

# STRESS LESS

Prepare and Prioritize



**When you lose a job, your ability to cope depends on how quickly you prepare for the economic and emotional difficulties ahead. Losing your job can make you feel like you've lost control of your life. It's best to expect and prepare for the most likely challenges – such as stress and financial concerns.**

## BE AT YOUR BEST

Having the right qualifications for a job is extremely important to getting an interview. But winning the job largely depends on whether you have self-confidence and a positive outlook. Job candidates who are confident in their skills and abilities are better able to market themselves to potential employers. When you're unemployed, you should use the hours in your day to your best advantage. Moving from a structured day to one that is completely self-directed requires discipline and strategic planning. Consider doing volunteer work as an effective way to continue using your skills or gaining new/transferable skills. Volunteer work may help you avoid dwelling on the stress of unemployment while increasing your networking opportunities.

Make sure your time is productive – take charge of your day and create structure in your life and job search. One of the first steps in managing your time is to plan your day and week. Turn your job search into a full-time job, and commit 30–40 hours per week to job hunting. Set firm goals, and plan your day down to the hour. Create a schedule, including lunch and breaks, just as you would at work.

## ADJUST AND ADAPT FINANCIALLY

Most job candidates agree that concerns over how to pay the bills cause great stress during periods of unemployment. Even people who are not normally anxious find it difficult to think clearly about finances during this time. Before you do anything, assess your financial situation.

Take a realistic look at your family's income and overall expenses, and prepare an interim budget. Setting priorities and following a budget can relieve some stress during a job search. A financial plan will help you get back on your feet and get caught up with your bills faster once you're receiving a regular paycheck. Consider accepting a job with lesser pay or a part-time position while you continue to search for the job you truly want.

If you've saved for a rainy day, you may have an emergency fund that will support three to six months of household expenses. It's still wise to cut back on extra expenses, such as dining out and entertainment.

## LEAVE PERSONAL WOES BEHIND DURING THE INTERVIEW

By the time you're heading for a job interview, you must be at your professional best. Don't show or discuss personal stress or economic hardship when meeting an employer for the first time.