



Educational and Vocational Goals

Introduction

Welcome to the Educational and Vocational Goals session of the *Living in Balance* program. This session will help you to identify and pursue your educational and vocational goals during sobriety. More specifically, the session will help you consider the different types of educational opportunities available to you and select one that meets your needs. It will also provide you with tools for evaluating your interests, skills, and goals concerning employment. Finally, it will teach you ways to find and secure a job, including how to prepare a cover letter and résumé, and the proper way to behave during an interview.

What is in this session?

This session has two major parts: (1) Educational Goals and (2) Vocational Goals.

- ✓ After participating in part 1, you will be able to
 - understand the different types of education available to you.
 - evaluate which types of educational activities are best suited for you.



SESSION 25 HAS TWO MAJOR PARTS:

1. Educational Goals
2. Vocational Goals

- ✓ After participating in part 2, you will be able to
 - consider which types of jobs you should apply for, given your interests, skills, and goals.
 - understand how to prepare a cover letter and résumé and how to participate in an interview when applying for a job.
 - use some basic resources, such as the Internet, for finding a job.
 - prepare for dealing with drug triggers in the workplace.

What will be asked of you?

You will be asked to look at your strengths, weaknesses, and goals in respect to education and employment. You will also be asked to consider how to prepare a résumé, write a cover letter, and complete a job application. Finally, you will be asked to prepare a plan for dealing with alcohol and other drug triggers that you might face while at work. Education and work may have been forgotten or have become less important while you were drinking and using drugs. However, during sobriety you will find these things important as you try to reintegrate into society and grow as a person.



LEARNER OBJECTIVES FOR PART 1:

You will

- understand the different types of education available to you.
- evaluate which types of educational activities are best suited for you.



Part 1: Educational Goals

The Role of Education

Education is not simply what you learned in school. Education includes things you have learned from living and working.

Intellectual growth is an important part of growing as a person in sobriety, and every day you can add to your education by learning something new.

During your active addiction, you probably had a very narrow idea of what was worth learning. You may have wanted to learn things that could help you get and use drugs. Many normal areas of interest were no longer important to you. When you get sober, you may find that you have interests that you had long forgotten.

There will also be new things you wish to learn, such as how to stay sober. In recovery, you should take time to evaluate yourself in terms of educational and vocational goals, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

You may decide that you need further school education, or you may find that the things you want to learn do not require further schooling. You may want to look for a job in which you can learn or use some skills. But to make a good decision, you should think about your goals, both in terms of education and employment.

**EXERCISE 1**

Please answer the following questions:

1. In terms of your education and employment, what are your personal strengths?

2. In terms of your education and employment, what are some areas for improvement?

3. In terms of your education and employment, what are your major goals? Or did you have some education and employment goals that you put aside while drinking alcohol or using drugs?

4. What steps do you need to take to reach these goals?



Education means different things to different people.

Education and Schooling

Education means different things to different people. Some people enjoyed going to school and did well. Some didn't do as well and disliked the experience. Some people quit school to start working or because of their addiction. Some people went on to college; others attended trade or community schools.

Many people did poorly in school or never finished their high school education. Often those who did poorly were not prepared for school. For instance, some people didn't think that school was important and didn't take school seriously. They may have been rebellious and cut school to play or hang out with friends. Alcohol and other drugs may have become more important than school.

For many people, three things have changed since their high school days. First, they are older and have different priorities. Second, they have more responsibilities. Third, they are making serious attempts at becoming clean and sober. As a result, many people who did poorly in elementary and high school can perform well in school as adults.



EXERCISE 2

Please answer the following questions:

1. How important was school to you when you were younger?
Did this change over time? If so, why?

2. Were there reasons for you to do things other than attend school? What was more important than school? Why?



**DEFINITION OF
ADULT BASIC
EDUCATION
PROGRAMS:**

Programs designed for adults sixteen years or older who had less than twelve years of school and are not currently enrolled in public schools.

3. What is different about your life now, compared to when you were in high school? Do you think you would do better now in school? Why?

What Is Adult Basic Education?

Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs are designed for adults sixteen years or older who had less than twelve years of school and are not currently enrolled in public schools. These programs provide adults with basic education and practical information, particularly for adults seeking employment.

ABE programs provide instruction in reading and understanding help-wanted advertisements, tips on answering employment ads and using employment services, and help with filling out job application forms. The programs also provide information about job opportunities through sources like the government and labor unions.

ABE programs also provide information about vocational training, consumer education, Social Security, and health care. In addition, there is practical information about getting along with people at work and other social skills.

There are also programs such as ProLiteracy that have volunteer tutors who can help people learn to read on a one-on-one basis. Some employers also provide literacy training.

**EXERCISE 3**

Please check true or false for the following statements:

1. ABE programs are a good replacement for a high school degree.
☐ True ☐ False

2. Even if you have a high school degree, an ABE program can help you learn how to get and keep a job.
☐ True ☐ False

High School Equivalency Tests

If you didn't graduate from high school, you can take a high school equivalency test, such as the General Educational Development (GED) test or the HiSET test. These tests measure math, science, social studies, and language arts (reading and writing) abilities.

Passing one of these tests gives those who did not complete high school the opportunity to earn their high school equivalency credential. This credential can help you get into college and get started in some careers.

**EXERCISE 4**

Please answer the following questions:

1. Did you finish high school?
☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, why not? Did your addiction have something to do with it?

**DEFINITION OF HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY CERTIFICATE:**

Equivalent to a high school diploma. Individuals may receive this after passing a series of tests.

2. If you didn't graduate from high school, have you thought about taking a test like the GED in order to get your high school equivalency certificate?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is something stopping you from pursuing this goal?

3. What are some of the advantages of getting a high school equivalency certificate?

Preparing to Take a High School Equivalency Test

Although many people take a high school equivalency test without preparation, there are good ways to study and prepare. They can help you get a better score on the test.

There are many different study guides, which can be obtained from bookstores and libraries. Study guides are also available online. These study guides can help you review the basic areas that will be covered by the high school equivalency test. In addition, most study guides also contain sample questions and practice sessions.

There are a number of adult education programs and businesses that offer classroom reviews of the subject matter, instruc-

tion for taking the test, practice sessions, and study guides. In addition, the public library can provide information on preparing for the test.



EXERCISE 5

Please answer the following questions:

1. Are you planning to take the GED or another high school equivalency test?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, what have you done to prepare for the exam?

2. If you are planning to take a high school equivalency test, what might help you to prepare?

3. If taking tests gets you nervous, do you think that preparing for the test might make you less nervous? Why?



**Apprenticeships help
to train people for a
particular craft or trade.**

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships help to train people for a particular craft or trade through on-the-job training and classroom instruction.

Apprentice training is offered in many occupations, including automotive mechanics, bricklaying, carpentry, cement masonry, electrical work, plumbing, refrigeration, air conditioning, and welding. The apprenticeship asks for a commitment of a specific amount of time, ranging from one to five years. The terms are outlined in a contract signed ahead of time.

Finishing the apprenticeship allows the individual to work in that craft or trade. Unlike other career preparation programs, such as college or technical school, there is no tuition fee or related costs for apprenticeship training.



EXERCISE 6

Please answer the following questions:

1. Does the idea of learning a trade interest you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, what kind of trade do you find the most appealing?

2. Have you ever known anyone who was an apprentice?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, what was that person's experience like? If not, would you like to meet someone who was an apprentice or who works with apprentices? Please explain.

3. If you don't have experience in the trades you're interested in, have you looked into apprenticeship programs for them?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you be interested in pursuing such a program?

☐ Yes ☐ No *(If yes, please explain.)*

Vocational Education

Vocational education includes a number of different programs designed to provide employment and life skills. Vocational education programs prepare students for jobs that do not require an undergraduate four-year college degree. They also provide training to improve existing skills and retraining to help people keep up with changing technology.

General vocational education programs provide students with basic work skills and let them preview a number of different jobs. Job-specific programs train students for a specific job or a number of related jobs.

