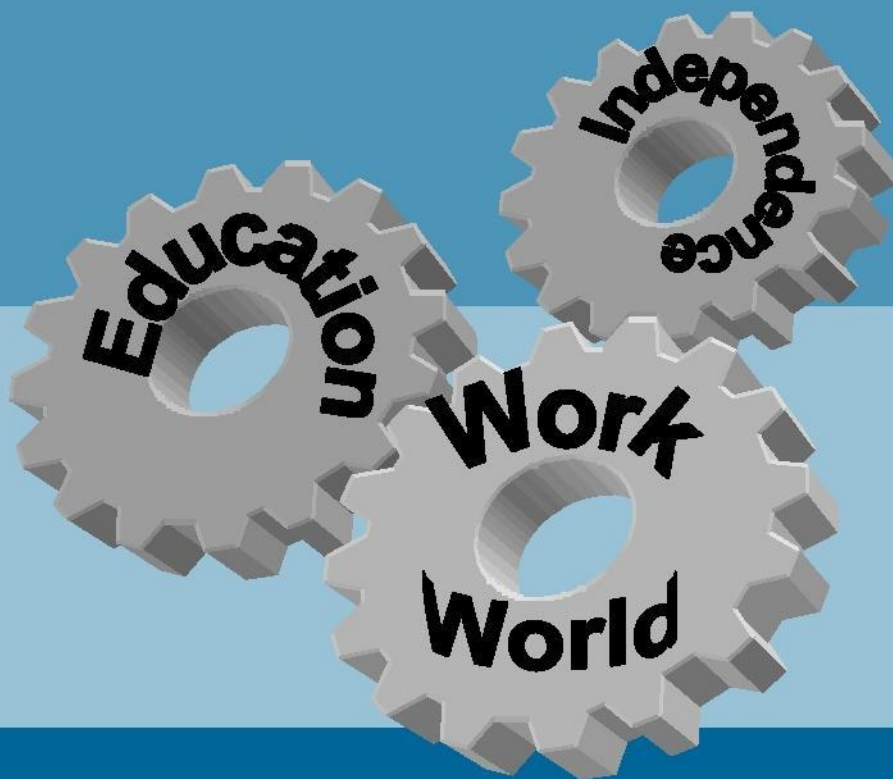


A Roadmap to Personal Success

Center for Capacity Building on Minorities with Disabilities Research
University of Illinois at Chicago



Written By
Fabricio Balcazar, Ph.D
Michele Murvay
George Ortiz
Richard Noam Ostrander
Teresa Garate
Christopher B. Keys
Edited By
Jocelyn J. Roos
Jessica Awsumb
Maria Arellano

Introduction

This curriculum will help prepare you to go on to college or employment following high school graduation. The next ten chapters involve lessons and activities ranging from how to talk on the phone professionally to how to apply for scholarships for college. This manual will give you tips that will help you to refine the skills you already have. It will also teach you skills that you may not have yet. It is important to remember that you have to do the work in order for this manual to be helpful to you. Below you will find a list of chapters and page numbers.

Chapter List

Chapter 1: Moving Towards Independence.....	1
Chapter 2: Using Goals to be Successful.....	29
Chapter 3: Strengths and Challenges	44
Chapter 4: Networking.....	57
Chapter 5: Interpersonal Skills	79
Chapter 6: Receiving Support	112
Chapter 7: Taking Action.....	133
Chapter 8: Education Options	142
Chapter 9: Employment options 1	157
Chapter 10: Employment options 2	177

Chapter 1 – Moving Towards Independence

Goal of the Chapter: In this chapter you will learn about things you need to know to become more independent.

New Words

Benefits–These are things that you might receive from your employer when you work full time. They include health, dental, and vision benefits.

Budgeting–This is a way to manage your personal finances so you can pay all your bills and make sure that you don't spend more money than you have.

Checking Account – This is an account that you may have at a bank. The bank may be an actual building, or an online bank. This type of account allows you to use checks to pay for your expenses. Different banks have different checking account programs. It is important not to go under your minimum balance or the bank may charge you a service fee.

Entertainment – Activities that are done for fun. This can include going to the movies, concerts, an amusement park, or out to eat at a restaurant.

Insurance – Can be health, auto, or life insurance. If you own a car or drive, the law requires auto insurance. Your insurance rate is based on several factors.

Medicare – This is the largest publically funded health care program that provides health care to elderly people and people with disabilities.

Mortgage – Homeowners usually get a loan to purchase their home. They must pay the loan back by making monthly payments that go towards the interest and the principal balance. Sometimes property taxes are included in the mortgage payment.

New Words (continued)

Public Assistance – This refers to monetary aid from the federal government. You must apply for it and make less than a certain amount of money. Forms of public assistance include food vouchers, welfare checks, and medical cards. Sometimes individuals on this can also qualify for public housing or subsidized housing.

Rent –The amount of money paid each month for living in an apartment, condominium, or house that is owned by another company or person.

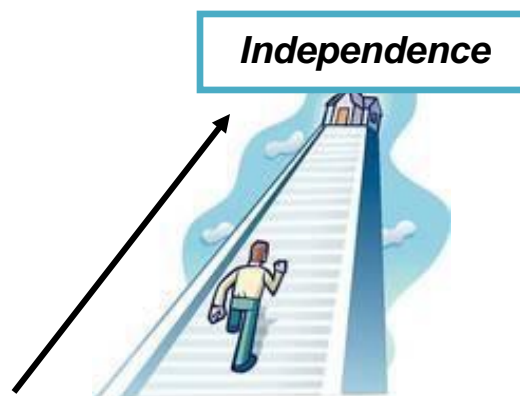
Savings Account – This type of bank account is used to put money away that is not needed for living expenses, but that is being saved to make a big purchase like a car. Savings accounts earn a small interest rate.

Social Security –This is a social insurance program that allows the government to take money from your paychecks. When you are older and retire, the government uses that money to give you a monthly check to help pay for your expenses.

SSI/SSDI – These are programs offered by the U.S. Social Security Administration to provide supplemental financial support for people with disabilities.

Taxes –Taxes are money that is paid to the government so they can provide people with different services. People have to pay state, federal, and sales taxes.

Utilities – Utilities include electricity, gas, water, and phone bills that usually must be paid each month.



Chapter 1 Introduction

A particular set of skills is required to help you move towards the ultimate goal of success and increased independence in your life. As a young adult with a mental health/emotional challenge, whether you want to live on your own or with others, you must realize there will be greater responsibility placed upon you. This increased responsibility also comes with many choices that you must make. These choices are related to your personal status, such as whether you live alone, with a roommate, family members, or friends. The choices you will have to make once you have completed an education or training program, found a job and started working, are:

- How do I manage my money?
- Where am I going to live?
- Do I rent or buy an apartment, condominium, or house?
- How do I enjoy life in a healthy and safe way?
- How do I handle my independent living expenses?

No one has the correct answer to these questions because the answers are based on what is best for you as an individual. Perhaps in high school, you might have felt pressure that moving out on your own was the best way to measure success. However, this is simply an opinion, or one point of view. You must make each of these decisions on your own. In order to make decisions, you need to have information that will help you identify and consider all the options. This chapter provides an overview of topics to consider when making important life decisions. These topics will include renting and buying, money and budgeting, transportation, and entertainment.

Lesson 1: Renting and Buying a Place to Live

How does having your own place sound? It probably seems really exciting! There would be no one to check on you as you come and go, no one to nag you to clean up after yourself, and no one to ask you what you are doing or where you're going.

Although these things might sound great, there are also some negative aspects. If you have your own place there is no one to grocery shop for you, cook for you, do your laundry, make sure there is toothpaste and toilet paper, pay the rent, and take care of the **utilities**, such as having heat in the winter and air conditioning in the summer.

There are many things young people take for granted when they live at home; things that they quickly begin to appreciate when they move out. In order for you to determine if moving out is the right step, you must first make a budget for yourself to see if you will be able to afford doing this on your own. First, you will learn the difference between renting and buying.

Buying property, either a house, townhouse, or condominium can be a difficult task. Before you are ready for this task, many things need to happen. First, you need to have good **credit**. If you have good credit and a solid job, you are in good shape. However, establishing your credit takes time. Below is a list of ways to establish credit.

- Have some credit cards
- Have a bank account (checking, savings, or both)
- Pay all your bills on time
- Have no outstanding balances for more than 90 days on your credit cards
- Demonstrate that your job is secure
- Can you think of any other ways? _____

Many people start out renting, but it is helpful to understand the difference and the steps involved in both renting and buying.

First step, as stated above, you must have good credit. People buy property with a loan from a bank or other lending institution. The lending companies will give you money to purchase your home. This money is called a **loan** and the lending company will charge you interest since you are borrowing this money. The current interest rates are between 4.0% and 6.0%. This means that if you borrow \$100,000 you will have to pay back \$100,000 plus an additional 4%-6% of that amount.

Most loans are either for 15 or 30 years. This means that you will pay a mortgage payment each month for 15 or 30 years. A **mortgage payment** includes a payment that is applied to your loan (principal), a payment that is applied to the interest, and also the property tax that is charged by the city where you live. This is a huge responsibility! If you miss a mortgage payment or make a late payment, there will be a big late fee added to your expenses. If it happens over a period of time, it is likely that you will lose the property and have bad credit.

When you buy a property, you will also have to make a **down payment**. A down payment is a part of the cost of the property that is paid up front. A down payment shows a commitment from the buyer and reduces the amount needed for a loan. You will also have to pay other costs associated with buying property. These other costs may include:

- Appraisal fees
- Lawyer fees
- Realtor fees

- Association fees

Renting an apartment is also a big responsibility, and there are multiple steps involved. Finding a place that fits your budget and is located in an area you want can be challenging. Most places require a **security deposit** before you move in. The security deposit is usually about one month's rent. The security deposit will be returned to you when you move out, as long as you did not cause any damage to the property. Some places also do credit checks to see if you pay your bills on time. If you do not have good credit, places may not allow you to rent from them. There are also late fees if the rent is not paid on time each month.

Once you find a potential apartment you need to find out if the rent covers any utilities, especially air conditioning and heat, since these can be huge expenses in the summer and winter. One way to save on the cost of rent is by having a roommate. Finding a good roommate also involves many steps. You will want someone that also has good credit to make sure that they pay their part of the rent on time. You will also want someone who is trustworthy. You do not want to live with someone who may steal from you. Sometimes a close friend or family member may not be the best type of roommate because you may argue about rent, sharing the expenses, and doing the chores. However, a roommate is a good idea if you are on a limited budget. You will have to decide what person is the best roommate match.



Where do you want to come home to?

Activity 1A: Renting or Buying?

Directions: Look at each sentence. Circle whether the sentence is about buying, renting, or both.

Example: This is a big responsibility!

Renting

Buying

Both

Question 1: Must pay a security deposit

Renting

Buying

Both

Question 2: Need to pay a mortgage each month

Renting

Buying

Both

Question 3: Need to pay for utilities if they are not covered

Renting

Buying

Both

Question 4: Need to pay for your rent each month

Renting

Buying

Both

Question 5: Need to have money for a down payment and closing costs

Renting

Buying

Both

Question 6: Will have additional expenses and poor credit if you don't pay bills on time

Renting

Buying

Both

Activity 1B: Finding a Good Roommate

Having a roommate is a good way to save money on rent by sharing expenses. Below you will make a list of qualities that make a good roommate and qualities that make a bad roommate. Look at the list of good qualities and use this if you look for a roommate.

<u>Good Roommate Qualities</u>	<u>Bad Roommate Qualities</u>
Example: Helps wash the dishes	Example: Leaves dirty dishes in the sink

Lesson 2: Budgeting

Let us assume that you are now working and are making about \$9.00/hour and are working full time (40 hours per week). With this income you are making about \$1,440 per month before **taxes**. However, your paycheck is not that much because the federal government takes out income taxes, the state takes out taxes, and there is also a deduction for **Medicare**. After all this money is taken out you probably have about \$1,100 to live on in a month.

You are going to search the internet to find a place to live that will fit your budget. Remember your **budget** is \$1100 a month and you cannot go over that. Find at least two potential places to live that are for rent and describe the places in the space below. You will then make a budget in the following activity.

Location 1

Monthly Rent _____

Description _____

Location 2

Monthly Rent _____

Description _____

Activity 2 Directions: Calculating a Budget

Before you begin this activity, your instructor is going to show you an example of a budget that he or she created. Next, you will complete a budget for each of the locations that you found during your internet search. You might not have to spend money on all the items in the budget template each month. If you think of any expenses that are not included on the budget template, please add them in the blank boxes.

Remember to use a calculator



Activity 2A: Calculating a Budget

Budget 1

Monthly Income: _____

Does your job offer benefits? Yes _____ No _____

<u>Expense</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>
Location 1 Rent		
Electric		
Heat		
Gas		
Water		
Phone		
Cable/Internet		
Car Insurance (if you have a car)		
Gasoline (if you have a car)		
Public Transportation		
Medical Expenses (if you have insurance)		
Medical Expenses (if you do not have insurance)		
Personal Items (toilet paper, shampoo, lotion, shaving cream, toothpaste, makeup, dish soap, etc)		
Food		
Personal Clothing and Shoes		

Accessories (jewelry, hats, gloves, scarves, etc.)		
Entertainment		

Are you a parent? Yes _____ No _____



<u>Expense</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>
Diapers, Formula, Baby Food		
Baby Medical Expenses		
Baby Clothes		
Childcare (baby-sitter, daycare)		

Budget 2

Monthly Income: _____

Does your job offer benefits? Yes _____ No _____

<u>Expense</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>
Location 2 Rent		
Electric		
Heat		
Gas		
Water		
Phone		
Cable/Internet		
Car Insurance (if you have a car)		
Gasoline (if you have a car)		
Public Transportation		
Medical Expenses (if you have insurance)		
Medical Expenses (if you do not have insurance)		
Personal Items (toilet paper, shampoo, lotion, shaving cream, toothpaste, makeup, dish soap, etc.)		
Food		
Personal Clothing and Shoes		
Accessories (jewelry, hats, gloves, scarves, etc.)		

Entertainment		

Are you a parent? Yes _____ No _____



<u>Expense</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>
Diapers, Formula, Baby Food		
Baby Medical Expenses		
Baby Clothes		
Childcare (baby-sitter, daycare)		

Activity 2B: Questions about Your Budgets

Budget 1

1.) Did you have enough money in Budget 1 for all your expenses? _____

2.) If **yes**, how much money did you have remaining? _____

3.) List two things you could do with this money?

4.) If **no**, by how much did you exceed your budget? _____

5.) List three solutions to stay within your budget?

Budget 2

1.) Did you have enough money in Budget 2 for all your expenses? _____

2.) If **yes**, how much money did you have remaining? _____

3.) If **no**, by how much did you exceed your budget? _____



Group Discussion

Why is it important to stay within your budget?

What are some negative consequences if you don't stay within your budget?

Lesson 3: Additional Income

If you had difficulty staying within budget, you may need additional income. For additional income, a second part time job is often the answer to that problem, or perhaps you could work overtime at your current job. Hourly employees usually get paid for overtime, where salaried employees usually do not. Another option might be to apply for public assistance, especially if you have dependents. Dependents are others that you are responsible for like a child or younger sibling.

Public assistance/aid is a federal program that helps those with low resources and provides for things such as food, subsidized housing, and medical cards. The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP) helps people with low incomes buy the food they need for good health. **Subsidized housing** is a type of housing that is made possible through government assistance to people who have difficulty affording housing. Usually, individuals who qualify for subsidized housing are given vouchers or government benefits that help them pay for housing. A **medical card** allows families with no or low income to receive the health care they need through government programs. The goal of these programs is to help individuals temporarily until they are able to find better employment or bring in the resources of combined income. No one wants to be on public assistance all their life, since the help provided is minimal and difficult for anyone to live on.

Other financial support programs from the federal or state agencies are **SSI** and **SSDI**. These benefits are administered by the Social Security Administration and are designed to help people in need, especially those with disabilities. Some of you may be receiving these benefits already and you may even be fearful of working because of the possibility of losing them. The goal of the Social Security Administration is to put

programs in place to help individuals, but not to make people dependent on these programs for life. For this reason, they have written a new law called the **Workforce Investment Act**. This act allows individuals with mental health/emotional disabilities who are receiving support from SSI to get employment services at many different sites throughout the state. These employment services should offer opportunities to receive training, apply for employment, and gain employment. When someone becomes employed, their SSI benefits will slowly start to be reduced but it will not happen immediately. In fact, there is a formula that SSI uses to figure out how much of the monthly benefit should be changed. The important thing to remember is that SSI benefits are small amounts of money, and by working, you have the potential to make much more money and become more successful and independent.

Can you think of other ways to earn additional income? 

Helpful Websites

Benefits for People with Disabilities (SSI & SSDI)

<http://www.ssa.gov/disability/>

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa>

US Department of Health and Human Services

<https://www.hhs.gov/programs/index.html>

US Office of Disability Employment Policy

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep>

Lesson 4: Transportation

Safe and reliable transportation is needed to get to and from school, work, appointments, community events, and many other places. You may think that driving is the best option; however, there are several factors to consider. If you are thinking of driving, you will have to buy a car and make many decisions:

- Will you buy a new or used car?
- Will you pay for your car all at once or will you get a loan?
- What type of automobile insurance will you get?
- How much will you have to pay for parking each month?
- How much will you have to spend on gasoline each month?
- How much will car maintenance cost you (e.g., oil change, tire rotation, repairs)

All these decisions deal with money and how much your car will cost. Whether you buy a new or used car, you will have a car payment, have to spend money on gasoline, get car insurance, and have some money put aside for repairs. In other words, having a car is possible, but it is a big responsibility. Even if you do not have a car, learning how to drive is an important skill that can be useful. If you are going to learn how to drive, you must get a driver's license. This involves both a written test and an actual driving test. If you did not take driving lessons in high school, you will need to do this in preparation for both tests. Driving lessons will also cost money.

If you do not drive, you will need to learn how to take public transportation. Taking public transportation like buses or trains can be a bit scary if you have not done it often. This is a skill that can be learned with practice and assistance. Below is a list of some things you will have to learn to use public transportation.

- What public transportation is offered in your community?
- How much a ride cost?
- The use of transfers
- Purchasing monthly passes
- Knowing the stops you need for school, work, etc.
- Safety

Group Discussion

Even if you have a car, do you think you will ever need to take public transportation?

What does it mean to be safe when if you are driving your own car?

What does is it mean to be safe when taking public transportation?



Activity 4a: Transportation Directions

Learning to take the bus or train is important and is something that will help you become more independent. Depending on your circumstances, it may also be less expensive than owning and driving a car.

Directions: Choose two places that you often go to in the community and write a list of directions to each place from your house using public transportation. You can work on this activity alone or with a partner. You may or may not need to use all 10 steps. Below you will find helpful websites that you can use to complete your directions.

Helpful Websites

Google Maps

<https://www.google.com/maps/about/#!/>

Metra Trains

<http://metrarail.com/metra/en/home.html>

Mapquest

<http://www.mapquest.com/>



Location 1 _____

Step 1 _____

Step 2 _____

Step 3 _____

Step 4 _____

Step 5 _____

Step 6 _____

Step 7 _____

Step 8 _____

Step 9 _____

Step 10 _____

Location 2 _____

Step 1 _____

Step 2 _____

Step 3 _____

Step 4 _____

Step 5 _____

Step 6 _____

Step 7 _____

Step 8 _____

Step 9 _____

Activity 4B: Transportation Safety

When you use public transportation, you need to make sure that you keep yourself and your belongings safe. There may be many nice and helpful people that you meet, but there will also be people that are dishonest and possibly dangerous. You need to complete the chart below by filling in five safe behaviors and five unsafe behaviors when using public transportation.

