

Empowering the Employment Sector to Serve Youth with Mental Health Issues



Project Made
Possible By:



The Counselling
Foundation of Canada

Empowering the Employment Sector to Serve Youth with Mental Health Issues

How to Use This Resource

This resource has been developed to help Employment Counselors better support youth living with mental health issues seek and obtain employment. This guide provides resources and tools for Employment Counselors who are looking to expand their programming and adapt their practices to better serve youth with mental health issues, covering topics such as: basic mental health, how to best adapt employment service practices to fit the needs of youth living with mental illness, and how to prepare youth living with mental health issues for new employment - an often challenging period of transitions and lifestyle changes for them.

Recently, Statistics Canada revealed that one in five people will experience some form of mental illness at some point in their life. Understanding the needs of youth who are living with mental health issues and having the tools/resources to work with them is therefore extremely important for Employment Counselors who are currently in the field. Outside the employment sector, mental health has quickly become one of the most pressing health concerns in Canada, with many campaigns, programs, and services being developed to support those living with mental health challenges, but even with these campaigns, programs, and developed services there are still many youth living with mental health issues who are choosing to not speak about their diagnosis and not to ask for the support/accommodations that they need because of the stigma surrounding mental health in society. Knowing this, makes it all the more important that you, a potential Employment Counselor to these youth, have the skills and tools to best assist them – always creating an open and supportive environment for these youth where they can feel comfortable to not only speak about their mental illness but to also ask for the support that they need in seeking and obtaining employment.

The main goals of this resource are to:

- Provide Employment Counselors with a basic understanding of mental health as well as the knowledge of how employment and the mental illness recovery process are related.
- Provide Employment Agencies/Counselors with tips and best practices on how to create an open and supportive environment for youth living with mental health issues.
- Provide Employment Counselors with six pre-employment workshops that have been specifically created to help prepare youth living with mental health issues seek and maintain employment successfully.

It should be noted that each workshop will take approximately two hours to complete and it is recommended that at least an additional thirty minutes be left at the end of each session for questions, follow-up, and individual consultations. All workshops have been created in a way that they can be run either as a group or an individual workshop session - depending on the youth's needs and/or Employment Counselor's availability.

In this resource we have chosen to use the term “youth living with mental health issues” to encompass all those who struggle with mental health challenges.

To get started, download the workshop PowerPoint Presentation which you wish to run and follow the lesson plan as well as facilitator notes for each presentation found in this guide for helpful tips, important notes, speaking points, and key questions to ask.



Mental Health in Our Communities

*Fact: 1 in 5 Canadians (24% of women and 17% of men) will experience challenges with their mental health, at some point in their lifetime, that will meet the criteria to be diagnosed as a mental illness.
(Gov't of Canada, 2006)*

Mental health issues are becoming increasingly more common especially amongst youth today and employment agencies are now serving more youth with mental health issues as these youth look for assistance and support with their career development and exploration. As employment and mental health are positively linked, the rise of mental health issues amongst youth is a challenge that the employment sector must be proactive in tackling and can start doing so by ensuring that all employment counselors have the resources, tools, and skills to best serve these clients.

In Canada, the statistics on youth mental health are astounding. According to CAMH, 10-20% of Canadian youth are affected by a mental health issue and our youth suicide rate is the third highest in the industrialized world - suicide being the second highest cause of death in 15-24 year old Canadians. And, sadly, of these youth only one out of five who need mental health services seeks and/or receives them. Some of the most commonly diagnosed mental illnesses include: mood disorders (depression, mania, and bipolar), anxiety disorders (PTSD, OCD, and panic disorder), psychotic disorders (schizophrenia), concurrent disorders (addiction and substance abuse), and personality disorders (antisocial personality disorder) [*please see Appendix A for more information on these mental illnesses*].

Having a mental health issue presents a number of challenges when it comes to finding employment – some of which include: having limited employment experience and/or gaps in work history; experiencing fear and/or anxiety; lack of confidence; social stigma; and workplace discrimination. These obstacles, as well as many others, result in those with mental health issues having difficulty obtaining and/or maintaining employment. The unemployment rate for individuals with mental health issues ranges from 70% to 90%. Employment Agencies need to respond to the rising increase of mental health issues amongst youth and know how to effectively service this group.

Youth Employment Services YES (YES) and The Counselling Foundation of Canada have chosen to address this issue by capturing the learnings of YES' Lighthouse Project – a one-year program that was developed in partnership between the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and YES, where YES is helping 60 youth with mental health issues find and maintain employment – and transferring these learnings into a practical curriculum. This project is seen as a step in the right direction for the employment sector and presents Employment Counselors with a unique resource that will help them better understand how to adjust and adapt intake and assessment procedures as well as career counselling and job development practices to better serve any young clients with mental health issues.

Mental Health and Employment

Employment is an extremely important part of any person's mental health journey towards recovery. As Employment Agencies know, employment can contribute to one's identity by creating new social networks and by giving a person a sense of purpose through their valued work in the community. Work is also known to provide structure in a person's life and is positively associated with improved self-esteem as well as general



hopefulness, all of which are necessary for a person who is challenged with mental health issues. (Martin & McKee, 2015)

70-90% of people diagnosed with a mental health issue are not working, even though they want to and are completely capable of doing so (Martin & McKee, 2015). People, especially youth, living with mental health issues are being left out of the workforce most often because of society's misconceptions about people with mental illness, with one of the most common misconceptions being that those living with mental health issues are unable and/or unfit to work because of their symptoms and potential for relapse.

Understanding the Stigma

When it comes to accessing employment, stigma is easily one of the greatest barriers for people living with mental health issues. Misconceptions about mental health not only make it more challenging for those diagnosed with a mental health issue to access employment but are also some of the greatest factors in why those living with mental health issues choose to not disclose about their mental health, seek out much needed support services, or request the accommodations/support that they need in order to be successful in the workplace.

The most common misconceptions are:

- People with mental illness are violent and dangerous;
- People living with mental illness are weak and can't handle stress;
- People living with mental illness cannot work;
- Mental illness is often just used as an excuse for bad behaviour, and;
- Mental illnesses are not real illnesses;

(CMHA, 2014)

It is important to note that while these misconceptions affect those living with mental health issues' ability to access employment, these misconceptions also have an impact on the personal beliefs and perceptions of those living with mental health issues as well. Even though they understand that these common beliefs about mental health are in fact myths, many people who are living with mental health issues have been seen to internalize the stigma, which often results in lower self-confidence, pessimism regarding their potential for recovery, and a level of personal shame that often results in them choosing not to disclose or not to access much needed supports/services. (Martin & McKee, 2015)

It is for these reasons that, as Employment Counselors, it is particularly important that you have a firm understanding of some of the most common mental health issues are, what workplace rights those living with mental health issues have (especially with regards to disclosure and accommodation), and that you are equipped with the knowledge and resources to be able to provide these youth with the right types of supports are so that they can be successful in finding and maintaining employment.

Best Practices and Tips for Working with Youth with Mental Health Issues

Youth living with mental health issues can face many unique barriers when trying to access employment and because of this a specialized pre-employment “training” period is needed to ensure that these youth are supported in developing the skills, tools, and knowledge needed to set them up for employment success. Some common challenges faced by these youth include:

- Transitioning into a routine which includes part/full-time work after being unemployed or out of school for a long period of time - with many of these youth finding it challenging to balance their mental health needs with their new job requirements.
- Side effects of medications and the ebbs and flow of recovery presenting challenges for these youth in meeting the expectations of an employment setting that does not allow for accommodation and/or flexibility in work expectations.
- Treatment needs (such as day time doctor’s appointments) making full-time work and scheduling a challenge, especially as it has been found that the reality is that only some employers are open to making accommodations that would allow for youth to address these needs.

Best Practices

1. It is important to always have a *Person Centered* approach when working with youth living with mental health issues. This approach should be applied to the overall program, individual employment counselling sessions, as well as the job development process. A *Person Centered* approach involves:
 - Being flexible and willing to make accommodations;
 - Being understanding of the youths challenges with program participation;
 - Being open to creating and trying different modifications for youth, always being open to the need to try something different;
 - Creating a welcoming and inclusive space for youth so that they feel comfortable (this applies to both group and individual sessions), and;
 - Always conveying optimism and hope, no matter how many challenges or roadblocks a youth encounters.
Note: this can be easily done by always ensuring that you are using positive language/phrasing when speaking to these youth.
2. Individualization of programming (both during the pre-employment as well as the job placement period) is extremely important as each youth will have unique/different challenges that need to be addressed in order for them to be successful in the workplace. It is important that the job developer seek out and match youth in job placements that would be suitable for their unique needs/wants.
3. Program goals must always focus on what clients CAN do – it is an important practice to look at each youth’s strengths and how they can be best applied in the workplace.
Note: Pointing out areas of strength to youth is also important to help them identify job opportunities they may have not otherwise considered.

Tips & Strategies

1. Client motivation and accountability can sometimes be a challenge. Youth living with mental illness, for a number of different reasons including anxiety, depression, and the internalized stigma, often require more support, encouragement, and structured accountability to ensure that they attend sessions, get involved with programming, and to stay on-top of their job search. Consistent feedback and conversations explaining the benefits of employment with respect to their mental health will and has been proven to be linked to higher levels of attendance and commitment to a pre-employment program.
2. It is encouraged that Employment Counselors create a “contract” with a client that outlines motivations, goals, and expectations of both the youth as well as the program staff that creates a clear understanding of what the program and relationship requirements are for both youth and staff.
Note: It is important that Employment Counselors understand their role and expertise when assisting youth with mental health issues find and maintain employment. Employment Counselors should develop a strong partnership with any relevant mental health providers so that youth are effectively being co-case managed. If the youth do not currently work with a mental health counselor, Employment Counselors should develop and provide youth with a network of mental health service referrals that the youth can independently access if needed. Having youth supported by both mental health services as well as employment services is vital to their long-term employment success.
3. Employment Counselors must provide continued support for the youth (both in person and over the phone) THROUGHOUT the job placement period to ensure job placement success. Frequent check-ins allow Employment Counselors to support youth with challenges that they are facing in the workplace and allow them to continue to work with the employer to ensure that the appropriate accommodations/modifications are being made for each youth.
4. The offering of group as well as one-on-one pre-employment workshops is extremely important. Many of the program participants’ needed/requested further individualized support during the pre-employment period. One-on-one workshops have been found to be most frequently requested for:
 - Resume building;
 - Interview skills (focusing on addressing gaps in their resume as well as how to address their potential need for accommodations);
 - Specific/individualized job “action” planning, and;
 - Assistance in creating “action plans” for moments of “crisis” in the workplace.
5. If possible, encourage clients to seek out additional support and/or to participate in various forms of health/wellness training in their community. Mindfulness training, meditation practice, art therapy, as well as health and wellness workshops have all been proven to help youth with their mental health needs and help them find balance as they transition into a new routine.

Taking Care of YOU

Supporting those who are living with mental health issues can have an effect on the mental health of Employment Counselors as well as other Employment Services Workers. The reality is that in becoming a counselor for these youth that you will naturally become an emotional support for them - listening as well as supporting them through times of distress and in moments of crisis as they transition into a new workplace and



adjust to a new work/life/mental health balance. Listening to stories of challenge, struggle, and crisis from these youth has the potential to lead to and result in emotional exhaustion, also known as compassion fatigue, for Employment Counselors. Compassion fatigue has symptoms which include: difficulty concentrating, exhaustion, irritability, as well as feelings of discouragement and hopelessness - all factors that influence one's mental health and ability to complete daily tasks and to meet work demands. (Martin & McKee, 2015)

With this being said, as Employment Counselors, you know that one cannot take care of the needs or support the mental health of others if one themselves is not in a positive, mentally healthy state of being. It is therefore extremely important that you, as the Employment Counselor to these youth, have a personal plan for taking care of your own mental health. Set yourself up for success by:

- Developing a personal wellness plan (plans to exercise, scheduled breaks in the work day; determined ways to continue to eat healthily even when work gets stressful/busy);
- Assessing your work/life balance and making changes where needed;
- Identifying and, if necessary, seeking out professional help;
- Identifying a coworker with whom you can talk to should a challenging situation arise or if you need to debrief a situation after a workshop/meeting, and;
- Taking the time needed to prepare and research mental health as well as to review all pre-employment workshops so that you feel ready and confident in your abilities to work with and support these youth.

Next Steps

In the next section you will find lesson plans for six unique pre-employment workshops accompanied by facilitator notes for the corresponding workshop presentation. The six workshop topics covered in this resource are:

- Mental Health 101: Finding Your Work/Life Balance
- Mental Health 102: Managing Your Mental Health in the Workplace
- Choosing to Disclose
- Breaking the Stigma
- The Job Search
- Cover Letters, Resumes, and Interviews

In the appendix you will find all needed resources as well as some additional web links and videos that you can use and review should you be looking for more information on mental health and/or how to best support those living with mental health issues as an Employment Counselor and caring adult.

Acknowledgements

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Workshop #1



Mental Health 101: Finding Your Work/Life Balance

Overview & Purpose:

This workshop will motivate and encourage participants to start their job search by providing them evidence of the many benefits of employment for those living with mental health issues. This workshop will provide youth with the tools as well as resources needed to support them in balancing their mental health needs during a period of transition (as they start new employment), filled with new demands and requirements.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the benefits of employment for those living with mental health issues in their process of recovery
- Understand the social and economic benefits of gaining and maintaining part/full-time employment
- Understand what community resources are available to support them in maintaining mental wellness
- Develop a personalized mental health wellness plan that will support them through this transition period

Materials Needed:

- White board/Screen
- Presentation *Mental Health 101: Finding Your Work/Life Balance*
- Resource *Resources in MY Community* (Appendix C:1)
- Resource *Maintaining Mental Wellness with a Healthy Lifestyle* (Appendix C:2)

Lesson Plan:

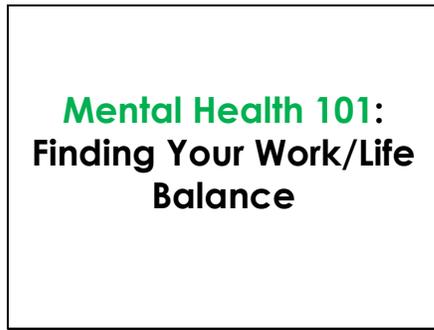
1. Ice Breaker
 - Spend the first 10/20 minutes of the workshop having everyone introduce one another and engaging them in a quick “ice breaker” game. Doing this will create a sense of openness/inclusion and make youth more comfortable with one another, encouraging questions and dialogue from them throughout the remainder of the workshop and pre-employment training period.
2. Main Activity
 - Presentation *Mental Health 101: Finding Your Work/Life Balance*
 - Facilitator notes found in presentation.
3. Individual Assignment
 - Finish the workshop by distributing the *Resources in MY Community* resource to your clients. Discuss all the services offered in your community (community centre health classes, support groups, free health services, etc.) with participants and have them identify at least three things they would like to do/include in their mental health wellness network.
*Note: As the facilitator you will have to do some research into your community’s offerings before this session and fill in the *Resources in MY Community* resource for your clients.

Leading Questions:

- What have been some of your barriers to employment?
- What benefits do you feel employment will have for you?
- What are some strategies/resources you could use to support you in maintaining mental health wellness during this period of transition?

Facilitator Notes

Slide 1



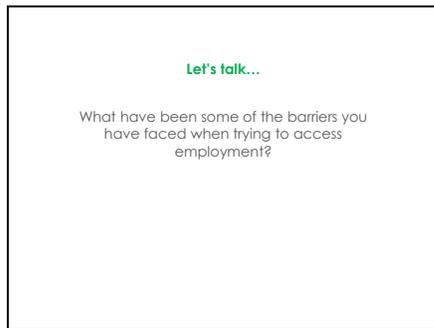
On this slide:

Spend the first 10/20 minutes of the workshop having everyone introduce one another and engaging them in a quick "ice breaker" game.

Things to Note:

Having a welcome activity that encourages the youth to share a little about themselves will create a sense of openness/inclusion and make youth more comfortable with one another. Having an open and inclusive environment is important for all workshops as it will allow youth to feel safe in asking questions and in partaking in discussions throughout the remainder of not only this workshop but also throughout the rest of the pre-employment training period.

Slide 2



On This Slide:

As a group, list all of the barriers the participants have experienced when trying to access/gain employment in the past. List them on a white board, chalk board, or sheet of chart paper for reference.

Some examples of things youth may say, include: stigma, lack of motivation, or anxiety.

Questions to Ask:

What have been some of your greatest challenges when trying to access employment?
How have these challenges affected your job search?

Slide 3



On This Slide:

In pairs, have the group make a list all of the challenges they have experienced with their mental health when working in the past. Examples may include: stigma, lack of motivation, side effects of medication, stress from workplace demands, or social anxiety just to name a few.

