



SPECTRUM SKILLSHARE

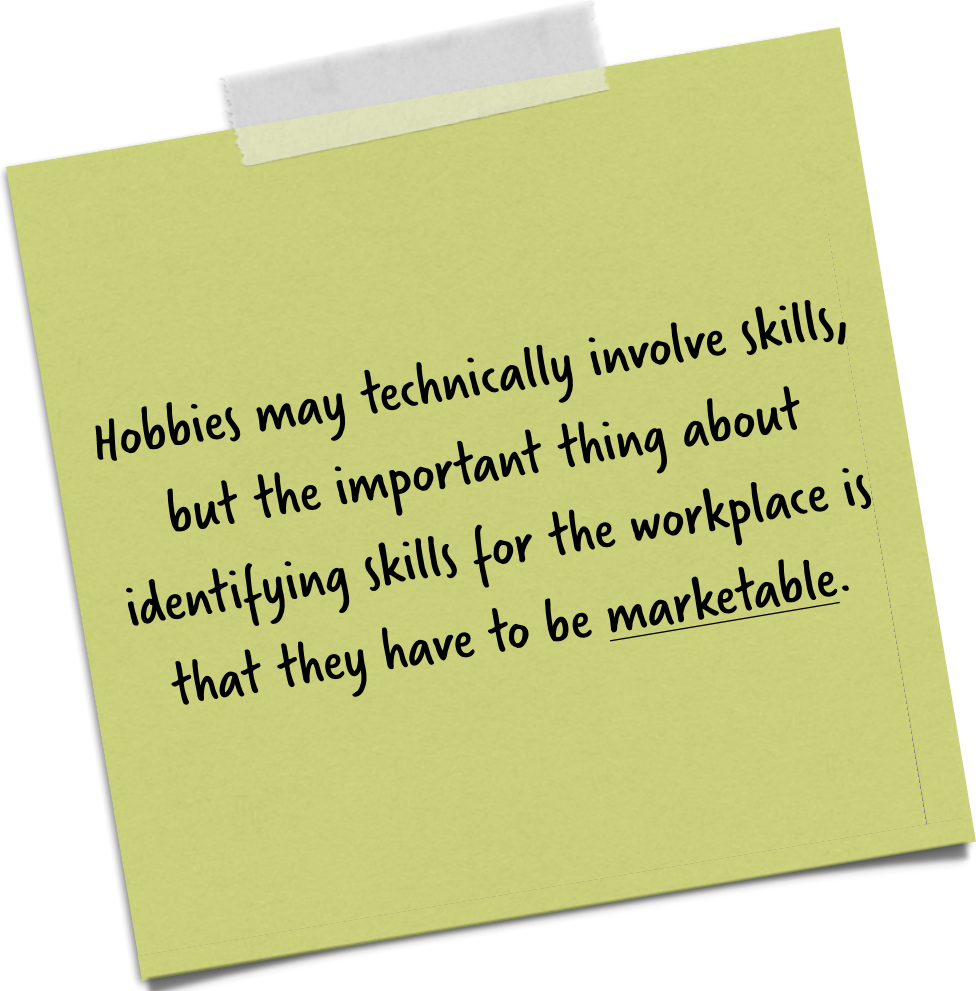
Workshop 1: Moving Toward Career Success

WELCOME!



IDENTIFYING SKILLS AND INTERESTS

- * **Interests** can help you in your job search because they can pinpoint a field you want to work in
- * **Skills** can help you because they are specific things you can market to potential employers.



Hobbies may technically involve skills, but the important thing about identifying skills for the workplace is that they have to be marketable.

