Work Readiness for IENs
Toolkit and Guide

A Resource for Interprofessional Coaching

May 2015

Internationally Educated Nurses Series

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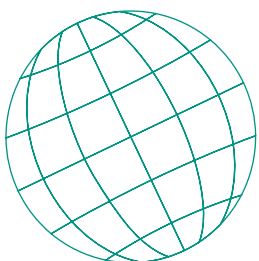
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Purpose and Use of this Toolkit and Guide

This Toolkit and Guide describes George Brown College's Work Readiness Pilot and is intended to assist anyone interested in implementing similar activities with Internationally Educated Nurse (IEN) learners. Though the Pilot was designed for IENs, it could also be transferable to other undergraduate health care programs. It is hoped that sharing the Pilot's evidence-based design will build capacity of IENs to integrate into the workplace. You are invited to adapt this Toolkit and the supporting materials to meet the needs of your organization. We ask that you cite our work if you use or adapt it.

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Sources Cited in this Document

All sources of information and data, whether quoted directly or paraphrased, are cited in this document. Any errors and omissions called to our attention will be corrected in future printings.

More Information

For further information, visit the George Brown College School of Continuing Education website at http://coned.georgebrown.ca/nursing/ien-toolkits or contact the George Brown College Continuing Education Nursing department.

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Introduction

Ontario's nursing workforce is aging and beginning to retire (Health Force Ontario, 2014), and the province "does not educate sufficient nurses to avoid a serious shortage in the future" (Blythe & Baumann, 2008, p. 5). In order to meet the ongoing demand for nursing care in an increasingly complex health care system, it is critically important that we maximize the resources of our nursing workforce (Baumann & Blythe, 2013). Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) represent one such resource, and their diverse knowledge, skills and experiences are highly valued, especially in communities with diverse populations (Ontario Hospital Association, 2011).

Stakeholders—employers and educational institutions—can help maximize this resource by enhancing the "work readiness" of IEN learners, ensuring that they possess the skills deemed important by potential employers. Supporting transition to the workplace in this way can also reduce the negative impact of "transition shock" (Duchscher, 2009) and increase the likelihood that IENs will be successful in their employment. Enhanced work readiness can also have a significant positive influence on the emotional and physical well-being of nurses, known factors in job satisfaction, turnover intention and attrition (Laschinger, 2012; Laschinger & Grau, 2012). Since the orientation of new employees represents a significant financial investment, efforts to improve work readiness can support an employer's goal of reduced attrition.

Work Readiness in this context is defined as "the extent to which graduates are perceived to possess the skills and attributes that render them prepared for success in the workplace" (Walker & Campbell, 2013, p. 490).

Challenges Faced by IENs Transitioning to the Workplace

In June 2014, human resources personnel and patient care managers from Bridgepoint Active Healthcare (Bridgepoint) and Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, University Health Network (Toronto Rehab, UHN) met with George Brown College to discuss several workplace challenges they experience with IEN employees. The following issues were noted:

◗ **Communication challenges:** Insufficient English skills can create difficulty with IENs' abilities to understand terminology, process information during job interviews, manage conflict situations and communicate with patients, families and physicians;

◗ **Difficulty coping with casual ("float") positions:** Many new staff are hired on a casual basis—such jobs hold additional challenges, for example, needing to adapt quickly to new situations;

◗ **Reluctance to ask for help:** Some IENs seem reluctant to ask for help—possibly related to low self-confidence or cultural expectations that view asking for help as a sign of weakness; and

◗ **Insufficient skills with the job application process:** IEN challenges with the hiring and interview process illustrate a need to prepare IENs for "how to apply for employment".

> *"It's easy to have a goal—I want to be a nurse here in Canada—but things happen. There is always one more thing I have to do before I can reach that goal."*
>
> *~IEN Learner*

These reported difficulties match findings identified in the literature: many new nurses have difficulty transitioning from an educational setting to the practice environment (Casey, Fink, Jaynes, Campbell, Cook, & Wilson, 2011), and working in a casual or "float" position "intensified or delayed progression through [the] transition experience" (Duchscher, 2009, p. 1109). But in addition to the difficulties that all new nurses face, IENs face further challenges when transitioning to the workplace: communication barriers, financial and emotional costs, discrimination, differences in the culture and context of health care delivery, lack of recognition of their credentials and the subsequent delayed licensure and deskilling process (Newton, Pillay, & Higginbottom, 2012). Baumann and Blythe (2013) additionally note that getting a job is often difficult for IENs due to their lack of familiarity with the job market, lack of Canadian contacts and work experience.

> *"I heard [from] a lot of IENs, they told me that it's really hard to find your first job. It's really important to know the culture."*
>
> *~IEN Learner*

> *"Oh my gosh it was so difficult at first! I had never been to a panel interview before and had no idea it would be like that!"*
>
> *~George Brown IEN graduate, now successfully employed*

These findings match comments of our IEN learners who anecdotally tell us that finding a job and transitioning to the workplace is a challenging and stressful experience (see quotes in text boxes).

Predictors of Successful Transition to the Workplace

Clinical skill and judgement will always remain foundational needs for a nurse to be "ready to practise"; and situational factors in the workplace, such as support and opportunities to learn and grow are similarly important predictors of a satisfying transition to the workplace. Work environments, where one can feel valued and feel one is doing something important, empower staff and are well known to contribute to job satisfaction as well as positive patient outcomes (Purdy, Laschinger, Finegan, Kerr, & Olivera, 2010).

But successful role transition and subsequent job satisfaction and engagement are also known to involve several personal resources that go beyond situational or discipline-specific competencies (Laschinger, Grau, Finegan, & Wilk, 2012; Walker & Campbell, 2013).

Walker, Yong, Pang, Fullarton, Costa, & Dunning (2013) identify these competencies as *organizational acumen* (maturity, organizational awareness and professional development), *social intelligence* (ability to communicate and interact effectively, manage conflict and ask for support as needed) and *personal characteristics* (resilience and adaptability).

Another way of describing these personal resources would be to consider them as capital, "a store of useful assets" (Capital, 2014). Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, and Combs (2006) identify three kinds of capital:

1. *Human capital* ("what you know");
2. *Social capital (*"who you know"); and
3. *Psychological capital* ("who you are and who you are becoming") (p. 388).

Human capital includes an IEN's past experience, nursing knowledge and skills. In the context of the Work Readiness Pilot, it can be identified as what one knows about the setting where one is working, as well as what one understands about the norms of getting a job, for example, résumé writing and interview skills.

Social capital can be identified as the value of relationships and the social networks one belongs to. In a work readiness context, this might include the ability, for example, to understand who to ask if one has a certain kind of question, how the "hidden job market" functions or how a professional association or a facility's educational resources can be tapped as an opportunity. This is particularly relevant for IENs who may not yet fully understand "how the system works".

Psychological capital is seen in the literature related to healthy work environments as being particularly helpful by being an important "buffer" for workplace stress—it increases engagement, proactive coping behaviours, job satisfaction and performance (Laschinger & Grau, 2012; Luthans, Avey, Avolio, & Peterson, 2010). This kind of asset is defined as being

comprised of four components: hope, optimism, confidence and resilience. These components interact dynamically and combine synergistically to answer the questions: "Who am I?" and "Who am I becoming?" (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009). Importantly, research has also shown that psychological capital can be nurtured (Luthans et al., 2010). Each component is described further below.

◗ **Hope** is more than just wanting something to happen, it is actually thinking that it could happen, a feeling of expectation (Hope, 2014). As the greeting card sentiment expresses: "Hope is the little voice that whispers 'maybe' when the entire world is shouting 'No!' ".

In psychological terms, hope is defined as a "positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (1) agency (goal-directed energy) and (2) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991, as cited in Snyder & Lopez, 2009, p. 324). In other words, hope consists of both willpower and waypower. "Willpower is an individual's agency, or determination to achieve goals and 'waypower' is one's ability to devise alternative pathways and contingency plans" (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991, as cited in Simons & Buitendach, 2013, para. 5). Hope thus has three important elements: a goal, goal-directed energy (a determination to achieve that goal), and a pathway for reaching that goal. From a perspective of planning one's career path, it is easy to see where the existence of hope can be beneficial to goal attainment. According to Peterson, Walumbwa, Byron, and Myrowitz (2009, as cited in Simons & Buitendach, 2013, para. 5),

"researchers discovered that hope predicted job performance beyond cognitive ability and self-efficacy".

◗ *Optimism* refers to "how individuals perceive themselves and their environment, how they process incoming information, as well as how they decide to act based on this information" (Forgeard & Seligman, 2012, p. 108). These psychologists summarize the impact of optimism by noting that optimists "acknowledge the presence of negative events, but they think about them in a constructive, non-fatalistic manner " (p. 110). Optimists interpret negative events as temporary and they see them as limited setbacks (not permanent, globally pervasive events). Thus optimism can foster confidence and the belief that one can succeed. An IEN's journey to become a nurse in Canada is often fraught with challenge and stress. Optimism, therefore, could be seen as a protective factor that could assist an IEN to cope with the stress of transition to the workplace.

◗ *Confidence*, often referred to as self-efficacy, is the belief that challenges can be dealt with successfully. "People suffer stress when they believe they lack the resources to deal with difficult events", but individuals with self-efficacy have confidence to "take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks" (Avey et al., 2009, p. 678, 680). Part of self-efficacy stems from positive experiences coping with difficulty in the past. This concept is thus closely related to the final construct of psychological capital, resilience.

◗ *Resilience* is the ability to "bounce back" from difficulty, the process of "adapting well in the face of adversity … or significant sources of stress" (American Psychological Association [APA], 2013, para. 1). It has been described as "ordinary magic" (Masten, 2001)

and "arguably the most important positive resource to navigating a turbulent and stressful workplace" (Avey et al., 2009, p. 682). Factors that enhance resilience include the ability to identify a goal and make realistic plans to achieve that goal, to identify and build on strengths, and possess confidence in one's abilities. The complex needs of adaptation that an IEN faces are undeniable stressors often interpreted as a setback in an IEN's career and life path. "Supportive relationships that … provide role models and offer encouragement and reassurance help bolster a person's resilience" (APA, 2013, para. 5).

Introduction to George Brown's Work Readiness Pilot

As educators, George Brown has made a commitment to create a "seamless bridge between learners and employment" (George Brown College, n.d., para. 2), so our goal is to provide dynamic programming that will address these challenges and maximize elements that facilitate work readiness. Collaborative partnerships with health care facilities are an important element of this programming, simultaneously enriching learning for IENs, building a "work ready" pool of potential employees and enhancing the capacity of individual professionals within partner organizations—a process that is mutually beneficial to all stakeholders.

With funding from the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade, George Brown partnered with Bridgepoint and Toronto Rehab, UHN to develop activities and supports to enhance work readiness of IEN learners by

building their human, social and psychological capital. Conducted in January 2015, the Work Readiness Pilot incorporates two main elements that complement and inform each other:

◗ Pairing of interprofessional volunteers with IEN learners in a coaching relationship; and

◗ Learning and practising of career-building skills.

