



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

LANDING THE JOB:  
**SKILLS** for  
**SUCCESS**

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NAME



# The Purpose

This workbook was designed to provide you with the essential tips, tricks, and resources needed to be successful and confident in the job seeking process. In this workbook, we will take you through every step, from gaining confidence to being a model employee once you've landed a job, and everything in between. Keep this workbook and refer back to it regularly. Use it as a tool in your journey to creating success and landing the career of your dreams!

This workbook was proudly created by the Human Resources Department of the County of San Mateo and a dedicated team of folks who believe in your success.

**Download the Landing the Job workbooks,  
access job listings and find additional resources at  
[www.jobsforyouth.org](http://www.jobsforyouth.org)**

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# Skills for Success

*Because success starts with knowing yourself, loving yourself, and being yourself.*

## Lesson 1: Success, Confidence, and Resiliency



**Objective:** Understanding and realizing your growth potential, and how critical it is to your success.

## Lesson 2: Exploring Your Skills and Interests



**Objective:** Creating awareness of your individual strengths and talents, and leveraging them for your growth.

## Lesson 3: Presenting Your Best Self



**Objective:** Presenting yourself in a positive and thoughtful light.



# Achieving Success

"Success isn't always about 'Greatness', it's about consistency. Consistent, hard work gains success. Greatness will come."  
- Dwayne Johnson

**Exercise:** How do you define success? What does **your** success look like? Draw it out, be creative!

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## 5 Minute Positivity Break

**Read it, believe it, and repeat:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am a capable and worthy individual who brings  
(your name)  
many gifts to the world around me. I am alive, free, and enough. My support system,  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
(friend/family members who support you, who you rely on)  
believe in me and will always be there when I need reassurance that I'm on the right path. What  
I give, and who I am, is enough. I believe in myself and know that every time I feel helpless, my  
support system will be there to get me back on track. I vow to always try my best, work hard,  
have integrity, and help others along the way. I trust in myself, I trust my abilities. That is enough.  
I am proud of myself and I know I can accomplish anything I put my mind to! **I know that I am  
perfectly imperfect, just the way I am. I know that I am enough!**

# Grateful for Gratitude

"Be thankful for what you have; You'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, You will never, ever have enough." - Oprah Winfrey

**Exercise:** What are you grateful for?



# Confidence

"You control your own life. Your own will is extremely powerful" - J.K. Rowling

## Confidence Booster Techniques

It is very common to experience moments of anxiety, doubt, insecurity, and negative self-talk. Here are some ways to increase your confidence when you need a quick boost. Try these techniques the next time you have an interview or are speaking in front of a group of people.

VISUALIZE	EXERCISE	LISTEN TO MUSIC
Picture yourself already being in a position of success. Visualize every detail of your picture of success. Then tell yourself you are capable and believe it!	Research shows that as little as five minutes of exercise can boost your mood. So go for a walk, climb some stairs, or do a few jumping jacks. Take a break and move your body!	Zone out to the radio or your favorite playlist. Choose inspiring music with a positive message. This will help shift your energy and get your mindset in a healthy place.
BREATHE	STAY POSITIVE	BE YOURSELF
Inhale deeply for three counts and exhale for four counts. Controlling your breathing will reduce your heart rate and calm any physical reactions to anxiety.	Have confidence in your abilities. Negative thoughts may creep in but do the best you can to look for the good in every situation and remind yourself that you are capable!	This one's simple – be authentically you! Pretending to be someone you're not will just add to your nerves. Be true to you and you will find success.

**Exercise:** Do you have a favorite confidence booster technique?

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Confidence isn't walking into a room thinking you are better than everyone, it is walking in and not having to compare yourself to anyone at all.

# Building Resiliency

## Overcome Challenges to Achieve Success

In your lifetime, you will experience difficulties and hardships that will create speed bumps to your success. Being mindful and aware of how these difficulties affect us and how we can create coping skills to help us weather the storm will keep us pushing forward.

Remember, the mistakes we make DO NOT decrease our value!

## SOME TIPS ON OVERCOMING CHALLENGES:

### ACKNOWLEDGE & CONFRONT THE CHALLENGE

Accept that there is an issue and decide how you will overcome it. Denying or ignoring the issue will not make it go away.

### MAKE MINDFUL CHOICES

In an emotionally charged situation, take a step back and reflect on your desired outcome. Focus on the greater goal of success, not the helpless goal of revenge or “one-upping” someone else.

