cologne, hair style, and jewelry.

Discussion Questions

- Today we were all supposed to come dressed for an interview. Let's go over what we should wear.
- Are parts of some outfits appropriate for an interview (i.e. nice pants, shirts and shoes) while others are less appropriate?

Trainer's Tip

Bring pictures of people dressed professionally for a visual representation of appropriate style and fit of clothing. Make sure the pictures reflect those of varied gender, age, ethnicity, race, disability status, etc.

Suggested Script

It is 8 am on the morning of your interview. Your interview is scheduled for 1 pm. What are you going to do now to ensure that your interview is successful? (Record answers on the flip chart.)

Trainer's Tip

Next we will be discussing what to do when you get to the interview site. If the group is unable to come up with ideas, try asking the following questions:

• What do you do in the waiting room?

• What do you say to the receptionist?

• If you get there 45 minutes early, what should you do?

   You can also explain that sometimes the receptionist will be asked his or her opinion of the job applicant and how they interacted in the waiting room.

• You have just arrived at the interview site. What do you do? (Record answers on flip chart.)

Now have each person stand up, shake your hand, introduce him or herself, and state that he/she is there for an interview. Comment on his/her eye contact, hand shake, and confidence level.

Next ask each person to tell you a little about him or herself (referring to "Why Hire Me?").

Tell Me About Yourself

Key Point

To have students get more familiar with common interview questions.

Facilitator's Directions

- Before the next session have students write down answers to the "Tell Me About Yourself" exercise.

⭐ Suggested Script

Today, we discussed ways to succeed on an interview. It is very important that you spend time preparing for every interview you go on. You should be able to easily talk about your strengths and skills as well as what you can do for an employer.

Take time between now and the next time we meet to write down what you are going to say when an employer asks you the very common interview question "So, tell me about yourself." The more you practice this, the better prepared you will be for an interview.

Look at the handout for tonight's homework. What are some things you can write down in each category? Look at some of the handouts we have been working on throughout this training if you get stuck (such as "Why Hire Me," "What's Good About Me?" and "What I Can Do For an Employer".)

> ## "So, tell me about yourself."
>
> ❖ **Skills**
>
> ❖ **Personality & Attributes**
>
> ❖ **Hobbies & Interests**
>
> ❖ **Oriented to meeting employer needs**

"So, tell me about yourself."

❖ Skills

❖ Personality & Attributes

❖ Hobbies & Interests

❖ Oriented to meeting employer needs

Tell Me About Yourself

Skills:

Personality and Attributes:

Hobbies and Interests:

Research Before an Interview

Key Point

To further discuss what it takes to be successful in an interview.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss how to find out information about a company.
- Review the discussion points below.

Discussion Questions

If you are going on an interview, additional company information maybe be helpful. What strategies have you used to get information about a business? What other ways can you think of to get information about a company? (Record answers on flip chart.)

Target Audience

Students who will be going on job interviews in the near future

Discussion Points

Research before the interview:

- Read company brochures. They can be sent to you or you can pick them up.

- In addition to the informational interview, ask for a tour. You gather more information this way because you see the worksite. It also allows you to meet more people.

- Take time before you interview to talk with current employees. Ask if they like their jobs, if they know of good people to connect with in the company, etc.

- Talk to the competition (businesses who do the same kind of work).

- Read the bulletin board while there. If you don't take a tour, visit as a customer.

- Look on the Internet at their website or on a related business website (i.e. Chamber of Commerce).

- Talk to someone you know who knows the company well.

⭐ Suggested Script

These strategies are effective for gathering information prior to an interview. Not every strategy will work for every business. For example, you can take part in a public tour of a museum or walk around a retail store prior to an interview, but this would be more difficult to accomplish in an insurance company. With all of these strategies, the aim is to gather factual data, get names of potential contacts, meet new people directly, identify potential allies or advocates who may take an interest in you, and broaden your overall network. Remember, getting a job takes time and effort!!

Even when talking with people who are in positions to hire or influence the hiring decision, you should avoid asking for a job right away. It is an easy way to get a quick no before they have a chance to get to know you. You want to make sure that you have an opportunity to present what you have to offer.

Instead of asking about a job opening, spend time asking questions about their business and specific projects, what they look for in potential employees, and what they anticipate their future needs to be. In asking these questions, you may obtain valuable information, not only about potential jobs, but also about the people themselves and what is important to them. You may then present information about your skills, experience, and interests in a way that fits best with the information you just learned about the company.

Research Before the Interview

- Company Brochure

- Internet/Website

- In the news?

- Talk to employees

- Talk to the competition

- Take a tour

- Read the bulletin board

Reasons for Being Late

Key Point

To help students understand that there are very few acceptable reasons for being late to a job.

Facilitator's Directions

- Come up with a list of reasons why someone might be late for work.
- Discuss with students why there are very few good reasons for being late to work.
- Remind students that they should call their supervisor as soon as they realize that they are going to be late.

Target Audience:

Students who have a habit of being late for class

Exercise Directions

Have students come up with some reasons for being late to work. Record answers on flip chart.

Now have students look at the list and vote on which are really good reasons for being late to work. Read a reason and have them tell you, if they were your boss, would they accept the reasons as good excuses for being late?

Go through the reasons one by one and have the group decide if each would be accepted by a supervisor. The goal is to come to the conclusion that there are very few, if any, good reasons for being late.

- What should you do if you realize you are going to be late?

Direct the group into coming to the conclusion that you should always call as soon as you know you might be late. For example, if you scheduled a doctor's appointment in the morning, tell your supervisor as soon as it is scheduled. Or if your car will not start, immediately call your boss.

- What would you do if you realized you were going to be late for a job interview? Or your first day of work?
- How could you prevent this from happening?

Trainer's Tip

Have the group come up with as many possible reasons as they can for being late to work, regardless of their validity. If they are not able to come up with a good like, start asking questions such as:

- How about when you need to walk your dog in the morning?
- Or if you little sister is crying?
- What if you need to go to the hospital?
- Or if you are tired?

Reasons for Not Going to Work

Key Points

To help students understand that there are very few accceptable reasons for not going to work.

Facilitator's Directions

- Come up with a list of reasons why someone might not go to work.
- Discuss with students that there are very few good reasons for not going to work.
- Remind students that they should call their supervisor as soon as they realize that they are not going to work.

Exercise Directions

Have students come up with some reasons for not going to work. Record answers on a flip chart.

Have them look at the list and vote on which are really good reasons for not going to work. Read a reason and have them tell you–if they were your boss, would they accept it as an excuse for not coming to work?

Go through the reasons one by one and have the group decide if each would seem acceptable to an supervisor. The goal is to come to the conclusion that there are very few, if any, good reasons for not going to work.

- What should you do if you realize you are not going to make it to work?

Direct the group to the conclusion that you should always call as soon as you know you are going to be out. For example, if you have scheduled a doctor's appointment, tell your supervisor as soon as it is scheduled. If you are very sick, immediately call your boss.

- What would you do if you realized you could not make it to an interview?
- What about vacation time? Or personal days? How far in advance should you request time off?

Time off policies vary from employer to employer. The main thing to remember is that you are requesting time off, not demanding it. In some instances, a supervisor might not be able to grant you the exact week off that you would like due to scheduling. Be sure to speak with your supervisor before booking a trip or making plans.

Target Audience:

Students who have a poor attendance record

Trainer's Tip

Have the group come up with as many possible reasons for not going to work as they can, regardless of their validity. If they are not able to come up with a good list, start asking questions such as:

- How about if your friend is on vacation and you want to hang out with them?
- Or if you do not like what you have scheduled to do that day?
- How about if you are very sick?
- What if you have a slight cold?

Unit #11

Why We Don't Network

Goals

Students will discuss reasons why people don't network and how to deal with a "no." Students will also continue to identify more potential contacts.

Unit Plan #11

Homework Review: Tell Me About Yourself

Discussion: Why We Don't Network

Discussion: Dealing with "NO"

Homework: Adding People to Your Networking List

Optional Discussion: Getting Unstuck
(target audience: students who have a tendency to procrastinate or who have been searching for a long time and need some additional motivation to continue with their job search)

Optional Brainstorm: Broadening Your Network
(target audience: students with a small network)

Optional Discussion: Schmoozing
(target audience: students who are shy or uncomfortable with talking to people they do not know well)

Unit #11

Tell Me About Yourself

Key Point

To be able to answer the most common interview question, "Tell me about yourself."

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss what to say when asked the question, "Tell me about yourself."

Suggested Script

Last time you were all asked to come up with ideas on how to answer the question "Tell Me About Yourself". Please take out the handouts that you worked on and let's look at some of the ideas that you came up with.

"Tell me about yourself." You will hear this question in some shape or form at every interview you go on. Basically, an employer is trying to find out why they should hire you over the next person. Remember, the focus here is on work-related skills. Including personal or non-job related aspects of ourselves does help to present a fuller, more interesting picture, but be mindful to focus on why that employer should hire you. It helps to develop your own scripts for this question and practice until you can recite them confidently, so you sound pleasant and natural.

Remember, when answering this important question, keep your answer employment focused. This is where you should be able to convince an employer that you are the right person for the job!

Discussion Points

"Tell me about yourself" means "Why should I hire you?"

- skills
- personality & attributes
- hobbies & interests
- oriented to meeting employer needs

Why We Don't Network

Key Point

Many times people will come back to class without having contacted people from their network, or will have only talked to people that were very easy and convenient for them (such as their mother, father, sibling). Lead a discussion about why they might be feeling uncomfortable with networking right now.

Facilitator's Directions

- Check in about progress with putting networking skills into practice.
- Discuss why some people are uncomfortable with networking.

Suggested Script

Has everyone talked to people in his/her network? If not, why?

It is very common to be nervous or scared to talk with people about your job search or career exploration in the beginning. As with almost anything, this will get easier with more practice.

What do you think are some of the reasons that people feel uncomfortable with networking? (record these answers on a flip chart)

Discussion Points

Why people are uncomfortable with networking

- You are scared. What's the worst that could happen?
- You don't feel comfortable asking for help or don't want to feel like you owe someone for helping you.
- Asking for help is something "weak" people do.
- You believe you are not worthy of help from others. Remember, unemployment is a temporary condition, not a character flaw!
- You feel foolish asking for something that you should be able to do yourself. We all need help sometime.
- The more you ask for help, the more comfortable you will get with it. Try to imagine the worst scenario of what could happen if you ask for help. How bad is it?

WHY PEOPLE DON'T NETWORK

➤ **FEAR** (I'm afraid that....)

➤ **PRIDE** (I can't ask for for help!)

➤ **DEPENDENCY** (He'll think I can't do anything..)

➤ **EMBARRASSMENT** (She'll think I'm dumb or something...)

➤ **DOUBT** (He won't want to help me..)