For the purposes of this Pilot, coaching is defined as a *time-limited collaborative relationship between a skilled facilitator (coach) and a consenting individual* (Donner & Wheeler, 2009). The relationship is focused and goal-directed, using one-to-one conversation to help an individual identify and achieve their goals or improve their understanding or performance (Donner & Wheeler, 2009; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012).

This Toolkit and Guide describes George Brown's Work Readiness Pilot. The first three chapters provide an overview of the work readiness model, key participants, and timeline of the Pilot's key elements, followed by a detailed description of them. Ensuing chapters in this Guide describe evaluation strategies, provide verbatim participant feedback, and offer future recommendations, as well as provide resources including a glossary and reference list. Supporting materials (**see Appendices**) provide additional materials such as, discussion prompts that will assist in implementing interprofessional coaching, a sample workshop agenda, a summary of job search challenges and strategies, and evaluation tools.

Overview of Key Elements

Goals of the Work Readiness Pilot

The Work Readiness Pilot is intended to help prepare IEN learners for success in the workplace—help them build the confidence, resilience and skills necessary to find a job and integrate into a dynamic interprofessional work setting.

It is expected that upon completion of the activities, IEN learners will be able to:

◗ Reflect on strengths, interests and areas for development;

◗ Develop personal resources of psychological and social capital;

◗ Identify career goals as well as strategies to achieve those goals;

◗ Build strategies for communicating and interacting with the interprofessional team;

◗ Write an effective résumé; and

◗ Apply strategies for effective employment interviewing.

Use of Coaching as a Strategy for Learning and Empowerment

Coaching was chosen as a strategy for this Pilot for many reasons. It is founded on the understanding that supportive relationships with an experienced health care professional have been shown to "have a very positive influence on acculturation of IENs" (Newton et al., 2012, p. 540). Coaching is experiential and situated in the "real world", so it can maximize the prior experience of an IEN and capitalize on an adult's need for learning that is relevant. Additionally, the one-to-one nature of a coaching dyad allows time and space to foster learning that can be individualized to each learner's unique needs.

Coaching as a learning strategy also possesses strong support in the literature. Recent years have seen an increase in coaching-related activities in educational contexts (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012), a phenomenon that speaks to its utility as a tool to increase performance and effectiveness. It has solid theoretical foundations, informed by many fields of knowledge—education, psychology, philosophy and management to name a few— and a growing body of research supports its use as an education and development strategy across a diverse range of situations, including transformational learning of new behaviour (Bachkirova, Cox, & Clutterbuck, 2014; Mezirow, 2009; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012) and leadership and career development (Donner & Wheeler, 2009).

While there are many different ways and means of using a coaching strategy to promote learning, coaching as applied in the Work Readiness Pilot relies heavily on closely related underlying principles of adult learning and transformative learning theories. Unlike sports coaching, where a coach's role may be *directive*, "telling" a learner what to do, Work Readiness coaching is primarily *non-directive* in the sense that it involves asking questions and guiding reflection to help a learner identify answers for themselves.

There are some elements of the learning in this Pilot where a directive approach is relevant (for example, providing information to IEN learners about what a Canadian employer would like to see in a résumé), but beyond this kind of new information, the acquisition of knowledge and skill ("learning") is something that is *facilitated* by a coach rather than directly *taught*. This acknowledges the principle of educational coaching that states, "when the intention is to build self-esteem, independence and confidence, a non-directive approach is more likely to yield positive results" (van Nieuwerburgh, 2012, p. 17).

It should be pointed out that the phrase *non-directive*, does not mean that there is a no direction, it simply means that "coaching is not about telling, it is about asking and focusing" (Allison & Harbour, 2009, as cited by van Nieuwerburgh, 2012 p.15). In this way the coaching relationship becomes "person-centred", promoting self-direction from the learner by focusing on the learner's strengths and tapping their innate ability for self-understanding and self-direction (Joseph, 2014). This premise is also well suited to what is known about adult education, for a foundational tenet of adult learning notes that "Learning is best facilitated when self-criticism and self-evaluation are primary and evaluation by others is of secondary importance" (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 264).

Coaching in this sense is transformative—it has the capacity to change how a learner thinks and acts. It is also empowering, for it creates an opportunity for learners to experience success, building skills and strategies that will help them achieve goals that they have defined for themselves. This is known to be an effective strategy for adult learning, for "people feel a commitment to a decision in proportion to the extent that they feel they participated in making that decision" (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 248). The skills developed in this way are skills that can continue to empower learners throughout their nursing careers, long after they have finished school.

Coaching Model Design

In the Work Readiness Pilot, learning evolves in the context of the coaching partnership—an IEN learner paired with an interprofessional coach (a grouping referred to in this document as a "dyad"). This partnership works like a prism (illustrated in **Figure 1**, next page), allowing IEN learners to explore a spectrum of human, social and psychological resources that exist like the bands of colour hidden within a beam of white light. These resources are not always visible, nor are they necessarily well understood. But with time and support, learners are able to reflect on, and develop them, in order to enhance their work readiness.
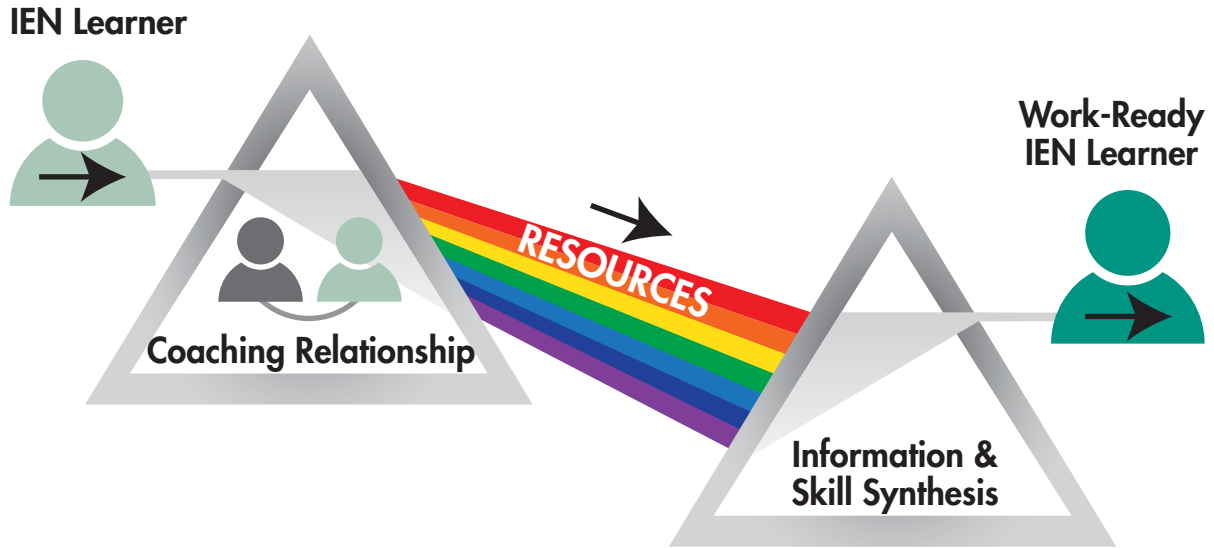
Figure 1: The "prism effect" of the coaching relationship resulting in resource development in support of work readiness.
Source: George Brown College, 2015.

Figure 2 (below) breaks down the "resources" into the supportive human, social and psychological capital resources that help the learner surmise what you know, who you know, who you are and who you are becoming.

Human Capital: What you know

Social Capital: Who you know

Psychological Capital: Who you are and who you are becoming [hope, optimism, confidence, resillience]

(Luthans et al., 2006)
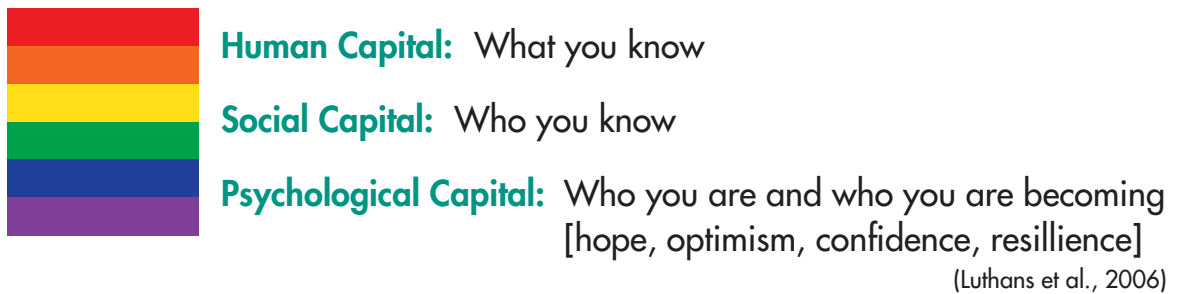
Figure 2: Supportive "capital" resources: human, social and psychological.
Source: George Brown College, 2015.

These supportive capital resources are developed through a combination of activities that:

◗ Introduce concepts (the Introductory Workshop);

◗ Provide opportunity for direct learning and practise (Career-Building Skills Workshop and Mock Interviews combined with a Learner-Coach Meeting); and

◗ Support guided reflection, synthesis and planning through coaching conversations (Learner-Coach Meetings).

These activities are described in detail in the next chapter **Coaching Model Activities**. A timeline for them can be found in **Figure 3** (below).
This timeline has three parts:
1) Activities in preparation for the clinical semester such as coach recruitment;
2) The 11-week clinical semester which encompasses IEN Learner-Coach Meetings and career-building activities; and
3) The post-clinical evaluation exercises.

PRE-CLINICAL PERIOD	CLINICAL PERIOD (During the Semester)											EVALUATION PERIOD
6 Weeks Pre-Semester	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	6 Months Post-Semester
Recruitment of Coaches	Introductory Workshop	Learner-Coach Meetings (Wk 2-11)				Career-Building Skills Workshop & Mid-Semester Verbal Check-In		Mock Interviews		Regrouping for Final Discussion and Focus Group		Conduct Post-Pilot Survey

Figure 3: The three-part timeline of the Work Readiness Pilot.
Source: George Brown College, 2015.

Coaching Model Participants

IEN Learners

Learners in the Pilot were enrolled in their final ("consolidation") clinical semester of George Brown's bridging program for IENs, working as student RNs or RPNs on clinical units under the supervision of a clinical nursing instructor. All were graduate nurses prior to immigrating to Canada, and while some had been "new" graduates at the time of immigration, others had up to ten years experience as a nurse. They had collectively worked in seven countries: China, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Taiwan. When asked before participating in the Pilot to rate their confidence, the majority of IENs rated themselves as being "a little bit confident".

Many IEN Learners reported a very high level of stress related to worries about the future for themselves and their children in Canada. The process of finding a job was viewed as particularly stressful (see quotes in margin).

