

OVERCOMING THE ANXIETY OF NETWORKING

If you have started your job search already, you are likely familiar with the importance of networking. While there is an abundance of suggestions on how to network, a less common discussion is how to overcome anxiety in order to do so. If you have experienced anxiety to any extent, consider the following tips to help ground yourself when networking:

START SOMEWHERE YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE

At a job fair, this may mean starting with an employer that you have done the most research on. Feeling more prepared will help to settle any anxiety related to communication. If you know you are familiar with the company, it will be easier for you to recall topics of conversation. Before you know it, you'll be having a natural conversation that you can really speak about!

BRING A FRIEND OR MAKE USE OF THE CSPS

Surrounding yourself with a familiar environment can help calm your nerves. If you feel anxious at any time during the fair, having a friend there will remind you that you are not alone, and that support is easily accessible. Our Career Support Peers will also be designated at a station and can provide tips to initiate a conversation with an employer.

SET TARGETS FOR YOURSELF

A lack of direction can sometimes contribute to feelings of anxiety. Before the fair, set manageable targets for yourself so you can remember what your goal is. An example of a target could be speaking with at least five employers. If you set this goal, you will be able to measure your progress and stay focused on the task.

REMEMBER YOU'RE IN CONTROL

The difficulty with anxiety is that it can feel overwhelming to the point where you can't manage it. Even if anxiety isn't necessarily controllable, your actions are. If at any time you feel as though the job fair is too much, remember that you can always leave. You should never feel pressured to stay if you aren't comfortable – and don't worry, the job fair will be back again!

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