### TAKE CARE OF YOU

It's harder to overcome an obstacle when you're tired, unhealthy, or stressed. Focus on self-care and your challenges will seem more manageable.

### HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF

Have the belief that you are strong and can face (and overcome) whatever challenges come your way.

### REFRAME YOUR THINKING

When you come upon an obstacle in your path, accept it as an opportunity to learn and develop.

### REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT & GUIDANCE

Find resources that can help you overcome the challenge you're facing. Some resources might include your supervisor, a friend, online articles, books, etc.

# Bouncing Back

## Overcoming Adversity

It happens to the best of us. We put together a resume, submit an application, and practice for the interview only to get a rejection call, letter, email or sometimes we may not hear back. While we may feel discouraged or disappointed, not getting the job can be seen as a great learning opportunity. The diagram below breaks down four areas of productivity that you can focus on to stay positive in tough and trying situations.

**Exercise:** Write a note about how you can overcome disappointment.

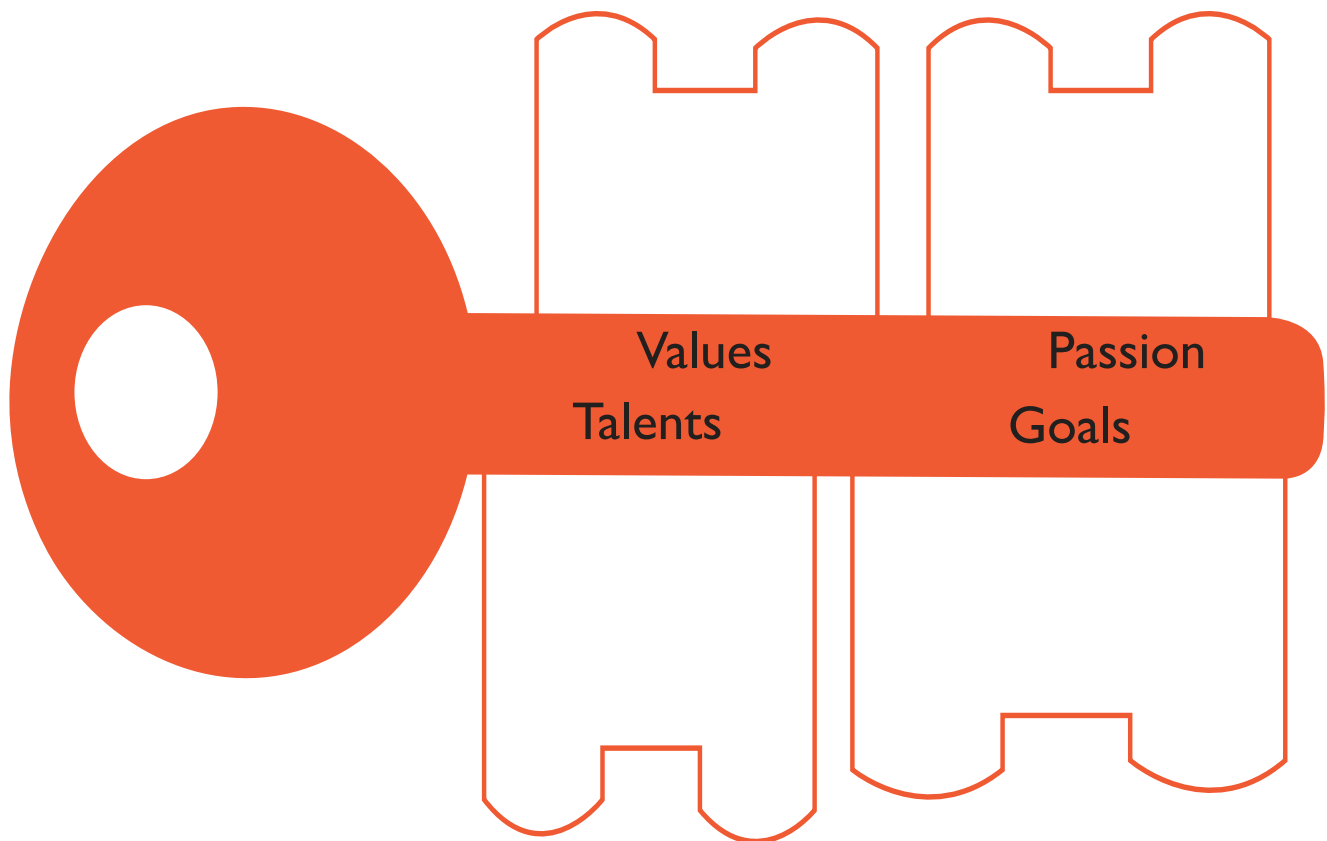
<h3>GET FEEDBACK</h3> <p>If possible, send an email to the organization you were not hired by to get some feedback.</p> <p>Take the opportunity to thank them for their consideration, and request some feedback on your interview. How could you have done better? What qualifications were you lacking? How was your personality perceived?</p> <div></div>	<h3>REFLECT</h3> <p>If you have a journal, it's time to start writing! If you don't have one, anything, even a napkin, will work. Writing out how you're feeling about any topic, good or bad, that you feel strongly about is therapeutic.</p> <p>The most important thing to remember when journaling is to be honest with yourself. Refrain from unnecessary negativity, but reflect on how you can do better, be better, and/or make better choices.</p> <div></div>
<h3>DEVELOP</h3> <p>Sometimes we feel like giving up or doing nothing but this is a downward spiral that will just make us feel worse. Think about ways you can make progress in different areas of your life, make a plan, and start. Another way to make progress is by being proactive. You can actively network, keep searching and applying for job opportunities, and check in with a trusted advisor for advice.</p> <div></div>	<h3>STAY POSITIVE</h3> <p>This is the most important component of boosting productivity and preparing for the next interview. Keep a positive mindset, even if you're not feeling that way. Remind yourself that you're worthy of success, and that you've got lots to be grateful for. Eventually, your mood will shift. Positivity is the greatest defense against negativity!</p> <div></div>