<u>Safe Behavior</u>	<u>Unsafe Behavior</u>
Example: Holding onto your purse or bag on your lap	Example: Putting your purse or bag on the floor

Lesson 5: Bank Accounts

There are two basic types of **bank accounts**, **checking** and **savings**. Each type of account can be useful, and many times people have both accounts. Below you are going to learn what checking and savings accounts are, and the differences between these two types of accounts.

<u>Checking</u>	<u>Savings</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be used like money• Can use your debit card and pin number to pay for bills, goods, and services• Can write checks to pay for bills, goods, and services• Can use your debit card and pin number to withdraw money from an ATM• You cannot spend more money with your debit card or checks than you have in your account• Does not earn interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Money is saved in an account at the bank instead of at your home• Can earn interest, which means the bank pays you a small percentage for having your money in their bank• Cannot be used to directly pay for bills, goods, and services• Can add and withdraw money from your savings



Think and Discuss

1. How do you think money gets into a person's checking or savings account?
2. What is one reason why you might want to have a savings account?
3. Why is it unsafe to keep large amounts of money at your house?
4. Why would a person want to have both a checking and savings account?

5. What might happen if you spend more money than you have in your checking account?

Before opening any type of bank account, you should “shop around” by looking at several different banks. A bank is like any other business. You don’t want to use the first one that you find without knowing what services they offer. When “shopping” for a bank here are some questions that you might want to ask:

- Can I have an adjoining checking and savings account?
- Is there a minimum balance I must have in either the checking or the savings account?
- What interest rate do you pay on savings accounts?
- Do you pay an interest on checking accounts?
- Is there a fee if I use an ATM that belongs to another bank?
- Do you offer direct deposit?
- Do you offer online banking?
- Is there a service fee if I want to see a teller?
- What is the fee for overdrawing on checking accounts?
- If I have adjoining accounts, will you move funds from my savings account to my checking account if I overdraw?
- Do you charge for cancelled checks?
- What type of account protection/safety features do you have?
- How many checks do I get for free for opening up a checking account?
- Can I have others on the account with me?
- How many bank locations do you have locally and nationally?

Can you think of a question on your own?



Activity 5: Learning about Bank Accounts

Directions: Attached you will find a list of banks in the area. Choose one bank from the list and go online to learn more about the bank and the services they offer. Use the charts provided as a guide and fill in the requested information.

Bank of America https://www.bankofamerica.com/	HSBC Bank https://www.us.hsbc.com/
JP Morgan Chase Bank https://www.chase.com/	PNC Bank https://www.pnc.com/
Commerce Bank https://www.commercebank.com	U.S. Bank http://www.usbank.com/index.html
Wells Fargo https://www.wellsfargo.com/	

Name of Bank _____

Checking Accounts

How many types of checking accounts are offered?	_____
Do any of the checking accounts earn interest? How much interest?	_____
Do the checking accounts come with a debit card?	_____
Is there a minimum balance required? If so, how much?	_____
Is there an overdraft charge? If so, how much?	_____
How can I get more information?	_____ _____ _____

Savings Accounts

How many types of savings accounts are offered?	_____
How much interest is earned?	_____
Is there a minimum balance required? If so, how much?	_____
Can the savings account be linked to a checking account?	_____
Is there a monthly service fee? If so, how much?	_____
How can I get more information?	_____ _____

Other Questions

How many bank branches are there near my house or work?	_____
How old do you need to be to open an account?	_____

Lesson 6: Entertainment

Having fun, relaxing, having time for yourself; these are all important in life, but when you are on a budget it can become difficult to find things to do that are inexpensive. Regardless of what you decide, you are now making decisions and choices as an adult. This means that you will continue to have more and more opportunities to decide for yourself. However, this also means you will have to live with the consequences. If you decide to spend the money you set aside for your weekly train rides on movies and going out to eat, that is your decision. That also means you will have to come up with a plan to pay for your train rides to get to school or work the following week. One option might be to rent a movie and make some popcorn with a friend, instead of going out. There are other things you can do for fun that will be less expensive.

If you are going to do something special that costs a lot of money you need to include this in your budget. You don't want to spend more money than you have, or you will not have enough money to pay for bills, grocery shopping, or transportation costs. If you know that you want to do something special in the future, you should set aside a small amount of money from each paycheck. For example, if it is March and you know that there is a concert you really want to see in August, you should figure out how much the concert costs so you can save enough money. If the concert ticket costs \$100 and you have 4 months to save, you should save \$25 each month.

Group Discussion

What are some other special events that might require you to save money?

Activity 6: Having Fun and Saving Money

Directions: Read each of the listed activities and think of an alternative activity that would cost less money. Write the alternative activity on the line provided. Look at the example before you begin.

Example:

Activity: Going to the movie theatre at night to see a movie and buying popcorn

Alternative 1: Renting a movie to watch at home and making microwave popcorn

Alternative 2: Going to an afternoon movie because tickets are cheaper

Activity: Going out to eat at an expensive restaurant

Alternative: _____

Activity: Buying concert tickets to see your favorite band

Alternative: _____

Activity: Buying tickets to see a professional sports team play

Alternative: _____

Activity: Shopping for clothes at an expensive store at the mall

Alternative: _____



Chapter 2 – Using Goals to Be Successful

Goal of the Chapter: In this chapter you will learn about goals. You will also learn how to write goals, objectives, and action plans.

New Words

Vision –A long term view of your future.

Goal –These are things you want in your future. These things may take some time to complete.

Objective – These are steps you need to take to reach your goals.

Action Plans – These are plans that you develop that will allow you to identify your objectives and plan the step you need to reach your goals.

Monitoring Yourself – This means you need to always make sure that you are working on your goals.

Target Dates – To make sure you stay on track, you should set due dates for every task. This will also help you self-evaluate to see if you are making progress.




Having a goal is like having a target. You want to aim and try your hardest to hit the bull's eye.

- Setting goals will be your target
- Aiming will be your action plans
- Shooting will be taking all the necessary actions

Chapter 2 Introduction

Setting goals will help you work towards achieving success in life. Successful people will tell you the importance of having a vision and setting goals and making an action plan. When you were younger people probably asked you, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Having an answer to this question is important because it means that you have given your future some thought. More recently, in high school, your teachers and counselors probably spend lots of time asking you about what you wanted to do in the future. How did you answer?

When I was younger, I always wanted to... 

Do you still want to do what you thought about when you were younger? Why or why not?

Answering these questions will help you think about life and what you want for yourself. It is important to realize that what you wanted to do when you were younger may not be the same as what you want now. You may also find that you might not end up doing what you dreamed of. For instance, you may have wanted to become a professional athlete or doctor, but you now realize this may not be the path for you. Sometimes it is difficult to change paths, but it is also beneficial. Understanding your strengths and challenges will help you make realistic plans for the future. Remember, everyone has challenges, and it is nothing to be embarrassed about. You must always focus on your strengths. Changing your course of action is a sign of maturity and your ability to make responsible decisions.

Try and answer these questions 

I have always wanted to...

Now that I am close to finishing high school, I realize I should ...

Did you have a hard time answering these questions? Think about the people you know. Who has a good job? Who do you consider to be successful? Can you think of at least one person?



1. Who is it? _____
2. What kind of job do they have? _____
3. Why do you consider them successful? _____

If you can't think of anyone right now, that's alright. As we talk more about this you may come up with new ideas. People like the ones we are asking you to think about had goals and things they wanted out of life. They have worked hard to get those things. For example, think about a nurse. Nurses have a very important job, but they need to work hard to earn their nursing degree. They need to go to school, study, take exams, and apply for nursing jobs.

Planning for My Future Activity 1

Directions: You are going to participate in an activity called Planning for My Future. First you will complete a personal profile and then you will complete a vision for the future form. Before each activity, we will talk about the questions as a class.

My Profile

1. What do you like to do? Who do you like to do these things with?

2. Where do you like to go? Who do you like to go there with?

My Profile (continued)

3. How would you describe your personality?

4. What are your strengths and positive contributions to your school, family, friends, and community?

ABOUT ME



Planning for My Future Activity 2



My Vision for the Future

1. Where do you want to live?

2. What kind of job do you want to have?

3. Do you want to go to college or any other postsecondary school? If so, where?

4. How will you get to and from work, school, and/or other community locations?

5. What will you want to do in your free time?

6. Who will be your friends?

Lesson 1: Visions, Goals, & Objectives

Take a look at what you wrote for your profile and vision for the future. There is a difference between a goal and a vision. A **vision** is a long-term view of your future. From your vision you will come up with concrete **goals** and objectives that are realistic. **Objectives** are things that you will need to work on to reach your goals. Look at the examples below to get a better understanding of visions, goals, and objectives.

Example 1

Vision: To work for a successful company as an account

Goal: Attend a four-year university as a student in the accounting program

Short-Term Objective: Research and apply to 5 different universities

Short-Term Objective: Enroll in several math courses in college

Example 2

Vision: To work as a successful auto mechanic at a car shop near my home

Goal: Attend and complete an auto mechanic training program

Short-Term Objective: Research 4 different auto mechanic schools

Short term Objective: Apply to three auto mechanic schools

Before you work on writing specific goals and objectives, look at five possible goal areas below. Take some time to think about these areas to help you develop your goals.

1. Obtain funding for post-secondary education
2. Enroll in a post-secondary education program
3. Complete a post-secondary education program
4. Obtain employment
5. Find a place to live

These are all goals that you have most likely explored as you began planning and developing your individualized transition plan throughout the school year(s). You probably have additional personal and independent living goals that you can work on as well. The following activity provides a list of some sample goals that can help you evaluate what areas you need to improve on.



Group Discussion

How have you been involved in your transition planning? How has this involvement made you feel?

Transition assessments?

Goal writing?

Led IEP meeting?

Created a transition portfolio?

Activity 1: Goal Ideas

Directions: Read the list and decide if you want to do this or not. You can also mark not sure if you don't know yet.

	Yes	No	Unsure
I want to find out what I am good at			
I want to improve my personal situation			
I want to read better			
I want to write better			
I want to understand math better			
I want to be more organized			
I want to go to college			
I want to understand how to apply for financial aid			
I want to understand how to register for courses in college			
I want to learn about vocational rehabilitation services			
I want to learn about career options			
I want to go straight to work after high school			
I want to get training at work to learn the job			
I want to work part-time			
I want to work full-time			
I want to learn about the laws that protect people with disabilities			
I want to learn about my rights			
I want to understand what supports I need to be successful			

	Yes	No	Unsure
I want to communicate effectively			
I want to be able to talk to new people			
I want to live on my own			
I want to live with a roommate			
I want to live in a different area than I do now			
I want to live in the same area that I do now			
I want to learn how to get around the city by myself			
I want to own a car			
I would like to learn how to drive			
I want to have friends			
I want to join a club or gym in the community			
I want to know how to have a healthy lifestyle			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			

You won't be able to work on everything on this list at once, and that is okay. However, the purpose of this activity was to get you thinking about some things that you need to work on so you can be a successful adult and live as independently as possible. You may also have other ideas that are not on the list. You will work with your teachers to complete goal-setting forms in at least three areas that you want to work on. You will also learn how to monitor the process on your goals and objectives.

Lesson 2: Writing Goals and Making Plans

Do you like to cook? Have you ever had to cook anything or help somebody cook? To make anything in the kitchen, you need to have the correct ingredients and know how to put them all together. Think about your favorite meal and the ingredients you need to make this meal.

My favorite food is:



The ingredients I need to make this food are:

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

The instructions I need to follow to make this meal are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Writing goals and making action plans are similar to cooking. If you are hungry or have a craving for something delicious, having your favorite meal to eat would be your vision. Before you get to your vision, or eat the meal that you want, you have to do some work. Your goal will be to make the meal. Your objectives may include the following:

- Finding out how to make the meal
- Making a shopping list of the ingredients you need
- Making sure you have enough money to pay for the ingredients
- Going to the store to buy the ingredients
- Preparing all the ingredients and cooking utensils

While you are taking actions to reach your goal, you may be working on more than one objective at once. For example, you may be boiling water for spaghetti and at the same time cutting up vegetables for the sauce. Working on a goal is very similar. You know what you want, you make an action plan (instructions), and you actively work on the objectives you have chosen. This helps you reach your final goal. You also will be working on more than one goal at a time. Writing down your goals is a good way to remind yourself of what you are working on and will allow you to keep track of the steps you are taking to move forward. You need to work on your objectives to reach your goal. For instance, if you want to go to college, one of your objectives will be applying to different schools. Without completing an application, there will be no chance of going to college, as the application is a requirement. Can you think of another objective you will need to complete in order to go to college? This curriculum focuses on you taking responsibility for your future. Saying that you want to work on something is not enough. You actually need to work at it to make it real and reach your goal. This curriculum will talk more about goals and action planning in further chapters. However, the next activity will help introduce you to the action planning process.

Activity 2: Goal Writing

Directions: Choose one goal area that you marked “yes” to in Activity 1 and complete the following activity. Do not hesitate to ask for help from you teacher or classmates.

The goal that I will be planning for is...

What obstacles stand in the way of meeting this goal?

What are some resources that can help me overcome the obstacles?

Which of the resources that I listed would be the easiest for me to access?

What objectives do I need to work on to reach my goal?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

The following is a sample of a Goal Attainment Scale that we have used in our program to help assess people's progress in their process of goal attainment.

Goal Attainment Scale

Participant: _____ Mentor: _____

Goal: _____

Level of Difficulty: _____ Date goal set: _____ Date goal reviewed: _____

GOAL ATTAINMENT SCORE	ACTIONS/STEPS
(-1) Deterioration	
(0) Goal Dropped, no intent to continue	
(1) Active pursue of goal, little progress	
(2) Active pursue of goal, some progress	
(3) Accomplished less than desired goal	
(4) Accomplish goal as expected	
(5) Accomplish more than expected success	

Chapter 3 – Strengths and Challenges

Goal of the Chapter: In this chapter you will learn how to talk about yourself. It is important to know what you can do and what you need help with. Learning how to communicate this effectively is an important skill.

New Words

Strengths – Things you are good at; things that you can offer others.

Talents – Skills you have, like being able to play a sport or knowing a lot about music.

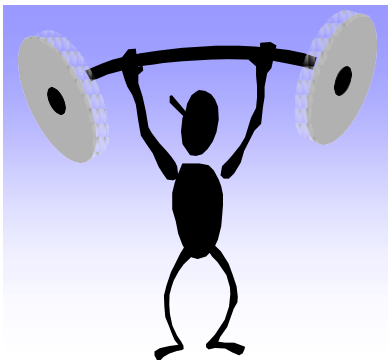
Experience– Things you have done or been through (work, school, and personal life).

Knowledge – Things you know about from reading, listening, or watching others. You may have a lot of knowledge about music or sports, but not necessarily have any experience in those areas.

Qualities– Things that make you special. Examples of qualities are being a good listener, being patient, or being creative.

Interests – Things you want to learn about, do, or experience; hobbies.

Challenges – Things that are difficult for you. These things may make your goals more difficult to achieve.



Chapter 3 Introduction

Something to Think About...

Before you learn how to talk to new people, potential employers, instructors, possible mentors, or counselors you need to know how to talk about yourself and your mental health/emotional challenges. To do this right, you need to understand what you are good at and areas where you may need help. Understanding our own challenges can be difficult, but it is just as important as identifying our strengths.

Everyone has **strengths**- things they are good at, and **challenges or needs**- things they need some help with. Many people can talk about what they are not good at, but have a harder time saying what they can do well. This chapter provides activities to help you improve your ability to talk about yourself.

Many of the things that cause us frustration are things we have not learned how to do well. Sometimes it is because we have not been taught these things, and other times it is because we have been distracted by other obstacles. For this reason, you need to feel positive about what you have accomplished or will accomplish soon, such as graduating from high school.

Your **experience** in school may not have been as enjoyable as you would have liked. These past experiences may make you nervous about continuing your education. This is a normal feeling, but you should not let this stand in your way. In this chapter you will learn how to make your future experiences better by teaching you how to ask for help and receive help.

Lesson 1: Making a Good Impression

As you start to work on making progress towards your goals, you may need the help of others. During high school, your teachers and other school staff can help you, but there may be others who can help as well. Below is a list of people that may be able to help you. You will need to show these people that you have many strengths, talents, and positive qualities.

- College counselors or advisors
- College instructors
- Employers
- Co-workers
- Coaches
- Neighbors
- Church members

Can you think of any other people that may be able to help you now or in the future?



This chapter is going to talk about three ways to help you make a good impression.

They are:

1. Make a list of your strengths
2. Talk about your challenges
3. Choose the most important strengths that will help you in reaching your goals

Activity 1: Hard and Easy

As mentioned before, sometimes it is difficult to make a list of strengths and weaknesses. Instead, you are going to make a “hard and easy” list instead. On the left side of the list, you will write down anything that is easy for you to do or things that you do well. On the right side of the list you will write down anything that is hard for you or things that you do not do well. Before you begin, we will look at an example as a group.

When you are ready to start, read these directions:

Take several minutes to think about these things. Write down anything that comes to your mind. There is no right or wrong answers and spelling does not count. If you forget anything, you can also come back to this activity later and add them.

<u>Easy</u>	<u>Hard</u>

Lesson 2: Talents and Portfolio

Have you ever wondered how famous movie stars or T.V. actors get jobs? They use agents who represent them. Their agents need the actors to put together a portfolio that describes their skills and talents. This portfolio is what the agents use when there are new parts, they want the actors to audition for. As you work on your goals now and in the future, it is a good idea to have a portfolio that you can use when you are asking for help from others. A portfolio can also be a great thing to have when you are applying and interviewing for a job. Your portfolio might include:

- Contact information
- Resume
- List of your strengths
- School history
- Work samples



Group Discussion

Has anyone in class created a portfolio before?

What was included in your portfolio?

What are some other things you might want to add to your portfolio?

Activity 2: My Strengths and Talents

Directions: Use the easy list you created in activity one to identify some strengths and talents that you can include in your portfolio.

School: Write down a few things that you can do well in school. All things count even if they aren't classroom things.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Social: Write down good things about how you get along with others, including your friends, adults, family, and other people in your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Activities/Hobbies: Write down any activities you can do or think you could be good at (examples: sports, dancing, photography, playing an instrument).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Personal Care Skills: Write down things you do to take care of yourself and the place where you live (examples: exercising, doing chores).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Creative Skills: Write down things you like to do that are creative (examples: writing stories, drawing, painting).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My Strengths and Talents

Lesson 3: Personal Qualities

Knowing what qualities you have is very important. When you start applying for college and a job, you will be asked about your qualities. A question that is usually asked is “what qualities do you have that will make you a good employee for this job”? Colleges may also ask you to talk about the qualities you have that will make you a good student at the school. Do you know how you would answer these questions? It is important to prepare for these types of questions so you can give a well-constructed response that highlights your strengths. Let’s look at the responses from two different people applying for a job at a coffee shop. Which person do you think would get the job?

Coffee Shop Boss: “What qualities would make you a good addition to my staff at the coffee shop?”

Interviewee 1: “Well, I think I am pretty nice and am usually on time to work”

Interviewee 2: “I think I would make a great addition to your staff because I am a fast learner and enjoy being around people.”



Activity 3: My Personal Qualities

Directions: Take a look at the words below and circle the words that apply to you. If you do not know what a word means you can ask a classmate, ask the teacher, or check the dictionary.