Dealing with "NO"

Key Point

"No" does not have to mean the end of a relationship.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss what to do/say if an employer does not want to hire you.
- Come up with a list of positive responses that students can use to deal with getting "no" for an answer.

⭐ Suggested Script

Remember that receiving a "no" from a networking contact or potential employer does not have to be the end of a relationship. It is important to keep in touch with employers that don't hire you. They may have liked you very much but just could not offer you a job right now. They can be good sources for other contacts and connections in the future. How helpful they will be in considering you for a job in the future, or in making connections with other employers for you depends greatly on how you handle getting the "no thank you" from them.

Let's come up with a list of some suggestions of what to do (and not do) when an employer doesn't hire you. Always listen carefully to what the employer says, ask questions, and don't get upset. As much as possible, you want this exchange to be positive and open to invite future opportunities to expand your network.

Discussion Questions

- What are some things you could ask or say to an employer who did not offer you a job?
- What are some thing you would NOT want to say?

Discussion Points

Positive responses
- What could I do differently next time?
- Do you have any suggestions regarding how I can get this experience or skill?
- Is there someone else you suggest I speak with (inside or outside of the company)? May I use your name when I call this person?
- May I keep in touch with you about future job possibilities?

Responses to avoid
- If you asked better questions, you would have hired me!
- Will you hire me next time?

NO

SHOULD NEVER

MEAN

THE END OF A

RELATIONSHIP

You didn't get the job. What to find out:

- What could I do differently next time?
- Do you have any suggestions of ways to get this experience or skill?
- Are there other places in your company or elsewhere that you see me fitting in better?
- Can you tell me people I should speak with? May I use your name when I call?
- May I keep in touch with you about future job possibilities?

Responses to Avoid:

- If you asked better questions, you would have hired me!
- Will you hire me next time?

Adding People to Your Networking List

Key Point

To add more people to networking lists.

Facilitator's Directions

- Before the next session, have students revisit their networking contacts handout and add names to it.

Suggested Script

We have discussed ways in which to reach out to contacts and expand upon existing relationships. Look at the list of people on your networking tree. Is there anyone that you could add to this list? Think hard! Before our next session, ask two people that know you well if they can think of anyone that you might have missed.

Try to add to the current list and begin to think about community resources which tie in more to your particular field of interest. Again, you are not just looking for contacts to hire you. You are trying to find people who may know about the field or know others working in the field.

During our next session we will see how many names everyone added.

Getting Unstuck

Key Point

Talk about why people procrastinate with exploring career options and job searching.

Facilitator's Directions

- Talk about why there are really no good reasons for putting off exploring career options or a job search.
- Brainstorm ways to stay active and motivated in a job search.

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think that some people put off doing a job search?
- Do you feel that any of these are good reasons for someone to delay their job search or to identify their career path?
- Can anyone think of some ways to stay active and motivated in a job search?
- How do you usually motivate yourself to do something that you have been avoiding?

Target Audience:

Students who have a tendency to procrastinate or have been searching for a long time and need some additional motivation to continue with their job search

Trainer's Tip

If students do not come up with any suggestions, you can offer some of these:

I called but they never called back. My resume is not done. My resume is not up to date. I am waiting to hear back from another job. Nobody hires during the holidays, before or after weekends, during a full moon, on rainy days, in the summer, etc. My turtle is looking a bit green—I should take care of him.

Suggested Script

Figuring out a career path and then looking for a job are not easy tasks.

Since most people find job-hunting stressful and discouraging, they often will go to great lengths to avoid it, delay it, or stop it. There are many ways to put off identifying a career path and job searching.

It is important to be aware of the natural tendency to procrastinate on tasks that are difficult. Keep in mind that actions lead to outcomes. When the temptation to put off the job search is strong, try to resist it.

Discussion Points

Set goals each week for how many...

- people in your network you will contact
- job applications you will fill out
- ads you will respond to

Go to the library and research a career you are interested in. Reward yourself when you go to a job interview. Walk around your neighborhood and see what businesses are there. Talk to a friend about his or her job.

Broadening Your Network

Key Point

To brainstorm ways to broaden your network.

Facilitator's Directions

- Brainstorm ways to broaden your network.
- Discuss how to start a conversation with someone you just met.

Discussion Questions

- What are some of the things you can do to broaden your network?
- What are some things that you can ask or say to someone to start a conversation?

Target Audience:

Students with a small network

Discussion Tips

Tips on broadening your network

- Informational interviews
- Let everyone know that you are looking
- Ask if they know anyone in the field
- Have him or her call a person and introduce you
- Ask if you may use his or her name
- Always have resumes handy and ask your connections to pass them along for you
- Volunteer or do temp work
- Join clubs, activities, church, or other groups

⭐ Suggested Script

Some people know many others, and some people know few. Whether we have two or 20, our personal contacts are often not enough to get us the job we want. But our contacts can lead us to more connections (and those connections to more connections) until we have a broad enough network to lead us to potential jobs or information on a career search.

Once you have located a place in the community where you would like to work, find out who you should connect with there and how you can be of service (even if they are not hiring right now). Maybe you could volunteer there or work in a part-time or seasonal position. Remember, when employment opportunities present themselves at most places of business, people who have been in sight and mind are most often considered.

Having connections is good, but most of us need to work on expanding ours because we don't have a family member who owns a business, or neighbors who can hire us for the jobs we want. Searching for a job through connections takes persistence. One thing that will make your efforts more productive is to focus on trying to meet people who have lots of connections themselves, and who are good at helping other people make connections. That is the reason you not only ask the people you know if they can help personally, but also ask if they know anyone who might be helpful to you. These resources can be a gold mine that not only helps in finding a job now, but also can be a great resource for the future.

The connections that help most people get jobs are not usually the people in the job seeker's close circle (parents, relatives, and close friends). Rather, they are the casual contacts such as neighbors, former co-workers, and connections you have made through people you know. To benefit from this method of searching for a job, you need to continually work at expanding your network.

Identifying, expanding, and using your contacts to get a job requires that you make it a part of your everyday routine to talk to people in line at the grocery store, to neighbors as you walk home, or to others waiting in the dentist's office. Always ask everyone you know and meet what he or she does! This is not intrusive. People like to talk about themselves and what they do. You never know when you will meet someone who is in a position to offer you assistance or information.

BROADENING YOUR NETWORK

- ◆ Informational interviews

- ◆ Let everyone know that you are looking

- ◆ Ask if they know anyone in the area that might be willing to talk to you

- ◆ Have them call the person and introduce you

- ◆ Ask if you can use their name

- ◆ Always have resumes handy and ask your connections to pass them along

- ◆ Join groups or volunteer in activities that interest you (team, clubs, religious groups, etc.)

Keeping in Touch

Goals

Students will discuss how to network without being a pest and how to keep in touch with their network.

Unit Plan #12

Discussion: Creating a Network Without Becoming a Pest

Discussion: Keeping in Touch

Final Thought: Keep Schmoozing and Networking

Optional Exercise: Assertive vs. Aggressive
(target audience: students who are having difficulty differentiating between assertiveness and aggressiveness in their job search)

Discussion

Creating a Network Without Becoming a Pest

Key Point

To show students the importance of communicating effectively with their networks without being a pest.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss examples of being too pushy with networking contacts.
- Discuss how to communicate effectively.
- Discuss ways to get what you need without being a pest.

Discussion Questions

- What behaviors would be too pushy in dealing with a contact?
- What types of people turn you off?
- Would you be willing to help someone who has a style that turns you off?

Discussion Points

Communication is:

- Being available and open to people, taking time to talk to a receptionist, neighbor, etc.
- Body language that communicates interest.
- Asking questions.
- Showing curiosity.
- Getting others to talk about themselves.
- Saying what you want positively and politely.
- Understanding that a person is busy, but not allowing this to prohibit you from asking.

Not being a pest is:

- Being direct, but not backing this person into a corner—can he or she say yes?
- Having good manners.
- Always offering something in return.
- Using notes, cards, e-mail, etc.
- Making requests that will be reasonable to the other person.
- Getting back in touch whether it works or not, but be ing polite in delivery and meaning (i.e. the idea went nowhere).
- Letting them know good news.

Suggested Script

As we have already discussed, one of the key elements of using connections to help you get a job is the ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with a wide variety of people.

For this to happen, you need to be able to communicate clearly and effectively about what you are interested in and what you want from that person. The more specific your request is, the higher the probability of getting what you want. At the same time, you don't want to be thought of as a pest.

Don't be a pest!

- Assertiveness vs Anger
- Be grateful, not gushy
- Please & thank you
- Reciprocate
- Notes
- Don't expect too much
- Tell the good AND the bad

Communication Is…

- Schmoozing
- Active Listening
- Asking Questions
- Being clear about what you want
- Understanding, not just accepting

Good Social Habits

- Speak to people
- Smile at people
- Call people by name
- Be friendly and sincere
- Be courteous
- Be generous with praise and cautious with criticism

Keeping in Touch

Key Point

Effective networking means keeping in touch with many people.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss ways to keep in touch with people in your network.
- Reinforce the importance of sending thank you notes.

Discussion Questions

- What are different ways to stay in touch with the people in your network?
- How can you organize yourself to remember to keep in touch?

Suggested Script

Effective networking requires active outreach again and again. You will speak with many people you know and many you are referred to. It is crucial that you keep in touch with people and follow-up with them. This takes time, energy, and organization. As a general rule, follow-up with thank-you notes as immediately as possible. The longer you put off writing a note, the less likely it is to be sent. Also, a note loses its effectiveness if it takes longer than five working days to be received.

The goal is to keep in touch and maintain the involvement of people you connect with beyond the first contact. Try to personalize your contacts to make more of an impression, and stay in touch in a way that is persistent rather than pushy.

Discussion Points

Keeping in Touch:

- datebooks/calendars
- PDA/iPhone
- rolodex
- computer files
- holiday cards
- stop in and say "Hi"
- announcements
- notebooks
- small thank you gifts

KEEPING IN TOUCH

- DATE BOOKS/CALENDARS
- ADDRESS BOOKS
- COMPUTER FILES
- HOLIDAY CARDS
- SAY HI
- ANNOUNCEMENTS
- NOTE BOOKS
- THANK YOU GIFTS (small)

Keep Schmoozing and Networking

Key Point

Remember to keep schmoozing and networking!

Suggested Script

The best way to build and use your network is to constantly schmooze. Keep talking to people about what you are doing and what you would like to be doing and remember to NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK!

Discussion Points

Keep Schmoozing:

- The more people you know and talk to, the more you can learn.
- Let people know what you want.
- People who network have many sources of information.
- People may help you along the way.
- Some ideas may come up that you did not think about. Don't reject them—think about them.
- You never know who could end up being of great help.

