

# THE GOOD NEWSLETTER



THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

King County

**Mission Statement:** The knowledge and wisdom that come from personal experience gained as a consumer of the mental health system should be shared with all who have an eye and an ear to absorb what is written. The pen is an excellent communicator. Our commitment is to make certain that consumer voice is heard and acknowledged in King County.

## WORK WORKS!

**Welcome to this special edition of The Good Newsletter.**

In conjunction with the employment fair on Friday, October 22, 2010 (see page 7), we decided to focus this issue on the important factors you should be aware of during your job search. We hope these articles will be helpful to you.

In future editions of the *Good Newsletter*, we will continue to include articles concerning employment. If there are any employment issues you would like us to cover, please contact Lenore or Steven at the phone numbers or emails on the back page of this newsletter.

### DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

Does it really make a difference how you dress for an interview? In most cases, yes. Even in a region as casual as the Pacific Northwest, there are guidelines on how to dress for an interview. It is much better to be overdressed than underdressed for a job interview.

For guys, if you have a suit or sport coat, wear it--even if you would not necessarily wear it on the job. Make sure that the clothes you are wearing are clean and pressed.

- Clean your shoes
- Little or no jewelry
- Neat hairstyle
- Limit the aftershave

For women, if you have a business suit, wear it. Coordinated tops and skirts or slacks are fine. Be sure that they are clean and pressed.

- Limited jewelry (no dangling earrings or arms full of bracelets)
- No jewelry is better than too much jewelry
- Neat hairstyle
- Light makeup and perfume
- Neatly manicured, clean nails

What Not to Wear on a Job Interview

- Flip flops or sneakers
- Shorts
- Jeans

- Skirts that are too short
- Pants that are too low rise or too tight
- Blouses that are too low cut or too short

Get your clothes ready the night before your interview. Make sure your shoes are clean. Use a breath mint before you enter the building.

When you get a job and are not certain what clothes are appropriate, ask the person who hired you. You can also visit the workplace to see what people coming in or out of the building are wearing. It can make your confidence go up or down if, on the first day of work, you are either underdressed or overdressed.



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## HOW TO WRITE A GOOD RESUME

Many resume templates are available online. You can ask a public librarian for assistance if you wish. Below are some guidelines for effective resumes:

### ALWAYS

- Always print your resume on standard letter size, white or ivory paper.
- Always use conventional English. Stay away from multi-syllable words when a one or two syllable word is clearer.
- Always use short paragraphs – no longer than five lines.
- Always make sure the resume and the cover letter

are error free. Proofread and have others proofread the document.

- Always keep a file of your achievements, no matter how inconsequential they may appear to be. This is the basis for a good resume.
- Always give each of your references a copy of your resume.
- Always send a brief, customized cover letter with each resume (see the article below on cover letters).
- Always re-read your resume before your interview – chances are the interviewer did that too.

### NEVER

- Never give reasons for termination or leaving a job on the resume. In almost all cases, the reader can find negative connotations to even the best reason. You're far better off explaining in person.
- Never take more than two lines to list hobbies, sports and social activities. When in doubt, "leave them out."
- Never state "References Available on Request." It clutters up the resume.
- Never list references on the resume—create a separate page for this purpose.
- Never use exact dates. Months and years are sufficient.
- Never include the date your resume was prepared. If your search takes longer than a few months, the resume will appear outdated.
- Never include your height, weight or remarks about your physical appearance.
- Never list your grammar or high school if you are a college graduate.
- Never provide salary information on the resume. Save it for the interview. If you are required to give that information, reveal it in the cover letter.
- Never lie.

## COVER LETTERS

All cover letters should:

Explain why you are sending a resume.

Tell how you learned about the position – website, newspaper ads, and personal referrals.

Convince the reader to look at your resume. The cover letter will be seen first. It must be well written and targeted to that employer.

Reflect your attitude, personality, motivation and enthusiasm in your letter.

