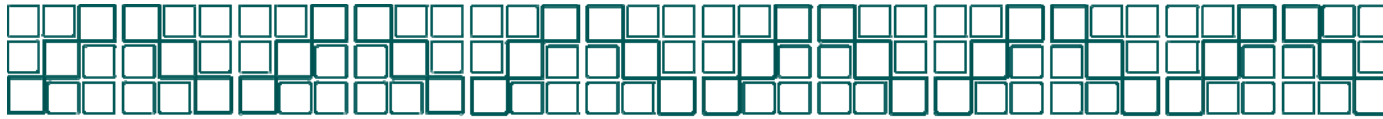

Preparing For Career Satisfaction & Success

Sharon Milgram, PhD
Director, NIH Office of Intramural Training & Education

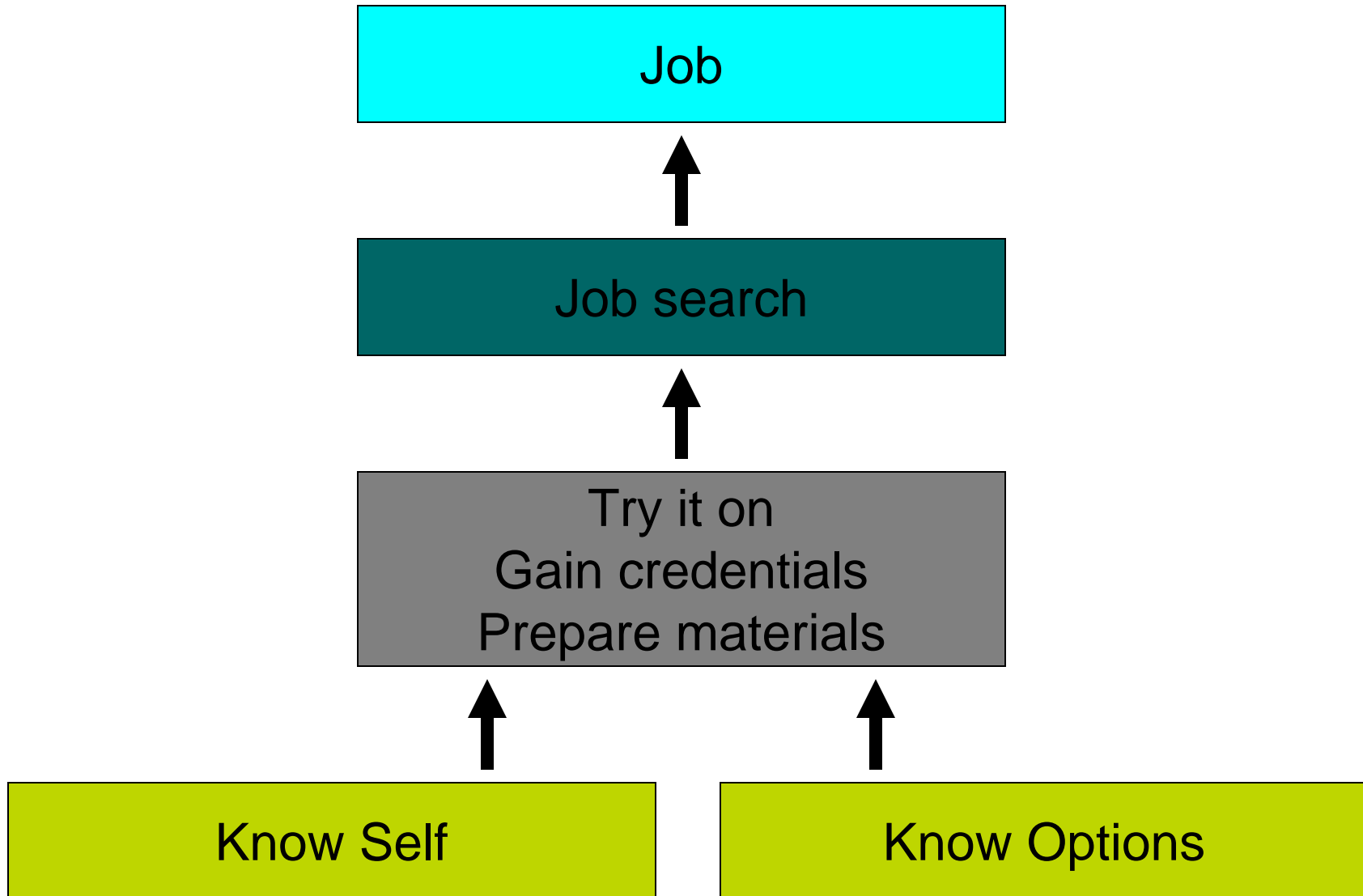


Some Fundamental Truths

- Most of us will face one or more job searches in the future
- Job searches are about transitions and transitions are always difficult
 - We have to let go
 - We have to deal with a lot of uncertainty
 - We face the discomfort of deeply examining ourselves
 - We face the discomfort of being examined by others
- In addition to managing the job search we have to manage the emotions and doubts that go along with it
- Understanding the process is the first step in conquering the process



Elements of Career Planning



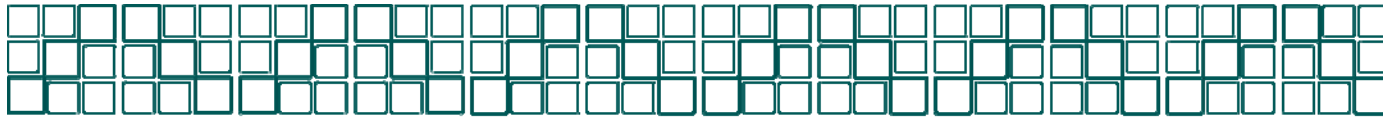
Who Can Help In the Process

- NIH mentors and colleagues (find out what your IC training office offers SS/SC)
- Scientific networks beyond NIH
- Friends, neighbors, and family

- Be sure to make contact with your mentors and advocates