Adventurous	Good Listener	Patient
Brave	Hard Working	Quiet
Creative	Helpful	Shy
Calm	Honest	Smart
Fast Learner	Loyal	Strong
Funny	Mature	Team-Player
Fair	Nice	Thoughtful
Good Friend	Outgoing	Quiet

How many of these words describe you? Check all that apply.

- Good Helper
- Good Problem Solver
- Good Student
- Leader
- On Time
- Responsible

Lesson 4: Challenges

Now that you have a better idea of what your strengths, talents, and qualities are, you need to think about the things that are challenging for you because of your mental health/emotional difficulties. Look at your “hard list” you made for activity one and think about the two most difficult things on it. For most people, the hardest things are things they have not learned how to do. For example, if writing a paper or essay is hard, it may have something to do with your skills in spelling or writing sentences. If making friends is hard it may be because you are shy or don’t really know how to talk to new people.

Youth that are always getting in trouble will have a hard time doing well in school, getting a job, and having a successful future. They may even end up in juvenile detention or jail. Many of these people want to do well and make good decisions, but for some reason they cannot. Instead of asking for help, they keep making poor choices. By asking for help they can make a positive change in their life. For example, if there is a student who gets angry a lot, they should ask their teachers or counselor for help in developing strategies to calm down. This could be a good decision. What do you think would be a bad decision?

Things that are hard for you to do can get in the way of achieving your goals. For this reason, it is important to learn what these things are and ways you can get help with them. They should not stand in the way of being successful. There are many ways to help overcome your challenges!

Remember

You may need to ask for help with some of your challenges and that is okay. Everyone needs help with something at some point in their life. Look at the scenario below. What might have happened if Brad did not ask for help? _____

Brad is a very talented writer for a local newspaper. He uses his computer for most of his writing, but lately has been having problems using his keyboard because he has a physical disability that affects some of the fine motor movements in his hand. Brad is not able to complete his writing if he can't use the keyboard. Brad decides to talk to the IT, or information technologist at his work to find out if he can get a specialized keyboard. The IT identified an ergonomic keyboard that Brad could easily use with his hand restrictions. Brad is back to his writing and has a big story being published in the magazine next month.

Activity 4: My Challenges

Directions: Take time to read and think about each question. When you are ready, write your answers on the lines provided. There is no right or wrong answer.

1. What do you think are some of your challenges?

2. How can these challenges get in the way of achieving your goals?

Activity continues on the next page

3. What things can help you deal with your challenge?

4. How can your teachers, family members, and mentors help you with these challenges?

Chapter 4 – Networking

Goal of the Chapter: In this chapter you will learn the importance of networking with potential helpers. Individuals that you can network with, such as: your teachers, potential employers, counselors, or case managers.

New Words

Advocate – This is someone who can help you by speaking up for you and representing your interests.

Independent – Doing things on your own or with little support.

Mentee – Someone who receives guidance and support from a mentor.

Mentor – Someone who provides guidance and support to another. These people could be teachers, instructors, counselors, case managers, family friends, employers, co-workers, or others around you. If one of these individuals becomes a mentor to you, it is likely that they will provide help over a period of time.

Network – A group of people around you that affect your life and can provide support to you.

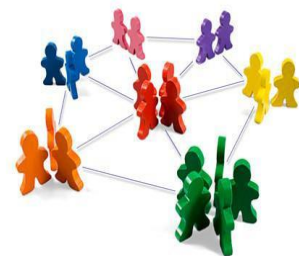
Networking - The act of using your network to work towards reaching your goals.

Obstacles – People, places, or things that stand in the way, or make it difficult for you to reach your goals.

Relationships – This is what comes out of your contact with people in your life. Building these takes effort from two individuals going through a variety of steps. Having strong relationships with potential helpers can make networking easier.

Resources – People, places, or things that can help you reach your goals or provide for your needs. They usually don't cost anything and are in the community. A few examples are free tutoring and access to computers.

Role-Model – An individual who is admired or looked up to by others.



Chapter 4 Introduction

Since you graduated from High School you probably realize that as you get older, and become a young adult, you need to be more and more **independent**. When this happens, sometimes we find **obstacles** or things that get in the way. An obstacle might be not knowing about the **resources** that are available to you or not being able to speak up in a meeting or interview. At these times we may need another person to give us support and guidance to make certain decisions or take actions towards planning our future. This may happen when we are doing something for the first time (like applying to a college program), meeting someone new (like a new instructor or supervisor), or trying to make decisions about our future. During these times it is a good idea to look for support from people who have experience in similar situations or at least know something about the potential problems.

Have you ever heard the saying, “It’s not what you know but who you know?” This means that often times, people need the help of others to obtain their goals. Using the help of others is **networking**. The internet is a network that connects people all over the world. This network helps people obtain information and communicate with each other in ways we never thought possible. A **network** of support can do things for you that you never thought possible. By making a good impression on people of authority, or those that have information and resources you may need, you can increase your chances for successfully pursuing your goals, overcoming obstacles, and reaching the outcomes you want.

Introduction Activity

MENTORS AND MENTEES



Please think about and answer the following questions. Give your best answer in the lines below.

Have you heard the word “mentor” before? Where have you heard it?

What do you think it means?

Do you think you have a mentor in your life? Who?

What can a mentor do for you?

Lesson 1: Mentors and Mentees

What is a mentor? What is a mentee?

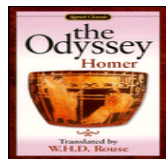
A **mentor** is someone who provides guidance and support, who listens and understands, who does not judge, and encourages us. A mentor can teach a new skill, **advocate** for us, advise us about the future, and help us network by making introductions, or simply be there to be proud of our accomplishments. A **mentee** is someone who seeks help from a mentor. A mentee also has some responsibility in their **relationship** with a mentor. A mentee should



try to listen and follow the advice of the mentor, ask questions, be specific about asking for help, and be honest if he/she disagrees with the mentor.

The word “mentor” comes from a Greek word. This is the story of The Odyssey written by Homer a very long time ago. The story takes place in Greece and is about a king who goes to war. The king’s name was Odysseus and his son’s name was Telemachus.

The Odyssey



Odysseus was the king of Ithaca in Greece. Ithaca was getting ready to go to war with the Trojans. Going to war took a very long time in those days. Odysseus led his army to war. While he was away fighting the war, Odysseus was away from his young son Telemachus for

many, many years. Odysseus knew that Telemachus would be King one day. He was worried about raising his son to be a good man and also a good king for Ithaca. Because of this worry Odysseus depended on his best friend for help. Odysseus counted on his advisor and trusted friend named, "Mentor", to raise his son while he was away. **Mentor was more than Telemachus's teacher. He was also a role model, a guide, and a friend to Telemachus. Mentor had to teach Telemachus everything he would need to be a good leader for Ithaca one day. Mentor had to do this by guiding, inspiring, and empowering young Telemachus to learn from his own life.** Telemachus watched everything that Mentor did in his life. By watching, Telemachus learned.


This story shows us two very important things about life.

1. First, we learn by watching how other people behave. Mentor taught Telemachus by example and was a good **role model** for Telemachus to learn how to be the future king. Mentor passed along the wisdom and experience of his own life to Telemachus. Mentor also supported Telemachus's learning, encouraged him to grow, and made sure he was ready to carry out his role as King.
2. The second point is related to the mentee. Telemachus knew that he would someday be king. He knew that this task would be difficult and that he had to learn in order to be a good and strong leader. For this reason, Telemachus was an attentive mentee and was willing to watch Mentor and learn from him all that he could.

Today the dictionary has adopted Mentor's name and defines the word 'mentor' as "a wise and trusted teacher or counselor." To become wise takes experience; to be trusted takes time, effort, and effective communication.

Lesson 2: Teachers

All of us have had many teachers in our life. Most of the time when you think about “teachers”, the only ones that come to mind are those that you met in school. However, teachers in schools aren’t the only ones who teach us important skills. Before we begin our discussion of teachers, let’s see what your thoughts are.

Describe the best teacher you ever had. Why do you think he or she was the best? What about them made them a good teacher? 

Describe the worst teacher you ever had. Why do you think he or she was the worst?

Has anyone outside of school ever taught you a valuable skill? Who was he/she and what did he/she teach you? How did they teach you?

Have you ever been a teacher to another person? What did you do to make sure the other person learned what you were teaching? Was it difficult?

A **teacher** is someone who teaches. This means anyone who has taught you something in life has been a teacher to you. At times, individuals may be teachers without even knowing it. If you have had a role model you looked up to



and observed for a period of time, you might have learned some valuable skills from them. That person was a teacher to you. As you become an adult, teachers will not be the same as the ones you had in school. In the college environment, teachers are called instructors or professors. These individuals have the responsibility of teaching you about a topic or a specific skill, but they will not be after you to come to class, complete your assignments, or contact your parents when you don't do so. Their teaching requires that you become very active in the process and demonstrate your independence and desire to learn. These new types of teachers will meet with you only if you ask for it. They will provide help if you ask for it and the help that you are used to getting will be different than before. As you become a college student, you will need to be an **advocate** for yourself or ask for help from others to build a working relationship with new teachers in your life. (We are going to learn more about this in Chapter 4.) Employers or co-workers can also become teachers and can help you learn about a new job and its responsibilities.

Think about your answers to the questions above. How did you learn best? Knowing these tips will help you know what to ask for when you need help from your new teachers. Teachers can also become mentors, and if they do, then your relationships will change, but you should never limit the support a teacher can provide.

Activity 2: Reflecting on Your Teachers

List all of the teachers you can think of in your life. Talk about how each teaches you and what you have learned. Remember a teacher doesn't have to be a school teacher.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Lesson 3: Advocates

Webster's dictionary defines an advocate as, "one that takes on the cause of another." Both a mentor and a teacher can also be advocates. An advocate or the process of advocating does not need to be long term or on-going. While you may always need support and guidance, you may not always need an advocate. In other words, individuals in your network can take on the role of an advocate for the period of time that you need this kind of help. Usually, an advocate is needed when someone faces a problem they cannot resolve on their own, either because they don't have the necessary information or the skills needed to speak up for themselves. Ultimately, it might be your goal to become your own advocate by speaking up for yourself and making sure that your rights are not being violated. However, learning how to advocate effectively takes time and practice. If you have never done it, then having someone who can do it for you and whom you can learn from, by watching, is a wonderful opportunity.

In a college environment the individuals working in the disability services office will be advocates for the students. At work, a vocational rehabilitation counselor can be an advocate. If you think about the role parents take for their children by making sure that they are protected and that no one takes advantage of them, then it is easy to understand the role of the advocate.

There are three types of advocacy:

Individual advocacy: In this type of advocacy, the advocate is interested in making sure the rights of one person or one family are protected and their desires met. This is where everyone starts as they learn about advocacy and how to self-advocate.

Group advocacy: In this type of advocacy, the advocate is interested in the rights of a group and making changes for that group. For example, in a college setting, the disability services office might be working to advocate for the group of students in one



program that is not open to students with disabilities. They might have a meeting with the Dean or Director of that program and try to get them to open the program up for the group. Another example might be that a certain business does not hire people with disabilities or people of an ethnic minority. An advocate would try to meet with business owners, remind them about the laws that exist to protect against discrimination, and advocate for hiring these individuals.

System advocacy: In this type of advocacy, the advocates are trying to change policies that affect all people. For example, in Chicago, the public transportation system is not always accessible to people with physical disabilities. An advocate may work with transportation officials from the city to make policy changes that will result in improved public transportation access for all.

Regardless of what type of advocacy one is involved in, it is important to understand that advocating is a difficult task. Not everyone is ready to have an advocate or wants an advocate. Definitely, advocating for oneself is something that comes with time and some skill building (which we will cover in later chapters).

Some Key Points...

- Mentors provide support, advice, and guidance
- The word mentor comes from a story in Greek Mythology
- People learn from watching, copying, and experience
- A mentor teaches from personal experience
- A mentor helps the person they are mentoring (mentee) grow
- A teacher can take on many forms
- A mentor can become a teacher or an advocate
- There are three levels of advocacy: individual, group, and system

Activity 3: Self-Advocacy Checklist

Create a checklist for yourself, about yourself. This should contain ways you can and should advocate for yourself. Look at it frequently to make sure you are doing what you need to do for yourself.

<u>Checklist Items</u>	<u>Accomplished?</u>
EXAMPLE: Remember to ask my mentor for advice when I think I need it.	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Lesson 4: Finding the Support You Need

Mentors/Teachers/Helpers are found in many different areas of life. We can find mentors at school, work, and other places we go during our normal day-to-day activities. It is important to think about whom mentors can be and know how to engage potential helpers in mentoring relationships.

Where to find mentors

Let's take some time to think about some people we already know who could be mentors. *Insert Circle of Friends Activity* (see picture next page)

Now that you have completed the Circle of Friends Activity, let's discuss some of the traits of a mentor.

We can say that a **mentor/teacher/helper** is someone who devotes time and energy to give support that will result in the accomplishment of goals. Your mentor/teacher/helper should be a **role model** and provide advice, support, direction, and opportunities. As we discussed above, not all potential helpers will become mentors, but they should be considered as such. Individuals that provide us with support or increase our opportunities for **networking** with others are those we want in our lives.

Mentors are:

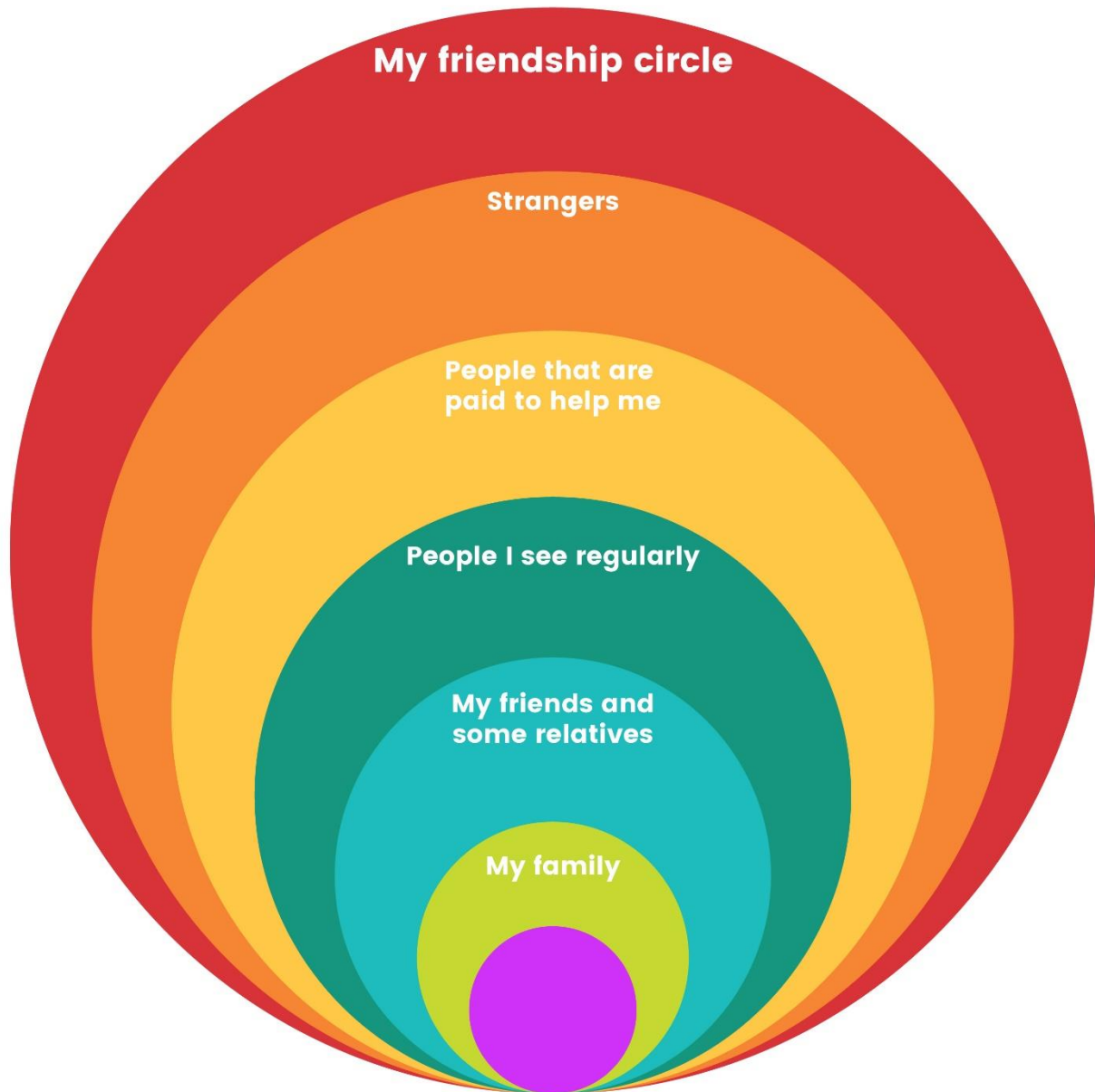
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Mentors are not:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Circle of Friends Activity

Please fill out the names of the people in the circles below. Try to fill as many names as possible.



A mentor can have any of the roles listed below:

- ◆ Advisor
- ◆ Co-worker
- ◆ Counselor
- ◆ Teacher

- ◆ Role model
- ◆ Supporter
- ◆ Advocate
- ◆ Supervisor

Can you think of more roles?

Additional Mentor/Helper Roles

If you had a mentor right now, or a teacher, or an advocate, what are some of the things these individuals could help you with? How many things can you think of?

Types of Help

Being in this program is the first step toward realizing that you can be more effective in finding the right support. However, it is worth pointing out many benefits of knowing how to ask for help and how to get help from people.

Receiving HELP may result in...

- Realizing that you don't have to be by yourself in your effort to make a better future for yourself
- A sense of self confidence
- Having additional support to be more productive
- You taking some risky steps towards independence
- Planning out your future career plans
- Understand your strengths and needs
- Better relationships with others
- Learning from others' experiences

Lesson 5: Your Role

DOING YOUR PART

In order to make your experience with a mentor/teacher/advocate/helper the best that it can be, you also have to do some things. These things are not hard but can help you be more involved. Before we continue, let's reflect on what you can contribute to a new relationship that has the potential of benefiting you. Remember, not everyone you meet will become a mentor, but making sure that you make a good impression on any new potential helpers, will increase your networking ability. What are some of the things you think you can add to any new interaction?

What can you add to the relationship?

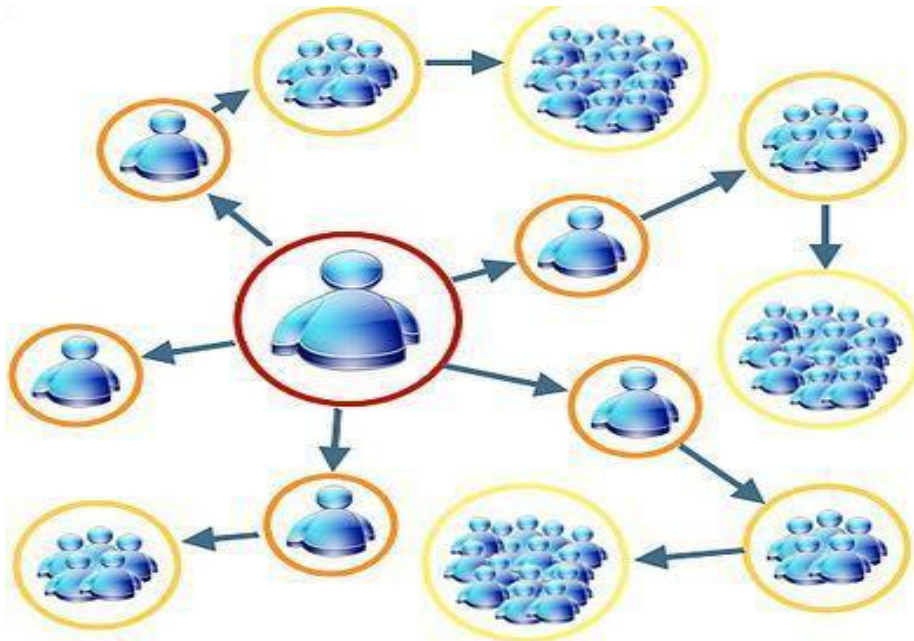
These are our ideas. Let's see how similar they are to yours.

