

# Your Social Work Résumé and Job Interview

## Strategies for Success

Valerie Arendt, MSW, MPP  
Associate Executive Director  
National Association of Social Workers  
North Carolina Chapter

# NASW Career Resources

**CAREERS.socialworkers.org**  
The Social Work Career Center

Find A Job



Explore The  
Social Work Profession



Professional Development  
And Training



Employers



**NASW CAREER CENTER  
2016 VIRTUAL  
CAREER FAIR**

February 9, 2016 » 12-4 pm EST

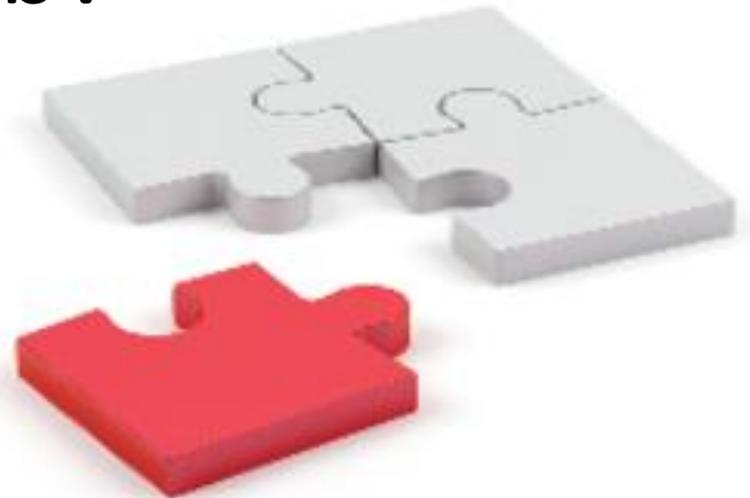
[bit.ly/NASWVirtualCareerFair](http://bit.ly/NASWVirtualCareerFair)

# Social Work Resume

- What you can do for them
- Experience with client population/  
commitment to issue
- Certain skill set
- Leadership experience - can you make things happen?
- Experience working with diverse people and communities

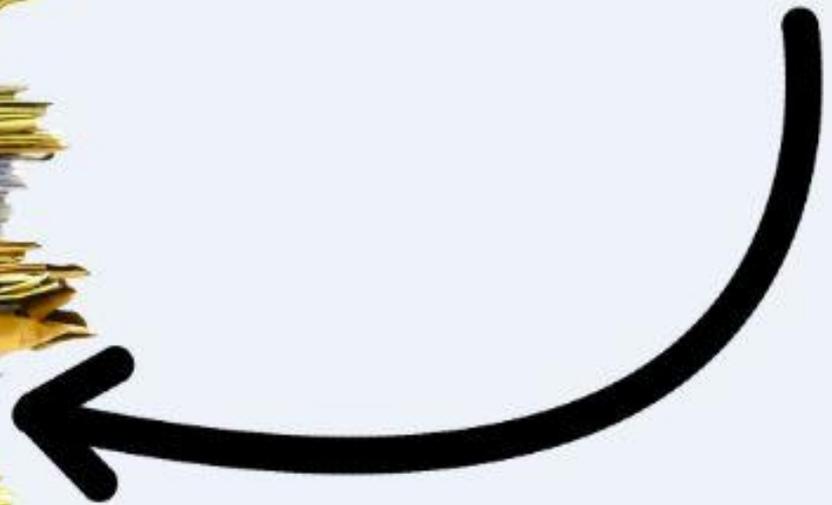
# Basically...

- Can you do the job?
- Will you do the job?
- Will you fit in?





**Your Resume**



# Resume Basics

- 2 pages or less
- Easy to read – Formatting is important.
- Reverse chronological order
- Limit yourself to your best achievements related to the position. More ≠ better.
- 3-8 bullets under each position.  
No paragraphs.
- Accomplishments and metrics
- Keyword rich

# TAILOR YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER!

# PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

## VS.

# OBJECTIVE STATEMENT

# RESUME

## Objective



To obtain a sales position in the Information Technology sector working with a market leader to increase sales volume, grow revenue, improve customer satisfaction, and exceed quota.

