Managing Your Career: Strategies for Graduates with DisAbilities

Presented by: Shayna Golding, Career Counsellor & Cheryl Lepard, Disability Consultant

Modules
1. Career Planning
2. Understanding Employment Equity
3. Addressing Employment Barriers
4. Dealing with Disclosure
5. Workplace Accommodations
6. Resources for Employers & Students

Module 1: Career Planning
Agenda

- Career Planning Process
- Strengths Based Approach to Self-Assessment
- Researching the World of Work
- Networking & Mentorship
- Targeted Job Search Resources
- Alternative Work Arrangements
- Tips for Career Planning

Career Planning Process

- Self Assessment
- Research & Exploration
- Implementation
- Evaluation & Decision Making
- Adjustment & Re-evaluation

Discover Your Strengths

- Consider your skills, interests, values, personal qualities
- Focus on your STRENGTHS!!
- Think about times in your life when you felt particularly proud, energized and happy
- What were you doing?
- Are there challenges, obstacles or barriers that you have overcome?
- What skills did you use to do this?
- What personal qualities helped you to overcome this challenge?
Consider Your Interests

- Populations:
  - Children
  - Youth
  - Women
  - Older Adults
  - LGBTQ
  - Ethnic community groups
  - Mental health patients

- Work Environments:
  - Schools
  - Hospitals
  - Corrections
  - Community centres

- Industry Sectors:
  - Government
  - Education
  - Health
  - Rehabilitation
  - Business/Professional services
  - Marketing
  - Community services

Assess Yourself

- Psycho-educational assessments, neurological assessments and medical documentation may help you understand your strengths and areas of difficulties.
- Meeting with a Career Counsellor and completing a career inventory:
  - Strong Interest Inventory
  - Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
  - Online Self Assessment

Research & Explore the World of Work

- Conduct Occupational Research:
  - Career Cruising
  - National Occupational Classification System
- Consider Labour Market & Industry Trends:
  - Industry Canada
  - Employment Ontario
- Understand Employment Equity Policies
- Explore your options through job shadowing and volunteering
Evaluation & Decision-Making

- Self Assessment
- Research & Exploration
- Clarifying your Career Goals

Implementation

- Taking steps towards your goals
- Gaining additional qualifications or experiences
- Actively job searching
- Targeting your resume and applying for work opportunities
- Networking

Networking

- Networking is the single most powerful tool you have to find work
- Process of building relationships/contacts in order to further your career goals
- Great way to research various occupations
- Conducting informational interviews can help you to network while gathering career specific information
**Work Your Network**
- You already have a network: friends, classmates, professors, family and neighbours
- Tell them your career goals
- Explore what they know and who they know
- Remember casual, informal networking happens daily in your life
- Be open, curious and courteous
- Leave a good impression wherever you go

**Build Your Network**
- Use Career Centre Online Networking Contacts
- Attend Job fairs & events
- Join professional associations
- Volunteer
- Attend charity events, fundraisers
- Utilize Directories
- Consider Social Networking Facebook, Linked-In

**Identify Mentors**
- Mentoring relationships can be a key component of your career success
- Connecting with more experienced person in your field of can assist you to make career-related decisions and provide you with
  - Tips and strategies
  - Insider information
  - Support & guidance
Utilize Targeted Job Search Boards

- **Ability Edge**: provides paid internship opportunities for post-secondary students and graduates with disabilities
- **Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)**: Offers programs and services for all aspects of the employment of persons with disabilities
- **JOIN (The Ontario Job Opportunity Information Network for Persons with Disabilities)**: is a network of 22 community agencies in Toronto that assist people living with disabilities to find and maintain employment

Targeted Job Search Boards

- **JVS Toronto (Ability Works)**: assists persons with mental health, developmental, learning and physical disabilities, injuries or illnesses to transition to employment
- **Link Up**: offers assistance with needs assessments, job development and placement, employment action plans
- **Ontario March of Dimes**: Employment preparation, job placement and training

Adjustment & Re-Evaluation:

- Maintain a positive attitude
- All experiences can be beneficial as they enable opportunity for:
  - Career exploration
  - Skill building
  - Making contacts and new friends
  - Industry and occupational exposure
  - A stepping stone to your next career move
Considering Alternatives

- Alternative work arrangements are becoming increasingly common and may be a great option
  - Part-time
  - Job share
  - Casual/Seasonal
  - Self-Employment
  - Contract
  - Telework
- Understanding the demands of your family as well as your making your health and well being a priority
- Balance your social life with work demands

Resources

- Meet with a Career Counsellor
- Meet with an Employment Coach
- Register with the Recent Graduate Employment Service
- Get your resume critiqued
- Sharpen your interview skills
- Attend a Workshop
  - Discover your Skills and Career Options
  - Networking
  - Interview Strategies
  - Winning Resumes & Cover Letters

Final Thoughts: Career Planning

- Know yourself
- Focus on your strengths!!
- Conduct research
- Explore your options and test them out
- Clarify your career goals
- Network, Network, Network!
- Identify mentors
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Celebrate your successes along the way
- Be open to making adjustments and considering alternatives
Recap

1. Career Planning
2. Understanding Employment Equity
3. Addressing Employment Barriers
4. Dealing with Disclosure
5. Workplace Accommodations
6. Resources for Employers & Students

Thank you for reviewing this module. If you would like to provide feedback or if you have questions or concerns, please contact
Shayna Golding golding@utsc.utoronto.ca
or
Cheryl Lepard clepard@utsc.utoronto.ca