

# WELCOME! WE'LL GET STARTED IN A FEW MINUTES!

Note: This session will be not be recorded, but attendees will be sent the slide deck after the fact.

In the meantime, feel free to introduce yourself in the chat! (e.g., name, program/faculty, regular/co-op)



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A red "ON AIR" sign with a glowing effect, positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide.

# PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

10/22/2025

Kierra Young (she/her)  
Career Advisor, Centre for Career Development



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# Whose land are we on?

We respectfully acknowledge that we work on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, which includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River: land promised and never returned to the Six Nations.

**Some incredible local community members on IG:**  
Bangishimo Johnston @bangishimo, Amy Smoke @amysmoke, C. Elizabeth Best @lizbot5000

**Support:** O:se Kenhionhata:tie – [Land Back Camp](#),  
@ose.kenhionhatatie on IG

**Reports:** [TRC Calls to Action](#), [National Inquiry into MMIWG](#)

**Reading:** [The Inconvenient Indian](#), [21 Things You May Not Have Known About the Indian Act](#), [This Place: 150 Years Retold](#)

**What land are you on?** [native-land.ca](#)

**Learning opportunity:**

INDG 201 The Indigenous Experience in Canada



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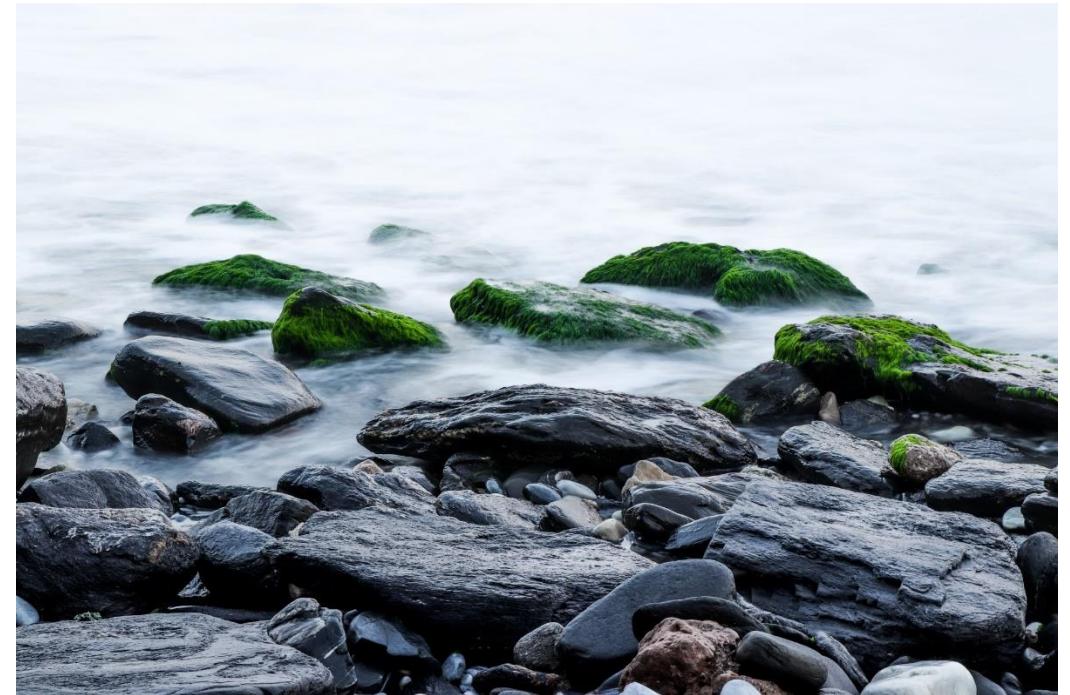
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# A Safe(r) Space

Going into this workshop, the intention is to create as safe a space as possible.

A safe space means different things for everyone, but we'll do our best! Let's keep three things in mind:

- **Choice**
- **Respect**
- **Care**



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# How might we co-create this safe(r) space?

- Participate in a way that feels most comfortable for you!
- Please use the chat during presentation time. Ask me questions whenever! At the end of the workshop, you can go mic on or mic off during Q&A
  - Feel free to send us a direct message if you have a question or comment you would like to share privately
- Take what works for you and leave what doesn't



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# AGENDA



Before the interview:  
preparation and practice

Virtual vs. in-person interviews

Behavioural vs.  
technical interviews

Next steps after  
your interview

Wrap up, Q&A



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**What topics do you hope this workshop will cover?**



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# BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Preparation & Practice

# PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

What do you think students could do to get ready for an interview?