## Employment

*Starlight Industries*, New York, NY

October 2009—Present

### **SALES EXECUTIVE**

- Identified problems with company's order entry system; developed and proposed solution that was implemented company-wide and reduced administrative errors by 30%, increased sales productivity by 40%.

# Professional Summary

- 1-3 sentences at the beginning of your resume.
- Describes the value you bring through your skills and experience.
- Answers the questions:
  - What position are you applying for?
  - What are your qualifications?
  - Career goals?
  - Professional identity?
  - How can you help the organization?

# Professional Summary

**FIRST LNAME, LCSW**

1522 Road, City, ST, 19999

**Home: (666) 644-6666 • email@gmail.com • Cell: (999) 599-9999**

---

**Licensed Clinical Social Worker** with 6+ years experience in medical and clinical mental health, working with diverse populations in private practice, health care, outpatient, and inpatient treatment settings. Recently relocated to State.

---

# Use Keywords

- What are keywords?
  - Nouns and noun phrases that reflect skills and experience sought by a potential employer
- Why are they important?
  - It is about THEM, NOT all about you!
  - Employer will know you are a fit for their position AND organization.
  - Automated Tracking System

# Sources for Keywords?

## Research!

- Job Description
- Employer Website
- NASW!
- LinkedIn profiles of users who have similar jobs to see what keywords they're using
- Spell out acronyms!





# KEYWORDS

# Job Description

Title: Social Worker

Job Details:

Responsible for completion of psychosocial assessment of patients and families enrolled in Hospice. Will work as part of a team to address end-of-life needs, some counseling and emphasis on case management. Able to access homes in Moore & Montgomery County service areas. Must be able to take call rotation. Strong organizational skills needed.

# Job Description

Title: Social Worker

Job Details:

Responsible for completion of psychosocial assessment of patients and families enrolled in Hospice. Will work as part of a team to address end-of-life needs, some counseling and emphasis on case management. Able to access homes in Moore & Montgomery County service areas. Must be able to take call rotation. Strong organizational skills needed.

# Job Description

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina

Title: Major Gifts Officer

Part-time Major Gifts Officer needed to identify, cultivate, solicit and grow major gift donors (donations of \$5,000 and above). The primary objective of the Major Gifts Officer is to cultivate and shepherd major donors and develop long-term relationships built on a firm understanding of these individuals (interests, passions and values) to increase commitment to the mission of Second Harvest, increase gift size and to develop leads for new donors. S/he will also foster and expand current giving by planned gift donors and integrate planned gift objectives into individual major donor intentions. Concern and passion for Second Harvest Food Bank's mission and vision must be evident as well.

# Job Description

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina

Title: Major Gifts Officer

Part-time Major Gifts Officer needed to identify, cultivate, solicit and grow major gift donors (donations of \$5,000 and above). The primary objective of the Major Gifts Officer is to cultivate and shepherd major donors and develop long-term relationships built on a firm understanding of these individuals (interests, passions and values) to increase commitment to the mission of Second Harvest, increase gift size and to develop leads for new donors. S/he will also foster and expand current giving by planned gift donors and integrate planned gift objectives into individual major donor intentions. Concern and passion for Second Harvest Food Bank's mission and vision must be evident as well.

# Descriptive Sentences

Pretend your reader has no idea what you do. This will help you be descriptive. Use concise sentences. These are NOT descriptive sentences:

- Provide psychotherapy to clients.
- Conducted assessments.
- Provided case management.
- Worked on multidisciplinary team.

Use PAR stories.

# PAR Stories

- Problem: What problem did you solve, what was the situation before you took action?
- Actions: What did you do? What steps did you take to solve the problem?
- Results: What happened? How were things better than before? Is there a way to measure the difference?

# Be Descriptive

- DON'T: Provide psychotherapy to clients.
- DO: Provide group and individual outpatient therapy to adult clients at a substance use treatment center utilizing Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and motivational interviewing with the goal of setting steps toward recovery.