Facilitator's Directions

Ask each participant to share a goal they have set to advance in his or her career exploration or job search. Record what people say on the flip chart and help them brainstorm with input from the group to come up with next steps to reach their goals. Encourage them to connect with someone to help them in the next few weeks. It is important to help people maintain the momentum after the group ends.

Keep Talking!

- Talk to as many people as possible

- Be willing to say yes to help/ideas

- Say the type of job you desire

- Seek out networks

- Look for allies/advocates

- It could be anyone that helps!

Target Audience:

Students who are having difficulty differentiating between assertiveness and aggressiveness in their job search

Assertive or Aggressive

Key Point:

To learn the difference between assertive and aggressive interactions.

Facilitator's Directions

- Discuss the difference between assertive and aggressive.
- Read through statements to determine which are assertive and which are aggressive.
- Have students pair up to practice assertive interactions.

Exercise Directions

- Read each statement and ask the students if they think the statement is assertive or aggressive. After each statement, discuss how they could phrase a similar request to someone in their network. You can also come up with more statements that may be more appropriate/applicable for the group.

Discussion Questions

- What do you think I mean when I use the word aggressive?
- What about the meaning of this word gives it a more negative tone?
- What do you think I mean when I use the word assertive?
- What about the meaning of this word gives it a more positive tone?

Suggested Script

I am going to read a statement about job searching. After I read the statement I would like you to tell me if you think the statement is assertive or aggressive.

1. *Could we meet sometime to discuss your job?*
2. *I really need to get some information from you ASAP!*
3. *Do you know anyone I can talk to about a job in that field?*
4. *Can you take a look at my resume and tell me if I have the proper skills for that job?*
5. *You must know someone who can help me out!*
6. *Get me a job!*
7. *I value your opinion. Do you have any suggestions for me?*
8. *Can I give you a call next month?*
9. *I would love to talk with you sometime about how you got your job. Could we meet sometime next week?*
10. *You must interview me for that job!*

Exercise Directions

Next, have people pair off to practice interactions which are assertive, but not pushy or aggressive. Have them role play, one acting as a job seeker and one as a network member. They should practice making requests of one another.

Appendix A

ICI

Tools for Inclusion
family and consumer series

One-Stop Centers:
A Guide for Job Seekers with Disabilities

by Sheila Fesko, David Hoff, Melanie Jordan, Kristin Fichera, & Cynthia Thomas

Introduction

One-Stop Centers were developed to bring together employment and training services that work with all people into one place and make it easier for job seekers and employers to use these services. One-Stop Centers first began in the early 1990's as demonstration projects, and have expanded so there are now One-Stop Centers opening in all areas of the country. Services available through the One-Stop system include such things as: information about job vacancies, career options, and relevant employment trends; instruction on how to conduct a job search, write a resume, or interview with an employer; referral to training programs and unemployment insurance claim processing.

The One-Stop system is designed and required to meet the needs of all job seekers who want to use the system. This includes people with disabilities. The establishment of the One-Stop system across the country provides a wonderful opportunity for people with disabilities to receive services in new and different ways, right alongside everyone else. This brief is designed to help you use the One-Stop system. It includes information on what services are available, how to make the best use of those services, and how to advocate to get the services you want and need. The brief describes general information about the One-Stop system and then answers specific questions individuals with disabilities may have about these services.

One-Stop Centers are part of America's Workforce Network, the new federally-sponsored nationwide employment and training system. The expansion of the One-Stop Centers was authorized in a law called the Workforce Investment Act that was signed in 1998. This law has several main principles that influence services.

- **Universal Access.** Any individual should be able to go into a One-Stop and receive services called core services, to assist in making decisions about what career to pursue and in the actual job search.

- **Streamlining services.** Employment and training programs for all people should be brought together, and be easily accessible via One-Stop Centers.

- **Increased accountability.** The One-Stop system is being evaluated based on how many people get jobs and the satisfaction of the customers.

- **Empowering individuals.** Customers should be given more information about services in order to make informed choices and have more control of their services.

- **State and local flexibility.** Local One-Stop systems can set up services in different ways to respond to the needs of their local community.

The Workforce Investment Act is a new law and, in many areas, the One-Stop system is just beginning. All of the goals of the law may not be achieved yet, but Centers are working toward achieving these principles. Individual states are developing plans for how they will implement the Workforce Investment Act. (The deadline for submission of all state plans was April of 2000, and implementation must have begun by July of 2000.)

Who is eligible to receive services from the One-Stop system?

Everyone can use services provided by the One-Stop system. Even if you receive services from another agency, you have the right to access One-Stop services.

Three Categories of Services Available through One-Stop Centers

Core Services

Core services are those services that are available at no cost to everyone. Individual One-Stops determine how their core services are provided. An individual may receive core services as part of a large group, or service may be provided one-to-one. The following is a sampling of the types of core services that may be available:

Sample Core Services:

- intake and orientation
- work skills exploration
- resource library which includes access to computers, telephones, fax and copy machines
- searches for jobs and training
- access to job banks or listings of available jobs
- Internet access
- resume development
- job search skills training
- networking skills workshops
- interview techniques workshops
- referral to an employer with current job openings
- customer satisfaction follow-up
- determination of eligibility for additional services

You should ask the One-Stop staff to help you create a plan or list of ideas on how you can get the most out of the services of the One-Stop Center at no cost and without having to apply for additional services. Making a plan or list like this will allow you to get the most out of the core services.

Intensive Services

Intensive services are available to individuals who are unable to obtain employment by using core services, and who meet specific eligibility criteria. These services are free to individuals who meet eligibility criteria. One-Stops may have projects or services that are targeted toward specific groups such as teenagers, veterans, people with disabilities and people with limited incomes. Funding for intensive services and special projects comes from a wide variety of sources including state and federal funds, employers, unions and other places. In some cases, Centers may allow individuals to pay for intensive services from their own funds. Talk to staff at the One-Stop about various options for funding these services.

Sample Intensive Services:

- comprehensive assessments of skills and service needs
- development of an individual employment and career plan
- customized screening and assessment
- reference/background checks
- intensive career counseling
- in-depth interviewing skills development
- computer workshops
- one-to-one assistance with updating your resume, cover letters and thank you letters
- case management

Training

Referral for training services may be available to individuals who have used core and intensive services and have not become successfully employed, and meet eligibility criteria. The type of training that is offered varies between local One-Stop systems and is based on the employment needs of the local economy. Individuals eligible for training services use what are known as Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). You can use an ITA to freely choose training services from any eligible organization that provides training. Listed below are some of the types of training services available from the One-Stop system. Talk with staff at your local One-Stop Center about what is available.

Sample Training Services:

- occupational skills training
- on-the job training
- up to date work skills
- job readiness training
- adult education and literacy
- customized training for an employer who commits to hiring

What kinds of services are available through the One-Stop System?

There are three levels of services available through the One-Stop system and adults typically move from one level of service to the next depending on their needs. Each level of service is described on the table to the left. The first level of service is called core services and they are usually self-directed in nature. For individuals who try core services but have not become employed, intensive services may be available, if the One-Stop Center determines that core services are not sufficient to obtain employment. Training services are available to individuals who meet eligibility criteria, and have used core and intensive services, but still are not successfully employed. In addition support services may be provided by a One-Stop to people receiving any service, so that the services an individual receives are effective.

How do I find out about One-Stop Centers and where they are located?

One-Stop Centers go by a variety of names depending on the state. Some states use the same name for all centers throughout the state (for example in Connecticut, all centers are called "Connecticut Works"), while in other states (such as Massachusetts), the name is different in each local area. Centers are not typically listed in the phone book as "One-Stop Centers." You can find the location of your local One-Stop by contacting America's Service Locator from the U.S. Department of Labor, on the Web at: www.servicelocator.org, or toll-free by phone at (877) US2-JOBS [877-872-5627]. You can also contact your state, county, or local department of labor or employment listed in the government section of the phone book. You should be able to find out where your local One-Stop Centers are located through these sources.

If there is more than one One-Stop Center in my area, can I use more than one?

You may use the services of more than one One-Stop if you want. Find out which Center has the types of free services that you want to use, and the Center where you are most comfortable.

How do I start using the services of a One-Stop Center?

One-Stop Centers vary in how you initially begin to use the services. It is probably a good idea to call your local Center and find out the steps involved. At some One-Stops you can simply walk in the door and start using many of the core services, while others require registration and orientation before using any of the services - and may offer orientation only at certain times, or on certain days. Remember, it costs nothing to use the core services. (Please note that some Centers do charge small fees for incidental expenses associated with core services such as faxing, using the photocopy machine, etc. This varies from Center to Center.)

What should I expect on my first visit to the Center?

On your first visit to the One-Stop, you may attend some type of orientation session and receive a tour of the facility, or at least be able to sign up for orientation (all Centers are required to provide orientation). You may be asked to fill out some type of registration form. At some Centers, you will receive a card, which you need to present each time you attend, while at other centers you only need to sign your name on an attendance sheet, or can just walk in. No matter what the procedures are at your local Center, you should be made to feel welcome!

Once you have completed any requirements of the One-Stop to use the services such as initial registration and orientation (and remember, this varies from Center to Center), you may begin to use the services and resources that are available.

Case Study 1

Jen, who has a visual impairment, was looking for a job and decided to register at a One-Stop Center. She chose to go to Boston Career Link because it was conveniently located. When Jen joined the Center, she felt welcomed. During the orientation, she learned that although the Center was designed to be generally self-directed, people were extremely helpful to her when she asked for help. For example when she asked a staff member to help her fill out some of the forms, the staff member was very respectful and also very helpful in completing the forms.

The variety of different services available in one place was important to Jen. For example, she was able to use the resource library, attend workshops (some of which were paid for by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind), attend job fairs, and fax her resume to employers all from one location. Center staff were good at getting information to her in formats which she could read. Staff members would regularly e-mail to her home the monthly calendars, announcements of current events, and other notices that were available at the One-Stop Center.

The counselor Jen worked with helped her to clarify her work goals. He helped her to direct her own job search, and encouraged her to make cold calls to employers. The counselor met with her weekly and gave her job leads regularly. He also brought her resume to places of employment in order to market her skills and abilities to various organizations.

Jen found it very helpful to make connections with the leaders of those workshops she attended at the One-Stop. She got better at making connections with people as she became more comfortable at the Center. Making good connections with people was very important to her because it became easier for her to ask those people for help when she needed it. She recommends that individuals pay attention to networking opportunities with the Center staff since they can direct you to job leads. She left the One-Stop Center with a lot of good information that will continue to be helpful to her in the future. One last tip that Jen shares with others who are using One-Stops, is that the more effort you put into your job search, the clearer you can be about your career goals, and the more you can recognize areas where you may need help and areas you can be more self-directed, the more you can get out of using a One-Stop Center.