You can...

- Choose realistic goals based on your strengths and needs
- Develop detailed plans of action
- Take actions to make progress toward goals
- Make sure you keep your word and do what you say you will do
- Ask questions and ask for help when you need it
- Show respect for others
- Learn about your rights and how to talk about them
- Speak up for yourself
- Follow-up to meetings

Chapter 4 Conclusion

In this chapter we covered many topics relating to the process of identifying individuals that help us. One way in which we hope to support you is by teaching you how to recruit your own help from other individuals that can become mentors, advocates, or teachers. As you progress through this project, we expect that you will demonstrate your independence by asking for help when needed and not waiting for it to be offered. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, asking for help is the first step in helping yourself. Networking is an important part of becoming independent and having control over your future. Through networking opportunities, you will have a better chance to meet people in a position to help, apply for resources and programs that can benefit you, and learn about new opportunities. As you become part of a network, you may also become a mentor to someone else or may be able to provide information to others like yourself.



Chapter 4 Review

REVIEW QUESTIONS



Do all helpers become mentors?

What are the responsibilities of a mentee?

What is needed before advocacy can occur?

What is the difference between individual and group advocacy?

How can networking help individuals reach their goals?

Chapter 5 – Interpersonal Skills

Goal of the Chapter: In this chapter you will learn about the skills needed to talk to different types of individuals and for different reasons. You will understand how to communicate on the phone and in person, how to ask for accommodations, and how to interact with mentors, helpers, and possible employers.

New Words

Accommodation – This is a type of support you may need in order to demonstrate what you know or what you can do.

Adaptation – This relates to the process of changing material or the presentation of material so that you can use it. For example, translating something from one language to another might be an adaptation.

Appointment – A meeting set up for a specific time.

Attitude – This is related to your behavior and how you act. Having a positive attitude will help you get what you are asking for. Examples include being interested, passionate to learn, committed, or friendly.

Conversation – This is the dialogue between two individuals. The more you converse with someone the more you will learn about them and them about you.

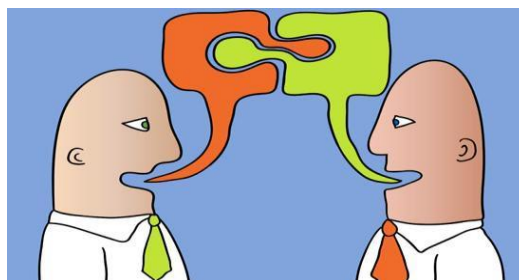
Follow-up – Making contact with a potential helper after a meeting, either by phone or through a letter.

Impressions – This is what others will think of you, or remember about you, once you are gone.

Problem Solving – Having to think about several solutions to specific challenges that come up; being creative to try to figure things out on your own.

Chapter 5 Introduction

If you remember the last chapter where you learned about the importance of networking, you should recall that there will be all different kinds of people you will meet. Meeting a new person and interacting with them by having a **conversation** can be difficult, especially if you are not used to doing this or if you are meeting a new individual to ask for help or support in some way. In this chapter you will start to learn about the skills (sometimes they are called “interpersonal” skills) that you need to have a **conversation** in person and on the phone with the different types of helpers we discussed (mentors, teachers, advocates, and possibly employers). Not only will you learn what the skills are, but also you will have an opportunity to practice them by participating in role-play activities. These role-play exercises may at first feel uncomfortable or unnatural. With time, however, you will see the value of practicing how to describe yourself, make requests, leave messages, and follow-up. We are going to cover four main points: (1) talking on the phone, (2) asking for accommodations or adaptations, (3) interacting with mentors (tutors, helpers, or advocates), and (4) interacting with potential employers. Although there are some similarities between the skills you will need, there are also some differences. Try to pay attention to see if you can figure out which skills are unique to each of the situations.



REFLECTIONS



Before we start with each of the situations, let's think about our own interpersonal skills.

Reflect on the following questions about yourself and how you interact with others:

1. Describe how you have felt in the past when meeting a new person; try to use adjectives to describe the feeling. Are you uncomfortable? Nervous? Calm? At ease? Shy? Outgoing? _____

2. Describe your actions when you have met a new teacher or support person in the past. For example, did you talk or were you quiet? did you look him/her eye to eye? did you shake his/her hand? were you polite? did you follow up? _____

3. Describe the last time you had the opportunity to ask for help from someone (was it a teacher? A friend? A family member? An employer?), include details as to what happened. _____

Hopefully, reflecting on these past experiences will help you learn about yourself and prepare you for the next time you meet a new individual or need to ask for help. As you enter the City College programs or other training and vocational programs, you will meet new individuals. Some of them may be able to provide you with support along the way to help you address the challenges of your disability.

Lesson 1: Talking on the Phone

Everyone is used to talking on the phone to family and friends. This is helpful, but not enough to be able to talk to potential employers on the phone. Can you think of some examples of when you may need to use the phone to get information or make an **appointment**?

We suggest you consider the following four steps in order to have effective conversations on the phone: preparing your materials, obtaining the information, leaving messages, and following up.

1. **Preparing your materials:** Before you pick up the phone to dial, you should have certain materials in front of you, such as, a pad of paper and pen to take notes, some notes with points that you need to remember to ask for, and the name of the individual you want to talk to if you are looking for someone specific. If you know that, you will need to have personal materials ready, like your personal ID number, a copy of your schedule, test results, or any paperwork that is relevant to the phone call you are making, then you should get that before you get on the phone. The person you are talking to may ask you a specific question. It will be better for you to be ready than to have to put them on hold while you search.

2. **Obtaining the information:** When you are on the phone you should make sure that before hanging up, you are told all the specific information you need to know to proceed with any steps. You may need to ask the “WH” questions (where, what, when, and who). This will help you make sure that you have everything you need before hanging up.
3. **Leaving Messages:** Often times, the most frustrating thing about using the phone to interact with people is that they may not be available. This will require you to leave a message or multiple messages. While this can be frustrating, it is important to always leave a message if you cannot get through to whom you called. Another important step that is easily forgotten is getting the name and title of the person you left the message with. By doing this, you are making sure that if the individual you are trying to reach says he/she never received a message from you, you can indicate when you left the message and whom you left it with (e.g., the secretary).
4. **Follow up:** After a phone conversation, you may need to do some follow-up to make sure that what was agreed upon during the conversation is actually happening. A follow-up can be another phone call, a visit, or a letter that just summarizes the initial conversation. Doing this, shows the individual that you are prepared and motivated to get things done.

5.

Sample Dialogue for Talking on the Phone

Getting information

“Hello, my name is Michele, and I am interested in finding out more about the programs offered at Truman College in the area of nursing or nursing assistant. Can you give me some information on these programs?”

Leaving a message

“I am sorry that Mr. Ortiz is not able to talk to me right now. I would like to leave a message. Can you take it down for me? I would prefer that than to use his voice mail. May I ask, what is your name? Thank you for making sure that he gets my message as soon as possible.”

Making an appointment

“Good morning, my name is Cory and I called you yesterday. I left a message with MaryAnne the receptionist. The reason for my call is to set up an appointment to meet with you regarding financial aid documents. I am available any day before 2:00 pm and I can come to your office. What day works best for you?”

Following up

“Good afternoon, I am calling you today because I received your name and phone number from my counselor. She said that I should follow-up with you to see when my classes at Goodwill programs start. Can you give me this information?”

Activity 1: Practice Calls

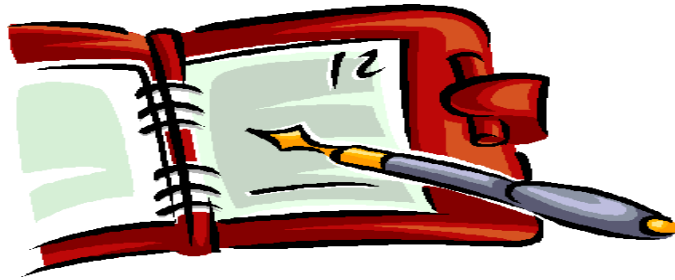
Write your own script and practice it with your friend for: (1) getting information, (2) leaving a message, (3) making an appointment, and (4) following up. Please do not copy the above example script.



Getting Information

Leaving a Message

Making an Appointment



Following Up

Lesson 2: Asking for Accommodations or Adaptations

In school, your teachers were responsible for making sure that the material you learned was given to you in ways that you could understand. You may have spent some time learning about how you learn best, but you more than likely never really had to ask for **accommodations** or **adaptations** to address the challenges of your disability. Now that you are a young adult and your school teacher is not with you, who do you think needs to ask for you? You guessed it! You need to ask for yourself. When should you be ready to do this, you may be asking yourself? If you are going to attend any training, vocational, or college program, and possibly in a place of work, you may at some point need to ask for these accommodations. You may also need to ask for these in other environments, like applying for a reduced fare public transportation pass or taking the state-driving exam. The first step is understanding the difference between the two. An **accommodation** is a tool that will help you complete a task or demonstrate your true strengths. For example, if you need a computer to write, that would be an accommodation. An **adaptation** is a different version of material presented that is *adapted* in a way so you can understand it better. For example, to have the state driver's license test adapted so that there are only 10 questions on each page would be an adaptation. A **modification** is a change to the material presented that implies the information has been somehow reduced. For example, if you ask to be tested only on 5 vocabulary words every week instead of the 10, the instructor uses a modified approach. Clearly these are very similar, and it may be difficult to remember the differences between each. What you need to remember is that before you ask for any of these, you really need to know yourself well. You also need to know your learning

and work style. Hopefully, chapter 2 on self-awareness helped you do that. Just to reflect for a moment, let's discuss these questions:

When you were in high school, how did you take tests? _____

How did your special education teacher help you remember important information, for example when you took and passed the U.S. Constitution test?

Did you ever use any tools such as a computer, recorder, slant board, electronic speller, calculator, and visual model chart? Did using these tools help? _____

The following are some examples of possible accommodations for individuals with disabilities in the classroom:

- Allow for verbal responses instead of only written ones
- Allow frequent breaks
- Provide preferential siting
- Allow the student to record the teacher's presentation
- Allow more time for the student when taking a test
- Use large print
- Reduce the number of items presented in a page
- Provide a designated reader for the student, it could be a peer
- Present instructions orally
- Provide a space with minimal distractions
- Administer the test in a private room or an alternative test site
- Administer the test at a specific time of day
- Provide any reasonable accommodation that the student needs that does not fit under these categories

(Source: LDonline)

The following are some examples of accommodations for individuals with disabilities in the workplace:

- Use screen-reading software, which highlights and reads aloud the information on a computer screen
- Allow employees to give verbal, rather than written responses, or provide speech-to-text software
- Allow employees to organize their workspace as best fits their strengths and ideas for organization
- Color-code materials, folders, labels, etc.
- Promote the use of calendars and schedulers that provide digital reminders of meetings, deadlines, upcoming tasks, etc.
- Provide checklists for tasks
- Use flowcharts to describe the steps of complicated processes
- Allow the use of a voice-activated recorder to record verbal instructions
- Divide large assignments into smaller tasks with specific goals
- Teach the employee to “learn the ropes” by providing a job mentor
- Allow the use of a calculator if needed
- Provide additional training time on new tasks and processes

(Source: Learning Disabilities Association of America – What employers should know about learning Disabilities).

Being ready for how others will react when you ask for an accommodation is important. There are times when individuals without disabilities feel that an accommodation, adaptation, or modification is not fair or should not be requested. This can be more difficult to prove if you have a disability that cannot be seen, like in the area of learning. You may feel like you are required to continually prove yourself to others to get what you are entitled to. To help reduce some of that stress, we suggest the following: *being knowledgeable and reasonable, having documented proof of your disability, and being ready to advocate for yourself.*

1. **Being knowledgeable and reasonable:** As it was mentioned above, knowing yourself and your learning needs is the first step in making the impression that you are knowledgeable. Also, knowing about your rights and understanding how to use the laws that are there to protect you from being discriminated against, will show that you are in control. One important thing, however, is that you should be reasonable. For example, if you are attending a city college program and you know that you can write better with a computer, then you can ask the disability services office in the college to provide you with a laptop computer for your classes. The staff and faculty may see that as an unreasonable request due to financial constraints. However, you could ask the faculty member to give you a copy of the notes from his or her lecture before or after class. In this case, this could be a more reasonable request, which allows you to focus on learning without feeling pressured to take notes. This is just one example of how you can work with the person you are asking to provide an accommodation.

2. **Having documented proof:** Having a way to document your disability, either by your final high school Individual Education Plan (IEP), an evaluation from the Office of Rehabilitative Services, or an evaluation from some other assessment agency, will be necessary as a first step. While you may be describing yourself accurately, written documentation will be needed to verify your disability. Being prepared with one of these documents is a must if you are asking for an accommodation for the first time.

3. **Advocating for yourself:** As was discussed in chapter 3, there are different types of advocacy. The first is individual advocacy. Learning how to stand up for yourself and making sure that you are being treated fairly is not always easy, but it is necessary. In school, your family and teachers often advocated for you and made sure you were being treated fairly to the best of their knowledge. As an adult, the transition to advocating for yourself is a good first indication of whether you will be able to demonstrate your independence.



SUPPORT & HELP

Sample dialogue for asking for accommodations

Talking to a Special Needs Coordinator

“I am a student at Daley College, and I will be taking a class in the office specialist program. I know that it will be challenging because my strengths are not reading and writing. But I also know that I can do well if I receive the support I need. This support includes having notes before class, so that I can prepare for what the teacher will go over. Can you help me talk to the instructor or tell me what I need to do to ask for this support?”

Talking with an Instructor

“Good afternoon, I am registered to take your class this term. Before the first day of class, I wanted to let you know that I am a person with a mental health disability, and I need to ask you to provide me with an accommodation. I feel confident that I can participate in the class, but to be most successful having an advanced idea of what you will be covering would be helpful. This will help me prepare for class and will also help me review the material, so that when you are teaching it is not the first time, I’m hearing it. I have already met with Karen from the special need’s office, and she has recorded the documentation of my disability. Here is the letter that she has provided me with.”

Talking with an employer

“I am excited about being given the position in your main office. As I mentioned in my interview, to do the best job that I can, I will need any directions given for the first time written down for me. I will not need to always use them, but at first, it will help me make sure that I am doing all parts of my job the way you expect me to. Whom should I talk to about this?”

Leaving a message

“I am sorry that Mr. Jones is not able to talk to me right now. I would like to leave a message. Can you take it down for me? I would prefer that. May I ask, what is your name? Thank you for making sure that he gets my message as soon as possible.”

Activity 2: Asking for Accommodations

Think of the accommodations you may need for the workplace setting you hope to be in. Now, write down a script for asking your employer for these specific accommodations. Think about how you can compromise for these accommodations? Practice asking for accommodations with your neighbor.

Accommodations Needed

Script for Asking for Accommodations

Accommodation Compromises?

Lesson 3: Interacting with Mentors or Helpers

As we discussed in chapter 3, there are many individuals that you will meet who may become mentors or potential helpers. As you meet more people, and they become a part of your network, it is important to understand that you will need to interact with them in certain ways. To help you in this process the first step is understanding why you may need help to address your disability challenges. The second step is asking for help in the right way.



1. **Understanding why you need help:** Some of the information we discussed in the accommodations section should help you understand the need for help. Doing things that are challenging for us may cause some frustration, and if they are too challenging, we may decide not to try. If we don't try, we will never succeed. Asking for help is definitely much better than not even trying; however, asking for help is often not easy. It may be difficult because you may think that the other person will think you can't do anything or that you are too slow. We believe that asking for help is just the opposite. In order to ask for help appropriately, you need to do some preparation to figure out the type of help you will need, who in your network or outside of your network can provide it, and when to ask for it.

2. **Skills needed for asking for help:** When you were in school and you asked for help from your teachers or others, you were pretty sure that the help was going to be provided. However, now that you are an adult and trying to work towards a successful future, it is not a given that when you ask for help you will receive it. Therefore, we recommend that you follow some steps to make sure that the person who will be helping you understands the importance of this help for your future. First of all, we think you should talk about your goals and the vision you have for yourself. Also highlighting your strengths and all the things you have already done to help yourself is a good technique for making a good **impression**. Next, we suggest explaining how you will use the help that is provided and how it will help you. Following these steps is very different from what we are used to when we traditionally ask for help (for example if we ask someone to give us a ride somewhere or help us with a move). These steps that we are suggesting will come in handy when you are trying to develop mentoring relationships or getting access to possible resources.



The following are some tips for the development of a mentoring relationship

Attitude

- Have a pleasant look on your face, smile when appropriate.
- Be awake and act excited; be energetic; try to make a good impression.
- Be ready and eager to talk; be ready and eager to listen.
- Look at the individual when speaking to him/her.
- Be honest, don't lie, brag, or exaggerate.

Making an impression – Looking GOOD!!!

- Appear professional.
- Choose clothing that is appropriate.
- Don't wear a hat, mini-skirt, torn jeans, ripped t-shirts, or sunglasses.
- Don't wear too much jewelry or make-up.
- Don't eat, drink, or chew gum during a meeting or phone conversation.

Behavior

- Take a pen and paper with you. Be ready to write down things that might be important. You never know when you may want to write something down.
- Call the person by their title unless they tell you to call them by their first name or you know the person and already have a relationship with them.
- Sit up straight. Posture is important.
- Don't act nervous, don't fidget, or keep looking at the clock.

Conversation

- Listen attentively.
- Don't talk too fast. Take time to answer or speak.
- Don't get nervous if no one says anything for a moment. It is okay to say, "I want to think about that" before you answer, or "I don't know."
- Answer a question the best you can. Say as much as you can about the question, but don't keep talking just to talk.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN ASKING FOR HELP

- ◆ **Being ready to listen and learn** means having an open mind. It means knowing that you are in the relationship to learn new things, and people with more experience can teach you things.
- ◆ **Being OK to hear things about yourself that need to be better** means that you understand that these things are said to help you improve your chances for a better future. Understand that sometimes you may not agree with what you hear. Try not to get upset. The goal is for you to receive the help you need. It is not to make you feel bad or hurt your feelings.
- ◆ **Being ready to take a risk** means that you are willing to do something that you find challenging. Maybe learning how to take public transportation is a difficult step, but facing that challenge is a good step towards taking risks that will be of benefit to you. In the Olympics, the athletes do challenging things to be the best. They take risks. If you want to do better and have better chances of doing well in life, you may have to do some challenging things.
- ◆ **Having patience** means understanding that learning takes time. It will take some time for your mentor to be able to help you. Give this relationship some time to work.
- ◆ **Having a good attitude** is very important. In school, kids talk a lot about attitudes. Everyone has tough days, and everyone makes mistakes. If you learn from your mistakes and make different choices the next time, then your attitude will be better.
- ◆ **Being a team player** means that you are part of a partnership. You will not only be receiving help, but you will also be using the help provided to the maximum extent possible.