Come back together as a group and share.

Questions to Ask:

What have been some of the biggest challenges you have faced with your work in the past - either with your workplace, coworkers, or job requirements?
How did these affect your ability to fulfill your job requirements?
What about your motivation to work?

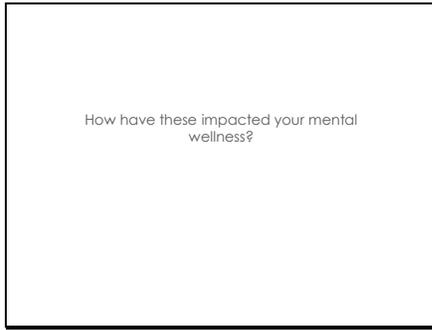
Things to Note:

It is important that as youth bring up challenges that they have had in past workplaces that you, as the Employment Service Worker for these youth, take notes so that you can begin to identify some of the factors in the workplace that negatively affect your clients' mental health.

It is also important that you use positive language/phrasing at all times. As the youth are addressing challenges and potentially sharing stories of past negative work experiences, it is up to you as the facilitator to show the youth how those negative experiences can help them find employment/jobs that are better suited to their needs.



Slide 4



On This Slide:

As a group, discuss how these experiences/challenges have impacted their mental health. Have they caused symptoms of their mental illness to re-surface? Have they triggered any new mental health symptoms? Have they affected their mental health in other ways? If so, how?

Things to Note:

Having the participants be able to identify workplace challenges and how these challenges may affect their mental health issues is extremely important for the success of their future employment. If youth are able to identify challenges that have a negative effect on their mental health they will be able to create “action plans” to help them better deal with these situations in the future (this will be discussed in the next workshop) and potentially even help them tailor their job search to positions that do not require them to do tasks that they find negatively affect their mental health (example: speaking in front of large groups of people).

Slide 5



On This Slide:

After having discussed some of the personal challenges that your group participants have experienced, use this slide to review some of the most commonly referenced barriers/challenges when seeking/maintaining employment for those living with mental illness.

While reviewing this slide it is important to note that while these are barriers/challenges named by those by those living with mental health, barriers/challenges in the workplace are things that EVERYONE experiences – mental health issues or not. Use this slide to normalize the fact that all people face challenges at work and finding solutions to these challenges is something that all people must do. As people living with mental health issues the challenges that they face may just be different/more unique than others.

Things to Note:

This slide is meant to show them that they are a part of a larger mental health community - that there are others who experience the same barriers/challenges as them.

Use this time to empathize but to also encourage/motivate them to find work just as so many others who face the same challenges with employment have (setting-up for next slide).

Slide 6

Despite some challenges that people living with mental health issues may experience when seeking/maintaining employment, **employment has been proven to be a KEY PART OF ONES RECOVERY PLAN.**

Let's brainstorm why.

On This Slide:

In pairs or small groups, have participants brainstorm some of the reasons why employment is considered to be such an important part of mental health wellness. After approximately 5 minutes, come back together as a group and share. Together, discuss what some of the main benefits of having a full/part-time job as a part of their journey to recovery.

Questions to Ask:

What have been some of the benefits of work you have experienced in the past? How have these affected your mental health?
What are some other aspects of employment that you think could be beneficial to one's mental health?
How do you feel employment will help you on your mental health recovery journey?

Slide 7

Employment & Recovery

Employment will:

- Create a sense of dignity and self-worth
- Provide a feeling of contributing and belonging to your community
- Offer opportunities to socialize with others and meet new people
- Provide a paycheck that will help with the expenses of day-to-day living
- Improve self-esteem and create a feeling of purpose/direction
- Give opportunities to learn new skills and improve upon those that you already have
- Provide structure and routine in your daily living

On this Slide:

Review all of the benefits of work with the youth stated above - especially those that may have not been brought up by the group in the previous slide. Discuss ways in which employment may provide some of these benefits and how they feel those would positively affect their mental health symptoms.

Questions to Ask:

Which of the above benefits had you not thought of before? Do you find any of these benefits surprising? If so, which ones?

Things to Note:

In this section, it is important to talk about recovery as a process. Recovery for those living with mental health issues does not necessarily mean that their symptoms will be gone forever, but it does mean that they will be able to get on with their life, and not be controlled or defined by their diagnosis. It is more of a journey than a destination. Work can help a person move forward with recovery through all the benefits listed above.

Slide 8

What motivates you?

I'm looking forward to:

On This Slide:

Having discussed the benefits of work, ask all workshop participants to write down a list of what motivates them to find/maintain employment. If they are comfortable, ask them to share with the group.

Questions to Ask:

What has motivated you to work in the past?
What are some of the benefits have you experienced from employment that you did not expect? Do these motivate you to find work now?
What are you most looking forward to in seeking employment?



Slide 9

Everyone experiences workplace stress.

- 1 in 4 Canadian workers describe their day-to-day lives as highly stressful, with workplace as major source of stress
- Workplaces can cause mental health problems and/or can trigger symptoms of one's mental illness
- Common sources of stress at work:
 - Too many demands
 - Long work hours
 - Risk of harm/injury on the job
 - Poor relationships with co-workers and/or managers

Stats Canada 2003

On This Slide:

Now that youth have created a list of motivating factors for them to find employment, it is important to talk about the potential stress factors that they may face in the workplace and to develop a list of resources/ideas of ways in which they can maintain their mental wellness in both the workplace environment as well as their daily lives.

Use this slide as a way to acknowledge the reality of workplace stress for ALL Canadians and to talk about some of the most commonly referenced sources of stress by ALL Canadians.

The next slides will encourage youth to discuss these factors, as well as others, in the workplace that they think may affect them as well as to develop strategies to help them manage them.

Slide 10

Let's talk (again)...

What does a positive work environment look like to you?

On This Slide:

Individually, have youth brainstorm what a positive work environment would look like to them. Encourage them to think about peer relationship, office environment, work style, etc. After about 5 minutes, have participants find a partner and encourage them to share what their positive work environments look like to each other. Have them think about what their partner presents/discusses... have they thought of any ideas that they had not? After discussing are there any additional attributes they would like to add to their list? If so, have them write them down! Come back together as a group and have each youth share one or two thoughts. Jot these down on a white board/chalk board/chart paper.

Questions to Ask:

What has made you enjoy coming to work in the past?
What, if anything, could have made work a more positive place/experience for you?

Things to Note:

The discussion/answers from this slide will give you, as the Employment Counsellor, insight into what a successful work environment may look like for each of the youth in the group. Try to take notes and think of the types of jobs or potential accommodations that an employer could make to make these positive work environments become a reality.

Slide 11

What workplace factors may cause you stress?

On This Slide:

Workplace stress is a reality for everyone – a reality that is important to acknowledge. On this slide, encourage participants to discuss the many different parts of a job/work environment that may/have caused THEM stress. Have them write down all potentially stressful workplace triggers on a sheet of paper (this will be used/referenced in the next slide).

Questions to Ask:

Has there been a time when you felt stressed at work? What factors were contributing to that stress?
Do you have any known workplace “triggers” that could cause you stress/negatively affect your mental health? If so, what are they?

Slide 12

What Can I Control?	What Can I Not Control?

On This Slide:

Have participants create a chart on a sheet of paper just like the slide above. Using their developed list of potential workplace “triggers” have the participants place each “trigger” in one of the two categories: “What Can I Control?” and “What Can’t I Control?”. Give them 5-10 minutes to do so.

Come back together as a group and discuss some of the factors they had listed and where they placed them (try to have each participant share at least one from each category). Why did they choose to place each “trigger” in that particular category? As a facilitator do you agree? If not, take time to discuss – some youth may not be thinking about potential accommodations that can be made or workplace factors that can be easily changed.

Take the time to specifically acknowledge the “What Can I Not Control?” list. Talk about the reality of how some processes/procedures in the work environment may not be able to be changed BUT that there are external supports that can help them deal with these stresses and support them in maintaining mental health wellness (setting-up for the next slide).

Questions to Ask:

What workplace stressors did you place in each category? Why did you place them there?

Things to Note:

Workplace accommodations will be covered in a later workshop. If this workshop is being completed independently of the others, take the time to also discuss the stressors that the participants placed in the “What Can I Control?” list by talking about managing personal behaviours/accommodations as well as potential workplace accommodations.



On This Slide:

As a group, develop a list of resources that exist in both the greater community as well as their own personal community that they could use as sources of support for their mental health wellness.

Conclude workshop by having all youth identify and write down three things/resources they will include in their network of support, why they have identified these as ways to help them manage/maintain their mental wellness, and how they will integrate them into their daily lives.

Things to Note:

In this section it is important to talk about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle (aka being active and eating well [resource to distribute in lesson plan]) as well as the importance of creating a support system (friends, family, career counsellor, etc.) that they can call upon when feeling stressed or when they notice symptoms of mental illness “relapses”. Have all youth write these down.

Resources to Distribute:

Distribute the *Resources in MY Community* (Appendix C:1) resource. Please note that you will have needed to fill-in this resource as the facilitator prior to this session by adding local support services to the sheet.

Workshop #2

Mental Health 102: Managing Mental Health in the Workplace

Overview & Purpose:

By the end of this workshop, youth will understand the barriers to work, have identified what resources they will need to support them as they transition into a new workplace. This session will ask participants to identify possible workplace factors that may affect their mental health and work with them to determine potential solutions. The main purpose of this workshop is to have all participants create an individualized action plan for managing their mental health in the workplace. This action plan will include a list of accommodation ideas, as well as plans of action for when they are feeling stressed/anxious/in crisis in the workplace.

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify potential challenges that may exist for those living with mental illness in the workplace
- Identify what resources, supports, and accommodations are available to support them with their mental health in the workplace
- Develop coping strategies/action plans using identified resources that will help them through times of stress/anxiety/depression/etc. when at work

Materials Needed:

- White board/Screen
- Presentation *Mental Health 102: Managing Mental Health in the Workplace*
- Worksheet *A Typical Day at Work* (Appendix D:1)
- (Optional) Resource *Resources in MY Community* (Appendix C:1)
- Worksheet *Maintaining Mental Wellness in the Workplace* (Appendix D:2)

Lesson Plan:

1. Warm Up Activity
 - A Typical Day
 - As a group describe a typical day at work. Discuss tasks and the potential challenges they may face in completing these tasks. This activity is intended to make youth think of all the workplace challenges they may have/are worried about having as they enter a new role/job/work environment.
*Further instructions and facilitator notes found in presentation.
2. Main Activity
 - Presentation: *Mental Health 102: Mental Health in the Workplace*
 - Facilitator notes found in presentation.
3. Individual Assignment
 - Finish the workshop by passing out the worksheet *Maintaining Mental Health in the Workplace*. Give time for clients to complete. It is important to work with each client on this individually, ensuring that their “action plans” are realistic.

Leading Questions:

- What challenges have you experienced in past work environments/job roles?
- What resources and/or accommodations exist to support you when feeling challenged at work?

Facilitator Notes

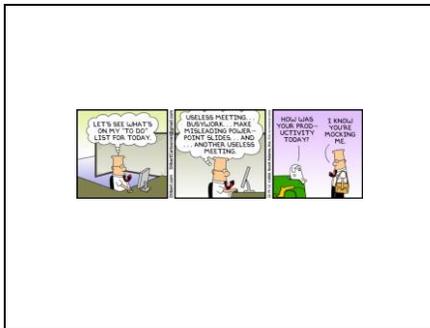
Slide 1



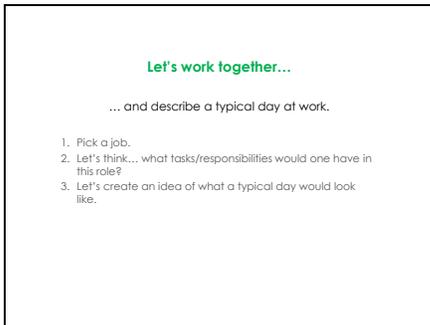
Things to Note:

The last workshop identified the benefits of employment, client's motivations to find work, and started the discussion of workplace stress and potential workplace stressors/mental health triggers for the clients. This workshop will continue this discussion and focus on creating an "action plan" for moments of stress or crisis – with the purpose of this workshop being to have the participants identify different factors in the workplace that may cause them stress, anxiety, or trigger other symptoms of their mental health issues and then have the develop "action plans" for how they will handle these issues when they arise.

Slide 2



Slide 3



On This Slide:

As a group, pick a job that most of the participants are familiar with (retail sales, food server, coffee barista, etc.) and create schedule for what a typical day would look like in that role, identifying any challenges/factors of stress that they could potentially foresee with each of the tasks (see next slide).

Slide 4

A Day In The Workplace.

Sample:

Time	Task	Potential Challenges
9:00am	Arrive at Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socialising with Coworkers Disturbance of small talk Arriving on time No schedule posted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Struggle what my role is for the day
9:15am	Open Cash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash closed incorrectly day before Don't enjoy task
9:45am	...	
...		

On This Slide:

This slides provides an example of the activity – showing the level of detail you, as the facilitator, are looking for as the group develops a schedule for a “sample” job.

Things to Note:

Blank schedule can be found on the next slide.

Slide 5

A Day In The Workplace.

Time	Task	Potential Challenges

On This Slide:

Complete the schedule as a group, using an agreed upon job as an example.

Questions to Ask:

- What would you first do upon arriving at work?
- What would some of the typical tasks for this role be?
- What could be some of the challenges that an employee (or you personally) would face with each task?
- What are some of the factors that could cause you potential stress in this role? In this type of work environment?

Things to Note:

As the facilitator for this activity it is important that you focus on the “potential challenges” section of this activity, really asking the workshop participants to think of/share workplace tasks and routines that they are nervous about. Having a good list of “potential challenges” will help the participants develop better (and more realistic) “action plans” with solutions to possible workplace challenges, which they will be completing by the end of this workshop.

Resources to Distribute:

Distribute the *A Typical Day At Work* (Appendix D:1) resource for youth to complete.

Slide 6

Now you try.

Pick a job you would be interested in (or have worked at before) and describe a typical day at work for that job.

On This Slide:

After having created a sample, have participants choose a type of job they are interested in/considering applying too and have them develop their own “A Typical Day in the Workplace” for the job they have chosen. Give participants approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Things to Note:

As the facilitator, make sure that you are taking the time to work with each participant individually, really making sure that they are completing the “Potential Challenges” section. While working one-on-one with each youth, you can also personally take time to note the types of workplace factors that your participants are most anxious about/see as the biggest barriers. This will help you better identify appropriate jobs for them, ones where specific workplace stressors that they have identified may not be a part of the job requirement.



Resources to Have:

It is recommended that you have a few job postings/descriptions printed for youth to reference in case they are struggling to identify a job they are interested in. Try to find job descriptions that have a strong job requirements/responsibilities section so that youth are able to get a good sense of what the job would entail. Job postings can easily be printed from any job board and do not have to be jobs that your clients would be potentially be applying too... these are just to be used as reference for this activity, if needed.

Slide 7

Let's talk...

What workplace factors did you list as ones that may cause you stress/challenge you?

On This Slide:

In pairs or small groups, have the workshop participants share their typical work day overviews. Encourage discussions to address the "Potential Challenges" section of their schedule, speaking to the aspects of the (or any) job they are most nervous about – especially with respect to their mental health and potential symptom triggers. Give youth 3-5 minutes to discuss. Come back together as a group and have everyone share one or two things that they discussed with their partners.

Things to Note:

During this activity, as youth will be specifically talking about the workplace stressors for one particular type of job, it would be appropriate for you, as the facilitator, to reference/bring up some of the workplace stress factors that the group identified/discussed in the *Mental Health 101* workshop that are not brought up.

Slide 8

Let's identify solutions...

To begin: What are some resources, accommodations, supports, and/or services available in the workplace?

On This Slide:

As the facilitator, lead a group discussion that talks about the types of resources, supports, and accommodations may be available to them in the workplace. Have participants share resources they have had access to in the past and what kind of accommodations they had (if any) in previous positions.

* Use the chart found in the next slide to complete. Facilitator notes for next slide include examples to help with discussion if needed.

Questions to Ask:

How have you dealt with workplace stress in the past?
What, if any, have been some of the accommodations you have received in the workplace in the past?
What resources have you found in the workplace that have helped contribute to your success?
Have any of your past jobs ever offered additional supports/services to help employees be successful in the workplace? If so, what were they?
Have any of your past workplaces offered any mental health benefits to employees? If so what were they? Did you ever

take advantage of them?

Things to Note:

While this activity is intended to focus on workplace specific resources, supports, and accommodations, if you feel like it would be helpful for the group, distribute/revisit the *Resources in MY Community* resource for external mental health supports available in their community.