> *"As an IEN, I have knowledge and skills from back home, but I come to Canada and I don't know where to go or what and how to do things."*
>
> *~IEN Learner*

> *"I have hopes of course. And I am excited, as this is our last step. But I hear bad news from others who have difficulty finding a job. So I am only a little bit confident."*
>
> *~IEN Learner*

> *"After this semester we will step out of school and we need to fight for a job, for our future, for being a nurse … so we worry a lot and we are really concerned about how to go there."*
>
> *~IEN Learner*

> *"My anxiety level is really high … too many things make me really stressed and tense. Sometimes you feel so tired you don't know how to go forward."*
>
> *~IEN Learner*

Interprofessional Coaches

Coaches who participated in this Pilot came from a variety of professional backgrounds in two health care facilities (Bridgepoint and Toronto Rehab, UHN). Each coach was an experienced health care professional working in the facility where the learner attended her/his clinical placement. The coach did not necessarily work on the same unit where the learner was placed, nor did she/he necessarily work in a clinical area. In the January 2015 Work Readiness Pilot, two of the coaches were nurses with advanced experience or education, the remainder represented a variety of disciplines: a physiotherapist, a social worker, a clinical librarian, a communications advisor, and an occupational/physiotherapy assistant.

By including the perspectives of a wide range of health care professionals, the Pilot modelled interprofessional collaboration and actively demonstrated that competencies of interprofessional collaboration are not discipline-specific. This unique interprofessional element facilitates learners' integration and development of understanding of the "system".

The nature of this Pilot was well suited to the use of informal word-of-mouth recruitment of coaches by Facility Leads. The Pilot was mentioned in unit advisory meetings and informal conversations, and interested participants stepped forward to ask for more information and to volunteer. Coaches in the Pilot reported that they were motivated to participate for three reasons; a desire to:

◗ Share their experiences and support students;

◗ Refine their coaching skills; and

◗ Learn more about IENs.

> *"At first I thought I would be at a disadvantage because I'm not a nurse. But really, the types of skills we worked on are applicable across professions. And I can empathize with her journey. I am not a nurse, but I could give different insights about how the team works."*
> ~Coach

> *"Even though they are not nurses, they know clinical aspects and how to find resources—they know working in health care, working in the hospital."*
> ~IEN Learner

> *"I signed up to be a coach because I love to take my experience and make it useful to someone else."*
> ~Coach

> *"This is a learning opportunity for me, a chance to grow professionally."*
> ~Coach

Project and Facility Leads

The Project Lead (from George Brown) and Facility Leads (from Bridgepoint and Toronto Rehab, UHN) played an important role fostering the coaching relationship and developing the Pilot's elements. In addition to initial recruitment, these individuals coordinated and facilitated the Introductory Workshop, mid-semester "check-in" and end-of-semester Pilot evaluation. They were also available as needed to answer participants' questions and provide ongoing support.

> *"I want to deepen my knowledge about the IEN program. And I just want to make our time to be special and useful for them. They can learn something. But I also want them to be welcomed by the health care system and by nursing. They are very precious resources and we should preserve their energy and integrity. That's how I feel."*
>
> *~Coach*

Underlying Principles of Effective Coaching

Many coaching models exist in the literature and many authors have coined mnemonics to identify exemplary practices. Wheeler (2015), for example, describes "The Donner-Wheeler 4 C's of the Coaching Conversation" (climate building, clarifying, collaborating and closing). Hawkins and Smith (2014) use the CLEAR mnemonic (**c**ontracting, **l**istening, **e**xploring, **a**ction, **r**eview) to describe transformational coaching. These are helpful memory aids, but there is much overlap in approaches and models, so rather than burden participants with a proscriptive model to follow, participants in the Work Readiness Pilot are introduced to the following basic principles in terms of ground rules and characteristics of the coaching relationship that can combine to make the coaching experience positive for both partners. (Refer to **Figure 4** on page 15 for a summary of these characteristics).

Establishing Ground Rules

Clarity of expectations about the role of coaches and learners is important in order to avoid misunderstanding. The following "ground rules" and strategies for success are discussed and agreed upon during the Introductory Workshop.

◗ Coaches are not clinical supervisors and have no connection with grading or course evaluations. Their role is not to supervise a learner's clinical nursing practice, but rather to help learners see the "big picture" of the health care system and facilitate reflection that helps them explore how they might find their place in it.

◗ Learners are expected to engage actively in the process, for example by listening, being open to feedback and taking initiative to explore learning needs as well as strategies to address those needs. They must be motivated to learn, willing to critically self-evaluate and try out new ideas to build their relational skills. Learners are asked to log their experiences in a journal to facilitate self-reflection.

◗ Coaches will not help learners find a job directly, but help to build understanding and relational skills that will indirectly impact the learners' ability to find and thrive in a job.

Characteristics of the Coaching Relationship

Joint responsibility: The coaching relationship is voluntary and both parties (coach and learner) share responsibility for its development. Coaching is thus interpreted as a flexible partnership, "not advice giving, not teaching, and not directing— it is a collaboration in which the coach acts like a midwife, supporting, encouraging, and helping the client through the experience while acknowledging the client as the person 'making it happen' " (Donner & Wheeler, 2009, p. 9). Coaches will often be in a situation where they can present perspectives that the learner may not have previously considered—they are, after all, role models and "walk the talk" of interprofessional collaboration and communication, so they may be able to provide insight. But the decision to think or act differently remains with the learner.

Focus on goals: The impact of coaching will be enhanced if there are clearly focused goals that are articulated by the IEN learner. The coach's role is primarily non-directive, and as Gallwey (2001) notes "Coaching is a dance in which the learner, not the coach, is the leader" (p. 207).

Mutual respect: The learner-coach relationship must be grounded in mutual respect. Both parties add value. The coach is an individual who can contribute to the learner's work readiness. The learner is someone who has often come a great distance and overcome significant hurdles to

establish a life and career in Canada. Mutual respect includes respect for the partner's time, for example by coming to meetings prepared and on time.

Trust: As Gallwey (2001) identifies, "The coach is someone with whom you … feel safe to disclose your shortcomings, your mistakes, and your personal aspirations" (p. 207). Effective coaches care, they have the best interests of their learners in mind. A relationship built on trust will also promote the discussion of feelings. "Self-initiated learning involving the whole person-feelings as well as intellect-is the most pervasive and lasting." (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 258).

Support: Coaches provide support and encouragement to the IEN learners, actions that are known to support the development of self-efficacy (confidence) (Laschinger et al., 2012) and resilience (APA, 2013).

Communication: Coaches possess effective communication skills, including the ability to listen actively and provide constructive feedback. This encourages learners to reflect in order to explore issues in depth and make decisions about future actions.

Self-Reflective: Asking reflective questions (an activity that both coaches and learners are expected to engage in) can be a useful way to stimulate thinking in new directions and challenge potentially obstructive perceptions or behaviours.

Confidential and "safe": Participants will not disclose any information about the coaching relationship without the consent of their dyad partner unless there is an ethical concern or if

either partner is not attending dyad meetings. This creates an opportunity for learners to critically reflect and engage openly in a "safe", non-judgemental environment.

Framework: It is important that there be a supportive framework in place to support coaches and learners. In the case of the Work Readiness Pilot, the Project Lead (from George Brown) and Facility Leads (from Bridgepoint and Toronto

Rehab, UHN) were available as needed to answer participants' questions. The Leads also coordinated a mid-semester "check-in" and end-of-semester Pilot evaluation.

Schedule flexibility: Feedback from participants in the Pilot indicated that scheduling flexibility of both coaches and learners was helpful in order to facilitate the successful scheduling of Learner-Coach Meetings.

GOAL-DIRECTED COACHING FRAMEWORK

IEN Learner ←→ Mutual Respect & Confidentiality ←→ **Coach**

- Be actively engaged
- Demonstrate initative
- Be motivated to learn
- Self-evaluate
- Ask reflective questions
- Be willing to try new things
- Log experience in Journal

- Listen actively and provide constructive feedback
- Role model interprofessional collaboration
- Be flexible in approach
- Ask reflective questions
- Provide support and encouragement
- Empower the learner

Project & Facility Leads

- Field questions throughout semester
- Check in mid-semester in person
- Conduct post-semester evaluation
- Facilitate scheduling

Figure 4: Characteristics of an effective coaching relationship.
Source: George Brown College, 2015.

Coaching Model Activities

As illustrated in **Figure 3** in the previous chapter, the 11-week Clinical Period involves a number of activities that complement each other and work together synergistically. These include: the Introductory Workshop, Learner-Coach Meetings, Career-Building Skills Workshop and Mock Interviews. Post-Clinical activities include an evaluation of participant perceptions upon completion of the Pilot and again six months later.

Participants' comments and responses to coaching activities are described in the next chapter, **Program Evaluation and Participant Feedback.**

Introductory Workshop

The coaching relationship begins with an introductory half-day workshop attended by coaches and IEN learners. The goals of the workshop are to:

◗ Establish rapport between the coach and learner (dyad);

◗ Understand the roles and expectations of the Pilot; and

◗ Initiate the development of competencies identified in the learning outcomes.

Workshop Content

The Introductory Workshop begins by exploring the IEN learner's context, and identifies roles as well as the principles and strategies of effective coaching. It continues with the concept of "capital resources" (human, social and psychological capital) and introduces activities and discussion

prompts that can become the basis for Learner-Coach Meetings. During the workshop, coaches and learners co-create a schedule to meet informally approximately every two weeks for the duration of the semester. Participants are provided with a folder of handouts related to the workshop in order to reinforce workshop content as needed, during the semester. (Refer to **Appendix A: Agenda for Introductory Workshop** and **Appendix B: Learner-Coach Meeting Discussion Prompts** for more information).

The rationale for including this content is that IEN learners, as well as some of the coaches, were "new" to the concepts of capital resources and also new to the kind of one-to-one work that they would be doing. So it is important to clarify expectations and answer the question: "What are we going to *do* in this relationship?" This is particularly important with IEN learners for the kind of transformative learning described earlier may represent a shift in the culture of education for them. Many have taken their initial nursing education in a didactic situation and need to understand that finding and using their "voice" is an important expectation. Even coaches who *have* had prior experience with coaching (for example if they had participated in health coaching with patients and families) expressed a desire to "refresh" their knowledge and re-focus on key principles of effective coaching.

Workshop Design

Since active engagement with content is known to build confidence and enhance the transfer of learning, the workshop design is primarily interactive and constructivist, and intended to promote dialogue and the development of a positive working relationship within the dyad. It incorporates four main aspects of constructivist learning: "Learners construct their own meaning; new learning builds on prior knowledge; learning is enhanced by social interaction; and meaningful learning develops through authentic tasks" (Finn & Chesser-Smyth, 2013, p. 213).

Learner-Coach Meetings

Following the principles of supportive coaching described in the previous chapter, learners and coaches meet an average of five times during the semester for approximately an hour each time. The agenda for these Learner-Coach Meetings is not rigidly fixed. The general goals and discussion prompts covered during the Introductory Workshop provide a starting point for these meetings (refer to **Appendix B: Learner-Coach Meeting Discussion Prompts**), but dyads are encouraged to be flexible in order to meet their own unique needs. Discussion and activities encourage guided reflection, provide support and build the human, social and psychological capital of IEN learners.

Career-Building Skills Workshop

IEN learners attend an interactive Career-Building Skills Workshop led by George Brown's Career Services Advisors that is structured around a framework of the "three pillars" of a successful job search strategy: know yourself, know the market, and know the process (see **Figure 5**, next page). Learners are encouraged to continue to develop their understanding of these pillars throughout their careers.

