

AN INTERVENTION FOR JOB-SEARCH TRANSITION READINESS: THE EFFECT  
ON DISPLACED WORKERS' READINESS FOR CHANGE AND  
JOB-SEARCH INTENSITY

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council  
of Texas State University–San Marcos  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of ARTS

by

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San Marcos, Texas  
August 2006

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This study explores the application of the Transtheoretical Model's (TTM) theory for displaced workers. The purpose of this study was to increase our understanding of the process of becoming ready to look for work after being displaced from unemployment. First, an intervention for readiness was developed and empirically tested. We did not find support for the intervention's influence on readiness or job search activity after one month; however this unique transition intervention is presented for future empirical research. Second, an exploratory model based on the TTM and previous research was analyzed. Our results support a causal path from transition readiness to job-search intensity. Results show support for the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) over the Theory of Planned Behavior (TBP) for this population. The findings suggest that interventions for a discouraged worker should facilitate decision balance as recommended in the TTM.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Job loss generates stress and is ordered in the top quartile of negative life events (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). Although there are economic costs to displacement, the harmful psychological results may be more difficult to calculate. Such costs include decreases in mental, physical, and psychosocial functioning (Hanisch, 1992; Price, 1992) with higher rates of dysfunction reported by unemployed persons related to depression (Dooley, Catalano, & Wilson, 1994), alcoholism (Catalano, Dooley, Wilson, & Hough, 1993), and divorce (Liem & Liem, 1988). Due to the strain of being involuntarily separated from employment, many individuals become unmotivated to perform job-search activities (Borgen & Admundson, 1987), which may in turn affect the duration of their unemployment. Researchers report that job-search activity appears to increase both one's probability, and quality of reemployment outcome (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001; Saks, 2006; Schwab, Rynes, & Aldag, 1987; van Hooft, Born, Taris, Van der Flier, & Blonk, 2004). Therefore, it would benefit this population to understand what type of intervention can impact their job-search performance. This study poses the question: Will an intervention designed to increase displaced individuals' readiness to engage in a job-search activity have an impact on the intensity of their search activities?

Displaced workers are defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as, "Unemployed workers persons 20 years of age and older who lost or left jobs because

their plant or company closed or moved, there was insufficient work for them to do, or their position or shift was abolished” (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2006, p. 2). The research literature uses various terms to describe an unemployed individual who was released from employment due to a reduction in force including: downsized, laid-off, involuntarily separated, and displaced. This study will refer to these individuals as *displaced workers*. The population in this study will be individuals who were displaced and have not yet found work, temporary or otherwise.

### Job-Search Interventions

The negative effect of unemployment may be mediated by an effective job-search intervention (Eden & Aviram, 1993; van Ryn, & Vinokur, 1992; Vinokur, Schul, Vuori, & Price, 2000). A *job-search intervention* is an act taken to intervene in the job-search process in order to shorten the duration of unemployment. Interventions enhance job-search skills and motivate the job seeker to engage in job-search behaviors until reemployment is attained (Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & van Ryn, 1989). Job-search interventions that are purchased by corporations for their displaced employees are called outplacement services. Kirk (1994) estimates that 39% of corporations who have reduced their labor force contract with outplacement firms to provide services for their displaced workers (Gowan & Nassar-McMillan, 2001). Most outplacement programs are designed help displaced workers develop problem-focused coping strategies (Leana & Feldman, 1994) by delivering skill-building interventions focused on how to conduct a job-search, write a resume, and interview for a job (Doherty, 1998).

Working with a supportive outplacement firm is associated with a greater number of hours being dedicated to the job-search (Westaby, 2004). There is empirical evidence

that job-search interventions increase the displaced worker's chances of reemployment (Kanfer et al., 2001), lessen the duration of unemployment (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005), and decrease the risk of *underemployment* (Saks, 2006; Vinokur, Van Ryn, Gramlich, & Price, 1991).

### *Job-search Intensity*

The time and effort dedicated to a job-search, or *job-search intensity*, is defined as persistence (Barron & Mellow, 1981; Schwab et al., 1987), or “the frequency and scope of engagement in job-search behavior” (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Rotundo, 1999, p. 897). Kanfer et al. (2001) report that higher job-search intensity led to more job offers received and decreased unemployment duration, thus suggesting that an active job-search is critical for displaced workers who desire reemployment (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

### *Readiness for Change*

It is expected that a lack of readiness to engage in job seeking behaviors could mean that discouraged individuals are likely to *not* utilize the outplacement services. Although interventions have been shown effective for a population of displaced workers, the most helpful components of such an intervention for those job seekers who are discouraged, or unmotivated, have not been identified. The motivation to begin a new set of behaviors is referred to as *readiness for change*, defined as “a collection of thoughts and intentions toward the specific change effort” (Bernerth, 2004, p. 40). Readiness is relevant to the displaced worker because role change is a central component of the experience of job loss (Price, Vinokur, & Friedland, 1996). It is necessary for the displaced worker to be motivated to change behavior as they cease performing the

activities related to their work, and engage in the new role of a *job seeker* where a different set of actions are required for finding work.

### Predictors of Job-Search Intensity

In the last 20 years research on job-search behaviors has increased our understanding of what variables may predict one's intention to search for a job (Saks, 2006; van Hooft et al., 2004; Wanburg Glomb, Song, & Sorenson, 2005; Wanburg, Hough, & Song, 2002). Three specific variables appear to be closely related to job-search behavior: (a) financial strain or hardship, (b) expectancy, and (c) work valence. *Financial strain* is the level of discomfort in the financial reality of losing one's job (Ullah, 1990; Vinokur, Price, & Caplan, 1996). *Expectancy* is one's confidence in being able to find a suitable job in the market place, not dependant on their job-search skills or ability (Feather & O'Brien, 1987). And *Work valence* is the importance of working to the individual (Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979), or the "perceived attractiveness or desirability of employment" (Feather & O'Brien, 1987, p. 251).

*Job-search intention* measures an individual's intent to engage in job-search behaviors in the near future (Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). Four predictor variables of job-search intention derived from a review of the job-search literature are as follows: (a) self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992), (b) subjective norm (Vinokur & Caplan, 1987), (c) job-search attitude (Vinokur & Caplan, 1987), and (d) motivational control (Kanfer & Heggstad, 1997). *Job-search self-efficacy* is based on Bandura's (1986) concept of self-efficacy and may be defined as the confidence to perform and sustain job-search behaviors under stress and despite temptations (Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Wanberg et al., 1999). *Subjective norm* is the

individual's perception of the importance of their job-search to the people closest to them (Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). *Job-search attitude* is a person's positive or negative evaluation of the value of performing a job-search (van Hoof et al., 2004; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). And last, *Motivational control* is the skill to sustain effort throughout the job-search (Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997; Wanberg et al., 1999). All of these variables are believed to predict intention either directly or indirectly, and therefore may have an influence on job-search intensity.

### Models of Job-Search Behavior

An integrated model of job-search theory may prove useful in the analysis of these variables related to job-search behavior. A Structural Equation Model (*SEM*) establishes and estimates the relationships between a set of variables (Breckler, 1990), which in turn allows researchers to identify how variables may directly, or indirectly, affect the target behavior (Kline, 2005). A SEM is used to demonstrate whether causal hypotheses embedded in a theory's model fit with the data (Kline, 2005). Although the primary purpose of our study is to examine the impact of a job-search intervention on a displaced worker's readiness to engage in a job-search, our data will allow us to examine the fit of a path analytic model of job-search behavior. This may inform the development of future interventions and help explain the influence, or lack of outcome for this study's job-search intervention.

### Research Questions

The objective of our study is to obtain a better understanding of the impact of the four predictor variables of job-search intention and the three predictor variables on job-search behavior on a displaced worker's readiness to perform job-search behaviors and

the relationship of readiness to the intensity of a displaced worker's job-search activity. This study extends the research by identifying readiness in this population and observing if the intervention has an influence on displaced individuals' readiness or behavior.

### *Significance of the Study*

Previous job loss interventions have not identified those least likely to take action, partly because past studies conceptualize job-search intention or motivation, as a *state* (Van Hooft et al., 2005; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987; Vinokur et al., 2000; Wanberg et al., 2005; Wiener, Oei, & Creed, 1999) rather than as a *process* that can be measured in terms of degree of intention. The Transtheoretical Model (TTM; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992) provides an empirically based approach to assess the *process* of becoming ready to take action, as well as a general guideline for effective interventions. The TTM has not been applied to a general population of displaced workers. The identification of effective components that increase job-search intensity for discouraged seekers may assist in shortening the duration of unemployment, thus reducing its negative consequences, and be utilized to strengthen future intervention efforts (Vinokur & Schul, 1997).

### *Research Questions*

The following research questions were identified to guide this study:

1. Could an effective intervention be adapted from readiness interventions that have successfully influenced behavior change within other populations (e.g. smokers)?
2. Could this intervention boost the displaced worker's stage of readiness to engage in job-search behavior?

3. Would a higher state of readiness be associated with the displaced worker's job-search intensity?
4. Can a model be created that encapsulates the theory of the Transtheoretical Model while integrating other psychological models of behavior change for a comprehensive and integrated model of job-search behavior?
5. Is the model, which describes the cause effects among the variables job-search attitude, subjective norm, work valence, financial strain, work expectancy, self-efficacy, and transition readiness and the dependent variable, job-search intensity, consistent with our observed correlations among these variables?
6. If our model is consistent, what are the estimated direct, indirect, and total causal effects among the variables?

### *Hypotheses*

Hypothesis 1: Participants who receive the job-search transition readiness intervention (TRI) will score significantly higher on the measure of readiness and job-search intensity after 1 month than participants who did not receive the intervention.

Hypothesis 2: Participants who take the initial survey without a TRI will score significantly higher on the measure of readiness and job-search intensity after 1 month than participants who did not complete an initial measurement or receive the intervention.

Hypothesis 3: An intervention targeted to those in the earlier stages of readiness will increase their readiness and yield a change in URICA-VC profiles.

Hypothesis 4: Participation in a Transition Intervention (TI) will be significantly positively correlated to a displaced individual's job-search intensity (JSI) so they will

utilize more of the programs and resources offered by the outplacement firm than control groups.

Hypothesis 5: Asking an individual to measure their readiness to seek employment (JSR) will be significantly positively correlated to a displaced individual's job-search intensity (JSI) so they will utilize more of the programs and resources offered by the outplacement firm than control groups.

Hypothesis 6: Age, gender, education, and occupational status will interact in such a way that men and younger individuals with a higher level of education or occupational status will have a higher degree of job-search intensity than women and older individuals with a lower level of education or occupational status.

Hypothesis 7: Job-search attitude (A), subjective norm (SN), job-search self-efficacy (SE), and work valence (WV) will be significantly positively correlated to higher job-search intensity (JSI).

Hypothesis 8: Job-search attitude (A), subjective norm (SN), job-search self-efficacy (SE), and work valence (WV) will mediate the relationship between job-search intensity (JSI) and their antecedent variables of financial strain (FS) and job-search expectancy.

Hypothesis 9: Motivational control (MC) will be significantly positively correlated to higher job-search intensity (JSI).

Hypothesis 10: A higher job-search readiness for change (TR) and job-search self-efficacy (SE) will be significantly positively correlated to job-search intensity (JSI).

Hypothesis 11: Job-search readiness (TR) for change will mediate the relationship between job-search intensity (JSI) and job-search attitude (A), subjective norm (SN), and motivational control (MC).

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Although there is a tremendous amount of research in job loss, there is relatively little understood about how to intervene and facilitate an individual's job-search if they are not motivated to look for work. This chapter seeks to review the literature in three primary areas: (1) the severity and extent of unemployment in North America, particularly due to job loss, (2) the negative consequences to the person, (3) psychological models of behavior change, and (4) the development of the study's transition readiness intervention.

#### Unemployment in North America

The rationale for this study is based on the gravity, scope, and impact of unemployment in North America, as well as trends towards increased downsizing. According to Canada's Labour Force Statistics, Canada's unemployment is estimated to be at 6.1% of the population. This is a 30-year low for Canada; nonetheless it is a statistic that affects a substantial number of Canadians (Labour Force Statistics [LFS], 2006). The U.S. Monthly Labor Review as of June 2006, estimates 7 million individuals are unemployed in the United States, or 4.6% (BLS, 2006a). Riddell (2005) from the Department of Economics at University of British Columbia notes that the ongoing gap between the U.S. and Canada's percentages of unemployment may be due to how the numbers are calculated for each country. Riddell points out that the U.S. includes only

active job seekers and excludes those job seekers who are both passive and active, whereas Canada includes these individuals (Jones & Riddell, 1999). It is disturbing to note that both the U.S. and Canada, after 1967 and 1975 respectively, excluded all passive job seekers. It is estimated that over 1.4 million people are not accounted for in the current U.S. unemployment statistics. The BLS news report (2006b) estimates that, of those individuals who are marginally attached to the labor force, an estimated 323,000 are considered *discouraged workers*, defined as “persons who want and are available for work and looked for work in the past 12 months, but are not currently looking because they believe there are no jobs, or none for which they would qualify” (BLS, 2006b). This shadow population suggests that the scope of unemployment may be even greater than is reported in either the U.S. or Canada by the media.

### *Downsizing Trends*

Beginning in the 1980s, the U.S. economy and its workforce experienced the destabilization of careers and widespread corporate downsizing (Cappelli, Bassi, Katz, et al., 1997). Farber (1997) evaluates job loss from 1981-1995 and finds a trend for increases in job loss for older and more educated workers. McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) point out that the frequency of downsizing remained constant even during the healthy economy of the 1990s and has shown an upward trend since September 11, 2001. The leveling effect of globalization suggests that the movement of jobs to other countries like Russia, India, and China is likely to increase through corporate downsizing, outsourcing, and offshoring (Friedman, 2004). The investment firm Goldman Sachs reports over 300,000 jobs lost to date and projects over 6 million jobs will leave the U.S. in the next 10 years (Wilson & Purushothaman, 2003). Such alarming unemployment trends

highlight the importance of understanding the effects of job loss (Hanisch, 1999; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

### *Negative Consequences of Unemployment*

Of those who are unemployed, the group referred to as *displaced workers* have experienced a recent job loss. The experience of job loss comes with its own unique set of stressors that change over time as a result of the initial job loss, such as an increase in financial strain over time (Archer & Rhodes, 1995; Caplan et al., 1989; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Additional stressors may result from loss, such as the loss of economic power, or a sense of normalcy, which often result in grief reactions (Archer & Rhodes, 1995; Keefe, 1984).

A large body of research establishes that there are negative physical, psychosocial, and mental health consequences for those who are unemployed, with emphasis on these outcomes for those who are unemployed due to a layoff (Bartley, 1994; Kasl, Rodriguez, & Lasch, 1998; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999). Unemployed persons display lower self-esteem (Winefield, Winefield, Tiggemann, & Goldney, 1991), more depression (Grunberg, Moore, & Greenberg, 2001; Hanisch, 1999; Vinokur et al., 1996), and increases in eating and Body Mass Index (Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stansfield, & Smith, 1998; Grunberg et al., 2001). Researchers found that marital satisfaction tends to decline while family dysfunction (Hanisch, 1999) and problems related to substance abuse tend to increase (Dooley, Felding, Levi, 1996; Reissman, Orris, Lacey, & Hartman, 1999).

McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) utilizing a meta-analytic technique to examine the impact of well being during unemployment, found both psychological and physical well

being appeared lower for those with a longer duration of unemployment. McKee-Ryan et al. stresses the importance of an active job search and when appropriate, an effective job-search intervention. Due to the scope of unemployment and depth of its impact, it appears necessary to identify what elements of a job-search intervention will promote the initiation and continuation of job-search activities (Caplan, Vinokur, & Price, 1997). A review of the models of behavior change and the variables studied in these models when applied to job search may serve to highlight what aspects of a job search should be the focus of such an intervention. This will also serve to illustrate what variables may be most important to include in an exploratory structural equation model on job search.

#### Psychological Models of Behavior Change

In a recent review of the predictors of job-search behavior, van Hooft et al. (2002) report several models that apply to job-search behavior: (a) the theory of reasoned action (TRA; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), (b) the theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991), and (c) the expectancy value theory (EVT; Feather, 1990, 1992). An additional model, *the Transtheoretical Model of behavior change* (TTM; Prochaska et al., 1992) is a model similar to these other attitude-behavior models, but one that has not yet been applied to job-search behavior. Recent studies integrated the TPB and the TTM to look at health food choice (Armitage, Sheeran, Conner, & Arden, 2004) and the cessation of cigarette smoking (Bledsoe, 2006), but this study is the first to integrate these models for the purpose of studying job-search behavior. This study proposes a model of job-search behavior in displaced workers (presented in Figure 1) that is conceptualized theoretically from the TTM, the TPB, and the EVT. This study's hypothesized model attempts to synthesize several frameworks as it incorporates mediator and predictor variables for job-

search behavior from the job-search literature and the aforementioned empirically supported models. Thus, a review of these attitude-behavioral models would serve to support the rationale for this study's hypothesized model.

### *The Theory of Reasoned Action*

The Theory of Reasoned Action was first developed in 1967 (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973; Fishbein, 1967; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). It has two premises that apply to job seeking. One, that the *intention* to look for a job is the immediate antecedent of job-search behavior. And two, that the individual's intention is determined by two variables: (a) an individual's *attitude*, and (b) their *subjective norm*. Subjective norm is an individual's perception of the value of their job-search to the people in their environment (Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). A high subjective norm and job-search attitude significantly predicted job-search intention in a displaced population (Van Hooft et al., 2004).

### *The Theory of Planned Behavior*

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is an extension of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and was one of the first such models to be used in understanding unemployment behavior (Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). The TPB was created with the addition of a third variable to TRA, namely perceived behavioral control (PBC), which is conceptualized in the job-search research as *self-efficacy*. In their meta-analytical review, Kanfer et al. (2001) found that self-efficacy negatively predicted unemployment duration, positively predicted the number of job offers received, and increased the probability of obtaining reemployment.

In a meta-analytic review of theory of planned behavior studies, the TPB accounted for 27% of variance in behavior and 39% of variance in intention (Armitage &

Conner, 2001). When applied to job-search, the TPB model adequately explained behavior with both unemployed individuals (van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992) and with graduating students seeking employment (Caska, 1998). Two studies support the TPB model's applicability in displaced populations in the Netherlands and Minnesota respectively (van Hooft et al., 2004; Wanberg et al., 2005). The TPB variables of job-search attitude, subjective norm, and job-search self-efficacy are incorporated into the model and assessed for the purpose of understanding their impact on individual readiness and job-search intensity. This provides evidence for the inclusion of these variables in our model.