Vocational education programs help to increase students' chances of getting a job and doing well with it once they have it. After having vocational education, people generally need less on-the-job training and often receive higher wages.



EXERCISE 7

Please answer the following questions:

1. Would you want to learn skills for a new job or improve the skills you have?

☐ Yes ☐ No *(If yes, please explain.)*

(writing space on next page)

Vocational education programs prepare students for jobs that do not require an undergraduate four-year college degree.

2. What are the advantages of learning skills for a new job or improving the skills you have?

3. If you had extra training for your present job, what might be the benefits of vocational education?

4. Do you know the name of a program that provides vocational education?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you want to find out?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Who might help you identify a program?

What is the difference between ABE programs and vocational training?



Part 2: Vocational Goals

Self-Examination

An important aspect of recovery is ongoing self-examination. The goal of self-examination is to improve those areas where you are weak and to reinforce areas of strength. This self-examination also applies to a person's vocational or employment situation. To get and keep a job, you need to be aware of your skills and also know what types of jobs you don't have the skills for. You will need to do some planning to figure out what jobs you should apply for based on what skills you have.

The first part of a job search should include the development of an *employability plan*. An employability plan organizes on paper the collection of personal information about your job skills, interests, and goals. By organizing and writing this information down, it is much easier to understand your goals and what steps you need to take to achieve them.

Because recovery is a time of self-examination, it is useful to examine your skills, qualifications, and career goals, even if you are not planning to change jobs.



LEARNER OBJECTIVES FOR PART 2:

You will

- consider which types of jobs you should apply for, given your interests, skills, and goals.
- understand how to prepare a cover letter and résumé and how to participate in an interview when applying for a job.
- use some basic resources, such as the Internet, for finding a job.
- prepare for dealing with drug triggers in the workplace.



**DEFINITION OF
EMPLOYABILITY
PLAN:**

A plan that organizes
personal information
about your job skills,
interests, and goals.



EXERCISE 8

Please answer the following questions:

1. Are you currently unemployed?

☐ Yes ☐ No *(If yes, please explain.)*

Did you lose your job as a result of addiction, either
directly or indirectly?

☐ Yes ☐ No *(If yes, please explain.)*

2. If you are employed, how has recovery affected your
attitude toward your job? Have you thought about
changing jobs or careers?

3. How do you think you should respond to prospective employers who ask questions about previous arrests or drug use? Have you talked about this possibility with a counselor, sponsor, or other adviser? Would you like to?

Starting the Job Search

In planning a job search, one of your goals is to figure out what jobs fit with your individual strengths, weaknesses, abilities, and interests. To do this, you should look at a number of personal factors that can affect your choice of a job.

Personal interests. People have different kinds of personal interests. Often, these interests relate to individual talents or skills.



EXERCISE 9

Please answer the following question:

What are some of your personal interests, talents, or skills? Describe them here.



In planning a job search,
one of your goals is to
figure out what jobs fit with
your individual strengths,
weaknesses, abilities,
and interests.

Work skills. Work skills describe the experience and ability that you have for a specific job or task. In this case, a work skill can also refer to your potential ability to do certain jobs.



EXERCISE 10

Please answer the following question:

What are some of your general work skills? Describe them here.

Job values. Job values are those aspects of a job that are important to you (for example, the hours, location, or responsibilities required to do a job).



EXERCISE 11

Please answer the following question:

What do you consider your core job values? Describe them here.

Suitable occupations. This area refers to your interest in specific jobs that you are aware of.



EXERCISE 12

Please answer the following questions:

1. If you are looking for a job, what do you consider to be your most useful skills?

2. What additional skills would you like to have?

3. In terms of looking for a new job, what are your biggest areas of concern?

Personal Interests

Make a list of your interests—those things you like to do in your free time or on the job, as well as things you might like to do if you had the chance. Interests can include anything, such as cooking, working on cars, taking classes. Draw from your imagination, or get ideas from this list:

Make models with wood	Draw or paint	Take photographs
Drive a truck	Write	Design buildings/furniture
Read	Run a business	Give talks
Make or listen to music	Supervise others	Go to parties
Be politically active	Talk to people	Attend meetings
Take care of others	Read about scientific subjects	Operate machinery
Work in a lab	Send email	Keep files
Write letters	Do research	Drive a car
Keep accounts	Buy and sell things	Do outdoor activities
Plan parties	Fix electrical equipment	
Work on cars		



EXERCISE 13

List and briefly describe some of your interests:

Work Skills

People use many different skills in their work, leisure, and routine activities. You may not even recognize some of the skills you have. Make a list of your current skills. The following list may help you think of some skills you have that you do not usually think about.

