

Employment Pathways Programs

Employment Action Coaching Program Training
Guide



Contents

<i>Employment Pathways Programs</i>	1
<i>Employment Action Coaching Program Training Guide</i>	1
<i>Introduction: What is Holland Bloorview’s Employment Pathways model?</i>	3
<i>Phase 2 programs: Employment Action Coaching (EAC)</i>	4
<i>The Employment Action Coaching program: Overview</i>	4
Who is this program for?	5
Role of a support person	5
Program objectives	5
<i>Program evaluation and outcome measurement</i>	5
<i>Clients and families will walk away with</i>	6
Resourcing.....	6
Planning program content	7
Program timing and scheduling	7
Recruitment.....	7
Intake procedures.....	9
<i>Program sessions</i>	9
Overview of program sessions.....	12
Example: Group Session #1.....	15
<i>Wrap up meetings</i>	17
<i>Appendices</i>	18
<i>Appendix A: Summary of Intake procedures</i>	19
<i>Appendix B: Sample GAS Goal</i>	20
<i>Appendix C: Summary of wrap-up procedures</i>	22
<i>Appendix D: Real life stories</i>	23
<i>References</i>	26
<i>Glossary</i>	28

Introduction: What is Holland Bloorview's Employment Pathways model?

This guide provides a step-by-step process of delivering Holland Bloorview's Employment Participation Pathways Employment Action Coaching (EAC) program. This section provides a brief background on our organization and our Employment Pathways programs. A full description of our programs and related materials are available in our Introduction Implementation Guide on our [website](#).

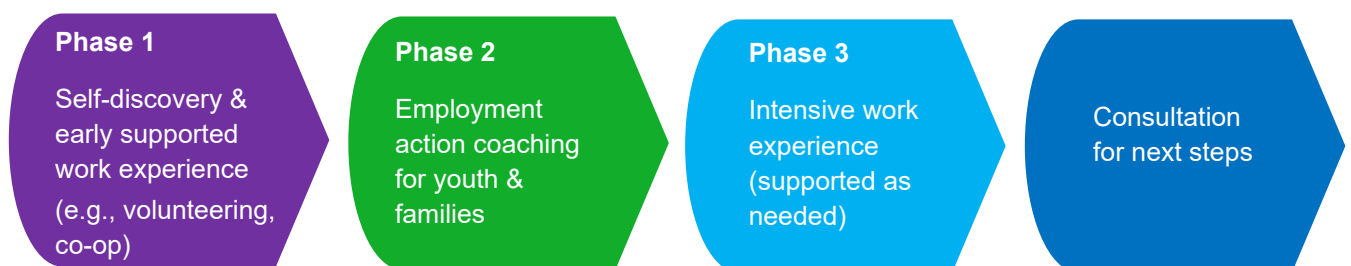
Want to know more about...

More information about the following topics is available in our other resources:

- Our other programs
- Funding Employment Participation programs
- Organizing and getting leadership on board with this program
- Hiring and training staff

The Holland Bloorview Employment Pathways Model [Bowman et al., 2023] harnesses evidence-based and evidence-informed practices to guide our implementation of start-early employment programs for youth with disabilities. It includes elements such as person directed planning, starting early (during high school), progressive and ongoing support, a supported employment model, family and community involvement, peer learning and mentorship, and evaluation and research [Bowman et al 2023; Jetha et al., 2020; Shogren & Wittenburg, 2020; King, Baldwin & Currie, 2005; Kohler et al, 2016; NCWD, 2019, NTACTION: Predictors of post school success, n.d.; ODEP, n.d.]. The model provides a structure on which local groups can support their progressive employment participation programming. A simplified version of the model is pictured below:

Holland Bloorview's Employment Pathways model



Phase 2 programs: Employment Action Coaching (EAC)

Through our EAC process, clients and their families¹ are guided to take more directed action towards the client's employment participation goals which could include volunteering, school based experiential learning, self-employment, paid employment or other from a person-directed planning perspective. Research on the topic of youth employment tells us that enlisting the support of families and peers in the job search process leads to more effective job search interventions (Liu et al., 2014).

The EAC program is based on the Job Club model (Azrin, 1975), borrowing from the strong psychoeducational aspects of a group to support job searching and growth (Maina et al., 2025). As Maina et al. explain:

“Job clubs are structured, group-based interventions designed to assist individuals in securing employment by combining skill development, social support, and motivational strategies. They typically involve regular meetings where participants engage in practical activities such as résumé writing, mock interviews, job application preparation, and networking exercises, while also sharing job leads and offering mutual encouragement.” (p. 28)

The model offers a robust evidence base with strong outcomes. In the EAC model, we added one-to-one meetings to our version to support the individualized and nuanced needs of our clients and families as they address practical disability- and search-specific needs as they approach the job search process.

The Employment Action Coaching program: Overview

Our EAC program is designed to provide more directed guidance towards a client's goals. Building upon their previous experiences, such as those in our self-discovery phase programs (information available on our website), in school, in the community, or in the home, clients and their family members or a trusted adult support person (if available) consider their employment goals. Youth and families set specific, realistic employment goals (paid or unpaid), connect with other clients and families, and leave with concrete next steps towards achieving meaningful employment.

At Holland Bloorview, we typically offer the EAC program once a year. We generally offer the program on weekends to account for school obligations and do so over 6-8 weeks. Three group sessions usually take place virtually on weekends and 3-5 follow-up individual sessions with clients and families and our staff members occur at a mutually agreed upon time over the 2-5 months following the group sessions.

