

WORK INTERVENTION NETWORK (WIN) PROGRAM

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please see the following page for details

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Background for WIN Initiative:

At the outset of the pandemic, a group of 10 vocational/counseling psychologists, career practitioners, and a sociologist convened to discuss the unemployment crisis (which includes underemployment and seasonal work). We concurred that the challenges resulting from the massive job losses require comprehensive and flexible sources of support and skill building. Building on the excellent services that are already available via employment and career transition agencies, training programs, and independent providers, we designed six 75-90 minute workshops that can be used in tandem or independently to support individuals who are unemployed and underemployed. Our intention is to disseminate this workshop content as widely as possible at no cost to agencies or providers.

General Tips for Facilitating Modules:

1. When using this manual, the following “helping skills” are useful:
 - a. Active listening
 - b. Empathy
 - c. Identifying and addressing issues and concerns
 - d. Clarifying assumptions and misconceptions
 - e. Expressing compassion and support
 - f. Affirm participants’ boundaries for disclosing personal information
2. A number of practical skills would be useful, including:
 - a. Group management skills
 - b. Job search skills
 - c. Career planning and transition skills
 - d. Knowledge of local referral resources (e.g., for mental health counseling; food banks, etc.)
3. As a facilitator, it’s also helpful to verbally validate participants’ experiences. This could include naming contextual factors contributing to their presenting problems (e.g., experiencing microaggressions at work, stressors outside of work such as divorce or moving) and a range of emotions that participants are experiencing. By acknowledging these, we normalize participant experiences and increase participants’ self-awareness and empowerment.

MODULE 1: Deepening and Sustaining Connections

Kelsey Autin & Amy Mazur

Overarching goal: To deepen relationships, which are critical in providing a source of support and resilience for people managing work-based challenges.

Participant Outcomes

1. Increase sense of belief in possibility, personal agency
2. Decrease self-blame in job seeking process
3. Reframe the importance of connection

Facilitator Goals

1. Create a supportive environment to facilitate critical reflection for each participant
2. Define what community means to participants
3. Communicate the benefits of community connection to job searching and well-being
4. Help participants identify existing communities of support
5. Discuss strategies for building community
6. Provide opportunities for support network with other participants

Activities

Framing and Check-in (15-20 minutes)

1. Welcome participants to the group
2. Introduce icebreaker
 - a. “What emotions are you feeling related to your current employment situation?”

Activities and Debrief (35-40 minutes)

1. Divide group into dyads and ask pairs to share response with one another
 - a. “Describe a time when you felt like you were part of a community”
2. Introduce “[Relational Map](#)” activity
3. Participants complete Relational Map on their own
4. Invite the group to discuss what came up for them in the activity

Next Steps (10-15 minutes)

1. Re-introduce dyads from earlier. This person will be the participant’s “buddy”
2. Discuss ongoing opportunities for support and connection among the group
3. Buddies to continue to meet in the future to facilitate job search persistence

MODULE 2: Fostering Social Awareness and Reducing Self Blame

David Blustein, Ofer Sharone, Gali Cinamon, & Joaquim Ferreira

Overarching Goal: To help participants enhance their critical consciousness (CC), which refers to the capacity to read the world and to enact change in one's life and context. Developing CC offers a powerful reframe about the causes of unemployment, which can reduce self-blame.

Participant Outcomes

1. Develop a critical perspective about the participants' current challenges that is both accurate and diminishes self-blame
2. Gain a better understanding of the macro-level factors that influence the labor market and job search
3. Enhance participants' resilience via the use of more adaptive reframes and the development of a more critical perspective of social and economic forces

Facilitator Goals

1. Create a supportive environment to facilitate critical reflection on the nature of the work situation for each participant
2. Provide participants with tools to understand the systemic and institutional causes of unemployment and sub-optimal employment
3. Support the development of protective resources that will help mitigate the psychological consequences of unemployment
4. Offer participants an evidence-based means of reframing the challenges that they are facing in order to reduce self-blame, internalized stigma, and shame
5. Group facilitators may elect to choose a selected number of activities and discussion topics that meet the specific needs of the group participants

Activities

Framing and Check in (15 minutes)

1. Ask participants to introduce themselves and respond to the following question:
 - a. In addition to the financial challenges of life, what are the most challenging aspects of your work and life situation now?
2. Optimally, it would be useful for the participants to write their responses to these points briefly.

