

## Cory

Cory is twenty-eight and single. After completing grade 8 he left school to work at a local gas station. Since then he has held a variety of jobs in the light manufacturing industry, mostly working 12 hour shifts on the assembly line. Cory would have been content to continue working these kinds of jobs as the pay was reasonable and he hadn't got his high school diploma so his options were limited. He had settled down quite a bit over the last few years and he no longer went out clubbing quite as often as he did when he was in his early twenties. This meant that he was better able to hold down jobs as he didn't take as much sick leave since he rarely suffered from hangovers any more.

However, earlier this year, the company Cory was working for went bankrupt and Cory lost his job. While Cory was on Employment Insurance (EI) benefits he looked for work in light industry and the construction field, but without success. Some jobs would have been hard for Cory to get to as public transportation was limited and although Cory had a driver's license (Class C) he didn't own a vehicle and couldn't afford to buy and run one.

With only six weeks of EI benefits left, Cory decided to return to his hometown to look for work. Before he moved, Cory spoke with a counsellor at an Employment Services centre about his decision to relocate. The counsellor thought it would be a good idea for Cory to move to a bigger town with more employment opportunities and also suggested that Cory think about different career opportunities. She suggested he contact the local Employment Services centre immediately after his move.

Within a few days of moving, Cory called the Employment Services centre closest to his mother's, where he was staying until he got a job. He made an appointment for early the following week. Cory arrived forty minutes early for his appointment with the employment counsellor so the receptionist gave him an intake form to complete while he was waiting. Cory found the form difficult and was still working on it when the employment counsellor called him into the office. Cory answered questions about his education, work experience and plans. Cory mentioned that his previous counsellor suggested considering a new career but that he hadn't got very far with thinking about what he would like to do.

The counsellor made another appointment with Cory during which time they would review possible pathways to employment. She left Cory completing the intake form, as she had to meet another client, asking him to drop it off on his way out. It took Cory another twenty minutes to complete the form.

The employment counsellor reviewed Cory's intake form before his next appointment. She noticed that the form contained capitals in the middle of words and that there were lots of spelling mistakes. Cory had also left some sections blank. The counsellor was quite surprised because Cory had been very articulate during the first interview but she remembered just how long it had taken him to complete the form.

Once again, Cory arrived early for his appointment. As soon as he noticed the intake form on the desk he sighed and looked down at the floor. He admitted that he wasn't any good at school and that the other kids made fun of him, especially when he had to read out loud in class.

The employment counsellor told Cory that many adults have similar stories and wondered if Cory might be interested in attending a nearby Literacy and Basic Skills program so that he could work on his reading and writing in a safe environment. She assured him the program was for adults and wasn't similar to school, that it wouldn't cost anything and that each learner would be working on individual goals based on their intake assessments. This meant Cory would be able to work with the staff to decide what he needed to learn to achieve his goals. With Cory's permission, she called the Essential Skills Centre to set up an appointment. She also assured Cory that they would continue to work together on his job search.

Within a month of their first meeting, Cory was attending the program at the Essential Skills Centre two days a week. Through Employment Services Cory was also able to find two part-time jobs. He was working a weekly shift as a press operator at the community newspaper and driving a cab two nights a week.

Cory was pleased to be able to give his mother some money towards his room and board but found the pressure of two jobs and attending the Literacy and Basic Skills program too much. After three months he gave up his plans to write the GED the following year and stopped showing up at the literacy program.

For the next two nights, while he was driving the cab, he thought of the progress he had made in class and how if he had his GED he would be able to get a job he liked, rather than just making ends meet. A week later his instructor called to find out why he was no longer coming to class. They talked and Cory admitted that things were not going well. He was encouraged by the instructor's faith in him and decided that he would do better to carry on living with his mother for another year. While there had been quite a lot of tension in the house when he had first moved back, things were no longer as bad. His mother realized that Cory had changed quite a lot and she really appreciated the little jobs he was able to do around the house.

Cory went back to the Essential Skills Centre and worked his way towards taking the GED. When he has his GED, Cory plans to go back to the Employment Service centre to explore further training or job opportunities. Unlike his experience at school, Cory now feels he has goals that are his own and that are achievable. He has begun to feel good about himself, and what's more he has a steady girlfriend who got her GED and is in college studying hairdressing.