

INFORMATION GATHERING QUESTIONS

An informational interview is a conversation with a professional currently employed in an organization or industry you are considering. It is important to bring prepared questions to the meeting. The Career Center has identified a few questions to get you started.

Sample introductory phrases for setting up an informational interview

"Hello, my name is Terrance Green. Ruth Anderson, a former colleague at Maple Corporation, suggested you may be a good person for me to talk with about the mental health counseling field. I am currently considering enrolling in a Master's degree program in Mental Health Counseling. Would you have 15 minutes to talk with me about your experiences in the field?"

"Hi, this is Melanie Peterson. I am in the process of changing careers from technology to psychology and am trying to learn more about different career options. Your organization is listed in the APA resource guide as a clinic that specializes in family therapy, an area I am very interested in learning more about. Would you or someone in your organization have a few minutes to talk with me?"

Sample Questions to ask in an informational interview

About the person you are interviewing:

1. How did you enter this field? What has been your career path?
2. What is your typical day like in this position?
3. What challenges/frustrations do you face?
4. What are your favorite parts of this job? What gives you the most satisfaction?
5. What traits or experiences do people who are most successful in this field have?

About the industry/field:

1. Is there growth in this field? What is the job potential?
2. What can I do, if I enter this field, to make myself marketable and competitive?
3. What is the typical salary range for entry-level and experienced professionals?
4. Do you belong to any professional associations related to the field?
5. Do you have any recommendations for me as I consider entering this field?

About the credentials:

1. What type of preparation, credentials and training would I need to enter this field?
2. What jobs do people have without a license or certification in this field?
3. Please provide me with an overview of what it takes to become licensed in this field.
4. What does one have to do to keep their license current?
5. How many hours of continuing education are required?

Final question:

1. Do you know of any other people who might be helpful for me to talk with?

Don't forget to send a thank you note after the informational interview!