¹ When we refer to “family” in this program and through this resource, we mean a meaningfully connected adult that provides support to the youth in their employment participation journey. This can be a parent, sibling, guardian, support team member, teacher, neighbour, coach, or anyone else.

Who is this program for?

Our EAC program is typically offered to clients who:

- Have engaged in an early self-discovery program (see our Self-discovery Guide available on our [website](#)) with Holland Bloorview and are returning to high school or any postsecondary education program.
- Need support to explore and set goals and next steps in employment (e.g., paid work, volunteering, co-op).
- Need support with future planning and [self-advocacy](#).

When our clients need further support but are finished formal education, we connect them with locally available, provincially funded employment service provider organizations. Our focus at Holland Bloorview is on youth who are in education and want to gain employment experiences because this population's goals and needs may not be easily addressed in the adult support service system.

Role of a support person

To participate in EAC, clients are asked to identify at least one support person who will help them move towards their employment participation goal. A support person is an adult who knows the client and can provide mentorship such as a parent, sibling, cousin, teacher, neighbour, or coach. Clients often require and benefit from a support person who can help apply learnings to real-world settings and provide overall guidance and hands-on support (e.g., complete forms, review resume and cover letter).

Program objectives

In EAC, clients will:

- Plan their immediate next steps for employment participation (e.g., paid work, volunteering, co-op or other).
- Learn about disability inclusive employment, disclosure & accommodations practices, self marketing, networking and other job search methods.
- Solidify their employment goals.
- Prepare materials to apply for roles.
- Connect with other clients and family members to share experiences.
- Apply to at least one position OR participate in at least 1 practice interview.

Program evaluation and outcome measurement

The purpose of the EAC program is to support clients in taking action steps towards their employment participation goals. Program evaluation helps us understand the impact of the program, whether it is effective, and how the program can be improved.

Program evaluation may include formal outcome measurement. We typically create a set of standardized goals for all clients in the program group, and have individuals indicate which goals are

most relevant to them. We then work to rate their goals using two clinical outcome measures, the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) and Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS).

We note here that due to the nature of the COPM and GAS measures, our goals are written in a present tense and in a form of having been achieved rather than aspirational (e.g., “I know how to search for a position” versus “I would like to learn how to search for a position”). This is because the measures we use measure goal achievement at a current point in time and compare to other points in time. We therefore want clients to rate how they relate to the fully realized goal.

Goals in our EAC program usually include:

1. I know how to search for a position, and I have the marketing/job search materials I need.
2. I have started to take steps to find a position (I am job searching).

As a team, we also evaluate a common GAS goal, available in Appendix B.

If a client/family endorses only one or two of the goals, they rate only the goals that are meaningful to them. It is common at this stage for families to discuss with youth how to rate goals, but we are open to youth alone rating goals themselves or when necessary, using family ratings. If clients and families do not generally endorse any of the above goals, the program might not be a good fit.

If formal outcome measures are not relevant for your program, we suggest asking at least one or two program evaluation questions at the end of the program to help determine if clients are achieving the intended outcomes. See our wrap-up meeting procedures in Appendix C for examples of potential program evaluation questions.

For more information on our outcome measurement, see our Employment Pathways Program Introduction Guide, available on our [website](#).

Clients and families will walk away with

- A personal job search action plan.
- Ideas of potential organizations to apply to if relevant.
- Personalized job search materials (e.g. cover letter and resume).
- Resources, templates, tip sheets.
- Knowledge and practice with job interviewing if relevant.
- A plan to address any disability-related supports/accommodations during the job searching process.
- Identified next steps for programs or roles (e.g. paid work, volunteering, co-op).

Resourcing

We recommend a group size of 8-12 clients and one primary staff person (with 1 additional staff to support the group session component). As an example, with 12 clients, one service provider working two days a week can see 2-3 people a week for the individual component of the program and see all participants once every 4-5 weeks (over a period of a few months) to complete the individual support component of the program. However, the program size will vary depending on the number of staff available and client needs.

Working with a family partner

In this program, we engage a family member who has previously participated in our EAC program (and typically who has also trained in group facilitation with Holland Bloorview) to co-design and co-facilitate the curriculum. Learning from others' lived experience of supporting a young person with a disability to find employment is an important part of our EAC program. Our co-facilitator attends planning meetings to help review and design workshop content in addition to contributing during group sessions. Our co-facilitator shares real-life examples of job search successes and challenges in a way that resonates with participants and hold valuable insights into participants' needs and concerns. This helps to ensure that our program is relevant and meaningful for participants.

When possible, we recommend engaging with a lived experience contributor (whether youth and/or family) who has a broad profile of experiences so they can share a variety of experiences with clients and families. Consider inviting a past participant who was highly engaged to lend their expertise to your group.

Planning program content

Organizing and updating appropriate program content (slide decks, resources) and scheduling individual meetings with clients and families takes several weeks of planning and coordination. We recommend identifying a team leader who can oversee this process. Tools for tracking your team's progress are available upon consultation with our team.

Program timing and scheduling

Our EAC program runs from October to the end of April. Three group sessions take place in October and November. From December to April, clients participate in 3-5 individual sessions. The number and timing of individual sessions are flexible according to the client's individual employment participation goal and needs, and when search activities are happening. For example, a client may prefer to do a practice interview after an interview is obtained. Consider your client population and their anticipated employment goals when planning the timing and schedule of your program.

Recruitment

Different types of learners require different types of support. For some learners who require a support person to direct and individualize the program content, consider grouping people with similar styles and needs. It is beneficial for staff, clients, and families when people are taught in a way that fits with their individual learning styles. We group clients and families with similar learning styles and needs and suggest the following groupings:

EAC YOUTH AND FAMILY: Youth and a support person (e.g., adult family member) will attend all sessions together.