### *Expectancy Value Theory*

Feather's (1990) Expectancy Value Theory (EVT) is a third attitude-behavior model that has been applied to job-search behavior (Feather, 1992). The EVT relates the individual's level of motivation to achieve a goal to two concepts: (a) the expectations to attain the desired goal, and (b) the incentive value (or valence) of that particular goal. The EVT predicts that the more value something has, the more the individual will perceive it as an important goal. Expectations can be conceptualized as two distinct constructs: (a) *self-efficacy* or "a person's estimate that a given behavior will lead to certain outcomes" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193), and (b) *work expectancy*, defined as one's confidence in finding a job in the market place (Feather & O'Brien, 1987). *Work valence*, also referred to as employment commitment, is an attitudinal variable that refers to the significance of work for the individual (Feather, 1990). Studies show that unemployed people who strongly value employment feel more depressed about being unemployed (Feather & Davenport, 1981). Researchers found a positive relationship between individual differences in

employment commitment and job-search intensity (Gowan & Gatewood, 1992; Rowley & Feather, 1987; Wanberg et al., 1999). Van Hooft et al. (2004) found additional evidence for work valence as a significant predictor of job-search behavior.

Van Hooft et al. (2004) found evidence that both financial strain and work expectancy have an indirect effect as mediator variables on job-search behavior through subjective norm and job-search attitude. It has been suggested that individuals who have greater financial obligations or lack financial resources during unemployment will have a greater need to find work (Leana & Feldman, 1994). In the research, financial strain is positively related to job-search effort and behavior (Vinokur & Caplan, 1987; Ullah, 1990), and faster reemployment (Kanfer et al., 2001; Vinokur & Schul, 2002). Based on van Hooft et al.'s SEM analysis, this study proposes that the effect of financial strain on job-search behavior will be indirect.

Feather and O'Brien (1987) found partial support for the EVT in that work valence did seem to impact job-search behavior, but expectancy did not. Additional evidence from recent studies shows support for the EVT (Vansteenkiste, Lens, De Witte, & Feather, 2005). Although there is less support for expectancy, the research overall has been inconclusive, and thus it is included in our model. The research that supports the variables of the EVT warrants the inclusion of work valence, expectancy, and job-search self-efficacy in our integrated model; however, based on previous research this study puts forward the hypothesis that work expectancy will have an indirect effect on job-search intensity. It is expected that an individual's subjective norm and job-search attitude will mediate the relationships of financial strain and expectancy to the outcome variable job-search intensity.

### *Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change*

The TTM is called transtheoretical because it includes multiple theoretical constructs to explain what impacts behavior change. These include: (a) *self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1977), (b) the *decision balance* of pros and cons of change (Janis & Mann, 1977), (c) the *10 processes of change*, and (d) the organizing construct of *stages of change*, or one's readiness to take action. The TTM proposes that decision balance and self-efficacy are the key predictors of transitions between stages (Armitage et al., 2004). Decision balance relates to the ratio of pros to cons associated with performing a particular behavior (Janis & Mann, 1977).

Until very recently, individual readiness studies were published almost exclusively in the medical and health literature (Madsen, Miller, & John, 2005). The TTM makes two significant contributions to the research on job-search behavior: (a) an assessment of the process, or stage, of an individual's readiness, and (b) a guide for what makes for successful interventions, and specifically for those with a lower state of readiness.

The stages of change provide a useful beginning in explaining the TTM. According to the theory, individuals can be classified as being primarily in one of these stages. In the first stage of change, *Precontemplation*, individuals are not intending to take action within the next 6 months. They frequently experience denial of the magnitude of the problem, they are unwilling to change, or they have given up because they feel demoralized or discouraged. Individuals in the second stage, *Contemplation*, are intending to take action in the next 6 months. They are more likely to see the importance of taking action, but they overestimate the costs. In the *Preparation* stage behavior

change is intended in the next 30 days and some small steps have been taken. Individuals in the *Action* stage have been engaging in target behaviors. In the *Maintenance* stage the behaviors are sustained over 6 months. Prochaska et al. (1992) conceptualize these stages as a spiral. People begin at the bottom and move up the stages in order (pre-contemplation, contemplation, etc...), but relapse to previous stages and may recycle several times before reaching the top of the spiral. In longitudinal studies, people moved through these five stages whether they initiated the change on their own or they received a form of intervention (Diclemente & Prochaska, 1982; Prochaska & Diclemente, 1983).

Readiness for change is sometimes referred to as “motivational readiness” in the literature (Godin, Lambert, Owen, Nolin, & Prud'homme, 2004). Motivation, or intention, is a fundamental aspect of the stages of change. Godin et al. (2004) note that the first three stages of change are defined by intention, whereas the last stage relates to actual behavioral changes, and the preparation stage contains elements of both intention and behavior (Godin et al., 2004). Because motivation can be incongruent with actual behavior (Godin, Shepard, Colantonio, 1986), it is expected that the stage model may better represent the dynamic and complex process of engagement in a job-search than the previously utilized ‘state’ models.

The construct of job-search readiness would appear to include job-search intentions by definition (Godin et al., 2004). Dalton and Gottlieb (2003, pp. 109-110) found evidence that the construct of readiness of change is both a state, as in a “readiness to do something” such as perform a skill; and a process, as in “becoming ready over time”. To assess one’s job-search intention researchers ask an individual to rate their intention to engage in job-search behaviors in the next 2 months (Vinokur & Caplan,

1987), 3 months (Wanberg et al., 1999), or 4 months (van Hoof et al., 2004; Vinokur et al., 2000). Job-search intention is conceptualized as a state, whereas readiness is both a state and a process. Therefore, in this comprehensive model, the construct of job-search intention from the TPB model is replaced with job-search readiness. Wanberg et al. (2005) found that subjective norm and self-efficacy were no longer predictors of job-search behavior when job-search intentions were included in their equation, and thus conclude that intention operates as a mediator of job-search behavior. Because readiness encompasses intention, it is expected that readiness will operate as both a predictor and a mediator of job-search behavior.

Armitage et al. (2004, p. 492) point out that behavior beliefs that are believed to support attitudes in the TBP are equivalent to the pros and cons. Thus, the construct of job-search attitude is used to represent the decision balance construct of the TTM in the hypothesized model. Job-search self-efficacy will be incorporated into the comprehensive model based on its prevalence in all three models (TPB, EVT, and TTM). It is expected that self-efficacy will have a direct influence on behavior, as well as an indirect influence through the channel of job-search readiness.

*Motivational control* (Kanfer & Heggstad, 1997) is the skill of maintaining sustained effort, and is anticipated to support the job-search process by increasing goal setting and facilitating job-search persistence. Wanberg et al. (1999) report significant relationships between the predictor variable motivational control and the outcome variable of job-search intensity and note that motivational control was the only non-demographic factor that predicted sustained job-search intensity. Because the concept of

motivation may be related to the construct of readiness, motivational control is included in our comprehensive model.

Table 2.1 provides a summary of the variables from the models reviewed above and the review of related job-search literature to link how they might relate to each other. These models and their variables provide the basis for our hypothesized integrated model.

**Table 2.1: Variables from Psychological Models for Change.**

Variables from the Literature Review	Theory of Planned Behavior TPB	Expectancy Value Theory EVT	Transtheoretical Model TTM
Attitude	Attitude		Decision Balance
Subjective Norm	Subjective Norm		
Self-efficacy	Perceived Behavioral Control	Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy
Work Expectancy		Work Expectancy	
Intention			Transition Readiness
Motivational Control			
Work Valence		Work Valence	
Financial Strain			

### Assessing Readiness

When researchers compare stage distributions across diverse populations seeking to change a wide variety of behaviors, they find that for those in a pre-action stage (precontemplation, contemplation or preparation), 40% were in the preoccupation stage, 40% were in the contemplation stage, and only 20% were in the preparation stage (Laforge, Velicer, Richmond, & Owen, 1999; Velicer, Fava, Prochaska, et al., 1995).

Based on this data, Mannock, Levesque, and Prochaska (2002) suggest that if only action-oriented interventions are offered, they are likely wasteful for the majority of the population who are not prepared to engage in job-search behavior. These statistics inform our approach to address the needs of the discouraged segment of a displaced population, or those least likely to engage in job-search behaviors with intervention that is not action oriented.

The *University of Rhode Island Change Assessment (URICA)* instrument was developed to assess readiness to change an unspecified problem (McConnaughy, DiClemente, Prochaska, & Velicer, 1989; McConnaughy, Prochaska, & Velicer, 1983). The URICA has four dimensions representing precontemplation, contemplation, action and maintenance. A separate dimension for preparation was dropped because subjects did not discriminate it from contemplation or action. Although the TTM states that an individual moves through each stage, one after another, the individual may have an attitude or exhibit a behavior that characterizes another stage at the same time. Therefore, researchers have utilized profiles developed from the patterns of scores to understand differences in a specific population (Mannock et al., 2002). These profiles can be used to predict behavior such as retention in therapy or the likelihood of reemployment. Although preparation is not a dimension on the instrument, researchers found that profiles of URICA scores represent this stage and thus they maintain it in their theory (McConnaughy et al., 1983; Levesque, Gelles, & Velicer, 2000).

The URICA has been adapted and validated for assessing an individual's readiness for change related to specific behaviors, such as the URICA-DV for men in batterer treatment (Levesque et al., 2000). In an adaptation directly related to our study,

the URICA-VC was created for a population of clients with disabilities to determine their readiness to engage in job seeking behaviors (Mannock et al., 2002). In their study to validate the URICA-VC, Mannock et al. (2002) found a cluster analysis revealed three major profiles: (a) reluctant, (b) reflective, and (c) participative. Those in the reluctant cluster were the most likely to remain in counseling and those who fell into the participative cluster were three times more likely to return to work than other clusters. Our study is the first study to utilize the URICA-VC to determine readiness for change in a population of displaced workers.

#### A Transition Readiness Intervention for Job Search

To facilitate understanding of the development of the TRI, a review of previous interventions related to job-search and transition readiness is presented. There are other forms of intervention delivered through job clubs and job-search classes, but these forums have received little to no attention by quantitative researchers. Although it has been over 15 years since Caplan et al. (1989, p. 759) noted that “experiments to help people cope with job loss and find new employment are few in number,” their own experiment, the JOBS intervention for the unemployed (Curran, Wisthart, & Gringrich, 1999), remains one of the few such empirically tested interventions in the literature.

Vinokur and Schul (1997) report the effectiveness of Caplan et al.’s (1999) intervention appears to come from two elements: (a) building the individual’s self-efficacy and (b) inoculating the individual against setbacks. McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) review job loss literature and recommend job-search interventions that focus on threats to personal identity, bolstering personal resources, and minimizing the negative appraisal of job loss. They note the consistency of their recommendations with previous research that

demonstrates the effectiveness of targeted interventions (Caplan et al., 1989; Creed, Hicks, & Machlin, 1998; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Vinokur et al., 2000). Wanburg et al. (2005) make multiple suggestions regarding what to include in a job-search intervention. They recommend interventions that: (a) improve the individual’s internal locus of control by encouraging them to be in charge of their job-search and helping them recognize that their work will pay off with reemployment; (b) teach coping strategies for reducing stress and encouraging confidence about dealing with set backs; (c) set goals for a higher level of job-search intensity; and (d) encourage involvement of significant others and support systems.

This study’s intervention seeks accomplish the goals recommended in the job-search literature and facilitate the individual’s readiness by utilizing the TTM’s *processes of change* which purport to facilitate the progression from earlier stages toward action, thus increasing motivation. Table 2.2 is adapted for this study from Xiao, O’Neill, Prochaska et al. (2001), and offers definitions of all 10 process of change as they might apply to job seeking.

**Table 2.2: The 10 Processes of Change as Related to Job Search.**

CHANGE PROCESSES	DEFINITIONS
Consciousness-raising	Increasing awareness of facts and tips that support a job-search.
Social Liberation	Feeling a sense of legitimacy in beginning a job-search and acting as a job seeker.
Dramatic Relief	Feeling the negative emotions related to the situation (i.e. loss, fear) and feeling inspired to engage in new behaviors.

Environmental Re-evaluation	Realizing the negative impact of unemployment and potential positive impact of a job-search on one's environment.
Self-re-evaluation	Realizing how unemployment impacts their identity as a person.
Self-liberation	Making a firm commitment to engage in job seeking behaviors.
Counter-conditioning	Strategy for substituting positive cognitions and desired behavior for undesired thoughts and behaviors.
Stimulus Control	Strategy for removing cues that trigger temptation and set backs, while adding reminders to engage in job-search activity.
Contingency Management	Strategy for increasing the rewards for the positive behavior change and decreasing defenses against change.
Helping Relationships	Seeking and using social support.

These 10 processes move from internal change processes that are cognitive and affective (conscience-raising, social liberation, dramatic relief, environmental re-evaluation, self re-evaluation, self-liberation) to external change processes that are behaviorally based (counter conditioning, stimulus control, contingency management, and helping relationships). Internal change processes are utilized more frequently by self-changers early in their progression through the stages, whereas the external processes are used in the later stages when the individual's motivation to make behavioral changes is

high (Prochaska, Redding, & Evers, 1997). These change processes are matched to the stages of change accordingly to create a *stage-matched intervention* for an individual.

For more than 20 years the TTM has been applied to ceasing destructive health practices (such as smoking and drugs) and beginning constructive ones (such as exercise programs and sunscreen use). Success of this model is based on matching an intervention strategy to the individual's stage of readiness. Stage-matched interventions for smokers of cigarettes more than doubled smoking cessation rates of other interventions (Prochaska, DiClemente, Velicer, & Rossi, 1993). They have also outperformed action-oriented interventions for exercise acquisition (Marcus, Bock, Pinto, et al., 1998), dietary behavior (Campbell, DeVellis, Stretcher, et al., 1994), and mammography screening (Rakowski, Ehrich, Goldstein et al., 1998). For *group interventions*, those less ready for change are targeted in the intervention strategy (Prochaska, Prochaska, Cohen, et al. 2004). For instance, Prochaska et al. (2004) designed a campaign for a university campus to attempt to change alcohol consumption by focusing on tactics to increase awareness and create dramatic relief. Although all processes are incorporated to this study's transition intervention, more emphasis is given to the internal processes, and less to the behavioral ones.

Two additional areas of research offer conceptual frameworks that support early interventions that are *not* behaviorally based: (a) transition psychology and (b) transformational learning. Transition psychology's focus is on how individuals cope with change. Its main emphasis is on how individuals evaluate change, and its impact on their perceptions of themselves, their relationships, and assumptions about their world (Nicholson, 1984; Parkes, 1971; Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995). Transition

theory has been directly applied to how individuals cope with job loss in work transitions (Bridges, 2004; Adams, Hayes, & Hobson, 1976), and thus informs our intervention strategy. Mezirow's (1991) transformational learning theory is more generally applied to how adults learn and develop new thinking patterns. It stresses the use of critical reflection on the assumptions of an individual in order to transform one's frame of reference. According to Mezirow (1997), assumptions are thought to underlie an individual's beliefs and interpretations that then influence their goals, motivation, and ultimately their behavior. To create a transition intervention for displaced workers, we synthesize these distinct bodies of research that relate to change.

Our study's job-search intervention will be called a *Transition Readiness Intervention* (TRI) as is designed to facilitate the individual's transition from displaced worker to job seeker. It is not a comprehensive job-search intervention in that it is not intended to build job-search skills such as resume preparation, identification of marketable skills, or interviewing techniques. An outplacement firm will deliver this other aspect of the job-search intervention. The focus of the transition intervention is on bolstering the job seeker's attitude, subjective norm, self-efficacy, and motivational control via the internal change processes. The TRI utilizes exercises to help the participant evaluate the impact and characteristics of their job loss with methods developed by Schlossberg (1981). Other evaluative exercises such as weighing the pros and cons of beginning their job-search are used throughout the intervention (Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente, 1994). An additional objective is to increase participants' awareness of the negative consequences of extended unemployment. The TRI attempts to assist participants in affecting their subjective norm by identifying those people who can

aid them in their job-search, strategize on the type of support they need, and practice asking others for help. The TRI teaches coping strategies, supports the development of self-efficacy and an internal locus of control, and promotes strategies for resilience to set backs. Participation in the TRI is expected to impact the displaced worker's readiness and job-search intensity.

Wanberg et al. (2005) found that men and individuals in professional, technical and managerial occupational levels were more likely to show a higher mean of job-search intensity over time. Leana and Feldman (1992) found that women, individuals with less education, and older individuals might face longer periods of unemployment. Van Hooft et al. (2004) found that both gender and age were significantly negatively related to job-search behavior, indicating that men and younger job seekers engaged in a higher job-search intensity. This study will control for the variables of age, gender, education level, and occupational status in the analysis of job-search intensity due to the empirical evidence for their association with job-search behavior (Kanfer et al., 2001; Wanberg et al., 2002).

### Summary

This study attempts to synthesize several frameworks related to motivation to change behavior in order to better understand what variables may impact job-search readiness. Previous research indicated empirical support for the application of both the TPB and EVT models to job-search behavior, as well as support for the TTM model for behavior change in general. No previous studies until now have applied the TTM to a population of displaced workers or sought evidence for a job-search intervention for

displaced workers based on the TTM, nor has the TTM been conceptualized as a path analysis model for job-search behavior before now.

Job-search interventions may impact job-search intensity by affecting one's intention and motivation to look for employment (Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). Researchers have found a positive correlation between job-search activity levels and shorter periods of unemployment, as well as a greater probability of attaining reemployment (Kanfer et al., 2001; Schwab et al., 1987; Stumpf, Collarelli, & Hartman, 1983). The job-search transition intervention attempts to utilize the 10 change processes to bolster an individual's subjective norm, job-search attitudes, motivational control, and self-efficacy. This study will examine if it encourages those discouraged individuals who are least ready to initiate and maintain a job-search to increase their readiness for change and job-search intensity. It will also explore the fit of a hypothesized model based on the TTM and other psychological models of behavior change in an attempt to maximize the information gained by a national study.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The current study utilizes path analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM), a correlation-based multivariate technique that simultaneously analyzes variables, to develop and evaluate a model that describes the influences an individual's readiness to engage in job search behavior and their actual behavior. Additionally, this research aims to compare subjects using an outplacement program coupled with a job search transition readiness intervention (TRI) to subjects using a conventional outplacement program without an intervention. The TRI is intended to bolster the motivation of an individual who has low readiness for the job search process and therefore is hypothesized to be the least likely to utilize the outplacement services or engage in job search behavior. Thus, the TRI may have an impact on a job seeker's overall job search intensity. In order to guide the reader through the research methodology, this chapter is divided into the following sections: (1) overview of path models, (3) the survey population, (4) variables in the study, (5) data screening and statistical analysis, and (6) the development of the hypothesized model.

#### **Overview of Path Models**

The multivariate regression-based technique of SEM analysis affords the researcher the power and flexibility to simultaneously analyze systems of linear and nonlinear equations. This is important when researchers attempt to explain the

complexity of influences on human behavior. Mertler and Vannatta (2002, p 1.) note when studying human subjects, “It is oftentimes unrealistic to examine the effects of an isolated treatment condition on a single outcome measure.” When structural equation modeling is used within the context of social or behavioral science research, measurements are obtained through observable data, for example information obtained from a survey questionnaire. These measurements are then used in the systems of equations. Also, within this dynamic modeling format, unobservable or “latent” behaviors, or constructs, are mathematically linked to the observable measurements. The results of this process allow for a dynamic, multidimensional understanding of the interplay among the system of equations. This ultimately represents the underlying behavior of interest in the research investigation, and in this case the influences on the intensity of an individual’s job search.