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# Interview Preparation

- Review resume
- Review job description
- Research employer (mission, challenges, motivators, culture and strategic plan)
- Practice interview questions
- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer
- References
- Copy of your resume
- Know yourself and what you bring to the position



# What is the employer looking for?

- Experience
- Education
- Knowledge
- Technical Skills
- Transferable Skills
- Personal Attributes



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# Know the details

- How many people will interview you? Who are they?
- How long will the interview be?
- What components will it include?
  - Question and answer?
  - Technical?
  - Application?



Knowing this information can help relieve anxiety and reduce surprises!



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# Practice, practice, practice!

How will you practice for your interview?

- **Behavioural interviews:** mock interviews (visit CCD!), sample questions, practicing with folks you trust, GenAI tools? (e.g., Microsoft Copilot)
- **Technical interviews:** connecting with upper-year peers, online prep platforms
- Networking?



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# **VIRTUAL VS. IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS**

# VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS



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# Virtual Interview Considerations

- **Test your Tech:** test run the software with a friend to ensure a smooth experience
- **Be early:** set up your computer, close extra tabs, turn off notifications and open the program
- **Start with a strong introduction:** say hello, smile and look into your camera
  - “Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.”
  - “I’ve been looking forward to our conversation”
  - ”It’s nice to meet you!”
- **Be prepared for small talk:** remain positive, find a common interest, avoid oversharing or controversial topics



# Setting the Stage

- 1. Sound:** find a quiet space and a room with some sound insulation
- 2. Background:** have a clean, simple and professional background
- 3. Camera Angle:** ensure your camera is at eye-level
- 4. Lighting:** use natural light or a lamp.  
Ensure you are not backlit!
- 5. Dress:** dress appropriately\* and professionally from head to toe

