READY Together

Choose Your Own Adventure

A Pre-Employment Adventure for Finding Work That Fits You



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Supporting Community Together · Ready Together Series

Choose Your Own Adventure: A Pre-Employment Adventure for Finding Work That Fits You

Part of the Ready Together series. Created by Angela Taylor, PhD Candidate, MA, PBDE, Supporting Community Together Inc., Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Created on Treaty 1 Territory, the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

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Welcome, Adventurer!

You've just found a mystical (okay, practical) guide to figuring out work, volunteering, and what you actually want to do with your time.

Think of it as your adventure map. Instead of battling dragons, you will be navigating job applications and interviews, and figuring out what kind of work makes you feel awesome instead of exhausted.

This book will help you:

1. **Discover your strengths.** Yes, you have them. Lots, actually.
2. **Explore job and volunteer paths.** No, you don't have to commit to anything yet.
3. **Figure out your next steps,** without feeling overwhelmed or stuck in a boring job forever. Because, ew.

Do You Even Want to Read This?

Fair question. Here's a quick test:

- Are you curious about what jobs or volunteer roles might fit you?
- Do you like books that don't make you feel bad for being yourself?
- Do you want an adventure where YOU make the choices?

If you said yes to any of these, congratulations. You're in the right place.

No pressure. No boring lectures. Just a choose-your-own-path guide to making work and life a little more exciting, or at least a little less confusing.

How This Book Works

You don't have to read this book from front to back. At the end of each chapter, **you choose where to go next.** Follow the arrows, skip what doesn't fit, and come back any time.

- Along the way, you will find questions to think about. You can think them through, talk them over with someone, or jot ideas in a notebook.
- At the end of each chapter, **Where to Next?** shows the paths you can take.
- Reading on a screen? Click any arrow link to jump straight to that chapter.

Ready? Turn the page, and let's see where your adventure begins.

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The Last Page You Did It!

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Chapter 1

What Kind of Adventurer Are You?

Every adventure starts somewhere. Here is where yours begins.



You're here because you want to explore what work or volunteering could look like for you. Maybe you're excited. Maybe you're nervous. Maybe you have no idea where to start.

That's okay. This journey is about figuring things out one step at a time, in a way that works for you.

Pick the Path That Sounds Most Like You

Whichever path you choose, you're in the right place.

"I have no idea where to start."

I want to be more independent and find ways to connect outside of home. I want to do something, but I'm not sure how to begin.

→ Go to Chapter 2: Reflect: Exploring Your Strengths

"I have some ideas, but I need help deciding."

Maybe I've had a job I liked, or I know a friend or family member with a job that sounds interesting. I like things about different places, but all the steps feel overwhelming.

→ Go to Chapter 3: Align: Narrowing Your Choices

"I know exactly what I want!"

I already have a place in mind, or I've started working and want to learn more. I want to know how to take my next step.

→ Go to Chapter 4: You Know What You Want

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Chapter 2

Reflect: Exploring Your Strengths

Before you choose a path, get to know the adventurer: you.



Meet RAR: Your Guide for the Journey

This book follows a simple framework called **RAR: Reflect, Align, Restore.**

Stage	What it means
Reflect	Discover who you are and what makes you unique.
Align	Find places, work styles, and roles that fit your strengths.
Restore	Build a plan that keeps you steady, with self-advocacy, breaks, and problem-solving.

Right now, you're in the **Reflect** stage. Let's start with you.

Who Are You?

- What's your favourite colour?
- What do you like to be called? (your name, pronouns, or nickname)
- What are some of your favourite memories?
- What's something you wish people always knew about you?
- What makes you feel included?
- What's something people say that you really dislike?

Special Interests and Strengths

Think about something you love to do, even if it doesn't seem like a job.

- What do you love to do?
- What do you like about it?
- How does it make you feel?
- Could it be a skill you use at work?

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For example

"I love organizing things." → You might enjoy office work, inventory, or library jobs.

How Do Others See You?

Ask two people, like a friend, family member, teacher, or support worker, what they think you are great at.

- What did each person say you are great at?
- Do their answers match what you believe about yourself?
- If not, why might there be a difference?

Your Go Kit for Transitions

Going into a new place can feel like a lot. Having the right tools can help.