All these skills may be useful for employment:

Manual: Building, operating machinery, typing, sorting, making models

Physical: Sports, lifting, carrying, moving, speed, strength

Analytical: Researching, evaluating, assessing, problem solving, troubleshooting

Intuitive: Planning, policy making

Creative: Imagining, inventing, designing

Artistic: Using colors, shapes, music, words, materials

Verbal: Reading, writing, speaking, debating, teaching, training

Numerical: Calculating, taking inventory, budgeting, bookkeeping

Visual: Observing, examining, inspecting, filing

Performance: Acting, performing (joking, clowning, making music)

Persuasive: Motivating, selling, negotiating, resolving conflicts, bargaining, manipulating

Organizational: Planning, putting things in order, prioritizing

Managerial: Organizing, directing, leading, coordinating, guiding, supervising

Administrative: Executing plans, implementing decisions, following through, keeping records

Caretaking: Being of service, understanding, listening, helping, tending, serving

Make a list of your current skills.

**EXERCISE 14**

List and briefly describe some of your skills:

Job Values

Jobs should provide people with some sense of purpose in their lives. For some people, getting paid is the main purpose. Other people may get other important benefits from their work, such as the satisfaction of helping others or the pleasure of spending time outdoors. Others may look for certain secondary benefits, such as working hours that allow them to attend night school. Make a list of the things that you appreciate about your current job or that you would value highly in the job you are looking for. Some examples of the types of things many people value are given in the following list:

- Working with people, information (numbers, facts, statistics), or things (equipment, objects)
- Making a lot of money

- Getting high prestige and status
- Working a regular, fixed schedule (eight hours a day, Monday through Friday) or having flexible hours
- Being the boss or being a part of a large organization
- Having a fixed set of duties or doing a variety of things
- Living close to work
- Being able to travel a lot on business or traveling very little
- Facing no risks or challenges in work or being constantly challenged and taking risks in work
- Working in an office, working outdoors, or working at home
- Working for a small company or working for a large organization



EXERCISE 15

List some of the things you're looking for in a job, and briefly explain why:

[illegible]

Suitable Occupations

Now that you've thought about and listed your interests, skills, and job values, you need to match these with specific jobs. Think about which jobs you have the skills for, and of those, consider which will best meet your needs. A short list follows of different fields and the types of jobs found in them. You can get a more complete list in occupational handbooks that are available from vocational specialists or at public libraries.

Financial work: Bookkeeper, budgeter, bank teller, accountant, payroll clerk, cost estimator

Service work: Copier, courier, typist or data entry clerk, receptionist, janitor, nurse's aide, hospital orderly

Salesperson: Real estate, cars, clothing, stocks and bonds, manufacturer's representative

Skilled labor: Mechanic, electrician, engineer, surveyor, construction inspector, TV repair, computer repair

Artistic/creative work: Writer, artist, musician, art dealer, composer, journalist

Scientific work: Lab technician, geologist, botanist, physicist, meteorologist, chemist, computer programmer

Counselor: Psychologist, social worker, school counselor, speech therapist

Manager: Running a company, hotel, restaurant, political campaign, radio station



EXERCISE 16

List some of the jobs you think would be good for you, and briefly explain why:

[illegible]

Your Cover Letter

When applying for a job, the two most basic tools you need are the *résumé* and the *cover letter*. The cover letter and *résumé* will often be your first contact with a potential employer. When a *résumé* and cover letter are received by a company's personnel or human resources office, they may be read in order to screen out candidates who are obviously not suited for the available job. After this initial screening, they may be sent to the supervisor, who may arrange for personal interviews.