Path diagrams are the graphical display of a set of simultaneous equations, and are expressed through two classes of variables: endogenous and exogenous. Loehlin (2004) describes how these variables are graphically represented in the model. Endogenous variables are those that lie within the diagram and have some dependency on other variables. These variables are portrayed with one or more arrows leading to them and are considered downstream. Exogenous variables are those that lie outside the path diagram and are independent of other variables. They are considered causal sources, and are described with arrows leading away. In a path diagram, source variables (exogenous) are interconnected with curved arrows, demonstrating a correlation between them. If the correlation is zero, there is no arrow. Curved arrows are never used for downstream variables. The most parsimonious (or the model with the fewest number of estimated

parameters) approach is one with the smallest number of connect variables (Loehlin, 2004).

In this investigation, path analysis creates a graphical display of the relative influences on job search intensity. Significant interrelationships and potential causal factors can be identified, and their relative influence can be quantified related to their magnitude or “effect” size. Ideally, the results derived herein will add substantially to the understanding of the complex and dynamic influence related to the behavior of displaced workers.

#### *Key Terminology Related to Structural Equation Modeling*

For the purpose of this research, the following definitions apply:

*Causal modeling* tests the researcher’s predicted theory of causation based upon the intercorrelations between variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002, p. 199).

*Communality ( $h_i$ )* refers to the amount of a variable’s variance that is explained by, or shared with, the other factor(s) (Loehlin, 2004, p. 19; Mertler & Vannatta, 2002, p. 339).

*Correlation coefficient ( $R^2$ )* is used to measure the strength of the relationship between pairs of variables. These relationships are then tested against the model.

*Covariance* is the measure of association between variables.

*Disturbance term* is a residual term that describes the effect of direct determinants that have not been included in the model (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002, p. 200).

*Effect Size* is the measure of the size of the differences between the means of the tested groups. In regression models, the effect size (ES) is computed from the correlation coefficient.

*Endogenous Variables* are latent, or unobserved variables that are dependent. They are influenced by the exogenous variables and the changes in these variables are explained within the model. (Byrne, 2001, p. 5). In the path diagram more arrows may lead into them (Loehlin, 2004, p. 4). For the purpose of this study, subjective norm, work variance, job search attitude, motivational control, transition readiness, and job search intensity are the endogenous variables.

*Exogenous Variables* are independent of other variables and are influenced by variables outside of the model. They are also referred to as source variables. Their causal relationship in path analysis lies outside the path diagram, with arrows leading only away from them, rather than to them (Loehlin, 2004, p. 4). For the purposes of this study, the exogenous variables are an individual's degree of financial strain and their work expectancy.

*Factor loading* is the Pearson correlation, or correlation coefficient, between factors in the model.

*Manifest Variables*, or observed variables, are indicators of the construct they represent. These values are directly measurable (Loehlin, 2004, p. 28).

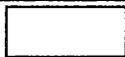
*Measurement Error* refers to the inconsistency of scores within the same instrument. The standard error of measurement (SEM<sub>Meas</sub>) describes the extent to which the measurement may change under different circumstances.

*Multiple Correlation (R)* is the relationship between the predicted and actual values when using multiple regression (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

*Multiple Regression* is a statistical analysis technique involving more than one predictor variable (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002).

*Path Analysis* is a method of latent variable analysis that addresses research questions through the use of path diagrams (Loehlin, 2004, p. 1). It is used to identify a causal relationship between multiple variables. The basics of this method were developed in the 1920's by Sewall Wright, a geneticist, and were used subsequently by researchers in other disciplines. A rapid expansion of use came with the development of many computer programs in the 1980s and 90s (Kline, 2005). Table 3.1 identifies the symbols that are used in path analysis diagrams.

**Table 3.1: Path Analysis Symbols.**

Terminology	Symbol	Definition
Observed Variable		Endogenous or exogenous variables observed by the researcher
Latent Variable		Unobserved variables
Direct Effect	→	The presumed unilateral effect of one variable on another; path arrows only lead away from exogenous variables
Reciprocal Effect	→ ←	The presumed influence between variables is two-way
Correlation	↔ (curved)	The relationship is between exogenous variables

*Path Coefficients* are standardized regression coefficients. These indicate the amount of change over variable causes on another variable when all others are held constant (Loehlin, 2004, p. 12) Measurements are shown in the same scale as the Pearson product-moment correlations. Unlike coefficients derived through multiple regression, however, the standardized path coefficients in path analysis may result in values outside the standard -1.0 to 1.0 range (Klem, 1995, p. 69).

*Path Tracing* is a method to determine the correlation coefficient for each path in the model. Three rules exist for path tracing: (1) the path may not pass through the same variable more than once, (2) a path may not go backwards after having gone forward, and (3) a path may not include more than one double arrow (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002, p. 206-7).

*Spurious Effects* are relationships caused by a third factor that is common between two variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002, p. 208).

*Structural Equation Modeling* is a statistical method that tests regression models simultaneously. The process begins by developing a path model to test a theory that includes latent variables. Objective data is obtained to then test the proposed model. Results include over model fit and parameter estimates (Kline, 2005).

A SEM regarding job search should include all relevant variables while still attempting to remain parsimonious in order to avoid misspecification bias (García & Martinez, 2000). This is why it was important to combine the constructs of the various models earlier identified into a single framework. However, the researcher should avoid specifying relationships among the variables that are not supported by the literature or a solid theoretical background. This explains why other relationships that may seem intuitive were not included in the model. The hypothesized model is considered exploratory in this study, and then results are presented in a revised model to provide a more meaningful analysis of the variables.

#### Survey Population

The subjects for this study were 127 unemployed volunteers across the U.S. and parts of Canada who had recently been displaced from employment (N=127). The data

were collected through a partnership with an international outplacement firm. Some of their clients in the spring of 2006 became our study subjects. These clients, who received outplacement benefits from their previous employer, had access to all of the outplacement firm's support for resume writing and job search. These resources included an outplacement coach, satellite offices, online resources, job banks, and online training classes.

### *Research Design*

Potential subjects were randomly assigned to three groups from the firm's current database of clients. Participants whose contracted services with the firm were about to expire or those without an e-mail in the database were eliminated as candidates. Using a true experimental analytic strategy, each potential participant was randomly assigned one of the three groups so that each group consisted of 550 potential volunteers (N=1,650).

Participants in each group were invited by a representative of the outplacement firm via e-mail to participate in the study. Each e-mail communication included a link to their respective online questionnaire and emphasized that participation was voluntary and confidential.

The experimental group (n=33) completed the URICA-VC instrument and measures survey at Time 1a. The measures asked participants about their job-search intention, self-efficacy, motivational control, work expectancy, work valence, financial strain, job-search attitude, and their perception of the subjective norm related to their job search. The job search transition intervention was delivered at Time 1b to the experimental group. One month later at Time 2, they completed a second set of surveys. This second set included the URICA-VC instrument, a measurement of job search

intensity, and a demographic survey.

The first control group was waitlisted, and thus did not receive a job-search transition intervention. This group (n=38) completed the URICA-VC instrument and measures survey at Time 1a, one month later at Time 2, control group 2 completed the same second set of surveys.

The control group 3 (n=55) completed all surveys, including measures survey, the URICA-VC instrument, a survey on demographic information, and a measurement of job search intensity at Time 2. See Table 3.2 for a summary of the design for this study.

**Table 3.2: Study Design.**

	<b>Experimental Group 1</b>	<b>Wait list Group 2</b>	<b>Control Group 3</b>
<b>Time 1a</b>	URICA-VC Measures	URICA-VC Measures	--
<b>Time 1b</b>	Job Search Intervention	--	--
<b>Time 2</b>	URICA-VC Demographics Job-search intensity	URICA-VC Demographics Job-search intensity	Measures URICA-VC Demographics Job-search intensity

The related hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Participants who receive the job search transition readiness intervention (TRI) will score significantly higher on the measure of readiness and job search intensity after one month than participants who did not receive the intervention.

Hypothesis 2: Participants who take the initial survey without a TRI will score

significantly higher on the measure of readiness and job search intensity after one month than participants who did not complete an initial measurement or receive the intervention.

Hypothesis 3: An intervention targeted to those in the earlier stages of readiness will increase their readiness and yield a change in URICA-VC profiles.

Hypothesis 4: Participation in a Transition Intervention (TI) will be significantly positively correlated to a displaced individual's job-search intensity (JSI) so they will utilize more of the programs and resources offered by the outplacement firm than control groups.

Hypothesis 5: Asking an individual to measure their readiness to seek employment (JSR) will be significantly positively correlated to a displaced individual's job-search intensity (JSI) so they will utilize more of the programs and resources offered by the outplacement firm than control groups.

Hypothesis 6: Age, gender, education, and occupational status will interact in such a way that men and younger individuals with a higher level of education or occupational status will have a higher degree of job-search intensity than women and older individuals with a lower level of education or occupational status.

#### *Administration of the Surveys*

In the initial survey, respondents were asked to indicate their fit for the study. Criterion for inclusion was that (a) the person was displaced from their employment within the last 6 months, (b) they are currently unemployed and seeking full-time work, and (c) that they will have access and the *ability* to use the outplacement services for at least 1 month. They were also informed of the parameters of the research at this time. Surveys included information on the level of participation, schedule, estimated time

commitment, and informed consent. Participants were told that all identifying information would be removed from responses and deleted from the database so that an individual's pattern of responses remains anonymous. All participants that completed their volunteer commitment were eligible to win a BlackBerry. This is a handheld wireless device that provides access to e-mail, phone, the web, and an organizer. Participants' agreement was given by clicking an "I agree" box in the survey. The experimental group and the wait list control group 2 were informed that after 1 month they would receive the last set of questionnaires. In this set, all participants were asked to complete a survey of demographic information, a measure on their job search activity, and the URICA-VC. The last control group 3 received all of these surveys to be completed at Time 2.

The experimental group was asked to select a class day and time at the time of their initial survey. They were given access to a private online class, the transition readiness intervention, titled *Navigating Your Job Search*. The TRI was delivered in a virtual meeting environment via the web and teleconferencing. This allowed volunteers to participate from across the U.S. and Canada without incurring travel expenses. The principle researcher facilitated all of the interventions. The TRI was delivered with the same materials: power point, training manual, and participant workbooks to ensure internal consistency.

### Measures

*Transition Readiness:* To measure the individual's stage of readiness for change, an assessment tool was developed called the (URICA) or University of Rhode Island Instrument for Change Assessment (McConaughy et al., 1989; McConaughy et

al.,1983). It was modified (URICA-VC) to assess vocational change readiness in a population with disabilities readiness to return to work (Mannock et al., 1999). The URICA-VC is a 12-item self-report assessment form published by Prochange Behavior Systems. It is composed of three 4-item scales that measure three distinct but correlated constructs that represent precontemplation, contemplation, and action. The pencil and paper form will be converted into a web-based format. Instructions will state, "Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with each of the following statements. Base your response on how you are feeling right now. Please answer using a 5-point scale with 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree."

In a study to validate the URICA-VC, 155 clients of a state rehabilitation center completed an initial 48-item assessment that was eventually culled to 12 items for analysis. Chi-square tests and analysis of variance were conducted to evaluate the construct validity of the URICA-VC stage clusters. The internal reliability of the three scales ranges from fair to very good. Coefficient Alphas were reported to range from .66 for the precontemplation and contemplation scales to .93 for the Action scales. Based on their analysis, Mannock et al. (1999) conclude that the URICA-VC demonstrated construct validity of the stages of change measures. Scores on the URICA-VC will be converted into T-scores. Cluster analysis will determine an individual's transition readiness profile.

*Job-search intention* This assessment will be based on Vinokur and Caplan's (1987) three-item measure that asks about an individual's intention to look for a job. These questions will be scaled from 1 (not at all hard) to 5 (extremely hard). A higher score will indicate a greater job-search intention.

*Job-search self-efficacy:* This assessment will be based on Vinokur and Caplan's (1987) six-item measure that asks about how confident an individual is about their job search skills and their ability to put them into action. These questions will be scaled from 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal). A higher score indicates a great level of self-efficacy.

*Subjective Norm:* Both Van Hooft et al. (2004) and Wanberg et al. (2005) based their assessment of subjective norm on Vinokur and Caplan (1987). The two items that ask the individual to indicate the extent to which their significant other and most people who are important to them, respectively, think they should seek a new job in the next 3 months. These questions will be scaled from 1 (not hard at all) to 5 (extremely hard). A higher score will indicate a greater subjective norm.

*Job-search attitude:* Wanberg et al. (2005) used Bagozzi and Yi (1989) to assess the cognitive aspect of job search attitude by asking "How would you best describe your attitude toward your job search?" on a scale from 1 (very negative) to 4 (very positive). An additional three measures are from the Van Hooft et al. (2004) study in which they based their measure on Vinokur and Caplan's (1987) work. We will ask the extent to which respondents regard a job search as sensible, wise, and useless (reverse scored) on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (extremely useful) to 7 (extremely useless). Higher scores indicate a more positive job search attitude.

*Motivational control:* Wanberg et al. (1999) developed a measure for motivational control based on approaches recommended by Hinkin (1998) and using a deductive approach guided by theory and research in self-regulation (Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997; Kuhl, 1985). Items will be rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) and 5 (extremely true of me). Higher scores indicate greater motivational control.

*Work valence:* This is assessed using Vinokur and Caplan's (1987) three-item scale. Van Hooft et al. (2004) added three additional questions to increase the internal consistency reliabilities of this scale. (.69 in Caska, 1998; .62 in Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). Based on Wrzesniewski's (1999) job versus calling orientation scale. Sample items included "Work is an important part of life" and "Work means more to me than just money." Items will be rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate greater work valence.

*Financial strain:* Perceived financial strain will be assessed by an adapted version of the three-item measure developed by Vinokur and Caplan (1987). Financial hardship is constructed as one's standard of living being reduced to the bare necessities of life. Participants indicate the extent to which they have difficulty in living on their current household income on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all difficult) to 5 (extremely difficult or impossible). The alpha for this scale was .84 in a study by Wanberg et al. (2005) and .85 for Wanberg et al. (1999). A total score will be computed by adding ratings on the three items. Higher scores imply greater financial strain.

*Expectancy:* Van Hooft et al. (2004) assessed expectancy with five items based on Vinokur and Caplan's (1987) perceived instrumentality scale and Feather and O'Brian's (1987) job confidence scale. Sample items include: "It is likely for me that I will get a new job if I try hard to find one" and "I am confident about finding a new job if I want to." Items will be rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) and 7 (strongly disagree). Higher scores imply a higher expectancy.

*Job-search intensity* will be measured using Vuori and Vesalainen's (1999) 10-item response scale that is adapted to reflect the technology of today and include those

people looking to start their own full-time business. Three items were added to reflect utilization of outplacement programs and benefits. Sample items include: “How frequently did you attend a training in the last three months?” and “How frequently did you visit the [outplacement firm] website to research future work opportunities in the last three months?” Participants will be asked how frequently they engaged in each activity over the last 3 months on a five-point scale from 1 (never) to 5 (nine or more times). Higher scores indicate higher levels of job-search intensity.

*Covariates:* Similar to previous studies, several covariates were considered for use in the study analysis. Within the context of this study, the term “covariate” denotes an extraneous variable that serves to possibly confound or obscure the results of the analyses. The following variables will be modeled as continuous-level or categorical-level covariates in this study. Six separate factorial multivariate repeated measures analyses of variance MANCOVA’s will be conducted in order to examine the effect of each of the following covariates related to the research hypotheses. Age in years, education level (ranging from 1 = less than high school diploma to 7 = graduate or professional degree), gender (0 = male, 1 = female), marital or cohabitation status (partner, no partner), number of people who are financial dependent on the respondent including children under 18, adult children and elderly relatives, not including self (from none = 0 to 5 or more), and occupational level (0 = contract, 1 = non-exempt, 2 = exempt, 3 = managerial, 4 = executive (director or above)). All of these variables have empirical support for influencing the duration of unemployment and the intensity of job-search behavior (Kanfer et al., 2001; Wanberg et al., 2002). In addition to the demographic information collected, we will collect information on the duration of current unemployment, the

number of times previous unemployed, and the duration of previous unemployment experiences.

### *Retention*

The response rate was calculated by looking at the number of people who logged into the online survey and began filling out the survey. Overall, there were 265 responses for a global response rate of 16%. For the experimental group (1), 128 people responded for a response rate of 23.2%. The response rate for the first control group (2) was .121% and for the second control group (3) it was .127%.

Of the 128 respondents in the experimental group (1), 9 indicated that they were not a fit based on our criteria. There were 63 volunteers who agreed to receive the training intervention. Due to attrition, 41 completed the training and due to incomplete response sets, 33 of those qualified for our analysis (N=33). In the first control group, two marked that they were not qualified and 61 agreed to participate. Due to attrition in this group over the 1-month period and incomplete response sets, 38 were considered valid for analysis in the first control group (2). In the second control group (3), four marked that they were not qualified and 62 agreed to participate. After incomplete responses were eliminated, 55 valid response sets comprised the second control group (3). The global attrition rate is calculated based on those 186 volunteers who agreed to participate, but who did not fulfill their commitment or who did not complete the surveys. The attrition rate was 31.7% for the overall study.

The high attrition rate could be due to participants finding work or drifting away from their involvement with the outplacement firm. The increase of unsolicited emails and SPAM software in recent years may also account for our low response rate since all

subject recruitment and additional communication was based on e-mail.

### Summary

Structural equation modeling begins with the development of a hypothesized model with arrows describing the causal or potentially the cause-and-effect flow. This initial diagram is based upon the researchers' beliefs (theoretical or hypothetical) regarding the links between variables. According to Tate (as cited in Martler and Vannatta, 2002), sources of information used in the development of the hypothesized model include the literature review, interviews, the researcher's experience, and common sense.

The first step in the development of this path model was the identification of the various hypothesized influences on an individual's job search behavior. This was accomplished by a thorough review of the literature related to similar models of job search intentionality and activity. Then a model was developed in an attempt to synthesize these models to be congruent with the TTM theory of change. Prior to model development and analysis, data were screened to ensure that there were no missing or out-of-range values. Next, hypothesized path models were developed and fitted using the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 6.0 computer program. In all cases, analyses were performed using the covariance matrix derived from the raw data in order to investigate the proposed hypotheses.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter is divided into three sections: (1) description of the study population, (2) presentation of the results related to the proposed hypotheses related to the transition intervention, and (3) presentation of the analytic results for the hypothesized model and path analysis.

#### Descriptive Statistics of the Population

The study population was drawn from the outplacement firm's North American region in the spring of 2006. Of the subjects whose data were utilized in the analysis (N=127), 91 Americans were living in one of 20 different states across the U.S., and 36 Canadians lived in one of six provinces in Canada. The study population consisted of 72 males (57%) and 55 females (43%). The average age was 47 years old. In terms of educational level, 3% had only a high school education, 8% had some college or trade school, 33% had completed college, and 56% had completed graduate school.

Occupational level was as follows: 6% non-exempt or paid hourly, 28% exempt or salaried, 27% management or sales, 30% director or VP level, and 9% executive. To better compare groups, descriptive demographic statistics for each of the control groups are presented below.