Slide 9

Resources	Supports	Accommodations

On This Slide:

As noted in the previous slide, use this chart to record past resources, supports, and accommodations youth have used/benefited from in past work environments. Encourage the group to think of other resources, supports, and accommodations that they have heard of from others or would like to have in the workplace to support their mental health needs.

Things to Note:

Below are some examples of resources, supports, and accommodations for you to use if the group is challenged to think of any/identify any that they have had in the past.

Resources: policies and procedures binders, opening/closing “to do” check lists, work schedules, staff trainings, etc.

Supports: direct supervisors, HR department, workplace mentors, employment counsellor, coworkers (can help with tasks, be someone to talk to, clarify instructions, be a friendly face at work), health & safety employee representative (a required position at all workplaces and would have training/knowledge on mental health in the workplace and what to do in crisis), etc.

Accommodations: flexible schedule (re: hours or increased/more frequent breaks), visual instructions, job design and/or sharing, flexible deadlines, etc.

Slide 10

How can we use these tools in both workplace situations that we can/cannot control?

On This Slide:

Now that the group has identified potential resources, supports, and accommodations that could help with managing their mental health in stressful work environments ask youth to look at the *A Typical Day At Work* activity they completed earlier. Have the participants think about which of the workplace stressors they can control and which of those they cannot. Focusing on those that they CAN control, individually (on the next slide) participants will apply some of the resources, supports, and/or accommodations discussed to these situations – creating an “action plan”, which will help them manage their mental health should this situation arise.

Questions to Ask:

Are there any potentially stressful workplace situations that I do have some control over?
For each situation, is there a resource, support, or



accommodation that could be applied to help me avoid entering stress/crisis?

Slide 11

A Day In The Workplace. – Action Plan

Time	Task	Potential Challenges	Action Plan
9:00am	Arrive at Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socialising with coworkers Disturbance of small talk Arriving on time No schedule posted Knowing what my role is for the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If no schedule is posted, check-in with direct supervisor or co-worker to find out what my role is for the day. If unable to find, look at or daily opening "to do" list and complete any unmarked items on the list until able to get further instruction.
9:15am	Open Cash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash closed incorrectly day before Don't enjoy task
9:45am	...		
...			

On This Slide:

An example can be found on the slide above. Review as a group and if needed complete one or two more examples as a group before having each participant complete the activity independently.

Things to Note:

In brainstorming solutions together as a group, you as the facilitator will be helping youth gain a better understanding of the types of supports that exist in the workplace and how these supports can accommodate their mental health needs. Many youth may not have considered asking for accommodation or be aware of the types of accommodations they can ask for.

Slide 12

Let's create our own "action plans".

Maintaining Mental Health in the Workplace – Action Plan

Task/Situation: _____

Challenge	Solution

On This Slide:

Have participants take their Typical Day At Work "schedule" and pick 5 workplace factors that they are most anxious about. Have them develop "action plans" for each of these situations.

Participants should complete this activity independently, then work one-on-one with their counsellor (or the group facilitator) to ensure that their "action plans" are realistic. Having strong action plans is incredibly important for these youth as they look to start a new job as having a strong action plan will give them confidence in knowing that they will be able to handle any workplace situations/tasks they are anxious/nervous/stressed about.

Resources to Distribute:

Distribute the *Maintaining Mental Health in the Workplace – Action Plan* (Appendix D:2) resource for the youth to use and complete.



Workshop #3

Choosing to Disclose

<p>Overview & Purpose:</p> <p>In this workshop, participants will discuss the topic of disclosure in the workplace. Through this workshop youth will gain an understanding of disclose and its different forms, the pros and cons of disclosing, as well as when it is appropriate/necessary to disclose to their employer. Through this workshop youth will also gain a better understanding of workplace accommodation and how disclosure plays a role into any accommodations that may be wanted/required.</p>	
<p>Learning Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Know and understand the definition of disclosure, specifically in reference to the workplace <input type="checkbox"/> Understand the different types of disclosure that one can partake in as well as the pros and cons of each of these types of disclosure <input type="checkbox"/> Learn the different kinds of accommodation that can be requested/offered in the workplace and understand how the act of disclosing can affect any accommodations being requested 	<p>Materials Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> White board/Screen <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <i>Disclosure in the Workplace</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Activity <i>Knowing My Limits</i> (Appendix E:1) <input type="checkbox"/> Activity <i>When to Conceal and When to Reveal</i> (Appendix E:2) <input type="checkbox"/> Resource <i>Workplace Accommodations</i> (Appendix E:3)
<p>Lesson Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm Up Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Knowing My Limits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A complete description of this activity can be found in Appendix E:1 o The purpose of this activity is not only to serve as an ice breaker that will create a safe space for the youth where they feel comfortable discussing their mental illness but for the facilitator to also get a better understanding of what the youths potential comfort zones may be with disclosing/talking about their mental illness. 2. Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation: Disclosure in the Workplace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Facilitator notes available in presentation. 3. Closing Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the <i>When to Conceal and When to Reveal</i> activity (Appendix E:2). Have youth complete the activity independently. Once they have completed the activity each youth will have an idea of if/when they would like to disclose any information about their mental health to an employer. With the potential for some of the youth having chosen to disclose, finish the workshop by developing a “script” as a group that can be used when disclosing to an employer - if and when they choose to do so (prompts/guide for “script” found in presentation). 	<p>Leading Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What information should I disclose to an employer, a manager, a coworker? <input type="checkbox"/> Why is it sometimes best to disclose and why at others times is it not? <input type="checkbox"/> How will disclosing information about my mental health impact my job?

Facilitator Notes

Slide 1



Slide 2



On This Slide:

Start this workshop by running the *Knowing My Limits* activity found in Appendix E:1 of the curriculum package.

Questions to Ask:

Suggested questions are included in the *Knowing My Limits* activity outline. As the facilitator you know your group best – take liberty with the questions, add a few more “fun” questions, but always be sure to conclude the activity with questions regarding speaking/disclosing about their mental health challenges.

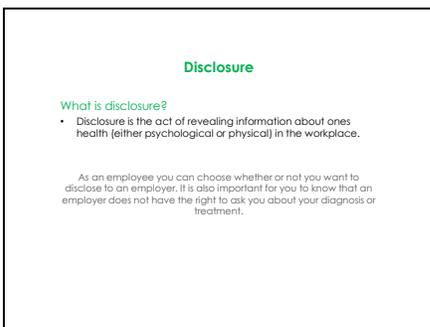
Things to Note:

The purpose of this activity is to 1) serve as an ice breaker for the group, facilitating them to know each other better and ultimately creating a safe space where they feel comfortable sharing past experiences/talking about their mental health with the group. And 2) to give you, the facilitator, an understanding of each participants comfort level in speaking about their mental illness as before you begin this workshop on disclosure.

Resource Needed:

Knowing My Limits activity found in Appendix E:1

Slide 3



On This Slide:

As a group, review the definition of disclosure and what it means to disclose to an employer. It is important that youth understand that disclosure is a choice and that if they do not feel it is necessary or do not wish to disclose that they do not have to.

As stated on the slide above, it is also important that they understand that employers do not have the right to ask them about their diagnosis – even should they request accommodation to help them better complete their job requirements.

Slide 4

Let's brainstorm...

What are some of the benefits of disclosing?

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-
-
-
-

On This Slide:

As a group, brainstorm what some of the benefits of disclosing to an employer may be. Encourage youth to think about past experiences where they have disclosed, how it has made them feel, and how it has affected their work environment in a positive way. Examples of what some of the benefits to disclosing are can be found on the next slide.

Questions to Ask:

Have you ever received accommodation in the workplace? If so, what were they?
Have you ever talked about your own personal mental health in the workplace? With your supervisor? Your HR representative? Your coworkers?
What, if any, have been some of the workplace benefits that they have experienced through disclosing to a supervisor/HR representative?

Slide 5

Benefits of Disclosing:

- Gain protection under Human Rights Legislation
- Ability to request accommodations specific to ones mental health needs (example: more time off for doctors appointments)
- Comfort in explaining past work history (i.e. gaps) and in discussing past workplace accommodations that have been successful
- Greater level of understanding from employer when exhibiting symptoms, require days off to recover/avoid relapse, having issues with job performance
- Can reduce fear or anxiety around co-workers and supervisors and potentially even create a support team to whom you could turn to if problems arise
- Allow you to serve as a role model, combat stigma, and give you an opportunity to educate others about mental health

On This Slide:

After having brainstormed some of the benefits of disclosing to an employer, take some time to review and discuss some of the benefits of disclosing found above.

Facilitate a conversation about the benefits of disclosure by asking youth to think of why these would be benefits to them. If one or two of the participants are comfortable, have one or two of them share their past experience with disclosing – what were the positive outcomes from doing so?

Slide 6

What are some of the potential reasons one may choose not to disclose?

- .
- .
- .
- .
- .

On This Slide:

While there are many benefits to disclosing, it is also important that youth know the reality that there are also potential challenges in disclosing. In partners, have the participants develop a list of reasons why a person (or even themselves) may choose not to disclose. Give pairs 3-5 minutes to develop a list and then come back together as a group and share. Examples of what some of the benefits to disclosing are can be found on the next slide.

Questions to Ask:

What have been some of the reasons you have chosen not to disclose in the past?

Things to Note:

At YES, we have found that many youth, because of their great relationships with past/current counselors, are more often than not, incredibly comfortable speaking about their mental illness. For this reason, in reviewing some of the potential issues with disclosing in the workplace it is important that you make sure that youth fully understand that while disclosure is important (especially to their counselor(s)), that with an employer it should only be done when necessary.

With this being said, in pairs have the youth think of what some of the potential reasons one would choose not to disclose in the workplace. Once pairs have developed a list of 3-4 potential reasons, come back together as a group and share.

As with the benefits of disclosure, some examples of potential reasons not to disclose are provided on the next slide.

Slide 7

Reasons Not to Disclose:

- Wanting to protect ones privacy and to not be labeled for ones mental health.
- No need for accommodation if condition will not impact job requirements/duties
- Fear negative attitude or stigma towards mental health from the employer and other coworkers
- Worry that with disclosure there will be a change in treatment and attitude from employer and/or coworkers
- Past negative experiences with disclosure in the workplace, potentially with harassment, gossip, and social disapproval having become an issue after disclosing in the past
- Avoiding any potential discrimination that may reduce chance of being hired or promoted, or increase the chance of being terminated because of disability

On This Slide:

Discuss as a group some of the potential challenges that may arise should they choose to disclose to an employer. Ask the youth if they have any questions about the “consequences” of disclosing or if any of them have experienced any of these challenges in a workplace environment in the past.

Questions to Ask:

Have you ever had a negative experience with disclosing to an employer about your mental health? If so, how did this affect your mental health? Your self-confidence? Your attitude towards your supervisor? Your thoughts on potentially disclosing with future employers?

Things to Note:

It is important that youth understand that disclosure may not always have a positive response from an employer because of mental health stigma, misconceptions, and misunderstandings about mental health. As a facilitator, take time to remind youth that talking about these “consequences” is not meant to deter them from disclosing but rather to make them aware. Conclude this conversation on a positive note and encourage youth to make sure that they always enter a disclosure conversation with ideas on how they would like to be accommodated/supported as it has often been found that if an employee comes with ideas on how they could be best supported, that employers will be more



open to accommodating their mental health needs.

Resource to Distribute:

After discussing the pros/cons of disclosure, distribute the *When to Conceal and When to Reveal* (Appendix E:2) resource to the group. Have them complete the first section (their pros/cons of disclosing) independently.

Slide 8

Things to Consider.

When choosing to disclose or not to disclose to an employer there are many things to consider. Beyond the general pros and cons, you should think:

- Would you find it stressful to hide your mental illness from your employer?
- Are there any accommodations that you would potentially need to support you in doing your job effectively and in managing your mental health in the workplace?
- Is it possible that any of your symptoms or medication side-effects may affect your ability to do your job?

On This Slide:

Now that you have reviewed the pros/cons of disclosing and the group has a strong understanding of what some of the potential outcomes of disclosing may be, have the group walk through some basic questions that they should always consider when making the decision whether or not to disclose (found on slide above).

Look to the *When to Conceal and When to Reveal* resource and have those who are comfortable sharing name one or two of the reasons they would choose to or not to disclose.

Looking forward: The next few slides will cover the topic of accommodation in the workplace.

Things to Note:

As the facilitator, it is important to emphasize to the group that should their answer be “yes” to any of the questions above, that that would be a good reason for them to be making the choice to disclose to an employer as accommodations can often be made more effectively if the employer is aware of the reason for the accommodation.

Slide 9

Accommodations in the Workplace

Ontario Human Rights Code 1962

The Ontario Human Rights Code is an Ontario law that gives all people equal rights and opportunities without discrimination.

- All people with mental health and addiction disabilities have the same rights to equal opportunities under the OHRC Code
- This code provides protection against:
 - Discrimination
 - Harassment
 - Poisoned Environments
 - Mental Health Profiling
 - A Workplace's Failure to Accommodate
 - NOTE: a company must accommodate an employee's mental health or addiction disability so not to create undue hardship
 - Reprisal

On This Slide:

It is important that youth understand that there is legislation in place that not only requires workplaces to create an environment that is accessible and open to all, but that also protects them from any maltreatment they may experience in the workplace because of their mental health issues.

Review the code above and as a group come up with 1 or 2 examples of what discrimination, harassment, poisoned environments, mental health profiling, a workplace's failure to accommodate, and reprisal may look like.



Slide 10

Accommodations in the Workplace

Duty to Accommodate

Duty to accommodate means that company policies and procedures can and should be altered to ensure equal access and opportunities for all. The duty to accommodate policy is based on 3 key principles:

1. Respect and dignity
2. Individualized
3. Integration and full participation

An employee who needs disability accommodation should tell their employer what their disability-related needs are in relation to their role. If needed, provide supporting documentation and work with your employer to implement accommodations in a timely manner and review accommodations with them on an ongoing basis – with the purpose of reviewing them to make sure that they are effectively supporting you in achieving your work targets.

Employers must accept requests for accommodation based in good faith, ask only for the information they need to accommodate the request, take an active role, deal with requests promptly, respect their employees' dignity and cover the costs of accommodation.

On This Slide/Things to Note:

The Duty to Accommodate is extremely important for all youth to understand, especially in the context of disclosure. It is because of the workplace's Duty to Accommodate that youth can be confident in requesting accommodations for their mental health should they choose to disclose.

It is important for youth to know, however, that accommodation does not mean that standards are to be altered/lowered, but rather that an employer should be open to making changes to the work environment to better support an employee in achieving set targets.

It is also important that they understand that the duty to accommodate is within reason. When requesting accommodation youth must be realistic/reasonable and be ready to meet employers half way (for example: while a youth may need to request more time off to manage their mental health, they should be open to working with the employer and allow them to potentially to choose what days they can take off). Review the Duty to Accommodate slide found above as a group and discuss.

Slide 11

Accommodations in the Workplace

Examples of Accommodation

- Flexibility in work schedule, example: provide shorter, more frequent breaks rather than one longer break during the work day or have access to short-term leave.
- Receive changes to work practices in writing as well as verbal.
- Modify the physical space to improve focus and concentration (i.e. change of lighting, use of partitions, and access to a quiet work space).
- Opportunities for training or delivering training in a different way.
- Receive information about community resources and supports.
- Depending on the circumstances, job restructuring, retraining, or assignment to an alternative position.

On This Slide:

Give each participant a copy of the *Accommodations in the Workplace* resource and talk about some of the different accommodations that can easily be requested by employers. As a group discuss other accommodations that participants may have had made for them in the past and add them to the list! After discussing, have youth complete the next section of the worksheet (*When to Conceal and When to Reveal*), where they are asked to identify what they need to be successful in the workplace and what accommodations, if any, they may need.

Questions to Ask:

- What have been some of the accommodations that have been made for you in the past?
- What have been some of the factors that have contributed to your success in past roles? Can any of these be applied to a new work environment with the support of an employer?
- What accommodations do you feel could have helped you be successful in your role in the past?

Resources to Distribute:

Accommodations in the Workplace resource (Appendix E:3)



Slide 12

Choosing to Disclose

In choosing to disclose there are a few things to think about. It is important to know when is the best time to disclose and to whom.

So, let's work through these things together!

On This Slide:

Being prepared to disclose to an employer is extremely important. Even if some of your participants have chosen not to disclose in the near future, it is important that they feel comfortable with disclosure should they ever change their mind/have need for accommodation in the future.

Work as a group through the next few slides which will help youth identify who and when disclosing would be the most ideal for them.

Slide 13

Who to Disclose To

Knowing who you want to disclose to is just as important as knowing when and how you want to disclose information about your mental health.