- Effective networking is key to career transitions and forward movement

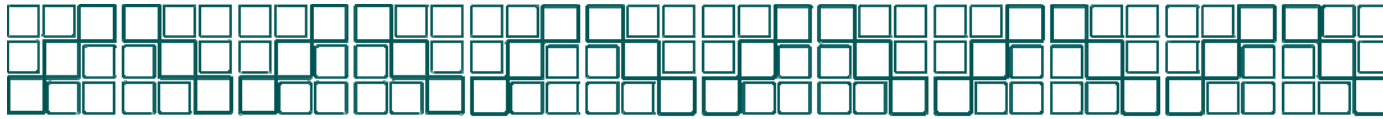
Self Knowledge Means Knowing Your:

- Personality and learning style
- Interests within the field
- Highly developed skills
- Work preferences
- Management [leadership] style and capacity
- Credentials
- Personal and geographic restrictions



Gaining Self Knowledge

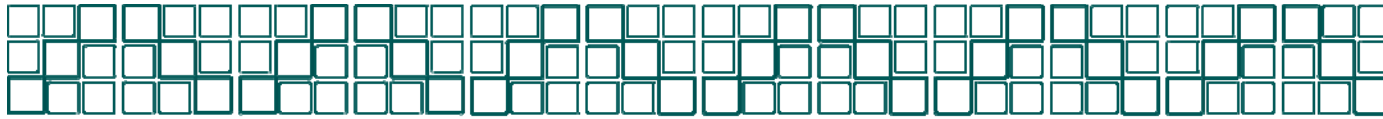
- Read books and Web-based resources
- Attend relevant workshops
- Talk with:
 - Mentors
 - Colleagues and friends
 - Career counselors
- All leading to self-reflection and greater self-awareness



Skills You May Have

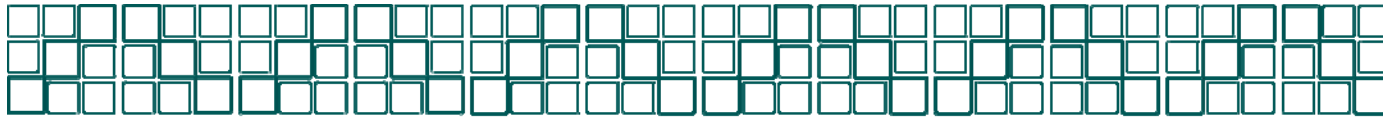
- Technical
- Analytical
- Learning
- Communication
- Teaching
- Project management
- Budget management
- Self management
- People management
- Leadership

Remember: Skills can be enhanced through coursework and practice



Parsing Your Skills

“ I have developed excellent communication skills”