EAC youth and family example:

Aaliyah* and her mom Zara* attended all EAC sessions together to work on a goal of obtaining a part-time summer job. During the program, they explored what Aaliyah might want to study in post-secondary and work experiences that would be relevant. Aaliyah was interested in studying Early Childhood Education, so the family decided to look for recreation summer jobs. With support from program staff and her mom, Aaliyah identified a list of potential organizations and roles. Zara helped Aaliyah customize her resume and cover letter to apply for a Camp Counselor position with the City of Toronto. In individualized sessions, the family and staff worked on how and when to request interview accommodations. At the end of the program, the family decided that if they received an invitation for an interview, they would reach out to take part in 1 or 2 more individualized sessions with program staff for interview practice. Meanwhile, Aaliyah and her mom would continue to search and apply for relevant recreation roles.

EAC FAMILY ONLY: At least one support person (e.g., adult family member) will attend all sessions without the youth. The support person will lead youth towards their employment participation goals and structure activities in the way that is most suited to their learning style and stage of readiness to participate in the job search process. Youth do not participate in program sessions.

EAC family example:

Mark* joined the EAC program to support his daughter Sutton* in finding meaningful ways to participate in the community after high school. Sutton plans to attend a day program after high school and will need support from people (e.g., family members) long-term. Mark was open to the idea of approaching their local library or a hospital in their community to talk about potential volunteering roles for Sutton. During individualized sessions, staff helped Mark outline what he would need to be prepared to ask about and discuss. For example, in what capacities do people volunteer in the organization? How would Sutton perform tasks? Staff also helped Mark expand his search by creating a list of organizations where the family could apply in addition to the library and hospital. They focused on what type of organizations and roles would value Sutton's strengths and experiences and used online volunteer databases to expand their search. As a next step, the family planned to create a list of questions and speak to someone at their local library to start exploring potential volunteering opportunities.

*Names and details are fictional

Recruitment can be undertaken from your existing pool of clients. We recommend drawing from the pool of clients who have completed your phase 1 Self-discovery programs. Consider using a flyer to advertise.

Intake procedures

To organize your program and make sure the client is the right fit for your EAC group, you need an effective intake appointment. We use the intake meeting to make sure we get to know our clients. This helps us to promote their success in our programs, and our staff's success in running effective programs.

We use the intake procedures summarized in [Appendix A](#). Detailed versions of these procedures are available upon consultation with our team.

The procedures that we use may not exactly align with your own organization's or program's intake procedures. That is alright. Your program's intake process should align with your organization's policies and procedures and any regulatory health professional college standards of practice and guidelines if applicable.

We encourage you to consider the different facets of our intake procedures, and how they might align with and enhance your current process. The final intake procedures are up to you. There are elements that are strongly recommended:

- Discussion of motivations for employment experiences, interests, and experiences to date.
- What the EAC program is, when the program takes place, who will be involved, and what is required (e.g. attending all group and individual sessions, completing homework).
- Discussion – is the program focus and format a fit with client's current goals?
- Goal setting and preparation for session 1.