In the experimental group (n=33), there were 8 participants from Canada (24%) and 25 Americans (76%). There were 17 men and 16 women. The mean age was 49.45

with a range of 23 years, from 37 years old to 60 years old. Of this group, one subject had some college or trade school, 11 had a college degree and 21 had completed a graduate program.

Exempt employees made up one third of the group with 11 people, and of the others: 7 were management, 9 were a director or VP, and 6 had held executive positions prior to displacement.

In the wait-list or static control group 2, 10 were Canadian (25%) and 29 were from the U.S. (75%). There were 27 men and 12 women. The mean age was 48.18 with a range of 34 years, from 28 years old to 62 years old. Of this group, 3 had some college or trade school, 16 had a college degree and 20 had completed a graduate program. Exempt employees made up 30% of the group with 12 people, and additional 10 came from management, 11 people had been a director or VP, and 5 had held executive positions.

In control group 3, 14 were from Canada (26%) and 41 were from the U.S. (74%). There were 28 men and 27 women. The mean age was 45.75, with a range of 43 years, from 23 years old to 66 years old. Four subjects had no college or trade school, 6 had some college or trade school, 15 had a college degree and 30 had completed a graduate program. Non-exempt employees numbered 6, 12 people had been classified as exempt, 16 were management, 17 were a director or VP, and 4 had held executive positions.

## Results

The results of the study are reported in two parts. First results will be presented that concern Hypotheses 1-6 related to the transition readiness intervention. Following that, a description of the hypothesized model and the results are presented along with a revised model.

The data obtained from the survey instruments were analyzed using descriptive and correlational statistical methods in order to develop a path model that described the relationships and influences on transition readiness and job search intensity. Table 4.1 presents the means,

standard deviations and correlations between the study variables.

**Table 4.1: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations Among Study Variables.**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Intention	4.19	.92							
2 Self-efficacy	3.86	.73	.308**						
3 Attitude	3.34	.41	-.353**	.289**					
4 Motivational Control	3.61	.78	.529**	.440**	-.031				
5 Subjective Norm	3.84	1.0	.759**	.170	-.356**	.464**			
6 Work Valence	4.83	.85	.300**	.288**	-.191*	.369**	.288**		
7 Work Expectancy	3.46	.49	.047	.010	.023	.015	.010	.044	
8 Financial Strain	1.97	.86	.263**	-.064	-.237**	.103	.355**	.030	.009

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

The data were screened and incomplete data responses were dropped from analysis. A univariate ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were any differences between the groups on their post-tests of job search intensity and transition readiness. Based on Levene's statistic ( $p=.472$ ), a homogeneity of variance-covariance, the assumption of variance was met between all three groups. Contrary to expectations, the one way ANOVA showed no statistically significant effect between the experimental group 1 and control group 2 on job search intensity ( $p=.581$ ) at time 2. There was also no significant difference observed between the experimental group and the two control group's post-test measures of transition readiness ( $p=.761$ ) or job search intensity ( $p=.185$ ). Table 4.2 presents the means and standard deviations.

**Table 4.2: Means and Standard Deviations.**

	<b>Experimental Group 1</b>	<b>Wait-list Group 2</b>	<b>Control Group 3</b>
<b>Transition</b>	Mean = 3.03	Mean = 3.04	Mean = 2.98
<b>Readiness</b>	SD = .47	SD= .45	SD=.36
<b>Job Search</b>	Mean = 3.59	Mean = 3.46	Mean = 3.52
<b>Intensity</b>	SD = .98	SD= .1.14	SD=1.07

An independent t-test was done to evaluate the mean differences in the control group's pre-test and post-test measure of transition readiness and job search activity. Two separate 2-tailed t-tests were run for each of the dependent variables. Contrary to stated expectations, no statistically significant difference was found between the two control groups for transition readiness ( $p=.481$ ) or for job search intensity ( $p=.238$ ) at post-test. This means that the pre-test of readiness and the measures questions appeared to have no effect on readiness or job search behavior one-month later at post-test.

To examine if the intervention (independent variable) had a statistically significant impact on the readiness scores or a measure of job search intensity (dependent variables), a repeated measures factorial multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted. To provide practical explanations for observed effects, measures of effect such as the partial eta-square statistic and the standardized mean difference were calculated for each hypothesis. Contrary to expectations, there was no statistically significant difference observed between the pre-test and post-test of transition readiness for the experimental group ( $p=.734$ ) or for the control group ( $p=.286$ ).

Contrary to expectations, age, gender, occupational status, and educational level were not

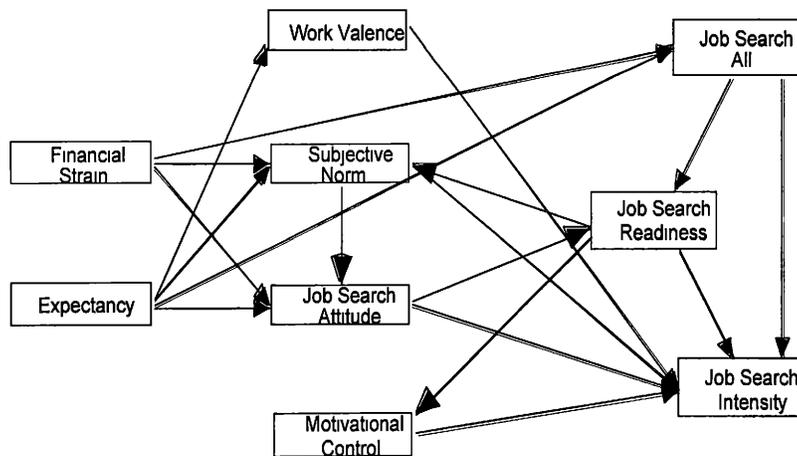
significant covariates and did not confound our results.

To extend the analyses conducted with the experimental design, path analysis within a structural equation model framework was utilized to examine the multivariate, dynamic relationship within the comprehensive model among the mediator and predictor variables in relation to the outcome variables. Prior to conducting the analyses, the requisite assumptions for applying the general linear model (GLM) to the data were verified. No model violations were detected prior to conducting any analyses. This path analytic strategy (Loehlin, 2004), via an analysis of the simultaneous estimation among the variables, can be used to facilitate greater understanding regarding these complex influences on a human subject

### Path Analysis

Path analysis is a technique that begins with the development of causal flow diagrams that depict cause and effect relationships (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). The proposed model described the overall expected flows based on information obtained through a thorough literature review. A visual representation, or summary, of hypotheses 7-11 is depicted in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Hypothesized Mediated Path Model: The Influences on Job-Search Intensity.**



Note: *Job Search All* in Figure 4.1 represents Job Search Self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 7: Job-search attitude (A), subjective norm (SN), job-search self-efficacy (SE), and work valence (WV) will be significantly positively correlated to higher job-search intensity (JSI).

Hypothesis 8: Job-search attitude (A), subjective norm (SN), Work Valence (WV), and job-search self-efficacy (SE) will mediate the relationship between job-search intensity (JSI) and the antecedent variables of financial strain (FS) and job-search expectancy (E).

Hypothesis 9: Motivational control (MC) will be significantly positively correlated to higher job-search intensity (JSI).

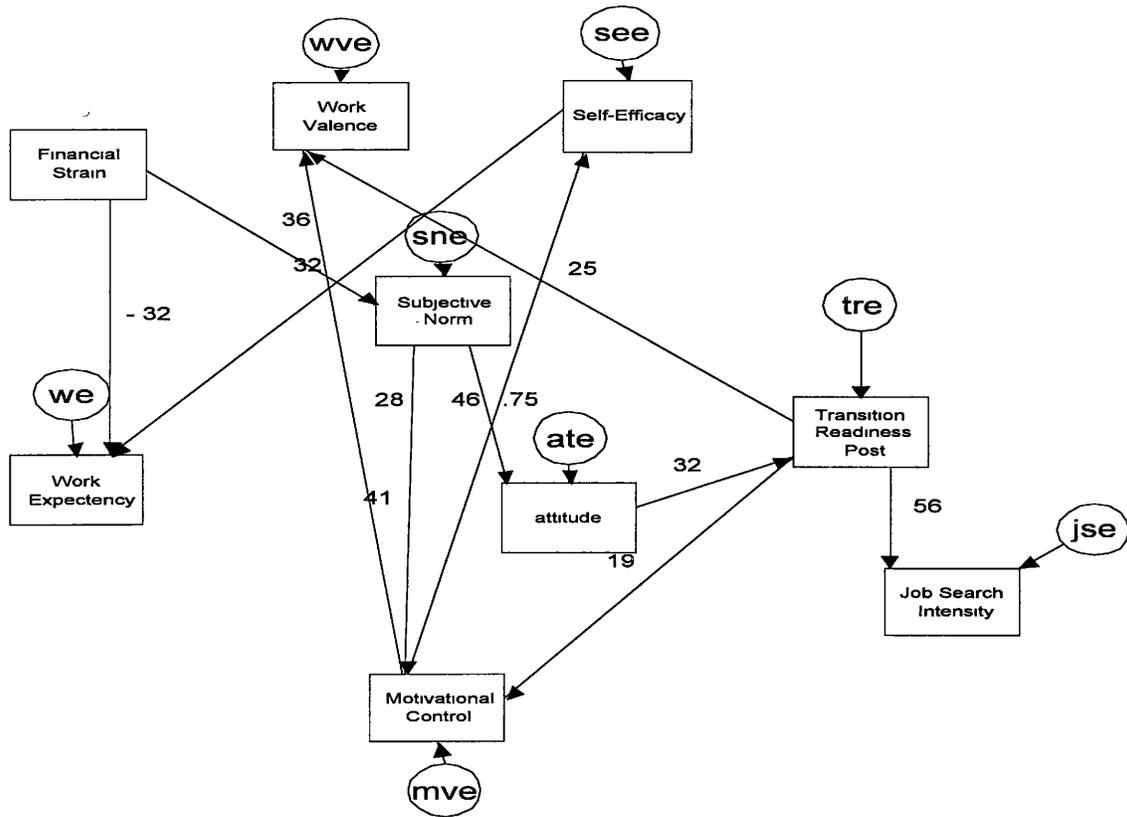
Hypothesis 10: A higher job-search readiness for change (TR) and job-search self-efficacy (SE) will be significantly positively correlated to job-search intensity (JSI).

Hypothesis 11: Job-search transition readiness (TR) for change will mediate the relationship between job search intensity (JSI) and job-search attitude (A), subjective norm (SN), and motivational control (MC).

The proposed model as depicted in Figure 4.1 was tested using structural equation modeling with the Analysis of Moment Structure 6.0 (AMOS) computer program. Using the model specification search engine within AMOS, the proposed model was refined to a more parsimonious solution as depicted in Figure 4.2.

In the revised path diagram in Figure 4.2, the paths are labeled with standardized coefficients, or Pearson correlation coefficients, for ease of interpretation. A summary of the causal effects for the revised model is presented directly below the revised model in Table 4.3. Unstandardized and Standardized path coefficients are listed in Table 4.5.

**Figure 4.2: Standardized Path Coefficients for the Revised Path Model.**



**Table 4.3: Summary of Causal Effects for Revised Model.**

Outcome	Determinant	Direct	Indirect	Total
Subjective Norm	Financial Strain	.42	-	-
Attitude	Subjective Norm	.75	.31	1.06
Transition Readiness	Attitude	.32	.46	.78
Job-Search Intensity	Transition Readiness	.56	1.06	1.62
Work Valence	Transition Readiness	.25	-	-
	Motivational Control	.29	-	-
Self-Efficacy	Motivational Control	.46	-	-
Motivational Control	Transition Readiness	.19	-	-
	Subjective Norm	.41	-	-
Expectancy	Self-Efficacy	.32	-	-
	Financial Strain	-.32	-	-

A path analysis was conducted to determine causal effects among the variables of subjective norm, job search attitude, motivational control, work valence, work expectancy, financial strain, transition readiness, and job search intensity. The variance/covariance matrices were used in all analyses with the method of maximum likelihood used for parameter estimation. The variables gender, age, and level of education were examined for potential confounding influences in the model, but were found to be inconsequential statistically. If this model accurately reflects reality, the results indicated a good fit for the model  $\chi^2 (25, N=127) = 44.7, p=.09$ , Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) = .93, Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit-Index (AGFI) = .88, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .91, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .07 Reproduced

correlations were calculated to check the model fit as well as indicate how many of the reproduced correlations were not consistent with the empirical correlations.

**Table 4.4: Unstandardized & Standardized Regression Weights.**

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	S. R. W.
Subjective Norm ← Financial Strain	.417	.097	4.323	***	.359
Attitude ← Subjective Norm	.654	.052	12.606	***	.747
Transition Readiness ← Attitude	.129	.034	3.786	***	.320
Motivational Control ← Transition Readiness	.403	.173	2.330	.020	.187
Motivational Control ← Subjective Norm	.311	.061	5.081	***	.407
Self-efficacy ← Motivational Control	.426	.074	5.738	***	.455
Job Search Intensity ← Transition Readiness	1.623	.215	7.563	***	.559
Expectancy ← Self-efficacy	.337	.085	3.963	***	.318
Work Valence ← Motivational Control	.318	.094	3.390	***	.285
Work Valence ← Transition Readiness	.604	.202	2.987	.003	.251
Expectancy ← Financial Strain	-.285	.071	-4.039	***	-.324

#### Significance of Path Coefficients

Our model hypotheses concerned both predictor variables and mediating variables. Results relating to Hypotheses 1-6 concerned the intervention and were previously reported in this chapter. Hypotheses 7-11 that related to the integrated model are reviewed here. Contrary to expectations (H7), an individual's job-search attitude, subjective norm, job-search self-efficacy, work valence, and motivational control (H9)

were not significantly positively correlated to higher job-search intensity. Thus, none of these variables operated as predictor variables in our model as anticipated.

Consistent with expectations (H10), transition readiness did significantly positively correlate and display a moderately strong relationship (.56) with job-search intensity. Attitude was an antecedent to transition readiness in that it was significantly positively correlated with a small to moderate effect (.32), and thus acted as a mediator variable for job search intensity via transition readiness. Contrary to expectations, self-efficacy did not significantly correlate to transition readiness.

Neither financial strain, nor expectancy mediated between attitude, subjective norm, self-efficacy, and the dependent variable, job search intensity as hypothesized (H8); however financial strain did mediate attitude via subjective norm. Financial strain was significantly positively correlated and displayed a moderate relationship (.36) to subjective norm, which in turn displayed a strong and positive relationship to attitude (.75).

Transition readiness was expected to mediate between attitude, subjective norm, and motivational control and the dependent variable of job-search intensity (H11). Transition readiness did not operate as a mediator variable, but rather only as a predictor variable for job-search intensity as previously reported. In addition, transition readiness was significantly positively correlated to work valence and motivational control, showing small effects on both variables (.25 and .19 respectively).

Subjective norm significantly positively correlated displayed a moderate relationship (.41) to motivational control. Motivational control was significantly positively correlated to two variables in the model. Motivational control displayed a

small to moderate effect to work valence (.29) and a moderate effect (.36) to self-efficacy. Self-efficacy significantly positively correlated to work expectancy, displaying a small to moderate relationship (.32). In contrast to self-efficacy's relationship, financial strain was *negatively* correlated to work expectancy, but with a similar effect size (.33). Neither work expectancy nor work valence significantly positively correlated to any other variable in the integrated model.

### Summary

Though structural equation and path analysis models do not establish a definitive case for causality, such models may be used as a plausible indicator model of influences that lead to an action or behavior. Our hypothesized model, that was intended to represent an integration of the theory of Transtheoretical Model and other models of behavior change such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, demonstrated a good fit for indicators of influences on job search intensity. The revised model demonstrated a positive correlation between the predictor variable of transitional readiness and job search intensity. The mediator variable of financial strain was predictive of subjective norm, which in turn predicted attitude, which then predicted transition readiness, an antecedent to job search intensity.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

Research suggests that greater job-search intensity leads to more job offers received and decreased unemployment duration (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005), thereby reducing negative consequences associated with extended unemployment. The purpose of this study was to better understand the process of becoming ready to look for work after being displaced from unemployment. Our task was two-fold to achieve this objective: (1) develop and empirically test an intervention for readiness, and (2) explore an integrated model based on the theory of transition readiness and previous research models.

One of the primary objectives of this study was to develop an intervention based on previous job-search interventions, recommendations from the body of literature, and the constructs of the TTM for the purpose of understanding how to facilitate a displaced workers' readiness to start a job search. Such an intervention addresses the gap identified by Butterfield and Borgen's (2005) research that reports that outplacement firms' mostly task-focused programs do not meet their clients' "emotional and transition needs" (p. 313).

In a review of the outplacement industry, Doherty (1998) points out that services were originally grounded in psychology, both bereavement (Hopson & Adams, 1976) and transition psychology (Nicholson & West, 1988). With the increase of unemployment in

the 1990s and the broadening of services to include non-executive and non-management clients (Doherty, 1998), the emphasis shifted to more task-orientated interventions for many outplacement firms (Butterfield & Borgen, 2005). This shift coincided with shifts in psychotherapy encouraged by managed care towards brief solution therapies (Miller, Hubble, & Duncan, 1996). Ironically, the same forces that drove the increase in downsizing, also drove the change in outplacement intervention strategies – a focus on the bottom line. A similar observation for the need to return to outplacement’s psychological roots was shared by the international outplacement firm participating in this research, and perhaps provides a rationale for their willingness to fund and support the research project.

#### Transition Readiness Intervention

The main question of the study was whether the TRI was powerful enough to have an impact on transition readiness or the intensity of job-search activity 1-month later. The results show that the intervention was not able to significantly impact the treatment group’s transition readiness or job-search behavior. These results are not consistent with other research on job loss interventions (Caplan et al., 1989; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Price et al., 1992; Vinokur et al., 2000; Vuori & Vesalainen, 1999). This intervention is not, however, fully comparable with the programs listed here.

The most significant difference is in the assessment of outcome, or measurement of the intervention’s result. Previous interventions targeted improvements in the level of depression, and subsequent reemployment outcomes (Price et al., 1992; Vinokur, Price, & Schul, 1995), whereas assessment of this study’s outcome was focused on transition readiness and job-search intensity.

The Yerkes-Dodson Curve (1908) demonstrates that performance falls off dramatically at high levels of stress. The TRI, like many interventions, focused on coping and managing stress levels to obtain an optimal level of performance. Because this research did not include a measurement of depression or stress, it is unknown if the TRI changed participant's negative feelings or stress levels; however if it did, the lower stress level did not change a subject's readiness or behavior in the job search, at least after 1 month. Future research may explore the changes of stress levels in a displaced worker over time and if, or how long it would take, to change readiness.