Jen gives credit to the One-Stop Center counselor for assisting her with obtaining the job she currently holds. When asked if she would consider using the Center again for her job search, she said she definitely would. She also said that she often recommends the One-Stop to others who are participating in a job search.

How do I go about using One-Stop Center services?

- Find out what the core services are at the Center you are using. Find out about any incidental fees that may be charged (such as faxing and copying) and make a plan to maximize your use of services without having to spend money or obtain funding for services.

- Sign up for workshops that you want to attend

- Review the One-Stop Center's monthly activity calendar to see if there are activities you want to attend (i.e., peer support groups, workshops, etc.); you should check the monthly calendars often

- Explore resources in the Resource Library

- Use computers and the Internet to look up job openings, to create a resume, and to write cover letters

- Look through career exploration books

- Post your resume on the resume bank (a set of resumes that employers can look at on a computer and will help them to find potential applicants)

- Participate in any on-site recruiting activities that occur at the center (i.e., an employer might go to a Center and interview job applicants there)

What should I expect from the services I receive at the One-Stop Centers?

Most of the core services of the Centers are designed to be fairly self-directed. This means that you should not expect to receive a lot of one-to-one assistance from One-Stop staff (although you should never hesitate to ask for help if you need it). You can bring someone with you to help if you would like. You will possibly be making a lot of decisions on your own concerning what services to use. For example, Center staff usually do not provide people using only core services direct help in finding a job; however, Center staff do have contacts with a great deal of local employers. If you get to know some staff at the One-Stop and build relationships with them, you may be able to use them as part of your personal network through which you find a job. If you receive intensive services from the One-Stop system, you will get more intensive personalized services.

Should I tell staff at the One-Stop Center about my disability?

It is your personal decision whether to tell staff about your disability. There may be advantages and disadvantages so you need to decide what is best for you.

Under the ADA, One-Stop Centers can ask if you have a disability to determine if you are eligible for certain services. However, disclosing your disability and information about it, is strictly voluntary. (This should not be confused with the employment provisions of the ADA under Title I, which prohibit employers or potential employers from asking about the presence of a disability prior to making a conditional offer of employment.)

However, if the Center asks about disability, these questions should be asked of every customer of the One-Stop, not just in cases where the Center staff feel a customer may have a disability.

If the One-Stop asks about disability, they must have a good reason to ask (i.e., they are trying to identify individuals who might qualify for special programs and services for people with disabilities).

Disclosing your disability can have some real benefits. By doing so, you can receive the accommodations and assistance you need and are entitled to, to fully benefit from the services of the One-Stop Center. By disclosing, you may also become eligible for special programs available for people with disabilities.

As a person with a disability, how can I advocate for myself to get the services I want from a One-Stop Center?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law that was passed in 1990 to assure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities for meaningful participation in our society as everyone else. Under the ADA, as someone with a disability, you are entitled to request accommodations and assistance in order for you to understand, use and benefit from the services that a One-Stop Center has to offer. It should be expected that the Center will work with you to make your involvement there successful. Here are some tips to help you get the most from your One-Stop Center experiences.

- During your initial visit at the Center ask for any assistance you need to help you understand the range of services the One-Stop can provide. Some accommodations that might be helpful include:
  - an individual meeting rather than group orientation
  - help with filling out any registration forms
  - brochures, flyers, and other information in an alternative format such as a different language, Braille, or large print
  - sign language interpretation
  - using a tape recorder to remember information
- Bring a friend or family member with you to help you use the books and computers in the resource library in order to check job openings, compose your resume and cover letters, fax applications, etc. You can also bring a staff person from another agency with which you are working.
- Gain an understanding of all of the Core services, classes, and other free resources and activities (such as computer lab) that are part of using at a One-Stop.
- Request an individual meeting with Center staff to develop a plan or a list of ideas that can help you make the best use of the services and opportunities available at the One-Stop.
- Stay informed about ongoing activities such as employer interviews or presentations held at the Center, as well as workshops and "hot job" leads. Look for flyers, posters, newsletters, etc.
- Get to know the front desk staff. You will then feel comfortable asking them for helpful general information including what current events and activities are happening or coming soon.
- Other important people to get to know are the library staff. They can be extremely useful in answering your questions as you use the resource library (career books, magazines, newspapers, job postings, fax and copy machine) and the computers and Internet.
- As you settle into using the One-Stop Center, be sure to ask for any accommodations you may need such as:
  - a larger/accessible work station at the computer
  - resources in a different language
  - Braille, large print, TTY, interpreter services, etc.
  - assistance using information you don't understand
  - adaptive equipment to use computers and phones

What can I do if I feel that the One-Stop Center staff are not making the accommodations I need?

Information concerning non-discrimination including what to do if you feel you have been discriminated against, must be posted in each Center, and also reviewed during orientation sessions. If you have tried to ask for help and feel that the Center is not making a reasonable effort to meet your needs, you should bring the matter to the attention of the staff member involved, as well as the management of the One-Stop Center, in an effort to get your needs met. In most cases, by calmly and clearly clarifying your needs with Center staff, issues can be resolved fairly easily. With the implementation of WIA, each Center is required to have an Equal Opportunity Officer, and if you feel it is necessary, you should ask to speak to this individual to discuss the issue. However, in cases where your efforts to resolve the situation with a Center have not been successful, you can contact the U.S. Department of Labor's Civil Rights Center (CRC), which is responsible for ensuring that One-Stop Centers do not discriminate. Contact information for the CRC is listed in the resource section of this brief. Other information concerning your legal rights may be available from your state's Protection and Advocacy Organization and other legal advocates. You should also feel free to contact the local Workforce Investment Board, which is the local board that oversees One-Stop Centers, or your state Workforce Investment Board.

Can I use a One-Stop Center if I am already receiving services from another agency?

Yes. If you are receiving employment services from another agency you can also utilize core services of the One-Stop system. In fact the core services may be helpful to you and your current service provider. In addition, you can utilize core services any time in your career. If your employment services provider helps you become familiar with how to use the One-Stop now, you may be able to use the Center on your own in the future if you want to change jobs. You may also want to speak with your counselor at the other agency about whether you are eligible for some of the special projects at One-Stop Centers. They could refer you to the Center and help you get these services.

How would services through the One-Stop system supplement what I am getting from another agency?

- **Access to computers.** Using a computer can help you develop a professional looking resume and cover letters. In addition you can use the Internet at One-Stop Centers to help you find out about job openings, to submit your resume to a number of different resume banks, and to learn more about companies where you would like to work.

- **Workshops.** Many One-Stops offer some workshops as part of the core services. Workshop topics may include resume writing, interview skills, introduction to the Internet, job search skills and information about industries that have a demand for new employees. While the agency helping you find a job may also offer support in these areas, you may want to review the workshop calendar for the Center you are using to determine if any offering would be useful in your job search. Participating in the workshops may also allow you to meet fellow job seekers who can provide support and advice.

- **Job Referral.** The staff at the Centers work with employers to help them find qualified applicants for job openings. While they will not provide individualized job development as part of the core services, they may have job leads that you will not learn about through other sources. If you find out about a job through the One-Stop, the Center staff and your employment service provider can work together to make sure you receive the individualized assistance you need to follow-up on the job lead.

Should I let my counselor know that I am working with the One-Stop Center?

Yes. If you are also working with a Vocational Rehabilitation agency and/or with a private employment program to help you with your job search, let them know about your involvement with the One-Stop Center. Everyone can then be working together to best meet your employment goal.

Case Study 2

Jim had been working for many years in a job he disliked. His efforts to find a new job on his own were unsuccessful. Jim's counselor from the vocational rehabilitation agency referred Jim to a community rehabilitation provider (CRP) for individualized job placement services. Jim and his employment specialist worked together to develop a career plan and to update his resume. In addition to providing job development services, the employment specialist went with Jim to the local One-Stop. She attended the orientation session with him and, together with a career counselor at the One-Stop, they identified core services that would complement the work that she was doing with Jim. Jim decided to post his resume on a number of resume banks and signed up to attend an industry briefing session. Jim was looking for a job in human services and an industry briefing at the One-Stop, conducted by a number of large local human service providers, gave him more specific information about the types of jobs available in his community. Jim and his Employment Specialist then worked together to contact these employers. Jim recently obtained a new job. In addition to accomplishing his primary goal of finding a new job, he has become familiar with a local resource, available to the general public, that can be used in the future as he progresses through his career.

Conclusion

The One-Stop system expands the resources available to individuals with disabilities looking to work and provides an opportunity to receive services side-by-side with the general public. We hope the information in this publication will help you to make most effective use of these services. As you are using the services of a One-Stop Center, keep the following in mind:

- Centers have a wide array of resources that help you to obtain and succeed in employment.
- You have the absolute right to use these services, and to be treated in a welcoming and respectful manner.
- Recognize that this is a new system, and that One-Stops are still learning how to best provide quality services for all people, including people with disabilities.
- While hopefully your experience will be a completely positive one, if you have concerns about how the services of a One-Stop are being provided, remember that it's your responsibility to make the Center aware of your concerns, and to educate and advocate in a positive and effective manner, so that your needs, and the needs of all people with disabilities are met.

The most effective way that One-Stop Centers can learn how to meet the needs of people with disabilities is by people with disabilities going out and actually using the services of a One-Stop. We encourage you to go visit your local One-Stop Center, and find out what it has to offer. The use of One-Stops by people with disabilities, combined with education and advocacy, will ensure that this new service system is able to fully deliver on its potential for helping people with disabilities succeed in employment.

RESOURCES

To find out the location of One-Stop Centers in your area, contact America's Service Locator:

www.servicelocator.org

Toll-Free Helpline
877- US2-JOBS [877-872-5627] (voice)
877-889-5627 (TTY)

You can also contact your state or county department of labor or employment listed in the government pages of your local phone book.

Information on non-discrimination polices and the One-Stop System:

The Director
Civil Rights Center
Frances Perkins Builidng
Room N-4123
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20210
202-693-6500 (voice)
TTY 202-693-6515 (TTY)
CRC-WIA@dol.gov (email)

For addition information on One-Stop Centers and the Workforce Investment Act:

United States Department of Labor
Office of Career Transition Assistance
Employment and Training Administration
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room S4231
Washington, DC 20210
202-693-3045 (voice)
202-693-3015 or 3229 (fax)
AskWIA@doleta.gov (email)
www.doleta.gov

The Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA) is the federal agency overseeing the establishment of the One-Stop Career Center system nationwide. Contact this agency to obtain copies of various WIA regulations, and information on the implementation of WIA.