# Good Action Words

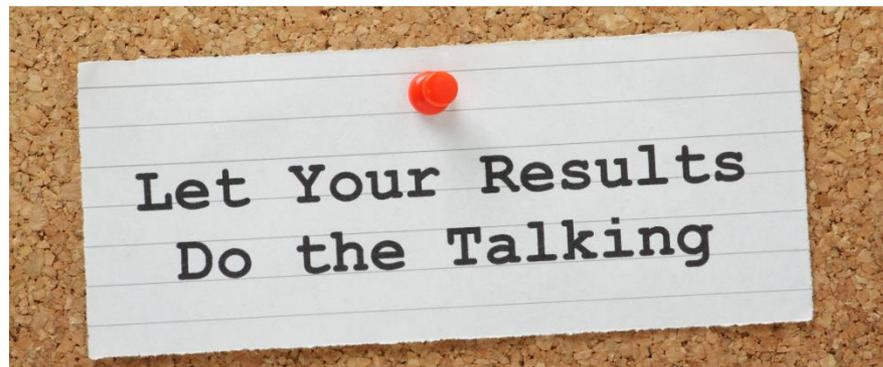
- Anticipated
- Advised
- Budgeted
- Challenged
- Coordinated
- Created
- Demonstrated
- Emphasized
- Exhibited
- Highlighted
- Incorporated
- Maintained
- Managed
- Proficient
- Qualified
- Reshaped
- Solved
- Spearheaded
- Trained
- Validated

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**YOUR RESUME SHOULD  
REALLY ONLY FOCUS  
20% ON DUTIES AND  
80% ON ACHIEVEMENTS.**

# Accomplishments

- Not just duties/responsibilities
- Knowledge, skills and abilities
- How were you an asset to the organization?
- Quantify your work



# Accomplishments

- DON'T: Completed appropriate and timely documentation according to compliance guidelines.
- DO: Recognized need for updated agency forms. Developed clinical and administrative forms, including no-harm contract, behavior contract, and therapist's behavior inventory.

# Quantify Accomplishments

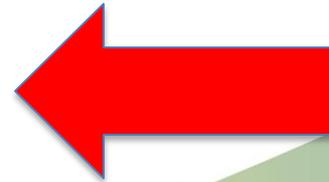
- DON'T: Completed appropriate and timely documentation according to compliance guidelines.
- DO: Recognized need for updated agency forms. Developed 10 clinical and administrative forms, including no-harm contract, behavior contract, and therapist's behavior inventory, which increased staff efficiency and productivity by 15%.

**WHAT HAVE I  
ACCOMPLISHED?**



# Accomplishment Questions

1. Did you solve a recurring problem for your program or organization?
2. Did you make a direct impact on the lives of your clients/individuals your organization serves?
3. Did you suggest any new procedures or programs for the organization that they implemented?
4. Did you train or supervise anyone?
5. Were you asked to do a special project? Take on new responsibilities?
6. Did you save the organization money? Or successfully secure funding for your programming?



# Accomplishment Results

- Increased productivity
- Improved performance
- Increased efficiency
- Raised money
- Reduced costs
- Reduced waste
- Improved safety
- Improved working conditions
- Created something new



# Accomplishment Exercise

Use PARs:

- Problem: What problem did you solve, what was the situation before you took action?
- Actions: What did you do? What steps did you take to solve the problem?
- Results: What happened? How were things better than before? Is there a way to measure the difference?

# PAR Exercise

Recognized need for updated agency forms. Developed 10 clinical and administrative forms, including no-harm contract, behavior contract, and therapist's behavior inventory, which increased staff efficiency and productivity by 15%.

# PAR Exercise

**Recognized need for updated agency forms.**  
Developed 10 clinical and administrative forms, including no-harm contract, behavior contract, and therapist's behavior inventory, which increased staff efficiency and productivity by 15%.

# PAR Exercise

Recognized need for updated agency forms.  
Developed 10 clinical and administrative forms, including no-harm contract, behavior contract, and therapist's behavior inventory, which increased staff efficiency and productivity by 15%.