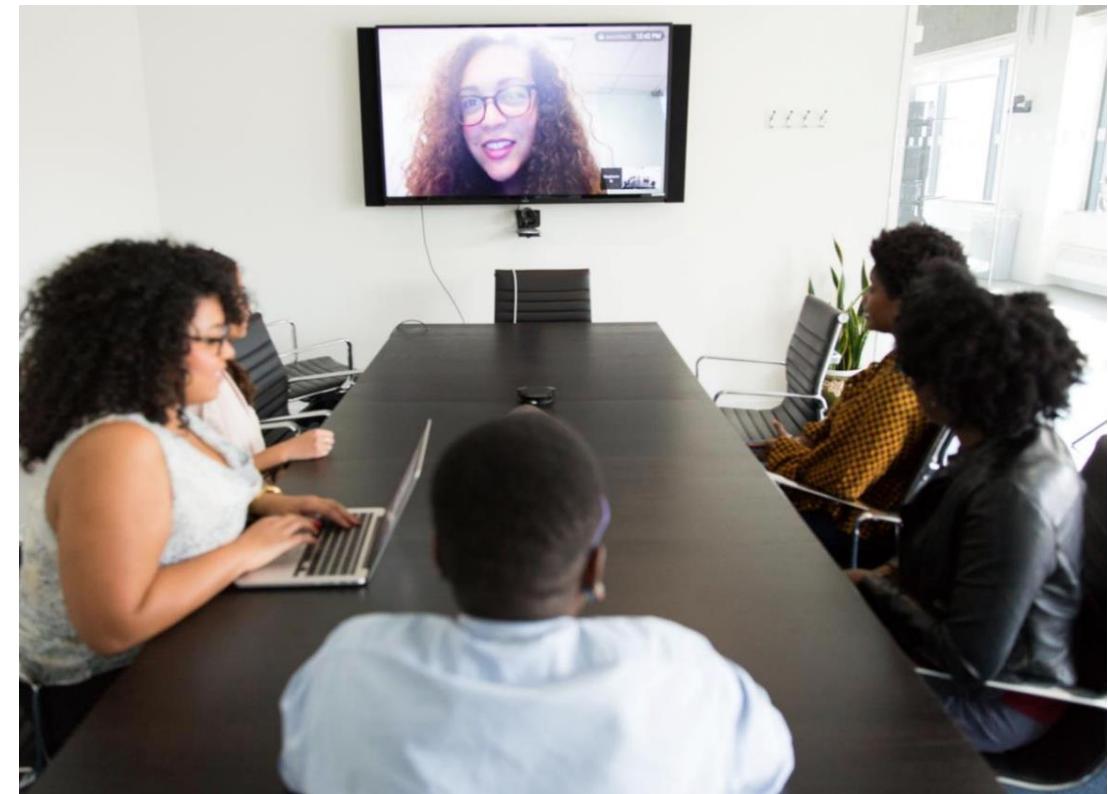


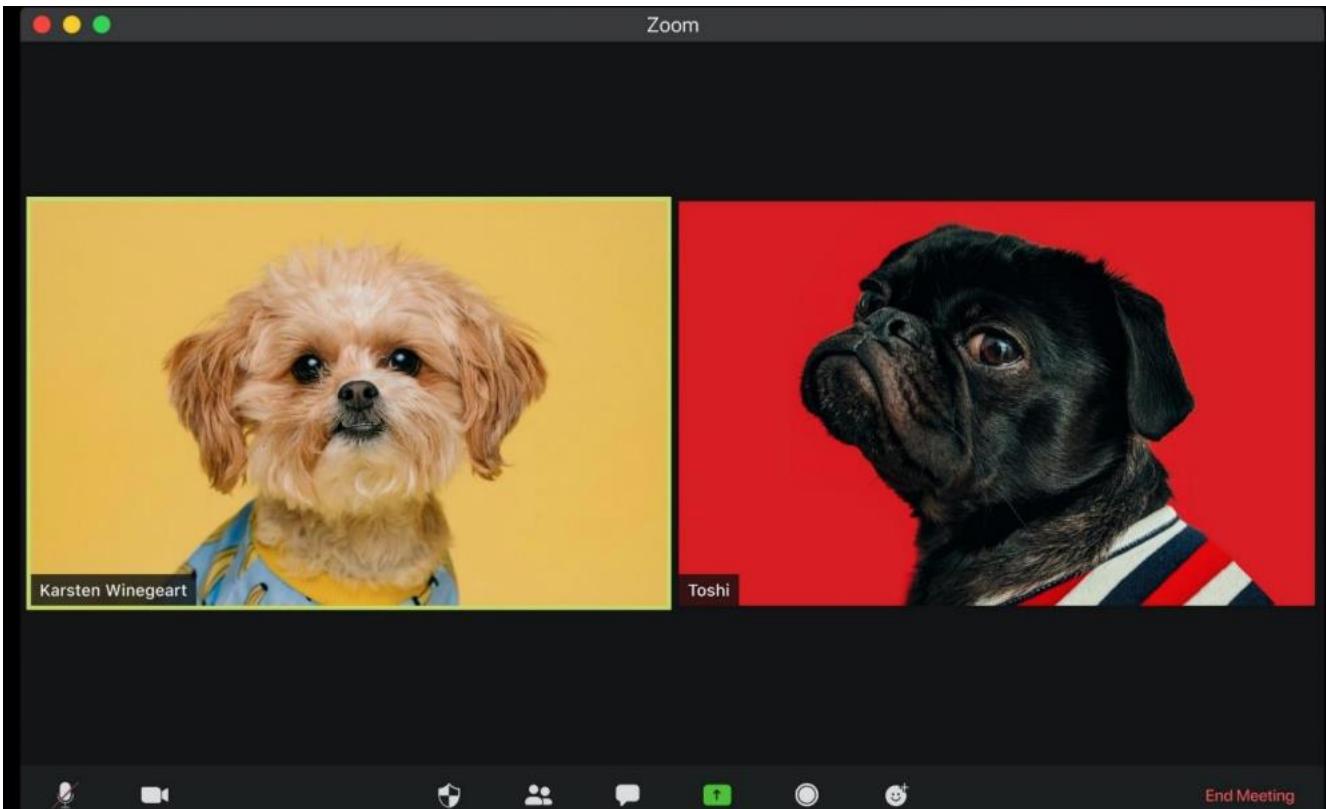
Photo by Christina @ wointechchat.com on Unsplash



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# VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS: BODY LANGUAGE



- 1. Posture:** positive body language
- 2. Eye contact:** look into the camera
- 3. Facial Expressions:** smile when appropriate
- 4. Voice:** be mindful of if you need to slow down
- 5. Practice your answers out loud!**



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# IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS



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# In-Person Interview Considerations

- **Know the way!** Where is the interview located? How long is the commute? Will there be traffic? Parking, etc.?
- **Remember the previous 3 slides?**
- Answering the dress question!