Additional useful web sites

Federal government's disability-related information and resources
www.disabilityinfo.gov/

National Center on Workforce and Disability/Adult
www.onestops.info

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/ Youth
www.ncwd-youth.info/

ETA/One-Stop tool kit
www.onestoptoolkit.org/

For more information, contact:

Sheila Fesko
Institute for Community Inclusion
UMass Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, Massachusetts 02115
(617) 287-4300 (voice)
(617) 287-4350 (TTY)
ici@umb.edu
www.communityinclusion.org
www.onestops.info

ICI

www.communityinclusion.org
www.onestops.info

This publication will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

Appendix B

ICI

INSTITUTE FOR
COMMUNITY
INCLUSION

Tools for Inclusion

family and consumer series

Networking: A Consumer Guide to an Effective Job Search

by Cecilia Gandolfo and Audrey Graham

Introduction

Finding a job is hard. On average it takes 10–20 calls to arrange an interview and 7–10 interviews to secure a job. Networking is a way to speed up the process, yet while research has shown that networking is the best strategy, it is probably the most underused tool by people with disabilities. There are two other important facts for you, the job seeker, to know: 1) There is a high rate of unemployment for people with disabilities, and 2) People with disabilities are more likely to rely on professionals for help with a job search than people without disabilities.

You can improve your job search by using a networking strategy. **Networking means talking with many people to learn about job openings faster**. It involves telling people about the kind of work you want to do, and about the past experiences you have had. It also means asking people about their work and employers, and requesting the names of other people who might be willing to offer information as well. This process lets you gather information and eventually provides you with opportunities to speak with prospective employers.

A study done by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) showed that using a networking approach to find jobs for people with disabilities helped in three ways. People got jobs with better pay and more hours, and the job search took less time.

This brief is based on a two-day networking workshop entitled "Building Community Connections: Designing a Future That Works." This training was developed by the ICI to teach people with disabilities who are seeking employment to become more active in the job search process.

Networking really is okay!

Many people resist this approach, but it is important for you, the job seeker, to understand three facts:

1. **Networking is a widely accepted practice among people seeking employment.**
2. **You have a right to ask for help.**
3. **People like to help.**

Most books on job seeking have a section on using contacts. People expect you to ask for help because they, themselves, have probably done the same, and everyone needs help at some time. Finally, most people feel good about being able to offer assistance to others.

If you are asking your network for direction and advice, be sure your requests are specific and reasonable. Most of the time, if people are able to help, they will.

How do you network?

The saying, "It's not what you know, it's who you know," is the basis for a networking strategy. When you are identifying your networks, include everyone you can think of, not just people who can hire you. Start by making a list of everyone you know, including family, friends, neighbors, counselors, past and present teachers, past and present coworkers, and employers. The most important thing is to come up with a list of people who know you well enough for you to have a conversation with them. These people are probably going to be willing to give you suggestions for your job search. This first group of people may simply introduce you to others, or they may offer specific help.

Using your network

Once you have identified your network, the next step is to let the people on that list know that you are doing a job search and tell them the type of job you are seeking. These people may be able to give you useful information on a specific job or company. They may also introduce you to other contacts.

Eventually you will meet people who will connect you with employers or others who can provide real job leads, and from those connections, you can find out about:

- ✓ Current and future job openings
- ✓ Good and bad managers to work for
- ✓ Who in a company is best to talk to
- ✓ Other people to talk with who are doing a particular job that you would like to do
- ✓ Which companies/ departments are expanding or laying off
- ✓ People who know about the type of work/business you want to do
- ✓ Other types of jobs/businesses that could use your skills

You will not know how useful or willing any of your contacts are until you ask them. As you begin to develop contacts, it is important to think about the types of requests to make of these people.

What do I say and do?

Always ask if contacts know of companies that are hiring.
It is usually okay for you to ask them to pass your name on to someone who they know is hiring.

Tell people that you are looking for a job, and describe the type of work you are interested in.
You should include a brief summary of related experiences and skills.

Let people know you want to talk with others who do this kind of work.
Contacts may be able to refer or introduce you to others who could be helpful in the job search. You might want to have an informational interview with these people.

Give your resume out to everyone if you have one.
Having people read your resume is helpful because they get to know you better. Ask people to pass it along to others too.

> **Note:** It is important to let everyone know that you are looking for a job, but don't ask contacts if they can hire you or if they know someone who can hire you. This question ends conversations quickly! If they have leads they will tell you about them.

Helpful hints for dealing with people you are referred to and know less well:

- ✓ Mention the name of the person who referred you, and explain why you are calling.
- ✓ Ask if it is a good time to talk. If it is not, ask when a good time would be. You be responsible for calling back.
- ✓ Offer to mail or fax your resume and ask for suggestions.

> **Remember:** not all of your contacts will be able to help you in your job search. Some people will provide better leads than others. Not everyone will have ideas on how to help. Suggestions will also vary depending on how close you are to your contacts.

- ✓ Leave an extra copy of your resume and ask them to pass it on to others who may be of assistance to you.
- ✓ Ask for suggestions and names of people who can assist in your job search.
- ✓ Ask if you may keep in touch to let them know how your search is going.

Informational interviews

Informational interviewing is a way to get your foot in the door to talk with people you know less well. The goal of this kind of interview is to learn about a type of job or a certain company, not to get a job.

Here are suggested questions for you to ask during informational interviews:

✔ Would you tell me about your job?

✔ How did you get started at this company or in this job?

✔ Is this a good company to work for?

✔ What is the typical work day like?

✔ Who would you recommend that I speak with to learn more about the company?

✔ Would it be possible to arrange a tour?

There are many benefits to informational interviews, as outlined below. They:

✔ are less stressful than job interviews

✔ increase your chance of getting job interviews

✔ give you a head start on the competition

✔ help you find out about how to enter a company through part-time or temporary options

✔ allow you to have face-to-face contact with people/employers

✔ lead to new contacts

If you want to set up an informational interview, start by listing the types of businesses or professionals you would like to talk with. Next, ask your network for specific contacts, or make a call and ask for an informational interview without a contact. When calling, you simply need to say that you would like to request time to talk with a person for an informational interview. Explain that you are doing a job search and would like to learn about the company.

If you are nervous about this process, ask for help from supports. They can practice the call with you, or someone could accompany you to the interview.

Maintain a positive relationship with people in your network

Networking means that you will meet and talk with many people. It is important to maintain a good relationship with them. Follow-up is part of that process, and one way to do so is to send a thank you card. A thank you card or letter should be sent immediately after you meet with a person. Whether you send a card or letter matters little, but it is important to send something.

The goal of follow-up is not to overwhelm contacts, but rather to make them aware of your progress and to continue to get their suggestions if possible. Only keep in touch with contacts who say it is okay to do so. Phone follow-up is also a possibility, but again, only with permission. If calling is okay with the person, follow up with them after a month.

Tips for maintaining energy and progressing in your job search and networking

No matter what your approach is, a job search is slow and tedious work. Keeping track of your networking is a good way of maintaining energy in your job search, as it keeps you directed. Below are some other useful hints:

✔ Make a list of all your contacts, starting with the ones that gave you the most useful leads. This allows you to track your job search process.

✔ Keep reminding people that you are looking for a job, so they will tell you about any leads that turn up.

✔ Design a contact follow-up plan, and follow up on leads that you may have ignored.

✔ If the connections that your network provided pay off, be sure to keep in touch with these people. Add them to your networking list.

✔ Rework your resume after three months if you get no interviews during that time.

- ✓ Get support from other job seekers to sustain energy and build stamina.
- ✓ Work on improving your writing and computer skills. This will increase your employment opportunities.
- ✓ Try to improve how you talk about yourself. Include your skills, interests, and hobbies in this discussion. Keep it positive.

Do whatever it takes to keep pushing ahead in your job search. Try to keep a positive outlook, as that will help you present well to others.

Self-advocacy

Being a self-advocate means speaking up for yourself and being assertive. Here are tips on how to do this when working with professionals:

- ■ **Be an active participant.** Give lots of input to your counselor.
- ■ **Ask for what you want.** If you have a clear idea of what you want, make sure you say it.
- ■ **Approach different people.** Everyone involved should know what you want (counselor/job club leader).
- ■ **Ask more than once.** Don't be afraid to say what you want several times, especially if nothing is happening.
- ■ **Ask why.** If something is unclear or doesn't seem right, ask the person for an explanation.
- ■ **Understand, don't accept.** Patience and understanding are good, but it is fair to want to get help. If things go wrong and you feel your counselor is not willing to work with you, you have the right to question why.
- ■ The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects people with disabilities and ensures that they will be treated fairly. Try to become familiar with your rights.

Conclusion

The time and energy you invest in your job search will pay off. Try to remain hopeful and keep the faith that your efforts will lead you to a good job.

When you find a job, and you will find a job, don't forget to contact the people who helped you with your search. They will want to hear your good news. As a way of saying "thank you," remind these people that you are available to offer assistance to them if they need it.

Important note:

Keep in mind how it felt to do a job search and to reach out to people. Remember what it was like to ask people in your network to give you assistance. They were there for you, and now it is up to you to return the favor to someone else. You can be helpful to others going through a job search. They will be grateful to you just as you were to those who helped you.

Appendix C

Tools for Inclusion

family and consumer series

ICI

INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Stories of Success: Using Networking and Mentoring Relationships in Career Planning for Students with Disabilities and Their Families

by Jaimie Ciulla Timmons, Jennifer Schuster, & Mairead Moloney

Introduction

For any young adult, finding the first few jobs can be hard to do. Many new job-seekers are unfamiliar with the employment process of locating jobs, filling out applications, and speaking with employers at an interview. Adolescents with disabilities may face additional roadblocks due to lack of knowledge about the job search process, difficulty in understanding and completing forms, or communication challenges that can make interviewing an even more stressful event.

Many students rely on formal mechanisms like newspaper ads or school counselors to explore job options and to locate a job. While these methods can often lead to successful employment, friends, family members, and other personal connections can dramatically expand the opportunities for a young adult seeking a job.

The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) conducted a study with high school students with disabilities and their parents/guardians. The 12 students and 10 parents came from four different high schools in Massachusetts that represent a mixture of urban and suburban culture and ethnic diversity. The students represented each high school grade level, and had a wide range of disabilities including learning, cognitive, physical or health-related, sensory, behavioral, and psychiatric.

ICI asked these families to share their experiences in planning for and finding employment. Both students and their parents explained the positive and negative factors that influenced the job search. The findings showed that students with disabilities and their families used their **personal networks** and **mentoring relationships** throughout the career planning process.

This brief will share stories about how students used networking and mentoring to become interested in or learn more about a line of work, or even to find jobs. You will also learn how to identify, build, and use personal networks to help in the job search, as well as strategies for developing mentoring relationships.

What is a personal network?

A personal network is all of the people that a family knows. This includes family members, friends, neighbors, community connections through religious organizations, clubs, local services and stores, and professional or business relationships such as past employers, former co-workers, classmates, teachers, and doctors.