The TRI also differed from previously studied interventions in its composition and delivery. This intervention was smaller in both scope and duration than previously empirically tested interventions (Caplan et al., 1997). The subjects in this study were not required to attend any outplacement training, although all had access to the resources and training by contracted arrangement for at least 1 month. These findings suggest that both types of interventions may be necessary -- an intervention related to specific job-search activities like writing resumes, as well as a psychological intervention focused on evaluating what unemployment means and coping with stress. As to duration, it may be that the short length of time (4.5 hours) of the intervention played an additional role in our outcomes, as previous interventions have lasted longer. Vuori and Vesalainen (1999) examined interventions in Finland that lasted 6 and 7 hours a day for 10 to 15 days. Vinokur, Price and Schul (1995) reviewed interventions that lasted 4 hours over the course of 5 days.

Another way the TRI differed is that it was delivered over the Internet in a live, virtual meeting space that consisted of a power point presentation and a conference call.

This option reduced the cost of delivery, allowed for more anonymity for the participants, and greater convenience in terms of location and choice of training day. It permitted study of displaced subjects from across North America. More and more internet-based interventions are being tested in other areas, but this research appears to be the first web-based job-search intervention of its type.

Despite the advantages of web-based training, the method of delivery has shortcomings. For our purposes, it prevented the participants and facilitator from having face-to-face interactions and from building a relationship of quality. Woodward (2004) in a qualitative study of job club and job-search classes in California notes that strong relationships were developed between the instructors and job seekers. Woodward observed that this “attachment” in some teacher-pupil dyads appeared to increase the job seeker’s loyalty and trust, as evidenced in high levels of personal and financial disclosure.

Research suggests that a relationship characterized by attachment may be significant to how individuals learn, and thus change (Larsoe, Bernier, & Tarabulsy, 2005). An attachment relationship is thought to facilitate one’s emotional self-regulation and the integration of relevant information in a ways that create behavior change (Siegel, 1999). Siegel states, “the patterns of communication that have been found to be the most effective in creating secure attachments are those that involve reciprocal, contingent, collaborative communication” (1999, p. 106). Although information was presented on optimal stress levels and coping strategies in an interactive format, a more personal experience may be required to integrate this information in a way that would affect change. If job loss and the resulting realities are stressful or traumatic the individual may

be less able to utilize the areas of their brain that govern linear analysis and other executive functions. This means that although they cognitively understand how to look for work, they are not able to plan and execute goals, as they might have in their previous role of worker, due to the stress of the transition. Studies of people having flashbacks suggest that the right hemisphere of the brain becomes intensely activated and the left hemisphere's speech areas become inhibited (Rauch, van der Kolk, Fislser, et al., 1996). It may be a logical conclusion that the relationships that develop within the personal time and space of extended intervention programs and job clubs might serve to both reduce stress and facilitate behavior change for some participants.

A strong, personal relationship was not achieved in the 4.5-hour virtual training format, either between the instructor and the students, or between the students themselves. The delivery method and duration may have contributed to the lack of relationships. Although rapport was reported in survey feedback and personal disclosure was facilitated by anonymity, it would be misleading to present the relationship as meaningful to the participants.

Greater group interaction and experiential learning methods may also contribute to behavior change. Mezirow's (1991) work on transformational learning examines how assumptions influence one's beliefs and interpretations, which have an influence on goals, motivation, and ultimately their behavior. Mezirow (1997) states that the learner must incorporate new information into an already well-developed frame of reference in order for it to become meaningful, or affect one's assumptions. The learner may need assistance to transform their existing frame of reference before they can fully integrate new information. To achieve this end, Mezirow suggests methods such as group projects,

role play, case studies, and simulations to create the new experiences that can facilitate learning. Transformational learning may require more prolonged and interpersonal interactions than can be achieved in the shorter duration, or via the interactive media used for this intervention's delivery.

It is noteworthy that gender, age, and occupational level did not confound the findings. Recent research has been mixed about the relationship of age and gender on job-search intensity. Wanberg, Watt, and Rumsey (1996) found that age and education were not significant predictors of job seeking frequency. In their study, women were more likely to have strong job-search intentions, but not necessary engage in job-search activity more often than men. Leana and Feldman's (1992) research found that women engage in less job seeking than men. With the increase of career roles for women in the work force and the aging of the baby boomers, these demographic variables require ongoing investigation in this area of research.

The transition readiness intervention (TRI) was developed to be consistent with researcher's recommendations in the literature review (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Wanberg et al., 2005). The exercises and discussions were specifically intended to impact the variables of motivational control, attitude, and subjective norm for the purpose of increasing self-efficacy and transition readiness. Despite the lack of results, participants reported favorable experiences of the training in follow-up confidential surveys. Reports were so consistently positive that the outplacement firm is moving forward to make it a regular offering for all clients. Due to the paucity of tested interventions and the possible limitations in how it was delivered, the results are probably best interpreted as inconclusive.

## An Integrated Structural Equation Model for Job Search

Our understanding of job-search behavior has grown considerably in the last 20 years with job-search models to describe the variables that both mediate and predict job-search intention and behavior. Despite its successful application in the health care field, the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of behavior change has not yet been used to develop a job-search intervention, incorporated into a structural equation model on job-search intensity, or used to explain job-search behavior in a population of recently displaced workers.

Our objective was to obtain a better understanding of job-search behavior by developing and testing an integrated structural equation model that would reflect the job-search disposition of displaced workers. The proposed model allows for a joint examination of the constructs that previous research suggests are important predictors or influences on said predictors of job-search intention and activity. It is anticipated that this integrated model may contribute to a better understanding of the influences on job-search behavior in North America.

It is important to note that any model is an approximate description of reality. A SEM establishes and estimates multiple dependence relationships (direct and indirect) among a set of variables and can be applied to demonstrate whether the causal hypotheses embedded in a model are consistent with the data (Breckler, 1990). As demonstrated in this study, the data was consistent with the observed correlations among the variables in the SEM. Nevertheless, it should be noted that other models might yield a similar or even an improved global fit.

The value of analysis lies in the subsequent application of information for the purpose of establishing effective interventions. An extensive model that describes how displaced individuals might transition from displaced worker to a job seeker will lend insight into the complexity of human behavior and decision making. Such a model allows us to identify variables associated with an intervention and how they directly, or indirectly, affect the targeted behavior. This type of information can better guide further decisions related to job-search interventions, facilitate an understanding of future directions for research, and broaden society's overall understanding of job-search behavior.

#### Revised Model for Job-Search Behavior

A preliminary conclusion of this research is that the chosen constructs are a good starting point for the modeling of job-search behavior. Presented are the variables in the revised model that influenced job-search intensity and the respective discussion on their relationships to each other: (1) transition readiness, (2) attitude, (3) subjective norm, (4) financial strain, (5) self-efficacy, (6) work expectancy, (7) motivational control, and (8) work valence. Of these eight variables, only transition readiness significantly predicted job-search intensity. Each variable is presented along with how the revised model relates to previous findings, and a brief discussion about what these findings may mean.

#### *Transition Readiness*

Findings suggest that transition readiness plays a significant role in predicting job-search behavior. This is consistent with previous research (van Hooft et al., 2004), assuming that transition readiness partially reflects the construct of intention. Transition readiness acted as significant predictor variable (direct influence) on job-search intensity.

This means that the more ready one perceives themselves to be to begin a job search, the more likely they will perform job-search activities.

### *Attitude*

Attitude acted as significant mediator variable (an indirect influence) on job-search intensity via transition readiness. Findings suggest attitude is an antecedent to transition readiness. This means that one's attitude or decision-making process appears to directly influence one's readiness to begin a job search, which then predicts subsequent job-search behavior.

This finding is consistent with the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) that emphasizes decision balance as an intervention to promote behavior change. This finding is consistent with previous research that applied the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to job-search behavior; assuming once again that transition readiness partially reflects the construct of intention (van Hooft et al., 2004; van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992; Wanberg et al., 2005). This means that the greater the perceived cons, then the worse one's attitude would be towards the job search, and the less ready they would feel to begin a job search. A job search for an individual would make good sense if the pros to looking for work were high, and vice versa if they were low. For instance, some participants in the TRI class had personal obligations to care for a seriously ill significant other, or aging parent, along with the financial means necessary to delay looking for work. In these cases, it may not 'make sense' to the individual to begin a job search. Therefore, they would likely negatively assess the idea of a job search and assess themselves to be less ready.

Although this study is the first to integrate the two models (TPB and TTM) for the purpose of exploring job-search behavior, Armitage et al. (2004) explored the

compatibility of the two theories as related to healthy food choice and Bledsoe (2006) explored the fit of the TPB's variables with the TTM for smoking cessation. The findings of this study on attitude are consistent with these researchers' findings that the TTM's construct of decision balance, or one's weighing of the pros and cons, operates as attitude in the TPB (Armitage et al., 2004).

### *Subjective Norm*

Findings suggest that subjective norm plays an indirect role in job-search behavior. Subjective norm is an antecedent to attitude and transition readiness. This is consistent with previous research (Mallinckrodt & Fretz, 1988; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987) that found social support may have had an affirmative impact on the job-search process, but inconsistent with research that demonstrated a direct relationship from subjective norm to intention (van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992). This study's findings suggest a causal path from subjective norm to attitude, from attitude to transition readiness, and finally from transition readiness to job-search intensity. This means that the perceptions of the significant people in a job seeker's life influence the job seeker's attitude (or the pros and cons of looking for work), which then influences readiness and subsequent behavior. This means that one's significant relationships do not appear to determine if one perceives themselves to be ready to actively look for work, but rather one's subjective norm has an influence on his or her decision making process about a job search.

Subjective norm also acted as an antecedent (a direct influence) on motivational control. These results indicate that the job seeker's perception of the feelings of important people in their life may significantly influence a job seeker's ability to focus on things like planning job-search activities and setting job-search goals. This is consistent with

Brasher and Chen's (1999) suggestion that social support may play a role in providing "coping assistance" (Thoits, 1986) thereby reducing stress levels and improving performance.

Vinokur and Schul's (2002) SEM analysis on two long-term studies conducted in Michigan and Maryland found motivation predicted job-search intensity. The construct for motivation was created from the converted mean scores of attitude, subjective norm, and intention. Although findings are consistent with their results, because this study included the three measurements as separate variables in the model, the path analysis may illuminate how they function to influence each other and job-search intensity.

### *Financial Strain*

Financial strain had an indirect influence on attitude via subjective norm. This means that perceptions of greater financial strain influence the job seeker's perceptions of the value of a job search to their subjective norm, or those closest to the displaced worker. Subjective norm was an antecedent to attitude, which then predicted transition readiness and subsequent job-search intensity. This is consistent with previous findings that found that financial hardship functions as a motivator to look for work (Leana & Feldman, 1995; Ullah, 1990; van Hooft, et al., 2004, Vinokur & Caplan, 1987; Vuori & Vesalainen, 1999; Wanberg et al., 1999; Wanberg et al., 1996).

Although previous research found evidence that financial strain, work valence, and work expectancy related to job-search intensity (Feather & O'Brien, 1987; Wanberg et al., 2005), this study's SEM analysis showed a relationship only for financial strain, and one that was indirect.

### *Self-Efficacy*

Findings suggest that self-efficacy does not play a role in predicting job-search behavior. Findings are inconsistent with research that indicates that one's confidence in being able to look for work predicts actual job-search behavior (Eden & Aviram, 1993; Kanfer et al., 2001; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985). Nonetheless, it is consistent with other research (Caska, 1998; van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992) and research utilizing similar structural equation models for job search (van Hooft, et al., 2004; Wanberg et al., 2005). Common sense might say that confidence plays some role in job-search outcomes. Saks (2006) found that it predicted the number of job offers received that then predicted employment. Wanberg et al. found that self-efficacy was no longer a predictor of job-search behavior when job-search intentions were included in their equation. Haggstad and Kanfer (2005) explore the mixed results related to self-efficacy and conclude that it is a *consequence* rather than a cause of performance. The question that is raised is if it has value for a focus on interventions for discouraged workers. It would appear that because it does not directly predict job-search activity, it might not be relevant for this population.

### *Work Expectancy*

Self-efficacy was an antecedent to work expectancy. This would suggest that one's confidence in being able to perform the activities related to finding work influences the person's belief about the market place's offerings. This means that high levels of confidence about one's ability to look for work may influence how one assesses the overall economy and the market for a targeted industry. Perhaps the confidence comes from knowing where to find job *leads*. Access to this type of information may predict a favorable assessment of the market place.

### *Motivational Control*

Motivational Control played no role in predicting transition readiness or job-search intensity. This is inconsistent with previous research (Wanberg et al., 1999) that found skill in sustaining motivation for job search predicted job-search intensity. This study differs in the variables assessed, for instance Wanberg et al. (1999) did not include attitude or a measure of intention in their model of job-search intensity. This may suggest that these variables have more influence. Motivational control acted as antecedent variable (direct influence) on self-efficacy and work valence, neither of which related to actual readiness or job-search intensity. Motivational control, or one's ability to set goals, cognitively rehearse for interviews, and plan for job-search behavior did predict the job seeker's confidence level in doing those behaviors. This suggests that when individuals are able to set goals, they are more likely to feel confident in turning those plans into action, but this confidence and planning may not result in changes in readiness or behavior. The findings suggest that one's actual decision balance plays a greater role in predicting job-search readiness and action than planning or confidence.

### *Work Valence*

Findings show insignificant effects for work valence on job-search intensity. This differs from previous research that found unemployed individuals with higher levels of work commitment, work involvement, and work centrality (all operationalized as the general importance of work to an individual) reported higher levels of job-search activity (Battista & Thompson, 1996; Feather and O'Brien, 1987; Gowan & Gatewood, 1992; Rowley & Feather, 1987; Ullah, 1990; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). Van Hooft et al. (2005)

also found that work valence predicted job-search intention in a SEM analysis in an unemployed population.

Previous research (Feather & Davenport, 1981) noted that the more significant work was to an individual, the greater difficulty they experienced in being displaced from it. Archer & Rhodes (1995) found that grief was associated with attachment (to previous employment role) and subsequent measures of anxiety and depression.

Therefore, the individual with a high value for work may experience more stress than one with a lower work valence. Although stress may have a negative impact on their ability to take action, no causal relationship was evident between work valence and job-search activity, or any of the other variables which appear to relate to job-search intensity.

Perhaps when under stress, the individual employs a coping strategy in order to manage their anxiety. For instance they may reappraise the value of working at this time or choose to value another domain of their life over work (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Schlossberg et al., 1995). Therefore, the discouraged individual may have incongruent ideas about the importance of work. Thus, work valence may reflect feelings of desire for work, but not directly influence one's intention or actions.

It is of some interest to note that both motivational control and transition readiness predicted work valence, or the importance of work to an individual. The EVT predicts that the more value something has, the more the individual will perceive it as an important goal. Results indicate the opposite, that the more the individual sets goals, plans, and feels readiness to act on those job-search goals, the more they perceive work as valuable. This is consistent with the TTM concept of decision balance where an individual's readiness increases with focus on the pros of taking action.

## Study Limitations and Future Research

Measurements of the dependent variables were taken at one time, 1-month after the intervention was delivered. Due to time constraints based on individual's contracted services with the outplacement firm, we were unable to assess subjects over a longer period of time. One month may not be the most ideal interval of time. The treatment group may not have had enough time to change their readiness or job-search intensity by the time of the second survey administration. Previous research took measurements to assess for change after 2 months (Vinokur & Caplan, 1987), 3 months (Wanberg et al., 1999), and 4 months (Van Hooft et al., 2004; Vinokur, Schul, Vuori, & Price, 2000).

Kanfer and colleagues (2001) suggested the job search is a dynamic pattern of activity. This is consistent with previous research (Barber et al., 1994; Kanfer et al., 2001; Saks & Ashforth, 2000) and highlights the need to see intention as a process versus a state. Following this line of thought, Wanberg et al. (2005) examined job-search intensity in a 10-wave longitudinal study to find that individual job-search intensity did appear to have a trajectory. Wanberg et al. notes, "a solid understanding of the dynamics of job search will have to await further research" (p. 427). If transition readiness is a dynamic process, this study may not have adequately captured a true measure of transition readiness. As the job-search process is dynamic, multiple measures over time might better reflect the process rather than a single measurement.

Other limitations of this study relate to the reliance on subjective measures. All measures were self-report. Although the assessment was through self-report, all surveys were confidential so there no little reason to suspect that social desirability played a role.

Future research should attempt to get significant others' reports on job-search frequency and effort.

The low response rate may be considered a limitation of this study. All of the subjects who did respond were likely participating with the outplacement firm, at least at some minimal level, in order to respond to the outplacement firm's solicitation. Many of their clients never continue past their original orientation, if then. Thus, we may have not had access to those with the lowest levels of motivation and readiness. Future research might incorporate the transition readiness intervention into the orientation program where a greater diversity of individuals is accessible.

The individuals from the study were displaced from companies across North America and at varying times. This is both a strength and limitation of this study. On the negative, there was no way to control for how long subjects had been unemployed. Also there was no control for the company culture or company size, things that may affect how displacement is conducted. On the positive, results may be better generalized to all recently displaced individuals in North America.

A further limitation is that there was no check on the intervention to ensure consistency. No third party rated the trainer on fidelity to the training manual. Uniformity in the trainer, materials, and power point helped to ensure consistency, but an objective observer might increase the reliability of the intervention.

To develop a hypothesized model, the TTM was used as a theoretical basis. This model may be limited in that the theory does not address grief reactions or stress levels due to loss and transition. It has previously been applied to a wide variety of behavior change both in the healthcare literature and branching out its application to financial

behavior (Xiao et al., 2001). The theory is meant to explain change in an individual's intention and thus behavior by facilitating their stage of readiness through the processes of change. One stage readiness study looked at a survivor's readiness to consent to cadaveric organ donation (Robbins, Levesque, Redding, Johnson, Prochaska, Rohr, & Peters, 2001), a behavior that clearly has a grief component. However, job loss is unique in some other important ways. First, the loss is transient in that reemployment is likely to resolve some of the secondary stressors, such as financial strain, and the losses of daily structure, social networks, or a sense of making a contribution. Many of the negative consequences of job loss greatly diminish with reemployment (Price, 1992). In this way the job seeker is unique in that the individual must adapt quickly to their loss and engage in new behaviors in order to change their situation for the better. Even a welcomed change from work to unemployment can still lead to frustration and stress over time as unexpected challenges arise. Future research should further explore if the construct of transition readiness is a viable model for job-search behavior.

It is important to develop empirically tested interventions, since this phenomenon is due to continue to affect the U.S. and Canada. Due to the cost-effectiveness and convenience, future research should attempt to empirically determine if web-based delivery systems facilitate the integration of learning and impact behavior change. Additionally, future research could measure if this intervention has an impact on the other variables of our revised model besides transition readiness.

### Implications

The lack of significance for the variables that reflect perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy and motivational control, demonstrates support for the Theory of Reasoned

Action (TRA) over the Theory of Planned Behavior. Wanberg et al. (2005) points out that self-efficacy may operate as theorized in the TPB with multiple measures (Shiffman, Balabanis, Paty, et al., 2000). However, this study's findings are consistent with other research (Bledsoe, 2006; van Hooft et al., 2005) that found little or no evidence for TPB and specifically for self-efficacy, but did find a good fit for its predecessor, the Theory of Reasoned Action. Van Hooft, Born, Taris, and van Der Flier (2006) went to apply the TRA in their most recently published study and found it to be a legitimate framework to describe job-application decisions. In van Hooft et al.'s (2005) study of two populations, they found self-efficacy was relevant to job-search intensity in the employed population, whereas it was not significant for the unemployed population. Perhaps the usefulness of the framework relates to individual readiness. These findings are congruent with the TTM that states attitude plays the largest role in intention formation and behavior change with a population less ready to change. As these conclusions are speculative, they can only be ascertained or refuted with further analyses.