- ◆ **Take responsibility for your actions.** Don't be afraid to say things that come to your mind. If you have an idea, share it. Use the input from the potential helper or mentor to bounce ideas and develop action plans.

- ◆ **Don't become dependent.** Never expect a helper to do your work for you. Ask for help and support but never let anyone do things for you. If you want to be independent these are some first steps you can take.

- ◆ **Make your own decisions.** Never expect another person to make a decision for you. Ask for someone's opinion and guidance but make the decision for yourself. You are the one that has to live with the decision, not the person providing you support.

- ◆ **Being partners** is the result of working together.

- ◆ **Building Trust.** Do not do anything to make the potential helper/mentor not trust you. Your WORD is who you are. If you do not have your word, then what do you have? Be honest! Building trust will come with time if the potential helper sees that you are taking advantage of the help he or she is providing, and you are using it wisely towards the attainment of your goals. This also increases the chances that a helper may become a constant mentor and someone who can provide you with support over a longer period of time.

Using Support to reach the TOP!

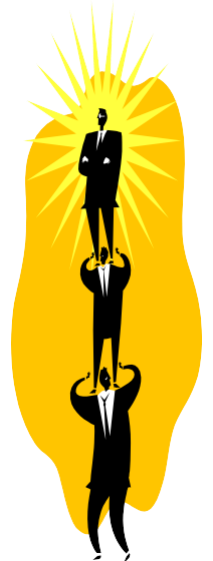
Sample dialogue for asking for help

Asking for tutoring or teaching

“As you know I am trying to get a better score on the exam for the auto mechanics license. You have already helped me get the accommodations I need, but now I need some help with studying. This help would give me someone to discuss the main topics with and practice my vocabulary words. My goal is to finish the program next term and then take the test. Do you think you would have some time to meet with me for study sessions? I think once a week would really help.”

Asking for advice or guidance

“I am trying to figure out which program to choose. I heard you talking at orientation about so many programs, and you knew them all so well. Can you spend a little time giving me some guidance? If you do, I will be more able to make a better decision about which program to focus on.”



Lesson 4: Interacting with Potential Employers

One of the most challenging things that adults have to face is looking for employment. This involves many steps that usually lead to an interview or an opportunity to interact with a supervisor who will be making decisions regarding the future of your employment. There is a set of skills that are crucial to demonstrating your strengths and convincing potential employers that they should hire YOU! These skills can be divided into four areas: making an **impression**, highlighting your strengths,

discussing the specifics and asking questions.

By the time you make it to a face-to-face interview with an employer, you probably have already completed an application, submitted a resume, and possibly spoken with someone regarding the position. In spite of all these steps, the interview is the most important step and the one that can make the difference whether you will be hired or not. The ultimate

goal for pursuing a career is to be employed and have an opportunity to be independent. Therefore, practicing interviewing skills should become part of your plan.



REFLECTION



If you have ever been in a job interview, describe the experience. Were you nervous or anxious? Do you feel you were prepared? Did you get the job and if so, what do you think you did well in the interview? _____

Have you ever had a bad interview where you did not get the job and you know it was because you didn't do well in the interview? How did you feel during the interview?

What could you have done better? _____

If you have never been in an interview, what do you expect it will be like? Describe what you envision. _____

Interviewing Pointers

1. **Making an impression:** Remember that you want the individual you are interacting with to remember you, your strengths, talents, and the reasons why he/she should hire you. Making an impression will require that you use appropriate language, dress professionally, make eye contact, shake hands, be somewhat energetic, and demonstrate an interest in the position.
2. **Highlighting your strengths:** Being able to talk about yourself is important. You will not want to spend too much time thinking about what to say in the interview. Instead, you should have practiced what words you will use to describe yourself and what you can do. The potential employer may ask you to list your strengths and qualities, what you would like to improve in yourself, your interpersonal skills in getting along with others, or being a team player. Being ready to answer these questions is critical.
3. **Talking about the specifics:** Often times, interviews are too vague. In other words, the questions that are asked may be general and the answer you give may be general. This will not make a good impression on the potential employer. Instead, we recommend being specific and giving the employer examples of what you have done in the past that highlight your strengths. For example, if you are asked a question like: *“Can you tell me what your goals are for the future?”* Don’t answer with

a vague response like: *“I would like to work and become independent.”*

We suggest being more specific, like: *“I would like to get a position where I can use my interest in computers to show my ability for web design and graphics. Doing that will help me gain experience and add to my basic knowledge of computers. With this experience I hope to make a contribution to the company I work for by using my enhanced skills.”* This answer has much more detail and specifics about the goal and may result in more questions from the person conducting the interview.

4. **Asking questions:** Even though the potential employer who asks most of the questions, YOU should also ask relevant questions. Depending on the type of job you are applying for, the questions will change. Some good questions to ask are: *Is there a training program? How long does the training last? How is it conducted? Will I be on the job during the training portion of my employment? Who will be my supervisor and how will I communicate with them? How is information communicated to employees?* These types of questions will show the employer that you understand the procedures for starting a new job and the importance of learning how to communicate in the right way with co-workers and supervisors. **Questions about salary and benefits are usually not discussed during the first interview unless you know you have already been given the job.**

TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF

Sample dialogue during an interview

Answering questions about your experience and strengths

Scenario #1

“As you can see from my application, I have been working in retail for the last year. I have now completed a certificate program in the area of cosmetology and feel that I have gained the skills I need to work in your beauty shop. My work at Target as a salesperson helped me improve my people skills. This experience will also be helpful when I meet new customers if I am hired for the position.”

Scenario #2

“I don’t have much paid experience working in an office, but having completed my training and certificate for office specialist at Daley College has given me an opportunity to learn the skills needed. Also, Daley required that we complete some fieldwork hours, so I have some experience in an office. Also, I should mention that in high school, I was a part-time student employee responsible for assisting the school secretary. My duties included taking and delivering messages, making copies, helping with filing, and distributing the mail.”

Scenario #3

“I have never worked as a cook in a restaurant. However, as you can see from my resume, I have completed a vocational training program in chef assistant. Part of this training required us to complete 20 hours of assisting a chef. I completed my hours and was told that I did a great job. I will be continuing to gain experience there until I find a job. In fact, the chef I work with is listed as a reference.

Activity 4: Practice Interviewing

With your friend, come up with practice interview questions. Once you have questions, practice interviewing each other. Try to come up with answers and questions that you could use later in real interviews.

Practice Questions

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Practice Answers

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

REVIEW QUESTIONS



What are some of the skills needed for all four different interactions we discussed?

Why should we follow-up on meetings and phone calls?

Describe the steps recommended in asking for help.

When asking for accommodations how can you provide proof of your disability?

List two tips for developing a good mentoring relationship.

What are the differences between accommodations, adaptations, and modifications?

What questions are not usually asked in a first interview?

Chapter 6 – Receiving Support

Goal of the Chapter: In this chapter you will learn about the different skills needed to ask for help the right way. This chapter includes steps and examples of the kinds of language to use when asking for help, support, accommodations or advocating for yourself. You will be doing some role-playing to practice all the various skills.

New Words

Feasible – If something is possible or reachable.

Gatekeeper – This person may be a secretary, administrative assistant, office clerk, or office assistant; they can have an effect on whether your message is delivered or you get to see the person you want help from.

Greeting – A formal way of opening a meeting; a statement that is made when meeting someone.

Messages – A note that contains your personal information, the reason for your call, and specifics about getting back in touch with you.

Request – Asking for what you want.

Rejection – When the answer to your request is no; when you don't receive the help you want.

Referral – The name and contact information for another possible helper or organization.

Suggestion – An idea that is shared and could be used to get alternative help.

**Making it to the TOP!
with a little extra help**



Chapter 6 Introduction

In the last chapter we discussed the different styles needed for interacting with different types of people in your life. As you have now learned, there are ways to talk that will make an impression and may help you get ahead towards reaching your specific goals. In this chapter, you will have an opportunity to learn and practice a set of skills recommended for interacting with others and receiving the support you need. Clearly, you have asked for help many times before in your life, and at times you have been successful in receiving that help. Your experience in school is a good example, since teachers are constantly reminding students to ask for help if they need it. You may remember that when you were younger you received much help without even asking for it. However, as you entered and completed high school, it was probably a bit different, with teachers reminding you that if you needed help it was up to you to get it. Now that you are a young adult and becoming more independent, this is even more true. You need to be well prepared to approach others, speak well, and **request** help or support to address your disability needs. Before we present skills that are helpful, let's do some reflection about your own personal style of asking for help. Understanding yourself and what you need to work on, or make better, is a first step in learning how to make any request.



Using the right words will take you a long way...

REFLECTIONS



Reflect on the following questions about your past personal experiences:

1. When was the last time you asked for help from someone? Who was it that you approached? Describe what happened. Did you receive the help you needed? Was your request granted? _____

2. When was the last time you provided help to someone else? How did this happen? Was the help asked for? How did the person ask you for the help? What type of help was it? _____

3. What do you think are some good ways to ask for help? (circle your ideas)

Be patient

Be demanding

Get to the point

Be polite

Be determined

Be persistent

Be convincing

Expect everything

Be confident

Don't take NO for an answer

4. How do you think you should start a meeting? Give an example of something you might say? _____

5. How do you think you should end a meeting? Give an example of something you might say. _____

Lesson 1: Gatekeepers

SUGGESTED STEPS/SKILLS

Talking to the gatekeeper...

Often times when you get to a meeting, or are trying to set up a meeting, you need to interact with a **gatekeeper**. This person is usually a secretary, administrative assistant, or clerk. Their role is important because they are usually the first person you will see. In spite of the fact that this is not the person you will be requesting help from, the impression you make on this person will influence their ability to represent you, introduce you, and/or deliver your message. The following are some suggested behaviors to making sure you know how to communicate with a **gatekeeper**.

1. **Make a greeting:** Say: good morning, good afternoon, good evening
2. **Introduce yourself:** Say: I am _____.
My name is _____. I am the _____.
3. **Ask for the person you want to see:** Say: I am looking for _____.
I have an appointment with _____.
I need to talk to someone about _____
_____.
4. **State the purpose of your meeting:** Say: I want to find out about _____
_____.

5. **If the person you are looking for is not available,** *Say: Can I leave a message with you? When will he/she get the message? Will he/she be returning today? What is a good time to call back or come by again? (For this option, make sure you get the person's name who took the message).*

These five behaviors will not be used in every situation, but it is important that you understand each of them know how to use them. There may be instances in which you will have to use all of them. The following is an exercise for you to practice identifying each behavior. After that, you will have an opportunity to do some role-playing and act out these behaviors.

Activity 1: Rate These Interactions

Instructions: Read each dialogue. Underline the greeting, circle the introduction, and put a square around the purpose. If any of the sections are missing, identify which one is missing and give an explanation of why you think it is missing. After each example give it a rating: very good, good enough, not very good, or bad. Remember, this is just an exercise to help you practice.

Good morning, my name is Teresa and I am here to see Ms. Murvay. I want to find out about financial aid at Daley College and if I am able to get it. Is she around?

Rating: _____

Good afternoon, I am Cory and I was told that you are hiring for part-time positions. I would like to talk to a manager. Are they available to talk about the openings?

None of the managers are available right now.

Can I leave a message for one of them with you? My message is: Cory Cook from UIC came by to find out about the employment opportunities. I can be reached at 312-413-1268.

Thank you for taking the message. When will it be given to a manager? Can I have your name?

Rating: _____

Hello, I am a friend of George's. He said that you would help me get accommodations for my class. Are you Karen?

No, I am not Karen and she is not here today

When will she be back? And can I leave her a message?

Rating: _____

Hey, what's up? Is my VR counselor here today? I wanted to talk to her about a new class I am taking and I need a voucher.

Rating: _____

**Here are some examples for you to apply the skills if appropriate, and practice.
Think about the situation first before you start acting it out.**

Situation #1

You have arrived at the main office of Harold Washington College. Before you meet with an admissions counselor for advising you have to talk to the front desk clerk. You have already set up an appointment with the admissions counselor. Pretend I am the front desk clerk. How would you start talking to me? What would you say?

Situation #2

You arrive at the local VR office, but you do not have an appointment. Your goal is to find out how to apply for services. The first person you see is the office receptionist. Your fellow College Connection classmate was there last week and talked to a woman named Leticia, so you decide to ask for her. Pretend I am the receptionist. How would you start talking to me? What would you say?

Situation#3

You are going to be taking a class from the Auto Mechanics department at West-Side Tech. Before you register, you want to observe a class and learn more about the program. You decide to talk to the director of that program. You don't have an appointment, but you have talked to that person before, and they told you to just "stop by whenever." You arrive at the director's office and see a student worker sitting at the front desk. How would you start talking to him/her? What would you say?

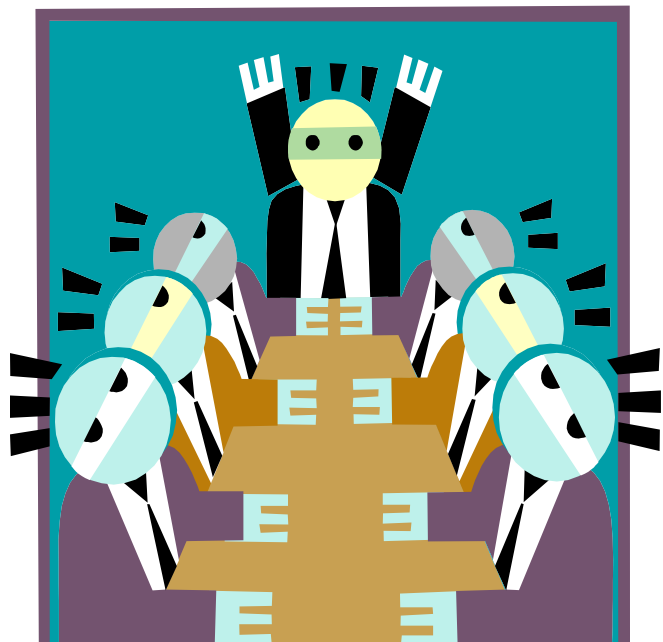
Lesson 2: Meeting Helpers

Meeting with the helper...

The meeting with a potential helper/mentor/employer/instructor has at least four sections and sometimes can have five sections. The sections are: 1) Opening the Meeting, 2) Making the request, 3) Action planning, 4) Handling Rejections (only if necessary), and 5) Closing the meeting.

SECTION #1 – Opening the meeting. This section will make you feel like a broken record because many of the skills used for interacting with the gatekeeper also apply in the next step, which is starting your conversation with the person who can potentially provide help.

1. Greeting (Hello, good morning, good afternoon)
2. Introduction (Name, role)
3. Purpose (Why are you there)
4. Mention the Referral source (if you have one). If you are meeting someone new for the first time and you received his or her name from someone else then this behavior is appropriate.



SECTION #2 – Making the request. Clearly you can remember situations in which you have asked for something whether it be advice, a favor, help, or an object. Most of the time, if you are making a request from someone familiar to you, you just come out and say it. For example:

Hey, I need to get to work; can I borrow a dollar for the train fare?

Hello, I am lost; do you have a transit map I can use?

Can you do me a favor? Will you take me to class?

While there is nothing wrong with these examples of how to ask for help, here are some additional steps that will make your chances of receiving the help even greater.

1. Talk about your goal/plan or situation
2. Talk about your strengths, but also be aware and ready to answer questions about your special challenge
3. Talk about how the help will benefit you or help you
4. NOW make your request

Talking about your goal, plan or situation requires that you have thought about your situation and have practiced how to describe it. Mentioning your goal will help the person you are meeting with, possibly an instructor or counselor, see that you have thought about your future and what you want. Explaining your situation will make your expectations clear.

You should have a list of strengths that are related to your meeting. For example, if you are going to ask for tutoring, you don't have to mention what a great cook you are, but you should mention that you remember better when you see a picture. Talking about yourself without bragging will build your self-esteem. A lot of times in a

job interview, this question is asked. For that situation you just have to have an answer ready to discuss.

Explaining to the helper how important their role will be for your success, will help make the case for receiving the help you need. However, in this step it is easy to sound fake. Sounding fake would not make a good impression on the person you are meeting with. If you are ready and feel comfortable talking about the benefit of their help, then demonstrate it. You should also be ready to answer this type of question in various situations. *For example, a counselor might say, how or why do you think I can help you? I have never worked with a student with a disability.* This would be an ideal situation for you to express the importance of the help.

Finally, the last recommended behavior in this section is actually making the request. By now, in a meeting you should feel comfortable with the person you are talking to, so making the request should be a smooth transition. The important point to remember is that you do not want the potential helper to feel like you are being demanding. However, you do want to be persistent.

Activity 2: Practice Situations

Instructions: Read each dialogue. Underline the goal/situation/plan, circle the strengths, and put a square around the request. If any of the sections are missing, identify which one is missing and give an explanation of why you think it is missing. After each example give it a rating: very good, good enough, not very good, or bad. Remember, this is just an exercise to help you practice.

Like my counselor told you, I have been attending Community College since last year. I am almost done with the courses and now I need to start thinking about getting a job in the area that I went to school for. I know that at this office you have computers and programs that can help me do a resume and start searching for work. If you help me by allowing me to come here to work on this, I know that I will have a better chance at getting a job. I was wondering if I could come after classes on Mondays and Wednesdays to use the computer for about an hour each of those days?

Rating: _____

I will have to take the auto mechanics certification exam when I am done taking classes. I still have many more weeks of classes to take, but I want to start getting ready. You are a mechanic and have been one for a long time. Having some advice from someone like you, who has taken the exam, could help me get ready. Can you help me?

Rating: _____

I will need to have an accommodation to take the final exam. As you know, I need more time for writing. I think I could really show you what I know if I could take an oral exam. I have been studying very hard to complete the certified nursing assistant courses. If I do not do well on this final, I feel like I will not be able to complete the program. If you allow me to take an oral exam, I can show you how much I really know. What kinds of arrangements would we have to make to give me an oral instead of a written exam?

Rating: _____

Here are some examples for you to apply the skills if appropriate and practice. Think about the situation first before you start acting it out.

Situation #1

You are nervous about starting your office specialist course, which will teach you about computer software. You think that if you got the notes in advance from the instructor you would be more ready for the class and better able to understand. You are now meeting with the instructor. How would you make the request for notes in advance? Pretend I am the instructor, what would you say?

Situation #2

You are already attending Community College but have been taking pre-credit classes for over a year. You are getting better at reading and writing, but they keep telling you to take another class. You feel that if you don't start your certificate program soon, you will give up and quit school. Before you do that you decide to talk to your advisor and ask

for their help in getting out of the pre-credit classes. Pretend that I am your advisor.
What would you say to make your request?

Situation#3

Even though you are happy at school and are getting some help, you think you might want to try a different training program not at the city colleges. You go see your ORS counselor to talk about different options. Pretend that I am your ORS counselor, what would you say to me to make your request for a new training program?

Lesson 3: Handling Rejection

SECTION #3 – Action Planning

After you have made your request, there are two possibilities, the person could say, “YES I will help you.” Or the person could say, “No, I can’t help you with this.

IF YES → ACTION PLANNING

If the answer you receive is a positive one, then you have to move on to action planning. Action planning really is quite simple because all you have to do is remember the WH questions: who, what, when, where, how and why. Who will do each activity you agreed upon, what will happen after the meeting, when will you meet again or when will things be done by, where will things take place, how will everything happen, and



why will things happen in this way. Asking these questions will let you make sure that all people at the meeting understand exactly what is going to happen next. The last step in action planning is making sure that the plan you have come up with

for next steps or other activities, is **feasible** and reasonable. That is that you can be involved and complete all the steps. After action planning is complete you can move on to closing the meeting section.