Think about your experiences with disclosure in the past and consider, in the workplace do you choose:

1. Not to tell anyone about your mental health condition?
2. To only tell those you feel would be supportive?
3. To not be concerned with who knows about your mental health and just tell anyone you encounter?
4. To broadcast your experience and speak about your mental health experiences to a larger group, educating others about mental health and helping combat the stigma?

On This Slide:

Work through the slide above and have youth complete the next section of the *When to Conceal and When to Reveal* worksheet which asks them to identify who they are currently comfortable speaking about their mental health too. As they complete this activity encourage them to think about who they would be comfortable disclosing to in the workplace – Supervisor? HR representative? Co-worker?

Things to Note:

Talking about mental health (both in general as well as their own personal journey) to their coworkers/peers is the topic for the next workshop. As the facilitator, take note of who has already begun to identify that they would be comfortable speaking to their coworkers about mental health – use these youth advocates in the next workshop, having them also encourage others to become more comfortable in speaking about mental health in the workplace.

Slide 14

When to Disclose

When it comes to disclosing, one can choose to disclose at numerous different times:

- **Before the interview**
 - **PROS:** Uphold honesty. Easy. Let's employer decide if your mental health condition is an issue before even offering an interview.
 - **CONS:** May disqualify you as a candidate for the position with no opportunity for you to present yourself, your skills, and qualifications (i.e. potential discrimination).
- **During the interview**
 - **PROS:** Opportunity to respond positively, in person, to specific issues/concerns that the employer may have about your mental health condition.
 - **CONS:** May create an interview situation where the employer focuses more on your mental health and how that could potentially impact your work performance rather than your skills.
- **After the interview, but before accepting the position**
 - **PROS:** Potential for legal recourse if disclosing your disability changes the hiring decision and you are confident in knowing that your mental health will not affect your job performance.
 - **CONS:** Hiring manager may have felt that you should have disclosed before, which may lead to some degree of distrust.
- **Once having started in the role**
 - **PROS:** Gives you the chance to show your ability to do the job before disclosing.
 - **CONS:** May cause reinvigoration over having an "episode" on the job and should an "episode" occur, manager/colleagues would be privy to how to support. Employer may try to accuse you of omitting important information on your application if your condition/medication/treatment could affect your job.

On This Slide:

Work through the slide above and have youth complete the next section of the *When to Conceal and When to Reveal* worksheet, which asks youth think about when they would be most comfortable disclosing. Make sure that all youth fully understand the pros and cons of each timing.

Things to Note:

At YES, we often encourage youth to choose the options of disclosing either after their interview or once they have started in their new role. These two disclosure points allow them to first show an employer all of their skills and strengths without the potential bias of an employer knowing that they have challenges with their mental health.



Slide 15

So, you've made the choice to disclose. Let's determine and practice what you want to say...

On This Slide:

As the final activity for this workshop, the group will work to develop a template script for disclosure. While this script may (and very probably should) change based on each workplace scenario it is important that youth practice what they would want to say with others so that they feel confident in their ability to disclose should it ever be the option that they opt for. The next slide will review some talking points to help youth develop their sample script.

Slide 16

Talking Points:

- Discuss how your mental illness affects your work performance, identifying accommodations that have helped with this in the past – making note of:
 - what are some of the ways in which your mental health may show symptoms
 - what accommodations may be needed
 - for what period of time will accommodations be needed for

Note: Make sure that you are being realistic/reasonable with your accommodation asks/expectations and be ready to meet the employer half way with any of your accommodation requests.

Example:

I wanted to let you know that I struggle with anxiety in the workplace, especially in larger group situations. When I get anxious I tend to "shut down" and have difficulty communicating with others. In the past, workplaces have accommodated this by giving me a "buddy" to support me with larger groups or have assigned me tasks where I would most often work independently.

On This Slide:

Review and discuss the slide above and then give each youth the time to develop their own sample script. Encourage them to write down this script in space provided on the *When to Conceal and When to Reveal* worksheet.

Things to Note:

It is extremely important that before the participants leave the session that they sit down with you, one-on-one, to review their script. Doing so will not only give you the opportunity to ensure that the script is appropriate but will also give you a chance to make sure that they feel comfortable with the idea of disclosure, potentially disclosing to a future employer, and all the outcomes that could result from disclosing.

Workshop #4

Breaking the Stigma

Overview & Purpose:

This workshop will focus on disclosure in the workplace - its potential to educate others and even reduce the stigma of mental health in one's community. Through this workshop youth will be shown the many benefits of disclosing and how talking about their mental health with others can help them thrive in their new role. Taking disclosure one step further, this workshop will also show youth how through disclosing to their supervisors and peers how they can become advocates for mental health and challenge the current beliefs/stigma towards those who are living with mental illness.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand all of the personal benefits of disclosure and the importance of having a "support team" to help them succeed in the workplace
- Learn some of the misconceptions that currently exist around mental health – both in the workplace as well as their own community
- Discover ways in which youth can become advocates for mental health, help educate others, and challenge the beliefs associated with the stigma surrounding mental health that exist today

Materials Needed:

- White board/Screen
Presentation *Disclosure in the Workplace*

Lesson Plan:

4. Warm Up Activity

- Start this workshop by watching the following video (also embedded in presentation) – The Pros and Cons of Disclosing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGsWZBwAiuY> (also embedded in presentation)
 - After reviewing the pros and cons of disclosure watch the video (which focuses on the positives) and discuss outcomes that had not yet been considered
- After discussion watch – The 5 Stages of Disclosure: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taBU4Mt9ZHo>
 - This video focuses on the peer support that can come from disclosing. Ask the group what their thoughts are on peer disclosure. Ask are they more or less comfortable with talking about their mental health with their peers?

5. Activity

- Presentation *Disclosure in the Workplace*
 - Facilitator notes found in presentation

6. Closing Activity

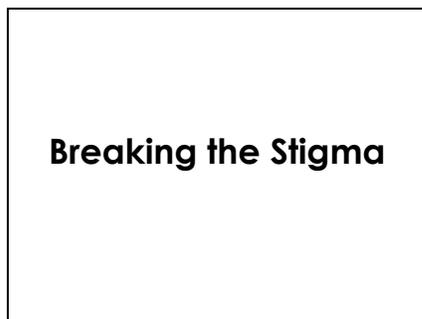
- Have the group practice talking about mental health in front of the group. Have them share their story and encourage them to talk about how their mental health has impacts their life. While this may be out of many of the participants level of comfort, doing this will give them practice and confidence in speaking about mental health with their peers
 - Finish workshop by watching the following inspirational video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GzAIYTh6s4&index=5&list=PLIZQIYhX-kTRZdai3oiXHRmVlwVBVcME>

Leading Questions:

- How can disclosing to my supervisors and peers support me in the workplace?
- What are some of the misconceptions about mental health that currently exist in society?
- How can I become advocate for mental health? And how can I best educate others about the issue?

Facilitator Notes

Slide 1

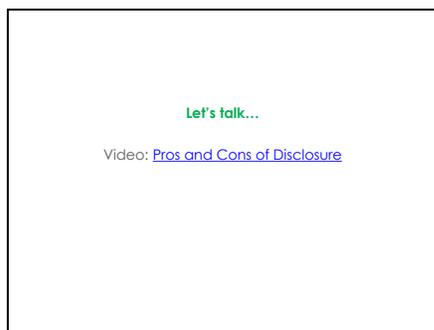


Things to Note:

In the last workshop disclosure in terms of what it is, what the positives and potential challenges of disclosing are, what rights employees have re: disclosure, and how to decide when it is appropriate/needed to disclose to an employer were all topics that were discussed.

In this workshop discussion about disclosure in the workplace will continue, but now with a focus on disclosing to their coworkers and peers – looking specifically at the positive outcomes that can come from disclosing to peers (example: create peer support, have the opportunity to educate others about mental health, challenge the stigma re: those with mental health issues in the workplace).

Slide 2



On This Slide:

Start this workshop by reviewing some of the benefits and challenges of disclosing in the workplace that were touched upon in the last workshop. Make notes on a white board/chalk board/piece of chart paper of all that pros/cons that are discussed.

Watch the video (hyperlinked in this slide) about the pros/cons of disclosure.

Questions to Ask:

What are some of the benefits and challenges of disclosing in the workplace?

Are there any pros/cons discussed in the video that you had not yet thought about?

What did you think about the video – specifically the pros re: disclosing discussed? (Facilitator note: did the group have any thoughts on the idea of the possibility of peer/co-worker support?... this will continue on the next slide)

Slide 3

Question:

How might I benefit by disclosing to my peers?

Video: [5 Stages of Disclosing](#)

On This Slide:

Continuing from the last slide, focus on the idea of disclosing to peers in the workplace. Watch the video to hear others share their experiences disclosing to friends/peers/coworkers. After watching the video take time to discuss. Focus on the idea of peer support and the benefits of having a support “team” at work and how that can help them be successful in a work environment.

Questions to Ask:

Has anyone in the group disclosed to peers in the past? What was their experience like?
What were some of the outcomes that resulted from disclosing to their peers?
What could some of the other benefits of disclosing to coworkers be?

Slide 4

Peer Support and the Mental Health Rights Coalition (MHRC)

The MHRC defines peer support as a relationship where a peer assists one with mental health issues to identify and achieve life goals as a part of their recovery process.

Peer supporters can provide mentorship, emotional support, problem solving assistance, goal setting feedback, and crisis support.

Peer supporters promote empowerment and self determination through non-judgemental listening and person-centred goal setting.

Mental Health Rights Coalition, 2016

On This Slide:

Review the MHRC’s definition of peer support. In pairs, have the participants talk about times when they have had a peer supporter (formally or informally – like with friends). Have them discuss how having this support system has helped them in the past and encourage them to think about the “types” of peer supports they create in the workplace through disclosure. Come back together as a group and have pairs share what ideas they discussed.

Questions to Ask:

What type of supports would they want from a peer in the workplace?
How would having these supports help them be successful in a new work environment?

Slide 5

Peer support in the workplace could look like:

-
-
-
-
-
-

On This Slide:

As a group, develop a list of ideas for what peer support could look like in the workplace. Some examples are listed below:

- Job shadowing – having a “buddy” to shadow when given new job tasks/assignments
- Career “mentor” – coworkers can provide insight/advice re: job goals or job opportunities within the company
- Support when in crisis – having a peer know how to support you when entering “crisis” in the workplace
- An ally – having someone know about your mental health could result in having a fellow advocate for your mental health in the workplace

Slide 6

Benefits of Peer Support.

Peer support can take many different forms but peer support will always benefit those living with mental illness navigate the workplace as well as co-worker relationships that may seem overwhelming and/or complicated.

Having peer support in the workplace has resulted in:

- Better coping skills.
- Better understanding of managing ones mental health in the workplace.
- Less isolation and more engagement in the workplace.
- Greater ability to reach career goals, which leads to a sense of accomplishment.
- Increased quality of life and stronger interpersonal relationships.
- Fewer crises and hospitalizations.

On This Slide:

Discuss some of the benefits of having peer support in the workplace. Facilitate a conversation with the group about ways in which peer support can help a person living with mental health issues in a work environment.

Questions to Ask:

Does anyone in the group have experience with peer support in past work environments? If so, how has this impacted their perception of the workplace? Their job performance? Their mental health in the workplace?

Things to Note:

Knowing the benefits of disclosing to peers and having the confidence to do so are two very different things. Even though the group may now have a firm understanding of the benefits of having peer support in the workplace, many of them still may not be comfortable talking about their mental health issues with others. For this reason, it is important to have the group take some time to reflect on who they would potentially be comfortable disclosing to and when they feel like they would be most comfortable doing so (see next slide).

Slide 7

I would be comfortable disclosing too...

My concerns about disclosing to my peers are...

On This Slide:

Give the participants time to think about who they feel they would be comfortable disclosing to in the workplace. Their supervisor? Their HR representative? Their co-workers? After having a few minutes to think independently about this have them share with a partner and encourage them to discuss why they are more comfortable disclosing to some rather than others. Encourage them, in their pairs, to talk about any concerns they may have about disclosing to their peers. Come back together as a group and discuss.

Things to Note:

It is important for you, the facilitator, to understand some of the participants' hesitations with talking about their mental health in the workplace. Make notes and as a group brainstorm ideas for ways that they could become more comfortable/confident in speaking about their mental health issues with others.

Slide 8

Talking About Mental Health

When speaking about mental health, whether it be your personal mental health or the topic of mental health in general, it is important to know the facts. So let's test our knowledge!

True OR False

In any given week, at least 500,000 employed Canadians are unable to work because of mental health problems.

On This Slide (and the following few slides):

As a group play a few rounds of “True or False” (questions are found on this slide and the following few slides) to learn some facts about mental health and the stigma that exists surrounding mental health in society today.

Answer: True.

Things to Note:

As youth prepare/consider talking about mental health, both in general and about their own personal mental health, it is important that they are aware of the misconceptions that may exist about mental health in their community and that they have some basic knowledge about mental health that they can speak too.

As the facilitator, use the following slides to inform your group. Feel free to add more “True or False” questions should you wish the activity to run longer or there are other specific pieces of information you would like to speak to with your group.

Slide 9

True OR False

People with mental illness have a tendency to be violent.

Answer: False.

Slide 10

True OR False

Just 50% of Canadians would tell friends or co-workers that they have a mental illness.

Answer: True.

Slide 11

True OR False

In 2008, 46% of Canadians thought people used the term mental illness as an excuse for bad behaviour.

Answer: True.

Slide 12

True OR False

Mental illness is a sign of weak character.

Answer: False.

Slide 13

Talking About Mental Health continued.

FACT

1 in 5 Canadians will experience a form of mental illness at some point in their life.

This means that even if someone is not affected by mental illness, chances are someone close to them has or will be affected at some point.

So... mental health is important to talk about! And in the workplace, it can start with YOU!

On This Slide:

Discuss as a group how mental health is something that affects everyone. In Canada, it has been proven that 1 in 5 people will experience some form of mental health issue at some point in their life so, even those who are not diagnosed with a mental health issue probably knows someone who has or will be affected by a mental health issue at some point in their lives.

Emphasize this fact to the group and how it is in knowing this that the need for conversations surrounding mental health are even more important – especially in our workplaces and communities. As people living with mental health challenges, they can be great advocates and start this conversation in their own communities (this will be discussed/the theme of the remainder of this workshop).

Slide 14

Breaking the Stigma

Negative attitudes + negative responses =
STIGMA

Stigma means thinking of less of a person because of their condition and makes a person feel unwanted/ashamed of their diagnosis. Stigma is often the reason why people are not comfortable talking about mental health and why people often hesitate to seek help when needed.

On This Slide:

Read over the slide above. Break off into small groups/pairs and have the youth discuss a time where they experienced stigma because of their mental health. Encourage them to discuss how they felt, how this action impacted them, and how they reacted to it.

Come back together as a group and discuss how they have seen/experienced the stigma towards mental health in action in their community. Jot down notes of some of the biggest misconceptions about mental health that the youth have experienced/seen in their community.

Questions to Ask:

- What does stigma mean to you?
- Have you personally had any experiences with stigma?
- How have you been affected by stigma – both in the workplace and in your community?
- How has stigma affected your understanding of mental health and mental illness?

Slide 15

What can we do?

On This Slide:

As people living with mental health challenges, the participants in your group have the potential to be the best advocates for mental health and have the power to end the stigma surrounding mental health by encouraging conversation about mental health and sharing their mental health journey with others.

As a group, brainstorm some ways in which they can educate others about mental health and different ways they can share their mental health journey with others – becoming role models and advocates for mental health in their community.

Slide 16

Communication Tips & Tricks

<p><small>Poor Communication Looks Like:</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • 	<p><small>Good Communication Looks Like:</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • •
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On This Slide:

Knowing how to effectively communicate with others is extremely important. Poor communication will often result in the audience not fully processing the information being shared and sometimes not even taking an interest in the subject matter.

Individually, have the youth think about what poor and good communication looks like. Have them write down some of their ideas and then share as a group.

Examples:

Poor Communication: folded arms, hands in your pocket, blank stare on your face, slouching, mumbled speech, etc.

Good Communication: talking loud and clear, making eye contact, sitting or standing straight

Questions to Ask:

- What do you think good/poor communication looks like?
- Think of a time when you experienced good/poor communication. What did it look like? How was the communicator handling/presenting themselves?



What are some tips/strategies that you have received in the past to communicate well with others?

Slide 17

SHARE

Sit/stand up straight
Have a pleasant tone of voice
Activate your thinking
Relax
Engage in eye contact

On This Slide:

To help youth remember some of the key attributes of good communication teach them about the acronym SHARE. If youth can remember these 5 simple good communication tips, then they are well on their way to becoming a great role model and advocate for mental health in their workplace and community!

Slide 18

Let's make a plan...

