

Preparing a Resume

Life Skills Library

Transitioning Back to Work After Completing Treatment



Seeking treatment for substance use disorder is the best way to achieve sobriety and live a life of recovery.

However, addiction treatment programs can last weeks or months and often require you to devote your time exclusively to scheduled therapy, support groups, and educational classes. This time away from people and places that are negative influences is necessary and part of the recovery process, but it often means leaving a job or career, too.

This guide will provide helpful tips for getting back on your feet professionally while maintaining recovery.

Transitioning Back to Work After Competing Treatment: Before the Resume

There are several things to remember as you begin the job-hunting process. The most important one, especially if you have not job hunted in many years, is that it is a digital world these days.

That means you will need the following:

-  An email address
-  Access to a computer
-  Access to the internet

You may have all these resources already, in which case you are ready to create a resume and begin applying. However, if you do not have these essentials, most public libraries offer computers and internet access for free, and numerous sites offer free email accounts, like Gmail or Yahoo.



Transitioning Back to Work After Completing Treatment: The Resume

Your resume is your first introduction to a potential employer. When submitting a resume, please read the job description carefully and determine whether you are qualified for the position. Look at a company's website/social media and try to get a sense of the values of the people in charge. Don't apply to a company you don't want to work for. Be selective; if you try to apply everywhere, you will burn yourself out and make mistakes.

Please don't lie on your resume. The people who read your resume (and interview you) are professional people-readers. Many people in these positions have attended workshops and read books about how to determine when someone is lying.

If you have recently completed a drug treatment program and are committed to your recovery (attending meetings, accessing your sober network, avoiding triggers, managing cravings, etc.), you may need to disclose that information to the potential employer during the interview, but not on a resume. Attending drug treatment is nothing to be ashamed of (and it's better than a gap in your resume), but most employers don't particularly want to know personal information about you.

These are the main ideas to communicate in your resume:

-  I can do this job
-  It is easy to get in touch with me
-  I can follow instructions
-  My presence is an attribute
-  I value other people (and their time)
-  I won't embarrass or abuse the company



Even if you are submitting a digital resume, you need to print your resume to make sure the formatting looks good. If you have anyone in your life who is willing to look over your resume and offer feedback, please do this. If not, you can easily Google information about creating resumes and see the various formats that are considered current and effective.

In general, your resume needs to include the following information (in a one-page document):

Start the resume with the following information:

-  **Contact information** – Name, address, phone number, and email
-  **Career objective** – A brief statement of what you are seeking (e.g., "I am seeking an entry-level position that allows me to use my customer service and communication skills.")

The next section of the resume can begin with professional experience or education, but you want to play to your strengths. Starting with education would make sense if you have an undergraduate or graduate degree but relatively little work experience. However, most people lead with work experience, especially if they have accumulated years of working in a particular field or industry.

-  **Professional experience** – List each position you've held dating back at least ten years; start with the most recent date and work backward. If you held multiple positions at the same company, list those as well. Briefly describe your responsibilities and accomplishments in each position and indicate how long you held each position.
-  **Educational experience** – List each academic institution attended, starting with the most recent. Indicate any degrees earned or special recognition such as dean's list or graduating with honors.

The final section of the one-page resume can include any of the following if they apply and you have the space to fit them:



-  **Technical skills** – This includes software or hardware you are proficient in, like Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop, configuring wifi routers, creating web pages, etc.
-  **Language skills** – It is always good to indicate if you can speak more than one language, especially if you are fluent in multiple languages.
-  **Certifications** – These include anything from food safety certifications for working in the service industry to scuba diving certifications for teaching at a dive shop.
-  **Accomplishments** – Any awards or recognition you have received that speak to your character, abilities, work ethic, etc.

You only have one page, so play to your strengths, but be truthful.

Final Thoughts on Preparing a Resume After Completing Treatment

Think about the person reading your resume. Try to make finding the information they need as easy as possible. Avoid needlessly personal information and distracting fonts. Try to keep your resume under one page. Attach a brief cover letter (that contains your contact information) along with your resume.

You should always tweak your resume for each job you apply to. Look at the language of the job advertisement—if the ad says they seek a "dependable self-starter with a strong work ethic," you should work those words into your resume or cover letter. Finally, accept that you will not get every job you apply for, and try not to get discouraged.



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