Contents covered within this job search framework include:

Know Yourself: Who am I?

◗ Identify your key strengths and achievement to create an effective marketing concept.

◗ Identify your skills, knowledge and experiences.

◗ Identify common nursing skills sought by employers (effective communication, relational skills such as the ability to work in interprofessional teams, clinical reasoning and computer literacy).

◗ Identify your interests, values and preferences.

◗ Recognize your major achievements in school, the workplace or community.

Know the Market: What's out there?

◗ Conduct labour market research of employers who hire RNs and RPNs.

◗ Research employers' needs in order to identify the skills that are in demand (online company research and job postings).

◗ Understand the "hidden" job market.

Know the Process: How do I get there?

◗ Understand the purpose and key components of a résumé and cover letter.

◗ Relate the information on your résumé to the position you are seeking.

◗ Format your résumé so it is easy to read and is accessible online.

◗ Understand situational or "behavioural" interview strategies.

◗ Identify the DOs and DON'Ts of successful job interviews.

◗ Be able to maximize available resources such as job fairs, professional organizations, and self-assessment tools.
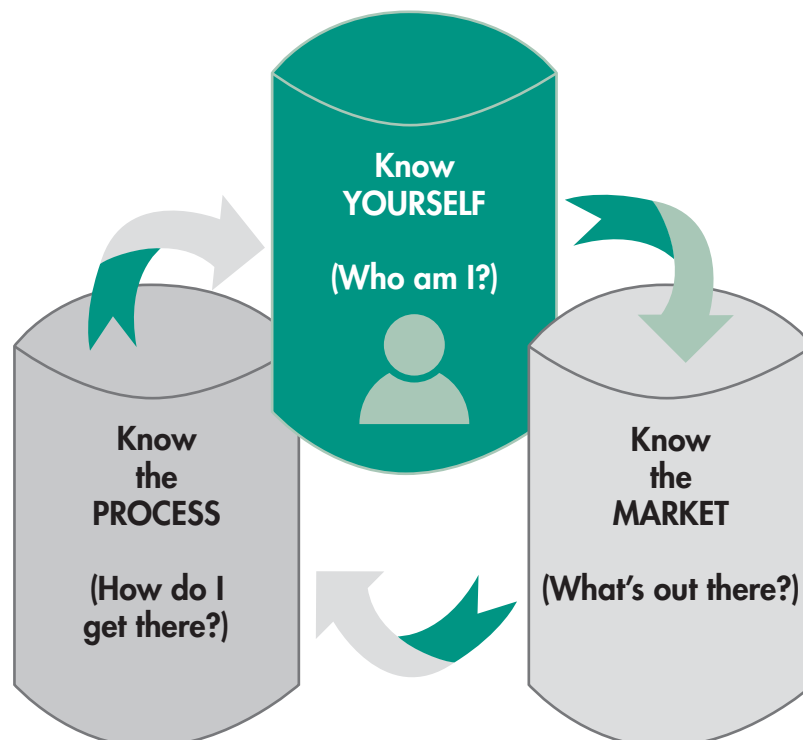
Figure 5: Components of a job search.
Source: George Brown College, 2015.

Many of the content elements of the Career-Building Skills Workshop represented new information for IEN learners. Refer to **Appendix F: IENs' Job-Search Challenges: Summary and Suggested Strategies** for the new learning that IENs found particularly relevant or challenging. This appendix, as well as the following chapter, **Program Evaluation and Participant Feedback** includes participant feedback on this element of the Pilot.

This workshop is a good example of how activities in the Pilot complement and feed into one another. After the workshop, learners apply their new knowledge by refining their résumés in consultation with their coaches, and then submitting their résumés to their clinical facilities in response to a mock job posting. In subsequent dyad coaching sessions they are able to discuss their interview skills and prepare for the practice ("mock") interviews.

Ongoing Support from Project and Facility Leads

Learners and coaches are invited to contact the Project Lead and Facility Lead at any time if they have questions or difficulties. In addition, at mid semester, the Project Lead "checks in" with the learner-coach dyads to obtain feedback and provide an opportunity for discussion or questions. This is accomplished in the Pilot as a focus group with learners, and informally via email and individual follow-up with coaches. Email was chosen as a means of communication with coaches in order to reduce the amount of time coaches need to devote to Pilot activities, but "in-person" conversations were viewed as supportive by the coaches who chose, and had time, to engage.

Interestingly, an unexpected side effect of the Introductory Workshop was that individuals also seemed to bond within their own peer group of IEN learners and coaches. This intra-group bond remained supportive throughout the Pilot, and participants welcomed the facilitation of this by Project and Facility Leads. Participant comments on this are detailed in the **Evaluation** chapter.

Mock Interviews

IEN learners have an opportunity to apply and be interviewed for a "mock" job opportunity in each of the partner clinical facilities. They submit their résumés electronically—a new experience for many IENs. Interviewers consist of a three- to four-person panel with human resources personnel, patient care managers and educational development personnel.

Learners found these mock interviews difficult and anxiety provoking, what transformative learning theorists would call a "disorienting dilemma" (Mezirow, 2009), an experience that did not fit their expectations. Learners felt that this stress negatively affected their "performance" in the interview, but at the same time, they welcomed the experience—its intensity provoked critical reflection and self-analysis, leading to a realization that previous feelings or actions were inadequate to achieve the desired effect. It thus paved the way for an exploration of new actions going forward. In other words, the mock interview experience has a strong transformational impact. Learners were very grateful for the experience and particularly grateful that they had an opportunity to hear feedback from the panelists.

Appendix F: IENs' Job-Search Challenges: Summary and Suggested Strategies summarizes some of the challenges that IEN learners experienced in these interviews and consolidates recommendations made by Pilot participants as well as interview panel members in their feedback to learners. The next chapter, **Program Evaluation and Participant Feedback** includes additional participant feedback on the mock interviews.

Program Evaluation and Participant Feedback

This chapter provides an overview of the purpose and methods of evaluation and then turns attention to the findings specific to this Pilot, answering the questions: "What were the outcomes" and "What short-term impact did the Pilot have on stakeholders?"

Evaluative data were obtained using:

◗ Focus groups (held mid-semester and upon completion of the Pilot),

◗ Informal conversations with participants, and

◗ Written surveys (refer to **Appendices C, D** and **E** for these survey instruments).

An additional survey or focus group with IEN learners will be conducted six months after completion of the Pilot to achieve long-term outcome evaluation.

Purpose and Methods

There is no uniformly agreed-upon definition of what the term *evaluation* means. *Evaluation* is defined by Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004) as "the identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object's value (worth or merit) in relation to those criteria" (p. 5), while Scriven (as cited in U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) defined evaluation as the "examination of the worth, merit or significance of an object" (p. 3). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011) defines program evaluation as "the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgements about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future program development" (p. 3).

A *logic model* is a "beneficial evaluation tool" used by evaluators to provide a graphic depiction of the relationship between the intervention's activities and its intended outcomes (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). It serves as an "outcomes roadmap" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). The purpose of a logic model is to identify short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes and link outcomes to program activities and inputs. Refer to **Figure 6**, next page.
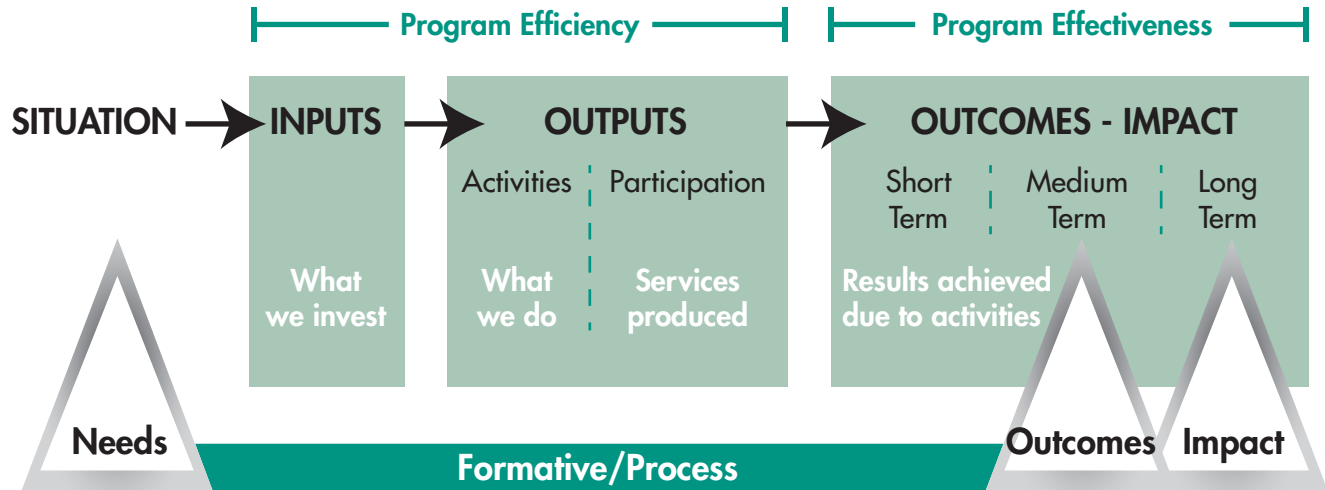
Figure 6: Basic logic model.
Source: George Brown College, 2015.

Each component of the basic logic model is described below as it applies to the Work Readiness Pilot:

◗ **Situation:** A global shortage of nurses has been predicted. IENs are a valuable resource that can help meet the workforce needs of our health care system, however they sometimes do not possess the skills and attributes that render them prepared for success in the workplace.

◗ **Inputs:** Investments included clinical/interprofessional and human resources staff from agencies; college coordination staff; funding and supportive learning environments.

◗ **Output Activities:** Intervention activities included workshops with IENs and coaches; job readiness meetings between coaches and IENs; and mock interviews.

◗ **Output Participation:** The stakeholders included IENs; interprofessional coaches; human resources personnel; coordination staff.

◗ **Short-term Outcomes:** Increased confidence to apply for jobs; improved job readiness skills; increased knowledge and leadership skills of coaches; and sustainability of program.

◗ **Medium-term Outcomes:** Adjustment of IENs to new environment and culture; behaviour changes toward employability; and demonstration of independence and self-esteem.

◗ **Long-term Outcomes:** Participants stay employed for at least a year; and program becomes sustainable.

Types of Evaluation

There are two main types of evaluation, formative and summative evaluation as depicted in **Figure 7** (next page). The primary purpose of formative evaluation is to describe how well the program is being implemented and to describe the experience of the participants. Formative evaluations take place while the intervention is still evolving and during a project's

Program Stage	Before Program Begins	New Program	Established Program	Mature Program
	FORMATIVE →		SUMMATIVE →	
Evaluation Type	Needs Assessment	Process / Implementation Evaluation	Outcome Evaluation	Impact Evaluation
Question Asked	To what extent is the need being met? What can be done to address this need?	Is the program operating as planned?	Is the program achieving its objectives?	What predicted and unpredicted impacts has the program had?

Figure 7: Evaluations by stage of intervention.

