

## **Helpful Tips & Resources for Transitioning Seniors**

*Upcoming graduation stress? Worried about finding a job?*

Feeling stressed about the upcoming job hunt after graduation? You are not alone. Experiencing stress related to change, preparing your future, and searching for a job is a common reaction among graduating students.

### **Where does my stress come from?**

- Leaving a familiar environment
- Financial stress
- Rejection of job applications
- Lack of social support, family pressure
- Uncertainty
- Not having control over decisions
- Conflicting demands
- Experiencing feelings of a loss of identity

### **What can I do to reduce all the stress from job searching?**

#### **1.) Identify Stressors**

- Track what stresses you—keep a journal log to record when exactly you begin to feel stress, what caused the stress, and include information such as time of day, environment, and how you responded. Keeping a log will allow you to avoid certain stressors. (e.g. if you recognize you become stressed while working on job applications, you could limit yourself to one or two applications a day)

#### **2.) Develop healthy responses**

- Make sure you're getting out *every day*—exercise, take a walk, meet a friend for coffee, or indulge in a hobby. Sitting behind a computer all day can lead to burnout. Schedule breaks midway through the day to be active.
- Take time to recharge—it is okay to take time away from job applications, career fair events, meetings, or planning life after graduation. Your job search is your job right now. Schedule it as an 8-5 search throughout the week days. You don't have to sacrifice your evenings and weekends.
- Practice visualization—job searching can feel discouraging or overwhelming, so take a few minutes to revisit a time when you accomplished something. Or actually engage in an activity that makes you feel confident.
- Eat nutritious food and get regular sleep. Poor diet, substance use, and lack of sleep increase vulnerability to stress.

#### **3.) Reach out to others**

- Get support—inform your friends and family where you stand in your job hunt. Oftentimes, friends and family can lend helpful advice or provide you with job connections and opportunities.
- You're not alone. It is likely that many of your friends are also experiencing stress from job searching, applications, and interviews.
- Utilize your university's career center resources—there are various workshops and tools to assist in your job search. There's nothing wrong with asking for help!
- Seek out a mentor who can provide guidance as you enter the professional world.
- Join a professional development/industry specific group (e.g. finance club, psychology club, engineering fraternities).
- Connect with your alumni association.

#### **4.) Don't take rejection personally**

- Remember—it is important to separate yourself from rejection. Just because you didn't get the job or haven't heard back does NOT mean that you are a failure. It just means it wasn't the right job for you. Keep searching and remain optimistic—negativity will only hinder your search and ability to appear confident on applications and in interviews.
- Turn your rejection into a positive experience—think about how to improve your applications, cover letters, etc. Think about how you can stand out in your next interview. Consider every job application process as practice for the real deal.

- Focus on your skills and strengths—think about the times you’ve overcome an obstacle and accomplished a goal. Use that feeling as motivation in your search.
- Keep realistic expectations, it often takes months to find a job, and a first job is often just a stepping stone as opposed to a “dream job.”
- Volunteer to do something you enjoy until you find your next position.

### **What else can I do?**

Job applications are becoming endless, interviews seem few and far between, graduation is right around the corner, things aren’t looking better and you’re experiencing chronic stress and feelings of hopelessness—there is help!

- Confide in someone about your feelings of stress, anxiety, and hopelessness—having someone to talk to can help you manage your feelings and develop a “game plan” to cope with your stress, anxiety, or hopelessness.
- Read up! There is a vast amount of literature and “self-help” books devoted to managing stress/anxiety. Here are a few suggested readings:

*Mind over Mood* by Dennis Greenberger and Christine Padesky

*The Anxiety and Worry Workbook: The Cognitive-Behavioral Solution* by David A. Clark and Aaron T. Beck

*The Feeling Good Handbook* by David Burns

- If you find yourself experiencing increased stress or suicidal thoughts, [click here](#) for contact information for on-campus and off-campus resources.

### **Experiencing stress unrelated to your job search?**

There are a multitude of paths and opportunities available after graduation. Even if you’re not planning on beginning a career immediately after your graduation, you may still experience stress caused by a variety of other circumstances:

- Is reality not matching your expectations of where you expected to be after graduation?
- Are you on a path you didn’t expect?
- Feeling down on yourself?
- Taking a gap year before graduate school or accepting a full-time position?

### **What can you do?**

All of the mechanisms for battling stress related to job searching can be applied here. However, here are a few extra suggestions to keep you feeling healthy and happy:

- Keep a positive perspective—brainstorm different activities, job options, things to keep you busy, and consider them from multiple viewpoints.
- Utilize summer after graduation as a time for rejuvenation and revitalization of your mind and body.
- Seek out counselors who specialize in transition and change to develop a plan to reach your goals.

**Looking for more information?** Visit the following:

- [Forbes—6 Things You Must Do to get Your First Job After College](#)
- [American Psychological Association, Help Center on Work Stress](#)
- [Careershift.com—Ways to End Job Search Stress in 5 Minutes or Less](#)
- [Careerrealism.com—4 De-Stressing Tips for your Job Search](#)
- [US News—No Job? How New Grads Can Cope with Depression](#)