# PAR Exercise

Recognized need for updated agency forms. Developed 10 clinical and administrative forms, including no-harm contract, behavior contract, and therapist's behavior inventory, **which increased staff efficiency and productivity by 15%.**

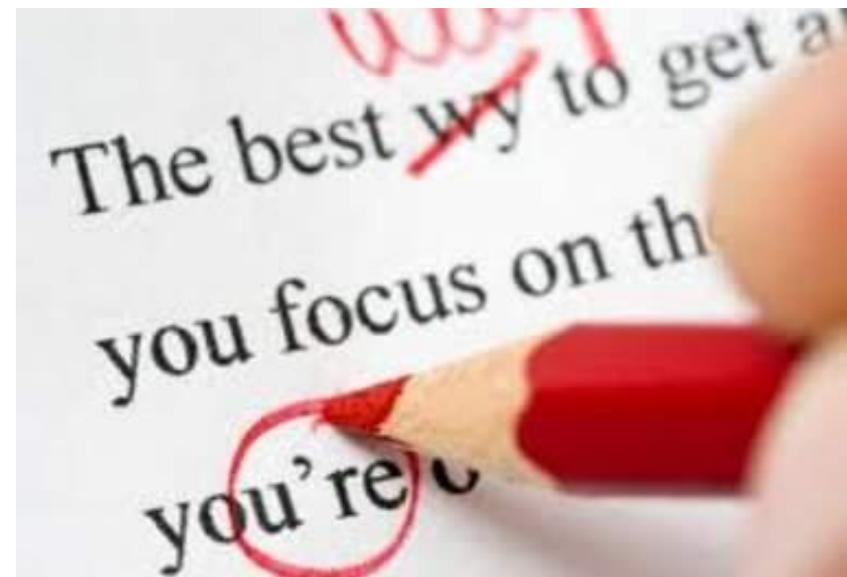
# Don't Forget...

- Education:
  - Master of Social Work
  - Bachelor of Social Work
- Volunteer Experience
- Publications and links
- Professional Affiliations
  - Member of National Association of Social Workers (Woot!)



# Don't Forget...

- Who were your clients?
- Person-centered language
- City and state
- Employment dates
- Job title
- Organization
- Proofread!!!



# No-Nos

- Salary Negotiable
- Experience working in...
- Hard working
- Team player
- Basic skills in...
- References available upon request



# Questions about resumes?

# INTERVIEWS



# The Interview

The interview is a mutual exchange of information

- Why should I hire you?
- Can you do the job?
- Will you do the job?
- Do you fit?
- Is this the right job for me?



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
ACE YOUR  
INTERVIEW**

# The Interview

1. Research.
2. Prepare.
3. Practice. Practice. Practice.
4. Leave a positive impression.
5. You are also interviewing them.

