**NORTH CAROLINA BLIND**

**Pre-ETS Emailed Activities**

**Week 1 – Self Care**

Since we are all isolated for the foreseeable future, I wanted to take the opportunity to make the most of our situation.  Our goal is to find a new normal for now and to continue evolving and moving forward.   **XXXX Staff Names** have decided that sending weekly activities and assignments to you all would be a great start of continuing work readiness while also incorporating self-care.  Self – Care is an important practice to work on because as we grow older, we all continue to add responsibility and performance expectations in our professional and personal lives.  Practicing a self-care routine that works for you will enhance your ability to cope with the stressors that come with work and personal life.  This week I would like to introduce a gratitude journal.  The general definition of gratitude is the thanks or appreciation of things in your life.  If you are interested in psychology and the efforts behind showing gratitude, check out this link (if psychology does not interest you, no need to click on it):

<https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-appreciation/>

**Activity 1:  I challenge each of you to create a gratitude journal this week and implement this into your daily lives.  This exercise may be a good way to begin and end your day with a positive outlook.  Every day, I challenge you to write or draw (for those who prefer to express their creativity with art) three things you are grateful for.  This is something that you can share with others or keep to yourself, depending on how you feel about journaling positive pieces of your life!  We can show gratitude to things we can and cannot see.  For example, I am grateful for fresh air, my ability to breath the fresh air and nature.**

We also would like to continue to work on challenging you in work readiness.  Check out this TED Talk I found about the balance between courage and fear.  <https://www.ted.com/talks/cara_e_yar_khan_the_beautiful_balance_between_courage_and_fear>

After watching this, I thought this is a powerful message to us all on perseverance, work ethic and finding courage to strive to be the absolute best version of our self and pursuing the dreams you have (that are realistic, of course).  Fear can often creep into our minds and tell us we cannot, when we often can.

**Activity 2:  What were your thoughts on the TED Talk?  I challenge each of you to write a paragraph about your thoughts on the presentation and how this relates to you and your life?  Email your paragraph to XXXX Staff Names (our emails are in the email for you to use).**

With this presentation in mind, I also would like you all to reflect on your passions in life.  The things you love the most.  I want you to start by writing 10 passions.  Then, narrow those 10 passions to the top 5 passions.  Once you have 5, narrow those 5 passions to 3 passions.  Finally, narrow those 3 to your #1 passion in life.

**Activity 3:  Email XXXX Staff Names your passions by XXXX.**

I hope the activities we have suggested will allow you to continue to grow and reach your career goals one day!  I know this is an uncomfortable time and a lot of uncertainty.  We will get through this on the other side and we can take this opportunity to slow down and prioritize what is truly important in our lives!

\*\*\*For those of you who are social and like to be out and about with friends and family\*\*\*  Please take this virus seriously and stay home.  In order to get back to our normal day to day activities, we must think of the bigger picture and protect the people in our lives and community that cannot protect their selves from the virus.  The more people who stay home, the faster and safer we can get back to doing the things we love most!

Take care of each other and we will be in touch soon!!

References

Ackerman, C. E. (2019, August 11). *What is gratitude and why is it so important*. Retrieved from https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-appreciation/

Yar Khan, C. E. (2019), *The beautiful balance between courage and fear* [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/cara\_e\_yar\_khan\_the\_beautiful\_balance\_between\_courage\_and\_f ear/details

**Week 2 - Self Care and Work Readiness**

 Good morning,

 Last week you started a daily gratitude journal, where you wrote or drew at least three things that you are grateful for in your life. As we learned last week, writing down things we are grateful for dramatically boosts our well-being, increases happiness levels, and improves mental health. This week, I would like to continue to expand on that and challenge you to incorporate positive thinking a step further.

 “The field of cognitive behavioral psychology has demonstrated that how we think directly influences how we feel. When our attitude changes, our behaviors change, and this in turn influences our performance. So how you choose to think about your classes, experiences, the job search, and your job directly affects your success before and after graduation.” – Katherine Brooks, You Majored in What? Mapping Your Path from Chaos to Career

 “It is your attitude in reaction to an event that colors your success. . . . Employers hire people because they want to grow their business. If you approach your job search with a negative attitude that conveys you just want a paycheck, employers will pick it up quickly and react accordingly.” – Levinson Perry, Guerilla Marketing for Job Hunters 3.0

**Activity 1: Attitude is Everything**

1. **Listen to this TED Talk** by Alison Ledgerwood – A Simple Trick to Improve Positive Thinking

[**https://www.ted.com/talks/alison\_ledgerwood\_a\_simple\_trick\_to\_improve\_positive\_thinking?language=en**](https://www.ted.com/talks/alison_ledgerwood_a_simple_trick_to_improve_positive_thinking?language=en)

1. **Be aware of the effects of negativity and, when you experience a negative situation, turn it around so that you can associate it with a positive feeling.** In the TED Talk, Alison gives examples, such as forgiving someone who snaps at you.
2. **Rehearse/share the good news with others,** instead of focusing on annoyances or things going wrong. Train your mind to see the upside. Then **ask someone else, “What happened today that was good?”.**

\*\*\* This is important to incorporate within typical interactions that you have with friends, family members, co-workers, etc., but you can always start by practicing this dialogue with us.

1. **Write a paragraph about how sharing positives has impacted your week. What negative situation did you encounter and then act on to leave it on a positive note? Email to XXXX Staff Member by XXXX.**

**Activity 2: Before you tap into the Hidden Job Market, consider this…**

An effective job search will include multiple strategies, not only applying for positions found on online job boards. Network, join professional organizations/associations in your field and be an active participant in their meetings and events, volunteer at companies of interest, attend career fairs, reach out directly to organizations that interest you, etc. Expanding your job search method will give you more options.

 It’s never too early, or too late for that matter, to network and grow your connections.  Connections are key in a successful job search. I’m sure you have all heard the saying, “It’s not what you know, it’ who you know”. There is a lot of truth to that! “Companies are more likely to get high-quality applicants from current employees, who both understand the needs of the job and have a vested interest in recommending good candidates – especially if they'll be working with whoever gets the job.” –  Alison Doyle at TheBalanceCareers.com.  Of course, qualifications and experience are essential, but if you have the same qualifications as the other job seekers applying for this role, what is it that will set you apart from the group and get you that interview? Job referrals through word-of-mouth can play a big role in finding and securing employment.

However, before you begin reaching out to those connections and growing your network, **ask yourself this**,“Would my business connections/personal connections have the confidence in my abilities to give me a referral?”. Hopefully, the answer will be “Yes, absolutely!”, as they know you are a dedicated, driven, and responsible professional who will be an asset to the team. However, what if they have reservations and aren’t willing to stick their neck out on the line? What if they don’t take you seriously and think you will make them look bad?

To make sure that you are portraying yourself in the best light, let’s explore this a bit further and find out what others think.

1. **Begin asking friends, family members, acquaintances, etc. these two questions:**
2. **What is it I do well?**
3. **If I could do one thing better, what would it be?**

**Note these responses down in your journal and look for a trend.** If there is an area that needs improvement, it’s better to find out now so you can begin to make those necessary changes.

**Email findings to XXXX on/by XXXX.**

References

Perry, L. (2011). *Guerrilla marketing for job hunters 3.0: How to stand out from the crowd and tap into the hidden job market using social media and 999 other tactics today*, 36-37.

Brooks, K. (2009). *You majored in what?: Mapping your path from chaos to career*, 51.

Ledgerwood, A. (May 2013). *A simple trick to improve positive thinking* [Video]. TED.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/alison\_ledgerwood\_a\_simple\_trick\_to\_improve\_positive\_thinking?lan](https://www.ted.com/talks/alison_ledgerwood_a_simple_trick_to_improve_positive_thinking?language=en)

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**Week 3 - Emotional Intelligence and Mindful Behavior**

**Good Morning!**

Last week, we shared information on positive thinking and how to change behavior by changing your conversation.  In the April newsletter, we also discussed the importance to identify and acknowledge our feelings and find ways to channel these into positive behavior.  We included a Feelings Chart to help do so.  This week, we want to go more in depth and discuss Emotional Intelligence and importance of the skill.

**Activity 1:**

**What is Emotional Intelligence?**

**Watch the video link below!**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auXNnTmhHsk**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auXNnTmhHsk)

**Write a reaction to the video and how working on your emotional intelligence could impact your life.  How does this relate to employment and your career journey?  Write your response and email XXXX (staff names here).**

**Activity 2:**

**Read about the one-question trick to boost your emotional intelligence today!**

[**https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/this-simple-1-question-test-will-help-you-instantly-increase-your-emotional-intelligence.html**](https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/this-simple-1-question-test-will-help-you-instantly-increase-your-emotional-intelligence.html)

**Answer the questions in the article and send these to XXXX (staff names here).**

We challenge you to work on your emotional intelligence during this time and continue to use the tools we are sending to you all on a daily basis!  The good news is that you all have been working towards emotional intelligence from your previous activities we have given you (i.e. Gratitude journal, improving positive thinking by dialogue, managing anxiety during the pandemic, identifying and acknowledging your feelings, etc..).  Consistency is key to success in the work place!  We are allowed to experience emotions and feeling; however, we must be mindful on how we are portraying our feelings.

Please complete the activities above and send to **XXXX (staff names here)** by XXX. If you have not completed the other activities, it is not too late to get started!  We encourage you all to spend time working on yourself for your future!  These activities as forms of self-care as well!  NOW is the time to invest in your future SUCCESS!

Please feel free to include areas you would like to learn more about as well!!

Stay safe, motivated and involved!

References

TED. (2017, August 3). *Travis Bradbury: The power of emotional intelligence* [Video File]*.* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auXNnTmhHsk

Bariso, J. (2018, August 9). *This simple 1-question test will help you instantly increase your emotional intelligence.* Retrieved from https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/this-simple-1-question-test- will-help-you-instantly-increase-your-emotional-intelligence.html