Activities and Debrief (60 minutes)

1. Introduce semi-structured group discussions (which may utilize breakout groups) structured around specific themes and prompts. (Brief talking points will be created and disseminated to the group facilitators and participants.)
2. Introduce group discussion questions:
 - a. ***What is the nature of this employment crisis?*** Discussion of structural conditions and macro-level causes of unemployment and sub-optimal work conditions.
 - i. Global pandemic: Totally transformed life and work around the world.

- ii. Big picture: era of precarious work; pervasive under-employment, unstable/contingent employment
 - iii. Significant barriers to good stable jobs are largely structural and outside the control of individuals.
 - iv. Explain and outline in detail the importance of discussing barriers as a way to counter the self-help myth of jobseeker control over outcomes, which often leads to self-blame.
 - v. Also, highlight the reality that this period of unemployment is unlike any other that we have experienced, which will help in reducing self-blame
 - vi. Discuss the psychological consequences of self-blame--it is not only inaccurate, but it can be damaging to the participants' health and well-being
- b. ***The job search: Identifying the "real deal" in locating a job***
- i. Invite participants, in small groups, to discuss barriers they have faced in finding good jobs. After small group discussions, ask groups to share with the large groups the common themes or patterns they noticed
 - ii. Share data from audit studies showing that applicants with equal skills and credentials receive very different call back rates depending on current employment status, as well as other factors like race and age.
 - iii. Discuss the hiring process, and the issue of employer biases against unemployed workers and intersecting biases (e.g., race-based discrimination, ageism, and bias towards self-employment/contract work)
 - iv. Explain that recognition of obstacles is necessary to avoid self-blame
 - 1. For some participants, this may raise feelings of hopelessness. Such feelings should be openly discussed. Obstacles do not mean it is impossible to get a job. Recognition of obstacles can clarify why finding a good job may take a long time and may inform individual and collective strategies.
- c. ***Subjective Experience and Stigma: examine the subjective aspects of the unemployment experience with a focus on unpacking internalized beliefs that can be reframed and debunked.***
- i. Discuss the subjective experience of constant rejection, stigma, and shame
 - ii. Review the experiences of stigma and shame
 - iii. Affirm boundaries so that people do not feel that they have to disclose material that they are not yet comfortable in sharing
 - iv. However, underscore that talking about these issues will help to reveal the ways in which we internalize messages from society and provide participants with a way of combating these insidious social messages
 - v. Have the participants rejoin their small groups and respond to the following prompts
 - 1. To what extent have you felt stigma about being unemployed--share an experience?
 - 2. Similarly, to what extent have you felt shame about being unemployed--share an experience
 - 3. Spend a few minutes writing down the external messages that have contributed to these feelings
 - vi. Using a critical perspective, review with the participants alternate explanations that highlight the role of systemic and institutional causes of unemployment and discrimination.

- d. **Moving Forward:** *move from reflection to action that will enhance resilience and support participants as they re-engage with the job search process.*
- i. Discuss the process of using these new understandings and reframes as a way to foster resilience and empowerment.
 - ii. Invite participants, in small groups, to discuss their overall conclusions about the previous talking points
 - iii. Pose the following questions in the group to facilitate the discussion
 1. What has changed in your understanding of the work-related challenges you are facing?
 2. To what extent has this discussion helped you to identify ways that the social and economic factors are influencing the job search process?
 3. How will this discussion help you to reframe the frustration and rejections of the job search?
 - iv. Closing activities
 1. Using imagery, have the participants envision how these new understandings can function as a shield in their lives?
 2. Ask the participants to write down how their response to the following question (raised at the outset) may have changed
 3. What are the most challenging aspects of your work and life situation now?
 4. Discuss some social actions that the participants can take to advocate for more humane policies about work and unemployment
 5. Have the participants develop an action plan for themselves that is informed by these discussions, focusing on the following
 - a. Goals for gaining employment
 - b. Connecting with buddies to keep up the adaptive reframes
 - c. Identify some action steps that will help you to feel that you are moving forward.

