

How to Explain Lapses in Employment

Life Skills Library

First and foremost, congratulations on completing addiction treatment and making the courageous decision to seek help. As you embark on your journey towards long-term sobriety, it's essential to build a stable and fulfilling life, which includes finding meaningful employment. It's not uncommon for individuals in recovery to have gaps in their resume due to their past struggles. However, it's important to remember that employers don't necessarily view employment gaps as a negative thing, and with the right approach, you can turn these gaps into an advantage.


This comprehensive life skills guide will provide step-by-step strategies to help you approach employment gaps and showcase them as highlights of your personal growth journey.

Step 1: Embrace Your Employment Gaps

Before diving into specific strategies, it's crucial to change your perspective on employment gaps. Many people experience gaps in their work history for various reasons, such as raising a family, pursuing education, or dealing with health issues. Employers understand this and are more interested in your skills, qualifications, and character than your continuous work history.

Step 2: Fill the Gaps with Personal Growth and Development

While you may not have been employed during those periods, you were likely engaging in activities that contributed to your personal growth and development. Consider the following options to fill work gaps:

-  **Self-improvement courses** – Did you attend any workshops, seminars, or online courses during your gap period? These can showcase your commitment to personal growth and continuous learning.



- ☀️ **Training and certifications** – If you gained any new skills or certifications during your time away from the workforce, include them in your resume to demonstrate your dedication to self-improvement.
- ☀️ **Volunteer work** – Volunteering is an excellent way to gain valuable skills, network with others, and give back to your community. Include any volunteer experience, whether it's related to your field or not.
- ☀️ **Personal projects** – If you completed any personal projects during your gap period, such as writing a blog, creating art, or building a website, include these accomplishments to showcase your creativity and initiative.

Step 3: Communicate Your Employment Gaps Effectively

When it comes to discussing employment gaps on your resume or during interviews, honesty, straightforwardness, and confidence are key. Here's how to communicate your gaps effectively:


On Your Resume


- ☀️ **Functional resume format** – Consider using a functional resume format that focuses on your skills and qualifications rather than a chronological work history. This format allows you to showcase your strengths without drawing attention to your employment gaps.
- ☀️ **Include a brief explanation** – If you prefer a chronological resume format, consider including a brief explanation for your employment gap in the work experience section. For example: "Gap in employment due to addiction recovery and personal development."

During Interviews

- ☀️ **Be honest** – When discussing your employment gaps, be honest about the reasons behind them. Employers appreciate candor and will likely respect your commitment to overcoming challenges and seeking help.



 **Highlight your personal growth** – Emphasize the positive aspects of your gap period, such as the skills you gained, the self-improvement courses you attended, or your volunteer work.

 **Focus on your present and future** – Demonstrate your enthusiasm for the position and your readiness to contribute to the company. Discuss your goals and how this job aligns with your long-term career objectives.

Lapses in Employment Happen for Many Reasons – Your Recovery Is the Best One

Navigating the job market with gaps in your resume can be challenging, but it's essential to remember that your past struggles have contributed to your personal growth and development. By embracing your employment gaps, filling them with meaningful experiences, and communicating them effectively, you can showcase your resilience and determination to potential employers. With confidence and honesty, you'll be well on your way to building a brighter future in sobriety and a fulfilling career.



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