INFORMATION GATHERING QUESTIONS  
SUGGESTIONS FROM THE CAPELLA CAREER CENTER

When doing informational interviews, clearly explain why you want to speak with the person and bring prepared questions to lead the meeting. Below is a sample introduction and questions you may want to ask. These are suggestions; be sure to ask questions that reflect your work values, skills and professional interests to get information that is relevant to you.

MAKING A PROFESSIONAL CONNECTION

When introducing yourself to a professional contact, provide the following pieces of information:

- **Rationale** for your interest in the field
- Relevant skills and experience (can be from volunteer and educational experiences)
- Reason for reaching out to this person specifically (what do you want to learn from them?)

SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR REQUESTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Hi, this is ______. I am in the process of changing careers from IT to psychology and want 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. I was wondering if you or someone in your organization would have a few minutes to talk with me?

SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR BEGINNING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me, Monique. To start, I’d like to share a little about myself and why I contacted you.

[Wait for a response, then proceed. Remember to keep your introduction brief so you have time to learn from the interviewee.]

I am pursuing my bachelor’s degree in Psychology, as I mentioned on the phone. I have been volunteering at the local homeless shelter, as well as the Boys and Girls Club; as a result, I’m confident I want to work in social services. I am still exploring which career area is the best fit for me right now which is why I reached out to you. I was hoping to learn more about Program Coordinator role because it is an area I have a lot of interest in based on the courses I’ve taken, my volunteer experience, and what I’ve read about the field online.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK IN AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

About the person you are interviewing:

- How did you enter this field? What has been your career path?
- What is your typical day like in this position?
- What challenges/frustrations do you face?
- What are your favorite parts of this job? What gives you the most satisfaction?
- What kind of people are most successful in this field (traits/interests/background)?

About the company/organization in which they work:

- What is the culture/environment like at this organization?
- Who are your major competitors?
- Are there opportunities for growth at this company?
- Where does the organization’s funding come from? Is there stability in funding?
- Who are your customers? Who do you serve?

About the industry/field:

- What type of preparation, credentials and training would I need to enter this field?
- Is there growth in this field? What is the job potential?
- What can I do, if I enter this field, to make myself marketable and competitive?
- What is the typical/average salary?
- Do you have any recommendations for me if I consider entering this field?

Final question:

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

REMEMBER TO SEND A THANK YOU NOTE AFTER THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW!