



Module: Navigating the Career Journey

This module covers how to work toward and achieve career aspirations, including strategies for staying motivated and committed to goals, adapting to challenges, reflecting on experiences, and reassessing or changing course when necessary.

About CanWork BC

CanWork BC aims to make it easier for youth with disabilities ages to 15 to 30 years old to find and keep employment. There are a series of tools and resources for youth, employers, service providers, educators, and caregivers.

CanAssist at the University of Victoria, with the support of the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, wrote the Provincial Employment Strategy for Youth with Disabilities (ESYD). This strategy informed the tools and resources.

The Youth Tool

The CanWork BC youth tool is available as an interactive online platform at portal.canworkbc.ca and through PDF workbooks such as this one. There are five dimensions of content available.

For the full PDF workbook content and accompanying facilitator guides, as well as other CanWork BC tools and resources, go to canworkbc.ca.

Introduction

This module has three sections to help you build your understanding of employment navigation. You'll explore:

- How to stay motivated and keep your focus on your career goals.
- Strategies for organizing your time to stay on track with your career goals.
- Balancing your day-to-day responsibilities while working toward your future.

Each section will take around 15-30 minutes to complete, and you're welcome to take breaks in between.

Each section has activities that connect employment navigation to your own life to make sure this is useful for you. Be prepared to think about and record your answers in whatever way works best. That could be writing your answers in this workbook or using a different format that works for you like voice recording or typing in a notes app.

At the end of the module, you'll have the chance to put what you've learned into practice with reflection questions. Let's get started!

Section 1: Working Toward Career Goals

Working toward your career goals is important, but it can be tough to stay focused, especially when life gets busy. Whether you're balancing school, work, or other responsibilities, learning to manage your time and stay motivated will help you reach your goals.

In this section, we'll cover:

- How to stay motivated and keep your focus on your career goals.
- Strategies for organizing your time to stay on track with your career goals.
- Balancing your day-to-day responsibilities while working toward your future.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of tools to help you stay committed to your career journey while balancing the other areas of your life.

Engage and Explore

Staying Motivated

Staying motivated is key to reaching your career goals, especially when challenges come up. Here are a few strategies to help you stay focused and committed to your path:

- **Keep your goals visible**

Write down your goals and keep them somewhere you'll see daily, like on your phone's lock screen or your desk. This way, you're constantly reminded of what you're working toward.

- **Celebrate small wins**

Progress is progress, no matter how small. Take time to celebrate all your achievements along the way, like submitting an application or learning a new skill. For example, treat yourself to something simple, like a favorite snack, or take a break to enjoy something you love after you reach a milestone.

- **Review your goals regularly**

It's important to check in with your goals often to see if you're on track or if you need to make changes. This helps keep you motivated and ensures your goals still match what you want. For example, set a reminder on your phone to review your goals every month. If you notice any progress, celebrate! If you need to adjust, that's okay too because goals can change as you learn, or new opportunities become available.

- **Find a supporter**

Share your career goals with a friend or mentor and ask them to check in on your progress. Having someone to talk to about your journey can keep you accountable and motivated. For example, if you're applying for jobs, ask a family member to check in with you regularly and encourage you to keep going.

Time Management and Prioritization

Balancing career development with your daily responsibilities can be tough, but good time management makes it possible. Learn more about managing your time effectively in the resource from Penn LPS and the helpful tips below:

- **Penn LPS**

<https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/features/mastering-your-schedule-effective-time-management-strategies-success>

- **Prioritize tasks**

List tasks related to your career goals and rank them by importance. Focus on the most urgent or important ones first to keep you moving forward. For example, if you're balancing a job search with school or work, spend one hour a day to focus only on career-related tasks, like applying to jobs or updating your resume.

- **Use time blocking**

Schedule specific blocks of time for different tasks. For example, spend 9-10 a.m. updating your resume and 10-11 a.m. researching companies. Time-blocking helps you focus and prevents tasks from becoming overwhelming.

- **Start with the toughest task**

Sometimes, the hardest task is the one you're avoiding. Start your day by working on this task first. Once it's done, the rest of your day will feel easier and more productive. For example, if updating your resume feels overwhelming, begin with just

one section. After you've completed that, the other tasks will seem much simpler.