**Making a plan
sticking to it
following through with it**

SECTION #4 – Handling Rejections

IF NO → HANDLING REJECTIONS

You are never guaranteed that you will receive the help you ask for, or get the accommodation you need, or get the job you apply for, etc. In this case, you have to be ready to handle the rejection. Handling rejection will still let you get something out of the meeting.

If the answer to your request is NO, you don't walk away defeated and depressed. You have a choice of three actions: Asking for a **referral**, asking for something less, or asking for a suggestion. We suggest that you do at least one, but if you'd like you can do two or three of them. The important thing is to try to walk away with something that you didn't have before you were involved in this meeting. For example, if you apply for a job that has been filled, you may ask if they can keep your resume/application for a year in case something else opens up (something less), or you could ask of other organizations that might be hiring (a referral), or you could ask about future openings (something less). These are all options of which you have control over and can be applied to many situations. If you receive a referral, you must ask the person's permission to use their name when you contact the referral.



Don't walk away empty handed!

Activity 3: Developing Positive Responses

Based on the scenarios below, practice asking for a **referral**, asking for something less, and or asking for a suggestion.



Scenario #1 There are no more positions available at your desired place of employment.

Scenario #2 You have been turned down for a spot in the schooling program of your choice.

Lesson 4: Closing a Meeting

SECTION # 5 – Closing the Meeting

Some would say that this is the simplest part of a meeting when you are applying for something or making a request. As simple as it is, it is very important because it will be the last thing the person you are meeting hears from you. It is also just one more opportunity to make an impression. We suggest three steps:

1. Summarize what you talked about
2. State your appreciation (even if you did not get anything)
3. Make a closing

Summarizing will help everyone at the meeting understand what the next steps will be. Even if you did not agree to anything or did not receive your

request, making a summary of what was discussed is a good idea. It is one final opportunity for you to once again, discuss the importance of your request. Stating your appreciation, even if it is just thanking them for their time, makes the person you are meeting with feel appreciated and more likely to help you in the future. Making a closing is very much like making a greeting in that it is polite and professional.



Activity 4: Rate These Closings

Instructions: Read each dialogue. Underline the summarization of the meeting, circle the show appreciation, and put a square around the final closing. If any of the sections are missing, identify which one is missing and give an explanation of why you think it is missing. After each example give it a rating: very good, good enough, not very good, or bad. Remember, this is just an exercise to help you practice.

I know how busy you must be, so I really want to thank you for meeting with me today. Even though you couldn't help me it was nice meeting you and maybe I can come again in the future if I need help in other areas of school. What do you think? Have a great weekend.

Rating: _____

This was a great meeting. You mentioned that I should contact the director of that program and tell them you sent me. I should bring the letter I received from you and do this before I have my next exam. In the meantime, did you say you were going to find out about me getting a note-taker? Thanks for all your help. I really appreciate it. Have a nice day. Good-bye.

Rating: _____

So, I should come here to your office after class every Wednesday for the next two weeks to review for the exam. You said I should bring what? I forgot, could you tell me again. Thanks again for helping me get ready for the exam. I feel much better knowing that I will have your help. Have a nice week and I'll see you next Wednesday.

Rating: _____

REVIEW QUESTIONS



List the suggested sections to a meeting:

If your request is denied, what are your options?

If you receive a referral, what must you also ask for?

List and explain the suggested behaviors before making a request.

Why is closing the meeting such an important part of any meeting?

Chapter 7 – Taking Action

Goal of the Chapter: In this chapter you will learn about the steps recommended to make sure that you carry out all the activities of your plan. Having a goal and asking for help are only the first step. Managing your time and taking action will help you complete the goal.

New Words

Assignments – This is work you may have to complete to get one step closer to your desired goal; you can give yourself these in the form of a to-do list.

Following up – This is what you want to do after you have had a meeting with a potential helper; it can be done through a letter, phone call or a visit; it is a way of demonstrating your interest and commitment to the goal.

Problem Solving – Being able to face a problem by coming up with potential solutions; being resourceful to overcome obstacles or challenges.

Revise – Make changes to; improve.

Tasks – This is similar to assignment.

Time management – Making sure that you schedule the actions you need to take and/or complete.

Making your plan



A Reality

Chapter 7 Introduction

In the last chapter you learned about how to ask for help and how to go through each step of a meeting. However, as important as the meeting is, it is not going to guarantee that you are going to receive the help that you need. Even if you do receive the help you need, or your request is honored, you will also have to be very active by taking the steps needed to reach your goals. As you may remember when we talked about goals and objectives, we also discussed action steps and possible helpers. This chapter is going to recommend some ways that you can make your plan become a reality.

Reflections...

Think about when you graduated from high school. What steps were involved in that entire process? What did you have to do yourself? What was done for you? _____

Think about a time when you went to a dance or other social event at your school, maybe prom or homecoming. What were steps that you had to take? Who helped you? How much planning did you have to do? _____

In both of these examples, you might have had some help from family, friends, teachers, or others, but ultimately you were also very involved in the process. If these examples don't make sense to you, think about another situation in which you had to plan something out, take action, and follow-through to make sure it got done. These three skills are very important as you plan your future, but they are also important for many individuals who are employed. Understanding that you need a plan that makes sense and is realistic is step #1. Developing a list of actions, you or someone else has to complete is step #2, and following through is step#3.

Step #1 – Making an action plan. In Chapter 5 we talked about action planning with a potential helper, perhaps during a meeting or interview. Now we are recommending additional steps for action planning that involve more effort and thought on your part, independent of a helper.

Suggested tips:

- Write out your goal and objectives. Examine how you have written them and ask yourself if they are true goals and objectives. When you read the goal statement can you picture the outcome? Close your eyes and try to see yourself in the goal. If you can see it clearly then it is probably a goal. Remember that objectives are similar to goals but are the things you have to accomplish on your way to the goal. For example, if your goal is to go to prom, objectives are to save money for the ticket, pick out an outfit, get the outfit. If you write an objective that will probably take too long to accomplish, more than a month or two, then it is probably not an objective but rather a goal.

Step #2 – Making a list of actions, assignment, tasks.

- *Once you have goals and objectives, make a list of actions. Many people make what we call “To Do Lists”. This is a list of all the things we have to do in a day or perhaps a week. The list can also be used to see how far you are getting by checking things off as they are done, very much like a grocery list. This “To Do List” technique is also good because it makes you feel great when you scratch something off the lists as it gets finished.*
- *Assigning tasks, assignments, and dates for completion is important. In the goals chapter we talked about the importance of target dates so this should be just another reminder. One of the reasons people who have goals don’t ever reach them is because they often don’t take the time to write goals down, make a plan of action, and actually assign due dates for completing tasks.*

Step #3 – Following Through

- *Following through is something that comes after you have begun taking actions towards completing your goals. Writing the goals, developing the action plan, and meeting with a potential helper are all fantastic steps, but will mean nothing if you are not on top of everything and following up. You are now like a manager, managing your life by looking at the goals, assigning tasks, and making sure they are completed on time. If one of your tasks or action steps turns out to be extremely difficult to complete, it is acceptable and recommended that you review and **revise** your plan as needed. This*

may require some problem solving either by you or with the help of a potential helper.

- **Time Management** requires that you make a schedule. We are all busy people and knowing how to use our time is an important skill. This will require that we sometimes make difficult decisions to do some work, study, apply for programs, read information, talk to someone, or perhaps practice a skill, instead of relaxing or hanging out. This is not to say that you can't ever have FUN!! But it can't always be FUN!! Giving yourself due dates like you had to in school, will help you assess how much progress you are making. The due dates are not set in stone and can be changed if things come up or perhaps you set due dates without knowing how long exactly things were going to take to be completed. If this happens, it is recommended that you sit down with your plan and revise the due dates.
- Following up with others by making phone calls, making visits, or sending letters is a skill often used in business. It is recommended that you use it as well. If someone agreed to help you, but hasn't, it maybe they forgot or are very busy. They may appreciate a friendly reminder or perhaps just a thank you and update on how things are going. Here are some sample situations and suggested dialogue.
 - ❖ **Example A:** You could call an instructor and say, Hi, I was so grateful that you agreed to meet with me to go over the class notes before the exam. Since it hasn't happened yet and the exam is coming up in a couple of weeks, I was wondering if we could set something up right now.

- ❖ *Example B: Since my orientation meeting at your ORS office, I have not received that packet you said I would in the mail. I am wondering if it has been lost or if maybe I could just pick it up.*
- ❖ *Example C: You have been so helpful in getting me a tutor and it is really helping in class, I just wanted to say Thank you!*
- ❖ *Can you think of a sample situation where you could do some follow-up?*



This list of suggestions is given to help you carry out your plan. In the following exercise, we ask you to take an activity that you are familiar with and write out a plan of action. This could be something you have done already, like setting up an outing with friends? Or it could be something related to school or work, like preparing for graduation. To help you out, there is an example of something common that we all do in Box 1.

Now it's your turn

Goals

A Plan

Actions

Getting Help

Managing time

Following Through

Example: Making Thanksgiving Dinner

Goal: To have Thanksgiving dinner at your house for family and friends.

Objective 1: Developing a menu

Actions: get cooking magazines, look in the cooking section of the Tribune, figure out how much all the food will cost so a budget can be made, and figure out if there are certain foods some people won't eat.

Objective 2: Send out invitations

Actions: Get materials for the invitations (paper & decorations), get addresses or phone numbers of all family and friends, make a list of guests, and buy stamps and envelopes, mail invitations.

Objective 3: Decorate the House

Actions: Figure out what kinds of plates and utensils will be used, look for tablecloths, set up tables.

Objective 4: Cook the Meal

Actions: Go to the grocery store with list, purchase all food, defrost turkey, prepare the vegetables, make the side dishes, season and soak the turkey, bake the turkey.

Getting help – talk to those invited and assign a side dish or appetizer to everyone, make sure that you don't duplicate the assignment; ask someone to help with the setting up by coming early.

Follow-through – Call guests to make sure they are coming so you have enough food, chairs, plates, etc... Call the guests bringing food or completing a task, about 3 days before the date as a reminder. Say thanks for all the help.

Time Management – Make the invitations while you are watching TV; have some help making the phone calls to follow-up.

Making your own

SAMPLE ACTION PLAN WHAT DO YOU NEED TO MAKE IT A REALITY?

Goals:

Objectives and Actions:

Getting Help:

Time Management:

Follow Through:

Chapter 7 Review

This chapter should have gotten you thinking about the importance of your role in the process of attaining your goal. It has some suggestions to help you take action and keep working at it over a period of time. These suggestions can be used over and over again with every new goal you may have. They are skills that you will be able to use in many life situations.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

What are some tips that may be helpful in managing your time?

Describe some ways that you can follow-through or follow-up with agreed upon activities.

What is suggested if you do not complete actions by the due dates you set?

Chapter 8 – Education Options

Goal of the Chapter: In this chapter you will learn about education options. This information here will help you make informed decisions about the options you choose for yourself.

New Words

Applications – Usually refers to a form used to apply either for work or for continued educational opportunities.

Ethics – The code of behaviors that are accepted on the job or in a post-secondary education institution.

Financial Aid – support to complete education and/or training programs at a college or university; the application process for this is complicated but necessary to demonstrate the need.

Institutions of Higher Education – Community Colleges, Colleges, and Universities.

Interviews – A meeting that is called for by either an employer or potential school to meet the applicant face-to-face.

Post-secondary – After high school or secondary school

Recommendations – Statements of your ability and experience made by individuals who know you, like a teacher from high school or your supervisor at your first part-time job.

Trade Schools – Schools for individuals who are out of high school and would like to learn a specific trade (for example: carpentry, plumbing, nursing)

choices = options = decisions

The goal of this chapter is to teach you about the different options available in education. It is likely that some of the information in this chapter will be familiar to you, or you will have at least heard of some things. If this is the case, it will be more of a review. However, if things are new, expect to spend some time understanding the differences so that when it comes time for you to make certain decisions, you will be well informed.



REFLECTIONS...

1. When you were younger and thought about what you wanted to do after high school, what came to mind? _____

2. Why do you think you had these thoughts and not others? _____

3. Do you remember talking about what would happen after high school with anyone other than family or parents? Describe those conversations. _____

4. Have you always had a specific career for yourself in mind? If yes, what is it and how did you pick it? If no, now what do you think you might want your career to be? _____

These questions should have gotten you thinking about your future, what you always wanted to do and how you came to those ideas. While some people always know what they want to do and actually end up doing it, this is not very common. In fact, the majority of young people aren't sure what they want to do after high school. If they end up in an **institution of higher education**, they usually spend their first year trying to figure out what career to pursue. For many of us who have a definite goal of employment to become independent, it is best to figure out what we want to do as soon as possible, instead of spending years exploring the options. However, before you make any decisions, you need to be informed about what the options are and what the strengths of each option are.

Lesson 1: Educational Options

When you ask most high school students if they want to go to college, many of them say yes without even knowing or understanding what college is and what it is all about. Colleges, four-year universities, and community colleges are similar but also very distinct. Training, vocational, and/or trade schools are another option that is at times not clearly understood.

Colleges

- Can be either two year or four year
- Offer Associates Degrees and Bachelor's Degrees
- You can take classes as a student at large
- Offer financial aid through federal government program or scholarships
- Usually need to take a standardized exam and score a certain way to be accepted
- Requires an **application**, an application fee, and **letters of recommendation**

Community Colleges

- Two years only
- Offer Associates degrees and Certificate training options as well as continuing education courses
- Offer community needed courses (like the General Educational Development test –the equivalent to a high school diploma and literacy courses)
- You can take classes as a student at large
- Offer financial aid through federal government program or scholarships

- The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) will pay for the completion of short-term courses that lead to increased employability
- Open enrollment, meaning there is no exam score required to be accepted, however a placement test is given to determine advising
- Does not require letters of recommendation

4-year Universities

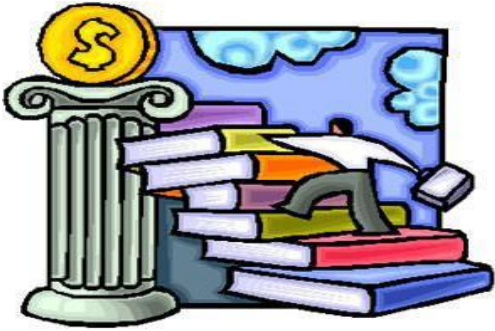
- Offer bachelor's degrees and post-graduate degrees
- Require an application, letters of recommendation, and the completion of standardized exams to be accepted
- If you take courses as a student at-large, you are required to choose a major area of study by a certain time so that you can transfer courses taken into a credit program
- Offer financial aid through federal government programs or scholarships
- Usually, ORS does not cover 100% of the expenses incurred in this type of educational option but may make partial payment.
- Completing training in a desired career is long-term and usually requires at least four years of full-time attendance in a program

Trade or Vocational Schools

- Do not usually require a standardized test score, but do require an assessment of skill level
- Having some prior experience in the area that the school will focus on is helpful (for example, a cooking school may be more likely to accept individuals that have been cooking for work than someone who has never worked in a restaurant/kitchen)
- Short term programs, usually not more than 18 months
- Financial aid is sometimes available but much more challenging to receive directly through a school or program
- ORS will pay for this type of educational program as long as the outcome is increased employability

Lesson 2: Financial Aid & Funding

One of the most important things to think about when you are trying to decide what kind of education to pursue is cost. Most people have little money to continue their schooling after high school. However, this should not be an obstacle since there are a few options. The first is federal financial aid programs. These programs include merit



scholarships (ex: money you get for being good at something, academics, sports, or a talent), grants (ex: money you get for being from an ethnic minority group), and student loans. In order to get any of this money, or even find out if you can, you must complete a

FAFSA form (Free Application for Federal Assistance Aid), which is very complicated. On this form you include information about yourself and your family, how much money you make, and how much you need to live on. The information on this form is used to determine your financial aid award. The best deals are grants because they are easier to get than meritscholarships, and you don't have to pay them back. The most common awards are student loans that you are supposed to pay back when you are done with school.

Completing the FAFSA form will be the first step in figuring out how much financial assistance you will need.

Activity 2: FAFSA Website

Navigating the FAFSA website can be difficult. It is important to explore the FAFSA website to answer any unanswered questions before beginning your application. Fill out the application with a parent, mentor, or teacher. <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/index.htm>

Lesson 3: Scholarships

Scholarships come in many different shapes and forms. There are some important places to begin looking for scholarships. In general, most scholarships require you to do some extra work and apply. You may be expected to write a personal statement about yourself and explain why you want and need the scholarship. Further you may also be required to find people to write you recommendation letters. These are just a couple of the things that may be required of you, but let's slow down and talk about some great places to find scholarships.

- Your high school teachers are great resources to lead you to scholarships
- If your high school has a college counselor, they will have information about available scholarships and where to find them
- Website of the University you may be interested in attending
 - ❖ Often, these scholarships will be filled out and submitted after you have applied to the school
 - ❖ Check with the financial aid office
- A general search on a search engine such as google or can also be helpful
- The following link is to the U.S. Department of Labor which has a tool to find scholarships

<http://www.careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch/ScholarshipCategory.asp?searchtype=category&nodeid=22>

- The following link takes you to find career, training, and job search resources.
<https://www.careeronestop.org/ResourcesFor/YoungAdult/young-adult.aspx>

Activity 3: Scholarship Search

It is extremely important to avoid any scams when searching for scholarships. Let go to the Department of Labor's scholarship website and learn more about available scholarships. Try to find a few scholarships that you may qualify for.

<http://www.careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch/ScholarshipCategory.asp?searchtype=category&nodeid=22>

Lesson 4: Department of Rehabilitation Services

Vocational rehabilitation (VR) is a program that was developed under a law called the Rehabilitation Act. This law states that people should have the opportunity to find employment, and that they should receive the help they need in order to become employed. In the state of Illinois, vocational rehabilitation is available through the Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). While still in high school youth with disabilities are encouraged to apply for certification by DRS so that when they are adults, they can receive services more easily. Unfortunately, not many staff work on this program. Therefore, most of the students in public schools know very little about VR, how to use it or how to apply for it. This is especially true for individuals with invisible disabilities like mental health disabilities and other non-apparent disabilities. Because the DRS professionals can easily identify a young person with a visible disability, it is more likely they will receive services and support. For these reasons it is important to learn about VR and what it can offer.

The DRS offices are located throughout the city and suburbs. There are two ways to become involved with DRS and benefit from their services. The first way is to get certified in high school before graduation, and the second way is to apply as an adult upon graduation. They can offer funding for vocational training programs at community colleges, trade schools, and even universities. They can also offer financial support for accommodations, like interpreters or assistive technology. Finally, and what is sometimes considered their most important benefit, is the services they provide to help individuals find and obtain employment.

OPTION #1: When in high school, contact your counselor of special education or case manager to see who the Student Transition Employment Preparation (STEP) counselor is that is assigned to your school. There are only a few STEP counselors, meaning they are not in one high school all week, but instead are moving around a lot. Set up a meeting with this person so that you can ask questions about the process and how the services can benefit you. The STEP counselor will conduct an intake interview, complete paperwork, and obtain information from your legal guardian. If you meet the criteria, you will receive a DRS certification number. When you are getting ready to graduate, the STEP counselor uses that number to transfer your case to an adult VR counselor. This counselor will send you a letter after graduation with the number that was assigned to you, and it is up to you to contact VR directly. If they do not receive a response from you by the third letter that is sent out, then your case is closed. This means that it is critical for the student to know about the certification, their DRS number, and be on the lookout for the letter in the mail. If your case becomes closed, but you still want to apply for services, then you follow the steps for option #2 as an adult.