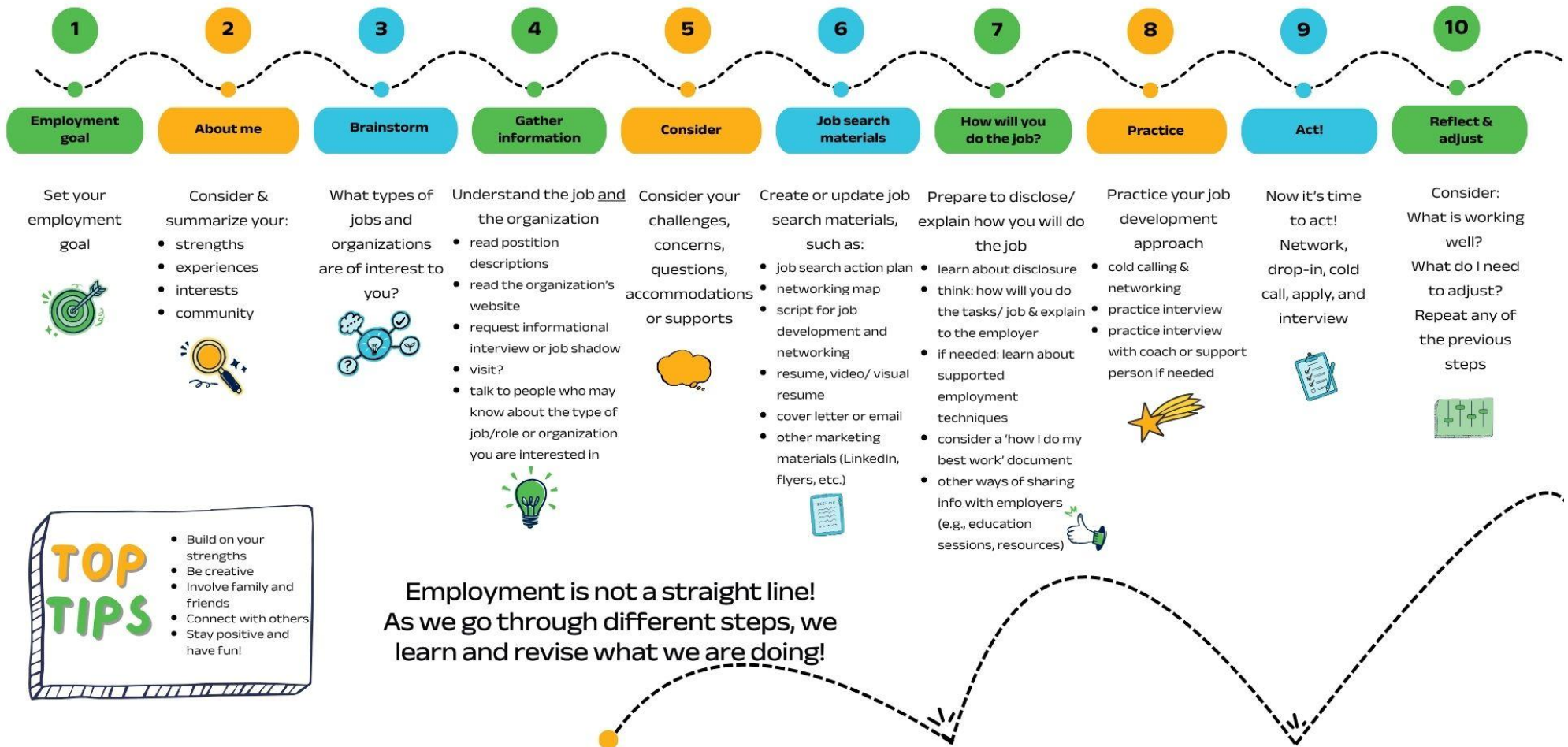
Program sessions

Due to the personalized nature of this program, there is flexibility within the number of sessions and goal-focus and action steps within those sessions. The sessions are based around the goals and corresponding action steps related to those goals.

The program is delivered over approximately six sessions and includes three virtual group sessions and three to five individual sessions during which clients and families receive 1:1 employment counseling support from a staff member. Group sessions typically take place weekly on Saturdays though we have also occasionally done group sessions on a weekday evening. Individual sessions take place after the group sessions have been completed and are scheduled at times that are convenient for staff, clients, and families that are relevant for their goals. e.g., meetings may coincide with the start date of co-op, volunteering opportunities

Overall, sessions are structured to guide clients and families through 10 steps to employment.

10 steps to reach my job-search goal



TOP TIPS

- Build on your strengths
- Be creative
- Involve family and friends
- Connect with others
- Stay positive and have fun!

Employment is not a straight line!
As we go through different steps, we learn and revise what we are doing!

Employment Pathways 10 steps to help reach my job search goal graphic

We find it useful for clients and families to have the journey to employment broken down into discrete, manageable steps. However, it is important to recognize that the job search process is unique to each individual and not always as structured or linear. Clients and families will often need to go back and re-engage with various steps throughout their job search.

Our **group sessions** typically include an education burst about a specific job search topic, lived experience examples, activities and/or individual work time and group discussion/reflection. Homework assignments are also reviewed and introduced during each session. Clients are responsible for completing the homework in between sessions, and there is an expectation that they will be prepared to discuss their homework at the next session. With our youth & family program, group sessions include a specific additional time at the end for families to learn and discuss strategies on how they can support their youth's personal job search plan.

Our **individual sessions** are 1:1 and focus on providing personalized support and feedback as the client works through steps in their job search action plan. We also connect clients and families with additional resources and support if needed (e.g. community employment agency). Examples of how individual sessions can be structured according to the client and family's employment participation goal (co-op, volunteering, paid job) and our 10 steps above are available through consultation with our team.



Overview of program sessions

The table below provides a high-level overview of the EAC program sessions. Like all of our programs, the exact logistics of how the sessions are organized and delivered can be adapted to meet the group’s and organization’s needs. For example, some partners have offered the program over 4 group sessions instead of 3 to better meet the learning needs of their participants. For individual sessions, steps occur concurrently and may overlap.

Session	Key Objectives	Steps to Employment	Key Activities	Homework/Next Steps
Intake Meeting	Understanding clients’ and families’ strengths, interests, needs, and employment goals.	Step 1: Job search goal Step 2: About Me	Staff get to know clients and families. Clients and families set employment goals. Staff introduce clients and families to the “About Me” handout.	Clients will complete the “About Me” handout in preparation for the first group session.
Group Session #1	Introduction to job searching steps. Starting a personal job search action plan.	Step 1: Job search goal Step 2: About Me Step 3: Brainstorming Step 4: Gather information	Clients share their About Me handout with the group. Clients reflect on potential roles and organizations to apply to; learn ways to gather information about jobs. Families consider strategies for supporting youth with their employment goals.	Clients will complete the “Is this job for me?” and “Gather info” handouts.
Group Session #2	Considering relevant questions, concerns, and accommodations. Preparing job search materials.	Step 5: Things to consider Step 6: Prepare Job Search Materials	Clients reflect on their strengths and any support/accommodations they may need in the workplace. Clients learn about and start to update/create a cover letter and resume. Families start a networking plan to support the client’s job search action plan.	Clients will complete the “Things to consider” handout and prepare job search materials (cover letter and resume). Families will create a networking plan and begin seeking out networking opportunities.

