

# Abilities Empowerment Services

## Opportunities Fund for Person with Disabilities

### Testimonials

#### Sujin

I am Sujin from South Korea. On the first day of interview, I was so confused because I thought I do not have disabilities. I did not read the application description quite enough. During the short seminar before interview I wanted to join the workshop, because I felt something different in PICS. I tried to appeal that I have menopausal depression and acrophobia. It was really my psychological problem, but I never thought they were my disabilities.

I was in various seminars in WorkBC and SUCCESS more than 30 times. Participating the seminars, I felt helpless more and more strongly. I need references and helps to try some jobs. I understood the lectures in seminars, but my way of thinking continued to stay the same. That was my big problem.

At that time, I met PICS. During the seminars at PICS I became to realize the real Canadian job market, situation and interview. PICS has a different and practical approach to help to find a job for job seekers. For example, I am ready now how to answer some difficult questions for job interviews. Kathleen has real examples and explains exactly how to answer and how to behave. I am really lucky to meet Kathleen. After workshop at PICS I feel myself more confident and I am not afraid of interviews anymore. I can prepare for job interviews by myself now.

The other thing which is unique and attractive at PICS is it helps to find a workplace for 4 weeks. Any other organizations do not provide such a thing. It is really awesome and great for job seekers who do not have little Canadian work experiences. I am hired thanks to this system.

I think many foreigners with little Canadian work experiences do not know how to approach the job market in Canada. Even though they know it by their brain, they do not know by their mind set. We need more practical and realistic help to find a job.

It says: Don't give a fish, teach them how to catch a fish. I often thought of this proverb during seminars, because I felt they were abstract. I desperately hoped that anybody should tell me where I have to go and where the fish lives.

PICS shows me the way to go. That is why I really appreciate Kathleen, Loveleen and all staffs in PICS. I hope PICS will thrive in the future and help more people to find a job.

Thank you so much!!!

## **Karim**

It was a pleasure to meet the team you were all very helpful and positive  
was able to learn a lot about how to go about presenting yourself

## **Denize Pereira da Silva**

I am a newcomer and have been living in Canada for six months and have been looking for a job since November. I have participated in other programs and made many applications for job vacancies without success so far.

My Job Coach at Newton WorkBC Center asked me if I would like to participate in a Job Skills Training Program. I accepted immediately, but I thought it would be another one of those programs full of theoretical information. Although, I asked myself: "Why not participate? Since, I love studying, learning new things and I believe we should always be willing to do that.

In fact, the Program was incredible because I learned a lot about the Canadian job market and how to present my basic and technical skills. Additionally, I had the opportunity to practice job interview and improve my resume.

Even though I have great experience, enormous knowledge and am an excellent professional, the language barrier still needs to be overcome and improved, so that I can show everything I know and can do. I am working on it.

For example, I am already taking English classes, I will participate in conversation groups and I will look for some volunteer work to improve my speaking skills as much as possible. Because my goals are to work as a rehabilitation assistant and obtain my license as a Physical Therapist. Finally, the program is excellent, it really conveys clear, objective and practical content aimed at developing professional skills. The entire team is attentive, welcoming and offers us all the information and support we need to improve our skills. It also helps us look for a job with more confidence.

I thank the entire team for this opportunity and for all the knowledge shared. Your work makes a difference and contributes to everyone's personal growth.

Thanks.

## **Raaghav**

Hi

Getting to know about AES program at PICS was the first right step in the right direction.

I wanted to join AES as I was eager to get started with some job.

I was thinking that someone will help me go through the process to find a job.

I learned Food Safe Level 1 guidelines and getting ready to pass the test.

I realized that I want to start a job make money and travel.

Kathleen and my case manager Anurag were helping me in understanding all the aspects of the AES course.

I am open to any job which gives me job satisfaction. I am open to learning new skills to be self reliant.

I will work hard to achieve what I am looking for.

This AES program made me more confident towards achieving my dream of getting a job.