Provide or refer to any information specifically requested in a job advertisement that might not be covered in your resume, such as availability date, or reference to an attached writing sample.

Indicate what you will do to follow-up:

Applicants often write something like "I look forward to hearing from you." However, if the employer hasn't said "no phone calls," it is better to take the initiative and say that you will contact him or her in the next two weeks to see if you need to send any additional information regarding your qualifications.

Many employers today will only accept online applications. Some of the online applications will allow for a cover letter – if they do, a cover letter is a great thing to attach.

HAVE PEOPLE THAT YOU TRUST LOOK AT YOUR COVER LETTER FOR SUGGESTIONS AND ALSO TO MAKE SURE THAT THERE ARE NO SPELLING OR

## Vegetable and Fruit Diet for Healthy Living and Working

Diet really makes a difference in your ability to function well at work. Here are some tips:

Dark green vegetables and fruit improve concentration and your energy level. Here are three benefits of vegetables for the mind and body:

- **Lose weight:** Fruits and vegetables are high in fiber. Recent research shows that consuming more fiber can help you lose weight.
- **Reduce heart disease risk:** You could cut your risk for heart disease by almost 25 percent, suggests one study, simply by adding 3 servings of vegetables (or fruit) to your diet daily.

• **Fight cancer and Alzheimer's disease:** Eating vegetables and fruit in a variety of colors provides you with phytochemicals, some of which act as antioxidants that may help prevent heart disease, cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

Here are 2 testimonials from clients regarding the value of vegetables in their daily diet:

"I eat vegetables at least three times a day: sautéed chard stirred into scrambled eggs for breakfast, a big garden-fresh salad for lunch, and grilled corn and steamed potatoes as side dishes with dinners in the summer. I don't have much trouble eating enough vegetables, but I know I'm the exception, not the rule."

"Had a friend who was very serious about the benefits of steamed, dark green, leafy vegetables in a daily diet. Cabbage, broccoli,

(continued on p. 4)

## “SMART” Goals and Wrap Tools for Work

People do get well enough to develop a plan for employment after therapy or case management. Employment is also considered a cornerstone of the Recovery model. SMART goals and WRAP tools can help prepare for employment when you're ready.

Setting SMART goals means creating a written plan that includes reasonable and measurable short-term and long-term objectives.

### SMART Goals:

**Specific**-work goals need to be specific. Be precise about what you expect to accomplish i.e., restructuring your resume is a great start.

**Measurable**-goals need to be measurable. Include amounts, times, days and, other milestones for gauging success.

**Achievable**-goals need to be reasonable and achievable. Setting achievable short term goals can move you toward your long term goal of employment.

**Realistic**-goals should be realistic. It is important to honestly evaluate yourself. Do you have the commitment to make your dream come true?

**Time Managed**-goals need to have a time frame. Having a set amount of time will give your goals structure.

### WRAP For Employment

Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is a structured system for monitoring uncomfortable and distressing symptoms. The first step in WRAP is to develop a Wellness Recovery Toolbox

made up of those things you have done in the past or could do to help yourself stay well. Here are 6 good wellness tools that will help you gain or maintain employment:

Good computer skills are very important. Check with your provider about opportunities to learn or improve your computer skills.

Create an updated resume.

Consider how your transportation needs will be met. How will you get to work, i.e. by bus, car or walk?

In the interview have specific questions to ask the employer (for example, what is the work schedule?). If you need accommodations, ask if such help is available.

A good sense of humor is a very good de-stressor for the work place.

Stay Balanced. Make sure you get 7-8 hours of sleep, eat a balanced diet, and exercise regularly. Be consistent, with a WRAP plan that keeps you functioning at your best on the job.

### Two pathways to permanent employment:

According to the article on SMART planning, setting goals is more than deciding what you want to do. Goal setting is only the first step. To be more successful, you need to know how you are going to reach your goal and plan how you are going to get there. David and Steven started their plan for employment with short-range steps of volunteering and part-time work, which lead, as Dave put it, to his

dream job.