- Do you have a transition object, like a fidget, a notebook, or a comforting item?
- What helps you feel safe in new places?
- What can you say if you need a break? (For example: "I need a moment to reset.")

Where to Next?

You know more about yourself now. Next, let's match your strengths with the kinds of places where you would do well.

Explore sensory needs, pace, energy, and social comfort: → **Chapter 3: Align: Narrowing Your Choices**

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Chapter 3

Align: Narrowing Your Choices

Find the kind of workplace where your brain and body do their best.

Workplaces are not one-size-fits-all. Some are loud and busy. Others are calm and predictable. Some are full of people, and some let you work alone.

The best job for you is one that matches how your brain and body work best. **Notice which answers sound like you.**



Step 1: Sensory and Environment Needs

Do you prefer quiet or busy spaces?

- I work best in quiet spaces with little noise. → *libraries, offices, working from home*
- I thrive in lively places with background noise. → *restaurants, retail, community work*

Do you need movement or stillness?

- I need to move around a lot to focus. → *trades, landscaping, stocking*
- I like a mix of moving and sitting. → *childcare, customer service, delivery*
- I prefer sitting while I work. → *computer work, writing, data entry*

Are you sensitive to lights, sounds, or textures?

- Yes. Sunglasses, noise-cancelling headphones, or soft clothing might help me at work.
- Not really. Sensory input doesn't bother me much.

Step 2: Pace and Energy

Do you like fast-paced or slower work?

- I do best in fast-paced jobs with lots of variety. → *kitchens, event work, delivery*
- I prefer predictable, step-by-step tasks. → *bookkeeping, research, assembly*

How is your energy, most days?

- I have lots of energy and like switching tasks. → *retail, childcare, customer service*
- I need a steady pace and time to focus deeply. → *design, tech work, animal care*

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Step 3: People and Connection

Do you enjoy working with people?

- Yes! I want to talk with people all day. → *teaching, customer service, health care*
- Sometimes. I like a mix of teamwork and working alone. → *office jobs, library work, tech support*
- No. I prefer working alone, or with very little interaction. → *coding, warehouse jobs, research*

How do you handle conflict or miscommunication?

- I need time to process and calm down.
- I like to talk it through quickly.
- Conflict makes me nervous, so I avoid it.

Good to know

There are no wrong answers here. Every one of these can work. It's about finding the fit, not changing who you are.

Step 4: Choose Your Work Path

Think about the answers that sounded like you. Which of these sounds most like you? Not sure? Read more than one. Explorers are allowed to wander.

People-focused work

Customer service, childcare, health care, community work

→ **Go to Chapter 7: People-Focused Work**

Hands-on work

Trades, landscaping, crafts, repairs

→ **Go to Chapter 6: Hands-On Work and Skilled Trades**

Structured and routine work

Sorting, stocking, packaging, assembly

→ **Go to Chapter 8: Structured and Routine Work**

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Computer and organization work

Data entry, digital art, bookkeeping, research

→ **Go to Chapter 9: Computer and Organization Work**

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Chapter 4

You Know What You Want

You have a goal in mind. Let's make it happen.

There are three ways to move forward. Which one fits you best right now?

I need experience

You want to build skills before jumping in. Maybe you want to try different roles, learn from a mentor, or just spend time in a place before making big decisions.

Great places to start: volunteering, job shadowing or internships, and part-time or seasonal work.

→ Go to Chapter 5: Gaining Experience Through Volunteering

I need training

You're ready to grow your skills. Maybe you got feedback, heard about something interesting, or want to build on a special interest.

Options: short courses and workshops, certificates like food safety or first aid, and apprenticeships.

→ Go to Chapter 10: Training and Certificates

I'm ready to apply

It's time to put yourself out there. You'll build a resume, practise for interviews, and learn where to look for jobs.

→ Go to Chapter 11: Applying for Jobs

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Chapter 5

Gaining Experience Through Volunteering

Everyone starts somewhere. Volunteering is a great place.



Many jobs ask for experience. If you don't have any yet, that's okay. We all start somewhere.

Volunteering is a trade. You give your time, and in return you learn, grow, and build relationships.

Why Volunteer?

What you get	Why it matters
Flexibility	You choose your schedule and how much you commit.
Appreciation	People value your time and effort.
Mentorship	You learn from people with experience.
Connection	You build friendships and grow your network.
A path to a job	Some volunteers are later hired.
References	You can ask for a reference letter for future jobs.