Talking about mental health, specifically your own mental health journey, to peers can sometimes be more challenging than disclosing to a counselor, HR representative, or workplace supervisor. Creating a plan and having an idea of what you want to say will give you the skills to communicate confidently and help you become an advocate for mental health in your workplace.

Key Points About Mental Health

- Mental health is an individual's journey in finding balance in all aspects of life (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual).
- Mental health helps people deal with everyday challenges such as:
 - Making choices
 - Coping with difficult situations
 - Expressing one's needs and desires
 - Creating and maintaining meaningful relationships

When someone experiences issues with their mental health these everyday challenges may become extremely difficult to manage, to a point where the person is unable to complete simple tasks.

Breaking the Stigma

- Be a role model in your workplace for mental health.
- Treat everyone with respect
- Be warm, caring, and non-judgemental
- Challenge the stigma when you see it by being willing to openly communicate about mental health
- Encourage conversations about everyone's mental health and ask about their journey with mental health
- If comfortable, share your story to help educate others about mental illness and the process of recovery

On This Slide:

In the previous disclosure workshop, you talked about the importance of being prepared and of creating a script for disclosing/talking about mental health with the supervisor/hiring manager. Having a plan/script for speaking with peers/coworkers is just as important.

As a group discuss some of the key points about mental health. Make a list of all the things the group wants others to know about mental health and then brainstorm some ways that they could best communicate these things to their peers.

Give each individual time (10-15 minutes) to develop a short "speech" about mental health (this can be about mental health in general or their own personal journey). Youth will present to the group, practicing their good communication skills and giving them the opportunity to speak about mental health in a space where they feel safe before potentially doing so in a new work environment.

... go to next slide.

Things to Note:

The notes on breaking the stigma, found on this slide, are tips on how they can become role models for mental health in their workplace. Even if they are not comfortable speaking up about mental health, they can still be a role model/advocate by treating people with respect and by being warm, caring, and non-judgemental towards others in their workplace. You can review these notes as a group, but most will have been covered through discussions in previous slides. These notes have been placed here as a reminder for the group as they prepare their "scripts" for speaking up about mental health.



Slide 19



On This Slide:

Have the youth practice their “speech” in front of the group.

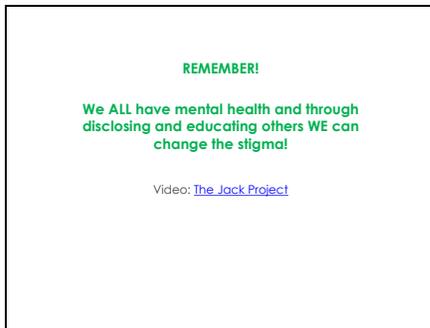
Questions to Ask:

Once all group participants have had the chance to speak, ask: How did speaking to peers about mental health make them feel? Do they now feel prepared to speak up about mental health in their workplace? And how likely are they to do so? What other information, if any, would they want/need to feel more confident speaking about mental health with their peers?

Things to Note:

It is important that the group participants know that they do not have to become an advocate for mental health on their first day of work. If they want to wait until they are more settled/comfortable in their work environment, then that is okay too!

Slide 20



On This Slide:

Finish this workshop by watching the inspirational video above. This video speaks to all of the points/topics that have been covered through this presentation and overall, encourages youth to speak up about their mental health and become advocates in their community!

Things to Note:

The Jack Project is a Ontario based organization that encourages people with mental health to talk about their challenges, recognizing that everyone is affected by mental health in some way.

Workshop #5

The Job Search

Overview & Purpose:

By the end of this workshop, participants will have identified what transferrable skills they have, know what types of jobs would be best suited to them, and have developed an accountability plan for their job search. All participants will leave this session with an individualized job search action plan that will include motivation strategies that will encourage and support them throughout the job search. This accountability plan will further include achievable goals and targets that they will be held accountable too during their job search.

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify what technical, transferable, and personal skills participants have that could be used for employment purposes
- Identify what types of jobs they would be interested in as well as what jobs they are qualified for
- Understand how different jobs can help strengthen different skills that can be used/transferred in future job searches
- Develop an individualized job search action plan that will keep participants motivated and accountable during the job searching process

Materials Needed:

- White board/Screen
- Presentation *The Job Search*
- Worksheet *MY Work Skills* (Appendix F:1)
- Worksheet *My Action Plan: The Job Search* (Appendix F:2)

Lesson Plan:

7. Warm Up Activity
 - Let's Review: have youth in group review the motivations they developed in the Mental Health 101 workshop for wanting to seek and maintain employment. Review and see if the group can develop more.
 - o Leading questions:
 - What are some benefits to work? How will employment help my mental health?
8. Main Activity
 - Presentation *The Job Search*
 - o Facilitator notes found in presentation.
3. Individual Assignment
 - Finish the workshop by giving youth time to complete their personal MY Action Plan: The Job Search worksheets, which you started together as a group during the "main activity". It is vital that you leave time at the end of the workshop to work with each youth individually, ensuring that they have created a realistic and attainable action plan that will help them meet their employment goals.

Leading Questions:

- What motivates you to find work?
- What technical, transferrable, and personal skills do you currently have?
- What kind of job do you think you would enjoy the most? Why?

Facilitator Notes

Slide 1



Slide 2



On This Slide:

Have the participants think back to the *Mental Health 101* workshop. In this workshop participants developed a list of reasons they are motivated to find work. Start this session by reviewing the reasons they are motivated to work, focusing on the benefits of work and why/how work can help them on their road to recovery.

Things to Note:

If this workshop is being run independently of the others, have participants make a list of what motivates them to find and maintain work. Have them share their motivations with the group and, as the facilitator, use this time to discuss the benefits of work, especially those in the recovery process for their mental illness (information on this, if needed, can be found in the *Mental Health 101* workshop lesson plan and presentation).

Slide 3



On This Slide:

Now that participants have listed all of the reasons why they want to get a job, let's start the process towards getting them that job!

This slide encourages discussion on the difference between goals and objectives. Emphasize that while it is important to have a goal, creating a list of objectives for that goal is equally important if that goal wants to ever be achieved.

Things to Note:

The main activity of this workshop is focused on having the participants make a job search "action plan". At YES, counsellors have found that they have seen increased levels of motivation for the job search in youth who have mental health challenges when they create an "action plan", as having them break down their employment goals into smaller objectives and then tasks (this will be done later in the presentation) takes something, such as the job search, which they often find overwhelming and breaks it into smaller more manageable tasks.

Slide 4

Before we can make a list of our objectives
we have to set a goal, so...

My goal is:

On This Slide:

Ask the participants to complete the first step (create a goal) independently. Have the youth write down their goal and ask a few to share with the group.

Things to Note:

Most participants will likely write that their goal is to “get a job” and that’s okay! While not a very specific goal, the following slides have been built to help them take a simple/generic goal and make it a much stronger one – one that is specific and attainable for each youth to achieve over the coming weeks.

Slide 5

Before we list our objectives, let’s talk...

SMART

Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely

On This Slide:

While having a goal is great, having a SMART goal is even better as a SMART goal is a type of goal that will more realistically be achieved. The following slides go more into detail on each aspect of a SMART goal and why using the SMART system for setting goals will help them create a stronger, more realistic and attainable goal, for their job search.

Things to Note:

The individualization of each participant’s goal is an important step in the job search for youth. Many of them may set goals that are unrealistic or unattainable for them in this moment/stage of recovery. As the facilitator/counselor for these youth it is important that you work with them to determine what a realistic employment goal is for them. Things you should consider when assisting them create their goals:

- Based on their mental health needs would full or part-time work be more suitable for them?
- What kind of accommodations would they need in a workplace?
- What types of jobs would be better suited to their mental health needs and/or current skill sets?

As your clients are youth living with mental health issues you are aware that they may need additional support/accommodations in the workplace, but it is important to note that this may also mean that they are in need of additional support/accommodations with the job search. Be flexible, work with them individually, and make sure that each client creates a job search “action plan” that is realistic and attainable for them based on their unique needs.

Slide 6

SMART
Specific

Specific goals have a higher likelihood of being achieved as you know exactly what you want to accomplish.

Develop a SPECIFIC goal using the following questions:

- 1- Who is involved?
- 2- What do I want to accomplish?
- 3- Where do I want to accomplish it (ie location)?
- 4- What is the reason I want to accomplish this goal?

Example:

A general goal would be: "Get in shape."
A specific goal would be: "Join a gym in my neighbourhood and commit to working out 3 times a week to improve my overall health."

On This Slide (and over the next few slides):

As has been mentioned, creating SMART goals is extremely important for a successful job search. As youth work through the following slides, encourage them to be taking their mental health needs into accommodation as they will only be successful in seeking and obtaining employment if they are also taking care of their mental health needs.

While youth may have a goal of seeking full-time employment it may be a reality that at this point in their recovery process that part-time employment is more realistic for them. As the facilitator remind them that this is okay! They can set new goals in a few months.

Workplace environment may be another important factor youth may need to consider when creating their goal. As an example: a youth may want a retail position but the realities and workplace demands (quick paced, customer service, level of unpredictability, etc.) of working in retail may not be suited to their mental health needs - so they may need to think of jobs better suited for them.

Work through the following few slides with this in mind.

Slide 7

SMART
Measurable

It is important to determine how you are going to measure your goals progress. Measuring your progress will help you stay focused, achieve targets in a timely manner, and will have you recognize when you have achieved your goal!

Develop a MEASURABLE goal by asking questions such as:

- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it's accomplished?

Slide 8

SMART
Attainable

Goals are representations of something that you really want to achieve. It is for this reason that having attainable goals is extremely important as it is in attaining goals that we feel success and strive to move forward.

Developing attainable goals will give you the opportunity to create a plan of action with steps that can be accomplished in a timely fashion.

Slide 9

SMART
Realistic

Goals must be realistic if they are ever expected to be achieved. All goals must represent something you are both willing and able to do.

Slide 10

SMART
Timely

All goals should be grounded within a time frame. As, if there is no time frame, there is no sense of urgency to complete it.

Setting a timeframe within which you want to achieve your set goal will set your unconscious mind into action and you will begin working on your goal.

Slide 11

Let's try...

General Goal: I want to get a job.

SMART Goal: _____

On This Slide:

As a group, work through the SMART system to take the goal of “I want to get a job” and change it into a SMART goal. Once complete, give the participants time to modify their original goal to be a SMART one.

Distribute the *MY Job Search Action Plan* (Appendix F:1) worksheet and have them write their SMART goal at the top (where it says “MY Goal.”)

Slide 12

Our goal is set, now what are our objectives?

REMEMBER: Objectives are the ACTIONS set to achieve a goal. One or more objectives may be needed to achieve a goal.

To achieve my goal, my objectives are:

- 1- Identify what technical, transferrable, and personal skills I have.
- 2- Determine what kinds of jobs I would be interested in applying too.
- 3- Update/work on cover letters, resume, and practice interview skills.
- 4- ...
- ...

On This Slide:

Now that all participants have a goal, it is time to create a list of objectives (action items) that are needed to achieve this goal.

As a group of youth who are all seeking employment, all will have the same first three objectives (listed above). They will work through the first two of these objectives in this workshop and will start work on the third in the next session. Have the participants write these down on their worksheet as the start to their action plan and then give them time to write down other objectives with their desired deadlines and “to do” lists (example found in next slide).

Things to Note:

By creating and completing the same first few goals as a group, you are “scaffolding” the process of the job search for these youth. Scaffolding is an process through which you model, assist, and then empower youth to continue independently. Scaffolding has been proven to encourage, motivate, and empower with their job search – all things that youth living with mental illness have identified as needing additional support with.

Resources to Distribute:

Distribute the *My Job Search Action Plan* worksheet to participants. Participants do not need to complete anything at this time; they will complete it over the next few slides. The next slides will work them through the first few objectives that are listed for their job search.

Slide 13

My Job Search Action Plan

Objective	Will Complete By	What I Need to Do
Identify what technical, transferrable, and personal skills I have.	End of workshop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a list of my technical skills, my transferrable skills, and my personal skills.
Determine what kinds of jobs I would be interested in applying too.	End of day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a list of “dream” jobs. • Think of jobs I have had in the past and make a list of what I liked/didn't like about those jobs. • Work with my counsellor to identify jobs that I may not have thought of that I would be qualified for.
Update/work on cover letters, resume, and practice interview skills.	End of week.	...
...		

On This Slide:

Have youth fill out the *My Job Search Action Plan* activity sheet as seen above. Give participants time to fill in their further objectives as well as their “what I need to do” for each objective, working with them work with them to set realistic timelines for each of these. Give youth 5-10 minutes to complete. Work with youth one-on-one during this time, consulting with them about their developed plan.



Let's get started!

Objective #1: Identify what technical, transferrable, and personal skills I have.

On This Slide:

Lead a group conversation on the differences between technical, transferrable, and personal skills (definitions below). Talk with the group about how these skills are skills that all people have, and are learned through social interactions, school, volunteer experiences, or past employment.

Technical Skills: Specialized skills and knowledge that you have learned in a formal or informal setting (high school, college, in your community).

Transferable Skills: Functional skills that allow you to carry out a number of different tasks. You will have learned these skills in your home, in a school or training program, and/or in your community.

Personal Skills: Self-management skills that you use to communicate your attitudes and your motivations. These skills reflect your personality and your work habits.

Have youth brainstorm some examples of each type of skill. Once you have compiled a list, review the examples found in the following slides (and on the worksheet).

Resources to Distribute:

Distribute the *MY Job Skills* worksheet to participants. The next slides are designed to walk them through this worksheet, having them identify what employable skills they have and enjoy using.

Things to Note:

Many youth living with mental health issues struggle to identify and talk about their personal strengths – both in an employment and social setting. Having them identify and recognize that they have many employable skills is an important step in boosting their self-confidence and making them more comfortable talking about themselves in a positive way.

Identifying their skill sets is also an important step for these youth to help them determine what type of jobs they are capable of doing. Through this activity, many youth will discover that they are skilled to do many jobs that they may have not considered in the past.

MY Technical Skills

Examples:

- Able to operate a cash register
- Able to drive a vehicle
- Able to care for someone who is ill/needs medical support
- Able to create and manage financial records
- Able to plant and care for a garden
- Able to use and operate a computer
- ...

On This Slide:

Review the examples of technical skills with the group. Are there others they can think of that could be added to the list? Have youth complete the first section of the *MY Job Skills* worksheet, writing down some of the technical skills they feel they currently have.

Slide 16

MY Transferable Skills

Could include:

- People Skills
 - Examples: assisting, counseling, demonstrating, serving, teaching
- Communication Skills
 - Examples: advising, making presentations, reading, summarizing
- Information and Number Skills
 - Examples: analyzing, budgeting, ordering, scheduling
- Creative Skills
 - Examples: cooking, designing, improvising, inventing, performing
- Leadership Skills
 - Examples: coaching, coordinating, directing, facilitating, motivating, planning, supervising, consensus building
- Manual and Mechanical Skills
 - Examples: constructing, installing, painting, operating, repairing

On This Slide:

Review the examples of transferable skills found above. Have youth complete the second section of the *MY Job Skills* worksheet. In this section, it is important to encourage youth to both identify transferable skills they feel they currently have as well as mark the skills which they are looking to strengthen for their future employment goals. In doing so, youth will be able to not only identify skill sets that they have but also skill sets that they need to work on for a particular job they wish to have.

Slide 17

MY Personal Skills

Accepting	Energetic
Adaptable	Expressive
Active	Friendly
Capable	Helpful
Cheerful	Intuitive
Committed	Mature
Competent	Open-Minded
Creative	Organized
Dependable	Patient
Discreet	Quick Learner
Efficient	Sincere
Encouraging	Trustworthy
	Warm

On This Slide:

Review some of the examples of personal skills on the slide above. Ask youth if they can think of any other personal skills they think should be added to the list. In this brainstorming session encourage youth to think of times when people have commented on their personal skill sets – this could be in an employment setting (such as a review) or have been in a more casual setting (example: when talking with friends/family). Many youth may struggle with identifying/recognizing personal skills, take the time to help them identify personal strengths they may have, even taking the time to identify a personal skill you have recognized that they have through the first few workshop settings.

Have youth complete the last section of the *MY Job Skills* worksheet.

Slide 18

Now that we know our skills...

Objective #2: Determine what kinds of jobs I would be interested in applying too.

On This Slide:

Now that all participants have identified the many different skills that they have. Get the youth to work in pairs to help each other identify what kinds of jobs they would be well suited for. As the facilitator, work with each pair to help them think of some roles that they would be suited for/might enjoy based on their skill sets. Come back together as a group and discuss.

Encourage them to continue brainstorming types of jobs they could apply to with their career counsellor, peers, family, and friends.