### Work Experience 1

Homeless for 3 years, Dave was approached by a street outreach worker. Dave entered the Union Gospel Mission, worked as a breakfast fry cook and a lunch sandwich maker. One year after entering outpatient services, Dave began a job as a desk clerk at a hotel, where he worked for 2 years.

David's favorite job was as a volunteer for 4 years. He picked up deli items at a local company and delivered them to a drop-in center where people gather for meals, socialization, recreation, and hygiene needs. People appreciated good meals.

Reliability and good references led to employment in a dental clinic making appointments over the phone and filing records for 1 year. Next, David worked 2 years at a senior center convenience store. David was admired as a checker at the store for his good communication skills with seniors. He was promoted to cashier within 3 months.

Dave mentioned that the above work experiences and his love of helping people prepared him for the Peer Counselor (2005) and WRAP facilitator (2006) trainings. Dave took recovery-focused classes with Western Washington University, and worked 2 years at Navos outpatient services. Dave worked as a respected staff, teaching computer skills and WRAP recovery.

(continued on page 5)

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## Keep Your SSDI or SSI Medical When You Start Work

Several King County mental health provider agencies have staff called benefits counselors who are experts in this topic. Ask your case manager or therapist for help in identifying the benefits counselor or someone else who can provide guidance. The following is a brief description of some programs and links to more information.

Employment support provisions for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Social Security Income Program (SSI) are intended to assist you in your efforts to become as self-sufficient as possible through work. Employment supports can help you find a job or start a business, protect your cash and medical benefits while you work, or save money for school. Examples are "Ticket to Work," which helps make the transition to work less complicated by giving you a ticket to programs like private and public providers, employers, and other participating organizations called Employment Networks (ENs). The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation can assist with work training and education needs if necessary. Community Work Incentives Coordinators assist you in your employment goals in the "Work Incentive Planning and Assistance" (WIPA) program.

Here are websites and phone numbers helpful for understanding employment support: [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)

2010 Red Book for General Information about SSI, SSDI and work-related support programs.

[www.socialsecurity.gov/work](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work) for "Ticket to Work" and "Work Incentive Planning and Assistance" (WIPA) information for planning your employment future. 1-866-YOURTICKET (1-866-968-7842)

Call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213, 7am to 7pm, to report change in work situations. Recorded information and services are available 24 hours a day.

## References/ Recommendations

If you are interviewing for a job, expect to have your references checked prior to getting an offer. Having good references can be the clincher to getting that new job. Plan ahead and compile a list of references now, so you are prepared when a prospective employer requests them.

### Who to ask for a reference

On average, employers check three references for each candidate, so have at least that many ready to vouch for you. It is important to know your references, to select the right people, and to get their permission to use them.

It is also very important to have a good idea of what they are going to say about your background and your performance. It is perfectly acceptable to use references other than your employer. Business acquaintances, professors/academic advisors, customers, and vendors can all make good references. If you volunteer, consider using leaders or other members of the organization as a reference.

### How to ask for a letter of recommendation

Don't ask "Could you write a letter of reference for me?" Just about anyone can write a letter. The problem can be what they are going to write about. Rather, ask, "Do you feel you know my work well enough to write a good recommendation letter," or "Do you feel you could give me a good reference?" That way, your reference writer has an easy out if they are not comfortable writing a letter and you can be assured that those who say "yes" will be enthusiastic about your performance and will write a positive letter. Be sure to provide an up-to date-copy of your resume so the writer has current information to work with.



## Healthy Eating, continued (from page 2)

zucchini, romaine lettuce, and even a little fresh garlic and ginger produced great energy, quality concentration, and overall cheerfulness. I cannot emphasize enough the joy of feeling my health and enthusiasm go from marginal to superb as a result of a 2 month diet that included vegetables and fruit of different colors and flavors."