The findings suggest that interventions targeted for a discouraged worker should concentrate on facilitating decision balance as recommended in the TTM. Also interventions with displaced workers might involve significant others or entire families in an attempt to influence the subjective norm of the job seeker as it relates to the pros and cons of a job search. Clinical work with discouraged workers might focus on a comprehensive assessment of other life stressors and the role of significant others in the job seekers decision-making process. A pro versus cons list of beginning a job search may at first seem remedial, however it could help to reveal the factors behind a job seeker's attitude and guide productive clinical interventions.

## Conclusion

This study makes a few contributions, despite its limitations. First, it offers a unique intervention designed based on recommendations from several areas of research. This intervention is provided for future empirical research. Secondly, it provides a model of job-search intensity that appears to be a good fit while introducing the concept of transition readiness into the job-search literature. Lastly, it suggests that working with a discouraged job seeker's attitude and subjective norm may produce the best results for transition readiness.

Clearly investigations focused on variables predictive of job seeking are important. Knowledge gained in such research can help develop effective interventions for displaced workers and increase the quality and speed of reemployment. A shorter duration of unemployment is beneficial to individuals, their families, past employers (because of reduced severance obligations and public relations), and society as a whole.

**APPENDIX A**  
**INFORMED CONSENT**

*Experimental Group*

You are invited to participate in a research study. Our goal is to identify what can help a job seeker who is discouraged to increase their motivation to look for work and help an active job seeker maintain their motivation to keep looking despite setbacks. If you choose to volunteer, you will receive this training at no cost. Also, one lucky volunteer will win a Blackberry! (This is an all-in-one mobile phone, e-mail device, web browser and organizer)

My name is Michelle Miller Bohls and I am in the process of completing my Masters of Arts at Texas State University in Professional Counseling. I was given the opportunity to work with an outplacement firm when I was displaced from my position with Dell Computers in May of 2001. Because of my positive experience, I have chosen to partner with them for this thesis project.

This survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. If you should need to stop and exit the survey, click on "exit survey" (at the top of each page in the dark green box) and you will be connected to the client website for your convenience. You will be able to return later and pick up where you left off. We ask that you try to complete this survey in the next 72 hours.

**Time Commitment**

If you volunteer, you will spend less than 30 minutes completing two online surveys plus your participation in training. (Three sessions, 90 minutes each). Your total time commitment will be less than seven hours. This pilot training program is FREE as part of your DBM services. If you agree to participate today, your survey will continue and you can complete your first short survey today that should take ten to fifteen minutes to complete.

In the coming pages you will be able to see an agenda for the training and select your preferences for the day(s) and times. You may also choose to wait and select your day(s) and times in the next week or two. Then, three months from the date of your training you will receive an e-mail with a different survey that should take five minutes to complete. At that time you will be asked about the number and frequency of programs that you used as well as your other job search activities. Once you attend the workshop and submit your completed second survey, your participation level will be complete and you will be eligible to win a free BlackBerry! You can still participate even if you find work before the research ends.

Please verify that you meet the requirements to participate in our study. They are:

- (1) you were displaced from your job in the last six months,
- (2) you have access to outplacement services for at least the next month,
- (3) you are unemployed (no paid part-time work), and you are able to work if offered a job (at least 20 hours a week)

Yes, I qualify to participate.

No, I do NOT qualify to participate.

This is Confidential and Voluntary

Your identity in this project will be kept private and confidential. The results of the study will be shared for scientific purposes, but without identifying information. All names and addresses will be destroyed when the study is completed. Your identity will not be revealed without your written permission.

Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. You may choose to stop participating at anytime. If you agree to participate and later decide to stop, we request that you notify myself, or my thesis chair, Dr. John Garcia. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

For questions about this study call Michelle Miller Bohls at (512) 577-3371 or e-mail her at [mbohls@austin.rr.com](mailto:mbohls@austin.rr.com).

For questions you may have about your rights as a research subject call Dr. John Garcia at (512) 716- 4553 or e-mail him at [jg12@txstate.edu](mailto:jg12@txstate.edu).

#### Risks and Benefits

In agreeing to participate in this research, it is important for you to understand potential risks, or discomfort that one might experience as a result in participating in the workshop.

First, you may experience stress, such as pressure to begin a job search. Also, there may be times that you experience strong emotions such as fear or grief regarding your job loss.

These risks are balanced by some significant potential benefits, for instance, you may increase your resilience to set backs and shorten the duration of your unemployment.

#### Workshop

You have been randomly assigned to the group of volunteers who will participate in a workshop lasting four and a half hours.

### Navigating Your Job Search - Part I

1: The Pros and Cons of Beginning Your Job Search - Why search for a new job right now? Is there a difference between people who spend a lot of time on their search and those who do not? Isn't it all just luck? Explore your current motivational level for your job search.

2: Change Versus Transition - How can we understand what losing this job may mean for us? Why do some people seem to "bounce back" or "land on their feet" and others do not? Processing this event of job loss can be crucial to how you manage your stress and maintain your motivation. You will learn about role transitions and how this could impact your day-to-day search.

3: Business Plan: Job Search, Inc. - What if your job search could be conducted as if it were its own business enterprise? Who would you hire to run your search? We will look at a job search as if it were a project or a small business to run and make a simple business plan.

4: Models of the Transition Process - Find out how the transition process works in real life and what you can do to avoid the pitfalls. Identify your defenses, learn how to let go of frustration or anger, avoid temptations and overcome setbacks. Establish some goals and rewards for your job search.

5: Getting Support - Identify your resources and determine how each person can make a contribution to your job search process. Uncover resources you may have missed. Find out the best way to enlist your partner, friends, or family's support.

6: Change Hardy and Career Resilient - You will learn about different coping strategies and how to manage your stress to achieve the best results. What makes some people resilient to difficult life experiences? Learn how to improve your resiliency.

7: Tips & Tricks! - Learn tips and tricks for planning an effective job search strategy. What makes some people succeed in actually getting a better job than the one they lost? Determine for yourself what you need to do to be one of those people.

You may register at this time or wait to register. (We will e-mail you at a later date).

By selecting YES, you agree with the following statement:

I have read and understood this consent form, and I agree to participate in this level of participation in the research study. I understand that I must complete my participation level in order to be eligible to win a free BlackBerry. I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. I understand that Michelle Bohls will be the only person besides myself to view my survey responses.

Please select one of the following:

- I agree to participate
- I decline to participate

### *Control Group 2*

You are invited to participate in a research study. Our goal is to identify what can help a job seeker who is discouraged to increase their motivation to look for work and help an active job seeker maintain their motivation despite set backs. One lucky volunteer will win a BlackBerry - just for participating! (This is an all-in-one mobile phone, e-mail device, web browser and organizer)

My name is Michelle Miller Bohls and I am in the process of completing my Masters of Arts at Texas State University in Professional Counseling. I was given the opportunity to work with an outplacement firm when I was displaced from my position with Dell Computers in May of 2001. Because of my positive experience, I have chosen to partner with them for my thesis project.

Your participation will take less than 15 minutes to complete. If you should have to stop at any point, click "Exit Survey" (in the upper right hand corner in the dark green box) and you will be directed to the Client website. You will be able to come back to complete your survey later from where you left off. We ask that you try to complete these set of three short surveys within the next 72 hours.

#### Participation Details

Your time commitment will be less than 30 minutes total and consist of two online surveys. Three months from now you will receive another e-mail with a link to your second survey for your completion. That one should take five minutes to complete.

At that time you will be asked about the number and frequency of programs offered by DBM that you used as well as your overall job-search activities. You will also be asked questions about your age and education, etc... (all information is completely private.)

Once you submit your completed second survey, your participation level will be complete and you will be eligible to win a free BlackBerry! You can still participate even if you find work before the research ends.

Please verify that you meet the requirements to participate in our study. They are:

(1) you were displaced from your job in the last six months,

- (2) you have access to outplacement services for the next month,
- (3) you are unemployed (no paid part-time work) and you are able to work if offered a job (at least 20 hours a week)

Yes, I am qualified.

No, I am NOT qualified.

#### This is Confidential and Voluntary

Your identity in this project will be kept private and confidential.

The results of the study will be shared for scientific purposes, but without identifying information. All names and addresses will be destroyed when the study is completed. Your identity will not be revealed without your written permission.

Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. You may choose to stop participating at anytime. If you agree to participate and later decide to stop, please notify myself, or my thesis chair, Dr. John Garcia immediately.

You are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

For questions about this study call Michelle Miller Bohls at (512) 577-3371 or e-mail her at mbohls@austin.rr.com.

For questions you may have about your rights as a research subject call Dr. John Garcia

By selecting YES, you agree with the following statement:

I have read and understood this consent form, and I agree to participate in this level of participation in the research study. I understand that I must complete my participation level in order to be eligible to win a free BlackBerry. I understand that I

may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. I understand that Michelle Bohls will be the only person besides myself to view my survey responses.

Please select one of the following:

- I agree to participate
- I decline to participate

### *Control Group 3*

You are invited to participate in a research study. Our goal is to identify what can help a job seeker who is discouraged to increase their motivation to look for work and help an active job seeker maintain their motivation despite set backs. One lucky volunteer will win a BlackBerry - just for participating! (This is an all-in-one mobile phone, e-mail device, web browser and organizer)

My name is Michelle Miller Bohls and I am in the process of completing my Masters of Arts at Texas State University in Professional Counseling. I was given the opportunity to work with an outplacement firm when I was displaced from my position with Dell Computers in May of 2001. Because of my positive experience, I have chosen to partner with them for my thesis project.

Your participation will take less than 15 minutes to complete. If you should have to stop at any point, click "Exit Survey" (in the upper right hand corner in the dark green box) and you will be directed to the Client website. You will be able to come back to complete your survey later from where you left off. We ask that you try to complete these set of three short surveys within the next 72 hours.

Participation Details

Your time commitment will be less than 15 minutes total and only consist of three short online surveys. If you agree to participate, you will link to all of your surveys today. You will be asked about the number and frequency of programs offered by DBM that you used as well as your overall job-search activities. You will also be asked questions about your age and education, etc... (all information is completely private.) Once you complete the third survey, your participation level will be complete and you will be eligible to win a free BlackBerry!

Please verify that you meet the requirements to participate in our study.

They are:

- (1) you were displaced from your job in the last six months,
- (2) you had access to outplacement services for the past month,
- (3) you are unemployed (no paid part-time work) and you are able to work if offered a job (at least 20 hours a week)

Yes, I am qualified.

No, I am NOT qualified.

This is Confidential and Voluntary

Your identity in this project will be kept private and confidential.

The results of the study will be shared for scientific purposes, but without identifying information. All names and addresses will be destroyed when the study is completed. Your identity will not be revealed without your written permission.

Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. You may choose to stop participating at anytime. If you agree to participate and later decide to stop, please notify myself, or my thesis chair, Dr. John Garcia immediately.

You are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

For questions about this study call Michelle Miller Bohls at (512) 577-3371 or e-mail her at mbohls@austin.rr.com. For questions you may have about your rights as a research subject call Dr. John Garcia at (512) 716-4553 or e-mail him at jg12@txstate.edu.

We believe that the potential risks, or discomfort that one might experience as a result of completing these surveys is minimal; However, you may experience stress, such as some feelings of pressure to begin a job search. You may perceive these feelings as a benefit of participation. If you have any concerns about the risks, please feel free to exit the survey.

By selecting YES, you agree with the following statement:

I have read and understood this consent form, and I agree to participate in this level of participation in the research study. I understand that I must complete my participation level in order to be eligible to win a free BlackBerry. I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. I understand that Michelle Bohls will be the only person besides myself to view my survey responses.

Please select one of the following:

- I agree to participate
- I decline to participate

**APPENDIX B**

**MEASURES**

*Please choose the best one selection:*

1. Your gender?                     Male                     Female
  
2. Marital status                     Married or living with partner  
    Not living with a partner
  
3. Age in years                    \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Number of dependents you help support financially including children under 18 and elderly family members (not including yourself)  
  
                  No                    One (1)                    Two (2)                    Three (3)                    Four (4)                    Five or more  
Dependents
  
5. Education (Check the highest level completed.)  
 Grade School  
 High School  
 Vo-tech or some college course work  
 College undergraduate degree  
 Professional or graduate level degree
  
6. How long have you been unemployed? Please estimate as accurately as possible.  
\_\_\_\_\_ months    \_\_\_\_\_ weeks    \_\_\_\_\_ days
  
7. How many different times have you been unemployed in the past 10 years (not including now)? \_\_\_\_\_ times
  
8. For each time you have been unemployed in the past 10 years, what was the duration of each time? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What was the occupational category of your last job?

- Contract
- Non-exempt
- Exempt
- Managerial
- Director
- Executive

*For some people finding work is an urgent matter. For others, it is less so. Because everyone's situation with unemployment is different, we need to ask you a few questions about your plans to find work in the next three months. For each question below, mark one number that best describes **your** plans in the next **three months**.*

1a. Over the next three months, how hard do you intend to try to find full-time employment?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All Hard</u>	<u>Not Too Hard</u>	<u>Somewhat Hard</u>	<u>Fairly Hard</u>	<u>Extremely Hard</u>
1	2	3	4	5

1b. In the next three months how likely is it for you that you will try hard to find work?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Not Too Much</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Extremely</u>
1	2	3	4	5

2. I am very interested in finding a job in the next three months

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Not Too Much</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Extremely</u>
1	2	3	4	5

3a. In the next three months, how hard does your spouse or the person closest to you think you should try to find work where you would work over 20 hours a week?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All Hard</u>	<u>Not Too Hard</u>	<u>Somewhat Hard</u>	<u>Fairly Hard</u>	<u>Extremely Hard</u>
1	2	3	4	5

3b. What about other people who are import to you? How hard do they think you should try to find work in the next three months (where you'd work over 20 hours a week)?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All Hard</u>	<u>Not Too Hard</u>	<u>Somewhat Hard</u>	<u>Fairly Hard</u>	<u>Extremely Hard</u>
1	2	3	4	5

4a. How useful or useless is it for you to try hard in the next three months to find work?

*Choose one number*

Extremely <u>Useful</u>	Very <u>Useful</u>	<u>Useful</u>	Neither <u>Useful nor</u> <u>Useless</u>	<u>Useless</u>	Very <u>Useless</u>	Extremely <u>Useless</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4b. How beneficial or harmful is it for you to try hard in the next four months to get a job (where you'd work over 20 hour a week)?

*Choose one number*

Extremely <u>Beneficial</u>	Very <u>Beneficial</u>	<u>Beneficial</u>	Neither <u>Beneficial</u> <u>nor Harmful</u>	<u>Harmful</u>	Very <u>Harmful</u>	Extremely <u>Harmful</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4c. How wise or foolish is it for you to try hard in the next four months to get a job (where you'd work over 20 hour a week)?

*Choose one number*

Extremely <u>Useful</u>	Very <u>Useful</u>	<u>Useful</u>	Neither <u>Useful nor</u> <u>Useless</u>	<u>Useless</u>	Very <u>Useless</u>	Extremely <u>Useless</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. How would you best describe your attitude toward your job search?

*Choose one number*

<u>Very Negative</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Very Positive</u>
1	2	3	4

The following statements refer to thoughts and responses that people often report during the job search process. Indicate how representative each of these statements is **true of you** in the job search process.

<i>Circle one number per questions</i>	Not at <u>All</u>	A <u>Little</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	Pretty <u>Much</u>	A Great <u>Deal</u>
1. I make myself concentrate on what more I can do to get a job .....	1	2	3	4	5
2. I practice my conversations with potential employers ahead of time ....	1	2	3	4	5
3. I plan my job search activities ahead of time.....	1	2	3	4	5
4. I set specific goals for myself .....	1	2	3	4	5
5. I think about how happy I will be when I get a (new) job .....	1	2	3	4	5

Whether or not you are employed or unemployed now, how **confident** do you feel about **doing** the following things successfully?

<i>Circle one number per item</i>	Not at <u>All</u>	A <u>Little</u>	<u>Some</u>	Pretty <u>Much</u>	A Great <u>Deal</u>
1. Making a good list of all the skills that you have and can be used to find a job .....	1	2	3	4	5
2. Talking to friends and other contacts to find out about potential employers who need your skills .....	1	2	3	4	5
3. Talking to friends and other contacts to discover promising job openings that are suitable for you .....	1	2	3	4	5
4. Completing a good job application and resume .....	1	2	3	4	5
5. Contacting and persuading potential employers to consider you for a job.....	1	2	3	4	5
6. Making the best impression and getting your points across in a job interview .....	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions relate not to your abilities or job-search skills, but rather how confident you feel about the likelihood of finding a job in the marketplace.

1. It is likely that I will find a (new) job if I try hard.

Choose one number

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

2. If I look hard, chances are high that I will get a (new) job.

Choose one number

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

3. It is difficult for me to find a suitable job.

Choose one number

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

4. I am confident about being able to find a (new) job if I want to.

Choose one number

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

5. No matter how hard I try, chances are low that I will find a (new) job.

Choose one number

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

The following questions refer to your opinion about working.

