



Job Search Club 101

Bruce County Human Services Department
Income & Employment Supports

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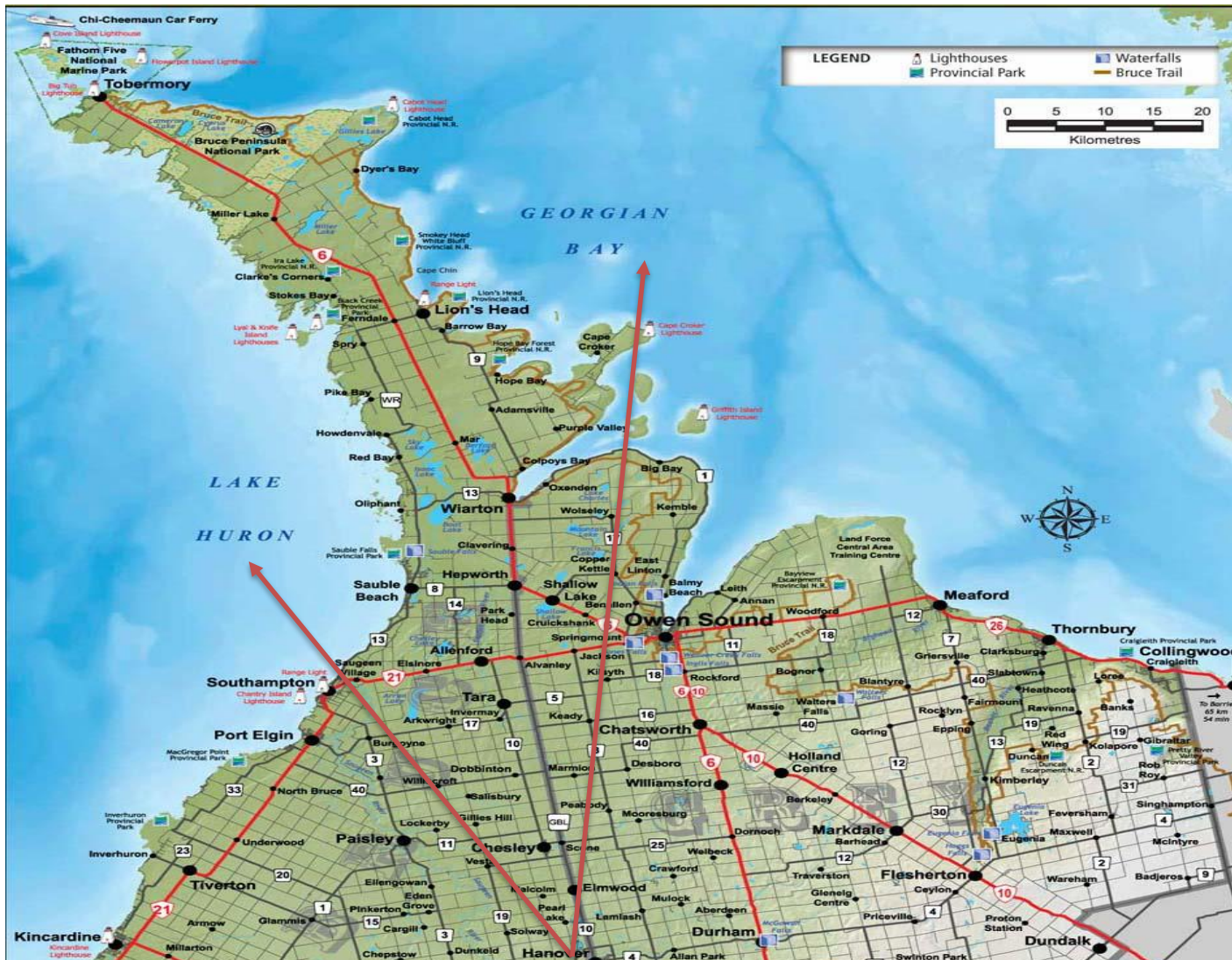
Who We Are?