Steaming is one of the best ways to cook vegetables. It leaves more of the vegetable's natural taste, texture, and color intact than any other method, and it requires no added fat.

Here is the easiest way to steam vegetables. Place a half inch of water in a pot, add a steamer basket, chop your veggies into small, 1/4 to 1/2 inch slices, and steam 1 to 7 minutes. Check steaming veggies for your desired texture every 60 seconds or so. Any vegetable can be steamed with the above method, including cabbage.

The following links offer more information about including vegetables and fruits in your diet.

[www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)

<http://mideastfood.about.com/od/tipsandtechniques/a/steaming.htm>



## SMART Goals, Work Experience (continued from page 3)

### Work Experience 2

Steve's uncles were master barbers. Steve's family suggested he take a 9-month cosmetology course, which was lots of fun. Great friendships were established. After securing a job as an apprentice barber and working 40 hour weeks, Steve was able to finish a long-sought-after two year Associate Degree. He gained confidence that all work and

employment goals are possible. Next, working 6 years as a case manager aide in outpatient agencies strengthened Steve's resume and increased his confidence. Steve felt ready to look for a government job. He was very excited to get employment at King County as a Quality Review Team (QRT) member. He has worked at the county for 11 years and it has been

very rewarding.

In addition, Steve wanted to finish his four year degree. After obtaining employment at King County, Steve entered Western Washington University's Online Human Services Program. Five years of part time classes earned Steve a Bachelor's Degree in Human Services. He took one class a quarter, 4 quarters per year, to assure low stress and doing

a good job on one class at a time.

It took him 30 years to graduate from college but as friends and associates informed him-- the main thing is that you got it done. Steve is now a candidate for an online Masters Degree program.

References:  
Career-intelligence.com  
www.mentalhealthrecovery.com

## TOP INTERVIEW BLUNDERS

**Not Prepared:** Not being able to answer the question "What do you know about this company?" might just end your quest for employment, at least with this employer. Background information, including the company history and mission statement is available on most company websites. Review it ahead of time and print it out and read it over just before your interview to refresh your memory.

### Poor Communication

**Skills:** It is important to communicate well with everyone you meet in your search for employment. It is, however, most important to positively connect with the person who may hire you. Shake hands, make eye contact, exude confidence, engage the person you are speaking with, and you will let the interviewer know that you are an excellent candidate for this position – before you even answer an interview question.

### Too Much Communication

**Skills:** Many hiring personnel have cited the use of cell phones by the person being interviewed as a ma-

jor negative of what is currently happening in the world of job seekers.

Make sure your phone is turned off as soon as you enter the building where your interview will take place. Same goes for coffee, food and anything else other than you, your resume, your job application and your list of references.

**Talk too Much:** There is nothing worse than interviewing someone who goes on and on. The interviewer really does not need to know your whole life story. Keep your answers succinct, to the point, and don't ramble. Simply answer the question.

**Don't Talk Enough:** It is really hard to communicate with someone who answers a question with one or two words. Even though you shouldn't talk too much, you do want to be responsive and fully answer the question as best as you can.

**Fuzzy Facts:** Even if you have submitted a resume

when you applied for the job, you may be asked to fill out a job application.

Make sure you know the information you will need to fill out an application, including dates of prior employment, graduation dates, and employer contact information.

### Give the Wrong Answer:

Make sure to listen to the question and take a moment to gather your thoughts before you respond. A good technique is to begin by stating what you believe to be the question. That way, you can avoid giving an inappropriate answer for a question you may have misunderstood.

### Badmouthing Past Employers:

Your last boss was an idiot? Everyone in the company was a jerk? Even if it is true, don't say so. It's sometimes a smaller world than you think and your interviewer might know people at that company, including the boss who is an idiot. You also don't want the interviewer to

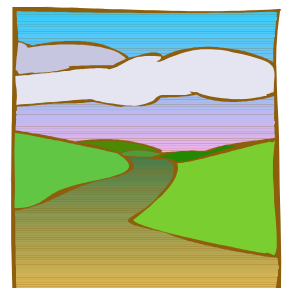
think that you might speak that way about his or her company.

