### **Networking**

**AGENDA**

1. Warm Up
2. Topic Presentation & Discussion
3. Activity Options
4. Break
5. Activity Options
6. Reflection
7. Evaluations

**WARM UP**

What are the different ways you found jobs you’ve had in the past?

**TOPIC PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION**

Review content included in handout.

**Tip:** Give examples from your own life or pop culture to illustrate the major points. For example, how did you find your own job? Or do you know someone who found an opportunity through networking? Ask participants for examples from their lives.

Oftentimes, participants ask “What if I’m shy/self-conscious/don’t like interacting w/ people?”

You can offer them the following strategies:

* Find out which networking techniques feel like a good fit for you (e.g. online, in person, etc.)
* Practice first w/ safe people – e.g. career counselor
* Talk about work w/ people you already talk to all the time (e.g. therapist, case manager, brother)
* Take baby steps w/ techniques that feel more intimidating (e.g. make eye contact and say hello to someone new)

**ACTIVITY I: Your One Minute Pitch**

See participant handout. Discuss w/ participants how we use different levels of formality, depending on the social situation. “Your pitch may sound different when you’re talking to the person who works the front desk at your gym vs. a prospective employer.” When participants are developing their pitch, ask them to also indicate what the scenario is. Encourage them to create an informal version, since they can work on a formal version in the interviewing session.

**ACTIVITY II: Mapping Your Network**

* + Center Circle: 1st degree contacts, people closest to you (ex. sibling)
  + Middle Circle: 2nd degree contacts, "Kinda-sorta know" (ex. barista)
  + Outer Circle: 3rd degree contacts, people you WANT to meet or know

Have students map their current network. Some participants may say “I don’t know anyone,” but with a little brainstorming, they will likely find they are more connected than they realize. List categories and environments to jog their memories (people in their neighborhood, people they see on a daily basis in different settings, etc.)

**ACTIVITY III: Strengthening Your Network**

Have students brainstorm ways they can strengthen their network. Again, it can be helpful to share anecdotes from your own life. Have each student share at least one example and get feedback from the group if they are struggling.

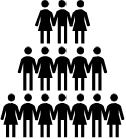
Examples:

* Send a quick hello message via email or text
* Join a local club or association
* Make a LinkedIn profile (touch on ways to keep social media accounts professional)

**REFLECTION**

What did you learn today that you didn’t know before? Where can you practice networking this week?

### **What is Networking?**

Your **network** is the group of people with whom you interact on a regular basis.

**Networking** is creating and sustaining connections with the people around you – in class, at work, in your communities. You can actively utilize your network to find leads and referrals.

Networking works best when it is **proactive** – meaning part of your lifestyle, something you do on a regular basis – regardless of job status.

**Why should I care about networking?**

* Many of the best jobs are never advertised to the public!
* More than half of job hunters find their new job through their network.

Contrary to popular belief, the best way to find opportunities – be it volunteering, internships, or paid employment – is not necessarily through submitting resumes and applications online. (Although these can still be valuable strategies.) Chances are, by the time a job is posted, the employer already has a candidate in mind.

**Networking Strategies**

* Identify people who are already in your network.
* Work to strengthen your current connections and build new ones.
* Utilize your network by talking about your goals, asking for referrals, and setting up informational interviews.
* Continue to improve your communication skills through role-play and regularly challenging yourself to practice in your everyday interactions.

### **Your One-Minute Pitch**

Follow the “Present, Past, Future” formula. What is your professional area of interest/passion? What work, volunteering, education, etc. are you currently doing that relates to this passion? What related work, volunteering, education, etc. have you done in the past? What are you looking for in the future?

**Example:**

*"My passion in life is bringing people and animals together. I believe that with the right approach, any dog can be trained to become a loving companion.* ***Right now,*** *I’m volunteering as member of an animal rescue team. Part of my work on the team involves rehabilitating dogs that have been abandoned or abused.* ***Before that****, I started a successful dog walking and grooming business. At one point, I had as many as 40 clients.* ***What I am looking for in the future*** *is a small company that emphasizes the highest quality care for animals, where I can join an experienced team and positively impact relationships between dogs and their owners.”*

***Your Turn!***

ShapeShape

Shape

Shape

Shape

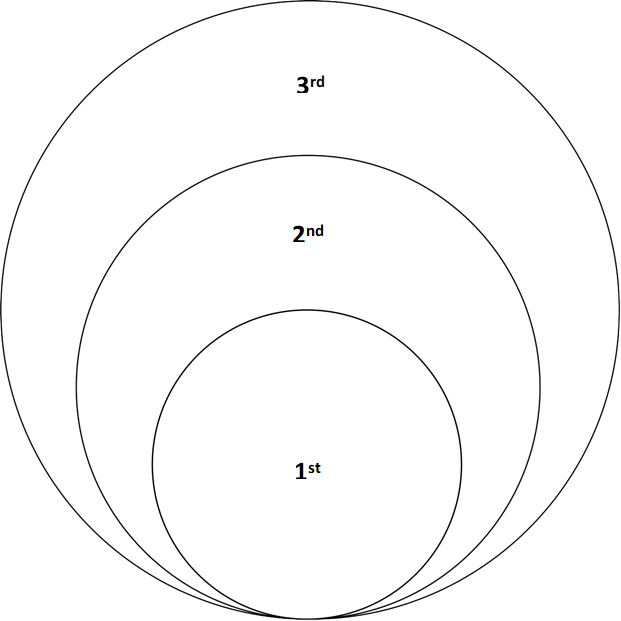
Shape

Shape

Shape

*Adapted from “A Simple Formula for Answering ‘Tell Me About Yourself’”* (Minshew)

### **Mapping Your Network**



**1st** = People closest to me.

**2nd** = People I see on a regular basis but could get to know better.

**3rd** = People I don’t yet know but want to connect to.

### **Strengthen Your 2nd Degree Network**

|  |
| --- |
| ***Examples:*** *Get to know the barista at the coffee shop, send birthday/holiday*  *card to former employer, congratulate neighbor on accomplishment, etc.* |
| **Steps I can take to strengthen my 2nd degree network:** |
| **1.** |
| **2.** |
| **3.** |
| **4.** |
| **5.** |

*Adapted from* ("Soft Skills to Pay the Bills - Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success,")