Session	Key Objectives	Steps to Employment	Key Activities	Homework/Next Steps
Group Session #3	<p>Preparing for job interviews.</p> <p>Learning practical strategies to facilitate job searching and job start-up.</p>	<p>Step 7: Prepare to disclose</p> <p>Step 8: Practice your job development approach</p>	<p>Clients prepare for interviewing and engage in role playing.</p> <p>Families consider their role in supporting clients in their job search including job matching, interview preparation, and disclosure/accommodations.</p>	<p>Clients will complete the “Tell me about yourself” and “Answer a question using an example (STAR-R)” handouts.</p> <p>Clients and families will consider what other supports are needed for their job search action plan and what would be most helpful to discuss during their individual <u>job coaching sessions</u>.</p>
<p>For individual sessions, steps are fluid and meant to serve as a guide. Sessions should always be individualized to the client and family’s specific needs and employment participation goals.</p> <p>In the example below, the client/family prioritized doing a practice interview as an important step in their job search preparations. Additional examples of how individual sessions can be structured according to the client and family’s employment participation goal are also available.</p>				
Individual Session #1	<p>Reviewing the client’s personal action plan and discussing any next steps.</p>	<p>Step 4: Gather information</p> <p>Step 5: Things to consider</p> <p>Step 6: Prepare Job Search Materials</p> <p>Step 7: Prepare to disclose</p> <p>Step 8: Practice your job development approach</p>	<p>Clients, families, and staff review the client’s personal job action plan and discuss any steps needed to reach the client’s employment goal.</p> <p>Clients and families prepare for the practice interview and review how to request interview accommodations and when/how to disclose to employers.</p> <p>If applicable, staff introduce the Ready to Work program, the next step in the employment pathway (or other relevant employment programs).</p>	<p>Clients and families will take steps to prepare for their practice interview, including requesting interview accommodations (if needed).</p>

Session	Key Objectives	Steps to Employment	Key Activities	Homework/Next Steps
Individual Session #2	Participating in one practice interview (e.g., job, volunteering, co-op).	Step 6: Prepare Job Search Materials Step 7: Practice disclosure Step 8: Practice your job development approach	Staff conduct practice interviews with clients. After the interview, staff and clients watch a recording of the interview. Staff will ask the client self-reflection questions and provide feedback.	Clients/families will consider their best hopes for the final EAC session. Staff will confirm intake meetings for clients and families moving onto the Ready to Work program
Individual Session #3-5 (as needed)	Wrapping up program experiences by reviewing questions, next-steps, and EAC goals.	Continue to work on previous steps Step 9: Act! Step 10: Reflect & adjust	Staff tailor the session based on clients and families' needs and best hopes (e.g., review job search action plan, interview feedback, cover, and letter and resume). Staff connect clients and families to community resources to further support their job search. Clients review and re-rate their EAC goals.	Clients and families will continue to take action towards their employment goals.

Our team also has detailed outlines for each session. Below, we provide an outline of our first group session as an example with a facilitator agenda. All sessions have similarly detailed outlines. Sessions should be adapted to meet the needs of your group and organization. Individual sessions are less structured, and slide decks are available to provide a loose structure.

You can access the full resources (presentations, materials etc.) including separate youth and family and family only materials available based on consultation with our team.

Example: Group Session #1

Objectives

- Meet & interact with others in group
- Feel hopeful and positive about youth's employment participation goal (e.g., volunteering, co-op, paid work)
- Understand overview of job searching steps
- Work on steps 1 (goal), 2 (about me), 3 (brainstorming) and introduce 4 (gather info)
- Start personal Job Search Action Plan

Materials

- Slide deck

Handouts

- Pathway
- SMART Goal Sheets (Individual)
- About Me
- Brainstorming
- Is this job for me?
- Gather info
- Action Plans

Staff roles

- Facilitator: *Name*
- Co-facilitator: *Name*
 - Have slides open to share; note taking on slides for all group discussion
- Technical host: *Name*
 - Be prepared to troubleshoot any technical issues with Zoom
 - Manage Breakout Rooms
- Family co-facilitator: *Name*
 - Act as note taker for brainstorming activity

Facilitator agenda

Time	Activity	Materials
15 min 9:30-9:45 am	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce group Agenda 	Slides
20 min 9:45-10:05 am	Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff introductions: share 1 personal job search highlight Icebreaker: Name and icebreaker question 	Slides
20 min 10:05-10:25 am	Large group education burst <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast Facts Pathway to Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example (goal and person) 	Slides
35 min 10:25-11:00 am	Brainstorming Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take turns sharing About Me Silent brainstorming in breakout room What roles or jobs might this person love? What kinds of organizations need people with these kinds of passions and skills? Breakout room to share ideas as a small group One staff to note take while the other staff manages timing and shares About Me At the end the co-facilitator compiles all brainstorming into one handout to send by email to client	Slides Employment path handout
10 min 11:00-11:10 am	Break (10 mins)	
5 min 11:10-11:15 am	Wrap-up from Brainstorming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other ways to brainstorm Online searching/ brainstorming 	
20 min 11:15-11:35 am	Gather Info: Group Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss as group gathering info for a retail organization role Discuss other roles Introduce gather info homework activity 	Slides 'Is this job right for me?' handout
10 min 11:35-11:45 am	Introduce Homework and Youth Leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review tasks for homework Handouts: "Is this job for me", action plan (discuss how to use), gather info handout (complete for 2 roles as homework) Google Drive tips with demonstration Job Search Action Plan – have youth open the action plan Incorporate time for break if needed for parents/family members 	Facilitators have Action Plan handout open to share
45 min	Parent session	Slides