Finding the Right Role

There are hundreds of places to volunteer. The best role for you depends on what you enjoy.

If you…	Try…
Like working with kids	after-school programs, camps, youth groups
Enjoy helping others	food banks, community centres, senior support
Love animals	animal shelters
Like organizing	libraries, thrift stores, offices

Volunteering can be one time, now and then, or regular. It is up to you.

> **Try this**
> Pick one volunteer role that matches your interests. Where could you do it, and who could help you reach out?

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Where to Next?

Need a certificate first? → **Chapter 10: Training and Certificates**

Ready to apply? (Many volunteer roles ask for a resume too.) → **Chapter 11: Applying for Jobs**

Want to plan your next steps? → **Chapter 12: Your Adventure Map**

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Chapter 6

Hands-On Work and Skilled Trades

For people who like to move, build, fix, and see the results.

If you like working with your hands, moving your body, or seeing the results of your work, this chapter is for you. Hands-on jobs happen in many places: indoors, outdoors, offices, schools, and beyond.



Types of Hands-On Work

Type of work	Examples
Outdoors	nature guide, park maintenance, landscaping, lawn care
Hands-on office work	sorting mail, organizing, stocking supplies
Tools and building	woodworking, home repairs, furniture making
Crafts and small business	jewellery making, pottery, art facilitation
Repairs and fix-it work	bike repair, electronics repair, car detailing
Maintenance and custodial	cleaning, organizing, keeping buildings running
Working with kids	classroom assistant, daycare support, after-school programs

- Who do you know who does this kind of work?
- What appeals to you about these jobs?
- How could you try it out? Visit a place, search online, or start a project at home.

Where to Next?

Your mission: pick one skill that interests you and try it in a small way this week.

Did you enjoy it?

Want to grow your skills? → **Chapter 10: Training and Certificates**
Ready to apply? → **Chapter 11: Applying for Jobs**

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Chapter 7

People-Focused Work

For connectors, helpers, and people who love a good conversation.

Do you love working with people? Let's figure out why.
Knowing what you love about being around people helps you find the best fit.



- Do you enjoy just being around others?
- **What kinds of conversations do you love?**
- What kinds of people do you click with?
- **Does your energy match certain people: high energy, calm energy, or a mix?**
- Are you drawn to people with similar brains or shared experiences?

What Kind of Helper Are You?

If you like…	Try…
Supporting kids	childcare, tutoring, after-school programs
Talking to lots of people	customer service, retail, reception
Meaningful one-on-one conversations	support work, therapy assistant, elder care
Caring for older adults	assisted living, companionship, home care support

Helping is a lifelong skill. Many people start in one area and later explore new training or new roles.

Recharging Your Social Battery

Even people who love working with others need time to recharge.

- How do you recharge after being around people?
- What do you do when someone is difficult, or brings up strong feelings in you?
- What helps you get back to the strategies that work for you?
- What if something in your life makes you want to connect less?

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Good to know

Social needs change over time. Some days, connection feels exciting. Other days, you need more time alone. Both are okay.

Try this

Look up one people-focused job that sounds interesting. What skills does it need? Do you need training, or can you apply now?

Where to Next?

Need more skills? → **Chapter 10: Training and Certificates**
Ready to apply? → **Chapter 11: Applying for Jobs**

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Chapter 8

Structured and Routine Work

For people who like clear steps, steady work, and knowing what to expect.



If you like hands-on work done in a routine, step-by-step way, this chapter is for you.

These roles often repeat the same tasks. That can be a great fit if you like clear instructions, steady work, and a supportive team. Doing the same task well, again and again, builds confidence, routine, and real skill.

Types of Structured Work

Type of work	What it looks like
Supported workplaces and social enterprises	Structured tasks, social connection, built-in support, and a chance to earn money. Ask how pay works before you start: you deserve fair pay.
Food sorting and warehouse roles	Sorting food donations, stocking shelves, packaging items.
Assembly and production	Clear, repeated steps like assembling, labelling, or organizing products.

This Might Be a Good Fit If...

- I enjoy routine and knowing what to expect.
- I like working with my hands in a structured way.
- I feel comfortable repeating tasks and getting better over time.
- I want a job with built-in support and teamwork.

Where to Next?

