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**What You Need to Know about Career Training**

**By Virginia Bola, PsyD**

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You've thought a lot about the kind of work you want to do. The duties, the pay, the hours, the environment - everything sounds right. According to the newspaper ads, there is a big demand out there. You find a program that sounds really good. You are all ready to sign on the dotted line.

Stop! Before you invest your time, your energy, and a good chunk of your money in this direction, ask some tough questions.

1. Request that the school provide you with placement statistics - these are required by the state for all approved vocational courses. Statistics can be misleading so ask for details - what kind of job did the graduates find, how much did it pay, how long did it take them to find it?
2. Ask for the names and telephone numbers of 6 recent graduates you can contact for feedback. Good schools often have recent graduates visiting on site to share their experiences with current students. If the school refuses to provide such a list, or cannot provide it for whatever reason they give you, red flags should be immediately raised.
3. Is State Licensure or Certification required for this field? If so, what is the school's passing rate? What is the examination's pass rate overall? How do they compare?

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4. Arrange to audit one or two classes. Evaluate the instructor and the program organization. Talk to the other students about their experience.

5. Visit the placement office and find out what services and support are offered. At a minimum, you should receive a professional resume and multiple job leads. An excellent school will also provide interviewing skill training and employer background information. Find out if the school works consistently with several local employers which indicates that their graduates have been positive hires in the past.

6. Sit down with the Sunday Classifieds and circle employers in the field. Then call them for information. Are new graduates considered or is actual work experience required? Is the school known in the business community and what kind of reputation does it have? Has this company ever hired a graduate of this school? How would the employer recommend that someone enter this field?

If the school comes through with flying colors, move ahead with the knowledge that obtaining a first job after training is always difficult but you have some sources of support.

If your questions have revealed weaknesses in the program, evaluate other schools or consider selecting a different career goal.

Dr. Bola operated a rehabilitation company, developing innovative job search techniques for disabled workers, for 20 years. A licensed clinical psychologist, she directed vocational programs for the mentally ill, served as a Vocational Expert in administrative and civil court, and pioneered vocational testimony in Workers' Compensation. Author of *The Wolf at the Door: An Unemployment Survival Manual*, she can be found at: <http://www.virginiabola.com>

### **When Your Career Becomes Very Stressful**

**By Stan Popovich**

## What You Need to Know about Career Training

What do you do when the career you have chosen stresses you out? When this happens, it is easy to get depressed since your career is very important. As a result, here are some suggestions on how to deal with your career anxieties.

Determine why your career makes you stressed out. Maybe its some aspect of your career that makes you anxious or maybe you need a new job. Do some soul searching and determine the main causes of your career anxieties. Once you know why you are stressed, then develop a plan of action.

Maybe it is not your career that is stressful, but instead your job that is the problem. If it is your job that makes you anxious then try to find ways to improve the situation. If this doesn't work then change jobs.

Sometimes it may be the career itself that is the problem. Do not be afraid to change careers if you have to. People nowadays change careers for various reasons. Many adults go back to school to get the necessary training for their new career. The important thing is to determine which career best suits you.

Remember you have options. There are all kinds of jobs and careers out there so do not feel that your back is in the corner. If you do not know what to do, then take a career skills assessment test which will determine what kind of job or career best suits your particular interests and skill sets.

There are many career coaches that can give you additional advice. Your local college has career counselors that can give you much assistance and provide you with information on a variety of careers.

It is important to find a job or career that makes you feel good about yourself. Do not just take a job because the money is good or because it will impress your friends. You're the one who has to go to work everyday, so find something that you like to do and also will pay the bills. It will take some work, but eventually you will find something.

Stan Popovich is the author of "A Layman's Guide to Managing Fear" an easy to read book that presents a overview of techniques that are effective in managing persistent fears and anxieties. For additional information go to:



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