Visuals by my talented colleagues at the Office of Career and Professional Development (OCPD) at UCSF

Concepts from Naledi Saul, Director, OCPD
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Our Agenda: By the end of this workshop, you will be able to…

A. Define what an informational interview is
B. Describe how to approach someone to request an interview
C. Determine which questions you should ask, based on your goals
D. Discuss how to handle the etiquette and pacing of an informational interview
E. State steps to take post interview to maintain the relationship over time
A. Define what an informational interview is
What are informational interviews...

A 20-60 min conversation with a person who could be helpful to you
...why are informational interviews useful to you?
...why are informational interviews useful to you?

Explore career options
Research for future interview
Research an organization
Establish a professional relationship
What are informational interviews and why are they useful to you?

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What are informational interviews and why are they useful to you?
Explore career options
Research for future interview
Research an organization
Establish a professional relationship
Your Turn: Think, Pair, Share!

A. Reflect on your goals by answering these 3 questions:

1. Who do you want to meet?
2. Why do you want to meet them?
3. What, specifically do you want to know from them?

Career Exploration  
Explore career options

Job/Postdoc Search  
Research for a future interview

Professional Success  
Research an organization  
Establish a Professional Relationship
I have a career exploration goal. I would like to meet Roshini, a Medical Science Liaison. Because I would like to increase my understanding of careers involving communications and developing expertise in a particular health/science area. Specifically, I want to know about a typical day in the life of an MSL & salary.

I have a job search strategy goal. I would like to meet someone who works at Abt Associates, a global health consulting firm. I’d like to find out more about the company and make connections there. Specifically, I want to know how they recruit, what people like about working here, and typical skills and experiences of competitive candidates.

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1. Who do you want to meet?
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Your Turn: Think, Pair, Share!

Career Exploration

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Research Org. for Future Job Interview

I have a job search strategy goal. I would like to meet someone who works at Abt Associates, a global health consulting firm. I’d like to find out more about the company and make connections there. Specifically, I want to know how they recruit, what people like about working here, and typical skills and experiences of competitive candidates.
Your Turn: Think, Pair, Share!

A. Reflect on your goals by answering these 3 questions:

1. Who do you want to meet?
2. Why do you want to meet them?
3. What, specifically do you want to know from them?

Your answers will:

1. Be included in your approach to ask for an interview
2. Focus your conversation when you meet
Our Agenda: By the end of this workshop, you will be able to…

A. Define what an informational interview is
B. Describe how to approach someone to request an interview
Why will people make time to meet with you?
Why will people make time to meet with you?
Why will people make time to meet with you?

1. Connection
2. Affinity
3. Paying it forward
Three Reasons Why People Will Take Time…

1. **Connection – close bond:** You know each other, or know a connector person.

2. **Affinity – middling bond:** You have a related connection to each other – attended the same university, belong to the same group, etc.

3. **Paying it forward – loose bond:**
   - They have the time/interest to do so
   - To share their knowledge
   - Because they have hard won lessons they want to share
   - They believe/benefitted from professional connection
Three Reasons Why People Will Take Time…

1. **Connection – close bond:** You know each other, or know a connector person. My ex-colleague has student that could use an info interview for a next step.

2. **Affinity – middling bond:** I am a proud alum of a PhD program at UCSF, so I said yes to this request.

3. **Paying it forward – loose bond:** A person spoke at a conference and is passionate about increasing understanding about the topic she researches; someone asked her for 15 min on skype so she gave it.
Don’t leapfrog to middling or loose ties: try to find the close connections

LinkedIn is perfect for this:
Type in a person’s name and it will find the connection for you.
The people in your professional community:
First, look for the connection; then uncover their motivations

Initially, you’ll never know why a person chose to help you.

But during your conversation, if you want to strengthen the relationship, should be to be curious enough to find out what motivated them to meet you and help you achieve your goals.

• How do they know your connection?
• What role has networking or mentorship played in their career?
• Did they ever do an informational interview?

Be curious!

1. **Connection – close bond:** You know each other, or know a connector person.

2. **Affinity – middling bond:** You have some type of connection to each other – attended the same university, belong to the same group, etc.

3. **Paying it forward – loose bond:**
   • They have the time/interest to do so
   • To share their knowledge
   • Because they have hard won lessons they want to share
   • They believe/benefitted from professional connection
Dear Dr. Epasinghe,

I am a second year PhD student at UCSF and for the past two months and have been speaking with UCSF alumni in health and science communications careers. I was wondering if you would be willing to chat with me for about 20-30 minutes about your position as a researcher in the healthcare foundation for whom you work.

I was intrigued by your perspective, as I see on your LinkedIn profile that you have researcher experience both at a governmental organization and in a non-profit.

If you agree, I can travel to you, or you prefer, we could Skype; I’m flexible to your schedule. Thank you for considering my request. Please feel free to learn a little about my background from my LinkedIn profile at linkedin/bgordon.

Barbara Gordon

Your approach needs to include 5 things:

1. Who you are (including your connection or affinity, if there is one)
2. Why do you want to meet them?
3. What specific information do you want to know?
4. A thank you for considering your request
5. How they can find out more about you
Dear Dr. Dolan,

I'm in the sociology program here at UCSF, and my work focuses on community interventions involving technology to reduce incidences of preventable diseases. I've been considering health consulting, and I was wondering if you would be open to talking with me for about 20-30 minutes about your experience at Abt Associates.

I was specifically interested in hearing about your experience as someone who has been involved in policy and consulting in academe, think tanks, and in private sector firms.