Because the résumé and cover letter represent your first contact with a potential employer, the appearance and format of these documents are very important. Employers may feel that

When applying for a job, the two most basic tools you need are the *résumé* and the *cover letter*.

a sloppy or poorly written letter reflects your skills and habits in other areas. For this reason, it's vital that you type your résumé and letter. If you don't type, ask a friend to do it for you.

When a business receives a few hundred applications for a single job, the résumés and cover letters that are smudged, dirty, and of poor quality are less likely to be read than clean, neat, typed résumés and cover letters. There should be no spelling or grammatical mistakes on a résumé or cover letter.

When writing and typing the ideal cover letter, you should address three main points:

Personalize the letter. The cover letter allows your résumé to be sent to a specific individual, rather than “To Whom It May Concern.” In cases when a company lists only the company name in its ad, you should use the name of the director of personnel or human resources, which you can get by calling the company and asking. In addition, the cover letter informs the reader precisely which job vacancy you're applying for, since there may be more than one job available at any given time. Because the résumé is not very personal, the cover letter gives you the chance to express some of your personality in your application.

Highlight your skill areas. Although your résumé will describe your skills and talents in more detail, the cover letter can highlight some of the skills that are most appropriate for the job you're applying for.

State your interest. While highlighting your skills shows potential employers why you might be good for a job, it is also necessary to show them why you want the job. A statement of interest tells the potential employer why you want this particular job. Employers generally feel that an employee who is really interested in his or her work is more likely to stick with it and work hard at it.

**EXERCISE 17**

Please answer the following questions:

1. What are some ways you can use your cover letter to show a potential employer that you are really interested in a job?

2. What are some ways that you can personalize a cover letter without making it too long?

3. What are some ways that you can highlight your skill areas?



Employers generally feel that an employee who is really interested in his or her work is more likely to stick with it and work hard at it.

The résumé is usually even more important than your cover letter.

Writing the Cover Letter

The sample letter shown on the next page will give you a better idea of how your cover letter should look and what it should include. Note that cover letters rarely have more than three paragraphs. If you are answering an ad that asks for specific information that is not on your résumé, you may want to include that in the cover letter too.

Writing the Résumé

The résumé is usually even more important than your cover letter. The résumé should be an accurate but favorable, positive description of your abilities and experiences.

Because a business may receive many résumés for a single job, it is best to keep your résumé short. Many people limit their résumé to one or two pages.

Some information should always be included on your résumé, such as your name, address, and work history. But other items, such as your goals or qualifications, are optional. They should be used only when they show your strengths, and not when they reflect potential problems. Most résumés are divided into the following sections:

Personal information. This includes your name, address, work/home phone numbers, and email address.

Objective. The objective may state the specific job function you're looking for. It can also highlight your interests and the type of job that will use your skills. This section is optional.

Education. List any college, university, or trade school experience, degrees, or certificates. Include any special courses that are relevant to the job. Also list any honors, such as making the dean's list. If you didn't go to school after high school, you should list your high school.

Qualifications. This brief section should list your skills, experiences, and specific qualifications for the job you're applying for.

Your street address
 Your city, state & ZIP
 Your email address
 Date of letter

Name of addressee
 Addressee's title
 Company name
 Address
 City, state & ZIP

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____ :

First paragraph:

1. Tell why you are writing. For example, say if you are responding to an ad in the newspaper or just asking about future job openings.
2. If you're applying for a job vacancy, mention how you learned about the vacancy—for example, from the newspaper, from a friend, or through an agency.

Second paragraph:

1. Highlight skills of yours that are appropriate for the job. You should only mention one or two qualifications that the employer will be most interested in.
2. State why you are interested in the job. Give at least one good reason why you want to work for this company or in this line of work.

Third paragraph:

1. Request an interview. Make a specific request for an interview and/or mention that you will call in a week to follow up on the letter. Make sure you include your phone number.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Enclosures

1. Note that a résumé is included along with any other papers that were requested by the employer.

Employment. List the name of each significant job you've had in the past ten years. Periods when you were unemployed for more than a month or two should not be highlighted. Because people with addictions who are recovering often have these gaps, it is best not to list your previous jobs by date.