Next Steps (15 minutes)

1. Participants will complete their new action plan and take it with them.
2. Participants also will be encouraged to share contact information with other group members.

MODULE 3: Building Emotional Resilience and Self-Care (Two workshops)

Saliha Kozan, Mindi Thompson, & Gali Cinamon

Overarching Goal: To provide participants with specific skills, resources, and support that will enhance their capacity to cope with the stress of job loss and other work-based disruptions.

Session 1: Building Emotional Resilience

Participant Outcomes

1. Understand the effects of unemployment on mental health
2. Validate own and others' psychological experiences during unemployment
3. Share stories of resilience to manage and overcome current difficulties

Facilitator Goals

1. Provide safe and supportive spaces to allow participants to:
 - a. identify and express/name feelings including loss;
 - b. identify areas of their lives that they have control over and build mastery within those areas;
 - c. increase their awareness of the common psychological reactions to unemployment/job loss;
2. Validate participants' sense of loss as well as other emotions during unemployment and job search process (e.g., grief, frustration/anger, sadness, disappointment and discouragement after rejections)

Activities

Check-in and Centering (10-15 minutes)

1. Read from provided script (Appendix 2) to check in with participants and lead a centering exercise
2. Explain goals of session and set guidelines (e.g., nonjudgmental and supportive listening, showing respect, giving space to each other)

Psychoeducation (5-10 minutes)

1. Provide information to participants about common emotional/psychological reactions to job loss
2. Provide handouts to participants that outline these emotional concepts

Small and Large Group Discussion (35-40 minutes)

1. Ask participants to separate into small groups (2-3 members) and discuss the following questions:
 - a. What are your thoughts on the handout?
 - b. Do you relate to any of this personally?
 - c. Which resources and/or strengths (e.g., family and friends support, governmental/institutional support, financial savings, hobbies, spirituality) helped you overcome hardships in the past?
2. Bring small groups back to the large group and discuss the above responses as a large group

Future Steps (5 minutes)

1. Ask group how they plan on building on existing resources as well as creating new ones
2. Ask group about the role of social support in their lives
 - a. Would you be willing to share your feelings about the current situation with someone you trust?

Session 2: Taking Care of Ourselves (Or: Self-Care)

Participant Outcomes

1. Understand the importance of self-care in stress management during unemployment
2. Build emotional resilience

Facilitator Goals

1. Increase participant understanding of how self-care helps one cope and be more resilient during stressful times
2. Encourage ongoing engagement in self-care activities/behaviors
3. Increase motivation to take care of one's physical and mental health

Activities

Check-in and Centering (10-15 minutes)

- Read from provided script to check in with participants and lead a centering exercise
- Explain goals of the session and ask about participants' understanding of self-care
 - "What does self-care mean to you?"

Facts and Myth Activity (10-15 minutes)

1. Read/show statements about self-care from a handout and ask group if they are myths or facts
2. Give examples of self-care using handouts
 - a. different domains of wellness (e.g., DBT PLEASE skills handout)
 - i. nutrition

- ii. physical activity
- iii. sleep hygiene
- iv. mindfulness/relaxation resources
- v. social activities/social involvement

Group Discussion (25-35 minutes)

1. Engage participants in group discussion about self-care exploring participants' responses to the following questions:
 - a. why is self-care important at this time in your life?
 - b. how have you been taking care of yourself lately?
 - c. what are your favorite low-cost ways to manage the stress of the job search?
 - d. how have you used those strategies lately, if at all?
 - e. what are your barriers to self-care?
2. Acknowledge that self-care is work and thank participants for taking time for self care by attending the session

Closing (5-10 minutes)

1. Ask participants what they have taken away from this group and how they plan to practice self-care moving forward

MODULE 4: Planning, Exploring, and Engaging in the Job Search

David Blustein, Amy Mazur, and Brian Stevenson

Overarching Goal: To facilitate career planning, which ideally will motivate participants in their job search while also providing hope and a pathway to a sustainable, and optimally, a meaningful life.