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# **BEHAVIOURAL VS. TECHNICAL INTERVIEWS**

What's the difference?

# BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEWS

# THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Classic

Behavioural

Situational

Skill Testing/Problem  
Solving



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# CLASSIC QUESTIONS

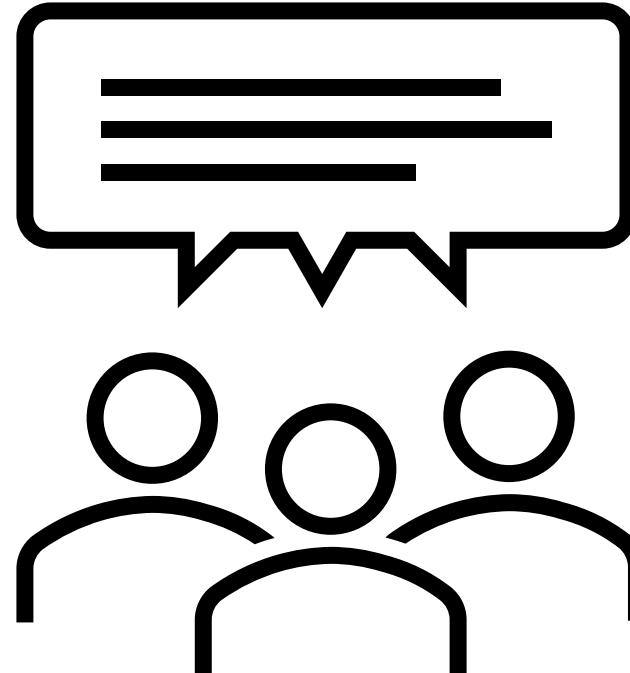


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# Recurring QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself
- Why did you apply?
- Why should we hire you?
- Strengths/weaknesses
- Organizational knowledge
- Short/long-term career goals



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# OUTLINE FOR “TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF”

- When/how did you become interested in this field/role/opportunity?
- What knowledge, skills and/or experience do you have?
- What are your short/long-term career goals?
- Can you tie this into the opportunity you’re pursuing?
- Anything else worth sharing? (interests, hobbies, fun facts about yourself?)
- Give yourself about 90 seconds (give or take) for this answer



# BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS



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# BEHAVIOUR-BASED QUESTIONS

Past behaviour is a good indicator of future behaviour.

Typical behavioural questions begin with:

- Tell me about a time when...
- Describe a situation in which...
- Recall an instance when...
- Give me an example of...



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# STAR APPROACH



<b>Situation</b>	Background and context
<b>Task</b>	What you needed to do
<b>Action</b>	What you did and how you did it
<b>Result</b>	The outcome of your actions



# Q: TELL ME ABOUT A TIME YOU COMMUNICATED SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE TO A NON-SCIENTIFIC AUDIENCE

Situation	“Let’s Talk Science” Volunteer
Task	Create workshop on global warming for 8 <sup>th</sup> graders
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Researched the 8<sup>th</sup> grade science curriculum</li><li>• Consulted with professors and TAs on strategies to simplify information</li><li>• Delivered the workshop to 20 students and kept them engaged by inserting analogies, videos and activities into the workshop</li></ul>
Result	Students expressed their newfound interest in global warming, and I was invited to deliver another workshop



# SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS



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# SITUATIONAL/HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS

- Actual (hypothetical) situation from job
- Can be very general but also can be very specific
- Typical questions begin with:
  - What would you do if...
  - Describe how you would...
  - What approach would you take...
  - Say you were faced with...



# SITUATIONAL/HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS about work

What would you do if you were almost finished working on a project that had a tight deadline but upon review you realized you'd made a mistake at the beginning that would require you to start over?

How would you resolve conflict with a co-worker?