11:45-12:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How, when and how much parents support • How to steer goals (pursue interests while being realistic) 	
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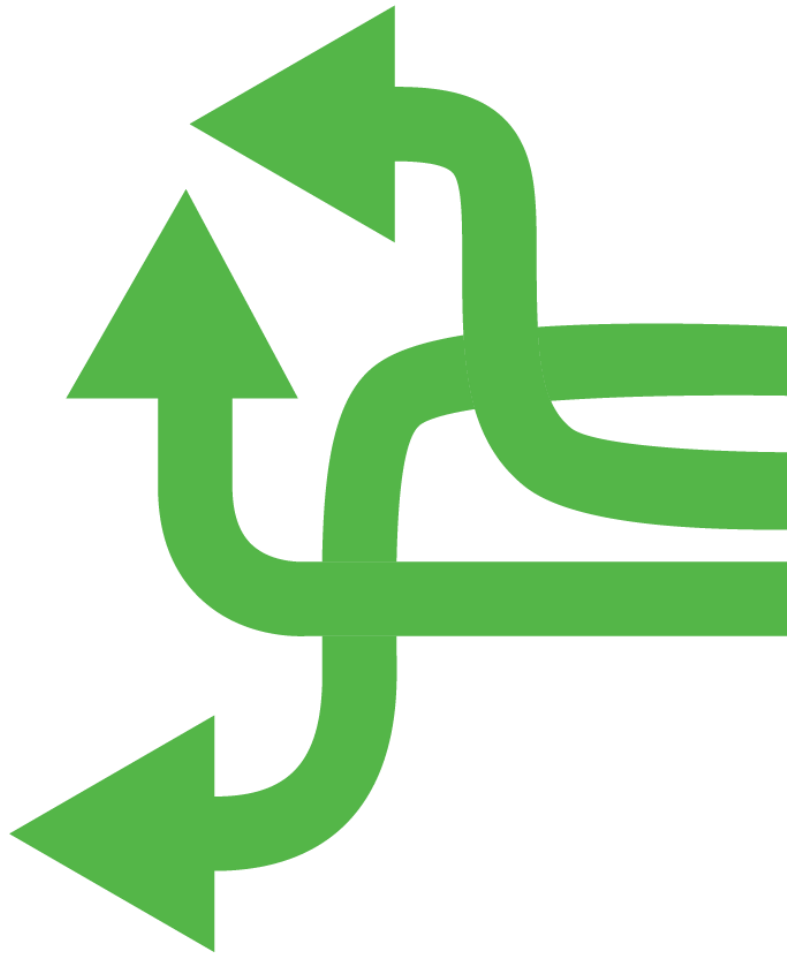
Wrap up meetings

To set clients and families up for success in their employment journey, you need to conduct a wrap up meeting. A wrap-up meeting provides opportunities to discuss next steps and connections to resources to support clients' next steps related to work related experience. If clients are moving onto the next program in your employment pathway, the wrap-up meeting is a good time to confirm their participation and schedule a subsequent intake meeting. Like all individual sessions, procedures for the wrap-up meeting are flexible depending on the individual client and family's employment participation goals.

We summarize procedures for the wrap-up meeting in [Appendix C](#). For detailed procedures, connect with our team.

Appendices

- [Appendix A](#) Summary of intake procedures
- [Appendix B](#) Sample GAS Goal
- [Appendix C](#) Summary of wrap-up procedures
- [Appendix D](#) Real life stories



Appendix A: Summary of Intake procedures

Note: Detailed procedures are available upon consultation with our team.

Consent (permission) to participate in the intake meeting

We review the purpose of the meeting and ask for the client and family's permission to take part.

Consent (permission) to participate in EAC

We go over what is involved in the program and make sure it is a good fit for the client's goals.

Questions about you (the client)

In this section we ask clients questions to get to know their goals. Questions include information on education, chores, previous volunteering experience, diagnoses, and assistance required to participate in work activities.

Setting goals for the EAC program

Setting specific goals helps people accomplish their dreams. Goals can also help support program development and program evaluation and promote more buy-in from clients and families. In this section, we ask the client questions to help them consider their long-term (e.g., volunteering with support or in supportive environment, paid part-time employment during school year) and two short-term goals for the program:

1. I know how to search for job/volunteering/co-op position, including disability-specific considerations.
2. I am actively searching for a co-op/volunteer/paid position or self-employment (prioritize 1 only and customize).

These are achievable outcomes of the EAC program.

Skills development questions

We ask clients about their skills related to volunteering and working. These questions contribute to our broader program evaluation and give us a sense of their experience to date. Questions ask about the client's skills, employment goals, employment planning, and how optimistic they are about their ability to achieve their job goals.

Next steps

We end with an overview of next steps, including scheduling individual sessions. We also introduce clients and families to the "About Me" handout that is due before the first group session.

Appendix B: Sample GAS Goal

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) is a helpful way for staff to work progressively with clients in achieving the goals. GAS goals can be aligned with intended program outcomes and provide measurable outcomes for client tracking and program outcome measurement.

GAS is a 5-point scale, with the goal of reaching the mid-point, labeled “expected outcome, 0”. To use GAS, all clients are expected to start at “Present level (-2)”. By the end of program, the GAS rating details can be used to recommend next steps to individual clients and families, and can help program staff explore how clients progress through the expected goals and where potential programmatic shortfalls may be interfering.