# Exploring Interests

Once you have positive belief in your potential, take some time to reflect on that. Success is far more attainable when we incorporate our passions and our interests in what we aspire to do. Sometimes, the simplest joys in life are the key to our happiness and success. For instance, if you love animals, you'd likely find joy, purpose, and success in working with them. If you're terrified of animals, chances are, you would not be happy or successful.

*Remember, those who pursue their interests over their desire for money eventually find both!*

**Exercise:** Fill in the teeth on the key with your personal definitions to unlock the door to success:



Based on the words you chose to complete your key, what career opportunities might you want to explore?

teaching  
criminal justice  
culinary arts

# Transferable Skills

When putting your best effort forward to succeed, being aware of what skills you possess is necessary as you explore and grow. Not all skills are specific to only one career choice, nor specialty. You'd be surprised how many skills that you can take to more than one place in your journey.

**Exercise:** Put a check mark next to each skill or quality that applies to you.

<input type="checkbox"/> Customer Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Organized	<input type="checkbox"/> Punctual
<input type="checkbox"/> Team Player	<input type="checkbox"/> Yard Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Answer Phones
<input type="checkbox"/> Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/> File Documents	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervision
<input type="checkbox"/> Stock/Inventory	<input type="checkbox"/> Quick Learner	<input type="checkbox"/> Warehouse
<input type="checkbox"/> Hard Worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Tutor	<input type="checkbox"/> Data Entry
<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Responsible	<input type="checkbox"/> Dependable
<input type="checkbox"/> Cash Handling	<input type="checkbox"/> Committed	<input type="checkbox"/> Flexible
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/> Active Listener	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Starter
<input type="checkbox"/> Take Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Reliable	<input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive Attitude
<input type="checkbox"/> Detail-Oriented	<input type="checkbox"/> Office Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Sales

What other transferable skills do you possess?

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# Transferable Skills

**Exercise:** Read and analyze the scenario below:

**Scenario:**

Alice is applying for an Office Assistant clerical position, but her only other work experience is as a barista at her local coffee shop. She's not sure if she should apply, because she feels her experience at the coffee shop is not enough to qualify her.

**Analysis:**

Help Alice list some core transferable skills she learned at the coffee shop that would qualify her for the clerical position:

Transferable Skills

1. working in a fast-paced environment
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

One other thing to note:

It's important to highlight your transferable skills on your application, resume, and in your interview!



# Passion Pitch

How do you share the skills you possess, your definition of success, and the gratitude of what you have with others? One way is by developing a Passion Pitch!