Thank you for considering my request. I've attached my CV for your information should you be available to talk.

Regards,

Clark Kent
Dear Dr. Dolan,

I'm in the sociology program here at UCSF and my work focuses on community interventions involving technology to reduce incidences of preventable diseases. I've been considering health consulting, and I was wondering if you would be open to talking with me for about 20-30 minutes about your previous experience at Abt Associates.

I was specifically interested in hearing about your experience as someone who has been involved in policy and consulting in academe, think tanks, and in private sector firms.

Thank you for considering my request. I've attached my CV for your information should you be available to talk.

Regards,

Clark Kent
By the end of this workshop, you will be able to...

A. Define what an informational interview is
B. Describe how to approach someone to request an interview
C. Determine which questions you should ask, based on your goals
Asking useful questions that help you meet your goal
One of these is likely your goal:
Explore career options
Research for future interview
Research an organization
Establish a professional relationship
The basic structure of an informational interview

There are four types of questions:

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<th>Future</th>
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<td>• What their role is now</td>
<td>• What prepared them and positioned them for their current role</td>
<td>• What opportunities interest them or open up for them 5-10 years in the future</td>
<td>• What advice do they have for people seeking to succeed in their career path or their specific role.</td>
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Career exploration Qs are about their job and similar jobs

Barbara Gordon talks to Roshini about her Research & Communications Job

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<td>1. What does your role entail?</td>
<td>7. How did you transition into this career path?</td>
<td>9. What opportunities open up for you because you are pursuing this career path?</td>
<td>12. What advice do you have for someone considering this career path?</td>
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<td>2. What is a typical day like?</td>
<td>8. What activities prepared you for this role?</td>
<td>10. What interests your about the Director of Communications role?</td>
<td>13. Could you suggest someone who is a Director of Communications who might be willing to speak to me as you have?</td>
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<td>3. What do you enjoy about it?</td>
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<td>11. What other organizations would be appealing for you to work at?</td>
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<td>4. What is most challenging about it?</td>
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<td>5. What qualities do you think are essential to succeed in this role?</td>
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<td>6. If you weren’t in this role, what position would you be in?</td>
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Research Qs are about the organization, trending issues and hiring experience

What will you ask?

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Clark Kent Talks to David about Abt Associates and Health Consulting

Present

1. What did your role entail?
2. What was a typical day like?
3. What did you like/not like about it?
4. How is your role different in a start up vs more established orgs?
5. How do people find positions in your field?
6. What are key issues in your field right now

Past

7. What was your interview like?
8. Is that typical for your industry?
9. How did you find your position?
10. Why did Abt appeal to you?
11. What is the typical starting salary range for people in your field?

Future

Advice

12. What do you think people should look for when selecting a science communications position?
13. What professional associations do you find useful?
14. What resources are invaluable to you
### Present
- What their role is now

### Past
- What prepared them and positioned them for their current role

### Future
- What opportunities interest them or open up for them 5-10 years in the future

### Advice
- What advice do they have for people seeking to succeed in their career path or their specific role?

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**Your Turn: Think & Write!**

C. Based on your goals – write up to six questions you’d like to ask.
By the end of this workshop, you will be able to…

A. Define what an informational interview is
B. Describe how to approach someone to request an interview
C. Determine which questions you should ask, based on your goals
D. Discuss how to handle the etiquette and pacing of an informational interview
Putting it all together for a productive conversation
Putting it all together: Sample timing for a 30 minute conversation

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I was particularly thrilled when you agreed to meet with me because one of by goals has been to learn more about the organizations involved in health consulting. I was hoping you could share a little more about your role, why you chose Abt, and where you think the field is going? in hearing your thoughts about the role is similar or different based on the size of the organization, and what some interesting things are in your field right now.

So thank you for agreeing to talk with me.

Thank you so much for taking the time. I have a much better understanding of the way consulting works and the different types of projects involved with health. Thank you also for recommending the interest group – I’ll join it. And your suggestion to talk with Selena Kyle, your director of communications. I’ll definitely keep in touch.
Researching Clark has an interview

Select and edit your questions

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So thank you for agreeing to talk with me. |
| Present| 3-5 minutes | 1. What does your role fit into the organization
2. What’s a typical day like for you?
| Past   | 3-5 minutes | 3. What do you enjoy about your work??
4. What do you think is the most interesting issue in your work today. |
| Future | 3-5 minutes | 5. What was your hiring process like
6. If you didn’t work here, where would you work?
| Advice | 3-5 minutes | 7. What opens up for you 5 years down the road? |
| Close  | 1-2 minutes | Thank you so much for taking the time. I have a much better understanding of the way consulting works and the different types of projects involved with health. Thank you also for recommending the interest group – I’ll join it. And your suggestion to talk with Selena Kyle, your director of communications. I’ll definitely keep in touch. |
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E. State steps to take post interview to maintain the relationship over time
Tending to Your Professional Network: How often do I keep in touch?

Let people follow your adventure

1. Every time something the person said helps you
2. Any time you see something of interest or would help the person
3. 6 months to one year
More resources for your Next Steps

A. ucsfconnect.com – let us do a tech transfer example
B. https://career.ucsf.edu – search by word Informational
C. Take Charge of Your Career workshop at Parnassus – June 28
D. Biotech Researcher Series at Mission Bay during July
E. For Faculty Jobs, get on the PFF listserv and check out July programs
Join
UCSF Connect,
the official networking platform for the
UCSF community.