Thanks,

Raaghav Dawesar

## **Alvin Bhan**

I participated in this program so that I would be able to find a job which I have been looking for. I have learnt more on interview skills especially on scenario interviews. Initially, before starting this course when my vocational counsellor told me I thought it would be very boring and something which I have already done whereas when I actually began the classes I turned to learn many new things from my tutor. This 2 week of the class was very interesting and very educational and I hope to find a job quickly. I wanted to learn more on scenario interview skills as I was finding it difficult when attending to this type of interviews and also to learn ways to tackle an interview by learning skills. In this current situation it is very hard to find jobs but I learnt nothing is impossible. Some things which I have learnt about myself is that I managed to figure out what I actually wanted to do in my life, the type of job I was looking for. The support I got from PICS while attending this course was the tutor helped me to rebuild my resume and also my case manager is working with me to find jobs and help me with my cover letter. They also train me for mock interviews, skills and sites to find job vacancies. I applied for jobs online from indeed, work BC and Job banks. My employment goal is finding a permanent government job, security or office administration jobs. My education goal is that I want to do a certificate in medical office administration course at Langara college. I am trying to apply for jobs online to get my desired and for my education I am trying to get my registration done for the course which will start in September. My biggest accomplishment while attending this course was that I have gained confidence in scenario interview skills. The best part of this course was learning new skills which I was not aware of on how to tackle interviews and some new skills as well. I have also overcome my difficulties which attending this course on scenario interview while attending mock training interview with my colleagues.

## **Eric Ma**

Dear Kathleen, Anurag, Ramanjot, Loveleen,

As a person with disabilities, barriers and challenges who has been off work for so long; I was searching for a program and organization that could help me bridge the gap between meaningful employment search and sustainable work. Before starting, my hope was that the program would be inclusive, friendly, welcoming and helpful; I found this to be the case after completing the program. My hope was to learn skills and training for a 2024 job search that could help me find a part time job that is suitable for myself and disabilities. In learning more about employment search and resume building, it's clear to me I must find a job that works with my personality, disabilities, aptitude, skills and also personal interests. I've learned that skills training, and effort has to be put in, and that I actually have a more diverse skill set than originally thought. From day one to graduation, I was supported by Kathleen, Anurag, Ramanjot, and Loveleen. We all worked together to work on different steps and aspects of job and workplace information, job search, personality assessments, and mock job interviews. As it takes many steps for job search and eventual employment, this was very helpful in learning what employers and the job market are looking for. I've applied all the skills and information I've learned to the overall task of preparing, searching and hopefully landing a suitable and sustainable part time job in the near future. My employment and educational goals for the long term is to start off with a more entry level position while learning additional skill sets and training to then apply for jobs that I find more interesting and rewarding (computers, web design, graphic design/ editing, software, etc). In order to make this happen, I will likely need to do a course in computer information and technology, and/ or learn and teach myself with the many available and free online resources (google, youtube, etc). I think my biggest accomplishment was being on time, not missing a class, mostly following through, and completing the course. After completing the program, the biggest thing I will take away is that employers want to hear stories of how prior issues were identified, and how they were resolved (star stories). Even if someone has some weaknesses, the employer wants to know that the person applying for the job has interest in improving themselves, is open minded, and wants to add to their overall skill set. I think this demonstrates that a job applicant could be a suitable and longer-term employee within the office or virtual office structure of the company.

**Eva Kwan**

Here is my testimony about this program:

When I first thought of this program - I read everything about it and was very interested in joining because it gives me a chance to get a new job and obtain plus to keep working that I want to do for now. I like everything that I have learned so far for the last two weeks in the building where the PICs Society is located. Once I get more information about my work placement and when it will start on which day and will be excited to get minimum wage as my pay for doing my work.

Thank you and take care.

## **Anthony Doan**

I was recommended by school faculty after they learned my decision to seek employment first before college, which is motivated by my family's financial situation and personal frustrations with independence and social isolation.

The school faculty that recommended me informed me of general details of IMPACT including scheduling, specific activities, and the overall goal of finding me a job that I would be most comfortable to work.

Before finishing and officially joining IMPACT, the school faculty and Ms. Luisa explained to me the general concept of IMPACT such as job searching, resumes, and my strengths and weaknesses.

It involved a lot of paperwork that I do not like, but it also confirmed many concepts that not only made me relaxed but opened many opportunities for me such as networking and workers' rights.

I love talking with my peers much more than I realize and I am confident in team-work focused environments, especially food related!

After IMPACT learned two new facts about myself, one that I plan to volunteer with my community and abroad for humanitarian, the second that I need to fix my sleep schedule which I will this year hopefully.

The proper amount. I cannot say much since I have only requested help and cannot really say much about any detail, but I am thankful for their prompt, polite, and fast support.

I just sent an email towards a local church for volunteering activities, and if I am accepted as a volunteer, I will be networking with potential peers. Aside from church volunteering, there are few situations to explain since I have just entered the workforce, nor ever had trouble with anybody.