SESSION 1: Planning and Exploring

Participant Outcomes

1. Increase self-awareness about hopes for their careers
2. Experientially learn about the reality of the career planning and job search process
3. Take action, maintain motivation and reach out for support in the job search

Facilitator Goals

1. Frame the job search around a broader career planning perspective
2. Instill hope for participants by helping them reconnect to hopes/dreams about work

Activities

Opening Discussions (10-15 Minutes)

1. Start with a discussion about the role of work in participants' lives. Affirm that work plays a role in everyone's life.
 - a. "What is working? What does work mean to you?"
 - b. "Why do we work?" Share pros/cons.
2. Clarify that work satisfies many needs. Optimally, it can satisfy needs for self-determination (some might call this a career, vocation, or calling/mission)

Reconnecting with Hopes (10 Minutes)

1. If you've been struggling with finding work, feeling underemployed or demoralized in your current job, or are experiencing barriers to your job development, you may find that you have "shut off" the part of yourself that dreamed of having a career or a calling
2. Re-connecting with this part of yourself can be scary, but it can be important and helpful to be mindful of these parts of yourself.
3. It could be helpful to think of your long-term vocational aspirations/goals as a lighthouse. You can see the light in the distance and it guides your actions/behaviors.

Exploring Self Concept (20-25 Minutes)

1. Exploring one's identity, values, and personality is an essential part of career planning. Knowing oneself helps people to find a more optimal career path and more meaningful life.
2. For those who need to focus on locating a job quickly, knowing oneself can help to develop new options and new strategies for the job search.
3. Learning about one's personality types using the Holland system:

- a. [Overview of the Holland RIASEC System \(5 mins\)](#): Five-minute video introducing Holland's personality taxonomy. Participants self-report based on a RIASEC worksheet. (available in an appendix of this report)
 - b. Instructional tools are available in *Making My Future Work* (<https://cehs.csuohio.edu/mmfw/making-my-future-work-0>); pages 146-150.
- 4. Exploring emotional connection and readiness to consider hopes/dreams/aspirations (10-15 minutes)**
- a. *Peak Experiences Exercise*

Closing Activity: Who Am I? (10-15 Minutes)

1. Consider your most important attributes; what makes you unique and what makes you feel positive about yours
2. Write down at least five of these attributes
3. Pair off with a partner in your group to discuss these attributes
4. Consider what aspects of these attributes give you strength now
5. Reconvene with the larger group
6. Visualize yourself at a decent and dignified job in 5 years
7. How did these attributes help you to get there?

SESSION 2: Engaging in the Job Search

Participant Objectives

1. Learn about the process of career development
2. Develop contextual awareness for career development
3. Recognize opportunities and challenges in the job search

Facilitator Goals

1. Support participants using new perspective and plans to sustain their job search
2. Communicate common opportunities and barriers to job searching
3. Acknowledge that career/job development is not just a test of individual fortitude, and that context plays a significant and perhaps the most important role in navigating one's vocational life

Activities

Psychoeducation (10-15 minutes)

1. Validate that participants have reconnected with vocational dreams and have learned a bit about themselves in relation to the world
2. Reconnection with your vocational dreams is a wonderful starting point

3. It can be hard and scary to begin taking steps toward achieving your employment goals
4. Some people in your life may have beliefs about the process of working toward one's long-term employment goals that are not helpful/supportive
5. Common myths vs reality:
 - a. "Most people know people" (Not everyone has connections in certain fields)
 - b. "Most people know the job they want from a young age, and every step they take leads in that direction." (most people figure it out as they go, taking opportunities as they come)
 - c. "I need to find the "perfect fit/choice" for me to be happy in my job." (There will never be a "perfect" fit; every job will have pros and cons).
 - d. "It's too late for me to have a job I like." (It is never too late).
 - e. "If I can't get the job I want now, it will never happen." (The next job you take is most likely not your forever job. Helpful to remember that finding the next job is just a next job. It is a stepping stone.)