When speaking about who you are and what you have to offer to the professional world, the key component you must possess is passion: passion for who you are, and passion for what you do. With a Passion Pitch, **YOU** are the “product or idea,” **YOU** are selling your critical aspects, **YOU** are pitching your value. It’s time for you to develop and practice your **Passion Pitch!**

**Exercise:** Fill in the statement below to craft your Passion Pitch:

Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m interested in  
(First Name)  
studying/ learning about \_\_\_\_\_. I’m really  
(insert major, vocation, field)  
passionate about \_\_\_\_\_, so I would like to  
(insert cause, subject, things)  
pursue this passion/career in \_\_\_\_\_. Thanks  
(dream job, position, field)  
to my experience with \_\_\_\_\_. I’ve learned  
(insert work, volunteer work, education)  
valuable skills, like \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and  
(transferable skill) (transferable skill)  
\_\_\_\_\_. I’m looking forward to utilizing my  
(transferable skill)  
learned skills and gaining even more professional experience, so I  
believe that a position/ opportunity with \_\_\_\_\_  
(insert specific place)  
would give me the experience I’m eager to obtain, and you would  
benefit from having a dedicated, hard-working employee!

**No time for a Passion Pitch? Write down a few things that are important for you to convey when sharing with others:**

I am passionate about

I value



# Communication

## Communication and Appearance

In order to appear professional, confident, and present yourself well, you need to be aware of the image you are portraying. This is primarily done through your verbal communication, body language, attire, and active listening. Let's take a look at best practices for each.

## Verbal Communication

Be aware of your tone, enunciation, and speed of speech during your interview. Breathe, control your pace, and do your best not to babble. This will allow your answers to come out clearer, which will result in a more effective interview.

## PRACTICE THE 7 C'S

- Concise
- Clear
- Cheerful
- Confident
- Complete
- Controlled
- Courteous

Communication Tips

- Use an appropriate tone / volume in your voice.
- When you're asked a question, think about your answer before speaking. This will help you avoid babbling!
- It's okay to pause!  
Not all silences are awkward

Word Choice	Tone/Volume
The words you choose have meaning, and their intent can be different than how they are taken. So be mindful and aware of what words you use.	When having conversations with others, how loud or quiet you speak can be perceived differently than what you mean. The same goes for the tone in your voice. Something may be perceived as sarcastic or rude based on the tone, not the words.
Enunciation	Speed/Frequency
When speaking, be sure to speak slowly and clearly. If there's something you aren't sure how to pronounce, especially someone's name, it may be better to ask than guess.	Speaking too fast may not allow the listener to comprehend or retain everything you say, so be sure to speak at an appropriate pace. This also includes your pauses.

# Body Language

Positive body language allows for a great first impression, and that can stick with any individual you encounter, whether it be a potential employer, colleague, team member, or friend. Body language (or non-verbal communication) accounts for 55% of good communication. Presenting yourself in a positive and professional manner is half the battle!

<b>FACIAL EXPRESSIONS</b> Smile! Make sure you keep a look of interest on your face throughout your interview. If they're speaking, reciprocate with head nodding to assure them that you're focused and listening. Do not yawn or zone out. Try not to look away.	<b>EYE CONTACT</b> Maintain reasonable eye contact with each member of the panel. When speaking, be sure to look directly at who you're speaking with.
<b>POSTURE</b> Keep an upright sitting position, with your shoulders pulled back and your head in a centered, forward facing position. Avoid crossing your arms, slouching, and fidgeting. If you tend to fidget, keep your hands flat on your legs.	<b>HANDSHAKES</b> Make direct eye contact, smile sincerely, and take their hand firmly, shaking with purpose. Be sure your hands are washed before the interview, too! A weak or sweaty handshake could ruin your chances of being taken seriously by the panel.

**Attire plays a role in how you communicate and are perceived by others**

*Key Concept:*

Make sure you are comfortable and confident in your outfit!

A few tips:

- Avoid gum.
- Consider if it may be appropriate to cover tattoos.
- Ensure that the clothing you select fits properly (not too tight or too loose/baggy).
- Prepare your outfit and resume in a nice folder the day before the interview. This will allow your morning to go smoother so you can focus on practicing your answers.
- Try your whole outfit on the day before, so you can take care of / avoid any wardrobe malfunctions.
- Clean your shoes if necessary.

# Appearance

**Exercise:** What clothing items would not be appropriate to wear to an interview? Think about if the clothes fit the organization's culture.



# Active Listening

Have you ever been talking to someone when they glance at their phone or seem distracted? Whether in social or work environments, we don't just want to be heard – we want to be truly listened to. Active listening is fully concentrating and engaging in a conversation. Active listening can help avoid misunderstandings and diffuse conflict; it is an important skill to practice.

The below table shows four of the most important ways to demonstrate you are actively listening, and the circles show additional active listening tools and tactics you can explore.