Related activities and affiliations. List any activities and organizations that you're involved in that relate to the job for which you're applying. This may be a volunteer position that relates to the job, or if required, membership in a union. This section is also optional.



EXERCISE 18

Please check true or false for the following statements:

1. It is okay not to include dates when you're listing your employment history.
☐ True ☐ False
2. You should always include your name, address, phone number, and email address on your résumé.
☐ True ☐ False
3. If you are applying for a job as a nurse's aide, it is a good idea to mention volunteer work you've done for a local Meals on Wheels program.
☐ True ☐ False

Things Not to Put on Your Résumé

Just as there are certain recommended procedures for writing a résumé, there are also certain things you should definitely not mention on your résumé. These “don’ts” include the following:

- Don’t state your desired salary or former salary. Until you know more about the possible job and all the responsibilities, you won’t really know what it is worth.
- Don’t include hobbies and memberships in social, fraternal, or religious organizations. Employers don’t need this personal information. You can, however, include volunteer work if it relates to the job for which you’re applying.
- Don’t include any potentially negative information, such as legal problems, your substance use disorder history, or jail terms.
- Don’t include personal information such as your age, sex, marital status, or the size of your family.



EXERCISE 19

Please check true or false for the following statements:

1. You need to mention the fact that you are in recovery on your résumé, in order to explain why it isn’t more impressive.
☐ True ☐ False
2. You should not mention on your résumé your marital status or whether or not you have children.
☐ True ☐ False

**There are certain things you should
definitely not mention on your résumé.**

The Job Application

Job applications will be different at different companies, and some small employers may not have an application form at all. Some companies will require you to apply online. To give you some idea of what to expect to see on a job application, a sample application form follows. You should take a few minutes to fill it out and see if there are any questions you are not prepared to answer. When you go to fill out a job application, you should also make sure you have this information with you:

1. Full legal name:

2. Address:

3. Home phone number and email address:

4. Social Security Number:

For security reasons, do not write your Social Security Number down here. But do have it memorized in case you need to supply it on an application.

5. Date of birth:

6. Are you currently working?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Current or last position:

8. Current or last employer (company name, address, and phone):

9. Direct supervisor (name and phone number):

10. May we contact your current or last employer?

☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Are you a citizen of the United States?

☐ Yes ☐ No

12. Have you been convicted of a felony or released from prison within the last seven years?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe the situation:

13. Do you have a disability, handicap, or medical condition that limits your job performance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain:

14. Professional references. Please provide the names of three individuals, not related to you, who know your qualifications. List the name, address, phone number, email address, and job title for each reference.

Reference #1:

Reference #2:

Reference #3:

15. Work history. Starting with the most recent experience, describe all paid, military, and applicable voluntary experiences. Highlight your knowledge, skills, and abilities that best demonstrate your qualifications for this position. You may list significantly different jobs within the same organization as separate items.

May we contact your present supervisor?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Job Title #1:

Employer

Address

Phone

Type of business

Immediate supervisor

Salary (start) _____ (finish) _____

☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time Hours/week _____

Duties

Equipment used

Reason for leaving

Job Title #2:

Employer

Address

Phone

Type of business

Immediate supervisor

Salary (start) _____ (finish) _____

☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time Hours/week _____

Duties

Equipment used

Reason for leaving

Seeking Employment

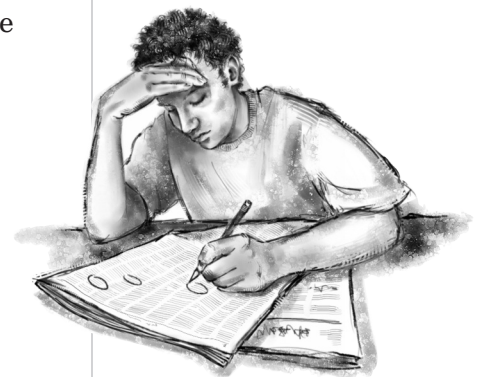
One of the most popular ways to learn about jobs is through the want ads of your local or community newspaper. Jobs can also be found through schools, universities, and institutions; from Internet job banks; through employment agencies; and by directly contacting businesses.