### Forget to Follow Up:

Afraid you didn't make the best impression? Are you sure you aced the interview? Either way, make sure to follow up with a thank you note reiterating your interest in the position. If you are interviewed by more than one person, be sure to send a thank you letter to each person.

### Finally, even if you do flub the interview, don't be too hard on yourself.

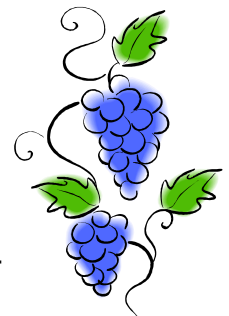
If it happens, look at it like it just wasn't meant to be. Learn from your mistakes and move on to the next opportunity.



## 15 Healthy Brown Bag Lunches

Brown bagging it to work every day can get challenging when trying to be creative, make healthy choices, and add some spice to the daily work lunch. Here are some healthy lunch choices. Some can be made the night before to save time in the morning when you are trying to get the kids and/or yourself out the door!

- ♥ Wraps made with whole wheat tortillas, containing either lean cold cuts or low fat cream cheese topped with veggie slices. Even the classic PB and J (peanut butter & jelly) are healthier in a wheat wrap.
- ♥ Single portion-sized cups of unsweetened apple sauce or fruit without added sugar.
- ♥ Trail mix made with cereals, nuts, pretzels, dried fruit or raisins, and a few chocolate morsels.
- ♥ Low fat cheese or spread on whole wheat crackers.
- ♥ Individual serving-sized packages of low fat yogurt, cottage cheese, or yogurt smoothies.
- ♥ Baby carrots, celery sticks, or apple slices with dips made from yogurt or low fat sour cream.
- ♥ Mini-burritos made with rice and black beans or refried beans in a tortilla with tomato salsa. These can be heated or eaten cold.
- ♥ Baked chips or pretzels are a better choice than high-fat potato chips or cheese snacks.
- ♥ Drinks made from water with a splash of cranberry, peach, grape or other fruit juice are healthier than sodas. Excess consumption of pure sugar-laden juices can increase the risk of obesity.
- ♥ Whole grain bagels topped with cream cheese-vegetable spread.
- ♥ Air-popped popcorn flavored with a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese.
- ♥ Low fat cheese cubes and seedless grapes make a delicious side dish for sandwiches or wraps.
- ♥ Cold strips of grilled chicken with honey mustard dip.
- ♥ Dried cranberries or cherries are a sweet alternative to raisins.
- ♥ Quesadilla slices made with cheese and chicken or vegetables.



King County &  
South Seattle  
Community College

**A Conference on  
employment for  
mental health  
consumers and those  
that assist them**

## *Recovery - Make It Work!*



**Date:** Friday, 10/22/2010

**Time:** 8:30am—1:00pm

**Conference is Free**

**Free lunch provided if  
registered by October 12.**

### **King County mental health consumers are making work a part of their recovery !**

Mental health recovery is a journey of healing and transformation enabling a person with mental health problems to live a meaningful life in a community of his/her choice while striving to achieve his/her full potential.

Though recovery may not always include employment, work is an important step for many consumers toward independence, empowerment and hope. Here are just a few of the jobs obtained by public mental health consumers in the past months.