What is networking?

Networking means talking to the people in your personal network to learn about the jobs they have or to find out about where there are job openings. Through networking, you can learn about the different kind of jobs that there are and what jobs you might like to do. It involves telling people about the kind of work that you are looking for and asking about their jobs and employers. These people may then refer you to others, eventually providing opportunities to speak with employers who are hiring.

What is a mentor? What is mentoring?

A mentor is a special person, often older, who provides support and guidance on a variety of life issues. Through their own job experiences, mentors can help provide advice in career development. They can also provide support and encouragement to help you succeed in obtaining a job or making career decisions.

Stories of Success

Many of the students and their parents who were interviewed mentioned using family and friends to develop the students' career goals and/or find employment. Although most likely they were not aware that they were doing it, they were expanding and utilizing their social networks. Examples of how these networks were used include finding and obtaining current jobs, securing future employment, and becoming familiar with a particular career field through the use of mentoring relationships.

The following case studies are based on the conversations with these students and their parents. Each of these stories illustrates several examples of how personal networks can be used throughout the career planning process. Please note that names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Story 1: Finding jobs through personal connections

Jamal is an 18-year-old junior in high school who was interested in finding employment for the summer and weekends. He has a combination of health-related, sensory, and learning disabilities. He began searching for a job on his own by applying at local businesses. Although Jamal sometimes had difficulty filling out the applications, he was able to turn to his mother for help with the hard parts. However, when he put out the applications, he was never called back for a job. Since he was unsuccessful with the typical application process, Jamal decided to ask friends about job opportunities. Jamal is fortunate in that he has a large, close-knit family and a wide circle of friends. Through the youth group at his church, Jamal was able to meet many people. He became friends with a man who owned a campground, and Jamal began calling him to ask if he needed help with the maintenance there. This led to a permanent part-time job where Jamal worked at the campground on weekends. To make some extra money, Jamal also asked his brother, who is a roofer, if he could come to work with him and help out on the job. This led to another job opportunity and more employment experience.

Jamal was also introduced to a new field through a personal contact who became a mentor to

> "ALL OF THE JOBS HE HAS GOTTEN HAVE BEEN THROUGH FRIENDS."
>
> —JAMAL'S MOTHER

him. Jamal knew that he would like a career that involved helping people, but had not considered firefighting until he talked with another friend that he met through his church. His friend was a firefighter, and Jamal thought that his job sounded exciting and that he would like to do that in the future. Although Jamal thinks it will be difficult to pursue that career because of the classes, testing, and paperwork that he will need to go through, his friend (and mentor) will help him to prepare for the necessary training by tutoring him and helping him learn the material.

Jamal's story shows several helpful uses of social networks:

> Getting help to overcome barriers in the job search process (filling out job applications).

> Using personal connections to help find employment (friends from church to work at the campground, family members to work in roofing).

> Gaining information about a new career from a mentor (learning about firefighting from a friend).

> Finding information and resources to help work towards a career goal (getting the necessary materials to learn about firefighting).

Story 2: Exploring Careers

Sarah is a 17-year-old junior in high school with a psychiatric disability who hopes to turn her personal talents into future careers. Her interests include taking care of children and woodworking. She is already working as a babysitter for her neighbor, a job that she got through her ongoing relationship with the neighbor. Sarah's experience from this job could be the first step on a career path; she is considering working in a day care setting someday.

> "I'M HOPING THAT SOMEONE IN THE FAMILY CAN GET HER CONNECTED."
>
> —SARAH'S MOTHER

In the future, Sarah would also like to be a carpenter and build houses. She has a personal connection to the field because her uncle is a roofer. She hopes that he will be able to connect her with a professional carpenter so that she can work as an apprentice and pursue her future career interests. Sarah also has explored her interest in woodworking through a local YMCA program that she learned about through another neighbor. There she developed her skills by making shelves and chairs. Sarah was offered a chance to use both of her interests when someone she met at the YMCA offered her a job doing crafts with children there.

Sarah's story illustrates examples of how to use personal networks to:

> Find a job while still in school (working as a babysitter for her neighbor).

> Get connected with professionals in a career field of interest (finding professional carpenters to work with through her uncle).

> Find a job for the future (working for the YMCA through a contact there).

Story 3: Power of a Mentor

Maria is an 18-year-old senior in high school whose friends and family played a major role in her career activities. She has a combination of physical and learning disabilities. When she was looking for a summer job, Maria turned to a family friend who worked in landscaping to get a job in his business. Maria was also exposed to her long-term career interests through another family member who served as a special mentor in her life. Maria has had a passion for auto body since her brother introduced her to the field when she was ten years old. By letting her work on his car, Maria's brother exposed her to a career that she might never have otherwise considered. This led Maria to take classes in auto body at school to gain more experience. Maria frequently talks to her family about her

> "HE HAD ME WORK ON HIS CAR WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, AND I JUST LOVED DOING IT."
>
> —MARIA

career goals. Her father proved to be another mentor by helping her to apply to a school for auto body that he himself had attended, helping her to move one step closer to reaching her career goal.

In Maria's story, personal connections were used to:

> Find and secure current employment opportunities (getting the landscaping job through a family connection).

> Learn about an unfamiliar career option (becoming introduced to auto body through her brother).

> Get help in taking necessary steps to reach a career goal (applying to school to learn about auto body).

What can you and your family do?

These stories show how useful personal networks and mentoring relationships can be in finding jobs and planning careers. Therefore, it is important that you and your family learn how to identify and expand your personal networks and use them in the job search process. Having a larger social network may also give you a chance to find someone who could serve as a mentor in the future and provide opportunities to develop mentoring relationships throughout your career.

There are a variety of ways to examine and build your network:

Identify your current network:

> Use the included *Worksheet #1: Identifying Your Network and Mentors* to make a list of everyone you know, not just people who can hire you. This list should consist of people you know well enough to have a conversation with. Include family, friends, neighbors, counselors and other professionals, past and present teachers, co-workers, and employers.

Build your personal network:

> Go on a few informational interviews. The goal of this type of interview is to learn about a type of job or a certain company, not to get a job. Informational interviews are an excellent way to explore different interests and jobs while making new contacts. People in your network can help you set up interviews where they work.

> Join different community groups such as local neighborhood organizations, clubs, religious organizations, or recreational facilities.

> Volunteer for a cause you believe in, or an activity that interests you.

> Participate in community events, such as those sponsored by local groups, schools, and libraries.

> Focus on developing relationships. Establish trust. Spend time doing this before you make specific requests of people.

Use your network:

> Let everyone in your current network know that you are looking for a job and what your interests are. Use *the Phone script for calling network members* to help you talk with the members of your network about your job interests and employment possibilities.

> Record important information for every contact or lead you have using *Worksheet #2: Contact Sheet for Using and Building Networks.* Make a photocopy for every network member you have identified and create a workbook as you set out on your job search.

> Ask each person in your network to introduce you, or refer you, to people in their networks. Document each referral that you receive on your worksheets.

> Tell these people that you want to talk to others who do this type of work. Use your worksheet to guide you through your conversations.

> Give your resume, if you have one, out to everyone.

> Ask your contacts if they know of companies that are hiring or opportunities in your field.

> Invite a group of people from your network together to brainstorm about job possibilities. This is something an employment specialist or counselor can help you to organize.

> Follow up with contacts with a personal thank you note. It is important to maintain connections even if nothing comes from the contact right away.

> Ask more than once. Follow up regularly with members for your network as long as you are still looking for a job.

> Keep your network updated on your progress.

Join with the school as you work to identify, build, and use your personal networks. Ask school personnel to help you to:

> Map out your networks and develop action plans with you.

> Think of additional strategies in reaching out to your network.

> Provide support and encouragement in using your network.

> Link your family up with both parent and student peer organizations to help build supports.

> Create linkages with local school-to-work partnerships as a way to connect you with opportunities in local businesses. These partnerships are programs within the school that provide students with real-life work experiences. School-to-work activities provide a rich resource for career exploration and employment experience while building community connections and social networks.

Remember that school personnel should always listen to you, provide you with choices, and empower you. School personnel should never make decisions for you or your family. You are your best advocate!

The following may be helpful in developing career mentoring relationships

A Mentor is:

> A trusted friend.

> Often older, so they can share their life experience and provide guidance.

> Sometimes a person in your own peer group who just has more experience in an area you would like to learn about.

> Someone who can offer encouragement when you need it.

> Someone who can help identify good approaches to the job search or to issues on the job.

A Mentor is Not:

> Someone you feel the least bit uncomfortable with.

> A person who puts you down or makes you feel like you are not capable.

> Someone who can't make time in their schedule for you.

Identify your current Mentor possibilities:

> Using *Worksheet #1: Identifying Your Network and Mentors,* put a star on your networking list next to people with whom you feel especially close. Again, this can be a friend, a neighbor, co-worker, employer, teacher (past or present) or counselor.

> Identify which of these people you can trust, and whom you would be comfortable asking for advice and help.

> Identify which of these people has a job or an interest that you want to learn more about.

Build your Mentor relationship(s):

> Set up a lunch date to discuss your job search ideas.

> Ask them to tell you about their jobs and career experiences.

> Go to work with them to get a clearer picture of what a day is like at their workplace.

> Ask them to help you write your resume.

> Talk to them about being a reference for you.

> Keep them posted about developments in your career.

> Thank them when they offer you their time or assistance.

Use your Mentor relationship(s) to:

> Help you find jobs you are interested in.

> Practice interviewing skills.

> Give your resume to people they know who might be able to give you a job.

> Identify contacts who can provide informational interviews, tours of their businesses, or opportunities to join them at their jobs.

> Get advice on a variety of issues. Ask how your mentor was able to resolve similar struggles.

> Build up your self-confidence.

Conclusion

As you and your family begin the task of finding a job, remember to consider the people in your personal network as important resources. The people you know may be the key to finding a first job or developing personal interests into a career. Remember that building relationships can take time, but stay positive and hopeful.

There is a job out there for you!

Worksheet #1
Identifying your Network and Mentors

Family

School Connections (teachers, classmates, etc.)

Clubs or Groups (after school activities, sports, gyms, etc.)

Friends and Neighbors

Work or Volunteer Contacts (former and present)

Phone script for calling network members

1. **Who are you calling?**

   How are you going to address this person? (Mr., Mrs., Dr., first name)

2. **How did you get the contact?**

   Who gave you their name and phone number?

3. **What are you going to say when they answer their phone?**

   Hello. How are you today?

   _____ gave me your name and suggested that I call you.

   Is this a good time to talk?

4. **What kind of job are you looking for?**

   Be as specific as possible.

   If you do not have a specific job in mind, be able to talk about a career that you think you want to learn more about.

5. **What are your skills and strengths?**

   What jobs have you had?

   What are you good at?