OPTION #2: As an adult, to find out what they have to offer, attend an orientation meeting and then meet face-to-face with a VR counselor. Every office has different orientation days that are open to the public every week. During the orientation you will learn about the services that DRS can provide and what you have to do to apply for certification. Young adults do not need to bring their legal guardian, but if they want to they are allowed to bring whomever they want to the meeting. During the one-on-one meeting with the VR counselor, you will have to provide information on your family

income, along with a copy of your social security card, and some type of proof that you have a disability, like a copy of your Individual Education Plan. The reason that they ask for family income is that even though all people with disabilities are eligible to receive these services, they are not all entitled. The decisions are made based on need.

Although this is a complicated process, it is an excellent resource that is available to all young people with disabilities and one that covers the costs of educational training that can lead to employment.

Activity 4: Contacting DRS

There are multiple ways to contact DRS. The first is to have a referral from a transition counselor or teacher. The second is to self refer. This can be done on the phone or on the DRS website. Please go to

<https://wr.dhs.illinois.gov/wrpublic/wr/dynamic/referral.jsf>

and fill out the referral (do NOT hit submit). Feel free to explore their website

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?>

Chapter 9 – Employment Options 1

Goal of the Chapter: In this chapter you will learn about employment options. The information provided here will help you make informed decisions about the options you choose for yourself.

New Words

Benefits – The perks of a job, in addition to salary and wages; usually refers to insurance, sick days, vacation days, retirement plans.

Career – When the work you do becomes a long-term employment.

Resumes – A written document that highlights your strengths, abilities, experience and education. It may also include a goal statement. This document is frequently asked for during employment searches.



VIEW JOBS

Employment, much like education, can be confusing. As young people, all we know is that we want to work and make some money. Part time jobs that you may have had in the past are not usually difficult to get, but they are also not the best jobs to work in all your life.

REFLECTIONS...



What are some part-time jobs you may not want to do for the rest of your life?

When might you want a part-time job over a full-time job? _____

What would you like to do for more than a few months and even perhaps for a long time (several years)? _____

Lesson 1: Types of Employment

Employment experience comes in all types. They include: internships, apprenticeships, volunteer opportunities, temporary jobs, part-time temporary jobs, part-time permanent jobs, full time jobs, careers and professions.

Internships and apprenticeships are usually unpaid opportunities to learn skills, practice what has been learned, and to continue learning. These are good ways to get some work experience before you graduate and could be helpful when trying to look for a job.



The apprenticeship is a little different from the internship in that it usually takes a long time to complete. Volunteer opportunities are also unpaid, but they are different from the other two in that there isn't the requirement that you learn something new. It is more a good way to gain experience before going to look for a job. Often times, a young person may not even think they are volunteering and then would not put that experience on their application or talk about it during an interview. Volunteering in a place of worship, around your neighborhood, in a hospital, or at school are excellent opportunities to get experience with different areas of work. Some of these are: getting along with others, understanding and taking responsibility of your actions and commitments, and skills related to the volunteer work (like watching kids, cleaning houses, answering the telephone and taking messages, giving advice to others younger).

Temporary work refers to the work that is usually available during busy times, for example, the holidays or summer for those that work outside. This type of work will end and it does not go on all year. For young adults or youth in high school, this could be summer employment, which is a good way to get experience. Temporary work can be either part time, less than 30 hours a week, or full-time, more than 30 hours a week. Part-time permanent jobs are those many young people get after school (e.g., grocery stores, waitressing, bus boys, movie theatres, childcare centers, etc.). Even if one is not going to work in a certain area, eventually part-time jobs are good ways to gain experience and meet potential employers for more long-term outcomes. In a part-time job the pay is usually by the hour and there are no **benefits**. Since there are no benefits, it is very important to understand the use of a schedule, how to ask for time off, and how to make sure that you are not fired because you didn't show up to work.

Full time employment usually means that you are working about 35-40 hours a week, and that you get benefits as well as getting paid. Benefits include: a certain number of vacation days a year, a certain number of sick days a year, holidays, health insurance, and sometimes retirement investment plans. Even though you may get vacation days, this does not mean that you can take vacation whenever you want. You still have to earn the vacation days and get approval from your supervisor to take those days. Sick days also need to get approved and sometimes you may be required to prove you were sick with a doctor's certificate. Some full-time employment opportunities offer health and dental insurance for you and your dependents. In order to get health insurance, part of the costs are covered by your employer, and you pay a reduced rate that comes out of your paycheck every month. This benefit is an important one

because it covers part of the costs of seeing a doctor, getting medicine, being hospitalized or getting health and dental treatment. Most companies that have full time employees offer health insurance, but not all offer dental insurance.

Retirement investment is another benefit that may be available in a strong company and is offered to full time employees. Everyone who works and earns a



paycheck in the country contributes a certain amount to the social security program that provides monthly benefit to the retired. The idea is that by contributing now, when you are retired you will also receive a monthly benefit check. As you may know, the retirement benefits are not very much money and usually the amount is not enough to live on. For this reason, many

companies offer their own retirement plans. If this is a benefit of a company you work for, it will allow you to take part of your paycheck and invest it into a program. The idea is that through this investment every paycheck, when you are ready to retire you will have an account that will help you cover your living expenses. These programs are excellent but not offered by every company. When trying to decide where to work, if you have more than one option, it would be good to ask about whether they offer this type of benefit and find out as much as you can about it.

Another option in employment is owning your own business or being self-employed. This is a HUGE task. It may sound wonderful, NO BOSS, NO PUNCHING IN OR PUNCHING OUT, NO ONE TO TELL YOU WHAT TO DO, SETTING YOUR OWN HOURS. However, people do not realize how difficult this is to achieve and maintain and the amount of hard work that is involved. To start a business you need **capital**, which is money!! Most businesses will require money to buy equipment, market your company, get customers, and possibly even get a space for your office or work area. Capital is not easy to get but some options are small-business loans or other investors. To learn how to do this the right way, banks may offer some workshops for people interested in starting their own business. Marketing yourself, in other words making sure people know about you and the business that you are in is the next challenging step. It is one that requires training and money. Some options could be flyers, mailings, developing a website, making radio announcements, and having friends and neighbors spread the word, but here again you will require training and help! Setting your own hours for work is also a challenge. Because you have no set hours and no supervisor, you have to be very motivated and have a great deal of time to devote to your business. For example, if you are going to start your own computer repair business or open up a boutique, you will need to do all the work yourself. This could mean working 50, 60, or perhaps 70 hours a week, and you will not see any profit from your business right away. You also



don't have any benefits unless you pay for them yourself. Owning a business is for many a dream but only becomes a reality for a few. This doesn't mean that you can't do it, but it does mean that if you are seriously going to pursue it, you need to be ready for the challenge and have the support you need.

Activity 1: What Jobs Interest Me?

Write down your employment interests in the box on the left. In the box on the right, write down jobs, volunteer experiences, internships, etc., that could help you fulfill your employment interests.

Lesson 2: Finding a Job

“Getting a job, finding employment, becoming employed” all of these phrases mean the same thing. The first step is always the same, whether it be part-time, temporary, or full-time – **APPLY!**

To apply you must first find out where the jobs are, who is hiring, and what the options are. It used to be that one of the only places to look for jobs was through the want ads in the newspapers. Now that we have the Internet, often times people find employment opportunities through there. Newspapers, the Internet, and listening to advertisement are all good places to learn about work opportunities.

Some great online resources for job-hunting include:

- Craigslist.org
- Indeed.com
- Monster.com
- Careerbuilder.com
- Shiftgig.com



Activity 2: Job Search

Reading a Want Ad. Look through the want ads and find three jobs that look interesting to you. Fill in the blanks below:

Want Ad #1

Who is the contact person? _____

How do you apply? (in person, by calling, by sending a **resume**) _____

What are the requirements? (experience or training) _____

What is the pay and benefits? _____

Where is the job located? _____

Do they offer training? _____

Want Ad #2

Who is the contact person? _____

How do you apply? (in person, by calling, by sending a **resume**) _____

What are the requirements? (experience or training) _____

What is the pay and benefits? _____

Where is the job located? _____

Do they offer training? _____

Want Ad #3

Who is the contact person? _____

How do you apply? (in person, by calling, by sending a **resume**) _____

What are the requirements? (experience or training) _____

What is the pay and benefits? _____

Where is the job located? _____

Do they offer training? _____

➤ Now, which of these three is the most attractive to you? Are you ready for this job now, or do you need training, experience? How can you get this training or experience? _____

Lesson 3: Getting a Job

The second step is applying. Most part time jobs require that you complete an application, participate in an interview, perhaps take a drug test, and demonstrate that you can do the job. Many full-time jobs require that you do all of these and also participate in more than one interview. Before applying to any job, you must be ready. How do you get ready? Prepare a resume, learn the skills you need to participate in an interview, practice those skills, get training or education that will help you do the job, learn how to get around by yourself, get the necessary identification you will need to cash your paychecks, and know about work ethics.

➤ A Resume...

This is a written document that highlights your education, experience, and strengths.

It includes all of your personal information so that employers can contact you if you are interested. This document represents who you are to potential employers and is usually

sent out with a cover letter. The cover letter is usually brief but should include a summary of the information in your resume and explain why you think you are qualified for the job.



Activity 3: Resume Developing

We will now review two resumes and critique them. We will also work in groups to write a cover letter for each of these resumes.

Lesson 4: Interviewing

➤ Interviewing Skills

All of the skills you learned in chapters #5 and #6 can be used in an interview. The difference between an interview and a possible meeting with helpers is that you are usually not going to be the one taking charge of the meeting. Most likely you will have



to wait until the interviewer asks you questions. The strength of knowing the skills you have learned already is being ready to answer instead of stumbling and not having an answer. This doesn't mean that you must have the right answer for everything, but it does mean that you should at least be prepared. In addition to the skills highlighted in those chapters,

these are some commonly asked questions in an interview:

What are your strengths?

What could you improve about yourself?

When are you available to work?

What are your goals for the future?

Why do you think you are qualified for this job?

How would you handle a situation in which _____
_____?

Making a good impression is also very important in an interview. We recommend that to make good impressions, you **dress** appropriately for the interview and if you are getting an application in person. The potential employer will remember how you

presented yourself and this will help him/her make the final decision about hiring you.

Making **eye contact** and **shaking hands**, as well as sitting upright are all behaviors that you do with your body. This is called body language or communicating with your actions, and it all counts in the interview process.

➤ **Training & Education...**

Not all jobs will require extensive training and education. Part-time jobs that people get for extra cash and to get experience in the workplace, often times provide on-the-job training of their own. The downside of these jobs is that if you don't have much training or education of your own, it is difficult and sometimes impossible to advance or get promoted. This is where getting the education and training is important. By continuing to go to school after high school, you are learning skills that will make you more likely to obtain the type of employment you want.

➤ **Getting Around...**

While we all need the help and support of family and friends, getting around to school, work, and other places should not be left up to those individuals. Often times family and friends offer that type of support, but eventually everyone must learn how to get around on their own. This way they will not have to depend on another person to get to school or work. There are many ways to learn how to get around. The most difficult step is accepting that you may have to take public transportation, and that you will have to learn how to do it by yourself.

➤ **Proper identification ...**

In order to get a job anywhere you will need to show some form of identification, either a driver's license or state identification card. This will be used in the hiring

process to complete tax forms, like the I-9. This type of paperwork will also be needed if you are going to try to cash your paycheck. Most importantly you will need to know your social security number and you might even be asked to bring a copy of actual card. Again, this is needed to verify your identification and make sure that the tax-related paperwork is done correctly. Sometimes you may have taken some action steps to get these documents before you actually start the application process.

Insert handout on getting a state ID and replacement copy of social security card



Activity 4: Practice Interview

Let's look at some videos of people interviewing. We are going to rate how they did in the body language area and also answering the questions. The rule is to always state something positive and then we will discuss what could have been improved.

Now, let's practice a few interview questions with partners. Ask your partner one or two questions from the list below, then trade places. Remember, answer with positivity and confidence!

What are your strengths?

What could you improve about yourself?

When are you available to work?

What are your goals for the future?

Why do you think you are qualified for this job?

Lesson 5: Work Ethic

Whether you are working, going to school, or both, there are difficult choices to make every day. As a young person, it is easy to think of this time as not very important without understanding that now is the time to make a future for yourself. For this reason, often times, young people do not make the best choices about their actions. This may result in negative consequences. A young person who is going to school may feel that it is too difficult, and instead of asking for help and not quitting, they may decide that they don't need to continue. They may think that they can depend on their family forever. Clearly this is not the right choice to make since most young adults would like to either be on their own or contribute to their household for a better future. A young adult working very hard, 40 to 50 hours a week in a job that doesn't pay much may start becoming discouraged. This may be understandable, but instead of talking to their supervisor, expressing their concerns, or getting advice from someone around them, they may start demonstrating bad work **ethic** (behaviors). Negative work ethic may mean that you don't show up for work, come in late without any excuse or phone call, or get into arguments with co-workers often. All of these actions can result in you having a negative recommendation from your supervisor or possibly even getting fired.

Can you think of some examples of negative work or student **ethics**?



Activity 5: Appropriate Vs. Inappropriate

We are going to review some scenarios in which a young person will be faced with a difficult situation. We will work in groups to find the different options the person may decide to follow and the consequences of each.

Chapter 10 – Employment Options 2

Goal of the Chapter: In this chapter you will continue to learn about employment options. The information provided here will help you make informed decisions about the options you choose for yourself.

New Words

Job application – A detailed form you will complete with personal, educational, and work information.

Job card – A tool to help you recall pertinent information for a job interview.

Questionnaire – A test-like document that new employees may have to take before being hired. Questions are related to work ethics and decision making topics.

References – People who know about your skills and strengths as well as education and work experience. These may be teachers or past employers.



Lesson 1: Job Interview Steps

While many of the skills you read about already are applicable to job interviewing situations, there are some specific skills to learn and practice before looking for a job.

As mentioned in [chapter 9](#), searching for a job can be a long and challenging process. Making sure you cover all the necessary areas of making phone calls, completing job applications, obtaining letters of reference, completing a resume, and interviewing will make it a less challenging process. Keeping a journal of your contacts will help you stay organized in your search. The journal will serve as a written record of the contacts you have made. If a journal does not seem like something that would be useful to you, keeping business cards is another option. If you see an advertisement, meet someone, hear about a job or get a referral, ask for a business card or make a note of it in your journal. The business card will give you all the contact information you need without having to look it up. Getting more than one card from each person is also helpful. Carry one with you and keep one in a safe place, that way it will be more difficult for you to lose them. By keeping the business cards with you, you can use them for easy reference when making contacts with possible employers.

Carrying a "Job Card" is another useful tool. Once this card is completed it contains all the relevant information you will need to complete a job application and answer questions at an interview. Although you will have your card with you at all times, you should try to memorize the information in it so that you don't have to refer to it during an actual interview.

Activity 1: Creating a Job Card

Exercise: *Cut Out and Complete Job Card*

Personal Information

Name: _____ email: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

SS#: _____

Educational History

High School: _____

Address: _____

Telephone # _____

Counselor _____

Attended from _____ to _____

Grade School: _____

Address: _____

Telephone # _____

Attended from _____ to _____

Employment History

Company: _____

Address: _____

Telephone # _____

Position held: _____

Contact/Supervisor: _____

Employed from _____ to _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Telephone # _____
Position held: _____
Contact/Supervisor _____
Employed from _____ to _____

Hobbies and Special Interest

Special Skills (i.e. typing, second language)

References (3)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone # _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone # _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone # _____

Lesson 2: Selling Yourself

In chapter 9, you completed an activity to help you learn how to read want ads.

Another source for finding jobs is attending job fairs, visiting local businesses, or going on the Internet. Following up on tips from friends and relatives about who is hiring can also work. Once you have the information you need, you will have to take the initial step of presenting yourself. On this visit your goal will be to introduce yourself, obtain an application, and set up an interview. The following is a list of suggested steps for a situation like this one. If you look at the steps carefully you will see that some are the same as those in earlier chapters that we suggest for asking for help or support from others.

Suggested Steps for an Initial Visit that may take place before an interview:

1. Greet and introduce yourself **(a must)**
2. State the purpose of your visit **(a must)**
 - "I would like to apply for the job of..."
 - "I would like to find out more about the job for..."
3. Ask for a job application; ask if you may take it home or are you required to complete it there. (By taking it home you can make sure that you have all the time you need to make sure it is done correctly and don't miss any important information)
4. If the job does not require a job application form, as what is the first step in applying.
5. Ask about the interview process **(optional)**
 - "When will you be interviewing?"
 - "How long will the interview process take?"
 - "Can I bring someone to the interview with me?"
6. Show your appreciation **(a must)**

Once you are called for an interview you need to prepare some more. You should practice some skills that will apply specifically to this situation. They are outlined below. In addition to that, you should prepare questions you would like to ask by writing them down, practice talking about yourself and your strengths, put together copies of your letters of reference (if you have them), and prepare a resume if applicable. Once you have done all these you should practice acting out the following skills either with a friend, family member, mentor, and/or teacher.

Suggested Steps for Job Interview Situation:

Secretary and/or Clerk

1. Greet and introduce yourself
2. State the purpose of your visit
3. Give the time of your appointment and who it is with

Interviewer

4. Greet and introduce yourself
5. State pleasure in meeting
6. Be ready to talk about your strengths and also areas of need
7. Talk about your previous experience and training or education you have received

Questions

8. Try to answer all questions the best way you can

- Don't answer questions in a rush, take your time and think about the answer. If you need more time to answer a question, say so.

9. If there is a chance for you to ask questions, here are some ideas

Ask about their training program for new employees

Ask about evaluations, who conducts them, and how often

Ask how evaluations will affect you

Ask about opportunities for growth within the company

Ask about salary, schedules, and benefits

Ask about taking further tests (i.e. urine tests) and medical exams

Ask about on-the-job support (some examples of "on-the-job supports" may include specialized training on tasks, visual representations for task completion reminders, support available from co-workers, special equipment such as computer equipment or software)

- Ask about completing questionnaires or taking skills tests

In Conclusion

10. Find out what the next step is

11. Find out when they will be making decisions about hiring

12. Show your appreciation

13. Make a final closing

Sending a follow-up letter after an interview or making a phone call to state your appreciation for the interview will show the potential employer that you are seriously interested in the job. If you decide to send a letter it should be brief and focus on showing appreciation and pointing out the highlights of the interview. If you don't have the resources to send a letter, a phone call is an appropriate alternative. Another instance when a phone call is appropriate is to find out about the status of your application. A good waiting time is about two weeks, unless the potential employer stated that it would take longer than that. If you haven't heard about the job in that amount of time, take the initiative and call them. This way you can stop waiting for the phone to ring and move on to another prospect if you need to. This call will also serve as a reminder to them that you are still interested.

Following the initial interview, you may have to have a second interview with other personnel from the company. At times there may actually be two people interviewing you at once. This may make you nervous, but if you apply all the suggested skills to each interview situation, it will help you present yourself as prepared and confident. Remember, just as in the mentoring situations discussed in the previous chapters, you are trying to make a good impression.



Activity 2: Role Play Situations

It's **PRACTICE** time again. Use your own examples and also do these three situations in order.