Currently, I am building up my resume with new skills, titles, and experiences by both working and volunteering. But in the later future, if I do have time or wish to fully commit, I will volunteer or fully involve myself in humanitarianism or any field similar, which are motivated by my recent interest in politics and desire to self-improve and travel outside Canada.

As of now, I am not only contacting local services for volunteer work, but I will also attend a trial workplace session with Luisa at a local restaurant. I will revise and prepare my portfolio soon, and as mentioned before I am trying to network with the local community to hopefully find myself more opportunities in case of failure and for whenever I am ready to progress my new career.

Unsure, I'm happy.

Network, study, be flexible, coordinate with others, and not be late.



## **Devin**

I wanted to participate in the pics program because I would have learned new things about myself that I wouldn't have learned. I also joined because of the wage subsidy because I thought it would be helpful. What I thought it would be like is a 6-8 hour teaching program with some useful information but it was not like that at all. It was all useful information and good length of time. I would learn a lot more about interviews as I thought I did and what questions are to be asked during the interview. I learned that you would need more certifications and qualifications for some workplaces. What I learned about employment is that finding a job with your specific qualifications and skills can be hard to find the location of the workplace as well. I learned that I had more soft and hard skills that I originally had. I was helped with finding jobs online on job websites like indeed or LinkedIn. When I went for an interview that was pretending to be a real one, I applied eye contact, I asked questions about the company, I told them about my strengths and weaknesses and my soft and hard skills. My educational and or employment goals are to have a stable job with stable income, I plan to work at a company for decent number of years that I like working with and then possibly switch career paths. As for my education, I plan on learning about what heavy duty mechanics do and what skills and qualifications they require. I also plan on taking a heavy-duty mechanic course so I can get into heavy duty mechanics sometime in the future. I am going to search for schools that have heavy duty mechanics courses and take them to learn and expand my knowledge on the topic. My biggest accomplishment in the pics program is to know what a real interview would be like when applying for jobs. Something that I will take with me from the program is how many soft and hard skills I had because some of them can be useful in future jobs I decide to do.

## Henry

Reason why I sign up for this program was to see what I could learn from it. I learn a lot of things from it like how to not put a bold statement onto a piece of paper why your there. This was before I got this assignment a little while ago, I put why I sign up for it because I was just being honest about it. I put "I was only here for the bonus", it's still true but now I have different options about it now. I could do a interview without learning the skills before the program but after the program I learn that adding a story could put more of a connection to you and the interviewer. From this program I just want to relax and have connections to other people like networking because I like knowing and understanding other people in a way I could talk to people in a matter where I can be confidence on keeping the topic for long. By the end of the year or one day would like to become a welder for a good pay and relaxing life with no bills in mind. Before knowing what goals or what to follow I was given a program "WISE" it's a program for people like me who struggle to get a job but to be honest I could get a job without the program but I want to see the outcome of it and the outcome was great. Didn't regret one bit of it and enjoy it.

Question: By any chance if I changed my mind I could resign my application? If I did say yes and sign it.

- Henry

## **Dan Sleath Testimonial – PICS Abilities program Cohort 4 August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

My name is Dan Sleath and I wanted to participate in the PICS Abilities program to help advocate for myself and discover my strengths. I wanted to help my girlfriend Rachel find a job as well. I feel I had great things to say and this program helped me to strengthen my communication skills during the workshops Kathleen Hughes presented.

I thought it would be like it was advertised. I found the workshops very easy to understand however found the two weeks went by very quickly. It was a lot of very valuable information albeit presented in a very short period of time. I learn very quickly however some that take the program might have learning disabilities preventing them from retaining the information presented as quickly as it was. There could have been more opportunity for questions and answers. The workshop timing from 1-3pm and the flexibility of having days off in between made it very convenient for my schedule. However, 5 workshops over 10 hours were a lot of info to pack in a very short period of time.

I would learn a lot from everybody in the group. I learnt that I have strengths and abilities that I hid from others because I wasn't comfortable accepting or adjusting to my weaknesses. I learned I could do better on mock interviews. I was given a lot of support from others including: My Mom, My advocate from PLAN (Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network) the team at CLBC, and my girlfriend.

I applied what I learned to a real situation using the STAR method. My education/employment goals are to continue to go back to school to take a course in Sociology, while pursuing a certificate in the Faculty of Arts. I have also researched cheaper options such as: Douglas College for their Community Social Service Work program or one of the Applied Community Studies courses. I have also looked into other private schools but don't want to get into anymore debt with Student Loans. I want to eventually become a Peer Support Worker. I am making this happen by: Working at Kwantlen as a Student Learning Assistant: helping people in the Employment and Community Studies with Career Exploration and Social Justice.