Questions to Ask:

- What types of jobs have you enjoyed/been successful in in the past?
- What types of jobs are you interested in?
- What industry would you ideally like to work in? And what skill sets are required of that industry?
- What skills do you currently have? What type of roles do you think you would be well suited too?
- Do you have any skills you would like to strengthen through employment? If so, what are they and what types of roles would help you strengthen those skills?



Things to Note:

Before ending the session, make sure that all participants know that they will need to bring this worksheet to the next session. Ask youth to also take some time at home to find a few different job postings for positions they are interested in applying too and to bring those postings with them to the next workshop as they will be developing/tailoring their resumes and cover letters for job applications.

Resources to Distribute:

As some youth may find this last activity challenging, it is recommended that you have a few sample job descriptions for different types of jobs to help youth see what types of skill sets are frequently requested for different roles. Job descriptions can easily be pulled from any job board and do not necessarily need to be positing that participants in your group would/will be applying too.

Workshop #6

Cover Letters, Resumes, and Interviews

Overview & Purpose:

The purpose of this workshop is to support all workshop participants in writing cover letters, resumes, and with their interview skills. In this workshop participants will be given strategies and tools that will help them write a strong cover letter, will understand the importance of tailoring ones resume, and will learn some tips and tricks that will help them answer those tricky interview questions and ace any interview that they attend. While this workshop will provide many general strategies, tips, and best practices, it will also address challenges that may be unique to those who are living with mental illness who are on the job hunt.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the importance of having a strong cover letter and the impact it can have when applying for jobs
- Develop a resume that accurately reflects ones skills, qualifications, and past job experience
- Review standard interview practices and practice answering tough interview questions that they may be asked

Materials Needed:

- White board/Screen
- Presentation *Cover Letters, Resumes, and Interviews*
- Resource *Cover Letter Template* (Appendix G:1)
- Resource *Resume Template & Example* (Appendix G:2)
- Resource *How to Ace the Interview* (Appendix G:3)

Lesson Plan:

4. Warm Up Activity
 - TED Talk: *Why the Best Hire Might Not Have the Perfect Resume*
 - o Link:
https://www.ted.com/talks/regina_hartley_why_the_best_hire_might_not_have_the_perfect_resume
 - Start this workshop by watching the TED Talk above. This video is intended to encourage youth in their job search, with the video focusing on how not having the perfect resume may actually make you a better hire.
5. Activity
 - Presentation *Cover Letters, Resumes, and Interviews*
 - o Facilitator notes found in presentation.
6. Individual Activity
 - Book some computer time for youth to work on their cover letters and resumes. Each participant should create one template of each that can be modified based on the jobs that they are applying for.
7. Activity Continued...
 - Presentation *Cover Letters, Resumes, and Interviews*
8. Follow-Up Activity
 - Presentation *Cover* the participants leave, schedule a time for them to have a mock interview with you, another career counselor, or, if possible, a volunteer.

Leading Questions:

- Why are cover letters and resume tailoring important when applying to a job?
- What interview questions have challenged you in the past? How can we answer these questions in a way that will achieve a positive outcome?

Facilitator Notes

Slide 1



Slide 2

My Job Search Action Plan

Objective	Will Complete By	What I Need to Do
Identify what technical, transferrable, and personal skills I have.	End of workshop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a list of my technical skills, my transferrable skills, and my personal skills.
Determine what kinds of jobs I would be interested in applying for.	End of day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a list of "dream" jobs. Think of jobs I have had in the past and make a list of what I liked/didn't like about those jobs. Work with my counselor to identify jobs that I may not have thought of that I would be qualified for.
Update/work on cover letters, resume, and practice interview skills.	End of week.	---
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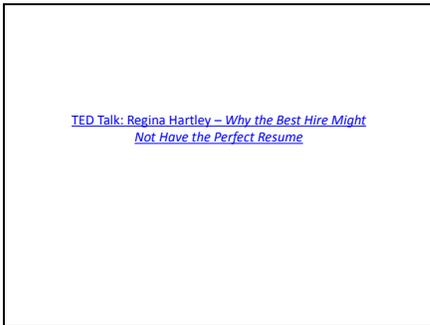
On This Slide:

In the last workshop, youth developed a “Job Search Action Plan”. In that workshop, as a group, everyone agreed to the same first 3 objectives (see above). The first two should have been completed in the last session and today, the group will focus on completing objective #3: *Update/work on cover letters, resume, and practice interview skills.*

Things to Note:

Make sure that youth have their *MY Job Skills* worksheet from the last session with them. They will be referencing this worksheet as they work to “revamp” their resume and develop a cover letter for the jobs that they would like to apply to.

Slide 3



On This Slide:

Start this workshop by watching Regina Hartley’s TEDTalk, *Why the Best Hire Might Not Have the Perfect Resume*. In this video, Regina, an HR representative, talks to other employers about giving those with the not-so-perfect resume a shot as it has been shown that these people are often more resilient, dedicated, and driven employees.

Things to Note:

Lack of confidence in youth living with mental health issues is one of the most frequently referenced challenges by counselors when these youth are looking to gain employment. As noted in the last workshop, many of these youth struggle to identify their strengths, skill sets, and to talk about themselves in a positive way. The purpose of this video therefore is to give the youth hope and understanding that while they may not have the most perfect resume, they still have a lot to offer a company as an employee as a person with many valuable skills and life experiences.



Slide 4

Let's get started...

RESUMES

Resumes are a way to highlight your skills, abilities, and accomplishments in a way that is easy for an employer to read.

On This Slide:

Having a resume that highlights a person's skills, strengths, and job experiences is key to being successful during the job application process. For this reason, this workshop is designed to work with your clients, helping them develop a strong resume template which they can use and modify for jobs they are interested in applying to.

Discuss as a group any advice they have received re: resumes in the past.

Questions to Ask:

What advice have you received in the past that has helped you build a good resume?

What have you found most challenging when trying to develop a resume?

Do you have any questions about what should be included on a resume?

Slide 5

<p>Resume DOs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modify your resume for each position you are applying too 2. Include an OBJECTIVE--stating which position you are applying to 3. List experiences in reverse chronological order (most recent appearing first) 4. Use action words and give specific examples of your demonstrated skills 5. List all languages you are fluent in 6. List all computer programs you are proficient in 	<p>Resume DON'Ts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include a casual or unprofessional email address 2. List your age, date of birth, or social insurance number 3. Lie, exaggerate, or inflate your actual skills, education, or experience 4. Write long sentences or paragraphs 5. Use acronyms or short forms 6. Have a resume that is longer than 2 pages
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On This Slide:

Review with the group the basic "Dos and Don'ts" of resume writing. Ask the group if they have any other dos and/or don'ts of resume writing they feel should be added to the list and discuss why each of these "rules" are important to consider when writing a resume. Do they find any of these "dos" and "don'ts" surprising or contradictory to past advice they have been given?

Things to Note:

The next few slides will guide youth in building a strong resume that will really highlight the strengths and skills that each youth has for any job they are applying to.

Slide 6

Step #1: Creating a Job Objective

Your objective is a simple, specific statement that states the position you are applying for and should help focus/strengthen your resume.

Must include:

- The field/area you want to work in
- The title of the level of position you are applying for
- The field/area of job specialization you are interested in

Always keep your objective SIMPLE and TO THE POINT.

On This Slide:

As employment counselors you understand the importance of having a strong resume. As you would tell all your clients, a job objective is the first thing that an employer sees when they look at a resume, which is why it is important that is clear and concise in its statement.

It is important to note that job objectives will need to be tailored to each job that a youth is applying to.



Slide 7



On This Slide:

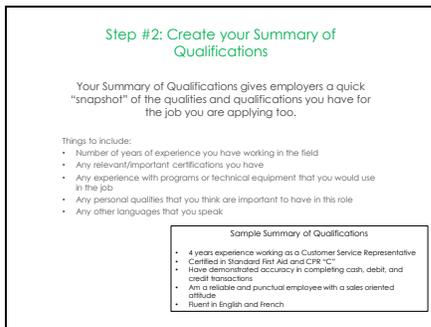
Have youth take out the job postings that they were to bring to this session for positions they would like to apply to. Have them create a job objective for one or two of these. If they did not bring in any job postings, provide them with a sample job posting or two for them to use as a sample/for them to practice with.

Give them time to complete the exercise and have them share one of their objectives with the group, having the whole group give feedback on what they thought worked well and how it could be made stronger.

Resources to Distribute:

As some youth may not have had the time or may have forgotten to bring in job postings be sure to have a few sample job postings for youth to use throughout this workshop. If possible, try to have job postings for a few different types of jobs. These postings can be pulled from any job board.

Slide 8



On This Slide:

The next step in writing a resume is to develop a *Summary of Qualifications*. As noted in the slide above, this section of the resume gives youth the opportunity to really showcase the experiences, skills, and strengths that they have that make them the perfect candidate for the position they are applying to.

Like the job objective, this section of ones resume should be tailored to each job they are applying to.

Have the youth choose one of the jobs they just created an objective for in the previous activity and have them develop a *Summary of Qualifications* for that job. Once complete, have them share their *Summary of Qualifications* with a partner and encourage them to give feedback to one another.

Things to Note:

Having a lack of work experience and/or many periods of unemployment are two resume challenges that are common in youth living with mental health issues. Having a strong summary of qualifications is important for these youth as it is their opportunity to highlight their skills, strengths, and experience to an employer before they look to the main section of the resume.

At YES it has also been found that the process of developing a *Summary of Qualifications* is extremely helpful for these youth as it forces them to identify skills that they have and relevant experience that they can speak to in an interview – giving them confidence in their abilities and their suitability for the role.

Slide 9

Step #3: Create your Resume

Functional, Chronological, and Combination Resumes are the three most commonly seen styles of resume in the job market.

Functional Resumes
This style of resume highlights your skills, strengths, and/or accomplishments, and downplays a lack of work experience.

Chronological Resumes
This is the most traditional style of resume that lists your work experience by date; in reverse chronological order (most recent job experience always appearing first).

Combination Resumes
This type of resume combines the two styles and includes one or more skills lists, followed by a chronological listing of work experience.

On This Slide:

The next step for all youth is to build the main “body” of their resume. Unlike the *Job Objective* and *Summary of Qualifications*, this section of the resume, if well written, may only require a few small modifications for each job they are applying to.

In the employment sector, there are three types of resumes that are widely accepted by employers, they are: functional resumes, chronological resumes, and combination resumes. Please take the time to review each type of resume and discuss when it is best to use which style.

Things to Note:

At YES we have found that a functional resume is most often best suited to youth living with mental health issues as they often lack experience or have many gaps in their employment history. For this reason, the following slides will review how to write a functional resume, but if another style is better suited it is highly encouraged that you work with the youth to develop it instead.

Slide 10

Let's Write a Resume.

Using a Functional Resume.

Functional resumes are a great way to highlight your skills and strengths when you are looking for your first job, lack work experience, or have many gaps on your resume.

This style of resume allows you to emphasize all of the skills and abilities that you have to offer but maybe have not yet had the opportunity to showcase in a workplace environment.

Slide 11

Your Name
12 - 456 Green Street, Toronto, ON M8B 2A8
416-234-5678 / contact.yes@ontario.ca

Objective: A position as a

Highlight/Summary of Qualifications

- Years of experience in the job
- Languages Spoken (if more than one)
- Special Skills
- Personal Characteristics

Skill Heading
•
•

Skill Heading
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•

Skill Heading
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Skill Heading
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•

Work History	Job Title	Years Employed
Company Name		

Education	Degree Received	Year Attained
School Name		

References Available Upon Request

On This Slide:

On this slide is a very basic template of what a functional resume would look like. Each *Skill Heading* should be followed by two or three bullet points giving examples of a time when that skill was used – can be in a work, volunteer, or school environment. Each bullet point should begin with an action word – this will be reviewed in the next slide.

It is extremely important to remind and encourage youth to review job postings and to take note of the skills/strengths that are commented on. Use these observations to determine which of their skills should be included in their resume.



Resume Action Words!

Highlight your skills and experiences by starting all bullet points with an action word that will draw your employers attention and showcase your areas of strength.

Achieved	Reviewed
Adopted	Revitalized
Completed	Saved
Contributed	Simplified
Doubled	Sold
Established	Solved
Expanded	Stimulated
Implemented	Streamlined
Improved	Strengthened
Increased	Structured
Introduced	Succeeded
Maintained	Supported
Managed	Translated
Opened	Unified
Proposed	Upgraded
Provided	Widened
Revamped	Won

On This Slide:

As mentioned in the previous slide, it is important that each *Skills Heading* is followed by two or three examples of when/how this skill was used. It is highly recommended that all bullet points following a skills or job heading start with an action word to capture the attention of the employer by clearly stating how a skill was used or what strengths were required in a particular job.

Example:**Customer Service Experience**

- Supported customers in their shopping experiences, assisting them in finding items that they were looking for and recommending similar products that they may be interested in.
- Maintained a high level of professionalism at all times and promoted the store culture by showing up to each shift with a positive, enthusiastic, and sales oriented attitude.

In pairs, have the youth take two or three of their skills headings or job experiences and develop two or three strong bullet points for each with their partner. During this time be sure to walk around and support each pair in their development of strong action focused statements. Have some youth share their statements with group as it may give others ideas for similar skill headings that they may have.

Things to Note:

Breaking down resume writing into these small steps and completing them as a group is important for youth with mental health issues. At YES, many clients commented on how overwhelming they found the resume writing task to be and frequently requested additional support in completing this task. Through this workshop, you as the facilitator are doing just this, supporting them in creating a strong resume but also facilitating their independence in doing so by getting them to work in pairs and independently under your supervision.

Next step...

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter is your chance to sell yourself to a potential employer as the best candidate for the job.

Cover letters are different than your resume and should not repeat the same information. Cover letters should focus on your intentions, what you can bring to the job and why you are the best candidate for the position.

On This Slide:

Now that the group has a strong understanding of how to write a great resume, it is time to move on to the cover letter. It is important that the group understands how the cover letter is their first opportunity to “sell” themselves to an employer and how cover letters should be used as the tool through which they express their interest, enthusiasm, as well as ability to do the job they are applying for. Cover letters are ones opportunity to showcase the many ways in which they are the perfect candidate for the position.

Things to Note:

At YES we have found that counsellors often become the “cover letter” for the clients, with the counsellor reaching out and “selling” the youth candidacy for the position. Spend time reviewing cover letters as it is important for youth to know and understand, but as the counselor for these youth be aware of the reality that you will be the advocate for these youth, contacting employers and “selling” them as a candidate for the position.

Slide 14

<p>Cover Letter DOs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highlight strengths and achievements 2. Use specific examples 3. Use key works and qualifications listed in the job ad 4. Show genuine enthusiasm 5. Indicate when you will follow-up 	<p>Cover Letter DON'Ts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mention salary or wage (unless requested) 2. Discuss why you left your last job 3. Discuss availability 4. Disclose accommodations or potential health related needs
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On This Slide:

Review cover letter “dos” and “don’ts” as a group. Ask the group if they have any other dos and/or don’ts of writing cover letters that they feel should be added to the list.

As a group discuss the reason one writes a cover letter and the importance of it. As a person living with mental health issues, what are some of the benefits of writing a cover letter? What are some of the challenges of writing a cover letter?

Things to Note:

As the facilitator emphasize how a cover letter can act as an advocate for them when first reaching out to an employer. A cover letter is a space where they can speak to their strengths, their interest in a position/company, and speak to experiences that make them an ideal candidate for the job.

Slide 15

Cover Letter Check List:

- One page in length
- 3-5 targeted paragraphs that focus on employers needs
- Address/write to someone specific (use full name and job title if available)
- Close the letter formally (eg. Sincerely or Yours Truly)
- Use same formatting, font, and paper as your resume
- Edit and use your computer's spell check
- Have a peer, friend, or counselor review, if possible
- Indicate when you will follow up and be sure to do so!

On This Slide:

Review as a group all of the features of a cover letter. A sample is provided on the next slide.

Slide 16

Your Name
12-456 Green Street, Springfield, MA 01104
416.234.5678 • cover.letter@email.com

Date:

Employer Name (if known):
Employer title (if known):
Company Name:
Company Address:
Fax Number (if using Resume)

Dear Mr./Ms., (if name of employer not known use: To Whom It May Concern),

Paragraph 1 - Introduction
Introduce yourself.
State your interest in applying to the position you are applying for (include position name) and where you found the posting.
If you found out about this position through a personal contact/networking, include the name of the person/where.

Paragraph 2 - Why this company or career?
Share your reasons. Tell the employer why you want to work for them.
Write about how their company culture and what experiences, values, etc. you have that would make you a great company fit.
Have a sentence or two that discuss how working for this company and having this particular role aligns with your career path.