Balancing Life and Career

Achieving your career goals doesn't mean you should sacrifice other parts of your life. Maintaining balance is important for long-term success:

- **Set boundaries**

Decide when you'll work on career goals and when you'll take time for personal activities. This helps prevent burnout and keeps you feeling refreshed. For example, work on your goals in the morning, then relax or enjoy hobbies in the evening. This balance keeps you energized.

- **Take breaks when needed**

It's okay to take a break from work when you need it. Short breaks help you stay focused and avoid getting too tired. For example, after applying to jobs for an hour, take a 15-minute walk or watch a quick video to clear your mind before continuing.

Make it Personal

To-Do Checklist

Creating a to-do list will help you stay organized and focused on your career goals. It's a simple way to track your progress and make

sure you're moving forward. Breaking big tasks into smaller steps can make things feel less overwhelming, and checking off each one as you go will keep you motivated.

Create your checklist by writing the most important or difficult tasks first. And remember, after completing each task, take a break and celebrate your progress.

Below is an example of a to-do checklist. This is just a sample; your checklist will be unique to your goals and the steps needed to achieve them. Use this as a guide to create your own personalized checklist.

Research your desired career:

- ☐ Learn about the skills and qualifications required.
- ☐ Explore potential job opportunities.

Identify the skills you need:

- ☐ List any gaps between your current skills and the skills needed for your dream job.
- ☐ Research training programs or courses to close those gaps.

Update your resume:

- ☐ Add recent experiences and skills.
- ☐ Tailor your resume to highlight your career goal.

Set up a portfolio (if needed):

- ☐ Gather samples of your work or create new projects that demonstrate your skills.
- ☐ Organize your portfolio in an easily accessible format.

Network:

- ☐ Connect with professionals in your type of work through LinkedIn or industry events.
- ☐ Reach out to a mentor for advice.

Apply for relevant jobs or internships:

- ☐ Search for job listings related to your career goal.
- ☐ Submit applications for positions that match your skills and interests.

Prepare for interviews:

- ☐ Practice common interview questions.
- ☐ Research the companies you've applied to and be ready to discuss why you're a good fit.

Continue learning and developing your skills:

- ☐ Complete any courses or certifications you've identified.
- ☐ Set aside time each week to improve specific skills.

Review your progress:

- ☐ Reflect on your progress every month.
- ☐ Adjust your to-do list as needed to stay on track.

Celebrate your successes:

- ☐ Acknowledge your achievements, no matter how small.
- ☐ Take time to relax and reward yourself after completing big tasks.

Section 2: Overcoming Career Path Obstacles

Working toward your career goals can be tough, especially when facing challenges like job rejections or work stress. It's important to stay flexible, have a growth mindset, and practice self-compassion when things don't go as planned.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Understanding common challenges and how to stay resilient.
- Adopting a growth mindset to view challenges as opportunities to learn.
- How to be kind to yourself during tough times and build self-compassion.
- Problem-solving strategies to overcome problems and find new paths.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of how to handle challenges with a positive attitude and keep moving toward your career goals.

Engage and Explore

Understanding Career Challenges

Working toward your career goals can be tough, and you might face some problems along the way.

Some common challenges include:

- **Job rejections**

It's disappointing to be turned down for a job, but it happens to everyone. Don't take it personally. Use it as a chance to learn and improve.

- **Work stress**

Balancing school, work, or other responsibilities can be overwhelming. Try making a schedule to manage your tasks and take breaks when needed.

- **Uncertainty**

Sometimes, you might not know what the next step in your career should be, and that's fine. Take time to explore different options and your path will become clearer as you go along.

Stay strong and flexible

Resilience helps you bounce back after challenges and being flexible means you can adapt to situations when things don't go as planned.

Developing a Growth Mindset

A growth mindset¹ is the belief that you can improve through effort and learning. It helps you see challenges as opportunities to grow. Unlike a fixed mindset, which believes abilities can't change, a growth mindset encourages you to develop your abilities with practice.

How to Build a Positive Mindset

1. Focus on your **effort**, not just the **results**.
2. See challenges as **opportunities** to get better. What new skills will you learn?
3. **Learn** from mistakes instead of seeing them as **failures**. What would you do differently next time?
4. Don't worry about what others think. Focus on your own progress, not comparing yourself to others.