Unique Rural Municipality —→ 2.5+ hours NW of Toronto

Population just over 68,000 with 2.5 million visitors/year

Known for Bruce Peninsula National Park and Warton Willie - our nation's spring weather monitor!





Situated between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay

Our coastline spans over 854km in length - longer than distance between the CN Tower and Statue of Liberty in NY!

Current Average Caseload = Approx. 550 Households

Diverse client base across 8 local municipalities which include several localized communities in towns, villages, and hamlets.

Neighbour to Chippewas of Nawash First Nation and Saugeen First Nation. As such, our population served includes off-reserve members.

- **The challenges of being a rural municipality?**
 - ✓ Transportation and housing;
 - ✓ Highly seasonal employment;
 - ✓ Transient population leading to interruptions in supports and services; and
 - ✓ Limited and at times inconsistent programs and services due to small population and geographic spread.

- **The benefits of being a rural municipality?**
 - ✓ Good understanding of our clients;
 - ✓ Strong partnerships with neighbouring municipalities, two Indigenous communities, and service providers; and
 - ✓ Innovative pre-employment and life stabilization strategies to support clients to financial independence.



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Purpose of Today's Workshop

1. Share a “Job Search Club” model that was as much about life stabilization as it was about job searching ... with positive results.
2. Discuss strategies for supporting clients who are long-term unemployed and multi-barriered.
3. Leave with ideas that can be customized and implemented in our unique local areas.

The “GAP”

- We noticed a gap between clients who were successfully moving to employment and those who were “stuck” ...
- The clients had:
 - reluctance and anxiety about new opportunities;
 - given up when things went wrong;
 - outdated mindsets and job search skills, difficulty self-marketing;
 - extremely complicated life circumstances;
 - mental and/or physical barriers, addictions or recent recovery, social isolation, incarceration and/or criminal records;
 - grown up with intergenerational reliance on social assistance;
 - missed or late attendance at appointments, didn’t call to tell us;
 - been on our caseload for years with regular suspensions.
- It was frustrating, we knew they were strong and had potential, so we wanted to try something different!



I WON'T DO IT

I CAN'T DO IT

I WANT TO DO IT

HOW DO I DO IT?

I'LL TRY TO DO IT

I CAN DO IT

I WILL DO IT

SUCCESS



The “Brainstorm” Fictional Client Profile

- Introducing “Spencer”:
 - 52-year old Caucasian male, grade 12 education;
 - no driver’s license due to DUI history, previously an AZ driver;
 - no consistent work in 10 years;
 - socially barriered and isolated;
 - self-identifies with health issues;
 - no family doctor, no family supports;
 - lives in the country (20 minutes from nearest OW office); and
 - has been with OW for 36 months after relocating to the area.
- Spencer completed employment related programs in preparation for employment and life stabilization:
 - Getting Ahead; Financial literacy; Soft Skills; Housing Stability;
 - Entered and exited EO services various times without success.

The “Brainstorm” Fictional Client Profile

You have a good working relationship with “Spencer”, he fulfills requirements requested of him, however, he remains unemployed, and you’re frustrated.

What comes to mind when you see
“Spencer” on your calendar?

Can we ask three to four people in the
audience share your thoughts?



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The “Brainstorm”

What We Know

- Research and experience tell us that:
 - Often those with the greatest barriers to employment have the most need for support, and they face challenges that are not overcome through traditional programs and training;
 - The challenges faced by these clients are not always eliminated just because they enter employment;
 - The result is often a pattern of short-term employment vs. sustainability, with clients often-returning to social assistance supports, sometimes with additional challenges; and
 - Providing flexible, individualized supports customized to the individual are needed to establish sustainability and maintain financial independence from Ontario Works.



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The “Brainstorm” What We Wanted

- We asked ourselves ...
 - How do we empower clients who are “stuck” in a repeat cycle (hamster wheel/appear to self sabotage)?
 - What hasn’t been working? What can we do differently? e.g. would a peer to peer/staff facilitated model be of assistance in motivating clients and helping them hit the “reset” button?
 - How can we introduce something new while managing program costs?
- Part of our mandate in Bruce County is to be explorers ...