Source: Adapted from: "Building our understanding: Key concepts of evaluation. What is it and how do you do it" by CDC's Healthy Communities Program, n.d. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/pdf/eval_planning.pdf

implementation with the aim of improving the project's design and performance. Summative evaluations are concerned with providing information to make judgements about program adoption, continuation, or expansion.

Formative evaluation often lends itself to qualitative methods of inquiry. The questions asked in formative evaluation are generally more open and lead to the exploration of processes, both from the viewpoint of participants, but also from that of project staff and other stakeholders. The use of participatory evaluation is particularly relevant and appropriate to formative evaluation. Formative evaluation complements summative evaluation and is essential for trying to understand why a program works or does not, and what other factors (internal and external) are at work during a project's life.

Summative evaluation is an assessment of the outcomes and impact of a project. Summative evaluation looks at the impact of an intervention on the target group. Summative evaluation is often associated with more objective, quantitative methods of data collection (e.g., the number of graduates who are employed and the nature of their employment). It is recommended to use a balance of both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to get a better understanding of what the project has achieved, and how or why this has occurred. Qualitative methods of data collection (e.g., focus groups, individual interviews) can provide a good insight into unintended consequences and lessons for improvement.

Findings

As mentioned earlier, evaluations using surveys were conducted after the workshop, and focus group sessions were conducted with learners and coaches upon completion of the intervention resulting in the following findings.

Included are descriptive summaries and observations about the Pilot based on the review of data by the project leads, as well as many verbatim quotes from participants. The participant quotes offer rich contextual data that illuminate the impact of activities in the Pilot, which provide useful insight about *why* the Pilot was successful (*what aspects and processes were particularly useful)* and also identify *what else happened* along the way.

Impact of Coaching Activities on Stakeholders

The Pilot's coaching activities proved to be beneficial for all stakeholders, supporting findings from the literature cited earlier:

◗ **IEN Learners** emerged from the Pilot with meaningful insights about themselves and how to find their place in the Canadian workforce. Participants in focus groups spoke eloquently of how they grew as a result of the Pilot activities, and they expressed gratitude and surprise at the extent of support and understanding offered by coaches. Participant feedback supports the literature (example, Luthans et al., 2010) that it is possible to nurture psychological capital. Detail of acquired learning as it relates to specific elements of *capital resources* is provided in the next section.

◗ **Employers** valued the personal and professional development of staff and have commented that this kind of activity can build leadership and capacity of coaches to engage in health coaching. Human resources personnel and patient care managers also reported enhanced understanding of the value and challenges of IEN employees. The literature adds that this kind of program in a health care facility can reinforce positive perceptions of a workplace as inclusive and welcoming, and it builds the capacity of employees to work with individuals from diverse cultures (Silkowska-Masior & Yardy, 2003; St. Michael's Hospital, 2013).

◗ **Educators** valued the Pilot's ability to build the capacity of their learners to transition to the "real world" of interprofessional complexity. Clinical nursing instructors commented that, despite the fact that coaching activities occasionally took place during clinical hours, the time commitment required for Pilot activities was comparatively small and the activities were viewed as building essential skills that graduates will need in the future. Additional follow-up is planned six months post-clinical in order to further assess the impact of the Pilot's interventions.

◗ **Coaches** emerged with improved facilitative abilities, expressed an appreciation of the opportunity to promote workplace success and build their leadership and communication skills. They found the experience innovative, challenging and personally rewarding. Many expressed increased awareness of the skills and experiences of IENs. All said the time commitment required was reasonable and they would be willing to participate again.

"I feel this personally contributed to my own growth—it was very beneficial to my own professionalism. I enjoy the opportunity to share my enthusiasm for health care. And having an opportunity to see someone new, I felt that helped me grow too because I was supporting this person to become part of our team." ~Coach

"A lot of times in our everyday life we forget what it's like to be a student—this lights that fire again—everything is an opportunity." ~Coach

"It was valuable and it opened my eyes to what these international nurses have to go through—how challenging that process really is. And how strong you have to be to come over here and go through that. That was a life lesson that was really valuable to me. It was my first interaction, really, with an international student." ~Coach

"It was not only just what I've been teaching her, but what she has taught me about life." ~Coach

"What I liked best was just being able to share my skills that I've developed with someone else." ~Coach

Ability of coaching activities to support the development of "Capital Resources"

Human and Social Capital

As mentioned earlier, coaching activities provided opportunities for learners to acquire considerable amounts of new knowledge. Participants reported that they improved their résumé writing and interview skills. Human resources personnel reported that many of the résumés submitted for

the mock interviews were strong and effective, though this was not objectively measured. IEN learners also reported that coaching activities provided them with additional resources to both understand and access important networks.

"Each one of us, we have one coach. And also we have the group information session about how to write a résumé. The people who give that session really know about how to find a job, they give us a lot of useful information. And now we know about the hidden jobs and how to network. And how to do the interview. So now we have self-direction, like you can go this way, you can go that way, and you can try." ~IEN Learner

Psychological Capital

The following comments from participants indicate ways in which these resources have grown as a result of the Pilot activities. In many cases, the learners' comments exemplify more than one element of psychological capital, reinforcing the dynamic nature of these resources. The ability to identify a goal, for example, contributes to hope as well as optimism, confidence and resilience.

◗ **Hope:** Involves *willpower* (one's determination to achieve a goal) and *waypower* (the ability to devise a plan to achieve that goal) (Simons & Buitendach, 2013).

"Working with my coach, it's helping me to make goals. She asks me things like what is your plan, where would you like to be in five years, how do you plan to improve your skills and upgrade. It's giving me ideas for my future. Thinking about the future is something I had done back home, but it's so hard to do it here in Canada. Back home I wanted to specialize in dialysis nursing, but I didn't think I could do

that here. But [my coach] gave me the idea that I can still do it here. We talked about associations like the RNAO. And she told me about employer programs for education. So there are financial things that can help me. Now I realize it's possible here." ~IEN Learner

"I think it's nice, and it's easy to have a goal, but it's really hard to modify your goal. And you can have a goal but then something happens. So you have to have options. I have Option 1, Option 2, Option 3. Like if it doesn't work, I will go to this. It's always good to have the back up plan!" ~IEN Learner

◗ **Optimism:** Is described as "How individuals perceive themselves and their environment, how they process incoming information, as well as how they decide to act based on this information" (Forgeard & Seligman, 2012, p. 108).

"I never have had this kind of experience before. I have a really amazing coach.... she taught me, she encouraged me a lot, she encouraged me to set my goal. At first I was really wondering how it would work, but slowly, I get it. I understand that this is a very helpful program. I really see clear my future now. I can be something, somewhere. This is a help." ~IEN Learner

"If you have a goal, then you can be optimistic, because you can work toward that goal." ~IEN Learner

"We talked about how the scope of practice is different here, and the accountability is different and I encouraged her to be more assertive. These are challenging things to learn. But it's important not to let them defeat you. I told her 'Don't let other people take away the dream from you.' " ~Coach

"My coach helped me see that I shouldn't feel so bad about myself. Everybody will have difficult situations, but you will work past it one day. Once you start to think this, you will get confident and then you will do better. So I decided to do that. Just go for it. I have to do it." ~IEN Learner

◗ **Confidence:** Is defined as "A feeling or belief that you can do something well or succeed at something" (Confidence, 2015).

"A major concern for my student is her language, her communication ability. So we practised. I kind of push her to talk. I said 'Just speak up. Just be yourself.' It's OK to make the error with me, you can make a mistake. You're learning. Confidence comes with practice and experience." ~Coach

"I am valued to be a nurse in Canada instead of being degraded." ~IEN Learner

"I was a nurse before, back home. But I haven't practised for so many years. I lack confidence because I know the work environment will be totally different, right? So I'm unsure about my future, even though I have the knowledge, I have the experience, I'm still always asking 'Can I really accomplish this? Can I really do this?' From talking with my coach, I feel like I know myself better. I know my goals more clear. I know which step I need to take. I know even so there's still a long way to go; but I feel the confidence now. I know it's already in my mind, like in my body, but it just needed a person to help me to reach that confidence. She always told me 'There is always a way to help to solve the problems.' So it's really helping me to feel calm again and also continue my goals." ~IEN Learner

One learner expressed that she actually felt in some ways less confident about her ability to get a job at the end of the Pilot ["I now realize how difficult it might be!"]. But she smiled as she said this and added that she felt better prepared to *take on* the challenge.

◗ **Resilience:** Is the ability to bounce back and "adapt well in the face of adversity" (APA, 2013, para. 1).

"Everybody falls sometimes so when you don't have a difficult time, you don't know that you are strong. But when you've past that situation, then you look back and say, 'Oh, I'm strong!' "
~IEN Learner

"Sometimes we talk about her past work experience, what she was like as a nurse [back home], working in ICU—the kind of confidence and the pride that she has. And I know that part of her will come up again in Canada."
~Coach

Participant Feedback about Specific Pilot Elements

Feedback on the Introductory Workshop

Participants reported that the Introductory Workshop served their needs well and they felt knowledgeable and prepared for the semester's work at the end of it.

"The workshop is very helpful. Little by little, we get close to each other because we do some activities together. And then we know what's going on with this Pilot program. Now I know what is expected of me."
~IEN Learner

"The workshop at the start helped me to get excited about what I was doing and it was also a chance to just connect. We got to have a sense of where the students were at in their lives. Some of the information about coaching was not necessarily new, but it was a good refresher." *~Coach*

"For me, it was the first time doing coaching. I never had an idea that I would be good at that. But I learned more in that workshop. It gave us a lot of ideas." *~Coach*

As mentioned earlier, an unanticipated bonus of the Introductory Workshop was that coaches and learners bonded as **two groups** as well as within their coaching partnership. This was seen as a source of ongoing support and guidance throughout the clinical semester.

"Since that first workshop, we students are really close now. It really helped us to know each other and support each other. Since that session, everything just changed and I feel safer now." *~IEN Learner*

"Touching base in the middle was good. I liked that point, just to know that I'm on the right page. It was very supportive from the College's end and I think that really helped." *~Coach*

"[That first workshop] is the starting point for us as a group. Yes, you will be doing work with your coach individually. But also we belong to this group and that gave us and students a sense of belonging. We're not alone. We're doing it together and it's a group experience."
~Coach

Feedback on the Coaching Relationship

At the completion of the Work Readiness Pilot, participants were asked how they felt about the unique interprofessional nature of the coaching relationship. Both learners and coaches agreed that it worked very well and many expressed the opinion that the interprofessional nature of the relationship worked to their advantage. They felt that the skills they developed in this Pilot, for example building resilience or building the ability to envision career goals, were not discipline specific and all said that it "didn't matter" what discipline the coach belonged to.