1. Work is an important part of life.

Choose one number

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

2. Having a job is a source of satisfaction in one's life.

Choose one number

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

3. Work means more to me than just money.

Choose one number

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

4. I enjoy talking about work with others.

Choose one number

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

5. If I had enough money for the rest of my life, I would still want to work.

Choose one number

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

6. Work gives a meaning to one's life.

*Choose one number*

<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Somewhat Disagree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Somewhat Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
1	2	3	4	5

### Financial Situation

1. How difficult is it for you to live on your total household income right now?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All Difficult</u>	<u>Somewhat Difficult</u>	<u>Difficult or Can Barely Get By</u>	<u>Very Difficult or Losing Proposition</u>	<u>Extremely Difficult or Impossible</u>
1	2	3	4	5

2. In the next two months, how much do you anticipate that you and your family will experience actual hardships such as inadequate housing, food, or medical attention?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Just a Little</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Pretty Much</u>	<u>A Great Deal</u>
1	2	3	4	5

3. In the next two months, how much do you anticipate having to reduce your standard of living to the bare necessities in life?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Just a Little</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Pretty Much</u>	<u>A Great Deal</u>
1	2	3	4	5

1. During the past three months, how often have you...

a. ...read the newspaper or web for job opportunities?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Once Every 3 to 4 Weeks</u>	<u>Once Every Couple of Weeks</u>	<u>Every Week</u>	<u>Two or Three Times a Week</u>	<u>Every Day</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

b. ...checked with employment agencies?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	Once Every 3 to 4 <u>Weeks</u>	Once Every Couple of <u>Weeks</u>	<u>Every Week</u>	Two or Three Times <u>a Week</u>	<u>Every Day</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

c. ...talked to friends, family, or other people you know to get information about work?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	Once Every 3 to 4 <u>Weeks</u>	Once Every Couple of <u>Weeks</u>	<u>Every Week</u>	Two or Three Times <u>a Week</u>	<u>Every Day</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

d. ... sent out a list of your qualifications and work experiences (i.e. resume) to someone who could assist you in finding work?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	Once Every 3 to 4 <u>Weeks</u>	Once Every Couple of <u>Weeks</u>	<u>Every Week</u>	Two or Three Times <u>a Week</u>	<u>Every Day</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

During the past three months, how often have you...

e. ...filled out application forms (in person or online) for a job?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	Once Every 3 to 4 <u>Weeks</u>	Once Every Couple of <u>Weeks</u>	<u>Every Week</u>	Two or Three Times <u>a Week</u>	<u>Every Day</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

f. ...contacted potential employers or investors?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	Once Every 3 to 4 <u>Weeks</u>	Once Every Couple of <u>Weeks</u>	<u>Every Week</u>	Two or Three Times <u>a Week</u>	<u>Every Day</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

g. ...actually gone for a job interview?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	Once Every 3 to 4 <u>Weeks</u>	Once Every Couple of <u>Weeks</u>	<u>Every Week</u>	Two or Three Times <u>a Week</u>	<u>Every Day</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

h. ...done things to improve the impression you would make in a job interview, such as wearing the right clothes, getting a haircut, thinking about what to say, and so on?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	Once Every 3 to 4 <u>Weeks</u>	Once Every Couple of <u>Weeks</u>	<u>Every Week</u>	Two or Three Times <u>a Week</u>	<u>Every Day</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

i. ...contacted a public employment agency?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	Once Every 3 to 4 <u>Weeks</u>	Once Every Couple of <u>Weeks</u>	<u>Every Week</u>	Two or Three Times <u>a Week</u>	<u>Every Day</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

During the past 3 months, how often have you...

j. ...gone out on information interviews (that is, contacted individuals, agencies, or businesses just to find out more about potential jobs)?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Once Every 3 to 4 Weeks</u>	<u>Once Every Couple of Weeks</u>	<u>Every Week</u>	<u>Two or Three Times a Week</u>	<u>Every Day</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

2. How frequently did you attend a DBM webinar in the last 3 months?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Once or Twice</u>	<u>Three or Four Times</u>	<u>Five or Six Times</u>	<u>Seven or Eight Times</u>	<u>More than Nine Times</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

3. How frequently did you visit the DBM website to research future work opportunities in the last 3 months?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Once or Twice</u>	<u>Three or Four Times</u>	<u>Five or Six Times</u>	<u>Seven or Eight Times</u>	<u>More than Nine Times</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

4. How frequently did you seek advice or support from a DBM professional in the last 3 months?

*Choose one number*

<u>Not at All</u>	<u>Once or Twice</u>	<u>Three or Four Times</u>	<u>Five or Six Times</u>	<u>Seven or Eight Times</u>	<u>More than Nine Times</u>
1	2	3	4	5	6

## **APPENDIX C**

### **TRANSITION READINESS INTERVENTION**

This manual was published for participants who received the training. Please write to Michelle Miller Bohls for permission to use this document.

Permanent Address: 5111 Valley Oak Drive

Austin, Texas 78731



Welcome!

You have agreed to participate in a pilot program called *Navigating Your Job Search*, the purpose of which is to make a difference in an individual's readiness to begin a job search. The exercises contained in this workbook can be done in class as well as through out your job search. They were designed to help you develop (or keep) a great attitude while you pursue your next job.

This workshop and the surveys you took are part of a research project. This means that some participants will not be attending this workshop. You may find that this workbook's exercises make a difference for you in your job search. We request that you do not share ideas from this class or this workbook with anyone also participating in our project as it may interfere with the outcome of the experiment. Others will have the opportunity to participate after the completion of the research project. If you are interested in the results of the research and have not already indicated your interest, please e-mail Michelle Bohls.

If you become overwhelmed at any point in this program, please let one of the trainers know. If you feel this way after your training, please contact Michelle Bohls. Your involvement is **voluntary**. This means that you can choose to quit at any time. We do ask that you let us know at your earliest convenience so that we may open your place to someone else. Your participation is also **confidential**. No identifying information will be connected to your survey, feedback, or input.

Thank you for participating in this experimental program. We hope you find something helpful for you in it. Our intention for this research project is to find something that could make a difference for the millions of people who will face unemployment in the future.

Thank you,

Michelle Miller Bohls

(512) 577-3371

[mbohls@austin.rr.com](mailto:mbohls@austin.rr.com)



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### THE PROS & CONS OF BEGINNING YOUR JOB SEARCH

Clearly there are both positive and negative outcomes related to each choice we make. Choosing one thing means we don't have the time, money, or energy for something else. What if you chose to begin your job search immediately? This choice means you start to do the related activities (phone calls, e-mails, research, classes, etc...) at least six hours every day, five days a week, until you find a job. List both the positive things (Pros) and the negative possibilities (Cons) for that choice.

PROS	CONS

## TAKING STOCK OF CHANGE

Change in our life means that we must adjust to things being different. The more we have to adapt, the longer it can take for us to feel comfortable with our new situation. It can help to evaluate the extent and impact of a change, and what it means to you *at this time*. Take a moment to examine the ways your life has been impacted by your job loss.

### ROLES

Are new behaviors expected from you? What roles have you lost? What did you like about each role you lost? What didn't you like? How have your roles changed?

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### RELATIONSHIPS

How have your relationships changed? Did this change impact the dynamic between you and your significant other? Friends? What relationships have you lost?

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### **ROUTINES**

How have your routines changed? What routines have you lost? Have the people with whom you do these activities changed? Do you miss these activities?

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### **RULES**

Did this change violate a rule you had about how the world should work? Are beliefs about your self being challenged by this change? Are beliefs about others and your relationships being challenged? Are you rethinking some assumptions you had?

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### **YOU**

Have the above changes begun to impact how you define your self? How valuable you feel? How you see yourself in relationship to others? How others might see you?

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## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHANGE

If we evaluate each change in our lives as positive or negative can depend on the context of what else transpired and what else is happening to us. Each change has different characteristics that place it in a context and some aspects of this will change over time. Take a moment to note the characteristics of your job loss.

### CONTROL

Was this change your decision? Was losing your job your decision to make?

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### TIMING

Was the timing of this change awkward for your plans for the future? Does it coincide with other major or minor things happening in your life?

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### PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Are previous experiences impacting how intense this current one is for you? Are there life lessons that may help you cope better?

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**PERMANENCE**

How long will this last? When do you expect to feel like “your old self” again? Is it a permanent change in your life? Have you started to let go or does it still feel unreal?

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**STRESSORS**

What else has happened in your life? Are there other responsibilities that take a lot of energy? Are you feeling depleted? Are you expecting other stressors to happen soon?

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**RESOURCES**

Have you identified resources for financial assistance or support? Social support?

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**ABILITY TO PLAN**

Did you expect to be unemployed? Were you able to plan ahead for how you would handle it? Have you seen other examples of how people behaved when unemployed?

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## AN INCREASED RISK

Researchers have studied unemployment over the last century both in the United States and around the world. A large body of research establishes that there are negative physical and mental health consequences for those who are unemployed due to a reduction in force. The people close to the displaced individual also report negative consequences. Although the impact of unemployment may vary for each individual, job loss is ranked near the top of negative events that generate life stress and as one of the top 10 traumatic experiences in a person's life. Below are specific examples of how unemployment can impact an individual and their family members:

- Depression is the most frequent and prominent symptom reported.
- Financial strain tends to increase as unemployment continues.
- Increased eating and in body mass index.
- Increased high blood pressure, levels of cholesterol, incidence of peptic ulcers, incidence of arthritis, and high anxiety.
- Marital satisfaction tends to decline while problems with family dysfunction tend to increase.
- Increased reports of sexual dysfunction, domestic assault, child abuse, divorce, separation, and desertion.
- Unhealthy attempts to cope with distress often lead to increased or heavy use of mind-altering substances. Reports of alcoholism increase.
- Lower self-esteem and confidence.

Those people who experience prolonged unemployment are at increased risk. It is relevant to point out that job-seeking activities tend to mediate, or lessen, many of these negative consequences, as well as shorten the time it takes to find re-employment. Those who become re-employed report increases in both their physical and psychological health. The best buffer against these risks is a high level of job search activity.

## THE JOB LOSS CYCLE

Individuals tend to progress through different phases, or a cycle, when experiencing a job loss. These responses can almost be predicted because individuals who experience a job loss report them with such regularity.

***Anticipation*** First, there is a sign of the impending reduction in force. Rumors or signals almost always precede the formal notification. High levels of stress characterize this phase. Anxiety increases, as the worker must confront unspecific and continuous uncertainty regarding their future. This phase is often characterized by denial. It is not unusual for workers to entertain fantasies of a last-minute solution that will save their job. Also, they may begin to look forward to the time of unemployment as a break. They may plan to begin a remodeling project or to take a vacation. Seriously looking for work is often avoided.

***Post-notification*** Planning a job search may begin as the actual date of the displacement approaches. Though for most people stress is delayed and procrastination is prolonged in the anticipation of unemployment insurance. Surprisingly, the event of the layoff itself is rarely traumatic.

***Post-layoff*** Sources of conflict and stress gradually emerge as unemployment continues. Vacant hours contribute to feelings of boredom, guilt, anxiety, uselessness, and eventually depression. Feelings of resentment and concern, previously denied, begin to surface and generate hostility and anger. Self-doubt begins to creep up as workers question if there was some way they could have prevented

their loss of work in the first place. Many begin to feel anxious and angry at not having more success in obtaining re-employment. Sometimes these emotions will be vented upon those nearest to the individual: spouse, children, friends, and neighbors. The longer the period of unemployment continues, the more stressful their experience becomes. Loss of a sense of personal control makes life feel unpredictable. Loss of routines and structure can lead to feeling “not like themselves.” Low morale, depression, anxiety, and rage often continue during this phase. Despite the fact that millions have and will experience unemployment, individuals experience it as a highly personal and lonely phenomenon.

***Exhaustion of Benefits***      If unemployment continues until benefits are exhausted, the consequences appear to increase dramatically. The individual’s sense of identity, confidence, and belief in their competence may be altered. Family stress becomes heightened, self-blame may be exaggerated, and problems become more intense. The more the individual’s sense of worth and identity is connected to working or performing their particular job, the more negatively they evaluate their situation. Individuals may exaggerate or feign physical ailments, or try early retirement as a means of avoiding the stigma of viewing oneself as unemployed. It is at this time that individuals need the most assistance; and yet their defenses are at their highest. Frequently, they want to project an image of self-sufficiency, or the lack of need for outside help. A strong commitment to self-reliance and pride can put the individual at a greater risk of strain. The statistics on unemployment often do not include this group who are referred to as discouraged workers.

## BUSINESS PLAN: JOB SEARCH, INC.

Can you imagine that your job search is a business? Who would you place in charge of this business? Wouldn't it make sense for you to be in charge of your own search? What qualifications would you like "the job seeker" to have? What behaviors or tasks will they have to perform in order to find a quality job? List these in the spaces below. Make a mark by the ones you don't feel confident in doing without some help.

President & CEO: \_\_\_\_\_

(Your Name)

### JOB REQUIREMENTS:

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	

### DEFENSES

We often put up defenses to protect ourselves from feeling negative emotions or hearing negative voices. This is like putting on suit of armor to protect us in battle. Sometimes these defenses are useful, but at other times they can interfere with our getting what we want. Think of examples of defenses related to your job search. Which ones are helping and which ones are getting in the way?

#### BLAME

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#### DENY OR MINIMIZE

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#### RATIONALIZE

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#### WITHDRAW OR ESCAPE

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## MODELS OF THE TRANSITION PROCESS

There are several models used to explain the internal process of adaptation to a change. For instance, Kubler-Ross's grief model is often presented. Here we are going to look at several models and you may notice how similar they are. You may find one resonates more for you than another. So far we have looked at a model for job loss.

### A Job Loss Model

- Disbelief & numbness
- Sense of betrayal
- Confusion & panic
- Anger
- Resolution

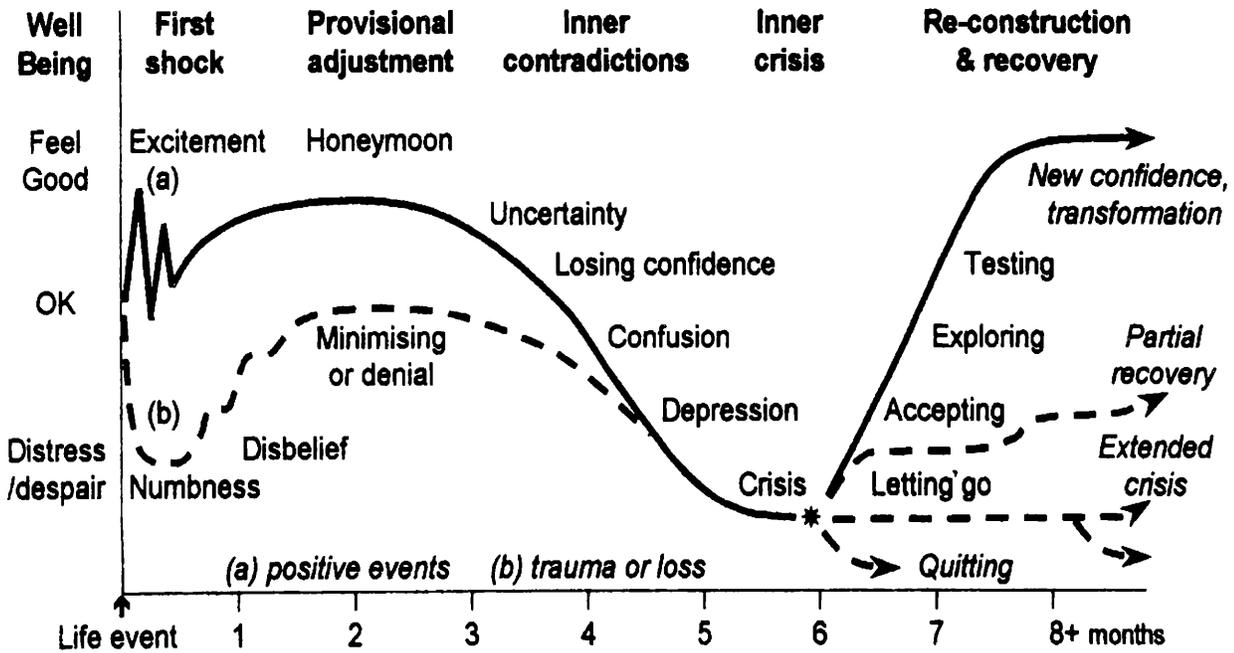
A General Transition Model: The Eos Life~Work Resource Centre has combined several models to create the first transition cycle depicted. In this model, any change event leads to a time of inner crisis, even ones that are thought of as positive such as marriage or a first child. This time typically occurs about 6 months after the change event. Several outcomes are possible from that point. Finding a job before your crisis point can circumvent many negative consequences.

### A General Model of Transitions

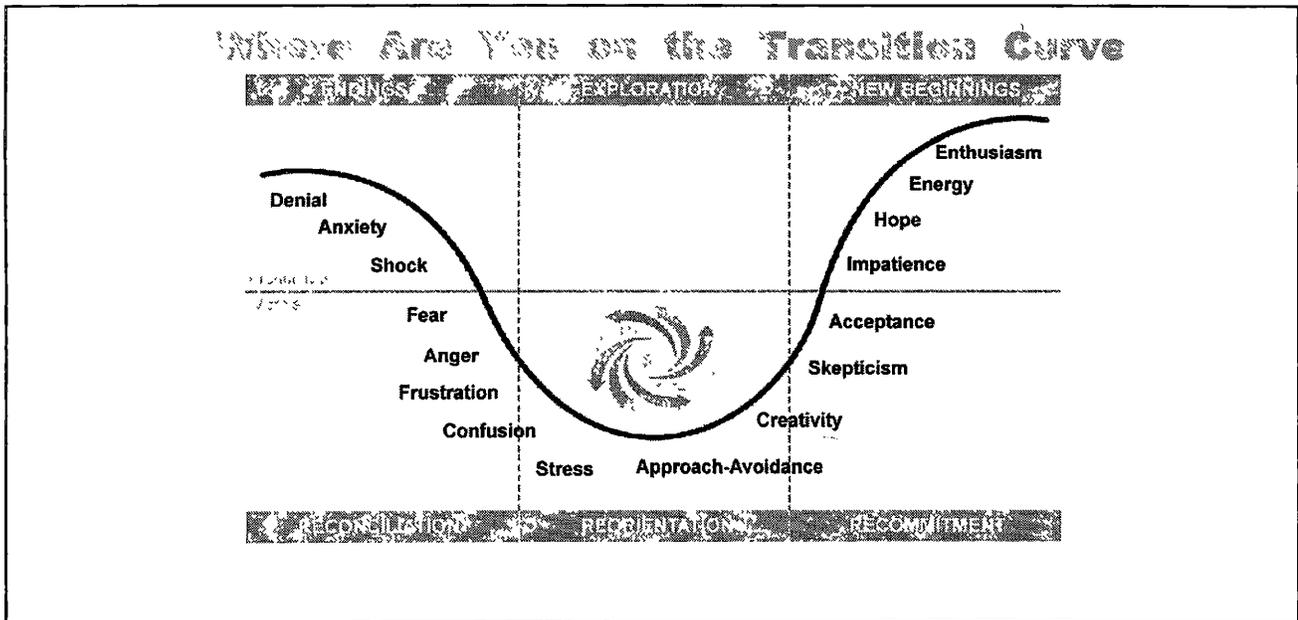
- Immobilization
- Denial
- Self-doubt
- Letting go
- Search for meaning
- Integration

A Transition Cycle for Job Loss: The second picture is a transition cycle that is presented by DBM to understand the transition process. This model incorporates elements from both of the previous models. Understanding the transition process can help you understand that a wide range of feelings are normal.

## THE TRANSITION CYCLE



From The Eos Life-Work Resource Centre <http://www.eoslifework.co.uk/transprac.htm>





## LETTING GO

If you decide to structure your days, then you will need to find things to fill the down time. There are four main tasks to letting go and they are: (1) accept the reality, (2) let your self feel the pain of loss, (3) develop a new sense of what makes you who you are, and (4) let others help you. These activities have been found to help people cope with loss. Write in some of your own ideas.

### EXPRESS YOURSELF

- Write your thoughts down
- Talk to a friend
- Sing, dance, draw, paint
- Find constructive ways to express anger
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

- Eat healthy food
- Drink plenty of water
- Take it easy on yourself
- Workout, play a sport
- Get regular sleep
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### TAKE TIME TO HAVE FUN

- Laugh
- Spend time with friends
- Do something you are good at
- \_\_\_\_\_

### DO SOMETHING NEW

- Volunteer
- Learn a new skill
- Rearrange a room
- Do something you are not good at or don't think you'd like
- Take a class
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### RELAX

- Go for a long drive
- Soak your feet
- Take a walk
- Listen to music

### SET BACKS & TEMPTATIONS

The most effective way to avoid a set back is to anticipate those things that may provoke one or those people, places, and things that will tempt you to avoid what you need to do, and then decided what you will do to get back on track. This can inoculate your job search against set backs and help you keep a great attitude, despite the bumps in the road. Write down what things might set you back and think of what might tempt you. Then, write down a plan for how you will cope with these when they happen.