# Research

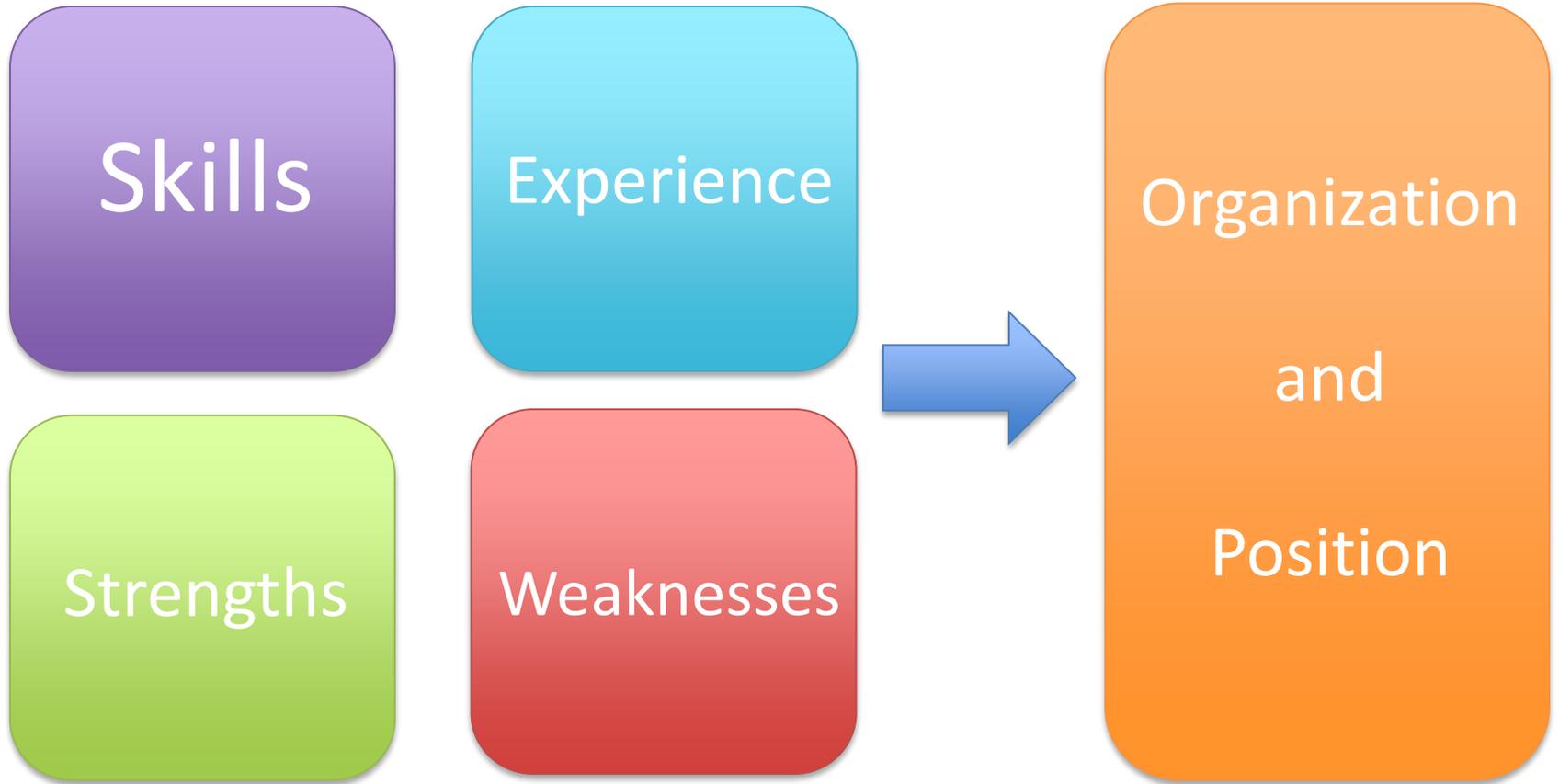
- Study the org's:
  - Website
  - Annual report
  - Staff list/structure
  - Job description
- Follow on social media
- Network to obtain additional info

The screenshot shows the DukeMedicine website interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the DukeMedicine logo and navigation links for DOCTORS, TREATMENTS, LOCATIONS, and PATIENTS. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail reads "Patients and visitors \ Support and resources". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a "General information" section with links for "Hospital information", "Parking", "Advance care planning and directives (living wills)", and "CarePages". Below this is a "Medical records" section with links for "Request medical records", "Request to amend protected health information", and "Requests for birth or death certificates". The right column features a "Social work services" section with a sub-header "Clinical social workers are available throughout our hospital and families manage stresses that may be due to an illness or life situ." followed by a list of services: Emotional and psychological distress, Grief, loss, and bereavement, Difficult family or social situations, Medical crisis and adjustment to illness, Substance abuse assessment and referral, Family violence and abuse, and Guardianship.