"I would say that the coaches do not have to be in the same profession. I mean they are not teaching us nursing procedures. They provide information of life—everything, from many perspectives. So it doesn't matter—same profession or not." ~IEN Learner

"My coach, she's not a nurse. So maybe she doesn't know some things about nursing. But she knows what I'm really passionate about… And you know what? Maybe we all know that. But when you listen—when you hear the words from the person who really listens to your words—it changes things. I can feel it—a big comfort." ~IEN Learner

"My coach is so open, so accommodating, very nice. I feel very comfortable with her."
~IEN Learner

"There are many skills that cross professional boundaries, like communication skills. I am a human being and we're all kind of the same with the same kind of goals. So it doesn't matter what our role is—we're all here for the same purpose." ~Coach

Participants were also asked to describe what the coaching relationship was like for them, what they did together and how they felt about it. The following is a sample of participant responses:

"We definitely used that package of prompt questions… But it wasn't just those questions we talked about. My student would email me and I would email her, and I'd help her along the way. So it was continuous. It wasn't just restricted to those questions or those times. It was just a very natural conversation." ~Coach

"Our sessions weren't structured much—it was fluid and very topical. What do you need to know now, today, trying to get a sense of what they're struggling with, how they view themselves and what they value. I think that's all really important." ~Coach

"We saw each other every two weeks. At first we have a structure for each session. For example, the first session, we talked about my student's strength and weakness. I learned a lot from her strengths and for weaknesses we made a plan… Then everything became organic after that. In our last session, she came up with something she wanted to talk about. I had something prepared for that session, but she came with some issues that had come up so we talked about how to solve those problems. She had a great strategy in some of those areas. Wow I learned from her too!" ~Coach

"At the beginning, I was a bit uncomfortable. But as soon as we started to talk, and she started to question me, and then I answered, I started to feel comfortable. And when a person is comfortable, one can express our feelings more. I talked about my life, how I'm going to do everything and she asked 'What is your weak point and what is your strength?' Then I felt—I'm horrible. I felt that I'm a horrible person, you know? It's like—I cannot get out from this, I'm always going to be down. Then I started to talk about it, and slowly, slowly then I'm okay. I'll find a way. I can see. Now I can open my eyes… Because she is beside me saying this 'You can do it.' She gave encouragement to me in so many ways. It was really meaningful to me." ~IEN Learner

"It was a good experience—we meshed well. We were like partners." ~Coach

"My coach used a strategy—active listening. We were trying to dig deep to figure why I'm so anxious and nervous about my future. And she would share some information to support me, but she's not really giving me the answer, but helping me to find the answer." ~IEN Learner

"My coach always brought something with her when we met—like she got something on interview skills from [the internet]. She did homework for me. My homework before we would meet was thinking. Thinking about the questions on those pages. And thinking 'I'll ask her this and I'll ask her this.' She would ask me, like 'What are your weaknesses? What are your strengths? How do you learn better?' So I would think and then I was writing down in my little book." ~IEN Learner

"I really feel that this is a privilege for us to have this opportunity to work with internationally educated nurses. I know that they are facing very special challenges and this is a difficult time for them. They have clinical practice, schoolwork. And their work environment is a different culture for them so they have to learn and adapt to that, even though it can be extremely challenging. And they just have to overcome all the difficulties. That's a lot of work! But what I can do for them is say 'You can do this… Keep going. You can do this.'" ~Coach

"Sometimes, when you are not encouraged to ask questions, the question is still there. So with this, I like it. It is helping me explore myself more... weaknesses and strengths." ~IEN Learner

"When I enter her small office and sit there, I found it's a really good experience. She always can really open her ears—try to listen to me. She can understand. So that's why I feel great—truly touched because every time after I was sitting with her and talking, after that I can go on with energy. It's really an inspiring experience and I truly appreciate that." ~IEN Learner

"The things we did worked well together. She and I talked about her résumé and then that was reinforced in the workshop at school. And we went over interview questions and strategic answers. And then she had the mock interview [so that] reinforced that as well." ~Coach

Feedback on Career-Building Skills Workshop and Mock Interviews

The mid-semester focus group session with learners provided an opportunity to determine their response to the Career-Building Skills Workshop.

"That career skills workshop helped correct my errors about how a résumé needs to be. The way they're doing the résumé here is different from how we do it back home. Back home you don't have a cover letter, you just list your information. So the new information is very helpful." ~IEN Learner

"I never knew about the hidden job market. That's very useful to know! I was surprised— wow! We need to make connections!" ~IEN Learner

"I had a résumé but it was quite different from what they suggested. And I realize that what I had before is really not a good résumé. So I'm so glad we could do this. I would have done it all wrong." ~IEN Learner

"A very important thing I learned is that every time you go for a job you have to make some little changes in your résumé and your cover letter. I didn't know that. I thought one résumé is enough for every job for which I will apply." ~IEN Learner

As noted earlier, IEN learners found the experience of the mock interview stressful but very useful:

"It's a really good chance for people to practise. I heard [from] a lot of IENs, they told me that it's really hard to find your first job. So I think that the job interview for us is really important. It's a whole culture thing, from your résumé to how to answer the questions. It's really important to know the culture." ~IEN Learner

Learners and coaches were able to identify that knowing what kind of questions the interviewers might ask and practising these questions with their coaches was very helpful in reducing stress. As well, learners and coaches together came up with several suggestions to help reduce stress and facilitate communication in interviews. These are incorporated in **Appendix F: IENs' Job-Search Challenges: Summary and Suggested Strategies.**

The impact of past experience plays a role in anxiety and supports the importance of individualized coaching that can elicit and perhaps change learner expectations.

"The interviewers were so nice! Back home they are not so nice. I think that's partly why I was so nervous." ~IEN Learner

Behavioural interviewing was a new concept for many IENs, and responding to situational questions [for example, "Tell me what you would do if …"] was particularly challenging for them. As with résumé writing, the learners' opportunity to discuss the interview with their coaches was a source of both support and direct guidance.

"The questions about 'What are your weaknesses, your strengths' that's easy. I and my coach talked about it a few weeks ago, so it really did help. But the situational questions—this one scared me most!" ~IEN Learner

"I was nervous when they asked me about how I would do a g-tube feeding. That's a skill I haven't done in a while and that was my most stressful moment. The interviewer was so nice and she said "What else might you do?" And I felt so stupid—stupid!—because I couldn't think of anything. My heart is so tense. I have such a fear of making mistakes." ~IEN Learner

The concept of sharing oneself as a person was also new for many IEN learners.

"Back home if you mention you are a registered nurse, you have a degree, they kind of think everybody has the same capabilities. There, they don't really look at you as a person. But here, they DO want to know you as a person. ~IEN Learner

"My student came with a really specific goal: She wanted help with her résumé and mock interview. So we compared some of the differences between nursing [back home] and nursing in Canada and we looked at key words in her posting and I asked 'What are your qualities as a human being? Everyone has nursing skills, what makes you different? What are your own qualities?' I felt a little bit bad because I was forceful but I really encouraged her to look at her own personality—why would someone hire you instead of someone else? We emphasized the communication piece, reflected on her strengths, spoke about her skills. At the end she still lacked some confidence, but she realized she did know." ~Coach

"After our pretend interview, they gave us the feedback—that was the best learning for me. If we didn't get feedback, it's really hard to know what you're missing and so maybe every time you're missing the same thing, going wrong in the same way. I think on the basis of feedback, we will grow. I will grow." ~IEN Learner

"Before the interview I was nervous and excited…excited because it's a valuable experience and you cannot have life experience like this in any other places, right? It's the real HR, real case manager who interview you, so you'll feel it's just so good we can have this experience … But nervous because you want to give them good impressions, right?"
~IEN Learner

Recommendations for the Future

All interprofessional coaches and IEN learners strongly endorsed the value of the coaching activities described in this Toolkit and recommended that the program be expanded to include all students in their final (consolidation) clinical nursing semester. The following recommendations will be considered as George Brown and partners explore ways to extend the Pilot to a larger group of learners going forward:

1. **Consider lengthening the coaches' Introductory Workshop to a full day.**

   Some coaches in the Pilot expressed interest in learning more about the art of coaching. This goal could be accomplished by extending the coaches' Introductory Workshop to a full day. The morning portion of the day could stay as described in the Pilot, a joint session with learners. The afternoon could be planned for coaches only, providing an opportunity for them to continue to explore best practice principles and refine their coaching skills. Coaches noted that extending their learning in this way would also build transferable skills that they could apply with colleagues and patients in their own professional practice.

2. **Add nursing-specific content to coaches' orientation to the Coaching Model at the Introductory Workshop.**

   While the coaches' interprofessional background was very beneficial to all participants, some coaches mentioned that they "wished they knew more about nursing resources". Adding content on this could easily be accomplished by sharing nursing resources such as the names and roles of professional associations and nursing-specific information such as regulatory standards and career opportunities.

3. **Formalize a Mid-Semester Group Session for coaches and learners.**

   All Pilot participants commented on the value of connecting in person as a group mid-semester. As discussed earlier, this was accomplished with learners during the Pilot, but connections between the Project or Facility Leads and coaches were mostly accomplished via email. Coaches reported that they themselves connected informally at the "Tim Horton's office". Since in-person conversations were viewed as supportive by the coaches who chose to engage, it is recommended that a mid-semester session be scheduled from the outset in order to provide this support.

4. **Continue to develop opportunities for learners to practise interview skills.**

   The mock interview element of the model was enormously useful to students for it provided a "safe" opportunity for IEN learners to practise much-needed communication skills. Participant feedback echoes the findings in the literature that experience can lead to mastery and is one of the most powerful ways of developing confidence (Luthans, F., Luthans, K., & Luthans, B.C., 2004). But it was a very time-consuming endeavour for facility personnel, so it may be difficult to sustain on a larger scale with a larger number of students. George Brown will continue to analyze the

challenges that learners encountered in their mock interviews and look for creative ways to provide this opportunity for a greater number of learners.

In conclusion, as a preliminary inquiry, this Pilot has provided significant new learning about a unique approach to developing the work readiness of IEN learners. Short-term outcomes were met, and additional follow up will continue in order to assess long-term outcomes.

Glossary

Capital

"A store of useful assets or advantages" (Capital, 2014).

Capital Resources

A term used in this Pilot to refer to the combination of human, social and psychological capital (see terms below).

Coaching

For the purposes of this Pilot, coaching is defined as a time-limited collaborative relationship between a skilled facilitator (coach) and a consenting individual (Donner & Wheeler, 2009). The relationship is focused and goal-directed, using one-to-one conversation to help an individual identify and achieve their goals or improve their understanding or performance (Donner & Wheeler, 2009; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012).

Coaching Relationship

In the Work Readiness Pilot, this is a one-to-one relationship between an interprofessional coach and an IEN learner who partner in order to help the learner understand and develop work readiness skills. An IEN learner that is paired with an interprofessional coach is known in this document as a "dyad".

Human Capital

"What you know" (Luthans et al., 2006, p. 388). Human capital includes an IEN's past experience, nursing knowledge and skills. In the context of the Work Readiness Pilot, this includes what one knows about the setting where one is working, as well as what one understands about the norms of getting a job: résumé writing and interview skills.

Psychological Capital

"Who you are and who you are becoming" (Luthans et al., 2006, p. 388). Psychological capital is comprised of four components (hope, optimism, confidence and resilience) that interact dynamically and combine synergistically (Avey et al., 2009).

Social Capital

"Who you know" (Luthans et al., 2006, p. 388). Social capital recognizes the value of relationships and the social networks one belongs to. In a work readiness context, this might include the ability, for example, to understand who to ask if one has a certain kind of question, how the "hidden job market" functions or how a professional association or a facility's educational resources can be tapped as an opportunity.