My biggest accomplishment during this program was learning more about my strengths and what I have to offer to others and future employers. One thing I learned from this program that I will always take with me is my improvement in self-confidence.

Thank you to all the staff at PICS, Abilities Empowerment Program: Kathleen, Anurag and everyone else. Good luck to all the future participants as I would highly recommend this program to anyone who feels motivated and ready to work.

Dan Sleath – Cohort #4 August 19, 2024.

**Karina Gill**

To PICS :

I enjoyed the Abilities Empowerment Services Program at PICS Head Office Surrey and I am looking forward to the job placement in September 2024. I am thankful that this non-profit organization has made this program available for people with disabilities and those looking to improve their skills to enter the work force. This service is much needed in today's challenging times since people such as myself get overlooked due to having some kind of limitations or barriers to finding suitable work.

For me, the best part of this program was getting to network with fellow job seekers and learning about workplace culture from my Facilitator Kathleen. Having been out of work for more than three years, it was refreshing and the information shared in the program was relevant to the kind of work I am looking for. It has made me more prepared than before for what Employers are expecting of their employees and how to communicate your needs to a Hiring Manager.

I would recommend this program to job seekers or members of the public who need help to secure much needed services and supports in the community. There are so many new immigrants in Canada who are not aware of these types of programs or organizations who can assist them when facing hardship. It would be helpful if programs such as this one was advertised on PICS corporate website with details about start dates.

Thank you so much PICS staff and management for helping me in my journey to finding and keeping sustainable work. Your efforts are appreciated.

Best Regards,  
Karina Gill

## **Maneet Kaur Testimonial**

All are just awesome. I learned a lot, many things from the program. I wanted to participate for self analysis, where am I ? What are my hidden capabilities?

I am happy to say that overall ... staff and my colleagues .. were very supportive. They not only told me about my weaknesses but also how to overcome them, this I learned from them. Our facilitator for Abilities Empowerment Services Program, Kathleen Hughes, is very kind and helpful, she took pain for each and every participant in this program. She always guides us the right way.

My biggest achievement during this program was, this program helps me in upgrading my skills and my confidence. Once again I would like to thank Kathleen, our TO BE case manager who is going to support us in our job search and to all staff of PICS.

## **Parmjit Singh Testimonial**

Abilities Empowerment Service Programme Report I landed as a Permanent resident of this country in beautiful British Columbia. I am healthy with a sound mind and fit to work 8 to 10 hours daily. In the last one year, I applied to hundreds of various types of jobs, but no response, in spite of the fact that I have vast experience in administration. I have learned about this programme and got an opportunity to join the same and finally completed the ability empowerment service programme.

Firstly I would like to Thank the PICS and the organizer, counselor and their supporting colleagues of the programme on ability empowerment. It is a great opportunity for me to learn new things, new ideas and to meet the intercultural community members and my colleagues in the present programme.

Initially on day one I learned about our rights, which are protected by the Human right Act. Advantages and disadvantages of disclosure of disability, during the course of interview and even in the resume. Then continue learning about the types of skills and thereafter the difference between hard skill, soft skill, transferable skill and adaptable skills. Types of resume, and how to write the resume.

Interestingly, I continue to learn about the interview, types of interview, tips for the interview, tips for researching the job, preparing for an interview, what to do on the day of interview, dress code, What to wear, and how dress impacts the interview. Your presentation on the day of interview on how one appears and acts in meeting the first person that is the receptionist before the interview and followed by waiting for the interview and finally before the interview room and interviewers; finally a mock interview. I enjoyed and learned a lot, particularly when I met Miss Kathleen, especially because I got very positive energy; Finally a graduation ceremony.

It is a fact that I have stopped applying for jobs, as I think it is just a waste of time and energy. I could not fully understand what most people said as they spoke too fast and never asked them to repeat. I joined this programme half heartedly, but now after the completion of the programme, I feel energetic, positive and hopeful. I started asking the people to repeat the words again to understand properly. I learnt that I am not the only person with a visible disability, but there are many like me, and I should not be afraid or hesitate with a problem rather face it. I have now started applying for new jobs.