6. **What are you going to ask them for help with?**

   Can I talk with you about your job or company?

   I was wondering if you could give me feedback on my resume?

   Could I get a tour of your office/company?

   Do you know anyone else I could talk to?

   Can you offer me advice on my job search?

7. **What do you say when you end the conversation?**

   Thank you!

Worksheet #2
Contact Sheet for Using and Building Networks

Make a photocopy for every network member you have identified.

Contact Information

name

phone number/fax

email

street address

city, state, zip

how known

employer

job or position

Could you recommend any people who might be helpful for me to talk with about my career goals?

name, job, employer, phone number

name, job, employer, phone number

name, job, employer, phone number

name, job, employer, phone number

May I tell these people that you have suggested that I speak with them?

☐ yes   ☐ no

Acknowledgements

ICI **UMASS BOSTON**

For More Information:

Sheila Fesko
Institute for Community Inclusion
UMass Boston
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125
617.287.4300 (v); 617.287.4350 (TTY)
sheila.fesko@umb.edu

Other ICI publications on this topic

Tools for Inclusion Series

An Examination of Teaching a Networking Strategy to Job Seekers *(January 1999, Vol. 7, No.1)*

Networking: A Consumer Guide to an Effective Job Search *(August 1998, Vol. 6, No. 3)*

Manual

Building Community Connections: Designing a Future that Works is a training curriculum that offers detailed, yet easy-to-follow suggestions for improving your community networking skills in the job search. Although geared more towards trainers, the manual's easy-to-use format makes it useful for all audiences.

Message Board

The Massachusetts Partnership for Transition (MPT) is a statewide coordinating council that brings together projects, resources, and activities aimed at supporting the transition of all youth. This organization moderates a Web-based message board to assist schools and families in learning about and working with issues related to transition.

NIDRR
A project funded by the NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH

This publication will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

**Visit
www.communityinclusion.org
to read this brief online,
find other publications on this topic, or
sign up for ICI's email announcement list**

www.communityinclusion.org

Appendix D

ICI

Tools for Inclusion

family and consumer series

Getting the Most from the Public Vocational Rehabilitation System

By Colleen Condon, Cecilia Gandolfo, Lora Brugnaro, Cindy Thomas, and Pauline Donnelly

Introduction

Every state has a vocational rehabilitation agency that is designed to help individuals with disabilities meet their employment goals. Vocational rehabilitation agencies assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for, get, keep, or regain employment. Many individuals and their families, teachers, employers, and advocates have found that these agencies provide flexible services that help people reach their employment goals.

This publication describes the vocational rehabilitation system by responding to questions frequently asked by individuals with disabilities. Our goal is to give you information that will help you get the services you need to reach your employment goals.

1. What kinds of services are available through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)?

Helping you to get and keep a job is VR's ultimate goal. There are many different services available to help you in reaching this goal. The services offered during each step in the process vary and depend upon your employment needs and interests. Your services may include:

1. **Eligibility determination** to figure out if you qualify for services
2. **Assessment of vocational needs** to learn more about your interests, skills, and the services and support you might need
3. **Development of an Individualized Plan for Employment** that outlines your goals and the services you will receive
4. **Coordination of services** to reach your goal of employment
5. **Post-employment services** to help you keep your job once you get it

2. Who is eligible for services from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)?

In order to be eligible for VR services, the federal regulations say you must:

◗ Be an "individual with a disability," meaning a person who
  • Has a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial barrier to employment and
  • Can benefit from VR services to achieve an employment outcome
◗ Require VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

If you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, you are presumed to be eligible for VR services, unless there is strong evidence that you are too significantly disabled to benefit from these services.

When a state does not have the funds to serve everyone who would normally be eligible for services, they are required to first serve people with the most significant disabilities. This is called "order of selection." Each state decides for itself what "most significant disability" means. You should check with the agency in your state to find out if you will be eligible for services.

It is important to remember that the government uses terms differently than they may be used in our daily lives. While you may not consider yourself to have a disability, let alone a significant disability, you may, in fact, qualify for services. Because the regulations are complex, you should not try to guess or determine for yourself if you will be eligible. Instead, if you think you could benefit from services, contact your local VR office and a counselor will meet with you to determine your eligibility. Remember, if you receive SSI or SSDI you are presumed to be eligible for VR services unless there is strong evidence that you will not benefit from them.

It is important to note that in some states people who are blind receive VR services through their state division for the blind.

3. Will I have to PAY for VR services?

There is **no cost to apply** for VR services and to find out if you are eligible. While most people do not pay for their services, some states may require you to complete a statement of financial need prior to purchasing services on your behalf. Depending upon your financial resources, you may be asked to help pay for your services. In most situations if you are going to take classes at a post-secondary school (such as a community college or a university) you will be required to apply for financial aid. Regardless of your financial situation, if you are determined eligible for VR, you may receive the following services at no cost:

- ◗ Assessments to determine VR needs
- ◗ Vocational counseling and guidance
- ◗ Referral for other services

4. How does the APPLICATION PROCESS work?

Each VR office is different, but usually **a staff person will outline available services to you during your first visit to the office**. This may be done in a group orientation or during an individual appointment. The best way to get started is to call your local office.

If you decide that you are interested in receiving services, **you must apply for services**. A VR counselor will be assigned to meet with you. During the first meeting, you and your VR counselor will have the opportunity to discuss your employment interests, concerns, and employment goals. In addition to getting information from you directly, the counselor may ask your permission to get information about you from other sources in order to determine if you are eligible for services. Your counselor must determine if you are eligible for services within 60 days of your application.

If documentation of your disability is not available, or is out of date, then the VR agency may pay for you to have an assessment by a medical professional, psychologist, psychiatrist, or other appropriate entity.

5. If I am ELIGIBLE for services, what will happen next?

You and your counselor will **work together** to figure out what services you will need to reach your employment goals. Typically, you and your counselor will:

- ◗ Explore your interests, skills, experiences and support needs
- ◗ Decide on your employment goals
- ◗ Develop an Individual Plan for Employment to help you reach your employment goals

6. What is an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)?

Each person is unique and therefore requires an individualized approach to reach their employment goal. You and your counselor will work together to establish your goal and identify the services that are necessary for you to achieve your goal. You may choose from a variety of different services and different ways the services can be provided. The following is a list of many of the services, that you might receive during the employment planning stage:

- ◗ Vocational counseling and guidance
- ◗ Job placement assistance
- ◗ College or vocational training
- ◗ Supported employment services
- ◗ Skill training
- ◗ Job coaching or tutoring
- ◗ Transportation
- ◗ Interpreter services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing
- ◗ Assistance with school to work transition
- ◗ Reader services for individuals who are blind
- ◗ Assistive and rehabilitation technology services
- ◗ Referral services
- ◗ Support, advocacy, and follow-up services for at least 90 days following job placement

Services may be provided directly by your VR counselor, coordinated with other services, or purchased by the VR agency on your behalf. Purchasing services means VR pays another agency or organization to provide you with services. For example, VR may pay for skill training or for a community employment agency to work with you.

7. Is the IPE IMPORTANT?

Yes! **Take your Individual Plan for Employment seriously.** The IPE is your map for meeting your employment goal. Be specific when developing it. Making weekly or monthly "to do" lists is an effective way to track your steps and mark progress. Frequently it takes time to meet your goals. Your IPE may need to be revised to reflect changes in your goals. You should discuss this with your counselor.

8. What are community rehabilitation provider services?

Vocational rehabilitation agencies frequently purchase services from community rehabilitation providers (CRPs). These agencies are **often able to provide more intensive services** than typically provided directly by VR counselors. Your IPE may state that you will work with a CRP for more intensive employment services or training. You should be given a choice of providers and an opportunity to visit each one before deciding which one is best for you. If you decide to use the CRP's services, the staff there will work with your VR counselor and keep them informed. Take these resources seriously. Work on your goals with your CRP counselor or employment specialist. If you are not happy with the services provided by the CRP, you may always return to your VR counselor and ask to change providers.

9. What SHOULD I EXPECT from the services I receive from VR?

You should expect **respect for your choices and support in making decisions.** You should also expect individualized services that are tailored to your specific goals. This means that VR will work with you to identify, search, and apply for jobs or educational opportunities leading to jobs that match your employment goals. You should know that VR does not have a ready-made pool of available jobs that you can automatically fit into, but they help with the job search process.

10. What is MY ROLE in working with VR?

There are **many things that you can do** to work effectively with your VR counselor.

◗ Become familiar with the range of services VR offers.

◗ Understand that participating in VR services involves going through multiple steps. Work with your counselor to identify the steps you will need to take and what will happen at each step in the process.

◗ Be as clear as possible about what help or tools you think you need to reach your goals.

◗ Participate actively in creating your IPE.

◗ Read your VR agency's handbook for consumers. This is given out at orientation and can often be found by visiting your VR agency's website.

◗ Ask questions, and listen to the answers.

◗ Stay in contact with your counselor throughout the process.

It is important to show as much initiative as possible!

Finding a job is hard work. You should spend a lot of your own time on your job search and use many different methods. For instance, go to a One-Stop Career Center or college career center to use their services, attend job fairs to practice interview skills, network in your community to discover who may be hiring, and join employment-focused support groups. Ask your VR counselor about some of these local employment resources.

15. If there is MORE THAN ONE VR office in my area, which one should I go to?

While VR offices are generally assigned to serve people in specific cities and towns, **you may use whichever office is most convenient** and accessible for you. You do not need to use the one that is in your town or closest to your home.

16. May I use more than one VR office at a time?

No. You may only receive services from one VR office at a time.

17. What if I am UNHAPPY with the services I receive at VR or the CRP?

If you are dissatisfied with the services you have received, try to think of the reasons why you are unhappy. For example, is it because you have not found a job? Have you received the services you asked for? Or do you feel that your counselor is not listening to you? Discuss your concerns with your counselor and ask for suggestions. If you remain dissatisfied, you may ask to speak with your counselor's supervisor or the office director. You may also request a new counselor if you feel you cannot work things out with your current one. But **start with honest communication and request what you want and need.** If, after trying to work the issues out with your counselor and the supervisor, difficulties with services persist, you can contact your local Client Assistance Program.

18. What is the Client Assistance Program (CAP)?

CAPs exist in every state. **They provide advocacy and information for individuals applying for or being served by VR.** If you are having problems with VR that you have not been able to work out with staff in your local VR office the CAP may be helpful to you. To find out more about CAP procedures, contact your local VR office and ask about their CAP services, or call the CAP program directly. You should receive information about CAP during your orientation to VR.