Using employment agencies. There are different types of employment agencies. Some are private businesses that try to match potential employees with businesses. These agencies will charge a fee, either to the business or to the potential employee.

The government also helps people get jobs. Government employment offices post job offerings for federal, state, and local government jobs. Many will also have information on jobs available through private companies that advertise through state employment offices.

Many large businesses and organizations will keep a listing of jobs they have available. For instance, large corporations, hospitals, and universities may keep job listings in their human resources departments—this information will also, usually, be available on the Internet.

Trying to contact potential employers directly. Some businesses do not advertise for positions through the newspaper or only advertise for a limited time. For this reason, it is worthwhile to directly contact companies you are interested in working for. Contacting a business at just the right time may open a door that you wouldn't have found otherwise.



One of the most popular ways to learn about jobs is through the want ads of your local newspaper.



Interviews make most people nervous. This is a normal reaction. It will usually get better after the first few questions.

Using web-based employment sites. There are many different websites that focus on employment. These can change frequently, so conduct a web search for those that include jobs in your geographical area. Your local newspaper's website is a good place to start.

The Job Interview

The interview is usually the first face-to-face contact you will have with a potential employer. Sometimes an interview is scheduled after an employer has received and read a résumé and cover letter, sometimes it is made after a phone call responding to an advertisement, and sometimes an employment agency will help set up the interview.

Often, before you will meet with the employer, you will be asked to fill out an application, like the example described earlier, or tax forms. It is a good idea to bring a clean copy of your résumé, as well as your Social Security card and driver's license, to any interview. Some employers will ask you to take one or more tests (for example, to test your typing, proofreading, grammar, or computer skills) that may or may not be directly related to the job you're trying to get.

Interviews make most people nervous. It is important to remember that this is a normal reaction and that it will usually get better after the first few questions. The first impression you give in an interview is very important; however, employers understand that people are often nervous during an interview. If an interview does not go well, it is important to learn from your mistakes and go right back out for another interview.

**EXERCISE 20**

Please answer the following questions:

1. What are some of the things you should do when interviewing for a job?

2. What are some of the things you should not do when interviewing for a job?

3. Do you get nervous and anxious during interviews?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What are some things you can do to reduce that anxiety?

Dos and Don'ts for Interviews

1. Bring a summary of your past experience and education, including names, places, and dates, with you for the interview. A complete, clean copy of your résumé is even better.
2. Prepare ahead of time a list of at least three people or firms (with names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses) to use as references.
3. Take your Social Security card to the interview.
4. Do not take anyone with you to the interview.
5. Be on time (or even ten minutes early) for the interview. Do not be late (even by one minute).
6. Dress well, but don't be flashy. Be neat and clean. If you are female, don't wear a lot of makeup or jewelry. If you are male, avoid sports clothes.
7. Even if you are tired or not well, sit up and look alert. Do not yawn or slouch, and try not to look nervous.
8. Do not smoke or chew gum.
9. Answer all the interviewer's questions honestly and briefly. Be confident without boasting.
10. If you are asked to fill out a number of forms or take tests, don't get upset by this task, and try to complete everything in a timely manner.
11. When you are asked, point out the value of your past experience, especially as it applies to the job for which you are applying.
12. Do not argue or get defensive with the interviewer.
13. Do not criticize others, especially your past employers and associates.
14. Don't talk about your personal, domestic, and financial problems. The employer will only be interested in what you can do and how well you can do it. He or she is not interested in your personal problems.

15. Be polite. Show courtesy and respect for the person interviewing you. If the employer offers suggestions about other jobs or types of work, but doesn't want to hire you for the job for which you are applying, listen to what he or she has to say. He or she may have good advice or may provide a lead for another job.