Your mission: search online, or ask your support team, about supported workplaces, food banks, or warehouse roles near you. Then visit a workplace, or talk to someone who does this kind of work.

Want training or a certificate? → **Chapter 10: Training and Certificates**
Ready to apply? → **Chapter 11: Applying for Jobs**

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Chapter 9

Computer and Organization Work

For organizers, creators, and tech problem-solvers.



Do you enjoy organizing, creating, or working with technology? If you like detailed, structured, or creative tasks, this chapter is for you.

Types of Computer and Organization Work

Type of work	What you do	Why people like it
Office and admin	scheduling, reception, mail, paperwork	You're the heart of the office, keeping everything running.
Data entry	entering information, often on your own	Clear routine and fewer interruptions. Some places let you listen to music or podcasts.
Creative work	social media, jewellery design, visual arts, theatre roles	A chance to share ideas, design, and work visually.
Tech	IT support, website updates, digital organizing	A mix of problem-solving, organizing, and technical skills.

Mini Challenge: Which Fits You Best?

Which statement sounds most like you?

- "I love keeping things organized and in order." → *office and admin*
- "I like working on my own on repeated tasks." → *data entry*
- "I enjoy designing, creating, or working visually." → *creative work*
- "I like computers and solving tech problems." → *tech*

Where to Next?

Want to build skills or get training? → **Chapter 10: Training and Certificates**
Ready to apply? → **Chapter 11: Applying for Jobs**

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Chapter 10

Training and Certificates

Grow your skills, often for low cost or even free.



Some jobs need training. Don't worry: many programs are low cost or free. Training helps you:

- build new skills
- open up more job options
- feel more confident at work

Useful Certificates

Certificate	Helpful for
First Aid and CPR	childcare, security, health jobs
Food Handler training	restaurants, catering, food service
Computer skills courses	office, data entry, design jobs

Where to Find Training

- **Online courses.** Some are free, and you can go at your own pace.
- **Community centres and non-profits.** Many offer free or low-cost programs.
- **Employment centres.** They can help you find the right training.
- **Colleges and trade schools.** Some have short, focused programs.

Calling Upon Your Helpers

You don't have to figure this out alone. People can support you, help with accommodations, and help you stay on track.

- Who can help you find training?
- Who can help you sign up, or stay on track?
- Who can help speak up for your needs?

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Finding the Right Fit

Programs can have waitlists, different focuses, or useful connections. Ask:

- How long is the waitlist?
- Does it match what I am interested in?
- Are there mentors or job placements?
- What accommodations do they offer?

Where to Next?

Ready to apply for jobs? → **Chapter 11: Applying for Jobs**
Want to plan your next steps first? → **Chapter 12: Your Adventure Map**

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Chapter 11

Applying for Jobs

Resumes, interviews, and everything in between.



You've explored different paths. Now it's time to apply! This chapter walks you through building a resume, getting ready for interviews, and applying online.

Step 1: Make a Resume

Your resume is a short summary of your skills and experience. Include:

- **Your name and contact information:** phone number, email, and city
- **Experience:** jobs, volunteer work, and programs you have done
- **Skills:** things you are good at, like teamwork, organizing, or helping others
- **Education:** high school, training, or courses

Example Resume

Jennifer Smith

Winnipeg, MB · 555-555-5555 · jennifersmith@email.com

WORK AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Veterinary Clinic Assistant (Volunteer, 27 hours) Cleaned kennels and helped with pet care.

Seasonal Worker, Tinkertown (2 summers, 2 months each) Helped run rides and games.

Employment Mentorship Program (3 months) Learned job skills and workplace expectations.

Special Events Volunteer Helped with setup and cleanup.

School Leadership Group (Grades 11 and 12) Took part in group activities and leadership roles.

Good to know

Not much experience yet? Add more detail. Even small experiences count.

Include school activities, clubs, leadership roles, and special programs.

List your strengths. What makes you a great worker?

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Step 2: Practise for Interviews

Interviews can feel stressful, but they are really just a chance to talk about yourself and your strengths. Practise with a helper, or role-play with a friend.

Not Great, Pretty Good, and Great Answers

Question	Not great	Pretty good	Great
"Tell me about yourself."	"Uh… I dunno. I'm me?"	"I like working with people and helping out."	"I'm looking forward to working on a team where I can use my skills to support others."
"Why do you want this job?"	"I need money."	"I like your company and heard good things."	"I'm excited about what you do, and I think I'd be a great fit because of my skills in ____."
"What are your strengths?"	"I don't get in trouble."	"I'm patient and kind."	"I'm great at staying organized and working with people, and I always show up on time."