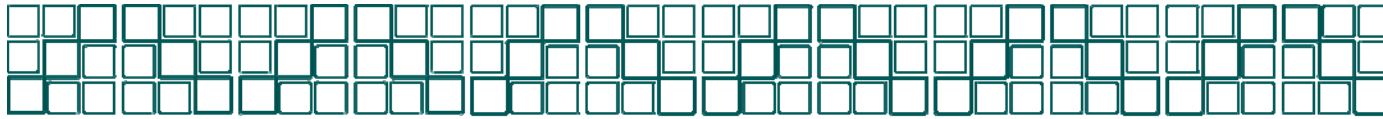
Parsing Your Skills

“ I have developed excellent communication skills”:

- Can explain complex concepts to lay audiences
- Best when speaking to an expert audiences
- Have an engaging public speaking style
- Can coherently organize material for others
- Can facilitate discussions, even heated ones
- Can influence individuals or groups
- Can think quickly on my feet when answering questions
- Can write for a deadline
- Can edit the work of others
- Can write for lay audiences better than expert audiences
- Excellent at writing highly detailed methods-based document (how-tos, SOPs, etc)

Identifying Highly Developed Skills

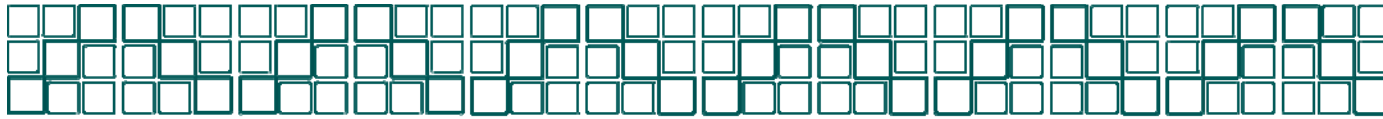
- Performance awards and formal recognition in the workplace or community
- Areas where you often receive genuine compliments and positive feedback
- Ask trusted mentors and colleagues for feedback
- Consider times you have felt most energized, confident and capable



Skills Exercise

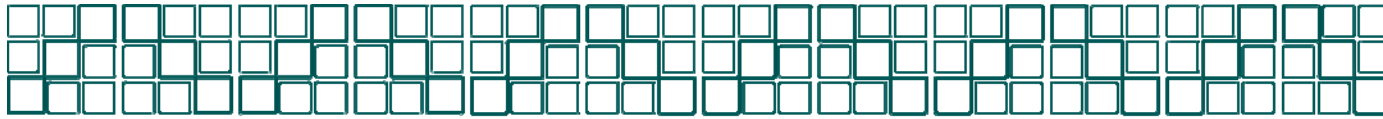
- Spend five minutes considering your highly developed skills
- Share these with a neighbor, using Q&A to more fully define the skills

- Spend five minutes considering a skill you wish to develop in the coming year
- Share this skill with a neighbor; strategize on ways you might develop this skill



More on Skills

- Can be learned and enhanced
 - But best to identify and exploit natural talents
- Important to define skills as specifically as possible
 - For career exploration and job searching
- For career transitions, it is often important to examine your **transferrable skills**
 - Skills you have acquired during any activity in your life that are applicable to what you want to do in your next job
 - Any activity means at home, in the community or at work

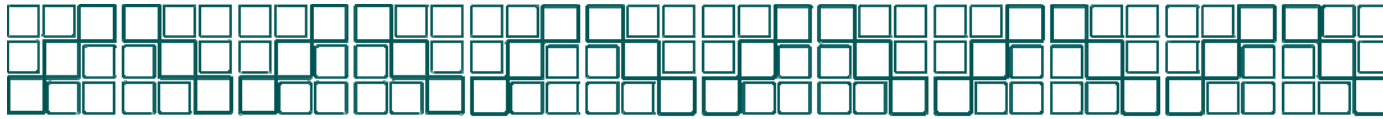


Transferrable Skills

- Identify them by analyzing your current activities
 - At work
 - And more broadly in the community
- Highlight them in three important steps
 - **S**tate it
 - **E**xpand on it [with an example]
 - **C**onnect it [to the new job]

Major Categories of Transferrable Skills

- Communication
- Analytical and problem solving
- Human relations and teamwork
- Organizational management (and leadership)
- Work ethic and approach