GOAL AREA	ACTION TO FIND POSITION
Present level (-2)	Client/family has not yet taken any steps to search for a volunteer or paid position or co-op position. [modify if have some steps already completed]
Some progress but outcome somewhat less than expected (-1)	(Some progress towards expected outcome by end of Employment Action Coaching) Client/family: Has done 2 or more of the following activities as part of a Personal Job Search Action Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identified marketable strengths & interests - Identified and investigated organizations in community that may value those strengths/interests - Prepared a resume or adapted it for specific job roles - Prepared a cover/introductory letter written by client (or parent if reaching out on behalf of client) - Created a networking plan and/or script - Prepared a visual resume/portfolio/presentation to support self-marketing during an interview - Prepared a written request for interview accommodations - Practiced preparing for an interview - Prepared a 1 page profile with information about how I do my best at work - Prepared an letter requesting accommodations on the job - Taken steps to advance readiness for participation in volunteering or work (such as planning for: Attendant/washroom arrangements, transportation or use of public transit or other method of getting to work, identifying support person to job coach if needed, adopting strategies to address key workplace self-management skills (e.g., use of phone timer to know start/end time, etc.)
Expected outcome - by end of program/service period (0)	(Expected outcome by end of Employment Action Coaching) Family/client has used prepared job/volunteer search materials/approaches to apply to at least one volunteer or work role, OR participate in at least 1 practice interview (1 opportunity is

	offered by Holland Bloorview to practice, reflect and provide feedback).
Outcome somewhat better than expected if accomplished within program/service period (1)	(Somewhat more than expected outcome by end of Employment Action Coaching) Client/family has used prepared job search materials/approaches to get an interview with 1 community organization where client could volunteer or work
Outcome much better than expected if accomplished within program/service period Outcome anticipated 4-6 months after program/service (2)	(Much more than expected outcome by end of Employment Action Coaching) Client/family has used prepared job search materials/approaches to get an interview with 2 or more community organizations where client could volunteer or work, OR as relevant- the client is successful in obtaining the position from the first interview.

Appendix C: Summary of wrap-up procedures

Note: Detailed procedures are available upon consultation with our team.

Check-in (best hopes for today's session)

In this section we ask clients and families questions to determine what their best hopes for the final EAC session. We ask if they have any questions since their last meeting, what their best hopes for the day are, and what they would like to focus on before wrapping up the program.

Job search materials review

We review the job search materials and action plan clients and families developed throughout the program to ensure they are prepared for next steps. At this time, we answer any questions and provide feedback on the client's (if relevant):

- Resume
- Cover Letter
- Job Action Plan
- interview/accommodation request templates
- Networking email examples
- Self-marketing statement

Review program goals

We ask clients to re-rate the goals they identified as personally important (rated 7+) at the start of the program. Clients consider their ability to perform in the area after taking part in the program, and their satisfaction with how well they perform on a scale from 1 to 10 via the COPM. The goals are also re-rated by a staff member using GAS.

Skills development questions

To evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the program, we ask about the client's experience in the program and program impacts. Questions ask about the client's preparedness for the workforce, program satisfaction, skills related to volunteering and working, and any changes clients have noticed after taking part in the program.

Next steps

We discuss support for work-related goals to help clients and families develop next steps and actions towards their employment goals. Next steps will depend on each client and family's unique needs and goals.

Appendix D: Real life stories

To bring this program to life, we want to share a case example based on our recent program delivery. We hope this case example will help you consider the different questions, opportunities, and challenges of delivering our self-discovery programs.

Employment Action Coaching: A client and family perspective

Reyna² (she/her/hers) is 15 years old. She began participating in Holland Bloorview's Employment Pathways in the Youth@Work program in the summer. After exploring her strengths and interests in Youth@Work, she and her parents signed up for the Employment Action Coaching (EAC) program to receive additional support for job searching. An evaluation expert spoke with Reyna and her parents to learn about their experiences with the Fall 2023 EAC program. The questions explored why the family was interested in participating in EAC, the impacts of the program, and any insights they would like to share with service providers who are interested in running similar programs.

What led you to joining the EAC program?

Reyna wanted help looking for a job, especially a job that met her needs and fit her interests. She also wanted to learn how to interview and some practical steps for job searching. She was especially interested in roles where she could pursue her love of animals, cooking, and baking.

Her parents wanted to explore employment opportunities and learn more about what type of roles were possible for Reyna, sharing "*we wanted to open up our expectations of where we could look.*" They found that EAC's "About Me" activity was especially useful in helping them explore Reyna's interests and what she was good at. Reflecting on interests and strengths was a good starting point for the family's job search.

What did you enjoy the most about the program?

Reyna shared that she liked learning about herself (e.g., what she likes, what she's good at) and how to interview for a job. Taking part in the program provided real insights into "*how much work it actually takes to get into a job.*"

The program helped her parents feel more prepared for supporting Reyna with job searching, "*I like that it made us think about questions we wouldn't really have been prepared to address until they were brought up.*" They appreciated learning about when and how to disclose to potential employers.

Mom noted the value of social interactions and shared learnings among the group. Mom particularly enjoyed hearing about the family co-facilitator's³ personal experiences with supporting her daughter's

² Client name and some details changed for privacy

³ We engage a family co-facilitator for our group sessions who is a past participant of our EAC group. They use their lived experiences to educate and support group members.

transition to work. Learning about how parents can overcome challenges made the family feel more hopeful about their own journey to employment.

Lastly, the family enjoyed how the program was structured into manageable “*chunks*”. They felt the pace of the program was just right to thoroughly take in the information during each session and to follow through with homework in between sessions.

What did you get out of the program?

The family agreed that the most impactful part of the program was building Reyna’s confidence for job interviewing in the real-world. The opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills gained during the program in a practice interview with a staff member helped Reyna feel more prepared and confident for future interviews.

The parents came away from the program with higher expectations for Reyna’s possible job roles and future career. Throughout the program, the client and family were supported to consider competitive employment opportunities that were fulfilling and challenging. Dad shared that, “*going in, we didn’t have high expectations. I was very surprised with the quality of the (potential job positions).*” Mom also shared that staff helped highlight the importance of focusing the job search on roles that “*match (the client’s) passion and are going to help her grow.*”

Why do you think the family is involved in EAC?