Work Readiness

"The extent to which graduates are perceived to possess the skills and attributes that render them prepared for success in the workplace" (Walker & Campbell, 2013, p. 490).

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Appendices

Appendix	Item	Primary Audience
A	Agenda for Introductory Workshop	IEN Learner and Coach
B	Learner-Coach Meeting Discussion Prompts	Coach and IEN Learner
C	Learner Evaluation of Work Readiness Pilot	IEN Learner
D	Coach Evaluation of Work Readiness Pilot	Coach
E	Focus Group Interview Guide	Future Project and Facility Leads
F	IENs' Job-Search Challenges: Summary and Suggested Strategies	Future IEN Learners, Coaches, Project and Facility Leads

Appendix A: Agenda for Introductory Workshop

A

Duration	Content	Learning Activities
15 min 30 min	***Icebreaker: Introduce your partner*** ***Introduction to Work Readiness Pilot*** • Agenda for the morning • Context: The IEN Learner • What we know about predictors of job and career satisfaction: situational and personal factors, human, social and psychological capital	PowerPoint Presentation Discussion
30 min	***Roles and Relationships in the Coaching Dyad*** • What the coaching relationship is and is not • The "ground rules"	Interactive Discussion, Q & A
30 min	***Who Am I? I am a person, not a role …*** • Promote reflection, optimism, and resilience. Resilient people have a good understanding of their own competence, and celebrating success is not "bragging"	Group Activity Individual Story-telling Discussion
15 min	BREAK	
30 min	***"Blue Sky" Visioning*** Where do I want to be? • Introduction to career-building concepts to be developed throughout the Pilot	Dyad Activity Discussion
30 min	***Confidence (Self-Efficacy) Activity*** Building confidence, optimism and hope: • What are these concepts? • Why are they important? • How can I develop them?	Dyad Activity Discussion
30 min	***Building Resilience: Juggling the Challenges*** • What is resilience? • Why does it help? • How do I build it?	Group Activity Discussion
30 min	***Planning Future Meetings*** ***Workshop Evaluation***	Dyad Discussion Completion of Workshop Evaluation Survey

Appendix B: Learner-Coach Meeting Discussion Prompts

B

Instructions for Learner-Coach Dyads:
You are encouraged to create your own plans and meeting agendas. The following discussion prompts may be helpful to get you started.

1. Understanding Yourself [Part 1]

Who am I? What helps me cope?
Objectives: Identify your strengths and weaknesses, build awareness of self, build resilience by taking care of yourself and understanding what helps you cope.

Suggestions to get you started …

◗ Resilient people have a good understanding of their own competence. Celebrating success is not "bragging", it is identifying one's strengths. Understanding yourself feeds optimism and builds resilience!

◗ As a reflection assignment before you meet, tell your peers about this Pilot and tell them you have been asked to share your strengths. Ask your peers "What would you say are one or two of my strengths?" Share their responses at your coaching meeting.

◗ Recall the "I am a person, not a role" activity you did as a group in the Introductory Workshop. ["I am a person who is skilled at…; enjoys doing…; is unique/energized by…; worries about…; does everything at the last minute/likes to plan ahead…"]. Now that you have had a bit of time to think about it, what words do you feel would best describe *your* strengths and interests?

◗ What about areas where you do not feel as strong? What do you think other people might see as a weakness in you?

◗ Is there something about yourself that you have been told to change? Do you agree/disagree with this suggestion?

◗ What do you do outside of work and school? Do you feel your work and personal life are balanced?

◗ Do you make time for … rest, exercise, good nutrition and fun with friends and family? If not, could you create a plan to do so? Start small, identify some stepping stones.

◗ What helps you cope? Describe a challenging experience (e.g., transitioning to nursing in Ontario) and identify what helped you manage it.

◗ What was your reaction to the challenge?

◗ What did you do to overcome the challenge and survive?

◗ Do you anticipate any challenges in the near future?

◗ Break the challenge into parts, identifying what you do/do not have control over. For the parts that are within your control, create a plan of action.

2. Understanding Yourself [Part 2]

Where do I want to be? What is my career vision? How do I think I might get there?
Objectives: Build hope, optimism and human capital.

Suggestions to get you started …

◗ Recall the "blue sky" visioning exercise you did in the Introductory Workshop. What were the circumstances of your "ideal job"?

◗ Have you seen anyone around you who is doing your ideal job, or perhaps is in a role in which you see yourself?

◗ What is it they do, that you like?

◗ How did they get where they are?

◗ Where would you like to be in five years?

◗ What could your "stepping stones" along the way consist of? Brainstorm as many different pathways as you can think of to get there.

◗ What obstacles might get in your way?

◗ Create a plan to overcome/avoid those obstacles. (Reflect on times in the past when you have worked through challenging times… What previously enabled you to address obstacles?)

◗ What resources exist that can help you reach your goal? Would it help to join a professional association or take additional courses? What courses exist in your area of interest? What opportunities exist in this environment that could help you achieve your career vision?

3. Building and Using a Network

Who/what can help me get where I want to be?
Objective: Build social capital.

Suggestions to get you started …

◗ What professional resources do you have? Who in your work environment (or in this facility) could a nurse go to as a resource? Note: This person *could* be a nurse (e.g., a Nurse Educator or an Advanced Practice Nurse), but she/he could also be someone from a different profession. Find a person who matches this description and talk to her/him before your next meeting. (A letter/email of introduction can be provided if you like).

◗ Are there other professional resources beyond this facility that could help you? For example, what would joining a professional association do for you?

◗ What *personal* resources do you have? Who in your personal life can you turn to?

4. Building your Job Search Skills

What can I do to prepare for my job search?

Objective: Build knowledge ("human capital") of how to apply for a job.

Suggestions to get you started …

◗ After attending George Brown College's Career-Building Skills Workshop about résumé writing and interview skills, share your résumé with your coach.

◗ Do you feel it accurately communicates your strengths and experience?

◗ Before your "mock" interview with employers, does your coach have any strategies to suggest? What can you do to prepare for the interview?

◗ What questions should you anticipate in the interview?

◗ After your "mock" interview, how did you feel about it? What questions do you feel you answered well/not so well?

◗ Is there something you think you'd like to do differently in a future interview?

◗ Practise [role play] alternative responses.

5. Understanding the Working Environment

What do I wonder about?

Objectives: Build confidence and human capital, interpersonal skills and understanding of the system.

Suggestions to get you started …

◗ Think of a situation that was challenging, or that made you uncomfortable. For example: Have you ever said, "Yes, I understand" when you really did not? Have you ever avoided a conversation with someone because you were not sure what to say? Have you been involved with or witnessed a conflict situation that made you uncomfortable?

◗ Reflect on how you felt at the time and why you may have responded the way you did. For example, were you hesitant to ask questions or unsure of what to say or do?

◗ Create an action plan for the future. If you had a chance to re-do the scenario, is there something you could say/do differently?

◗ "Rehearse" these actions (e.g., role play to act out alternative responses).

◗ Think of a situation you have seen that you wonder about. For example: How does the facility decide on a discharge date? What does this facility's Nursing Advisory Committee do? How does … work? Are you confused about the role of someone?

Appendix C: Learner Evaluation of Work Readiness Pilot

The Nursing department of George Brown College's School of Continuing Education is interested in understanding your perceptions of your participation in the Work Readiness Pilot in order to provide a final report to the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade, which is funding a number of IEN projects. Your reply is anonymous.

Instructions for IEN Learners:

Please complete the following survey questions in the space provided and return the completed form to: [name, contact information].

Rating Scale: 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree.

Learner Survey

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Using the Rating Scale above, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement: My Coach: a. Considered my feelings					
b. Provided constructive feedback					
c. Was aware of my learning needs					
d. Helped me develop my critical thinking skills					
e. Involved me in decision making					
f. Related new knowledge to assist me as an IEN					
g. Listened to my concerns					
h. Shared experiences to meet my needs					
i. Asked questions to help me make sense of my experience					
j. Asked me to establish goals and to self-evaluate during the experience					
k. Challenged me					
l. Provided encouragement					
m. Helped me develop my confidence					
n. Enhanced my well-being					
o. Made time for me					

Please turn over

2. What did you like most about the Pilot?

3. What did you like least about the Pilot?

4. What, if any, improvements would you suggest to the program?

5. Are there any experiences, good or bad, you wish to share with us?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix D: Coach Evaluation of Work Readiness Pilot

D

The Nursing department of George Brown College's School of Continuing Education is interested in understanding your perceptions of your participation as a coach in the Work Readiness Pilot in order to provide a final report to the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade, which is funding a number of IEN projects. Your reply is anonymous.

Instructions for IEN Coaches:

Please complete the following survey questions in the space provided and return the completed form to: [name, contact information].

Rating Scale: 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree.

Coaches Survey

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Using the Rating Scale above, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement: a. George Brown and Facility Project Leads oriented me to the role of coach.					
b. There were sufficient activities and time to get to know my learner in the Introductory Workshop.					
c. Project Leads maintained communication and supported me throughout the Work Readiness Pilot.					
d. I was able to meet the needs of my learner.					
e. I had a good sense of how I was doing as a coach throughout the Work Readiness Pilot.					
f. The learner was enthusiastic about learning and self-directed about seeking learning opportunities.					
g. The Work Readiness Pilot contributed to my overall professional development.					
h. This experience was beneficial and rewarding.					
i. The Work Readiness Pilot met my needs.					
j. I would participate again in future offerings.					
k. I felt confident being a coach.					

Please turn over

2. What did you like most about the Pilot?

3. What did you like least about the Pilot?

4. What, if any, improvements would you suggest to the program?

5. Are there any experiences, good or bad, you wish to share with us?

Thank you for your participation

Appendix E: Focus Group Interview Guide

Instructions for Project and Facility Leads:

Please guide your focus group through the following questions and record your answers. It is important to listen actively to participant responses and respond accordingly.

Focus group questions are open-ended and iteratively developed based on the responses to the initial questions:

◗ Could you tell me about your experience with the Work Readiness Pilot? What did you learn? What did you do?

E

Based on the responses of the participants, ask the following questions [as they naturally evolve]:

◗ Tell us about the workshop and your first meeting with your coach.

◗ What was your experience like with your coach/IEN learner?

– Did you meet on a regular basis?
– What was it like working with someone who was from a different profession?
– What did you talk about?
  o Sharing ideas?
  o Résumé writing?
  o "Mock" interview and how to prepare for it?
  o Practise interviewing?

◗ One of you mentioned that your coach had said: "It isn't only nursing knowledge and skills that you need". Could you tell us more and please explain what you mean by that?

◗ Tell us about your half-day workshop on résumé writing and interview skills?

– Was the workshop helpful?
– Could it be improved?
– How is résumé writing different from how it was back home?

◗ Describe how you felt during the mock interview.