- * Examples of **interests**: computer science, military history, twentieth-century British literature, modern South African film, the musical *Cats*, computer fonts, Ethiopian cooking, the development of the refrigerator
- * Examples of **skills**: HTML/CSS, cooking, JavaScript, computer repair, accounting, plumbing, welding, house painting, Photoshop, speaking foreign languages, programming, film editing

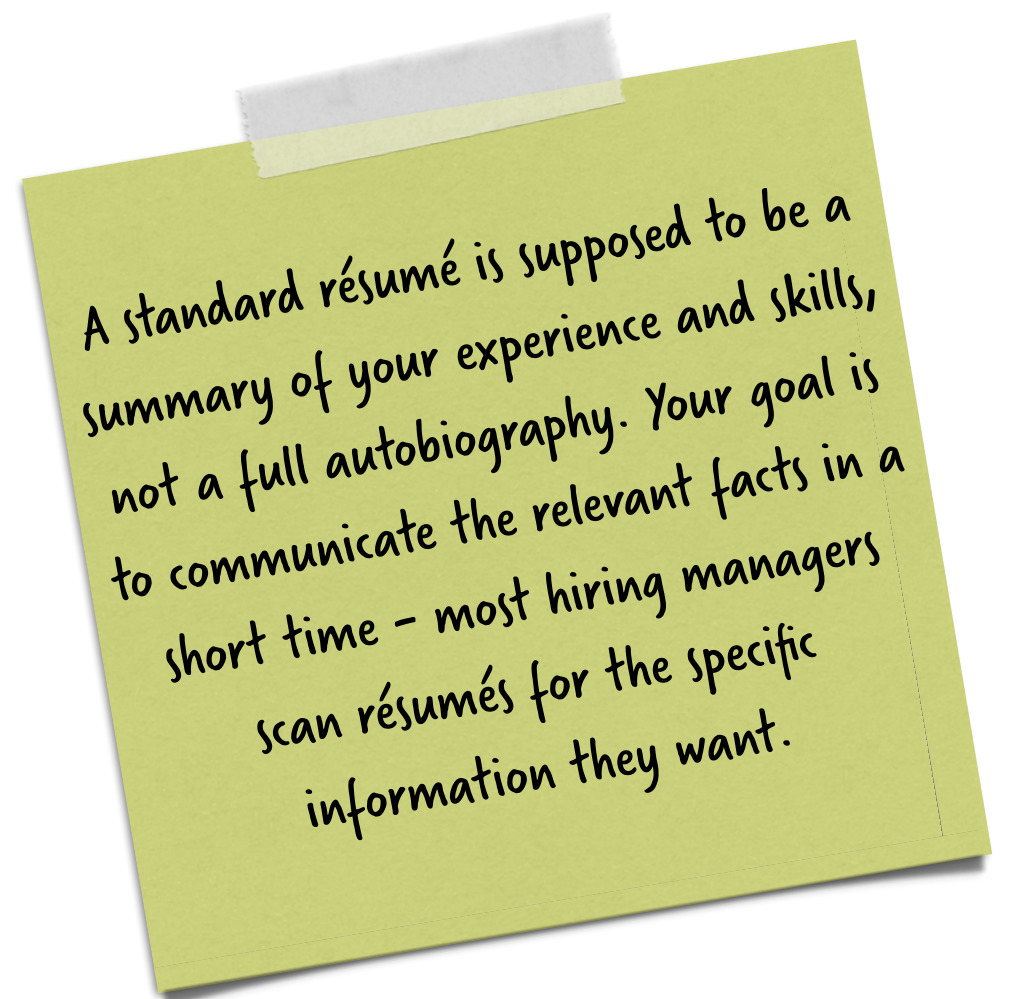
- * There can be overlap between interests and skills, but remember that **skills are specifically transferable and marketable**; interests may not be.
- * Straightforward example: you may be interested in computer science, so you can transfer that interest into learning computer programming languages and the theory behind them.
- * Off-the-wall example: you may be the person who's interested in the history of the refrigerator, but it's difficult to find work that's specifically about appliance history! You can go into refrigerator repair and remember how different models are constructed so you can find the right parts.

CREATING A COMPELLING RÉSUMÉ

- * Use “action words” that describe what you’ve done at work**
- * Don’t present your résumé as a dry list of duties. Don’t be formulaic.**
- * Write in a readable, but professional, style. You don’t need to sound as though you’ve swallowed the thesaurus.**
- * Place most of your emphasis on jobs that are related to the one you’re applying for. Unrelated jobs can be glossed over or omitted. Your résumé must be relevant to the hiring manager.**

SELECTED TIPS

- * Be clear and concise
- * Highlight your best accomplishments and skills
- * A résumé is a **marketing document**—put your best foot forward
- * **Make sure your spelling and grammar are correct**; have someone else proofread (and have a good dictionary on hand if needed)
- * **Don't bother with gimmicks** like scented paper or video résumés.