Visualization Exercise (20-25 minutes)

1. Read the following script to participants:
 - a. Visualize an image of an expansive lake. In the distance, you can see an island with a lighthouse. This lighthouse is your desired employment goal. Between you and the island, dozens of rocks protrude from the water's surface. You can step onto countless different rocks and take countless different paths to get to the island you are seeking. These rocks represent the various next jobs you can take toward your desired destination. There is no "right" path to get to the island, so searching for it is useless. There are hundreds of combinations of paths you could take that will lead you to your destination. The best you can do is simply step onto a rock that looks best to you right now based on what you know about yourself. With each step you are a bit closer to your lighthouse. Once you are there you can decide to stop or continue stepping onto the next best rock.
 - b. Participants will discuss the outcomes of their visualization exercise and identify themes that can inform their career planning.
2. Include "case study" that depicts the career development process of an average person that involves a bit of a winding/unexpected path, highlighting places where personal qualities played a role but also where environmental context played a role.

What Works Best (15-20 minutes)

1. Review handout on job search strategies that are supported by strong research evidence (see Appendix)
2. Discuss participant reaction
3. Review the strategies that the participants have interest in learning about
4. How will this information help?

Coping Skills (15 minutes)

1. Maintaining hope and motivation is important as you strive toward a desired destination. Ambivalence, self-doubt and fatigue are normal.
2. Don't shy away from these thoughts/feelings. Recognizing they are there is important. When faced with such thoughts/feelings the following may be helpful to remember:
 - a. Filling life with joyful activity, outside of your work-life, will be important as you are working toward your goals.
 - b. Connecting with others, and receiving social support will be important as you are working toward your goals.
 - c. Give yourself credit for the progress you have made. Everyone is working hard, and that hard work deserves to be acknowledged.
 - d. Consider your current level of confidence (self-efficacy) to find your next best job on a 0 to 10 scale (0 = no confidence and 10 = complete confidence).
3. Ask participants to reflect on the above by writing down their responses:

Reasons why I'm doing this: 1) ____ 2) ____ 3) ____ 4) ____ 5) ____

Things that bring me joy: 1) ____ 2) ____ 3) ____ 4) ____ 5) ____

People/organizations where I can get support: 1) ____ 2) ____ 3) ____ 4) ____ 5) ____

Affirmations of my progress: 1) ____ 2) ____ 3) ____ 4) ____ 5) ____

Things that would help me move one point higher on this confidence scale: 1) ____ 2) ____

Wrap Up (10 Minutes)

1. Brief discussion about "takeaways" and next steps. (Participants can develop a written list of takeaways along with plans to implement next steps.)
2. Some ideas/suggestions for next steps:
 - a. Continue with additional self-assessments
 - b. Further explore fields of interest
 - c. Take new workshops at a Career Center
 - d. Consider new training options
 - e. (Re)Focus job search in areas that reflect lifelong strengths
3. Reach out to others for ongoing support

Appendix 1: Best practices in the job search process

Social scientists have studied the job search process for decades, identifying the practices that seem to work best across many empirical studies. Please note that not all of these strategies will work for everyone.

We ask that you review this list and indicate the strategies that you are currently using by checking off the line next to the item.

If you would like to learn more about a job search strategy listed below, please check off under the third column.