# Research Questions

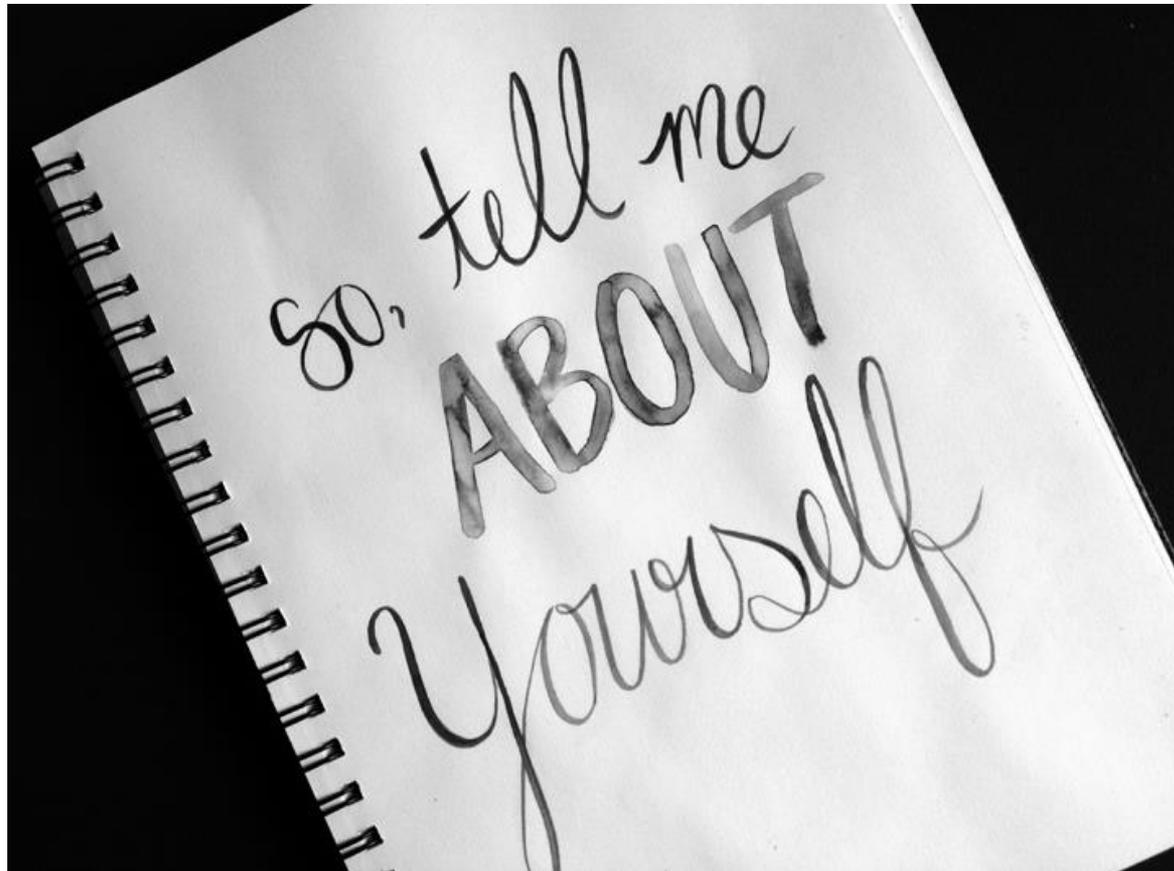
- What does the organization do?
- What clients do they serve?
- Who works there?
- Who might be interviewing you?
- What skills are needed for the position?

# Prepare: Know Yourself



# Prepare

## 60-Second Presentation Statement



# Prepare: Interview Questions

## PAR Stories

- **P** roblem that existed
- **A** ction(s) you took to address problem
- **R** esults you achieved solving problem

# Prepare: Interview Questions

## Anticipate Questions and Script Responses

[careers.socialworkers.org/findajob/](https://careers.socialworkers.org/findajob/)

# Prepare: Interview Questions

- Tell me some of your weaknesses.
- Tell me about how you work effectively under pressure.
- How do you handle conflict/difficult situations?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?

# Prepare: Interview Questions

## Example Behavioral Interview Questions:

- Tell me about a time you were in a disagreement over a treatment plan.
- Give an example of a goal you reached.
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
- Have you ever made a mistake?

# Prepare

- Give credit to your team
- Never say anything negative
- Don't talk politics, religion, etc.
- Take responsibility for your actions



# Prepare: Your Questions

## Ask great questions.

- What is the typical career path of social workers within this field/agency?
- Is the staff on call, and how is that handled?
- How would you describe the organizational culture?

# Prepare

## Professional Portfolio

- Full resume
- Newsletter/newspaper articles
- Samples of work
- Awards and honors
- Letters of reference

YOU!

12 February / March / April 2016 XXXX No. 1 The North Carolina Social Worker Newsletter

### Student Updates

#### NASW-NC 2016 Presidents' Award

Ayala Alexander, MSW Student  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

*By Liz Jester, NASW-NC Intern; Edited from Award Announcement*



The National Association of Social Workers North Carolina Chapter (NASW-NC) has named Ayala Alexander as the recipient of the 2016 NASW-NC Presidents' Award for Master of Social Work (MSW) graduate student for the 2015-2016 academic year. Ayala Alexander is an outstanding graduate student in the Department of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC).