Paragraph 3 - Your accomplishments
Discuss about what you can bring to the job. Name the skills, related education and/or training completed, achievements and how you can use them, while having the desired qualifications that were included in the job ad.

Paragraph 4 - Closing
Reiterate the title of the position you are applying and reaffirm your interest in it.
Indicate that you will follow up and when.
Thank them for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name

On This Slide:

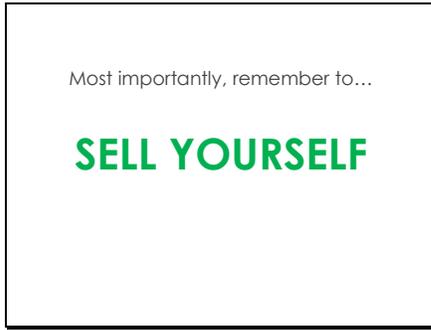
After reviewing the cover letter checklist. Walk the group through this cover letter template and distribute the Cover Letter Template resource for them to refer too. Encourage them to use this resource whenever they are writing a new cover letter for a job.

Resources to Distribute:

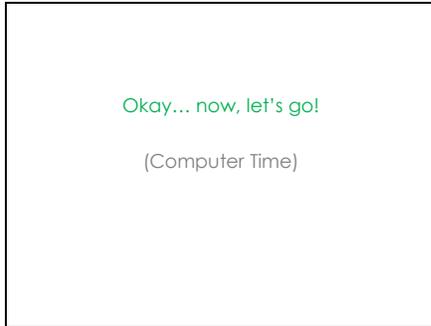
Cover Letter Template (Appendix G:1)



Slide 17



Slide 18



On This Slide:

The group should now have all of the resources and information needed to write a strong resume and cover letter. If possible, take the group to a computer lab and have them find one or two job postings they are interested in applying too. Have them write a resume and cover letter for these positions.

Alternatively, if time is more limited, take the group to a computer lab to only work on writing a resume, using all of the information and resources they just received. As the facilitator, be sure to take the time to support each youth with the writing of their resume (and cover letter), giving feedback where needed.

Things to Note:

At YES, the individualization of resume writing and the importance of giving individual support to each client is seen as one of the key factors to success for youth living with mental health challenges. These youth often requested (and needed) additional support in focusing, tailoring, and writing their resumes so please be sure to allocate time to do so – whether it be during, between, or after this workshop.

If a computer lab is not available. You could break this workshop into two sections here, sending them off to work on their resumes and cover letters on their own, with the next workshop starting with a resume/cover letter review and then continuing on to interview skills.

It is important that you encourage youth to now start applying for positions they are interested in, using the information and skills they have gained regarding resume and cover letter writing in this session. If they are seeking further support, set up a time to work with those youth one-to-one soon after this workshop is complete.

Slide 19



Slide 20



On This Slide:

Review the slide above as a group. Have a few members of the group, if comfortable, share past interview experiences OR their thoughts on the interview process.

Questions to Ask:

What has been your experience with interviews in the past?
What has gone well? What have you found challenging?
What are you most nervous about when entering an interview?
What do you do to prepare for an interview? How do you think you could prepare better for interviews in the future?

Things to Note:

Interviews are often noted as the most challenging part in getting a job, especially for youth living with mental health issues. Many youth struggle with an extremely high level of nervousness and lack of confidence when it comes to interviews. Preparing them properly for an interview is one of the biggest keys to employment success for these youth. With this being said, please make sure that you give the time required to go through this portion of the workshop as it should not be rushed. If needed, this portion of the workshop has been built to stand alone and can be completed as a separate session.

*If starting this as a new workshop, begin the session by asking the group about their job application progress. Do they have any questions about resume or cover letter writing? Have they applied to any jobs?

Encourage all youth to apply to at least two positions before the next session.

Slide 21

Let's brainstorm...

Things to do BEFORE the Interview:

-
-
-
-
-

On This Slide:

As a group, develop a list of things that should be done before an interview. Encourage them think about ways they have prepared for interviews before: what steps did they take? What were some steps they used to make them feel well prepared for the interview?

A sample list of things to do before the interview is available on the next slide.

Things to Note:

If applicable, bring up the topic of disclosure with the group. While it is often not recommended that a youth disclose about their mental health in an interview, discuss how they would speak to their mental health in an interview should it arise. It is important that youth are prepared to speak about their mental health in an interview, while it is encouraged that youth do not bring up their mental health, should the topic arise they need to be prepared to discuss their mental health in a positive way – a way which shows the employer that even if challenges may arise that they would still be able to do their job successfully.

Slide 22

Things to do BEFORE the Interview:

- Have a professional and working voicemail as well as email address.
- Frequently monitor your voicemails and emails, promptly returning employers messages.
- Complete your list of references and notify them of any jobs they may be called to be a reference for.
- Have your resume, a pen and pad of paper close to the phone at all times. Be sure to always answer the phone professionally and if the call is for an interview, take detailed notes on: who, what, when, and where.
- Research the company and who you are meeting with.
- Use resources such as Google Maps to locate where you have to go for your interview and how much time it will take to get there.
- Dress professionally and bring several copies of your resume and reference list in a professional folder, as well as a pen and pad of paper to take any notes on.
- Prepare by developing answers to potentially tricky interview questions you may be asked (see resource).

On This Slide:

Review all that were not mentioned by the group. Talk about why they are important and how doing these things will help them feel better prepared and more confident walking into an interview.

Questions to Ask:

How do you prepare for an interview?
What are you most nervous about when walking into an interview? What are some ways that you can prepare to help with this?

Slide 23

Things to do on the DAY OF the Interview:

1. Arrive to the interview 10-15 minutes early.
2. Greet the employer by shaking their hand and introducing yourself.
3. During the interview: posture is important! Sit up straight, look alert, be enthusiastic, maintain confidence, and be sure to have appropriate/natural eye contact.

On This Slide:

Distribute the *How to Ace the Interview* resource and review. The resource includes some commonly asked questions as well as some more challenging questions youth may be asked and gives a guide on how to potentially answer them.

Take the time to ask the group if they have had any questions in previous interviews that they have been unsure how to answer and together, as a group, develop potential answers.

Things to Note:

As it has been noted before, confidence is something that a lot of youth living with mental health issues lack and need additional support with. Reminders of how to act in an interview and how to appear/be confident in an interview need to be reinforced with these youth. As the facilitator allocate a good amount of time for youth to ask questions about interviews, how to answer certain interview questions, how to best prepare for interviews, and to practice “interviewing” with their counselor, peers, friends, etc.



Slide 24

Illegal Interview Questions

Illegal questions are personal and discriminatory in nature, and are related to the ones sex, race, ethnicity, and/or disability.

The Canadian Human Rights Act forbids employers from discriminating against any person based on these things. Employers thus only have the right to ask information about employees skills, abilities, and experiences.

It is important to understand that in refusing to answer an illegal question during an interview, while you are completely in the right to do so, it may cost you the job.

On This Slide:

Some youth may be concerned that employers will ask questions about their mental health or disability. Before walking into an interview it is important that the youth understand what questions they have a right to not answer but also how to answer these questions if asked (see next slide). Review the slide above and ask youth if they have had any experiences with this and/or if they have any questions about the information above.

Slide 25

4 Ways to Answer Illegal Questions

1. Ignore the question and focus instead on the intent behind the question. Use language such as "I think what you are saying is..." and then answer the question with information that you are comfortable sharing/wanting the employer to know.
2. Answer the question by saying, "I'm sorry, I don't understand the relevance of this question, could you try rephrasing?"
3. Answer the question without any reference to it's inappropriateness.
4. Politely say that you do not wish to answer the question as you feel it is not relevant/appropriate at this time.

On This Slide:

Talk through some different ways that youth could answer a question they are uncomfortable answering in an interview. 4 examples of ways to answer questions are provided above, but feel free to brainstorm more and add to the list! The more prepared they feel, the more capable they will feel at navigating those challenging questions!

Slide 26

Types of Interviews

One-on-One Interviews

What the employer will look for:
Skills, experience, and education related to the position.
Your ability to fit within the company and in this role.

What to expect during the interview:
Interviewer will likely be a future supervisor.
Have your resume out and refer to it for examples that demonstrate specific skills when answering interview questions.

Group Interviews

What the employer will look for:
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership abilities

What to expect during the interview:
Team-split atmosphere
- Group demonstrations and tasks
*Tip: Do not be shy about answering questions and participating in activities! Show your leadership skills and how awesome of a team member you can be!

Telephone Interviews

What the employer will look for:
Voice - tone, clarity, enthusiasm, and articulation.
Communication skills - concise, to the point, and organized answers.

What to expect during the interview:
Formal interview that could last as long as a typical in-person interview.

Other, but less common, types of interviews you may encounter:

Personnel Interview
Panel Interview
Written Interview
Stress Interview

On This Slide:

One-on-one interviews will be the most common type of interview offered to youth but it is important that they are aware and feel prepared for all types of interviews that could be offered to them. Take the time to review each one, focusing on how they can best represent/sell themselves in each type of interview and why a certain type of interview may be chosen over another.

Things to Note:

The importance of reviewing types of interviews again is to help these youth with confidence. The more information they have about interviews and the more prepared they feel walking into an interview the more confident they will be. By reviewing the different types of interviews they may be asked to take part in, they will have a better idea of what to expect – easing anxiety and helping them focus on how they will sell themselves to the employer.



Things to do AFTER the interview:

- Send a thank you note within 48 hours of the end of the interview. Doing this will make you appear thoughtful and show your interest in the position.

Sample Thank You Letter

Dear Mr./Mrs. ...

It was a pleasure to meet and talk with you about the sales position available at your company. I really appreciated you taking the time to discuss the role and company culture with me.

I truly believe that my experience in sales and customer service make me an ideal candidate for the position you outlined. As noted in the interview, my diverse experience in different customer services roles has given me the skills to be able to work with a wide variety of people and to have a customer service, solutions oriented approach.

I am extremely excited to know that I am being considered for this opportunity and, after having spoken with you, know that this is the ideal opportunity for me.

Again, thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely,
Your Name

On This Slide:

Sending a thank you note after an interview can make all the difference. In sending a thank you note, youth are showing the employer their interest in the position, reinforcing the ways in which they could benefit the company, and demonstrating strong relationship management/communication skills (which are both skills often required/wanted by an employer no matter what the position).

Appendix A

Mental Illness

What does a mental illness look like?

Mental health is something that affects all of us. Everyone feels sad, worried, anxious, scared, or suspicious at times, with these feelings affecting one's thoughts and physical well-being as well as actions. Those living with mental illness, however, will experience these feelings in a way that consistently impacts their daily lives over a long period of time.

When working with a youth who may have mental health challenges or may be living with a mental illness you may observe the following general symptoms:

- Feeling sad or irritable for more than two weeks
- Having excessive worries, fears, and anxieties
- Having extreme mood swings that range from really high to really low
- Appearing agitated and restless often
- Withdrawing from activities (both in their professional and personal lives)
- Expressing distorted or confused thoughts
- Having strange beliefs not based in reality (delusions), or hearing, seeing, possibly even smelling things that aren't there (hallucinations)
- Talking about harming or killing oneself

Bell Let's Talk, 2014

Note: If a youth is showing any of these symptoms over a prolonged period of time, and has not disclosed having a mental illness, it is important to talk to them about seeking help and the appropriate supports to help them manage their mental health.

In the case that a youth has chosen to disclose that they are living with a mental illness, here is some information on some of the most commonly diagnosed mental illnesses among youth today:

Mood Disorders

- Depression
 - Depression is a mental illness that affects a large number of people in society, with approximate 10-25% of women and 10-15% of men having been diagnosed with this mental illness.
 - Depression is most often characterized by:
 - prolonged feelings of sadness, despair, and a sense of hopelessness
 - consistently having a lack of energy
 - signs of slowed thinking and forgetfulness
 - having recurrent thoughts of death/suicide
 - showing a loss of interest in activities
 - Changes in eating/sleeping patterns
- Bipolar
 - Bipolar disorder affects 1-2% of the population and has symptoms that include: mania, depression, mixed state (a state when a person is exhibiting both depressive and manic features), and hypomania.

Psychotic Disorders

- Schizophrenia is the most widely known psychotic disorder and it affects about 1% of the population. Psychotic disorders are attributed to a problem with brain chemistry/development and can be treated with medication, therapy, and psychosocial rehabilitation. Psychotic disorders are genetically predisposed and affect men and women equally.

Anxiety Disorders

- Anxiety disorders affect more than 12% of the population and often start to appear in adolescence or early adulthood. Anxiety disorders are diagnosed when a person displays anxiety that is disproportionate to reality, often inhibiting a person's ability to partake in everyday activities. Some of the most commonly known anxiety disorders include:
 - panic disorder;
 - generalized anxiety disorder;
 - obsessive compulsive disorder;
 - Phobias, and;
 - post-traumatic stress disorder

Personality Disorders

- Personality disorders are diagnosed when a person exhibits patterns of behaviour, thoughts, and/or feelings that differ significantly from those of the culture. Those living with a personality disorder are often inflexible and have great difficulty with interpersonal relationships. Some personality disorders include:
 - paranoid personality disorder;
 - antisocial personality disorder;
 - borderline personality disorder, and;
 - narcissistic personality disorder.

CAMH, Social Determinants of Health Service, 2016

Appendix B

Mental Health Resources for Counselors

Bell Let's Talk (Toolkit): letstalk.bell.ca

Bell Let's Talk is a nation-wide campaign which aims to start a conversation about mental health across Canada, working to educate others about mental health and break the stigma that currently exists around the issue. This campaign has a tools and resources that can aid in creating a safe space and open environment in which people feel comfortable discussing and learning about mental health.

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA): www.cmha.ca

The Canadian Mental Health Association promotes mental health and supports the recovery process of those living with mental illness. This website is full of resources and information that will help one better understand mental health, mental illness, and the process of recovery.

Center for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): www.camh.ca

CAMH works to support those living with mental health and addiction issues through clinical care, research, education, policy development, and health promotion. This website is thus filled with resources, guides, workshops, and information about mental health, wellness, and support services.

Here to Help (BC): www.heretohelp.bc.ca

Here to Help is a group of non-profit organizations in BC that are working together to support people better manage their mental health, through prevention and teaching wellness practices. On this site you can find many self-help resources and personal stories of others' personal journey with mental health.

Jack.org: www.jack.org

Jack.org is an Ontario based youth organization working to reshape the way society, specifically youth, think and talk about mental health. This website is filled with unique programs and initiatives that aim to spark conversations about mental health and end put an end to the stigma in the young people's generation.

Mental Health Works: www.mentalhealthworks.ca

Mental Health Works is the Canadian Mental Health Associations social enterprise whose main objective is to provide capacity building workshops on mental health in the workplace to both employers and employees. This website is filled with resources for both employers as well as employees on how to create a positive workplace environment that supports everyone's unique mental health needs.

Mental Health Commission of Canada: www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

This organization brings together leaders and organizations across Canada in the mental health field to develop and implement mental health projects and initiatives that work to improve the mental health system and reduce the stigma that exists in Canada today. On this website you will find a library of resources as well as some webinars on a number of different topics regarding mental health.

Mind Your Mind: www.mindyourmind.ca

***mindyourmind** is an online platform for mental health and wellness, which works to engage youth ages 14-29 living with mental health challenges and provide them with a space filled with resources, activities, and stories of others' personal experiences to help support them with their own mental health journey.*

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) (US): www.nami.org

NAMI is one of the largest mental health organizations in the United States and is dedicated to assisting and supporting those affected by mental illness. This site has information on mental health and resources developed specifically for those living with mental illness, their families, as well as teens/young adults who are affected by mental illness.

Not Myself Today: <http://www.notmyselftoday.ca/>

The Not Myself Today is an initiative that works to help companies build mentally healthy workplaces by providing tools and resources that help build a greater awareness and understanding of mental health, reduce stigma, and foster safe as well as supportive work cultures for those living with mental illness.

Ontario Shores Foundation for Mental Health Sciences: <http://www.focusedonrecovery.ca/>

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health is a hospital in Ontario that is focused on supporting and providing treatment to those living with mental illness. Their foundation supports and funds innovative programs that focus on mental health promotion and their website is filled with mental health facts and patient stories that can be useful resources for fostering hope with those who are on their mental health recovery journey.

Workplace Strategies for Mental Health: www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

This Great-West Life Centre initiative aims to improve the psychological health and safety in the workplace by providing free tools and resources for workplaces that support and assist employers in creating a space that encourages positive mental health practices for their employees.