“Bruce County is where those roads less travelled become a journey in life, in our work, in our communities, and in how we spend our days together”

The “Brainstorm”

Thinking Outside the Box

Workshop Table Placemat Activity - Part 1:

1. Picture one client like “Spencer” who you’re struggling with.
 - Jot down some of your client’s characteristics *now* on your placemat.
 - Keep this client in mind as we go through today’s presentation.
2. As the support worker, use your placemat to consider:
 - How do you think your client is *feeling* when he/she comes to an appointment?
 - *Where* is he/she at with life stabilization?
 - *Where* is he/she at with employment readiness?
 - *What* are the top three challenges you face assisting this client to achieve self sufficiency?
 - Will existing strategies/programs for job readiness and job search be effective - *why* or *why not*?



Who is the “Expert” in the Job Search Model?

- The client is the “expert” on their identity, skills, interests, and life;
- We created an environment that would inspire clients to reinvest in themselves and look at things a bit differently;
- The Job Search Club offered a safe and supportive environment, facilitated by a trusted staff member;
- The first goal was to provide a space where clients could open their minds to the “possibility” of improving their life circumstances and employment opportunities;
- This enabled clients to:
 - Self-identify;
 - Think about their interests and experiences in a new way;
 - Be their own experts - be in the “driver’s seat”; and
 - Build a network of peer support.
- It was meant to complement and help clients prepare for programs/services offered by external partners.

Job Search Club Participant Selection

- Client selection based on:
 - Hard to reach - distrust of service providers;
 - Transient, lacking communication tools;
 - Length of time on assistance, suspension patterns;
 - Range of ages and genders that would be present in a work environment;
 - Complex lives, facing ongoing crisis, housing instability, family/caregiver responsibilities, legal issues, limited education, health concerns, etc..
- Wanted to help clients see their potential by:
 - Drawing on their positive attributes;
 - Recognizing their strengths/resilience in dealing with life circumstances;
- Identified 12 clients who showed “spark” of potential for shift in mindset and redirection (it wasn’t for everyone!)

Job Search Club Participant Recruitment

- **Highlighted the following points in recruiting clients:**
 - Encouragement including a caring/empathetic approach at every stage (asset-based approach);
 - Promoted program as a new opportunity where clients would have input into goals and program criteria through 1-1 conversation with staff lead prior to program start;
 - Invitation letter sent, followed up with outreach calls in preparation for Day #1;
 - Day #1 = Mandatory (encouraged clients to give it a try);
 - Structured to take place over 3 months, meeting once every two weeks - takes 3 months to create a new habit!



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Job Search Club

Setting the Stage - Day #1

- Facilitator Goal = give clients a positive experience, keep it light, so they would “want” to come back!
- Started by reviewing goals for the Job Search Club:
 - Goals/group norms “How we are going to work together”?
 - Accountability to the group - this is a “new network”
 - Self-evaluation
 - Job Search - target area
 - Job Ads - networking efforts
 - Resource binder (built in organization tool)
 - Group lunch
 - Overview of guest speakers for the program
 - EO service provider presented to group (afternoon)



Job Search Club Client Expectations

- **Clear expectations for client participants:**
 - Treat it like a job;
 - Consistent attendance;
 - Dress code;
 - Open-respectful communication; and
 - Engagement with facilitator and peers.
- **Homework:**
 - Bring two job ads [for themselves or someone else](#) in the group to every meeting (fostered peer support and accountability).
- **Follow up:**
 - One-month post-workshop follow up session
- **Note for audience:**
 - A copy of the Job Search Club outline has been provided at the back of the room for you to pick up when you leave;
 - Job Search Club materials will be posted on the OMSSA website;
 - The next few slides will touch on the program overview and highlight some of the tools and activities used with the group.

