

Building Confidence



C O N F I D E N C E

The Human Experience

Applying for jobs and attending interviews is a process that naturally can stir nerves. Some people find it easier to speak confidently, while for most it takes a little practice. This is not something to be disheartened by. It's no different to maths, sports, writing. Communicating one's own value is a skill – something that everyone can learn to do well.



How to use this guide

Over the next few pages are a collection of tools and tips to aid you in selling yourself confidently.

You will also find a link to an audio practice on the interactive PDF. Click on the link to be taken to the resource.



Practice makes perfect

Have you heard of the saying "neurons that fire together, wire together"?

If we want to become more confident, we must practice being confident, again and again.

Repetition forms new pathways in the brain which reinforces skills and when it comes time for us to implement them, they are easier to retrieve and execute.



Build Confidence

1. Identify the stressor

Describe the potential stressful situation, including the emotions and thoughts that arise. Consider what the worst case scenario is or what you fear the most. For example one might fear that the interviewer will ask them a question that they weren't expecting. In this case we describe by identifying: (1) the stressor is not being prepared for a question (2) the emotion is fear/anxiety and (3) the thoughts are "They won't think I'm capable" or "I've messed this up"

2. Strategise

Select a self-soothing strategy that you could use in this situation. Be thoughtful and realistic. Fresh air might help to calm you down but it's unlikely you'll be able to excuse yourself for fresh air in an interview. Examples might be 3 deep breaths, silently repeating a mantra/affirmation/wish, lowering your gaze briefly to give yourself a 'moment of space' or supportive touch (holding your hand, placing a hand on your belly).

3. Practice, practice, practice

Rehearse it in your head/out loud: "I will go to the interview feeling prepared. And if they do ask me a question that I wasn't prepared for I will briefly lower my gaze, take a slow deep breath. I will then look up and answer the question to the best of my ability in a relaxed, confident manner and **I will be okay**. There might be some anxiety there, it might take a moment or two to think of an answer, but this is temporary and I have the resources to prevent anxiety from derailing my interview."

The key to the success of this step is to imagine yourself recovering, being okay in the midst of the stressful situation.

4. Reinforce with relaxation

Exposure to a stressful situation, even if you are imagining it can drain you of energy. It's really important that after practicing Cope Ahead you rest or do something that's soothing or relaxing. This helps to condition the nervous system and build tolerance towards the stressful situation, so that if it does actually happen you won't be so overwhelmed with emotion.

'Cope Ahead' is a skill which involves making a plan for dealing with a stressful situation we will encounter in the future.

Your Value



Here is an exercise to help you discover and appreciate your good qualities.

Key player in preparation

Self appreciation is a key pillar in the job seeking process.

It is expected that you will advocate for your best qualities, so a healthy level of self-belief and self-worth is required.

Self appreciation is to acknowledge and savour the good qualities within you.

Why this is helpful

Our minds are like Teflon for good qualities and Velcro for our not-so-good qualities. So self-appreciation is just as important in your preparation as perfecting your cover letter or practicing interview responses.

It free's us from self-judgment and comparison mind as it provides us with emotional buoyancy and self-confidence.

1. Get out a journal and pen
2. Select a prompt from the 3 options below (or make up your own) and for the next 3-5 minutes free flow write by elaborating on the prompt. Allow yourself to write freely rather than perfecting an answer.
 - a. I felt proud of myself when...
 - b. My family admire me for my...
 - c. My biggest success this week was...
3. Once time has finished, re-read your entry, reflecting on your innate good qualities that contributed to what you are proud of.
4. Spend a few minutes writing down how these qualities serve you in the workplace and would be of benefit to an employer. i.e. I can remain calm in high pressure situations, I can think quickly and act effectively.