Melissa—A New Career Path

After graduating from high school ten years ago, Melissa worked as a child care worker. Though she enjoyed working with children, she found the job a bit stressful due to her significant learning disability. About one year ago, Melissa injured her neck in a car accident and was eventually laid off from her job since she could not lift the children anymore. After a year of unemployment, her mother suggested that she contact her local VR office for help deciding upon a new career. At first Melissa was hesitant, since she had used VR services back when she first graduated from high school and had not found them to be very helpful. After thinking it over, she decided to give it a try and called the local VR office.

Melissa attended the orientation and thought the services there would be helpful for her. A few weeks later she met with Linda, a vocational counselor. Linda worked with Melissa to help her decide what career path she would like to try next. The two of them met a few times and talked about Melissa's education, past jobs, and interests. Melissa then completed a series of vocational assessment tests, which helped her learn more about her strengths and skills. After the assessments and meetings, Linda and Melissa came to the conclusion that a job as a medical records clerk would be a great fit. Together they came up with an Individual Plan for Employment that included going to the local community college and taking a certificate program in medical records. With help from Linda, Melissa is currently enrolled in the program and is gaining the skills she needs to find her next job.

17. What should I do if I cannot get services I need right away?

Sometimes more people need VR services than the state agency can serve. When this happens you may not be able to receive services right away. When you complete an application for services, ask how long the review process takes and how long it will take for you to begin receiving services.

Visit your state's VR website and see if there is any information that would be helpful, including a guide or handbook on services. Visit other public centers where you can access free employment and information services like a One-Stop Career Center, library, or college career center. You can find a One-Stop Career Center online at *www.servicelocator.org/ nearest_onestop.asp.*

18. Does VR offer any OTHER SERVICES for people with disabilities?

The agency in your state that provides VR services may also provide other services for people with disabilities. Contact your state agency to learn about the range of services that may be offered.

Susan—Pursues her First Job

Getting Started

Susan has a mental illness and lives in a public housing development in a large city. Since graduating from high school five years ago, she has attended a clubhouse-a program for individuals with mental illness. Recently, Susan decided that she would like to get a job in her community. She talked with her therapist as well as a clubhouse staff member. They recommended that Susan contact the state VR agency to see if she would be eligible for their services.

Susan called her local office and was given an appointment to meet with a VR counselor, Jim. She completed an application during this meeting and some time later received a letter saying she was found eligible for services. When she met with Jim again, he requested permission from Susan to talk with staff at the clubhouse, her therapist, her caseworker at the Department of Mental Health, and her family. Jim explained to Susan that with input from people who knew her well, he could help her develop the best Individual Plan for Employment possible.

The IPE

Jim and Susan worked together to develop a good job. Together they came up with a plan for the services Susan would need. The VR agency agreed to fund job placement services for Susan along with some job coaching and support services as she began her job. Susan said she felt bad when she had too much time alone, so everyone agreed that it might be best for Susan to continue attending the clubhouse when she was not out looking for a job.

Selecting a Provider

Jim told Susan that she could get her job placement services from a private agency called a community rehabilitation provider. He gave her a list of three to visit. She visited and chose one she thought would be best for her.

Starting a Job

After working with a job placement specialist at the provider agency for four months, Susan was offered a full-time clerical assistant position with a local real estate company. When she began her new job a job coach went with her to help her get the accommodations she needed. He also helped her learn her job by providing one-to-one instruction. After a week the job coach was needed less and began to visit the worksite less frequently. Susan, the employer, and the job coach decided a weekly check-in by phone with the employer would be helpful. Susan also made plans to meet with her job coach once a week after work for additional support.

Keeping the Job

Susan continued to meet with Jim every six weeks. At these meetings they reviewed the public benefits that Susan was receiving to make sure she understood the changes that would result from her increase in earnings. Additionally, he and the staff at the clubhouse began to help Susan make plans to stay in touch with her friends there. Jim made sure that all of Susan's services were coordinated well, and he was there to listen to Susan's concerns. After she worked for six months, Susan found that she no longer required any services from VR, and her case was closed. She continues to attend social events at the clubhouse when they fit in her schedule and she gets informal support on work issues as they arise from staff and peers there. She also meets with her therapist after work.

Tips on Making VR Work from People Who Found Jobs Through the Program

Evaluate your expectations

Pat: "VR will not hand you a job. Nobody is ever handed a job. Expect to be given resources, advice and help on making connections. You must get involved in your job search."

Jose: "Working takes a lot of effort and finding a job takes just as much work-if not more. Be prepared!"

Ask questions

Juanita: "When I first went to the VR office, I was given a lot of forms and they asked a lot of questions. I was shy and did not say much even when I did not understand some things. I became frustrated and told a friend what had happened. She suggested I write down a list of questions to ask at my next meeting. I did this and I think my VR counselor and I understood each other better."

Advocate for yourself

Tom: "I had a VR counselor that insisted I apply for jobs that seemed beneath my qualifications and were a poor match for my skills. In fact, my counselor submitted my resume to such positions without telling me. When I tried to tell my counselor how I felt, there was no response. After some thought, I approached my counselor's supervisor. It was decided that another counselor would be assigned to me. I worked better with this new counselor and got a job in six months!"

Don't give up

Maria: "It can take from weeks to years to find a job, but those who stick with the program do the best. I once spent two years working on a job search while using VR services. Many times I wanted to give up. Finally, I was offered four different positions in one week! I chose one and have been employed ever since. I am pursuing my career!"

Try new approaches

Tasha: "When my VR counselor first advised me to ask people I knew about employment opportunities, I did not want to. I was used to looking in the newspaper for job openings. Eventually I found a job, but I got it after I started asking people I knew about jobs. I also started using other sources such as the One-Stop Career Center in my area."

Talk to your peers

Mohammad: "When I went to VR, I felt very alone. I was upset because I did not have a job. I really kept to myself except for talking to my counselor. One day my counselor suggested that I join the job seekers group. I thought it would not be for me since I had worked a lot in my past. I went and discovered that everybody had his own story. I got tips from them on what worked and did not work, different types of jobs and different resources that I would never had known about. We all found jobs. Some of us are still in touch."

Massachusetts Resources

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MA state VR agency)
Administrative Offices
Fort Point Place Suite 600
27 Wormwood Street
Boston, MA 02210-1616
MRC main information numbers:
800/245-6543 (voice/TTY) or 617/204-3600
(617) 727-1354 (fax)
www.state.ma.us/mrc

Vocational Rehabilitation Division
Phone: 800/245-6543 (voice/TTY) or (617) 204-3600
www.state.ma.us/mrc/vr

Statewide Employment Services
Phone: 617/204-3854
www.state.ma.us/mrc/ses/indexma.htm

Independent Living Division
Consumer Involvement, Independent Living Centers, Turning 22, Housing, and Supported Living programs: 800/245-6543 (voice/TTY) or 617/204-3851
Protective Services program: 508/823-2874 (phone) or 508/823-5186 (fax)
Homecare and Personal Care Assistance programs: 617/204-3853

Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP):
617/204-3852

Disability Determination Services Division
Phone: 800/422-7200 (toll-free within Massachusetts)

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
48 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116
Phone: 617/727-5550
Fax: 617/626-7685

Massachusetts Office of Disability, Client Assistance Program (CAP)
One Ashburton Place, Room 1305
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 800/422-7200 or 617/727-7440

National Resources

Vocational Rehabilitation State Offices (from the Job Accommodation Network)
http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/sbses/vocrehab.htm

Rehabilitation Services Administration
www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/RSA/About/

General Disability Resources
www.disability.gov

Social Security Administration
www.socialsecurity.gov

Independent Living Centers
www.ilru.org/jump1.htm

For more information, contact:

Colleen Condon
Institute for Community Inclusion
UMass Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, Massachusetts 02125
(617) 287-4300 (voice)
(617) 287-4350 (TTY)
colleen.condon@umb.edu

Visit
www.communityinclusion.org
to read this brief online;
find other publications on this topic; or
sign up for ICI's email announcement list

This publication will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

Institute for Community Inclusion
UMass Boston
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

www.communityinclusion.org

References

American Community Survey. (2006). U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Projections and Training Data, 2006-07 Edition (www.bls.gov).

Bolles, R. (2004). *What Color Is Your Parachute: 2004 Ed.* 10 Speed Press: Berkeley, CA.

Cluff & Associates. (1998). Increasing your employee referrals. *Recruiters Update, 1*(12).

Darling, D. (2003). *The Networking Survival Guide: Get the Success You Want by Tapping into the People You Know.* McGraw Hill: New York.

Cuilla Timmons, J., Hamner, D., & Bose, J. (2003). Four strategies for finding good jobs: Advice from job seekers with disabilities. *Institute for Community Inclusion- Tools for Inclusion No. 18.*

Cuilla Timmons, J., Schuster, J., & Moloney, M. (2001). Stories of success: Using networking and mentoring relationships in career planning for students with disabilities and their families. *Institute for Community Inclusion- Tools for Inclusion No. 12.*

Fesko, S., Hoff, D., Jordan, M., Fichera, K., & Thomas, C. (2000). One stop centers: A guide for job seekers with disabilities. *Institute for Community Inclusion- Tools for Inclusion No. 10.*

Gandolfo, C. & Graham, A. (1999). Networking: A consumer guide to an effective job search. *Institute for Community Inclusion- Tools for Inclusion No. 7.*

McConnell, J. (2002). Obtaining qualified candidates part II: Sources of internal candidates. Retrieved from the National Federation of Independent Business at www.nfib.com/object/3270225.html

References

American Community Survey. (2006). U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Projections and Training Data, 2006-07 Edition (www.bls.gov).

Bolles, R. (2004). *What Color Is Your Parachute: 2004 Ed.* 10 Speed Press: Berkeley, CA.

Cluff & Associates. (1998). Increasing your employee referrals. *Recruiters Update, 1*(12).

Darling, D. (2003). *The Networking Survival Guide: Get the Success You Want by Tapping into the People You Know.* McGraw Hill: New York.

Cuilla Timmons, J., Hamner, D., & Bose, J. (2003). Four strategies for finding good jobs: Advice from job seekers with disabilities. *Institute for Community Inclusion- Tools for Inclusion No. 18.*

Cuilla Timmons, J., Schuster, J., & Moloney, M. (2001). Stories of success: Using networking and mentoring relationships in career planning for students with disabilities and their families. *Institute for Community Inclusion- Tools for Inclusion No. 12.*

Fesko, S., Hoff, D., Jordan, M., Fichera, K., & Thomas, C. (2000). One stop centers: A guide for job seekers with disabilities. *Institute for Community Inclusion- Tools for Inclusion No. 10.*

Gandolfo, C. & Graham, A. (1999). Networking: A consumer guide to an effective job search. *Institute for Community Inclusion- Tools for Inclusion No. 7.*

McConnell, J. (2002). Obtaining qualified candidates part II: Sources of internal candidates. Retrieved from the National Federation of Independent Business at www.nfib.com/object/3270225.html