

Chapter 13

Starting Your Career

Getting Organized

- You may need to have access to:
 - A computer and printer
 - A telephone or cellphone with voice mail
 - Office supplies
 - Resources

Setting Priorities and Goals

- Determine the following
 - What type of support work do you want to pursue?
 - Would you prefer to work in a facility or in a community setting?
 - Do you want to be self-employed?
 - Do you want full-time or part-time work?

Preparing Your Resumé and Professional Portfolio

- A resumé is a concise, 1- to 2-page summary of your experience, education, and work-related skills and personal qualities.
- Elements of a resumé:
 - Experience
 - Education
 - Objective
 - Profile
 - Interests

Getting Started on Your Resumé

- Make a list of your experiences, education, skills, and qualities.
- Make a list of the skills and qualities an employer would want to see in a support worker.
- Compare lists—identify your areas of expertise.
- Store a copy of your resumé on a flash drive (memory stick).

Types of Resumés

- Chronological (see textbook *Figure 13.1*)
 - Highlights employment history—most current employment
 - Best format to use for those who have a steady history of employment and few gaps.
- Functional (see textbook *Figure 13.2*)
 - Highlights skills or functions, and briefly lists positions held
 - Best format to use for those who have little work experience, long periods of not working, or frequent job changes

Creating Your Resumé

Ask yourself:

- Does my resumé highlight the qualifications that are outlined in the job posting?
- Is the information relevant?
- Have I been completely honest?
- Have I expressed myself clearly?
- Is my resumé consistent?
- Have I accounted for all of my time?
- Is my resumé correct?

Formatting and Printing Your Resumé

- Choose a simple, professional-looking format—check your computer for preset resumé designs.
- Do not use more than one font.
- Keep graphics to a minimum.
- Do not crowd too much onto one page.
- If printing:
 - Use good quality paper
 - Staple pages together

The Professional Portfolio

- *A portfolio* is a binder containing the applicant's resumé, cover letter, references, certificates, letters of recommendation, awards, proof of volunteering, workshops, immunization record, police check, and other pertinent information.
- Its purpose is to easily reveal information about the applicant to the interviewer.

Copies of Portfolio

- **Hardcopy portfolio binder:**
 - Place each item in plastic page protector.
 - Label page dividers.
- **Electronic portfolio:**
 - All items should be scanned and placed in order.
 - Make available as an electronic file or a link that can be sent to the employer.

Finding and Following Leads

- The main sources for advertised positions are online job sites, community newspapers (includes electronic versions) and college career services.
- Check:
 - Journals: employment advertisements
 - Search engines on the Internet
 - Posting boards at the college or at potential employers

To Find an Unadvertised Position

- Check with college career services
- Contact people you know
- Check with your area home care program
- Look in the yellow pages
- Check your local library
- Attend job fairs
- Check with the Canadian Employment Centre

Selecting References (1 of 2)

- *A reference* is a person who can speak to a potential employer about your skills, abilities, and personal qualities.
 - Avoid using family members or friends.
 - Previous employers are usually best for references.
 - Other possibilities: people in the position of authority

Selecting References (2 of 2)

Basic Tips About References:

- Ask the referee for the reference.
- Make sure the contact information is correct.
- Keep your references informed.
- Follow up.

Letter of Application

- A letter of application is also called a *cover letter*
 - Accompanies the resumé
 - A solicited letter of application responds to an advertised position
 - An unsolicited letter of application inquires about potential job openings.
 - Organize the letter of application
 - See textbook *Figures 13.3 and 13.4*

Tips to Convey Professionalism Electronically

- Your email background should be neutral.
- Never create a childish or offensive email address.
- Never use “cyber-speak”.
- Ensure that your resumé is in the correct format.
- Do not have attachments that open automatically.
 - See textbook *Box 13.2: Sample of an Email to an Employer When Submitting a Resumé*

Completing a Job Application Form

- Some employers expect you to complete a preset job application form
 - Attach your resumé to the job application
 - The application may ask for legal eligibility to work in Canada
 - Your work-related skills
 - Employment history, names, and numbers
 - Reasons for leaving previous jobs
 - References

Using Social Networking Sites

- Important points to remember when posting information electronically:
 - Manage your identity.
 - Control your privacy settings.
 - Pay attention to the professionalism of your social media page or website.
 - Avoid errors in spelling and grammar and the use of slang terms.