**Preeti Awla**

8/20/2024

PICS Testimonial

To whom it may concern,

I decided to enroll in the abilities empowerment services program after I was referred to the program by my WorkBC case manager. I was quite reluctant as I had done a similar (or what I thought was similar) program several years ago that was not helpful in my job search at the time. Going into it I did not know what to expect.

From the moment I walked into the PICS office I was pleasantly surprised. Our instructor Kathleen Hughes made everyone, including myself, feel comfortable with her positive and motivating demeanor. We all had very different backgrounds and were looking for different career paths yet we all happened to be searching for a leader that could help format the blueprint of our job search and Kathleen fit that role perfectly. Her team helped us all tremendously with interview prep. I once mentioned how I needed help with my taxes and within seconds was offered help from one of Kathleen's team members.

This program helped me build the confidence that I had lost for years. The little moments of gratitude that I felt when certain things were accomplished such as upgrading my resume and practicing my interviewing skills, all happened due to this program. Having a better understanding of what I could change has helped me view my job search as more of an exciting experience rather than a stressful one. I would personally like to thank Kathleen and her team at PICS for helping our community and giving us the proper tools to grow in our future careers.

Sincerely,

Preeti Awla

## **Pardeep Kaur**

I am Pardeep Kaur. I recently completed the AES program. I participated in this program because I always wanted to be confident. Here I learned many things. I also learned about Human rights, hard skills and soft skills, resumes, interview questions, job search, networking, rights of employees and responsibilities of employers, bullying and harassment etc. Now I am clear about my goals and I will work hard to reach there. In five days I got all kind of support and I will never forget these days because I remember how nervous I was on the first day but this program helped me to be confident. I will always remember how to deal with situations, whether it's about work or life, doesn't matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



**Jesse Moniz**

I have learned how to find new way of finding jobs and this will help me also i am very thin line of becoming homeless due my financial situation so i am extremely needed a job very badly. I am only have two month left and that it.

## **Samar Deshpande**

I joined this program so that I could find a stable employment situation for myself. I wasn't very sure how it would help me at first but since I didn't have any luck finding a job myself, I thought of joining PICS program to focus on my job search in a more professional manner. I learned a lot about tips and tricks to find work and a lot of employment standards which I didn't know of before. I learnt in this program that I could overcome my physical limitations and find fulfilling work if I try my best. I was supported by the organizers by putting me through real life situations like a mock interview which would be definitely handy while job hunting.

My short-term goal is to find work as soon as I can and I hope to get certifications in the field of HR so I can hopefully pivot back in an HR job. I consider completing this program an achievement in itself. I learned in this program no matter one's physical barriers it is important to give your best which in turn can lead to a great career and a fulfilling life.

## **Kayla Walton-Benn**

### Journey to PICS Skills Program Graduation

I began my PICS Skills journey at Work BC, with my case worker Lisa. She helped me find the PICS program so that I could get help in looking for a job and be placed in a job that i could do.

I was excited to get into the PICS program feeling like I could finally get the help i needed in finding and getting a job. Help that I always felt that I needed but didn't know how to get it or where to find it. I began to feel more optimistic about the future when it came to finally getting a job

I was also excited to learn that i could get help with potentially getting a course in computer office/ office assistant program. When the program started i began to learn about employment and the steps i would need to take in order to help myself get and find a job. One of the things i learned is that I didn't have to disclose with any employer that is trying to employ me.

I also learned more about soft and hard skills, and also what soft and hard skills I needed to work on especially needing to improve on my hard skills. I learned about what other parts of my journey to employment, like my job interview skills needed to improve. I liked that the program broke down the areas that I needed to improve on something that I haven't gotten but I think I greatly needed and appreciated the program doing for me.

Because I know it will help me in the long run in getting a job in the future. As well as helping myself build my job finding and job interview confidence and help me be more hopeful and excited to look and get a job.

Through the first two weeks in the PICS course i learned not just about employment but also about myself, especially about my soft skills, some hard skills, and the confidence I thought I didn't have. I also learned of what my action plan would be like and the goals I came up with.

Some of the goals i came up with the help of Kathleen Huges, my career coach was, giving myself a year's time to apply and finish getting GED. As well as finding a part time job, and then possibly taking a course to help myself to get a full-time job within that suited my needs and ability's. Hopefully I will start beginning to achieve my goals within the next few weeks. And begin having a better quality of life not just financially, but mentally and emotionally.

I look forward to the next few weeks at the PICS program as well as my future.