EXERCISE 21

Please check true or false for the following statements:

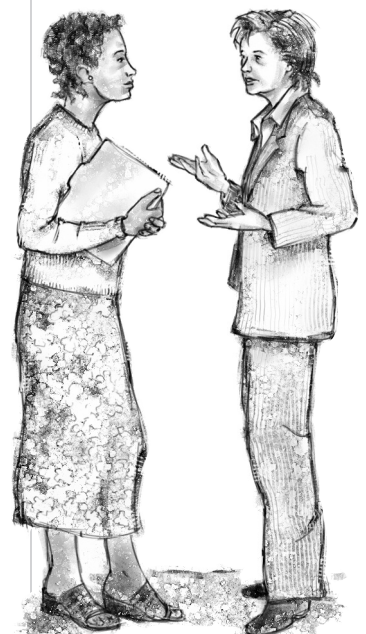
1. It is okay to take someone who can be a reference for you to your interview.
☐ True ☐ False
2. You should not criticize past employers, no matter how bad they were to you.
☐ True ☐ False

Coworkers

In many ways, a workplace is like a family. There are authority figures who may act like parents at times, and coworkers who may resemble brothers and sisters in some way. As with brothers and sisters, there can be cooperation and/or competition between coworkers. Also, while some businesses have a healthy work environment, others have an unhealthy or dysfunctional work environment that encourages distrust, arguments, and resentments.

In general, work involves solving problems. Because of early experiences, people have different ways of solving problems, and they may disagree about the best way to solve a problem. A major task of employees is to learn how to cooperate with coworkers and consider their approaches to work.

People in early recovery are often easily agitated and anxious. At work, they may get into conflicts and arguments with coworkers more easily than normal. In addition, the workplace and



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coworkers may be triggers for drug thoughts. When you go to work, whether at a new job or one you held in your active addiction, you should have a plan for what to do if you begin feeling drug cravings and thoughts.



EXERCISE 22

Please answer the following questions:

1. When you have problems with coworkers, what do you usually do? Is there a better way you could handle the situation?

2. Did you use drugs with coworkers?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, do you work with those people now?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How do you handle the triggers you feel when you work with them?

3. What other triggers for drug use do you face at work?

4. What specific plans do you have to handle triggers at work?

Authority Figures

If the workplace seems like a family, then the authority figures may appear like parents. Just like parents, they will have different styles of leadership. Some supervisors are capable and well trained. Others may not have experience or training or may be dealing with personal problems of their own.

Some supervisors are able to listen to and understand the needs of employees, but other supervisors focus entirely on their own needs or the needs of the company. Many supervisors have the patience and skills needed to teach workers how to solve problems, but others simply become frustrated and angry.

You may be worried that your supervisor will find out about your history of addiction and treatment. If you are sober today, it may not be a problem. If the issue does arise, you should know that alcoholism and addiction are considered disabilities under

**Workers can speak
with EAP staff in full
confidence.**

the Americans with Disabilities Act, and as such you are protected from discrimination because of your condition. (This does not mean that you can't be fired from your job if you are actively using.)

Disclosing a personal history of addiction and treatment is always a personal decision that depends on the worker, the supervisor, and the company. Many companies have employee assistance programs (EAPs). When workers need help with substance use disorders, mental health problems, and medical problems, the EAP is able to help the worker find treatment and coordinate absences with the supervisor. Workers can speak with EAP staff in full confidence. The EAP workers must keep the nature of the problem confidential, even from the worker's supervisor.



EXERCISE 23

Please answer the following questions:

1. Do you regularly get into trouble with your supervisor?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, what kinds of problems do you have?

Has anything changed since you've gotten sober?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. What areas of your relationship with your supervisor would you like to see improved? Is there some way that you can help to improve it?

3. If your supervisor asked you if you had ever had an alcohol or drug problem, what would you say?



Session 25 Summary

In this session you have looked at your educational and vocational goals and how you can work toward meeting those goals. You have considered your personal interests, work skills, and things you value in a job, and then tried to match those with potential jobs. You also have learned about how you can find a job and how you can apply for one. Finally, you have learned to prepare for alcohol and other drug triggers that you might face on the job.