Job Search Club Facilitator Goals

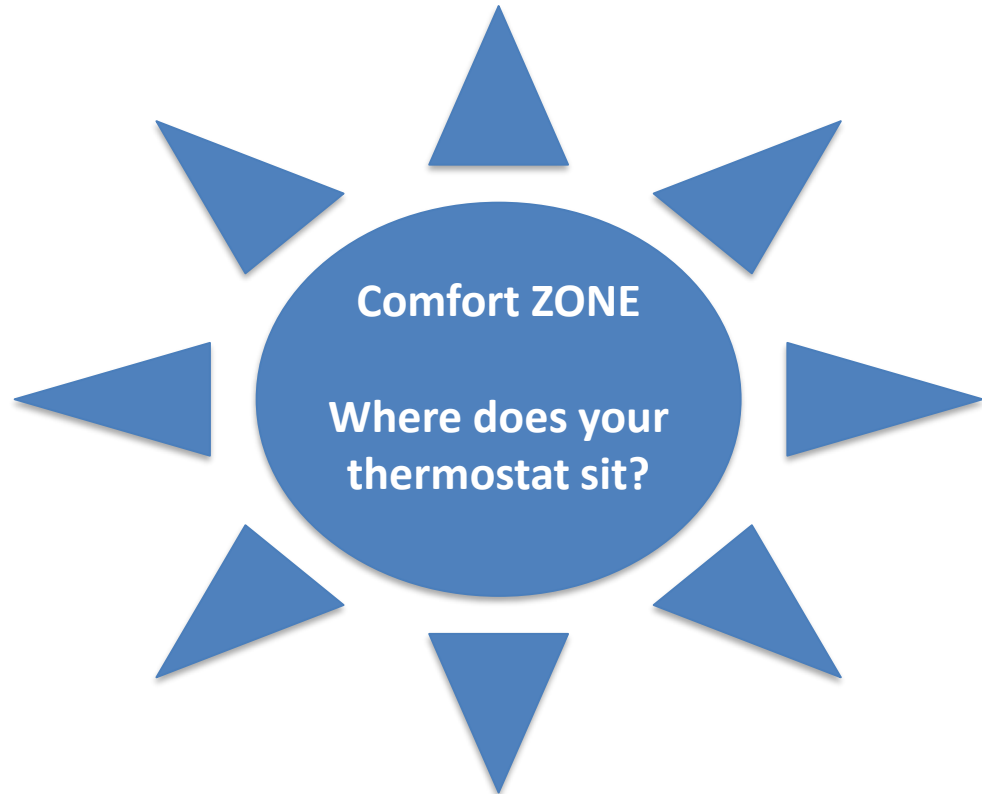
- **As facilitators, the goals are to:**
 - Build “healthy mindsets” in preparation to try a new path within an environment that promotes safety and trust;
 - Diffuse individual’s negative experiences and or thinking patterns that often prevent a client from moving forward;
 - Positive “seed planting” and identifying life stabilization needs’;
 - Build confidence to ask questions and explore different experiences;
 - Build social capacity within a group setting;
 - Reconnect client with community partners; and
 - Promote client to be the “explorer” of their own future, which also aligns with Bruce County’s vision and mandate.

Job Search Club Sample Activities

- **Communication Strategies**
 - “Passive, Aggressive, Assertive Communication”
 - “Hard skills get you hired, limited soft skills can get you fired”
- **Workshop Table Activity (15 minutes)**
 - Refer to the “[Communications Strategies](#)” handout on your table.
 - In pairs of two, work through one of the scenarios on page two.
- **QTIP- “Quit Taking it Personally”**
 - Reviewed various scenarios that a client may be quick to internalize = “quit” or “[blame game](#)” mindset sets in!

Job Search Club Motivational Tools

A - 1
T - 20
T - 20
I - 9
T - 20
U - 21
D - 4
E - 5
= 100%



Remind individuals of their Resiliency and GRIT!!
LET'S HELP CLIENT'S RESET!!