TEDTalks:

Regina Hartley: Here's Why The Best Hire Might Not Have The Perfect Resume

https://www.ted.com/talks/regina_hartley_why_the_best_hire_might_not_have_the_perfect_resume

Ruby Wax: *What's So Funny About Mental Illness?*

https://www.ted.com/talks/ruby_wax_what_s_so_funny_about_mental_illness

Thomas Insel: *Towards a New Understanding of Mental Illness*

https://www.ted.com/talks/thomas_insel_toward_a_new_understanding_of_mental_illness

Vikram Patel: *Mental Health for All By Involving All*

https://www.ted.com/talks/vikram_patel_mental_health_for_all_by_involving_all

Appendix C:1

Resources in MY Community

Please complete by filling out the contact information of services and free resources that exist for your youth in your community. Please take the time to review with workshop participants, if available review schedules online so that youth have a clear understanding of what services are offered and when they are able to access them.

Community Centres

Address:

Phone Number:

Services Offered:

Wellness Centres

Address:

Phone Number:

Services Offered:

Health Centres

Address:

Phone Number:

Services Offered:

Recreational Centres

Address:

Phone Number:

Services Offered:

Other

Address:

Phone Number:

Services Offered:

Appendix C:2

Maintaining Mental Wellness with a Healthy Lifestyle

Mental health and physical health are fundamentally linked and further, as stated by the World Health Organization: "... health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being... not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

The **benefits** of healthy eating and active living are:

- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Increased performance when completing physical activities/sports
- Increased ability to learn and retain new information
- Better sleep
- Increased self-esteem and self-confidence
- Disease prevention as well as decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety

Healthy Eating

Healthy eating is an important part of overall health and has even been proven to significantly reduce the risk of many diseases and symptoms of past illnesses. Eating well will also give you more energy, stronger muscles and bones, as well as make you look and feel better.

Tips:

- Use Canada's Food Guide to eat the recommended amount and types of food each day. You can create your own PERSONALIZED food guide here: <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/healthy-eating-saine-alimentation/food-guide-aliment/my-guide-mon-guide/index-eng.php>
- Limit foods and beverages that are high in calories, fat, sugar, or salt (examples: pop, chips, fast food, candy, etc.)

Physical Activity

Physical activity is an extremely important part in having and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Being active will improve your health, well-being, and overall quality of life.

- Be active for at least 3 hours a week to achieve physical and mental health benefits
- Focus on doing moderate to vigorous aerobic activity throughout the week (examples: fast walking, running, biking, basketball, aerobic classes, etc.)
- Get stronger by adding in strengthening activities that target your muscles one or twice a week (examples: push-ups, sit-ups, weight lifting, yoga, pilates, etc.)

Tips:

- Choose a variety of physical activities you enjoy
- Start a physical activity schedule to make it a part of your weekly routine
- Be your own transportation and walk, bike, or run instead of taking public transportation or a car whenever you can.
- Join a team and make physical activity social!

Remember: Every step counts!



Appendix D:2

Maintaining Mental Health in the Workplace – Action Plan

Identify tasks, routines, or situations at work that you feel may cause you stress, anxiety, and/or challenge you in some way. Work both independently and with your counsellor to develop an “action plan” outlining the any resources, accommodations, and/or strategies that could be used to support you in these situations.

Task/Situation: _____

Challenge	Solution

Appendix E:1

Knowing My Limits

Start this activity by identifying three different areas in the room that will mark three “zones”: comfort, challenge, and panic.

Brainstorm with the group what are some of the attributes that each area would include for them. Ask them probing questions that will encourage youth to share what each area would look like, sound like, or feel like. Have them give some concrete examples of places or times that they have felt that they were in each of these areas - comfort areas would be a place such as at home, challenge areas may feel like a place where they are learning something new, and panic areas may be a place where they have sweaty palms, a more rapid heartbeat, etc..

The next step is for you, the facilitator, to name different scenarios which may put the group’s participants in different areas of comfort. Ask them to think about how being in each of the scenarios would make them feel and have them move to the according area of the room. Scenarios will start simplistic and become more complex as the activity progresses. Throughout the activity the facilitator can ask the youth questions about why they chose the area that they moved to for each scenario. If comfortable, have them explain why that situation would put them in their comfort/challenge/panic zone.

Scenarios:

- Going to the movies to see the newest blockbuster.
- Trying a new type of food at a restaurant.
- Riding public transportation.
- Asking for directions when lost.
- Going to an interview.
- Talking about your achievements, skills, and strengths to others.
- Educating others about mental health.
- Asking for accommodations/support when needed (*note, this often does not require youth to disclose anything about their mental health, accommodations can, and should, be made for all employees so that they are able to perform at their best)
- Speaking about my own mental health with family/friends.
- Speaking about my own mental health in the workplace.

Once youth have shared, if comfortable, how they would feel about speaking about their own mental health in the workplace have the group come back around the table to begin further discussion/the presentation on disclosure. Let the youth know that through this workshop, they will learn and understand all about disclosure, its pros and cons, as well as how it can affect them in the workplace (asking for accommodations, relationships with coworkers, etc.).

Appendix E:2

When to Conceal and When to Reveal

This activity aims to help you determine if disclosure is the right decision for you by considering your needs and comfort in speaking about your mental health. This activity will help you know if and when disclosure is necessary as well as to whom you should be disclosing too.

For me, the pros of disclosure are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

For me, the cons of disclosure are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

For me to be successful in the workplace, I need:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Some accommodations that may support me in being more successful in the workplace could be:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I feel comfortable talking about my mental health with (please check all that apply):

- My family
- My friends
- My career counselor
- My employer
- My coworkers
- Other: _____

Appendix E:3

Workplace Accommodations

Many accommodations can be made easily, at little cost (often less than \$500), and in some cases can be made without any need for disclosure. Below are some examples:

- Flexibility in work schedule, providing breaks that are more frequent or having access to short-term leave.
- Job coaching (having a mentor/work buddy to support a new hire in adjusting to the workplace).
- Modifying the physical space to improve focus and concentration (this could include: a change in lighting, the use of partitions, having access to a quiet work space).
- Providing different ways of communicating (such as, having written as well as verbal instructions available for employees).
- Offering training in ways that accommodate different learning styles (verbal, visual, tactile, etc.).
- Alternative forms of supervision (opportunities for more frequent “check-ins”, ability to ask for more training at any point while on the job, higher levels of support (if comfortable disclosing could include developing collaborative coping strategies, etc.).
- Identifying/having a personal support team in the workplace - a person/group of people who are there to support during a time of crisis or relapse.
- Communicating clearly an employee’s access to employee assistance services, medical, psychological and/or addictions programs and creating an agreement that allows the employee time off to attend.
- Job restructuring, retraining, or assignment to an alternative position, depending on circumstance and availability of workplace opportunities.

An employee who needs a disability-related accommodation is required to:

- Provide the employer, union information in writing what are their work related disability-related needs.
- Provide supporting information about what enhances their capability to perform their job and any needs or limitations related to their disability.
- Provide supporting information from health professionals where appropriate and as needed to define needs.
- Employees are required to provide on-going co-operation with the employer to manage the accommodation.

Note:

If putting the best solution in place immediately may result in “undue hardship” due to significant costs or health and safety factors, employers still have a duty to look at and take next-best steps that would not result in undue hardship. Such steps should be taken only until better solutions can be put in place or phased in.

Appendix F:1

MY Work Skills

Use this worksheet to help determine all the skills you currently have that can be used in the workplace. In completing this activity, you will identify what employable skills you have and discover all of the different jobs/roles you would be able to apply to with these skills – some of these jobs being ones you may have never considered before!

Technical Skills

These are specialized skills and knowledge that you have learned in a formal or informal setting (high school, college, in your community).

Examples:

- Able to operate a cash register
- Able to drive a vehicle
- Able to care for someone who is ill/needs medical support
- Able to create and manage financial records
- Able to plant and care for a garden
- Able to use and operate a computer

MY Technical Skills are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Transferable Skills

These are functional skills that allow you to carry out a number of different tasks. You will have learned these skills in your home, in a school or training program, and/or in your community.

Transferable skills can include many different things including: people skills, communication skills, information skills, creative skills, etc. Circle the skills that you currently feel that you have and place a check (✓) next to the skills you wish to develop – potentially in a new place of work or job role.

People Skills

caring for
cooperating
counseling

listening
problem solving
teaching

training
conflict resolution

Communication Skills

presenting
negotiating
persuading

promoting
speaking
summarizing

translating
writing

Information and Number Skills

analyzing
budgeting
evaluating

memorizing
ordering
researching

reviewing
scheduling

Creative Skills

arranging
building
cooking
designing

improvising
inventing
painting

performing
producing

Leadership Skills

coaching
directing
facilitating

influencing
initiating (starting)
inspiring

managing
motivating
supervising

Mechanical Skills

constructing
installing

operating
repairing

servicing

Personal Skills

These are self-management skills that you use to communicate your attitudes and your motivations. These skills reflect your personality and your work habits.

Circle any skills you feel describe you.

adaptable
active
committed
creative
dependable
efficient
encouraging

energetic
friendly
helpful
intuitive
mature
open-minded
organized

patient
quick learner
sincere
thrifty
trustworthy
unpretentious
warm

Once you have completed the worksheet, review all of the skills you have and brainstorm (with the help of your counselor, peers, family, and friends) types of jobs that would require and/or strengthen these skills.

It is recommended that you keep this worksheet for future use/workshops that will focus on how to highlight these skills to help you get the job you want!

Appendix G:1

Cover Letter Template

Your Name
12 – 456 Queen Street West, Toronto ON, M6R 2K8
416.236.4587 ▪ connor.smith@hotmail.com

Date
Employer Name (if known)
Employer Job Title (if known)
Company Name
Company Address
Fax Number if faxing Resume

Dear Mr./Mrs. _ (if name of employer not known use: To Whom It May Concern),

Paragraph 1 – Introduction

Introduce yourself

State your interest in applying to the position you are applying for (include position name) and where you found the posting

*If you found out about this position through a personal contact/networking, include the name of the person here

Paragraph 2 - Why this company or career?

From your research, tell the employer why you want to work for them

Write about how their company culture and what experiences, values, etc. you have that would make you a great company fit

Have a sentence or two that discusses how working for this company and having this particular role aligns with your career path

Paragraph 3 - Your accomplishments

Write about what you can bring to the job. Name the skills, related education and/or training completed, achievements and experience that you have, referencing the desired qualifications that were included in the job ad

Paragraph 4 – Closing

Restate the title of the position you are applying and reaffirm your interest in it

Indicate that you will follow up and when

Thank them for their time and consideration

Sincerely,

Your Name

Appendix G:2

Resume Template

Your Name
12 – 456 Queen Street West, Toronto ON, M6R 2K8
905.431.9665 • matthewdowns@yahoo.com

Objective: A position as a

Highlights/Summary of Qualifications

Years of experience in the job
Languages Spoken (if more than one)
Special skills
Personal Characteristics

Skill Heading

-
-
-
-

Skill Heading

-
-
-
-

Skill Heading

-
-
-
-

Work History

Company Name	Job Title	Years Employed
--------------	-----------	----------------

Education

School Name	Degree Received	Year Attained
-------------	-----------------	---------------

References Available Upon Request

Resume Example

Jonathan Mighty
12 – 456 Queen Street West, Toronto ON, M6R 2K8
416.962.4517 ▪ jmighty@sympatico.ca

OBJECTIVE: To gain employment in a retail position that focuses on customer service and store experience.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- 2 years of customer service experience in a variety of industries
- Completed a Business Administration course at the high school level
- Demonstrated the ability to successfully handle several tasks at once
- Excellent people and listening skills
- Solutions-oriented approach to challenges and customer concerns

RELEVANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Customer Service

- Demonstrated ability to listen effectively to customers which resulted in excellent customers relations
- Successfully defused angry customers by using patience and excellent listening skills
- Answered as many as 60 calls a day from customers
- Researched lost orders and traced shipments

Technical Skills

- Excellent knowledge of MS Word, Access, Excel and the Internet
- Ability to operate fax and photocopy machine
- Typing speed of 50 wpm

Office Skills

- Responsible for filing client information in numerical sequence
- Efficiently sent documents through courier service
- Sorted and delivered mail to appropriate persons
- Scheduled appointments for orientation sessions

WORK HISTORY

Cool Clothes Office Inc.	Customer Service Representative Office Assistant	2008-2009 2007
Sunny Daycare	Volunteer Daycare Helper	2006-2007

EDUCATION

Toronto Secondary School	High School Diploma	2008
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References Available Upon Request

Appendix G:3

How to Ace the Interview: Tackling Those Challenging Interview Questions

Interviews can be... Below are some commonly asked interview questions that can sometimes be a challenge to answer. Use the notes below, to help you develop your own answer for each of these questions and be sure to practice what you come up with before your next interview!

Tell me about yourself.

Having a strong answer for this question prepared in advance will help you lead conversation in the direction you so wish – focusing and elaborating on your qualifications that make you the ideal candidate for the job. With this being said, develop a 30 second “elevator pitch” as your answer to this question, keeping it focused, specific, and relevant to the position for which you are interviewing for.

Example: I have a total of 3 years of customer service experience, specifically in retail and call centre positions. In my last job I supervised a team of 6 sales people and was known for my excellent communication and interpersonal skills, which allowed me to effectively work with a wide range of people. My strengths include my ability to achieve set targets as well as my skill in knowing how to resolve customer concerns, always resulting in high sales and consistent customer satisfaction.

What is your greatest weakness?

Use this question as an opportunity to talk about something you are working to improve. It is important for employers to know that you are self-aware; knowing what areas you would like to strengthen in the near future.

Have you ever had a bad experience with an employer or coworker?

In answering this question you are being given an opportunity to show that you are solutions-oriented person who is able to resolve conflict and/or come up with positive solutions in the workplace. In developing your answer, think of a time when you were challenged at work and create an answer that describes the challenge and how you resolved it in a positive way.

Can you speak to your past work history?

In answering this question, speak to the highlights and past positions you have held – what you enjoyed about them and what you learned from them. If asked about job gaps and frequent job changes, provide a truthful answer that notes challenges you have had but focus on your resiliency and the way you have positively dealt with these changes/challenges to become an even better employee overall.

Why did you leave your last employer?

In some situations, the answer to this question is simple. It may be possible that you have recently completed a contract or left a job because you moved to a new city, started school, or wanted to complete further training in a particular field. If, however, your last job ended poorly, when answering this question remain as diplomatic as possible and keep the answer simple, always remembering that it is okay to keep it short and say you were laid off, that your contract/placement ended, that you left to seek further training, or that you moved away.

Can we call your previous employer?

Preparing for this question is an important part of getting ready for your interview. You should always go to an interview with a list of references (two or three) that the employer can contact. If you are able, it is recommended that you include your most recent employer, but if you left your last position not on good terms or would rather that they not contact them for any other reason, just be sure to have a reference list prepared with people who can comment on your work skills, abilities, and to at least some of your past experience. This can include past supervisors, teachers, coaches, mentors, and/or other professionals who have known you for a while.

What motivates you?

This question may be one that you are likely asked as it is typical when the interview is focused on your strengths rather than past job experience. When answering this question, focus on what you enjoy doing and what you do well. Your answer can draw on skills you have/had enjoyed using in past jobs as well as skills you have developed through extracurricular activities or other trainings. Speak to how using these skills and continuing to strengthen them in a role would motivate you to come to work and do your absolute best.

Where do you see yourself in three/five years?

Be selective in how you answer this question and how much you choose to share. Develop an answer that comments your career aspirations, focusing on how this position and the company with whom you are interviewing with are aligned with your career growth goals.

Example: At this moment I am looking for a position in a restaurant with a good reputation. I am looking for a position where I can contribute and learn from a team of people, bringing and sharing my past experiences in the food industry, with the goal of adding to the restaurants success. Long term, my goals will depend on the opportunities that become available in the restaurant but overall I would love to be able learn the skills needed to become a cook for a restaurant such as yours.

Why do you want to work for us?

Preparing your answer for this question is vital to do before going to your interview. In your answer talk about what interests you most about the position as well as the company, what skills you have that would help you in this position, in what ways this position will help you grow/with your career goals, and what contributions you want to make to the company when hired for this role.

Why should we hire you?

This question is your opportunity to sell yourself! Develop an answer that lists three of your best qualities related to the job and that are unique to you. In your answer it is important to not only speak to qualifications but to also talk positively about how personality, experience, and skills make you the perfect candidate for the job!

Do you have any questions for us?

At the end of an interview it is typical for the interviewer to ask you if you have any questions for them. It is recommended that you always ask two or three questions to them, expressing your interest in the role and your commitment to becoming a great employee to their company. If unsure what to ask, below are a few suggestions:

- What can you tell me about the company culture?
- What do you like most about working here?
- Does your company offer additional training and/or opportunities for professional development?
- How is success measured and evaluated in this role?
- Can you tell me more about the team I would be working with?
- What are the next steps?