Being Kind to Yourself

Sometimes, things don't go as planned, and it's easy to be hard on yourself. Treating yourself with kindness is important to stay positive and keep moving forward. You'll recover faster and stay confident if you are kind to yourself.

Here are some simple ways to practice self-kindness:

- **Be gentle with yourself**

¹ The concept of “growth mindset” was introduced by Carol Dweck. 2006. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York. Random House.

Avoid being too hard on yourself and don't criticize yourself too much. Treat yourself like you would a friend going through a tough time.

- **Move forward**

It's okay to feel upset, but don't stay stuck in those feelings. Notice them and keep moving forward.

- **Encourage yourself**

Tell yourself something positive, like "I can handle challenges" or "I'm doing my best."

- **Write it down**

Journal about your feelings and focus on the good things you've done, even if they seem small.

Simple Steps for Solving Problems

When you face challenges, it helps to know how to solve problems and find new solutions. Here's an easy way to approach it:

- **Identify the problem**

Understand what's wrong. For example, you might feel unhappy in your current job.

- **Think of solutions**

What are your options? You could ask for new tasks at work, take a course, or start looking for a new job.

- **Take action**

Choose a solution and start with small steps. Even small efforts can make a big difference over time.

- **Evaluate**

After trying something, check if it worked. If it didn't, think of another solution to try.

- **Be open to change**

If things aren't improving, exploring new options and trying a different approach is okay. Stay flexible and adjust your plan as needed.

Get support when needed

Don't hesitate to ask for help. A mentor, friend, or colleague can offer advice and give you a fresh perspective.

Make it Personal

Growth Mindset Practice

Now that you've learned about different ways to overcome career challenges, let's put your growth mindset into practice!

Below, you'll find several statements. Your task is to drag and drop each statement into the correct category: **fixed mindset** (believing

that your abilities are fixed and can't change) or **growth mindset** (believing you can improve through effort and learning).

Remember, practicing a growth mindset can help you face challenges confidently and keep learning, no matter what!

Instructions: Read the eight statements below. Decide whether each one is an example of fixed mindset or growth mindset and write each statement in the correct box. *The answers are at the end of this module.*

1. "I'm just not good at this, so I give up."
2. "I can't do this yet, but I'll keep trying."
3. "Mistakes help me learn and grow."
4. "I avoid things that require effort."
5. "Mistakes are bad, so I avoid them."
6. "With practice, I'll get better at this."
7. "I already know it all."
8. "I can learn new things and improve."

Fixed mindset	Growth mindset

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Section 3: Reassessing and Adjusting Career Plans

Your career journey may need changes as you go. Whether you're reaching your goals or facing unexpected challenges, it's important to regularly check in on your career plans to stay on track and make any necessary adjustments.

In this section, we'll cover:

- How to review your career goals and see how far you've come.
- Celebrating your successes and recognizing your growth.
- Knowing when and why you might need to change your goals.
- Simple steps to review and update your career plans.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of how you can reflect on your career, make any needed changes, and keep moving forward with a clear plan.

Engage and Explore

Regular Reflection on Career Progress

Taking time to think about your career goals is important for staying on track and adjusting when needed. Regular check-ins with

yourself or a mentor help you see how far you've come. You can also adjust any plans to keep moving forward.

How to set up reflection points

Set up regular times to review your career, such as once a month or every three months. This can be by yourself or with a mentor, friend, or family member. These check-ins are a chance to reflect on your progress and make sure you're still moving toward what you want.

For example, if your goal is to land a management role within two years, you might check in monthly to review what skills you're developing, how your responsibilities are growing, and if you need to update your plan.

Questions to ask yourself during check-ins:

- Am I moving closer to my career goals?
- Have I learned new skills or gained new experiences?
- Do I still feel excited about my career path?
- Have my interests or priorities changed recently?

Celebrating Wins

Recognizing your achievements, big or small, keeps you motivated. It helps you see your progress and gives you the energy to keep going.

Celebrating reminds you that your hard work is paying off and encourages you to keep moving forward.

Ways to celebrate:

- Treat yourself to something enjoyable, like a nice meal or time to relax during the evening or weekend.
- Share your success with a friend or mentor.
- Reward yourself with something that supports your growth, like a new book or a workshop.