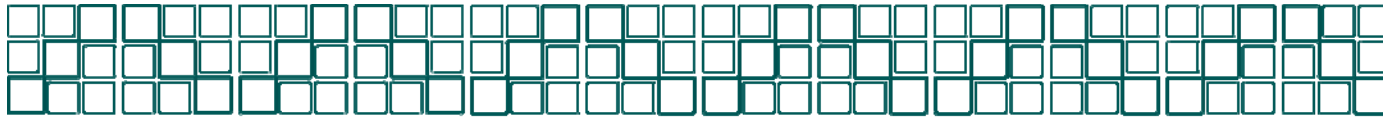


Exercise

- Apply the SEC Approach to one of the following job search scenarios:
 - Research position to admin job
 - Research position to teaching job
 - Research position in developmental biology to research position in vaccine development
 - Research position working in a small research group to head of a core facility

Knowing What You Need

- More personal, often ignored, and subject to a variety of cultural, personal, and family influences
- Mismatch between needs and actual job is often a source of job dissatisfaction and stress



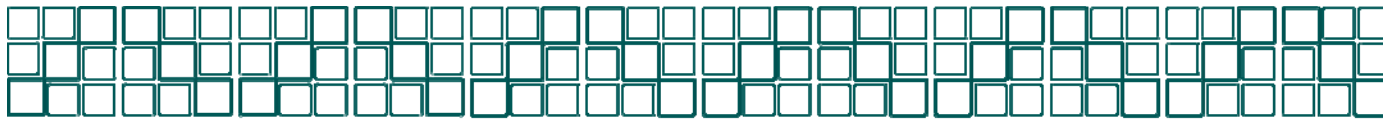
Exercise

- Answer the following question:

I am interested in a job that has/includes.....

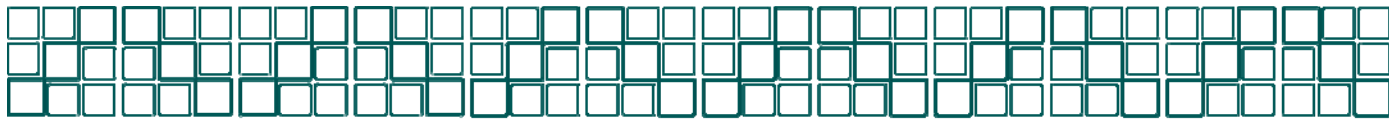
- Look at how many job requirements you have and work to identify which are **MOST IMPORTANT** to you