- Office Asst, 22 hrs/wk
- Staff Accountant, 40 hrs/wk
- Grocery Clerk, 40 hours/wk
- Certified Nursing Assistant, 31 hrs/wk
- Dietary Aide, 25 hrs/wk
- Machinist, 40 hrs/wk
- Nanny, 40 hrs/wk
- Cook, 25 hrs/wk
- Floor RN, 35 hrs/wk
- Medical Technician, 32 hrs/wk
- Accounts Pay/Receivables, 40 hrs/wk
- Peer Specialist, 20 hrs/wk



*From the brochure for the "Recovery - Make It Work" Conference*

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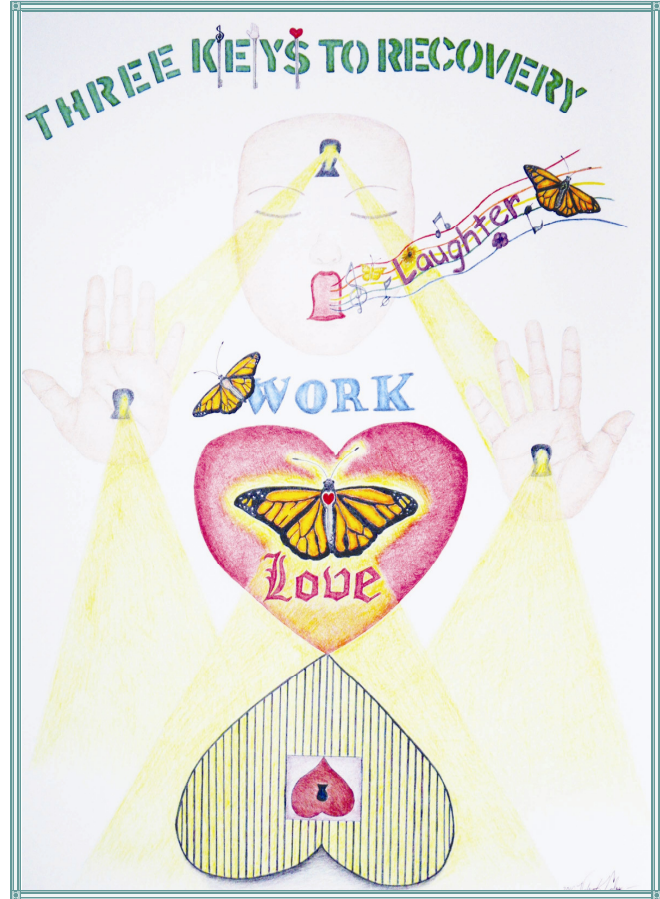
KING COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH, CHEMICAL ABUSE AND DEPENDENCY SERVICES DIVISION



King County

Valera Corliss is the winner of the **2010 King County Mental Health Poster Art Contest**. The judging panel found her poster to be a striking and powerful illustration of the theme of Love, Work, and Laughter. King County congratulates Ms. Corliss on this accomplishment and thanks her for sharing her creativity.

“The Mind, Hands, and Heart are symbols of the connection that the cycle of laughter, work, and love have on the whole being. The reversal of hands shows an integration of the creative and intellectual abilities brought by these healing forces. The keys and keyholes represent the unlocking of potential that is often imprisoned by mental illness and addiction. And the Monarch butterfly, the only one that migrates, is a symbol not only of growth and transformation of self and circumstances in the process of recovery, but also shows the impact the long journey can have on future generations.”  
- Valera Corliss



## WANTED

Articles, poetry, and stories from readers of the newsletter. If you have a personal story to tell, helpful information to share, or creative work such as poetry, pictures or art, please submit them to:

**Steven Collins or Lenore Meyer**  
**Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency**  
**Services Division**

**401 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. Suite 400,**  
**Seattle, Washington 98104**

Lenore 206-263-8963 or lenore.meyer@kingcounty.gov  
Steve 206-263-8966 or steven.collins@kingcounty.gov

All letters, articles and information will be considered. Items selected for publication may be edited for clarity and content. Remember, this is the **Good** Newsletter!

## From The Editors

This newsletter is an effort by the King County Regional Support Network (KCRSN) and the Quality Review Team (QRT) to document the thoughts and honor the achievements of consumers, youth, and supporting staff.

The KCRSN is responsible for publicly funded mental health services in King County. Unless otherwise noted, all sections are written and edited by Lenore Meyer and Steve Collins.



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