INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS
Informational interviews are one of the easiest and most effective ways to meet people in a professional field in which you are interested. Tapping into the knowledge of others will provide you with invaluable information to help you as you make career decisions. Informational interviews are meetings you arrange with a person who currently does the job you think you might want, or who has specific knowledge of an occupation or industry of interest.

What to remember:
1. You are not asking for a job
2. Think like a reporter gathering information and asking good, open-ended questions
3. Planting the “seed” for future help
4. Tap into the fact that people generally like to talk about themselves and usually are willing to help
5. Initiate contact via email first
6. Confirm date, time and offer to call or meet with them face-to-face
7. Timely follow-up is the key to maintaining and establishing the connection

What questions to ask:
1. How did you get to be where you are at? OR What was your career trajectory?
2. What ways do you use your JHSPH training in your current position? OR How did your JHSPH training prepare you for this role?
3. What advice would you give to a student preparing for their transition from school to working? OR What challenges are facing this industry today? OR What changes do you see occurring in the next 10 years?

GOALS OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING
1. Create advocates – at the conclusion of a good informational interview, you will have established a new professional relationship with your contact. This contact will become an “advocate” for you-keeping their eyes and ears open for any potential opportunities.
2. Influential introduction – if the contact you meet does not have the means to help you out directly, perhaps he/she can provide you with an “influential introduction” to another colleague that might be better suited to you. Having someone else vouch for you goes a long way in helping to meet new contacts.
3. Personalizes your job search – your job search is about you, the person. People want to hire people that they think they know. Get out from behind your computer, go out and meet people. The more you do it, the better you will get at it and the easier networking will become.

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING
Email is the preferred method for starting any type of informational interviewing. It is less intrusive than a phone call and the recipient can decide to respond at a time that works best for them.

1. Introductory email

**Subject line:** Questions from a current JHSPH student

**Email Text:** My name is __________, and I came across your information in a search of ____________ in the _____________. I’m curious to learn more about your career path and about your work at (name of organization). I’m emailing you today to see if it would be possible to find a convenient time in your schedule for an informational interview. I’d only ask for approximately 30 minutes of your time as I’m sure your schedule is quite busy.

If necessary, I can send you more information about myself and what I’m currently doing at the Bloomberg School of Public Health. I’m hoping you’ll be able to accommodate this request.

Thanks in advance for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

John Hopkins
MPH Candidate, May 2019

Tip: Do not attach your resume.
2. Follow-up email exchanges

**Possible email reply from recipient:**

John-

Thanks for your email. I would be happy to speak with about my career path and what is like to work with my organization. I really love it here!!!

Please send me a copy of your resume so I can review it before we talk. Let’s plan to have a conversation for 20-30 minutes via phone in the next couple of weeks.

My flexible days are Wednesday, Thursday and some Fridays. Have a good weekend!

Mike Health
ABC International

**Your email reply:**

Mike-

Thanks so much for getting back to me. Attached you will find my resume.

Next Wednesday, November 14th, is a good date for me. Would a phone call at 1 pm work for you?

Look forward to speaking with you soon.

John Hopkins
MPH Candidate, May 2019

3. Confirming email and offering to call

**Confirming email from you:**

Mike-

We are confirmed for Wednesday Nov 14th at 1 pm to speak over the phone.

I will plan to call you at the number in your contact information.

Should you need any additional information prior to our call, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

John Hopkins
MPH Candidate, May 2019