Identify your **TOP THREE** job requirements

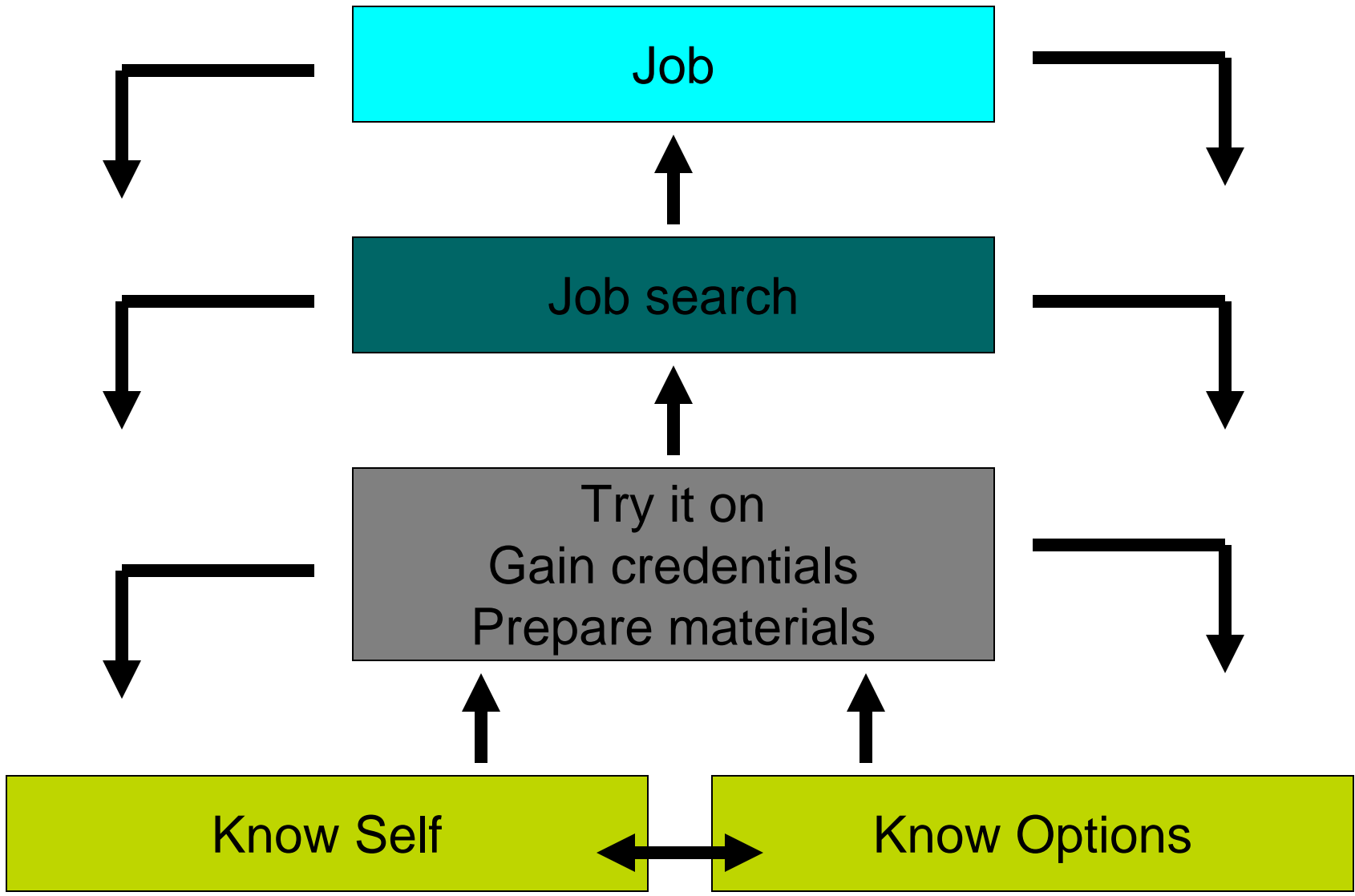


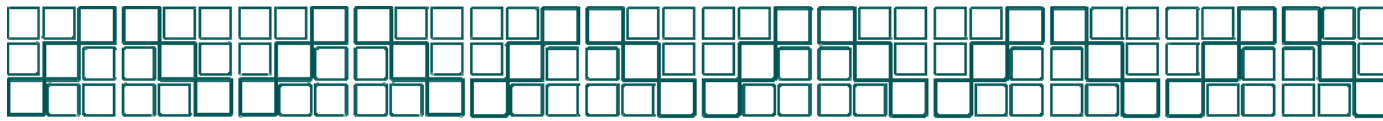
Interests

- What do we think about when we think about work?
 - Problems and broad areas of science
 - Technologies and approaches
 - Communicating outcomes and results
 - People and management
- If we never think about work, what do we think about?
 - A sign that it may be time for a change
 - Time to move away from the bench or time to move away from science completely? Important to consider what to move toward?
- Sometimes, our hobbies and outside interests help inform our science career decisions



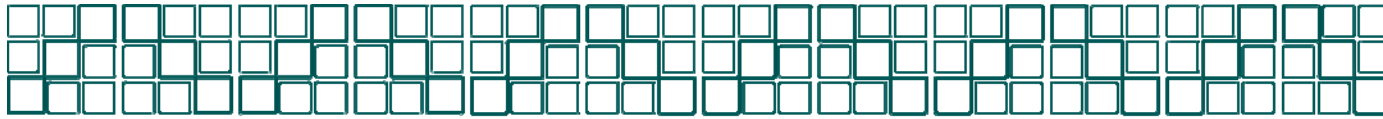
Elements of Career Planning





Options Knowledge Means Understanding:

- The responsibilities and duties of an occupation or position
 - Specific job demands and tasks
 - Unspoken “rules of the trade”
- The qualifications and experiences needed to get the job
- Salary, typical benefits, perks, and advancement opportunities
- Down-sides, risks, and typical de-railers



Options

- Have expanded in some areas and contracted in others
- Decision nodes:
 - At or away from the bench
 - Level of responsibility and independence
 - Sector(s) you will target

Non-bench Career Options In:

