

Transferable Skills: Resumes and Cover Letters

Employers value many skills in addition to the technical knowledge of rehabilitation counseling that you bring to the job. While you know about the importance of the clients' transferable skills, don't forget that you have transferable skills, too. These skills have been developed throughout your program's graduate training, practicums, and internships.

Transferable skills can serve you well in a variety of employment settings. Most employers are looking for the skills of strong written and oral communication, collaboration, and leadership. Employers who hire rehabilitation counselors are also looking for people with technology skills, the ability to effectively and efficiently manage multiple projects, financial management, and analytical and problem-solving skills.

When you look at your resume and the cover letter you'll use when applying for a job, think about ways to use your transferable skills as opportunities to demonstrate interest, show your expanding skills and knowledge, and highlight what you will bring to the job.

The sample resume on the following page illustrates how a rehabilitation counselor's transferable skills demonstrate their full range of skills in a broader context.

Interviewing Tips

Be prepared to tell your story when you land that interview! You'll be asked: "What can you tell me about yourself?" "Why are you interested in rehabilitation counseling?"

You are marketing yourself to employers. Help them see the value of hiring a rehabilitation counselor. You'll have just a few minutes to tell your story. Focus on your motivation to become a rehabilitation counselor. Draw on your experiences to explain your interest in certain roles. Your explanation needs to reflect both your skills and your demonstrated interest illustrated by your internship and volunteer experiences. This is going to lead to why you're a good fit for the position—make the connection between your background and education, what you care about, and the focus of the company or organization hosting the interview.

Sample Resume

Your Name & Contact Information

1234 Rehabilitation Counseling Avenue
Smith-Fess, IL 12345
123 456 7890
Professional@email.com
Linkedin.com/in/nameofapplicant

Include any digital content you want employers to see prominently on your resume, but only do so if it is **professional** and **up to date**.

Summary of Qualifications

A brief explanation (~100 words or 4 to 5 bullet points) of the applicant's qualifications for the recruiter who has very little time to review the resume.

Customize this section of your resume for the specific job you are applying for focusing on your experience in the aggregate. Use short, resume-style sentences.

Professional Experience

Rehab Counselor High School

Yourtown, IL
September 2013–July 2019

Keywords are critical. Your resume may be analyzed by a computer or by a recruiter/human resources person before your application reaches the person who makes the hiring decision.

Tip: Review job announcements and ads to understand keywords for the field. Make sure you use these keywords in your resume.

Quantify your accomplishments. State how many, how much, how long.

Break down each job into skill sets. The typical rehabilitation counseling skills include case management, benefits planning, job development, and job placement.

Tip: Include language skills and special technical skills.

Transition Specialist

Established screening and referral processes to ensure that all eligible customers are offered vocational rehabilitation services

Development of IPEs

Counseled 500 customers to develop rehabilitation plans and transition from school to work or post-secondary training

Job Development/Job Placement

Assisted 150 students with identifying job openings; completing and submitting job applications; developing job skills, including how to obtain and maintain employment; interviewing skills; networking; and appropriate work site behaviors

Event Planning/Business Relationships

Used interest inventories and online career resources; conducted 10 career exploration and awareness activities with students each semester; and developed a dual-customer model with local employers

Training

Provided in-service training for school personnel regarding transition and community resources

Rehabilitation Institute

Yourtown, OH
September 2012–September 2013

Vocational Case Manager

Assisted individuals with returning to work after being injured on the job by coordinating services with insurance adjusters, and defense and plaintiff attorneys

Labor Market Analyst

Completed labor market survey and transferable skills analysis

Job Placement

Conducted job placement services as requested by referral source

Education

STATE UNIVERSITY
MA in Rehabilitation Counseling
UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE
BA in Economics

Certifications

Certified Rehabilitation Counselor: 12345
Valid until March 31, 2021

CRCC recommends the following order for displaying credentials:

1. Degrees (list highest degree earned first)
2. CRC credential
3. Other nationally recognized credentials
4. State license(s)

Creating Rapport in an Interview

Why do you need rapport?

Rapport is the connection between two people—the spoken and unspoken words that say, “We are on the same page.” It is the art of making someone feel comfortable and accepted. To create rapport, we need to know how to connect with others regardless of their age, gender, ethnic background, mood, or the situation.

This skill is never more important than in an interview, where someone’s immediate impression of you is critical. Creating a connection with your interviewer is likely to have a large impact on whether or not they wish to do business with you, so learning the skill of creating good rapport should be one of your priorities as an interviewee.

We tend to be attracted to people who we consider similar to ourselves. When rapport is good, similarities are emphasized and differences are

minimized. Rapport is an essential basis for successful communication—where there is no rapport there is no (real) communication! We naturally experience rapport with close friends or with those with whom we share a common interest. However, we can learn to create rapport and use it to facilitate our relationship with anybody, even with those with whom we profoundly disagree.

Developing the skill

In an interview situation, you can employ numerous techniques to maximize the rapport between yourself and your interviewer.

First impressions count

Whether we like it not, judgments are made about us by the way we look, our clothes, hair, facial expressions, and posture. These decisions will usually be made within the first few seconds of meeting with you. Even before you speak, your

interviewer will be absorbing nonverbal clues about you. You will be judged by how you stand, how you walk, how you shake hands, how you smile, and how you sit. That's why it's important to plan your clothes, and even how you comb your hair before a meeting.

The way you present yourself can help influence a person's impression of you. For example, dark clothing suggests authority; lighter colors suggest friendliness or a sense of humor; a lot of jewelry suggests power or wealth. Your hair style might suggest sensible, cutting-edge, formal, or friendly; your makeup can suggest glamorous or professional.

Take a genuine interest

Focus on the interviewer as a person and your overall attitude is likely to become more genuine. When you first meet a prospective employer, visualize that person as an important guest in your home. Naturally, then, you will be glad to see them, and you will want to make them feel welcome and at ease. Your overall goal should be to understand them rather than expecting them to understand you.

However, don't be too friendly too quickly, or you may appear phony. Instead, hold yourself back, and increase your level of curiosity. Remember to:

- Smile when you first see your interviewer.
- Establish and maintain eye contact.
- Be the first to say hello and extend your hand.
- Deliver a sincere greeting.
- Use the person's name.
- Do more listening than talking.
- Match and mirror.

Watch two people who have good rapport. You will notice a sense of unison in their body language and the way they talk. Matching and mirroring is when you deliberately take on someone else's style of behavior in order to create rapport—a way of becoming highly

tuned to another person. If done well, this can be a very powerful technique for building rapport in an interview. To do this, you will need to match:

- Voice tone (how you sound), speed, and volume.
- Breathing rates.
- Speech patterns. Pick up the key words or phrases your interviewer uses and build these subtly into your conversation. Notice how the interviewer handles information. Do they like detail, or talk about the bigger picture? Feed back information in a similar way.
- Rhythm of body movement and energy levels.
- Body postures and gestures, though don't use this one too often as it can be obvious and may be perceived as mimicking.

The only exception is if someone becomes angry. In that situation, you wouldn't mirror anger; you'd instead express concern.

WARNING: Matching and mirroring must be carried out in a subtle way. If the process intrudes into the other person's conscious awareness, they may become uncomfortable and nonverbal. Rapport using the sound of your voice and your eye contact pattern is the quickest and most useful way to begin; copying gestures should be used rarely. Don't mirror the person exactly, just similarly. So, if the other person is sitting with arms folded across their chest, you may have yours crossed on your lap. That prevents people from thinking they're being imitated.

It may come as a relief to know that you don't have to mirror the other person for longer than a few moments. Once they become comfortable with you, you can actually start leading the nonverbal communication, and then they'll start following you.

Take time to practice this technique prior to your interview until you can use it easily without thinking. That's all there is to it—keen observation and practice.