– Were you nervous?
– Were you confident?
– Is the interview process different from how it was back home?
– Had you ever been interviewed by a panel?
– You mentioned you were stressed, what was it that made you feel stressed?
– How can we help you alleviate stress?
– Tell me how we can help you to approach an interview with a winning attitude?
– Is there anything you would do differently next time you have an interview?
– How will you prepare yourself for the next interview?

Before adjourning, ask your focus group:

◗ Is there anything else that you want to tell us about the Work Readiness Pilot?

◗ Is there anything that you feel you want to get "off your chest".

◗ Is there anything that *didn't* happen that you think would have been helpful?
("If you had done …, it would have really helped me to…".)

Appendix F: IENs' Job Search Challenges: Summary and Suggested Strategies

Good planning and preparation by the IEN learner, along with realistic job prospect expectations go hand in hand when transitioning from the classroom to the workplace.

Pilot participants received positive feedback on many aspects of their practice ("mock") job interviews. According to panelists who conducted the interviews, "candidates" dressed appropriately for their interviews, understood the nurses' role as a patient advocate, and indicated their willingness and ability to work as a team. The candidates' understanding of the need for teaching and health promotion as tools to empower patients was also noted.

Pilot participants also identified a number of **challenges** when completing their job search activities. The table below summarizes **strategies** that participants noted were helpful in addressing these challenges and pointing IEN learners in a positive direction. These suggestions came from IEN learners, coaches, interview panelists and career advisors who were involved with the Pilot. The reader is encouraged to seek additional resources such as professional organizations to complement this list.

F

Elements IENs Found New or Challenging	Suggested Strategies to Address these Challenges
Understanding the need for and creating a career strategy Participants commented that this was not something they had previously considered. The concept of "marketing yourself" was new. Many IENs did not realize that many jobs are never posted on websites but instead go to internal candidates or are found by word of mouth. This is the "hidden" job market.	Success takes planning, preparation and practice. Begin with a strong self-assessment, asking yourself "What skills, experience or traits make me unique?" Think carefully about your own strengths, weaknesses and areas of interest. Then apply to positions where your strengths will shine. Research the job market situation. What kinds of positions are being advertised where and what kind of qualifications and skills are considered an asset? Learn about and maximize contacts in social and professional networks. Attend job fairs, connect with professional organizations, volunteer in places that match your interests and skills. Take the initiative to introduce yourself to people on the unit where you are doing your clinical practice, (e.g., the patient care manager), and tell them you would be interested in working there.

Elements IENs Found New or Challenging	Suggested Strategy to Address this Challenge
Needing to prepare differently for each résumé and interview *"Before I thought one résumé is enough for every job." ~IEN Learner*	Do your "homework" before you compose a résumé or attend an interview. Visit the employer's website and learn what their mission and interests are; learn about the kind of care provided on the specific unit where you are applying. Relate your résumé specifically to the needs of this employer. *"When you look at the [employer's] website, don't try to memorize it. See what speaks to you as an individual." ~Interviewer* *"It's nice to highlight that you know something about the organization you're applying to. That shows, "I am interested in this place specifically. This is not just one of many places I've applied to." ~Interviewer*
Formatting your résumé and cover letter *"Back home, the way I would do a résumé is completely different." ~IEN Learner* *"I never did a cover letter before. We didn't do that back home." ~IEN Learner*	The employer first wants to see what you are doing now. Identify if you have worked in that facility as a student before. Highlights of your qualifications are particularly helpful to employers pressed for time. Think of this section as a movie trailer that intrigues a viewer to want to know more. This will be the first thing employers read, and it may be the only thing they read. List no more than seven items in this section. Keep your résumé to a maximum of two pages in length. Use an email address that identifies you by name. Keep all information relevant, for example, if a position posting does not mention computer skills; do not include this in your résumé. Read literature and websites that offer suggestions for résumés, but use these as a guide only, do not copy them. Paraphrase elements you like into your own words. Employers read the same websites. Describe your accomplishments and responsibilities, not just the title of previous jobs you have held. Double and triple check your résumé for typographical errors. If possible, ask a friend or advisor to read your résumé because it is human nature to miss errors we have made in our own writing. Do not list your references in your résumé but bring a typed list with contact information for three references to your interview. Having a variety of references is good, for example someone who has supervised your work, a colleague or team member, someone who was your teacher. If there are many applicants for the same position, an employer will focus on the résumé rather than the cover letter, but if a big group of applicants has been narrowed down and your résumé is on the "short list", the cover letter may be a deciding factor. *"It's always good to have a good cover letter and highlight your experiences in it." ~Interviewer*

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## Responding to situational questions in interviews Participants worried they would not know the "right" answer. Sample situational questions might be: • "What steps might you take if you were caring for a patient with a tracheostomy?" • "Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a conflict." • "What would you do if you walked into a patient's room and discovered the patient on the floor?" • "Tell us about a time when you collaborated with the interprofessional team in providing care."	Anticipate both technical and behavioural situational questions and practice interview responses with peers and coaches. *"Practise in a mirror or practise with a friend or coach. Practise saying the words out loud. Think about the main themes that typically come up in interviews—conflict, leadership, and communication—and try to think of specific examples where you showed those traits. That way you'll have an answer ready when the question is asked." ~Interviewer* *"Take your time to think about your answer—don't feel you have to rush. Being able to think before you respond is a strength." ~Interviewer* *"If you don't know the answer to a question, you can always ask to come back to it if you need more time to think about it. You can say, 'Is it okay if we come back to that question at the end?' " ~Interviewer* If you do not know the answer to a question, do not try to make it up and take the chance of being inaccurate. *"If you were to say, 'I haven't had the opportunity to do that, but I would like to and this is how I would go about learning how to do it,' that would probably be your best way to answer a question if you don't know." ~Interviewer*
## Sharing yourself as a person IENs expressed confusion about the concept of person-job fit. *"We're looking for professional knowledge and skill of course, but we're also looking to see if someone will fit with the team and with the organization. For that we have to get a sense of what the applicant is like as a person. What are their passions? How do they respond in certain situations?" ~Interviewer*	*"One of the first questions you'll be asked is 'Why are you interested in this position? What experience can you bring to this role?' This is a good opportunity to highlight things about yourself … We want to hear why you want to be here, and understand what motivates you." ~Interviewer* Rather than give a stock answer, critically reflect so you can answer this thoughtfully and personally. Every person applying for this position has nursing skills, so ask yourself "What makes me different as a human being and a nurse?" and "What do I find interesting/challenging about this workplace"? As an IEN, you likely have skills and experiences that other candidates may not possess—what might these be for this situation?

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Coping with anxiety Sources of anxiety mentioned by IEN Pilot participants included: • being interviewed by a panel of people • prior negative experience with interviews • lack of confidence about communication or professional skills • knowledge that there are few jobs • fear of the unknown, and • the "high stakes" nature of a job interview. *"After all the years I've put into this, it all comes down to an interview. That's scary!" ~IEN Learner* *"My student really wants people who are helping her to be proud of her." ~Coach* Being nervous contributes to perceived "poor" performance, inability to focus or answer questions thoughtfully.	If the number of people in the panel feels intimidating, focus on the person asking the question. Then you can "pretend" you are having a one-to-one conversation and there are not so many people around you. Reflect critically to identify what you find stressful. What is it, specifically, that worries you? Then address that area specifically. Practise your responses in the days leading up to the interview, but the night before the interview, just go to bed and get some rest. Make quality time for yourself in order to gain perspective and reduce your overall stress level. Find a supportive individual [like a coach!] and practise with her/him. *"If you get a chance to have a practice interview, go for it! This was really a treasured experience and I learned so much!" ~IEN Learner* Understand that if an employer has called you for an interview it is because they are interested in you, so think of the interview as something positive. Employers want to know more about you. *"We want to get to know you, and learn more about how you might respond in situations, and we know that the best way to do this is to help you feel comfortable. We don't want you to be stressed." ~Interviewer* *"Try not to worry that 'It's taking me too long to answer this question.' … Always feel that you can take time if you need it—you've got a right to take the time you need to take to put your answer together." ~Interviewer* Don't feel you have to rush to include your entire biography or everything you know in the first questions. You will have time at the end of the interview to add information if you feel something significant has not been said. After the interview, adopt a reflective learning attitude so you can learn from the experience and prepare for "next time".

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Submitting an online application Many employers will only accept online applications and many of these processes include online screening questions. Sample screening questions include: • "Are you licensed to practice nursing in Ontario?" • "Please describe your work experience relevant to this position." • "How do you see yourself providing patient-centred care in this position?" *"I wasn't expecting to do it all by computer. I had difficulty with the technology and wasn't sure I submitted my application correctly." ~IEN Learner*	Answer screening questions carefully because these are the first things an employer will see and they are as important as the résumé. Leave yourself enough time to submit your application so you can view these screening questions, then take time to think about them before submitting your response. If your responses to these questions have grammatical errors or many spelling mistakes, or if your responses do not answer the question, then it is likely the employer will not continue to read your résumé. Ask for help if you need assistance with submitting an online application.
Needing to talk about your weaknesses or areas for development "This is awkward! I don't want them to know my bad points!" ~IEN Learner	Identifying what you do not know is an important element of safe care, but you can position your weaknesses as areas of growth. *"Try to associate it with what you are doing or what you will do to address this weakness... If you don't know something, how will you go about learning it?" ~Interviewer*
Being expected to ask questions of the interviewers *"Back home they don't expect you to ask any questions—it's almost considered rude if you do. It's like asking questions is their job and you are impertinent if you ask." ~IEN Learner* *"I had prepared for the interview, but the question I was going to ask was answered along the way. So when it came time for me to answer I just said 'I don't have any questions" though I know that didn't sound good." ~IEN Learner*	Come to an interview prepared to ask questions. Questions that indicate a quest for knowledge are good indicators that you are committed to lifelong learning. For example "What educational opportunities exist for you with this employer?" or "What are some challenges that you expect for a new person in this role?" Researching the employer and the position before your interview gives you a chance to ask questions specific to this employer and shows you have done your "homework" for the interview. Imagine yourself working in this place … What do you think you would like to know? What do you find intriguing about this employer? Come prepared with several alternate questions you could ask.

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Knowing what questions NOT to ask	Do not ask about salary. This information is either in the job posting itself or it will become apparent if someone makes an offer to you. *"Don't ask, "How did I do?" This just makes everyone uncomfortable. You'll find that out later from either the manager or from the HR representative. And if you don't find it out later and if you want feedback, you can ask, but ask later, not during the interview." ~Interviewer* "When can I expect to hear back from you?" or "What are the next steps?" are acceptable alternatives to "How did I do?"
Following up after the interview *"Internet resources say it's important to follow up and say thank you. How do I do that? What words do I use? I don't want to be a bother to them or look like I'm pestering them." ~IEN Learner*	*"It's important to say thank you for the opportunity to meet… And it's always appreciated. You might want to ask in the interview 'Can I have your contact information?' or ask the HR assistant for that information." ~Interviewer* Send a thank you note to the Human Resources (HR) Department rather than writing the individual interviewers themselves. You can say "Please extend my thanks to the interview team" or "Please forward this message to the panel members." The HR assistant will then forward the information to the panel. This avoids any awkwardness associated with communicating with individual interviewers who may interpret your note as the question "Am I going to get the position?"

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