Reyna found it beneficial to have her parents help identify jobs that would be a good fit with her strengths and interests. Her parents agreed that they, along with other people who know the client well, play an essential role in helping to shape her goals and employment path. The parents viewed their role in the process as “*guiding (the client) through the path where they will be most successful*”. Furthermore, job searching can be complex and involves multiple steps, and Reyna viewed her parents as a significant source of support throughout the process, “*It was really helpful for them to help me with some questions that I fully didn’t know or explain more.*”

Now that you’ve completed the program, what difference has it made?

Reyna was excited to share that after taking part in EAC, she was able to achieve her goal of obtaining a summer job that involves working in a kitchen preparing healthy meals. She noted that the position was just the type of job she was hoping for and is overall a good fit for her interests.

The parents viewed their experience in the program as an important next step towards Reyna’s future post-secondary education and career goals. They feel better prepared to support her in her journey to employment by using the knowledge and skills they gained throughout the program such as seeking out networking opportunities and helping Reyna to consider her unique disability-related supports and accommodations, such as adapting training materials to meet her learning needs, and adapting the built environment so that Reyna could navigate it safely and efficiently. “*The program really helped to get us further than I think we would have gotten on our own.*”

What advice do you have for service providers who want to offer the EAC program?

The biggest piece of advice the family had for service providers was the importance of building a safe environment where clients and families feel welcome and comfortable. There was a strong degree of

trust between the family and staff, and they felt that staff genuinely cared about and effectively addressed their concerns. Furthermore, staff presented information in a clear and accessible way that was “*at the right level*” for clients. It was important for staff to “*not go over the (client’s) head, work at the right pace, and resonate with (client).*”

The family also provided suggestions regarding the format of the program for service providers. Given the amount of program content, consider how to keep the sessions as engaging as possible and offer breaks. Lastly, consider flexibility in the timing of the program to accommodate clients’ and families’ schedules. For example, offer weekend and evening sessions if possible.

Thanks Reyna and family!

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Glossary

We have defined the terms below according to how we use them. This may be different from how *you* use them, and that is okay! If you are unsure, consult the list below to see the context of how the term is being used in this implementation guide.

Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM): The COPM is a clinical tool through which clients can assess their own performance on a goal and their satisfaction with said performance, both on a scale of 1 to 10. Clients will usually rate their performance before and after an intervention, so that they can see if the intervention has made a meaningful difference. For information, see <https://www.thecopm.ca/>

Employment participation: In our model, employment participation includes any activity that intentionally builds employment experiences and life skills. Examples include work (paid and unpaid), internships, volunteering, chores, and cooperative educational activities.

Employment Pathways model: Holland Bloorview’s model that outlines the evidence-informed programming model that we created to improve participation in employment for youth with disabilities through direct, community, and system-based intervention (Bowman et al., 2023).

Evaluation: In this guide, we primarily refer to program evaluation. This type of evaluation is used to understand the outcomes and impacts of a program, service, or intervention through data. Data is collected in many ways (outcomes data, experiential data, observational data) and used to determine the successful delivery of programs. Evaluation outcomes can help to steer future program iterations and provide essential feedback to clients and staff (see also, Research).

Experiential work opportunity: A chance to try out a work skill or role in a true-to-life context. This might be a volunteer or work setting, or a simulated setting. Examples include volunteer placements, short-term job opportunities, and cooperative work experiences.

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS): GAS provides individualized and criterion-referenced measures of change following an intervention. Based on the client’s goals, a range of outcomes are defined, with their current (“baseline”) level being set at “-2”, their expected outcome being set at “0”, and +1 and +2 representing progressively better-than-expected outcomes. For more details, see https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232092303_Goal_Attainment_ScalingIts_Use_in_Evaluating_Pediatric_Therapy_Programs

Job coach/job coaching: A job coach can provide on-the-job support for a worker with a disability and their employer to enable job performance and workplace inclusion. The coach supports as the individual learns the job tasks and acclimatizes to the workplace culture and expectations. The coach may assist in adapting training materials and demonstrating communication strategies. The coach gradually fades support and may re-engage to support changes or as needed.

Person-directed planning: ‘Person-directed planning services and supports’ means services and supports to assist persons with disabilities in identifying their life vision and goals and finding and using services and supports to meet their identified goals with the help of their families or significant others of their choice (Services and Supports, 2008).

Research: While research comes in many forms, in our guides we use the word “research” to refer to the methodical and scientific study of a topic, usually communicated through peer reviewed sources or trusted agencies/organizations. Research-based evidence drives our work and provides a credible, reliable source for program design and delivery (see also, Evaluation).

Self-advocacy: Self-advocacy occurs when an individual communicates their needs, concerns, or interests with the goal of having those needs, concerns, or interests met (Daly-Cano et al. 2015)

Start-early (starting early): In our work, we define a “start-early” program to begin before an individual completes high school (Bowman et al., 2023).

Solution-focused approach: A solution-focused approach involves collaborating with clients and families to focus on solutions rather than problems. Service providers support clients and families in taking meaningful steps towards their goals and preferred futures by amplifying their strengths and resources.

Workplace life skills: These are often grouped with what are called “soft skills” and represent the different types of knowledge that contribute to success across different workplace settings that are *not* the technical skills required for a specific job. These include appropriate communication, hygiene, punctuality, etc. Examples include [Canada’s “Skills for Success”](#) and [Ontario Ministry of Education Learning Skills and Work Habits](#).



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<https://hollandbloorview.ca/services/programs-services/youth-employment-pathways-programs>

For information for employers, see our Employer Resource Hub:

<https://hollandbloorview.ca/employer-resource-hub>