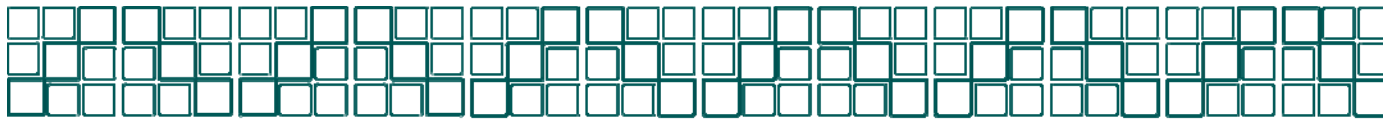
- Administration
- Education
- Policy
- Business
- Writing
- Law
- Consulting

Gaining Options Knowledge

- Read
 - Books – the OITE has a good career library
 - Blogs – including the new OITE Careers Blog
 - Web sites – find links at the Career Services web site
- Attend workshops
 - Felcom, IC, and OITE programs
 - Local and national opportunities
- Talk with mentors, colleagues and friends
- **INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING**

Why Do Informational Interviews?

- To explore careers and clarify your career goal
 - To expand your professional network
 - To access the most up-to-date career information and access the underground job market
 - To identify your professional strengths and weaknesses
 - To build confidence for your job interviews
-
- One in 12 informational interviews leads to a job offer – the best odds you have!



The Nitty Gritty

- Easiest to make your request by email
 - Keep it short
 - Proof-read it
 - Name-drop
 - Ask someone to make an introduction on your behalf
- Can meet in person or by phone
- Be flexible regarding when you meet
- Bring a current CV or resume
- Plan for no more than 30 minutes
- Open conversation with:
 - Brief explanation of why you requested the meeting
 - Summary of your experiences to date

Finding People To Talk With

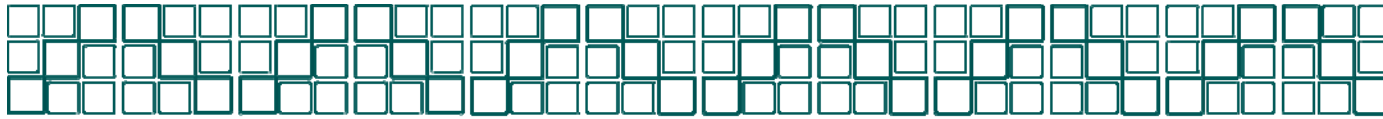
- Use all of your networks
- Search Alumni database on OITE webpage
- Ask your IC Training Office for IC alumni contacts
- Watch videos and attend career panels on campus and at scientific meetings

Example 1

Dear Dr. Milgram:

Dr. XXXX suggested I contact you because of your experience in science education at NIH and in an academic setting. I am a staff scientist here at NIH and I am very interested in transitioning from my current position to one where I can use my communication and organizational skills to enhance science education at the undergraduate or graduate level. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you briefly to discuss your thoughts on how I might make this career transition. I am especially interested in your views regarding volunteer experiences and differences you see in your staff who work with undergraduate vs. graduate students. I can meet at your convenience and greatly appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

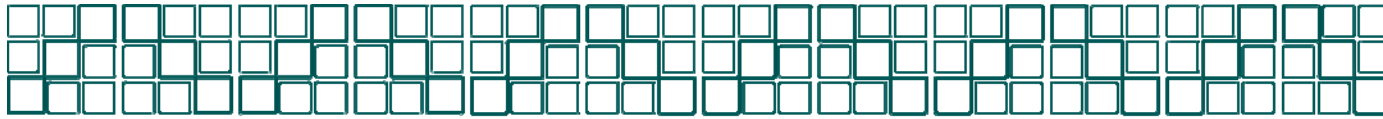


Example 2

Dear XXX:

I enjoyed your recent paper on the regulation of ENaC in airway. As a ion channel physiologist I greatly appreciate the combination of biochemical and functional studies and hope you continue to make progress defining the protein interactions involved in this regulatory pathway. I am currently a postdoc at NIH, working closely with Dr. XXX to elucidate pathways that regulate ABC transporter activity in cancer cells. I am now looking to transition to an industry position where I can use my expertise in electrophysiology as part of a R&D team. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about your career progression and how I might make a similar transition from NIH to industry. I will be at the Ion Channel GRC next month and would love to buy you a cup of coffee or a drink. Thanks and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