Ms. Alexander exhibits a dedication to the social work profession through her academic excellence, community involvement, and professional experience. The Presidents' Award honors Ayala's exceptional leadership skills and professional potential.

Originally from Asheville, Ms. Alexander has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Queen's University of Charlotte. But it was her desire to become "a true advocate for those who do not have the ability, education or courage to stand up and speak for themselves," that brought her to the field of social work.

Ayala uses her past experiences to fuel her dedication to the profession of social work. She says, "Quitting is never an option. It is clear that her hard work and determination are hallmarks of her outstanding achievements in the Department of Social Work at UNCC.

When Ayala entered her MSW program at UNCC, she noticed a lack of minority students despite conversations and curriculum that focused on minority populations. Ayala understood that in order to serve a diverse community, social work practitioners must also embody diversity. Understanding this was the impetus behind her decision to found the UNCC chapter of Advocates for Change, a student led advocacy organization.

In her work as President of the organization, Ms. Alexander collaborates with MSW students and various other campus and community organizations to "enhance the quality of life for oppressed and vulnerable populations through advocacy, human services delivery, and research." Her recent work with Advocates for Change has focused on raising awareness and understanding for the Transgender community through collaboration with local LGBTQ agencies and community leaders.

Additionally, Ms. Alexander was selected as a Gerontology Assistant in the Gerontology Department at UNCC. There she worked to bridge the generation gap by teaching courses in technology and social media to senior citizens in the Charlotte area. Ms. Alexander says, "Although the project's mission was to teach seniors, they taught me to how to be selfless, empathetic, and present in the process."

Ms. Alexander was recently selected as a student representative for the North Carolina Representative Beverly Earle's Health Disparities Conference in 2016. She is currently preparing for a study abroad trip to Malawi, Africa with the UNC School of Social Work to work with non-governmental organizations to combat HIV and AIDS. After graduation, Ms. Alexander plans to work with the Peace Corps as a part of their Community Youth Empowerment Program.

Leigh Norwood is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker at the UNC Charlotte Counseling Center, and is Ms. Alexander's clinical supervisor. Ms. Norwood says, "Ayala Alexander is an amazing student, advocate and practitioner. She is destined to make exceptional contributions to the social work field!"

Ms. Alexander will be honored at the 2016 NASW-NC Ethics Conference and Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, March 29, 2016 at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh. •

### Attention Graduating BSW Students!

A Reminder About the Toby Brown Award!

The Toby Brown Fund provides an annual award of \$1,000 to a graduating BSW student from an accredited social work program. The award is in recognition of outstanding academic achievement and field work.

**Requirements:** Applicants must be members of NASW and be involved in their school's student social work association.

Please visit [www.naswnc.org](http://www.naswnc.org) for an application or contact Valerie Arendt at [valerie@naswnc.org](mailto:valerie@naswnc.org). Applications must be received by April 1, 2016.

If you are a graduating BSW student (December 2015, May or Summer 2016), we encourage you to apply for this award! Good Luck!

**PRACTICE**

**PRACTICE**

**PRACTICE**

# Practice

- 60- second statement
- Anticipate questions and record answers using PARs
- Rehearse and rehearse some more
- Time answers for appropriate length
- Arrive 30 minutes early to review your notes

# Make a Positive Impression

- Arrive early/on time
  - Review job description, resume and cover letter
  - Water
  - Take notes
- Dress appropriately, watch your body language
- Bring a professional portfolio

# Make a Positive Impression

- Build rapport with the interviewer
- “Any more questions/anything else you would like to say?”
- Closing statement
- Thank you note!



# Remember: You are also interviewing them.

- How do the interviewers treat you?
- Did they answer all your questions?
- Is this job right for you?