Preparing for the Interview

- The job interview is the employer's chance to get to know and evaluate you.
- To prepare:
 - Find out more about the position and agency.
 - Create a list of your values, skills, qualities, interests, goals, strengths and weaknesses.
 - Have examples of specific experiences that illustrate each.
 - Decide what you should highlight at the interview--ensure you have your portfolio with you.
 - Prepare 3 references.
 - Be prepared to address any issues (e.g., worked several short-term jobs, etc.)

Group Interview

- More than one applicant:
 - Benefit: You may feel less nervous because you are not alone.
 - Can also be intimidating to think that your answers are being compared to others.
- More than one Interviewer:
 - Usually very thorough.
 - Will ask questions that test your ability to solve problems (e.g., “What would you do if...?” questions)
 - See textbook *Box 13.3: Common Interview Questions*

Grooming

Making a good impression

- Hair should be neat and away from your face.
- Do not wear too much make-up.
- Wear minimal jewellery (avoid large pieces).
- Remove body piercings that are not of religious origin. Cover tattoos that may be offensive.
- Do not wear perfume.

Clothing

- Present a businesslike, professional appearance:
 - Men—shirt, dress pants, socks, and shoes
 - Women—skirt or tailored pants
 - All clothing should be wrinkle free.
 - Ensure undergarments are fully covered and cannot be seen through clothing.
 - Avoid tight or revealing clothing.
 - Shoes should be in good repair and well-polished.
 - Avoid running shoes, sandals, and shoes with very high heels.

The Interview (1 of 4)

- Arrive 5-10 minutes before your scheduled interview:
 - Do not bring anyone with you.
 - Turn off your cellphone; do not use your phone while waiting for your interview.
 - Do not chew gum or smoke while waiting.
 - If you feel nervous, take deep breaths to calm yourself.

The Interview (2 of 4)

- For the interview:
 - Greet the interviewer in a polite manner and with a firm handshake.
 - Stand until asked to take a seat.
 - When sitting, use good posture.
 - Watch your body language.
 - Smile and make eye contact.
 - Speak clearly and with confidence.

The Interview (3 of 4)

- Do not use the interviewer's first name.
- Project a confident image.
- Listen carefully.
- Take your time when answering questions.
- Answer questions honestly.
- Speak positively about your previous job.
- Use experience to support opinions.

The Interview (4 of 4)

- Ask the right questions.
- Thank the interviewer for his or her time.
- You can ask questions at the end of the interview.
- Review the job description with the interviewer.
 - At this point, do not ask questions about:
 - Pay rate
 - Work hours
 - Benefits and vacation time

Follow-Up

- Send a brief thank-you note after the interview.
 - Send the note as soon as possible, no later than the day following the interview.
 - The note can be handwritten or computer written.
 - Mail the note; do not send by email.
- Express your thanks for the interview and reinforce your interest in the position.
 - See textbook *Figure 13.5: A Sample Thank-you Note*

The Employment Offer

- Accept the job that is best for you.
- When you accept a job:
 - Agree on a starting date, pay rate, and work hours.
 - Find out where to report on your first day.
 - Ask for the information in writing.
 - Ask for the employee handbook and other agency information.
 - Clarify job expectations and requirements.
 - Read everything before you start working.

Accepting an Offer

- Terms of employment:
 - If it's a contract, what is the duration and terms?
- Conditional offer:
 - Condition may be based on a health report
- Probation period:
 - Usually lasts 3-6 months
- Benefits:
 - Are you eligible? Ensure to find out about benefits, especially if you are working directly for the client.

How to Refuse or Leave a Job Without Leaving a Negative Impression (1 of 2)

- This is difficult to do.
- Ask to meet with your supervisor in person.
- Be honest, tactful, and pleasant to your employer.
- Your employer should have a good impression of you.

How to Refuse or Leave a Job Without Leaving a Negative Impression (2 of 2)

- Be as fair as possible if leaving a job because you do not like the atmosphere:
 - Always begin with what you like about the agency.
 - Be specific when stating what you didn't like.
 - If you are a valued employee, you may be asked to reconsider leaving. Either way, always maintain your professionalism.