<b>Make Eye Contact</b> Eye contact shows you are giving your full attention and care about what is being said.	<b>Avoid Distractions</b> Don't look at your phone or other people during a conversation!
<b>Show You are Listening</b> Give a responsive gesture like a nod or smile to encourage the speaker to continue.	<b>Give Feedback</b> Ask open-ended questions and summarize to make sure you understood the speaker.



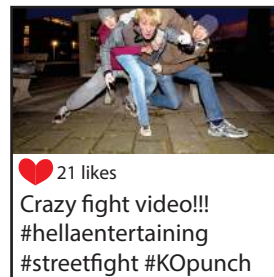
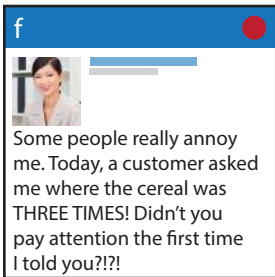


# A Word about Social Media

## **The Social Network**

As we are well aware, social media is this generation's preferred method of communication. With every new gadget and app that is released, we have the opportunity to display who we are to the world. On Instagram, we share our favorite photos. On Facebook, we repost articles we can relate to. On SnapChat ... well, we share everything. How we portray ourselves on our social media sites is not completely private and it can impact how others perceive us. It is important to being mindful about what images, comments and posts we upload.

**Exercise:** Under each box, write down why the above image or comment might be seen as negative to a potential employer:



## **LinkedIn: The Site for Professionals**

Now that we've covered the importance of using caution on social media, let's discuss the ways in which we can use it to positively **network**! The best online tool out there for this purpose is LinkedIn.

LinkedIn is a professional recruiting site where users can set up a career profile, connect with others, search for jobs, read business articles, and so much more. It's easy, free, and recommended that you set up your profile keeping these things in mind:



- ☒ Use an appropriate profile picture (no selfies, no revealing clothing, no odd poses).
- ☒ Keep your profile up-to-date and thorough. Fill out as much as you can.
- ☒ Avoid the use of slang words, abbreviated text, and other illegible language.
- ☒ Check in to LinkedIn frequently, and utilize its tools. Endorse your colleagues, learn about other companies, and network with people.

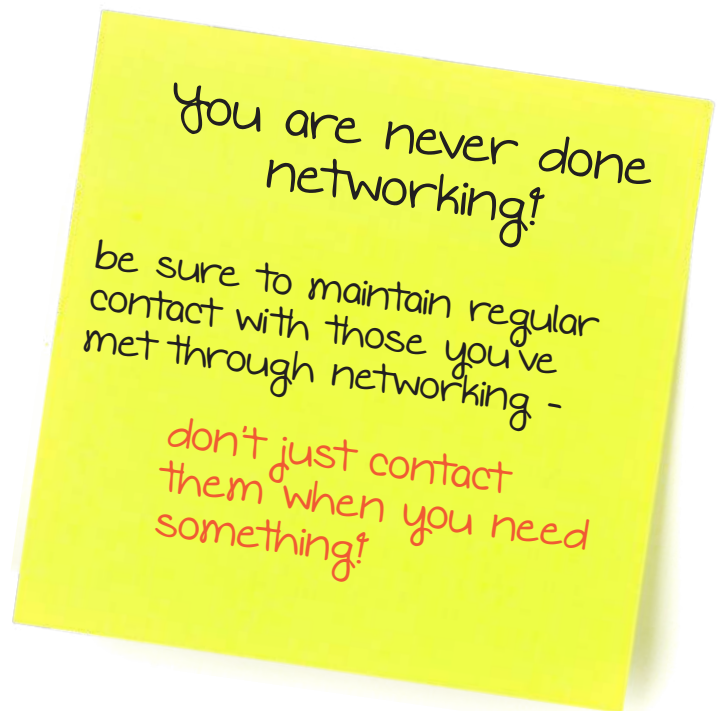
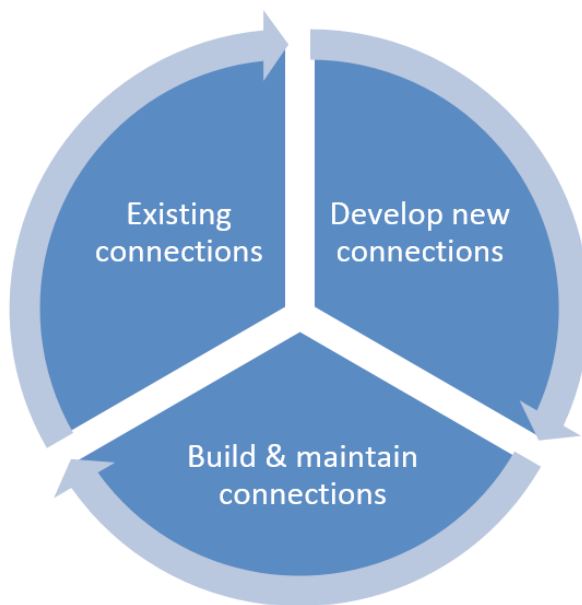
# Networking