CRAFTING YOUR COVER LETTER

- * You can be more detailed about yourself in a cover letter than in a résumé, but avoid being *too* long-winded.
- * Like the résumé, the cover letter is a marketing document.
- * Make sure to identify specific experiences you've had, or interests, that are relevant to the job posting.
- * Make sure your spelling and grammar are correct, and watch for commonly confused words (like “they’re,” “their,” and “there,” or “it’s” versus “its”).

NETWORKING AUTISTICALLY

- * Remember that **most jobs aren't found via online job boards** like Indeed, Monster, Craigslist, CareerBuilder, and HotJobs
- * Most jobs are found via **networking or word of mouth**—people you know may be able to point you toward a company or position that suits you

- * A strategy to get to know people in a desired field is the **informational interview**—a discussion with a staff member at a company or organization you'd like to work at that is strictly for research, NOT asking for a job. I repeat: **DO NOT ask for a job at an informational interview.**

HACKING THE INTERVIEW

- * Employers want to know how **you can help them become a better company, agency, or organization**—stress this as you conduct your interview.
- * It's not about what they can do for you; it's about how you can help them solve problems.
- * If you need to calm yourself down by stimming during the interview, **bring a small stress ball or something similar** that you can use under the desk if you're interviewing in person.
- * If eye contact is difficult, **try looking at the interviewer's nose, or just in the general direction of their face**. Eye contact can be really intense for us, but a lot of non-autistic people see eye contact as a sign of trustworthiness.

- * **Dress appropriately for the interview.** This can depend on where you're interviewing. There are some rules of thumb for dressing, though: **avoid jeans and t-shirts.**
- * At business-casual and casual workplaces, interview wearing business-casual clothes: **khakis or other neutral pants, button-down shirts, tailored skirts, blouses, or sweaters.**

- * If you're interviewing at a bank, law firm, or other conservative work environment, you may want to wear **more formal clothing**, like a blouse, full two- or three-piece suit, suit jacket, necktie, tailored skirt, or slacks.
- * It might be a good idea to keep the Garfield tie at home!
- * Remember that **business formal and evening formal are two different things**—don't wear a tuxedo or ball gown to an interview!

WRANGLING YOUR REFERENCES

- * Check in with your potential references before you decide to put them down on an application.**
- * Make sure to choose references that you know you've had a good working relationship with.**
- * Only provide references after the hiring manager has asked you for them.**
- * If you're no longer working with a reference, remind them of when you worked with them, some of your duties, and where you worked with them, if they've changed jobs since you've left.**

OTHER WAYS TO MAKE YOURSELF STAND OUT

- * **Create a portfolio** of your best work. This is mandatory in the industry for graphic designers and artists, but can also be useful for writers and other people whose work benefits from a visual presentation. This portfolio can be online, physical, or both. Bring this portfolio to the interview, if you can.
- * Things you can include in your portfolio: screenshots of web pages, artwork, samples of graphic design, pieces you've written
- * **You may be asked for homework before going to an interview.** This can involve creating a proposal or doing research. Make sure to follow the instructions given, since they are testing whether you can do some of the tasks listed in the job description.
- * Interviewers may also ask for **writing samples or examples of how you would use a particular piece of software.** Make sure to keep these handy.

CLOSING REMARKS

CREDITS

- * *An Autistic View of Employment*, by the Autistic Self Advocacy Network and The ARC of the United States
- * *Ask a Manager*, by Alison Green
- * *Ask the Headhunter*, by Nick Corcodilos
- * Dani Alexis/Autistic Academic on autism and the job search
- * *I Will Teach You to Be Rich*, by Ramit Sethi
- * “The Road to Resilience,” by the American Psychological Association

THANK YOU!