Sincerely,

Kayla Walton-Benn

## **Bridget Lee Thompson**

I am Bridget, I wanted to do this because I want to be working part time or full time, it's been over 2yrs since I worked. I had applied for help into finding employment because I could not understand why I was having such a difficult time. When I was accepted, I was so excited to get a different perspective about writing a resume and learning more about interviews. There is a lot to learn about interviews. Kathleen the facilitator is extremely knowledgeable and breaks everything down to have a better understanding how a resume and interview work. It was amazing how many people were in class. Everyone is pleasant to speak with. All the staff at PICS are pleasant and wants to help and see you succeed. A positive experience.

Bridget

## **Darren T.**

I wanted to participate in the Abilities Empowerment program offered by PICS because I am unemployed. I wanted to work and build a career. I have goals to move out with my partner and rent a place. Throughout the program, I learned a lot about resumes, interview tips, employment strategies, my rights in the workplace, workplace culture, and more.

There was a memorable in-class activity. There was a list of soft skills, and I had to check off my skills. I learned that I have dozens of soft skills, such as an ability to work under pressure, and an adaptable mindset. I became more confident because of this activity.

My biggest accomplishment during this program was doing well during the mock interview. I was able to use the STAR method a few times, so I had stories prepared that helped my interviewer see my strengths and capabilities. I feel like the STAR method will be very useful going forward, and it will help set me apart from other candidates.

It was very important for me to learn about the hidden job market as well. I did not know how important networking and referrals were. I plan to talk to more people, make more connections, be helpful to people, and then ask them if they know of anyone that's hiring.

I feel prepared to tackle my employment goals now. For now, I plan to work an entry-level job, and also take a Medical Office Administration course. I believe that taking this course is a step in the right direction for me. I feel confident that I can get a job.

Thank you PICS, and thank you Kathleen for facilitating the program,

Darren Truong

## **Jolinka**

I would love to participate in this program because it has taught me how to find a good job. I understand this place is a safe and supportive environment and it provides unconditional support for everyone and unconditional love toward every student.

PICS Accessibility Empowerment Program is giving me a tool that I can apply for a lifetime. Kathleen did a fantastic job by delivering all the knowledge to us and her enthusiastic personality inspired me in so many ways.

I understand what kind of rights I have and the policy and procedure for the work environment.

I am looking forward to others joining this great program and wish everyone good luck in his/her future as well.

## **Tristan Peters**

Going into this program I really lacked confidence about asking for accommodations in the workplace, and hearing that I am backed up by the government in asking for realistic accommodations makes me feel much more comfortable in asking for them where I need them. I was also unsure about when to disclose my disability, and I gained clarity on that.

## **Aman**

Dear Kathleen

let me fist thank you and your team who prepared this program for us

The ability and empowerment services program was beyond my expectations, I learned a lot. My expectations were so limited and small about this program, but to be honest I achieved much more than that. It took me from job searching point to the employee rights ,workplace culture and .....in general now I am able to make a target resume ,know about my soft and hard skills ,how to define my soft skills ,(STAR) technique and how to impress the employer by telling a short story of Satuation+Task+Action+Result . interview skills ,strengths and weaknesses and I have learned a lot about myself, There were some thoughts and imaginations in my mind about myself before participating in this program some of them are proven wrong , and the most important component of this program was mock interview , It was so practical ,effective and knew about my weakness and strengths points, and I am sure I will utilize all these in my career and employment journey in the future and the last thing that my self confidence and self esteem is much more stronger now .



## **Dyllan Barry**

I'd first learnt about this program from PICS from my case manager while looking for a way to get a reliable way for me to have employers be more likely for them to consider me ready for employment, not only have they given me the opportunities and knowledge to do so, they also still plan to give me their on-going support!

During my time here at PICs I've learnt that getting the training for the career I am striving towards is not only possible but may even be paid by organizations to help me pursue my career!

I hope that once I have completed my final courses and have my training , I'll have exactly what I need to put myself out there, thank you so much for all of your support, PICs!

## **Inderjit Kaur**

When I first joined the Abilities Empowerment Services Program, I was filled with a mix of hope and uncertainty. As someone with a mental health disability, I was looking for a way to rebuild my confidence and discover my strengths. On the first day, I stepped into the room, surrounded by others who were on their unique journeys. There was an instant sense of connection—an understanding that we were all here to grow, learn, and support one another.