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others. - African Proverb

## Networking Benefits...

- You (career opportunities, career development, employee engagement, etc.)
- The other person
- Organizations

## How Does a Network Function?



## Who benefits from networking and how?

# Networking

## A Step-by-Step Breakdown





# Networking

Reach Out	Connect	Develop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build positive relationships</li><li>• Keep an open mind and a good attitude when interacting with others</li><li>• Reach out to your connections regularly (keep your positive connections close)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help others connect by sharing your knowledge and experience</li><li>• Make yourself (reasonably) available to others to help with guidance and assistance</li><li>• Follow through!</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet and talk to new people outside of your common circle</li><li>• Put yourself “out there,” i.e. step out of your comfort zone!</li><li>• Collect and exchange contact information</li></ul>

## Valuable Networking Tips...

- Be sincere; be **yourself**.
- Always be prepared to network; know how to answer common questions and have questions ready to ask others.
- Be curious and ask questions:
  - “What do you like most about your job?”
  - “How did you get to where you are today?”
- Keep your questions light and work-appropriate don’t ask their relationship status or stance on a political topic.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Smile!
- Make eye contact when talking.
- Practice active listening.



## GROUP DISCUSSION

*Write down some examples of how you would ask questions*

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# Remember Your Worth!

## **Final Thoughts**

While your supervisors, colleagues and others in your circle are there to support you, you are ultimately the driver of your life and career. You are responsible for the level of success you achieve and that occurs through what mindset you have, what actions you take and your drive. Please refer back to this workbook often, retain the information it provides, and you will surely succeed!

**Exercise:** Fill in the empty circles with words that empower you. Recite them often to remind yourself that you're capable of achieving success!



# Resources

## COUNTY INTERNSHIP & FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS

The County of San Mateo is committed to creating employment opportunities for individuals interested in local government. We encourage departments to assess their operations annually to determine if they have a need and the capacity to hire Interns and Fellows. Interns and Fellows can provide valuable, short-term support on a wide variety of projects.

We have four programs for those interested in beginning their careers in local government:

	<b>Supported Training and Employment Program (STEP)</b>	<b>Jobs for Youth Summer Internships</b>	<b>County Internship</b>	<b>Management Fellowship</b>
<b>Web</b>	<a href="http://hr.smcgov.org/STEP">hr.smcgov.org/STEP</a>	<a href="http://jobsforyouth.org">jobsforyouth.org</a>	<a href="http://hr.smcgov.org/internships">hr.smcgov.org/internships</a>	<a href="http://hr.smcgov.org/fellowships">hr.smcgov.org/fellowships</a>
<b>Criteria</b>	Open to former Foster Youth, ages 18-24  Assignments acclimate STEP interns to the world of work	Open to individuals ages 18-21  Assignments introduce young adults to more basic office skills and entry-level work	Open to individuals ages 18+  Assignment, responsibilities, and length are determined by the Department	Open to individuals who recently completed or will soon complete Graduate School  Assignments tend to be complex projects
<b>Hours</b>	Flexible Hours 20-40 hours/week	Flexible Hours	Flexible Hours 20-40 hours/week	Full Time; Positions usually 2-3 years
<b>Duration</b>	Annual cohorts start in January & June, typically one year but may be extended	Jobs for Youth Summer Internships typically last for 10 weeks (June to August)	County internship opportunities can be offered year-round and/or during the Summer	Annual cohort starts in June
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:step@smcgov.org">step@smcgov.org</a>	<a href="mailto:jobsforyouth@smcgov.org">jobsforyouth@smcgov.org</a>	<a href="mailto:countyinternships@smcgov.org">countyinternships@smcgov.org</a>	<a href="mailto:countyfellowships@smcgov.org">countyfellowships@smcgov.org</a>

The County of San Mateo welcomes and celebrates the diversity of our employees, and strives to create a workplace where they feel valued every day. Visit [jobs.smcgov.org](http://jobs.smcgov.org) to view current employment opportunities and apply online.