When to Adjust Your Career Plan?

Sometimes, your goals or interests change, or you face challenges. Here are some signs that it's time to update your plan:

- You no longer feel excited or motivated by your current goals.
- Your personal values or interests have changed.
- You're facing new life circumstances that affect your career path, such as moving, family changes, or new responsibilities.
- You've achieved a goal and are ready for the next challenge.

How to Adjust Your Career Plan

Adjusting your career plan is important when your goals, interests, or circumstances change. Here's how to update your plan to stay on track:

- **Review your interests or values**
Ask yourself what has changed and how it affects your long-term goals.
- **Explore new opportunities**

Think about how you can change your career to match your current interests or situation.

- **Set new, realistic goals**

Break down your updated goals into smaller, achievable steps that reflect your current situation.

Making Smart Changes

Changing your career plan doesn't mean giving up on your long-term goals. It's about staying flexible and focused on what's important to you.

It's important to be open to change but not give up when things get tough. Sometimes, a small tweak to your plan is all you need, but other times, bigger changes may be necessary.

Examples of adjustments:

- **Minor adjustment:** Taking a new course or learning a new skill to stay competitive in your line of work.
- **Major adjustment:** Changing your career path or moving to a different industry.

Remember:

It's okay to change your goals or let go of some if they no longer match your values or interests.

Your career path is not fixed and adjusting it as needed is normal.

Make it Personal

Personal Reflection Journal

As you've learned, regularly reflecting on your career goals is a valuable habit that keeps you focused, motivated, and connected to what matters most in your career.

Let's begin creating your Personal Reflection Journal. The goal is to regularly check in with yourself and track your progress over time. You can answer these questions at a frequency that works best for you. That could be weekly, monthly, or every few months.

Writing down your reflections regularly will help you stay connected to your goals and make it easier to adjust your plan when needed.

You can write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you. Use the questions below to guide your reflection:

What new skills have I learned recently?

Reflect on any courses, workshops, or experiences that have helped you grow professionally.

How do I feel about my career path right now?

Are you feeling motivated and excited, or do you need to make changes to stay aligned with your interests?

What is one success I can celebrate this month?

It can be something small or big. Celebrating progress boosts motivation and helps you see the results of your hard work.

Am I still moving toward my long-term career goals?

Are you on track with the milestones you've set for yourself? Do you need to update your goals or set new ones?

What challenges have I faced recently, and how did I overcome them?

Recognizing challenges helps you learn from them and find new ways to overcome them in the future.

Do my career goals still align with my current values and interests?

Our values and priorities can shift over time. It's important to check in and make sure your goals still reflect what truly matters to you.

What's one thing I can do next to continue progressing?

Identify a small action you can take to keep moving toward your goals, such as learning a new skill, networking, or applying for new opportunities.

What have I learned about myself in the past month (or since my last reflection)?

Take time to reflect on your growth in terms of skills and how you've developed as a person and professional.

What changes do I need to make to my career plan?

If something isn't working or your priorities have changed, this is the time to update your plan. Reflect on what you need to change to stay on track.

Reflect and Connect

Great work! We've covered a lot in this module including:

- Learn ways to stay motivated while working toward your career goals.
- Develop strategies to help you stay on track and overcome challenges.

- Understand how to assess your career progress and decide if you need to make changes.

Take a moment to think about the questions below and how they relate to your experiences. Think of this as a reflective journal for yourself, which you can refer to later.

Happy reflecting!

What habits or strategies help you stay focused on your long-term goals? How can you keep your career goals visible in your daily routines?

How do you show kindness to yourself when things don't go the way you planned in your career? What did you learn from a past mistake or challenge?

How often do you review your career goals to assess your progress? What achievements have you made recently that you can celebrate?

Growth Mindset Practice Answers

Fixed mindset

“I’m just not good at this, so I give up.”

“I avoid things that require effort.”

“Mistakes are bad, so I avoid them.”

“I already know it all.”

Growth mindset

“I can’t do this yet, but I’ll keep trying.”

“Mistakes help me learn and grow.”

“With practice, I’ll get better at this.”

“I can learn new things and improve.”

Keep Going

There is so much more to learn! Access the full CanWork BC content and learn more about the program at **canworkbc.ca**.

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