The workshops were thoughtfully designed to help us develop practical skills while addressing the challenges we faced. From making a resume to an interview preparation, every session was a stepping stone toward building a more capable and confident version of myself. One session that truly stood out was a financial literacy presentation by Rahul. It taught us the essentials of managing money, budgeting effectively, and planning for the future. For someone who had often felt overwhelmed by financial decisions, this session was eye-opening. I walked away with tools and strategies that immediately made me feel more in control of my finances.

Throughout the program, I received unwavering support from Kathleen, Navraj, and Anurag. Their encouragement motivated me to step out of my comfort zone, and I developed a new level of self-assurance.

By the time I reached the skills graduation, I felt like a different person. I had not only gained practical skills but also a renewed sense of purpose. The program taught me that my mental health challenges do not define me—they are just one part of my story. The most valuable lesson I take away is that growth happens when you embrace vulnerability and allow yourself to be supported.

Graduating from the program was not the end of my journey but the beginning of a new chapter. I now carry the confidence and skills to pursue my career goals, whether in health care, community support, or education. This program reminded me that no matter where you start, with the right tools and support, you can build a future that aligns with your dreams.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my facilitator Kathleen and her dedicated team, Navraj and Anurag. Their guidance, patience, and encouragement made this journey truly transformative. Thank you for believing in me and empowering me to believe in myself.

Regards,  
Inderjit Kaur

## **Leah Veitch**

I participated in this program to re join the work force as I have been not working for so long. I thought it would be workshops. I learned a lot about myself and employers. I was given really great support in preparing for an interview. Feedback I never would have thought of. I really thought I did well in interviews. From the mock interviews I learned I have a lot to improve on which will really help me when I go for an interview for the job I really want. I also really appreciated being with other people who were struggling to find work it made me feel like I was not alone. I think my biggest accomplishment during this program was getting there every day possible even when I was sick. It was one hour there and back by bus, and I was still able to make it even though me and my kids both got sick. That showed me I am ready for work or school. I found Kathleen very supportive and inspirational she made me feel like it was possible to achieve my goals. I am really happy I did this program it was a great starting point for me rejoining the work force.

## **Rafael Mejia**

Hello my name is Rafael Mejia.

I wanted to participate in this program because I needed more information about what you look forward to about work, interviews and people.

I honestly thought it would be rough for me as I don't know many skills related to employment. I'm not a good people's person and I generally tend to not like many people being around me.

I expected to learn all sorts of things related to employment and resumes, people and also the inner workings of it all.

I learned that I really need a lot of work on myself. I had a hard time understanding certain things others said as I can't relate to them and their experiences. I need to work on how to talk to others and not talk about myself in a negative way because I have nothing good to say. I've never viewed myself that way and Kathleen has opened my mind and I do have certain qualities I should put forward and say.

The support was good. If I had any issues I could bring it up. Everything was understandable and if I need help, I can always contact someone there.

I will apply the feedback I received and make my interviewing skills better. I'm not great on expressing what my mind is thinking as it feels like a traffic jam.

Currently, I'm eager to find some type of employment, it doesn't matter what type. I could work on education but right now, making money is a priority. Though, I do want to finish my highschool/GED diploma in the future.

I'm going to work hard on the type of work I want to do.

Biggest accomplishment arriving to class and getting the knowledge of how to do interviews and how I can apply that information to myself. I make it on time, I try to do my best even if it isn't much.

From day one to the final day I really enjoyed everyone and Kathleen. She is very soft speaking and gives insights of her own experiences and how it relates to the workshop. I will remember what I have learned and try to not disappoint anyone that has put time to get me to do better.

I'm going to miss everyone in the class but that's how life works as it moves forward but I learned from everyone in there.

Rafael

## **Teresa**

Before I entered the Abilities Empowerment Services Program, I diligently researched ways to write resumes and cover letters. This time-consuming effort did not fruitfully land me in interviews. The Abilities Empowerment Services Program has been an efficient approach to gaining employment. In this program, Kathleen Hughes has been here to guide me and other participants with the right approach for our resumes to get accepted by employers.

In this program, I have learned to answer interview questions by using the STAR method. The program facilitators have taught many impressive ways to respond to interview questions. These techniques have made me understand what recruiters expect from job candidates.

In helping us prepare for interviews, they have taught us that the more stories you prepare, the more you can relate to the job.

They have brought many mind-opening insights, which are assets I can contribute during an interview and other aspects of a job search. For example, they have taught that completing work ahead of the deadline shows you are self-motivated and capable of self-direction. It shows you are passionate about the job. They have made me consider "What is one thing you want the employer to remember about you?" They have told me to identify that and frame my answers based on it.