SETBACKS	STRATEGIES
TEMPTATIONS	
PEOPLE	
PLACES	
THINGS	

## REWARDS

Rewards are things that reinforce the goals and plans that we set for ourselves. It may be helpful to understand the different types of rewards that mean something to you and the most effective way rewarding yourself. Below are examples of goals that may warrant a reward when achieved. Personal rewards are those positive things we say or do for ourselves. Social rewards are the positive things people say or do for us.

ACHIEVEMENTS	PERSONAL REWARDS	SOCIAL REWARDS
When I get up, shower, and dress and start my search before 9 a.m. ...		
When I make more than five networking phone calls...		
When I take a webinar or meet with a DBM professional...		
When I work 4 hours in 1 day on my job search...		
When I work 6 hours in 1 day on my job search...		
When I finish an interview...		
When I get an offer of employment...		

**STEP ONE: WHO DO YOU KNOW?**

The first step to putting together a great support team is to think of the people you know. Take a few minutes to brainstorm everyone you know.

**RELATIVES**

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Family (of origin)

---

In-laws

---

Partner

---

Partner's family

---

Ex-partners and their family

---

---

**CO-WORKERS**

---

Most recent job

---

Previous jobs

---

Your department

---

Other departments

---

Customers

---

People with whom you ate lunch

---

Former bosses

---

**FRIENDS & ACQUAINTANCES**

---

Current neighbors

---

Past neighbors

---

Place of worship

---

Club members

---

School friends

---

Teachers

---

Clergy

---

People your kids or relatives know

---

Hobbies

---

Professional organizations

---

Friends of friends

---

**SERVICE PROVIDERS**

---

Doctors

---

Counselors

---

Accountant/Lawyer

---

Barber/Hairdresser

---

Babysitters

---

Tip: You can use this list when you begin to network!



**STEP TWO: YOUR DREAM TEAM****Two Rules of Recruiting:**

1. Give each job to the person best suited for that job.
2. Don't ask someone to perform a job they won't be good at doing.

<b>JOB DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>PEOPLE</b>

### STEP THREE: ASKING FOR SUPPORT

Sometimes it is difficult to ask for help, especially if we pride ourselves in being self-sufficient. It can be helpful to think what you would do if someone asked you for help. It feels good to help others. Most job seekers find their next job through networking. This is one more way for friends and family to assist you. It is especially important that you ask for support from key people. Your immediate family is likely experiencing the stress of your job search also. Asking them for assistance can help them feel more involved and less helpless.

Here are some ideas on how you might elicit support from family or friends:

- Ask for assistance with household tasks
- Ask them to proofread your work
- Practice interviewing with them

You may also want to ask someone specific to be your job search coach:

- Call them at an agreed upon time each week
- Spend 15-20 minutes talking about your search
- Have them ask you how the job search is going and how much time you spent on your job search
- Ask them to offer you support and encouragement
- Set small goals with them each week to be reported on the next week

Take a moment to script out what you might say to someone. Below are some samples to get you started.

- “I am beginning my job search and I am asking people I know to be my eyes and ears for opportunities in my field. I value your insight and I would welcome any guidance that you would have for me.”



## SOCIAL PROS & CONS

Just as there are negative consequences and positive outcomes for us when we make choices, there are similar effects for the people to whom we are close. Take a moment to think of the positive things (Pros) and the negative possibilities (Cons) for choosing to start your job search as they relate to other people in your life. Think of the consequences to others as well as how others will react.

	PROS	CONS
Consequences to others		
Reactions of others		
Consequences to others		
Reactions of others		
Consequences to others		
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Consequences to others		
Reactions of others		



## CHANGE HARDY & CAREER RESILIENT

Resiliency is defined as, “One’s ability to progress in one’s development despite being ‘bent’, ‘compressed’, or ‘stretched’ by factors in a high risk environment.” Resilient children tend to view experiences optimistically, have a capacity to gain positive attention from other people, seek out new experiences, and use an active approach to problem solving. These are the same behaviors that make for a successful job search! Take a moment to ‘take stock’ of your resiliency and then think of ways you can strengthen each of these four areas.

	ASSETS & LIABILITIES	WAYS TO DEVELOP RESILIENCY
<b>SELF</b> Personality or Personal Characteristics		
<b>SITUATION</b> Characteristics of Current Change		
<b>SUPPORT</b> Social and Professional		
<b>COPING STRATEGIES</b> Problem-focused or Emotion-focused		

## COPING STRATEGIES

There are three types of coping strategies that one can employ when facing a difficult situation: 1) *modify the situation* by taking action to solve a problem, 2) *modify the meaning* by thinking about the difficulty in a different way, or 3) modify the stress by an activity. None of these are good or bad, but to be effective they must be used responsibly and appropriately. For instance, negotiation may be used to work out how the household chores will get done while you are doing your job search. Taking optimistic action will be an effective way to find a new job, but acceptance of your current situation could interfere with your finding new employment. Acceptance may be best applied to past events. All of these strategies can be used and in varying degrees.

MODIFY THE SITUATION	COPING STRATEGY	
<b>Negotiation:</b> Finding a compromise, sitting down and “talking things out”		
<b>Optimistic Action:</b> Taking action to solve the problem, or eliminate a road block		
<b>Advice Seeking:</b> (versus self reliance) Seeking support or help		
<b>Make a New Plan</b>		
MODIFY THE MEANING		
<b>Acceptance:</b> Deciding that there is nothing that can be done at this time; that something is out of your control		
<b>Applying the Transition Process:</b> Deciding that it is a normal to feel out of sorts		

MODIFY THE MEANING Cont.	COPING STRATEGY	
<b>Positive Comparisons:</b> “Looking on the bright side...”		
<b>Rearranging Priorities:</b> Deciding what is important, paying attention to those things, and ignoring what is not		
<b>Reappraisal:</b> Valuing other domains of life when one area is not going well		
MANAGE THE STRESS	COPING STRATEGY	
<b>Venting:</b> Expressive venting of feelings, blowing off steam, or yelling		
<b>Fight:</b> Working it out in a physical way, boxing or hitting a wall (we are <u>not</u> encouraging hitting other people)		
<b>Flight:</b> Staying away from people, places or things that stress you out		
<b>Tend to self:</b> Relaxation, physical activity such as exercise or sports, or rest		
<b>Tend to others:</b> Volunteer		
<b>Mend:</b> Therapy, faith, humor, play, or self-help		

## OPTIMAL STRESS

The relationship between stress and performance follows a bell-shaped curve. The top of this curve is our optimal stress level. Insufficient stress will leave us feeling bored, tired and lethargic. The closer our stress levels are to that 'optimal stress' point, the more excited and enthused we become about our work and our lives. Once we get beyond that optimum level, however, things start going downhill fairly quickly. Negative stress responses kick in, and our performance begins to decline.

Even if experts could agree on the relationship between stress and performance, it still wouldn't tell us where our own optimal levels stress lay, because stress responses are so individual.

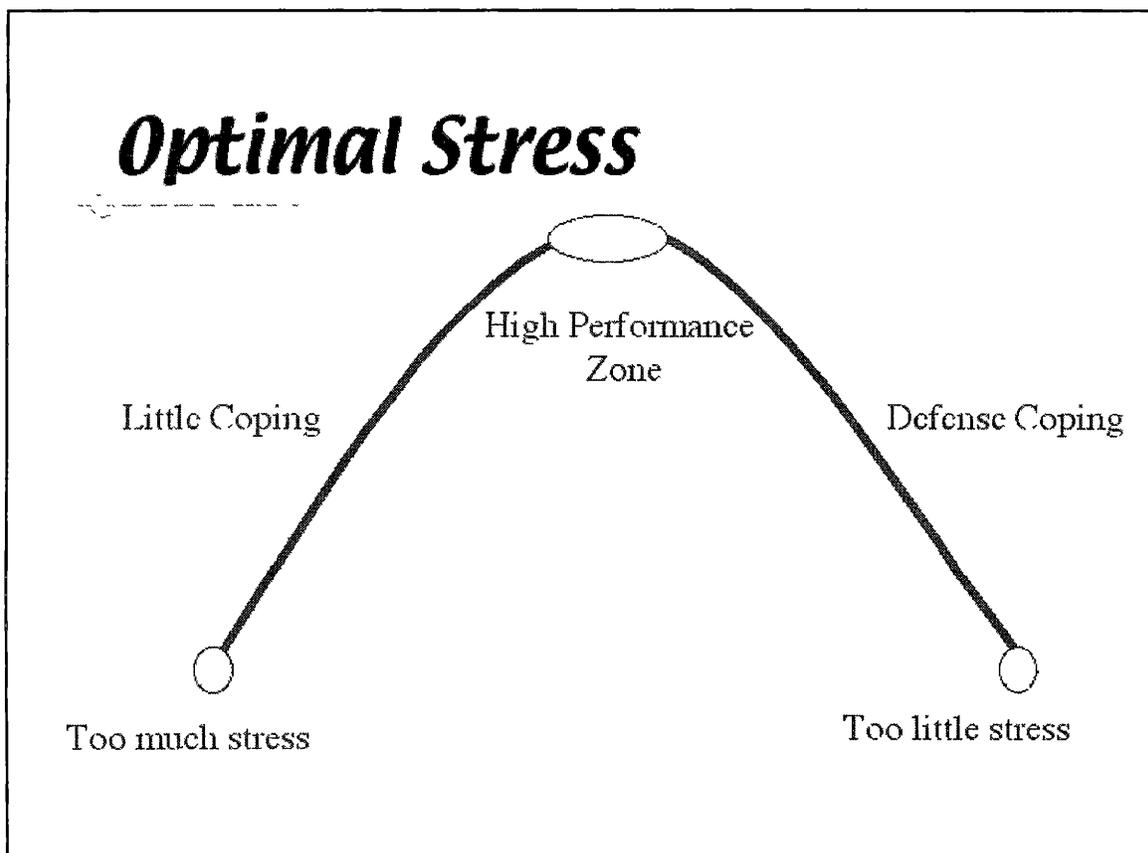
We know that a limited level of stress can have positive effects on our performance, including:

- Motivation to start new projects
- Motivation to finish them on time
- Motivation to produce higher quality work
- Thinking of tasks as challenges that can be met

At the same time, there are well-documented cases of too much stress leading to:

- Lack of concentration
- Procrastination and de-motivation
- Anxiety and/or insomnia
- Emotional overreaction (irritability or tearfulness)

An effective job search strategy might attempt to balance coping strategies with stress. As an example, those displaced workers with high levels of financial strain actually perform more job search activities than those with little financial pressure. Of course, it is important to take care of yourself and incorporate activities into your life that relax you, but some stress is necessary to motivate action. Defense coping is over coping. This may look like too many hours a day working out or watching television. Job loss is a unique type of loss in that the individual must perform their way out of the situation in order to be less vulnerable to the negative consequences.



**LET'S HELP JOE**

Joe was motivated to look for work after attending a workshop. He left with a lot of energy and feeling positive about his ability to start looking for a job. He filled out all of the worksheets and looked back over them a few days later. He used the list of people he knows to begin making calls and networking. A good friend gave him a name and he called, scheduled, and conducted an informational interview.

By the following week, Joe had really lost his momentum and just wanted to sleep and watch television. He set his alarm for 8:30 a.m. and planned to call for job leads from 9 a.m. until noon, but when the alarm rang, he turned it off and went back to sleep. When he finally woke up at 11:30 a.m. he felt bad for wrecking his schedule. Somehow the entire day went by and he didn't do a single thing toward his job search.

One day turned into a week. Each day he felt worse about his lack of progress, but he just couldn't get himself to keep up his job search. He thought a lot about what he could or should be doing, but didn't do it. He started using his time to clean the house and work on 'honey do' projects he'd put off. At least they brought him a sense of accomplishment and his wife seemed to appreciate it.

He had no idea how to handle this, never having been unemployed before. He had always been very energetic and self-motivated. His last employer commented on Joe being one of the hardest workers he had ever seen.

1. What do you think got in Joe's way?
2. What do you suggest Joe does to help him continue his job search?
3. What strategy would you recommend?



## TIPS & TRICKS

Congratulations! After completing the Navigating Your Job Search workshop you have several exercises to help you evaluate your situation as it changes and stay motivated. The following tips and tricks can help you turn your attitude into action!

### **Establish a work area for yourself**

- A CEO needs a place to work that has an ample amount of workspace, a telephone, and a place to organize your job search materials.

### **Schedule your time wisely**

- Schedule your week and time by logging on to DBM's website and signing up for their scheduled programs and then schedule in other job search activities from their website or add your own.
- Stick to a morning routine similar to when you worked for someone else. (Get up early, shower, dress nice). Now you are working for *you!*
- Reward yourself when you stick to your schedule.
- Schedule in workouts, lunch with friends, and the other activities.
- Balance time to learn about yourself, to plan, to explore and research, to implement your plan, and to prepare for interviews.

### **Pace yourself**

- Set realistic goals.
- Plan to spend at least 30 hours a week on your job search.
- Decide which days and which hours you will use to look for work
- Use a calendar or other planning tool to keep track of the hours and activities.

### **HALT!**

- If you are **Hungry, Angry, Lonely** or **Tired**, stop! Take care of yourself. You are your most important resource for a successful job search.

## YOUR ONE COMMITMENT

Before you leave here today we want you to choose one thing that you think will help you begin your job search. We want you to set this goal and make the commitment to the group. Take a moment to look through the workbook and DBM's road map. Choose one goal for yourself. Be sure to follow effective goal making rules. Your goal should:

- (1) Be realistic – can you do it?
- (2) Be measurable – how much will you do it?
- (3) Be concrete – how will others know you did it?
- (4) Have a defined time frame – when will you do it?

Write your one commitment here:

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Barriers and a strategy for overcoming any set backs:

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## CREATING & USING A TRANSITION STATEMENT

Responding to potentially uncomfortable questions from friends, family, and business associates regarding "what happened and why?" can be difficult and add more stress to an already uncomfortable event. Even telling strangers what you do or want to do can produce anxiety. Being able to handle these types of questions with ease is the first step you will take to be in control of the messages you communicate. A transition or elevator statement tells someone who you are in the time it takes to travel a few floors in an elevator.

Take a look at some recommended sample scripts and then script your own statement. Adjust it accordingly to represent your own situation. You will practice using your statement in a few minutes.

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the middle of a job search. I was a \_\_\_\_\_ for the last \_\_\_\_ years, but I am looking to move into a position with responsibility for supervising others.
- Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. I worked for the last few years as a \_\_\_\_\_ and I loved my job. I am currently looking for similar opportunity because I love working with people.
- I am \_\_\_\_\_. I started my career in \_\_\_\_\_ fresh out of my MBA. I am currently a job seeker and looking for a job where I can use that MBA to help a company \_\_\_\_\_.
- My name is \_\_\_\_\_. My last job was as a \_\_\_\_\_ for a great company, but what I am really excited about is the chance to begin a new career in \_\_\_\_\_.

### Guidelines for Creating and Using Your Transition Statement

1. **Take control.** Respond with an understanding of how you want to handle this type of question. Anticipate common questions and you will not be caught by surprise.
2. **Be factual.** Acknowledge your situation. Don't hide. Though uncomfortable at first, deal with your reality. It will become less and less difficult with time.
3. **Be constructive.** Seek to build an opportunity to talk further once you've had more time to get focused and organized. People will respect that and you'll soon be able to reach out to them for assistance and ideas.
4. **Be brief.** At this early point in your job search you should only try to provide a short and concise response - about 30 seconds is ideal.
5. **Be positive.** While you may be feeling some (understandably) strong emotions at the moment, try to keep them in check. Stay positive and project confidence about your future.

Write your statement here:

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## POST-WORKSHOP IDEAS & EXERCISES

To maintain a great attitude in your job search you may need to reevaluate where you are in the transition process. The exercises at the back of the workbook are the same ones you worked on in class. These can help you reevaluate your progress and help you overcome a set back during your job search process.

You may also want to refer back to the exercises related to letting go, gaining social support, and coping strategies to remind yourself of ways you can move forward.

### Overcoming Barriers to Success

In order to stay focused, you must have a strategy to use when times get tough and your job search is feeling stalled. Below is a five-step process you can use, and when applicable the workbook form that corresponds to that step:

1. Anticipate potential set backs, difficulties, or barriers that may occur (5-3)
2. Identify as many approaches or strategies as possible to overcoming the problem (5-3)
3. Weigh the alternative approaches or strategies (1-1)
4. Implement a strategy (5-4)
5. Reevaluate the chosen course of action in light of the experience gained trying, and begin the process again

You might also consider the following:

- Hire a life or career coach
- Speak with a licensed professional counselor
- Keep a journal
- Do a brief career autobiography
- Read a book about job loss or transitions

POST-WORKSHOP EXERCISE  
**PROS & CONS OF THE JOB SEARCH**

	PROS	CONS
Consequences to Self		
Consequences to Other		
Reactions of Self		
Reactions of Others		
Consequences to Self		
Consequences to Other		
Reactions of Self		
Reactions of Others		
Consequences to Self		
Consequences to Other		
Reactions of Self		
Reactions of Others		
Consequences to Self		
Consequences to Other		
Reactions of Self		
Reactions of Others		

## POST-WORKSHOP EXERCISE

### TAKING STOCK OF CHANGE

Situations in our life are constantly changing. It may help to assess your situation one more time now that some time has passed to see how you are evaluating your job loss. Take a moment to examine the ways your life has been impacted at this point in time.

#### ROLES

Are new behaviors expected from you? What roles have you lost? What did you like about each role you lost? What didn't you like? How have your roles changed?

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#### RELATIONSHIPS

How have your relationships changed? Did this change impact the dynamic between you and your significant other? Friends? What relationships have you lost?

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## ROUTINES

How have your routines changed? What routines have you lost? Have the people with whom you do these activities changed? Do you miss these activities?

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## RULES

Did this change violate a rule you had about how the world should work? Are beliefs about your self being challenged by this change? Are beliefs about others and your relationships being challenged? Are you rethinking some assumptions you had?

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## YOU

Have the above changes begun to impact how you define your self? How valuable you feel? How you see yourself in relationship to others? How others might see you?

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## POST-WORKSHOP EXERCISE

### CHARACTERISTICS OF CHANGE

If we evaluate each change in our lives as positive or negative can depend on the context of what else transpired and what else is happening to us. Each change has different characteristics that place it in a context. Has the context changed since the workshop?

#### PERMANENCE

How long will this last? When do you expect to feel like “your old self” again? Is it a permanent change in your life? Have you started to let go or does it still feel unreal?

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#### STRESSORS

What else has happened in your life? Are there other responsibilities that take a lot of energy? Are you feeling depleted? Are you expecting other stressors to happen soon?

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#### RESOURCES

Have you identified resources for financial assistance or support? Social support?

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## RECOMMENDED READING

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