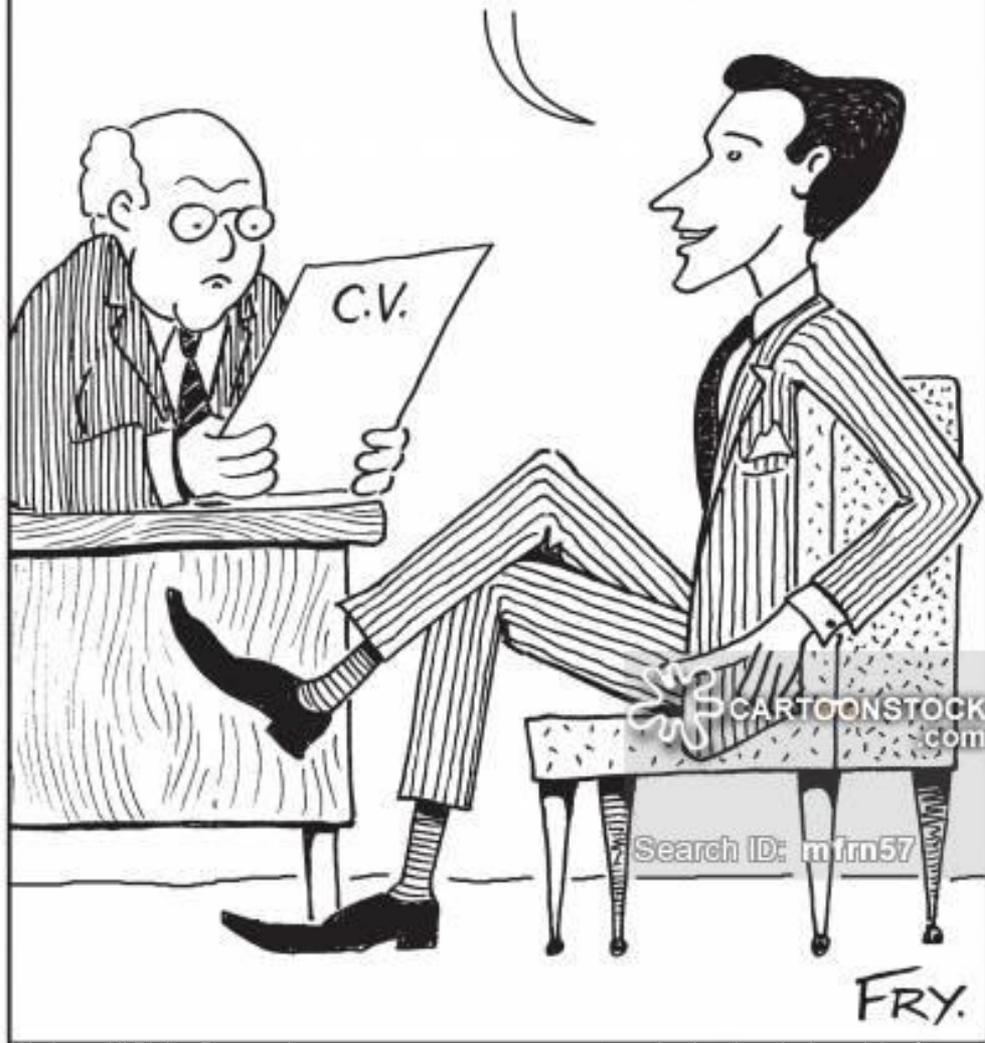
# Interview Action Steps

- Research the organization and job.
- Inventory your skills, experience, strengths & weaknesses.
- Network to obtain additional information.
- Craft a 60-second Presentation Statement.
- Identify PARs to mirror requirements of each job for which you interview.

# Action Steps

- Prepare and script responses to interview questions.
- Prepare your list of questions to ask.
- Practice closing statement
- Notify references of your upcoming interview.
- Write thank you notes.

"Yes, I suppose certain narrow-minded people would call it a 'pack of lies' - I prefer to think of it as creative up-selling."



# NASW Career Resources

- NASW Social Work Career Center:  
[careers.socialworkers.org](https://careers.socialworkers.org)
  - Post resume
  - Search for jobs
  - Example resumes and cover letters
  - Example interview questions

**NASW CAREER CENTER  
2016 VIRTUAL  
CAREER FAIR**

February 9, 2016 » 12-4 pm EST

[bit.ly/NASWVirtualCareerFair](http://bit.ly/NASWVirtualCareerFair)

# Questions about interviews?

Thank you for your  
NASW membership!