Job Search Club Success Factors Recap!

- **Recap of Key Success Factors:**
 - Reminded clients how strong they are, as well the value they had to offer, it mattered to us that they were there, and they knew it!
 - Tapped into personal values, interests, skills ... find the “spark”;
 - Peer-to-peer support and accountability with structure to maintain a safe, non-judgmental, learning environment;
 - Networking, social interaction, engage in conversations that fostered resiliency; let them know they are not alone;
 - Defusing negative thought patterns; depersonalize (Q-TIP);
 - Invited guest speakers who had a story to share;
 - Had a chance to reconnect with services providers in education/training, employment, employer perspective, in a safe space and supportive environment with peers.

Job Search Club Program Outcomes

- **Outcomes at Program Completion:**
 - ✓ 6 clients secured employment, one reunited with family
 - ✓ 1 exploring self employment
 - ✓ 2 entered counselling with mental health supports
 - ✓ 2 entered training with Adult Learning Center, Contact North
 - ✓ 1 ODSP application pending since workshop completion

The Brainstorm Bringing it Home

Workshop Table Placemat Activity - Part 2:

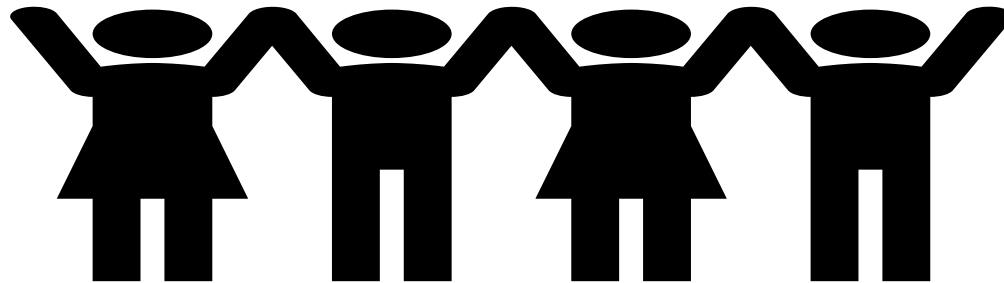
1. Picture your client, the one you're struggling with, and flip your placemat over.
 - Jot down some of your client's potential *future* characteristics - what would you like to see in them? What are they capable of?
 - Keep this client in mind as you think about returning to your office.
2. As the support worker, use your placemat to consider:
 - *Insights* from this workshop that can help my work ...
 - What *elements* of the Job Search Club might work in my area?
 - Are there any *other approaches* that might help my long-standing clients with multiple challenges?
 - What might be my *obstacles* and how can I *overcome* them?
 - What *next steps* can I take?

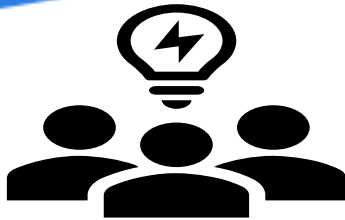


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What was the Most Valuable Aspect of the Job Search Club?





Additional Comments or Suggestions for Improvement?

I think the facilitator did a good job and I think she really cares.

Very informative, perhaps you could have more Guest Speakers

Workshop was helpful. It gave us more confidence to research companies and learn the job skills they need.

Nicely Done!

Serve Tacos!

Thank you for all of the information!

Thank You for Sharing the Journey!

Any last questions/comments?
(Check Parking Lot)

“We are the explorers. The dreamers who take roads less travelled. Those who turn alternatives into sustainable choices. Those who see tried and true as an invitation to try something new. Here's to children who look under rocks. and parents who help with the lifting. Here's to active inquiring minds, and those with the vision to look beyond obstacles. Here's to celebrating business innovation - and just as important, to exploring farm life in the morning, beach life in the afternoon and bright starry skies all night long. Here's to the explorers - here's to us. Bruce County is where those roads less travelled become a journey: In life, in our work, in our communities, and in how we spend our days together.”

Get in touch!

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