Because I now know what interviewers and recruiters expect from job candidates. I feel I can now fruitfully gain employment. Hence, I feel I finally have the freedom to thrive in society. I now dedicate my new skills to successfully achieve a job as an IT Specialist or a Finance Manager at reputable companies like Oracle and Samsung."

## **Leslie Watts**

When I arrived on Day 1, I was thinking "How many times can I rewrite my resume"? and "Is this going to be any more useful than the multiple workshops I've taken already at Work BC?"

I think we were all feeling a little discouraged with our job hunts since covid.

However, it was a real boost to our self-esteems when we had to list our soft skills.

We realized we still had a lot to offer, even if we've changed countries, aged, etc.

Day 2 was also encouraging. We learned how to "rewrite our stories" for the hard questions of an interview. I really liked when Kathleen modelled how she would read our answers.

By pausing after each sentence, each point could sink in more.

Plus it could stop us from "rambling".

(If there were problems we could show ourselves as willing to take action, work with team mates, etc.)

By Day 3 (after drinking espresso late to commute more, go to work and then an exercise class)

I was reminded how organized one would have to get before starting a real, new job.

(e.g.: taking time to shower, laundry managed the weekend before, etc.)

It was nerve-racking at first, even practising in pairs with people we'd met.

However, it became easier. Kathleen had set a safe environment, where we were encouraging each other after each step.

On Day 4 I had a specialist's appointment set.

However, I did set up a Zoom green screen/tested backgrounds in case a virtual interview invite came in.

(I probably could still rewrite my STAR questions so they were even stronger.)

Day 5 I felt was a little triggering, for me because I have some PTSD/panic disorder.

Loud noises, like a manager yelling at someone using aggressive language made me realize that at this particular time,

I might not be good in some Customer Service jobs.

(I did volunteer over the holidays in an Information Officer position helping the public at a Rec Centre - and loved the human contact!)

It was good to review the Canadian/B.C. Workers' Rights.

We Canadians forget that in some countries

the boss can abuse their employees, without complaints.

## **Kayla Bertholet Williams**

### My Story

Kayla Bertholet Williams

Jan,11th, 2025

When I first joined the program I was very anxious and nervous, I thought it wouldn't help me in the end and that I was doomed to fail in anything I was to participate in as my anxiety problems can get quite bad. I am very thankful for all the support I was given and now I have a lot of different areas I can branch off into for more support!

I believe i have accomplished a lot going through this program such as, having less doubt in myself and seeing more abilities than only focusing on my disabilities and what i can't do, getting over anxiety with bus routes and learning more knowledge about approaching interviews in a way i can still be honest but shine. Something I've learned that I find interesting that I never thought of or learned before was switching your resume up every job you apply for, with this knowledge it should be alot easier for me to get more replies from my job searches.

From now on I plan to take my knowledge from this program with me for my future career/employment goals, which i plan on going to art school (VFS) sometime after I get some more experience in me with a day to day life job, to then I wanna start working for video game companies in the art department for concepting/illustrating and or go into animation more and find a nice job in that department and of course to make sure i got a good portfolio going.

For the most part, something I've learned about myself that is special to me is that I have a lot more abilities than I thought I had and that I'm very capable of doing so much more if I really put my mind to it and I'm willing to learn! My disability doesn't make me who I am, my abilities make me who I am.



## Sahida Akter

Sahida Akter

I am looking for job it was long time.  
I hear pics is very helpful about the  
finding jobs. I had met several meeting  
in person finally I attend this program.  
It was really helpful. I learned how to  
make proper resume for specific jobs.  
and how to do the job search, How to  
attend interviews. I learned there  
are different kind of employments in  
the job market. I specially learn how  
to describe myself, my skills and ability-  
es. My trainer trained word by word  
sentence by sentence as a mentor.  
I learned here what is the real job  
market situation in the job market,  
and what percentage of jobs how to  
peoples get. I also learn how to be  
confident in myself.

**Arashdeep Kaur**

Joining this program mean a lot to me. This program gave me chance to improve my skills and better prepare me for a new career with help and some support. In this program I learn about hard and soft skills. Then I found how many soft skills I have. I also know in this program about Resumes and job interviews and how they are very import to find a job. I learn first time that to get a job I need new Resum who depend on what kind of job I am looking. I also learn in this program about what kind of way look for a job and how can I make my own network for job. I learn so much in this program and its a hard to explain in few words.

Thank so much

Arashdeep Kaur