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# SKILL TESTING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING QUESTIONS



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# SKILL TESTING/PROBLEM SOLVING QUESTIONS

## Skill testing

- Technical questions
- Hands-on

## Problem Solving

- Written or spoken
- Demonstrate structured thinking
- Show your process (the right answer may not matter)



# TECHNICAL INTERVIEWS

# Considerations for Technical Interviews



- Field/subfield/domain
- Organization size
- Asynchronous vs. synchronous assessments
- Prep platforms: Glassdoor, HackerRank, LeetCode, NeetCode, Techie Delight, and many others!



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# WHAT DO I DO ABOUT...?



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- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Silence
- Stumped
- Salary & negotiation



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# WRAPPING UP AN INTERVIEW

How do you best answer the following:

- Is there anything else that you'd like to add?
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about yourself?
- Do you have any questions for us?



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# QUESTIONS TO ASK AT THE END OF AN INTERVIEW

- What do you expect a co-op student to have accomplished in the first month?
- What aspects of the role do you believe to be the most rewarding or the most challenging?
- What are the key priorities for someone in this role?
- Can you give me an example of the types of projects the previous co-op student was involved in?
- What type of training would there be for the successful candidate?
- In what ways can I prepare for this job, if I am the successful candidate?
- What is the compensation for this position?\*



# PRO TIPS

1. Based on your analysis of the role, the organization, and your own experiences, go into the interview with 5 things you want them to know about you
2. Treat the interview like a conversation, not like an exam
3. Demonstrate your enthusiasm for the role/organization
4. Make sure you have a list of questions to ask
5. Make practice work for you!
6. Send a thank you/follow up email \*when appropriate



# MANAGING INTERVIEW STRESS

Bringing Calm & Confidence

# IF YOU'RE NERVOUS, IT'S NORMAL!



- Most people feel nervous during an interview
- Stress is a performance response – not a flaw!
- Interviewers *expect* nervousness - not perfection!
- You don't need to eliminate stress, just manage it



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# PREP MIND & BODY, NOT JUST ANSWERS

- Create a “pre-game” routine for more calm & confidence
- Use strategies that helped you before
- Picture it going well (or decently😊)
- Fact-check worries & fears
- Use helpful self-talk
- Try a “power pose”-posture can affect confidence (& others’ perception)



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# TAMING TENSIONS DURING THE INTERVIEW



- Pausing is ok & professional
- Try slow, deep breaths
- Notice feet on the ground
- Use one of the many evidenced-based strategies for managing stress & anxiety
- What will you try?



# PREVENTING THE POST INTERVIEW “SPIRAL”

- What you tell yourself can influence your next interview
- Treat it like a ‘dress rehearsal’
- Name what went well & ‘areas for growth’
- Don’t let the inner critic win
- Debrief with a trusted friend/family



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# SOME RESOURCE IDEAS FOR STRESS & ANXIETY

- “Anxiety” Moodjuice self-help guide:

[https://www.mcgill.ca/counselling/files/counselling/anxiety\\_moodjuice\\_self\\_help\\_guide.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/counselling/files/counselling/anxiety_moodjuice_self_help_guide.pdf)

- Apps ie MindShift CBT & Calm

- Centre for Clinical Interventions free workbooks:

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/looking-after-yourself>

- “Feeling Great” & “Feeling Good” books by David D. Burns

- “Mind Over Mood” book by Dennis Greenberger & A. Christine Padesky

- “Shyness and Social Anxiety” Moodjuice self-help guide: <https://sitotapsy.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Shyness-and-Social-Anxiety.pdf>

- “Ten Ways to Calm Your Interview Anxiety”:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/career-transitions/201503/10-ways-to-calm-your-interview-anxiety>



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# CAMPUS WELLNESS RESOURCES



- Counselling Services provides support including for stress & anxiety
- No cost & no wait list
- Support for co-op students off-campus
- Workshops & groups
- Call 519-888-4096 or go to Needles Hall
- Empower Me program 24/7:  
<https://wusa.ca/services/student-supports/empower-me/>
- Urgent Help & Emergency Contacts:  
<https://uwaterloo.ca/students/health-and-well-being>

<https://uwaterloo.ca/students/health-and-well-being>

# Career Development Website



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## Welcome to the Centre for Career Development



<https://uwaterloo.ca/career-development/>

### Visit our website for:

- Booking appointments/ drop-ins
- Job search resources
- Pre-recorded workshops
- And more!



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# Thank you! Any Questions?



Don't hesitate to reach out!



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