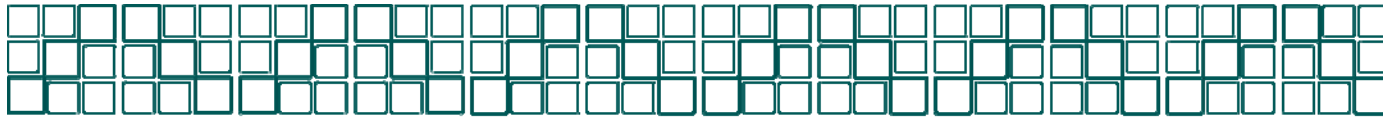


Example 3

Dear XXX:

I am considering a career transition from cancer research to science writing and Dr. XXX in the XXX Communications Office suggested I contact you. I recently completed a short volunteer internship under her guidance and this experience solidified my interest in science writing and editing. I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to talk with you about your current position as an editor of Cancer Cell. I know you are very busy and I am happy to meet by phone anytime that is convenient for you. In addition, I will be in NY October 15 – 20; I could meet in person anytime that week. I imagine you must get many requests like this one and appreciate your consideration of my request.

Thanks in advance,



Things To Explore

- What the job is really like
 - Explore from the perspective of your needs and wants
- Critical skills for success
 - To get a job
 - To succeed in it
- Career trajectories
- Advice on how you should move forward
 - Other useful contacts; feedback on your experiences, CV or resume; professional societies you might explore; insights into possible positions
- Do not ask for a job but be open to any opportunities they put on the table

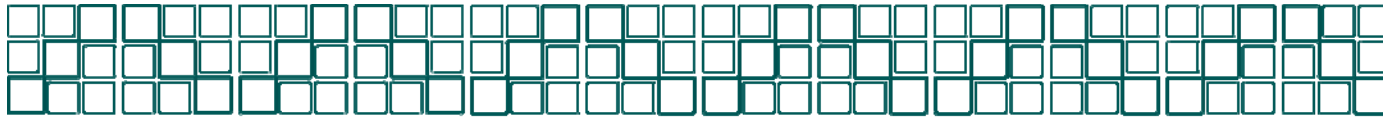
Knowing What It Takes

- With a partner list 5 – 7 skills needed to excel as a:
 - Patent lawyer
 - Grants manager
 - Assistant Professor at a research university/teaching university
 - Science policy analyst for the Stem Cell Institute
 - Science internship coordinator at NIH
 - High school science teacher
 - Director of research core facility
 - Scientific instrumentation sales rep
 - Director of outreach for a science museum
 - Head of quality control for a pharmaceutical company
 - Director of clinical trials unit at a university or a company
 - Another job of your choosing

Comparing Your Skills to the Job

MY HIGHLY DEVELOPED SKILLS	SKILLS NEEDED FOR _____ POSITION
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

- Then ask:
 - ❑ Where is there overlap?
 - ❑ Is there enough overlap to begin searching?
 - ❑ Where am I lacking important skills?
 - ❑ What can I do about skills I am lacking?



Gaining Credentials

- Gain hands-on experience by:
 - Volunteering for relevant projects at NIH, in your research group and (or) beyond
 - Doing a formal detail as part of your current work assignment
- Fill in knowledge gaps using adult education
 - FAES and local community colleges
 - On-line and weekend courses
 - Some professional societies offer excellent training opportunities
- The quality of the experience is more important than the quantity
 - Focus on task and relationship
 - Input from individuals observing you in the new role can be critical

This is a Difficult Process

	Enthusiastic beginner	Disillusioned learner	Cautious performer	High Achiever
Competence	low	some	moderate	high
Confidence	High	Low	variable	High
Needs	Direction	Support	Support	Independence

Adapted from Ken Blanchard, Self Leadership and the One Minute Manager

Finding Support & Guidance

- Use resources at NIH (IC Training Office, EAP, Ombudsmen, FAES, Training Center, OITE)
- Attend other parts of the OITE Job Search Series for SS/SC
- Email me at milgrams@od.nih.gov if you are interested in joining a SS/SC Job Group
- Email me at milgrams@od.nih.gov for a career counseling appointment

Keep In Touch

- Connect with me on Linked-In and join the NIH Intramural Science Linked-In group
- Watch previous OITE career workshops
- Read the OITE Careers blog (“Day in the Life Of” series)
- Join the OITE NIH Training Alumni database if you were a student or fellow here
- Email me at milgrams@od.nih.gov

www.training.nih.gov