Good to know

You can ask for interview accommodations, like seeing the questions in writing or having extra time to answer.

Step 3: Look for Jobs Online

- **Where to look:** Indeed, Job Bank (jobbank.gc.ca), and company websites
- **Who can help:** ask a support person to help with online applications
- **How often:** check at least once a week

Step 4: Get Ready for Interview Day

- **Know the location.** Visit ahead of time, or check the bus route.
- **Dress neatly.** Choose an outfit that makes you feel confident.
- **Practise with a helper.** Go over common questions.
- **Stay fresh.** Shower, brush your hair, and wear clean clothes.

Remember: First impressions matter, but even if you think the interview didn't go well, you might have done better than you think.

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Step 5: Follow Up

- **Send a thank-you email.** A quick "Thank you for the opportunity!" helps employers remember you.
- No one gets every job they apply for. **Each interview is practice for the next one.**

Where to Next?

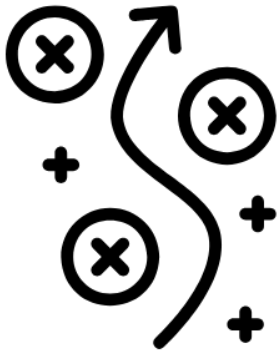
Time to put it all together: → **Chapter 12: Your Adventure Map**

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Chapter 12

Your Adventure Map

Plan your next steps, your way.



This is YOUR journey. Your Adventure Map is a way to plan your next steps while staying flexible and kind to yourself.

Make It Yours

- **Draw, write, use stickers, or roll some dice.** This is your map.
- **Go big or small.** Start tomorrow or next month. It is up to you.
- **Include breaks and accommodations.** You are in control of how this journey works for you.

Step 1: Choose Your First Adventure

Picture the job or volunteer role you want to try first. You might write it in a notebook, draw it, or say it out loud to someone you trust.

For example

"I want to volunteer at the animal shelter."

"I want to work at the grocery store near my home."

Step 2: Make Your Next Steps

Break it into small, doable steps. Three is plenty.

For example

"My helper, Bethany, is meeting me next Friday to talk about job options."

"I will look online for volunteer opportunities this weekend."

Step 3: Set a 30-Day Goal

Make it a SMART goal: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Be flexible and kind to yourself. Progress is progress, no matter how small, and you can always give yourself more time.

For example

"In the next 30 days, I will apply for one job with my support team."

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"I will visit three volunteer sites to see which one feels right."

Where to Next?

Remember: you are in control. Accommodations are allowed: you can take breaks, start slow, and ask for help. Your journey is valid, no matter the pace.

You've got this. Take your first step, and turn the page.

One last stop: → **The Last Page: You Did It!**

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The Last Step

You Did It!

Your adventure is just beginning.



You've explored, reflected, aligned, and restored, all at your own pace and in your own way.

This Is Just the Beginning

- You get to restart, redo, and keep learning forever.
- Every experience, good, bad, or unexpected, is part of your growth.
- There is no one "right" path. There is only the one that works for YOU.

You Are Allowed

- **You are allowed to ask for help.** Support is part of success.
- **You are allowed to make mistakes.** Growth comes from trying, not perfection.
- **You are allowed to change your mind.** Your needs, interests, and strengths will grow and change.

There may be moments when you feel like you "should" be able to do something a certain way, or like needing help means you are failing. That is not true.

- **You are not broken.** The world was not built with every brain in mind.
- **Accommodations aren't extra.** They are tools that help you thrive.
- **Struggle does not mean failure.** It means you need the right support.
- **Your abilities and energy can change from day to day.** It's okay to be human.
- **We all need support.**

Your Path, Your Way

You will have challenges, and that is okay. Every job, task, and new experience comes with bumps. You can handle them with support, strategies, and self-compassion. Your way of moving through the world is valid.

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This journey belongs to you. You get to decide where it leads next. **You are capable. You are creative. You are in control.**

The world needs minds like yours: minds that think differently, explore deeply, and carve out paths no one else has imagined.



This is your adventure. Own it.

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