<u>Evidence-based Job Search Strategies</u>	<u>Currently using</u>	<u>Would like to learn more</u>
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Enhancing social networks		
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Learning how to maximize social connections		
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Adaptive interpersonal skills		
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Improving self-presentation skills		
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Enhanced self-efficacy/confidence		
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Taking initiative		
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Goal setting		
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Developing new skills		
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Effective interviewing skills		
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Reflecting on one's progress and challenges		
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Persistence		
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Focused job search and exploration (clearly defined goals)		
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Appendix 2: Mental Health Prevention

Centering Exercise Script by Melissa Magaro, Ph.D.:

(Please note that this exercise will require that the workshop leaders have some training in mental health counseling and/or mindfulness-based interventions.)

“Go ahead and get in a comfortable position in your chair. Sit upright with your feet flat on the floor, your arms and legs crossed or uncrossed whichever is more comfortable, and your hands resting in your lap. Allow your eyes to close gently [pause 10 seconds]. Take a couple of gentle breaths: in...and out; in...and out. Notice the sound and feel of your own breath as you breathe in [pause] and out [pause]

Now, turn your attention to being inside this room. Notice any sounds that may occur inside the room [pause] and outside [pause 10 seconds]. Notice how you are sitting in your chair [pause 10 seconds]. Focus on the place where your body touches the chair. What are the sensations there? How does it feel to sit where you sit? [pause 10 seconds] Next, notice the places where your body touches your legs. How do your feet feel in the position they are in? [pause 10 seconds] What sensations can you notice in the rest of your body? If you feel any sensations in your body, just notice them and acknowledge their presence [pause 10 seconds]. Also notice how they may by themselves change or shift from moment to moment. Do not try to change them.

Now, let yourself be in this room. Be aware of the value that you are serving by being here [pause 10 seconds]. See if you can notice any doubts, reservations, fears or worries [pause 10 seconds]. See if you can just notice them and acknowledge their presence. Now see if just for a moment you can be present with your values and commitments. Why are you here? Where do you want to go? What do you want to do? [pause 10 seconds]

Then, when you are ready, let go of those thoughts and gradually widen your attention to take in the sounds around you [pause 10 seconds] and slowly open your eyes with the intention to bring this awareness to the present moment and the rest of the day.”

- Breath as an Anchor Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-Oge6MuFno>
- Breathing Meditation: https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mpeg/01_Breathing_Meditation.mp3
- Free Guided meditations on UCLA MARC’s website: <https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations>
- Free apps with similar exercises: Insight Timer, UCLA Mindful app

Common Emotional Reactions/Feelings related to Job Loss

- Surprised/shocked and in denial after receiving the news whether it was sudden/expected or not
- Sadness
- A sense of loss/grief
- Overwhelmed
- Tired/exhausted
- Fatigue and ill/ unwell
- Angry, resentful, and bitter
- Irritable and more sensitive than normal
- Helpless and not in control of your life
- Hopeless
- Mistrustful of others
- Isolated
- Stressed out when around family and friends
- Uninterested in activities that you used to enjoy
- Anxious/nervous and restless/on edge

Self-Care

- **Self-Care Myths and Facts:** <https://www.afcurgentcare.com/about/national-blog/2020/july/debunking-the-myths-of-self-care/>
<https://psychcentral.com/blog/7-damaging-myths-about-self-care/>
- **Tips for Self-Care During COVID-19:** <https://emmresourcecenter.org/system/files/2020-03/Covid-19%20-%20Self%20Care%20Card%20English.E-version.pdf>
- **Self-Care Activities for Families:** <https://www.creativeagingcalgary.com/family-group-self-care-activities-you-can-do-as-a-family/>
- **Self-Care for Stress:** <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/shyness-is-nice/201403/seven-types-self-care-activities-coping-stress>
- **6 Ways to Practice Self-Care while Unemployed:** <https://www.careersportal.co.za/careers/careers-advice/6-ways-to-practice-self-care-while-unemployed>
- **7 Self-Care Tips for Sudden Unemployment:** <https://www.caredash.com/news/healthcare/this-shall-pass-7-self-care-tips-for-sudden-unemployment>

Appendix 3: DBT PLEASE Skills

<https://dbtselfhelp.weebly.com/pm-cagov.html>