Situation # 1

You read about a Job Fair taking place at the local community college. You are interested in the sales position of a telemarketing company. Your goal is to fill out an application, obtain information and set up an interview. You approach a representative at a Job Fair, what would you say?

Situation # 2

You have an appointment with the representative of the telemarketing company you applied at. This is your first interview. Act out the interview. Make sure you mention that you have completed a training program in communication at the City Colleges of Chicago.

Situation # 3

You have been called back for a second interview with a telemarketing company. This time you are interviewing with the inside sales manager who would be your supervisor. Act out this situation.



True or False -- These are some review questions to see what you have learned.

We will read through all of them together and you decided whether they are true or false. We will then discuss them as a group.

_____ The skills for interviewing are exactly the same as the ones for talking with a potential mentor.

_____ You should write down the questions you want to ask before the interview.

_____ You should try to memorize the information on your Job Card before going to an interview.

_____ Do not bring letters of reference to an interview.

_____ You will need to present a resume for every job situation.

_____ If you haven't heard from a potential employer one week after your interview, you should forget about the job and go on to something else.

_____ Sending a follow-up letter show the potential employer that you are seriously interested in the job.

_____ Making a good impression is not important at an interview.

_____ There are six suggested steps for the initial visit to a potential employer.

_____ Going to a job fair is an ideal way to find out about new employment opportunities.

If you were an employer what are three questions you would ask an applicant?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What are three good questions to ask at an interview?

1. _____

2. _____


3. _____

Lesson 3: Potential Benefits

Now that you have learned about how to access resources, apply for programs, get help, and a job, you should try not to forget these skills. In addition to using your interviewing skills, you also need to use your skills to continue making progress. Unfortunately, some young people think that once they are employed, everything is just wonderful, and they no longer need to worry about anything. This feeling many times gets them in trouble, and they end up losing their jobs. Your goal should be to prevent this from happening to you.

You must remember that even though you have a job, there are still goals you are working on to improve your entire life. For example, if you do well in a part-time job, you may become employed full-time. If you are already full-time, you may have the chance to get a promotion or a raise. If you complete a certificate training program successfully, you could pursue a more advanced degree later on. If you are a quality employee, you may be able to use your experience from your first job to get a similar job at another company. There are always plenty of chances to get better at what you do and use it to make a better future for you. Get the picture?

Now here are the hard facts about employment, benefits, and your responsibilities.

As you know there are a number of employment situations - part-time, full-time, and temporary, etc... People who are full time employees of a company have more benefits. Can you think of some of the benefits you might get if you are a full-time employee of a company? (Hint: They were presented in [chapter 9](#)). 

For review: The benefits include health insurance for the employee and sometimes for members of their families, getting a certain number of paid sick days, and having a certain number of paid vacation days after being employed for a year. Now, just because full-time employees have these benefits does not mean that they can just miss work whenever they want. If they use up their sick days, then they don't get paid for any other days of work missed because of being sick. If they want vacation days, they have to ask for them a long time in advance, and it has to be approved by the supervisor.

Part-time employees usually do not have any benefits. People who work part-time work less than 40 hours a week and schedules might change each week. If they need a day off because of being sick or having an appointment, they do not get paid for it. In these situations, part-time employees have to ask for these days off in advance before schedules are made. Can you think of some common places where there are many part-time employees?

Examples of Part-Time Employment Situations

Examples of Full-Time Employment Situations

Although there are many young part-time employees in the work force, older people also hold these kinds of jobs. These types of jobs are very good for people who are going to school, have a second job, or other responsibilities at home. Part-time employees are just as important as full-time employees and should have the same sense of responsibility if they want to keep their jobs. At times companies may start people off on a part-time basis and then later on give them the opportunity to become full-time employees if they prove themselves.

Activity 3: Benefits that I Need

List all of the benefits you need to receive from an employer.

Lesson 4: Salary and Hourly Wages

Another difference between jobs has to do with how people are paid, either hourly or on salary. On an hourly basis you will be paid a certain amount of money for the hours you work each week. This is true for either part-time or full-time employees. Getting paid on an hourly basis can be very positive. If people want to make more money, they can ask to work over-time or holidays. If people work on holidays, like the 4th of July, they may get paid what companies call time-and-half or double time. What does this mean? This means you will get more than your hourly wage.



For example if you make \$8.00 an hour on a normal day, on the holiday you may get that plus half of that for each hour you work. That means you would get \$12.00 an hour for the hours you worked on that holiday. How did I get this number? Well, half of \$8.00 is \$4.00, so I added that to \$8.00 and got \$12.00. If you get double time, then you just multiply your hourly wage by two. In this example then you would get \$16.00 an hour, which is pretty good. Remember, hourly wages can be either for full-time or part-time employees, depending on the company.

Let's practice (Hint: you can use a calculator)

Figure out how much you would make an hour for time-and-a-half if your hourly wage is \$6.00 an hour. How much will you make for 8 hours of work?

Sample: what=X, is = equal, of = multiplication

Step 1 – Figure out what is half of the hourly wage

$$X = .5 * 6.00$$

$$X = 3.00$$

Step 2 – Add the answer above to the hourly wage

$$3.00 + 6.00 = 9.00$$

Step 3 – multiply the answer to step 2 times the hours of work

$$9.00 * 8 \text{ hours} = 72.00$$

So on time-and-a-half, you would get \$72.00 for working an 8-hour day, instead of the regular \$48.00.

The other option for getting paid is being on **salary**. This is only for full-time employees. What this means is that you make a certain amount of money for the year for at least 40 hours a week of work, or in some jobs it may be 37.5 hours a week. It may happen that on salary you may end up working more hours a week than 40, but because you do not get paid by the hour, you don't get extra money. People who are on salary are usually employed by big business companies, institutions like schools, universities, hospitals, or are professionals like lawyers, doctors, teachers, psychologists, social workers, business managers, company owners, bankers, secretaries, nurses, therapists, or professors. So, what is the benefit of this if you have to work more hours at time, you may be asking yourself? Well, employees on salary usually receive the extra benefits that were mentioned above. Many people who are on hourly wages are individuals who work in factories, warehouses, small stores, large department stores, grocery stores, and other similar places. These are just some examples. Each company or organization may do things the way they want for the different types of jobs they have. However, they must be consistent and fair.

In the future, which would you like to have, part-time or full-time employment, get paid by the hour or be on a yearly salary?

You may be saying to yourself, "I already knew all this stuff," and you may be right. This is our way of reminding you about how the world of work runs. If you know the ropes, then you are less likely to make silly mistakes that will cost you your job, which you have worked so hard to get.

Lesson 5: Job Retention and School Completion

Factors that Affect Job Retention and School Completion



There are many reasons why people lose jobs or end up dropping out of a training program. Can you think of some?

If you had a hard time thinking of some, here are some common things that have an effect on how well people keep their jobs.

1. **Transportation** is a very important factor. Telling your boss that you missed work because your ride didn't make it is not appropriate. Not being in class for the same reason is also not appropriate. It is not your boss' responsibility or your ride's responsibility to get you to work. It is yours. In school it is different because the only consequence of not making it to class may be your grade. Can you think of some things you can do to make sure that your ride is responsible and doesn't "forget" to pick you up?

What are some other ways of getting to work if you do not have your own car that are better than having to depend on someone else to give you a ride all the time?

Which of these do you think are the best options for you, and why?

2. Your **lifestyle** is an important factor that may affect your job. For example, if you live at home with your parents, siblings, or other family members, and you share rooms as well as responsibility for care taking, it may be difficult for you to get ready for work or get up in morning. If you were in this situation, what could you do about it?

Another aspect of your lifestyle might be partying too much, hanging out late, drinking, watching TV, or using drugs. How can this hurt you? Who are some other people besides family members that could hurt your chances of keeping a job? How can these people have a negative effect on your job performance?

How can you handle these situations?

3. **Fears** can also have an effect on your job performance. Often people on jobs may be scared of asking questions, learning new things, or talking to their supervisor. Asking questions in class may even help others who do not know how to ask questions, or are not comfortable doing it. What do you think will happen if you ask a question?

Asking questions shows the supervisor or instructor that you are interested in doing a good job and that you are willing to learn.

Fears may also cause people to shy away from trying new things at a job. For example, someone may be offered a job in a different department but because they are insecure of themselves and are scared of looking stupid by asking questions, they will not take the opportunity. What are some things you could do if you were in this situation?

Of course, it is definitely O.K. to have some fears. Actually, if people didn't have any fears about their future and how well they were doing it, it may result in less self-motivation. The important thing to remember is that we should not let our fears control us. You need to use the resources you have learned and the mentors you have met to help you resolve your fears, ask questions appropriately, and learn new skills when the time comes.

We have talked about three major things that might have an effect on a person's job or completion of a training program. Can you think of any other things that might interfere with someone staying employed and moving ahead?

Now we are going to read some short stories that can be found in Appendix A at the back of this book. What would you do in these situations? We will discuss these situations and some possible solutions to the problems.

Exercise:

True or False -- These are some review questions to see what you have learned. We will read through all of them together and you decide whether they are true or false. We will then discuss them as a group.

True & False

- _____ "My ride was late." is a good excuse to give your boss when you are late.
- _____ Sometimes fears can have an effect on how well we do a job.
- _____ It is better to ask questions than to pretend you know it all.
- _____ A part-time employee works more than 40 hours a week.
- _____ One of the benefits of full-time employment is having vacation days whenever you want them.
- _____ Part-time employees can make more money if they work on national holidays, like the 4th of July.
- _____ People who are on salary get paid for extra hours they work.
- _____ A part-time employee does not get paid for days of work missed because of \ being sick.
- _____ Once you have job, you can feel comfortable and not have to worry about anything else.
- _____ The lifestyle you lead may have a negative effect on your job.



Figure out these calculations...

An hourly wage of \$4.50 an hour, for a total of 9 hours of work.

Time and half for an hourly wage of \$5.00 an hour, for a total of 7 hours of work.

Answer Key

True & False

False "My ride was late." is a good excuse to give your boss when you are late.

True Sometimes fears can have an effect on how well we do a job.

True It is better to ask questions than to pretend you know it all.

False A part-time employee works more than 40 hours a week.

False One of the benefits of full-time employment is having vacation days whenever you want them.

True Part-time employees can make more money if they work on national holidays like the 4th of July.

False People who are on salary get paid for extra hours they work.

True A part-time employee does not get paid for days of work missed because of being sick.

False Once you have job, you can feel comfortable and not have to worry about anything else.

True The lifestyle you lead may have a negative effect on your job.

Figure out these calculations...

An hourly wage of \$4.50 an hour, for a total of 9 hours of work.

$$\begin{array}{r} \$4.50 \\ \times \quad 9 \\ \hline \$40.50 \end{array}$$

Time and half for an hourly wage of \$5.00 an hour, for a total of 7 hours of work.

$$\begin{array}{r} \$5.00 \quad \$7.50 \\ +2.50 \quad \times \quad 7 \\ \hline \$7.50 \quad \$52.50 \end{array}$$

An hourly wage of \$6.50 an hour, for a total of 20 hours of work a week for two weeks.

$$\begin{array}{r} 20+20=40 \quad \$6.50 \\ \times \quad 40 \\ \hline \$260.00 \end{array}$$

Activity 5: Identifying Obstacles and Next Steps

Now that you have completed this part of the training sessions, you should be well on your way to working on your goals. If you haven't already done so, you will start interviewing for jobs, making phone calls to get information you need, and going to appointments. Of course, it is O.K. to still feel nervous about all these things, but remember that you know what you're doing. You have worked hard, learned some things, reviewed some things you already knew, and practiced a lot. Now you need to use all the information in this manual to continue working towards your goals. You are not alone in this process. The mentors you have met in this program will continue to be there to provide support. However, it will be **YOUR** responsibility to pick up the phone and call to ask for this support. You are ultimately in charge of your destiny. This means that there will also be times when the staff of the program may call with ideas, suggestions, or opportunities. You will have to make your own decisions based on the goals you have set for yourself and your present situation.

REMEMBER, come back to this book, to these mentors, and to these skills as many times as you need until you feel satisfied with the goals you have set for yourself. You have the power to make a difference in your life!!!

List your obstacles and next steps to achieve your goals.

Handout

Interactive Situations -- Problem Solving

Situation #1

Everything is finally turning out great for you. You have been working at Marshall Fields in the candy department for about two months. Your supervisor is very impressed with your work. They have decided to offer you a full-time position. This would mean more money and benefits like health insurance. You are feeling a little insecure about your ability to work full-time because of your responsibilities at home. You turn down the offer and your supervisor is obviously disappointed and confused. What could you do differently? Let's problem solve...

Situation #2

You have been working at Jewel as a service clerk for about a month. You are working part-time, but the money is very useful. You have made new friends and you get along pretty well with your supervisors. You are kind of tired one day, so you decide to take a break. It isn't really your break time yet, but you figure, "what the heck, it's not that busy, nobody is going to mind." You grab a pop and go sit in the back room. While you're in there one of your co-workers walks in and asks you why you're on break when he was just told to go on break. You tell him what you had decided to do. He looks at you kind of funny, but doesn't say anything. You guys start "shooting the breeze," when the manager on duty for the night walks into the break room and finds the two of you

there. He asks you what you're doing there. When you tell him he calls you into his office and reprimands you. What would you do differently? Let's problem solve...

Situation #3

You have been working all summer long!!!! This is the first morning you have had to yourself. You have to work at 5:00 P.M. so you make plans to go to the beach with some friends around noon. Before you know it, it is 4:30 and you are still at the beach. You will never make it to work on time and you are having such a good time that you decided just to blow it off. Besides, you are just one of many cashiers. You not being there isn't going to be any big deal. What would you do? Let's problem solve...

Situation #4

You were on your way to work at Navy Pier when you ran into some of your old buddies. These aren't the guys you hang out with anymore but they're still your friends. They stop you to talk for a while, and since you don't really want any trouble, you decide to spend a few minutes. When you try to be on your way they ask you to join them for a ride in their new car. You don't really know what to do, but for some reason you decide to go for the ride. By the time you get back, you are already about an hour and a half late for work and you haven't called in. You aren't sure of what to do, if you should call, just go to work, or blow it off completely. After thinking about it for a while, you decide just to hurry up and go to work. When you finally get to work, you are two hours late.

Your boss isn't around so you just get to work right away but the guy you were replacing is extremely upset. You try to explain, but he insists that you should have been there or at least called. What would you do? Let's problem solve...

Situation #5

You have been out of school for over a year. You want to get your Associates Degree but everything you have heard about the application process makes you feel like you will never be able to be accepted. You keep trying to get into the admissions office, but something always gets in the way of you registering. Either you miss the date, you don't have a ride, you get sick or something. You start feeling like maybe you will never get your Associates Degree. What would you do? Let's problem solve...

Situation #6

Getting back into high school has been difficult. You would like to get your high school diploma but, because of your past gang involvement and being expelled from school, you are not allowed back into the school. You decide to try another high school, but you can't really find anyone in the school you know to help. You decide to just go take the GED test instead, even though what you really want is your diploma. What would you do? Let's problem solve...

Situation #7

You have been working at UPS for a few weeks. When you first started you were a little nervous, but you have worked hard to learn and are doing very well. You have formed some new friendships with the people you work with. There is one guy in particular who was really helpful at first, showing the ropes and introducing you to people. Lately he has been acting kind of strange and saying things that make you feel bad like, "You still have a lot to learn," or "Getting a promotion is impossible, no matter how hard you work because you're a drop out." You can't really figure out why he is saying these things since your supervisor has been impressed with your work and dedication. Your feelings toward this co-worker are starting to make you feel bad about going to work. What would you do? Let's problem solve...

Situation #8

You have been to many job interviews but getting a job has not happened for you. By nature you are quiet and reserved. You like to keep to yourself. You have been learning how to improve your social skills and make better impressions at interviews. You try to do your best, but something isn't right. You even have people who coach you before you go into an interview and give you some good ideas about what to say and how to answer questions. When you go into the interview, however, your answers are short, and dull. You don't really look or sound excited about a job, even though you are inside. You are starting to think you will never find even a part-time job. What would you do? Let's problem solve...

Situation #9

Although you have interviewed for a few jobs, you have not been able to pass the drug test and so you have not been hired. You don't really do a lot of drugs like you used to, but every once in a while you hang out with some friends who do. You have heard that the smoke from marijuana stays in your blood for a very long time, over a month, but you really didn't believe it. You don't really know what to do because you are always around people who might smoke pot. Maybe you will just have to wait until you find a company that doesn't do drug testing. Besides, you don't think smoking pot is really that bad. What would you do? Let's problem solve...

Situation #10

You have just found out about opportunities for city jobs. You have to go downtown to the Daley Center to pick up the paperwork. This is a great opportunity because you don't have to do an interview. All you have to do is complete the paperwork and you will be placed in a job that matches your skills. Of course, they aren't the best jobs but the pay is good and it would be a good place to start to get some work experience. Since you are not 18, you need to bring either your mother or father with you. Both of them work a lot of hours and they keep saying they're going to take you but every time you're going to go, something happens. The jobs are going fast so you don't have much time. What would you do? Let's problem solve...

TRAINING MANUAL REVIEW

As a review we are going to go over the main points of this training manual. You are not expected to remember every single thing, but rather to recall the important messages and know where to find them. If there is one thing that you should know well, it is the skills that are involved in asking for help from others or requesting services and supports. The job interviewing skills are also essential. You will spend some time practicing and improving those skills so that you can demonstrate your abilities in both of these areas.

REMEMBER

YOU are in charge of your future. This means you need to have clear goals, objectives, and action plans. You also need to know yourself pretty well, what you are good at and what you need help with. By knowing these things, it will be easier to talk about yourself in meetings and interviews.

REMEMBER

Asking for help or applying for services is not always easy. You need to be persistent and willing to take a risk. If you don't get what you want, don't leave without trying to get a suggestion, a less demanding request, or a referral. Ask for help or services by demonstrating your ability to make a request effectively.

REMEMBER

Going to an interview for work or school can be intimidating. Being prepared by practicing what you are going to say or ask is important. Role-playing the situation out is a good idea. How you dress, and how you act will also make an impression.

REMEMBER

When deciding what kind of education to pursue, you should understand what all the options involve. Knowing about your rights and the resources in the community will help you to make easier decisions. Don't go with what you think is the cool thing, or the right thing, go with what is best for you, your strengths and your needs.

REMEMBER

Living on your own requires much work and responsibility on your part. Making sure that you take it slow as you move towards more independence is the key. If living on your own is not for you, you can be independent or show that you are an adult in other ways: by getting training, becoming employed, contributing to your family, or getting involved in other activities. You are successful even if you live at home! It may be that your family members need you more than you need them, and it takes a mature young person to realize that.

What would you say was the most valuable thing you learned from the activities in this training manual?

What would be the least valuable?

Is there anything you would teach differently?

Is there anything you disagree with?

Exercise: *Cut out Steps*

GREETING	INTRODUCTION	PURPOSE
GOALS	SITUATION	OBJECTIVES
INFORMAL CONVERSATION	SOURCE	CHALLENGES
STRENGTHS/ TALENTS	THINGS ALREADY DONE	MAKE THE REQUEST
BENEFITS OF HELP	ACTION PLANNING	CHECK THE PLAN
ASK FOR A REFERRAL	LESS DEMANDING REQUEST	HANDLING REJECTIONS
GET PERMISSION TO USE NAME	FINAL CLOSING	SUMMARIZE AGREEMENTS
SHOW APPRECIATION	ACTION PLANNING FOR A LESS DEMANDING REQUEST	ACTION PLANNING FOR AN IDEA OR SUGGESTION