

## Ep #101: How to Get Your Dream Job



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Heather Branscombe**

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Episode 101, How to Get Your Dream Job.

Welcome to *Clinicians Creating Impact*, a show for physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists looking to take the next step in their careers and make a real difference in the lives of their clients. If you're looking to improve the lives of neurodiverse children and families with neurological-based challenges, grow your own business, or simply show up to help clients, this is the show for you.

I'm Heather Branscombe, Therapist, Certified Coach, Clinical Director, and Owner of Abilities Neurological Rehabilitation. I have over 25 years of experience in both the public and private sectors, and I'm here to help you become the therapist you want to be, supporting people to work towards their dreams and live their best lives. You ready to dive in? Let's go.

Hi there, friends. I hope that you are doing well. Happy 2025 as we're well into this year. I know for me, I'm really in the midst of hiring and onboarding a new group of therapists, as well as we're actually planning for some students coming to us this year, both physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy students this year. I'm really excited about that, and it's led me to start to think about new graduates and choosing your first position.

Now, I can't help when I think about that is to think about my position, my first position. And now that was a long time ago. The job market has certainly changed since I started in the late 1990s. And having accepted several other positions before actually starting Abilities myself, and now having hired many, many clinicians to our team, I have a perspective that I think could be both helpful and fun for you to think about.

Now, I have no vested interest right now. This is me coming as a friend or as an objective clinician. Although I will say, if you're at all interested in working with us, feel free to reach out, but that's not really the point of this podcast. It's really to help you to find your dream job. I always say when I first meet someone, even if they have applied to work with us, that this is my dream job here at Abilities, and it should be.

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I mean, whoever is hiring you, no matter what the organization they're working for, whether they founded it or not, if they are in a hiring position, they generally have the autonomy to be in a position that they should love. And so I want to say when we are hiring, we are biased. Of course, I always think it is a good idea for you to be sold on the place that you are considering to work with as much as you are selling yourself.

So today I wanna go through my perspective on the hiring process and some things that you might wanna think about before you get your next dream job. But before I share my perspective, I know you may already know this, but this podcast is a passion project of mine because I really want all clinicians to have the ability to use this kind of tool set and tips as a way to magnify their impact, even if they never work either alongside us or with us here at Abilities.

I consider myself so lucky to be able to do this and to share this as part of my work week. This is my fun at work. So you can help me to make this fun at work much more meaningful by helping to spread the message. Spreading this message helps more clinicians create a bigger impact. So let's work together to make that happen. You can help me to do that in a couple of ways.

One, first follow, rate, and review this podcast wherever you are listening to it. That helps feed the algorithm. I don't know exactly how, but I know that it does. So that when a clinician just like you is searching for something just like this, this podcast will come up for them.

Secondly, if you could actually share this podcast or better yet a favorite episode with a colleague, that would be the most amazing. If you've heard this before and you meant to do it, but you haven't done it yet, it's totally okay. I always say that it's okay, and it really is okay. Let this be the sign. Today's the day that you can help other clinicians just like you.

And if this is your first episode, first, welcome. Thank you so much for listening. And hopefully as you listen, you can decide who of your clinical friends would love to hear something like this kind of information to help them at work as well. Thank you so much in advance for your action here. And with that, let's get back

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to this episode. So I know when I talk about finding your next best dream job and when I'm thinking about new clinicians, it is a lot of this is going to apply to new grad clinicians, but it could apply moving forward to any clinician.

Now, if you are a clinician and you are working on this, what I would say first is it's easy to think that another job is going to make things easier for you, and maybe it will. But before you do that, I have an episode back in our archives. It's actually episode 17, When It's Time to Quit. And so I would just invite you if you are in a position, even if you are in a different position and thinking that you might want to work with us.

So I'm just trying to show you how unbiased I'm trying to be here. By listening to this episode, it really is going to help you to decide whether or not you like your reasons for quitting. So even if you are going to quit another position and come with us at Abilities, I really want to show you this is my unbiased thing. I want you to feel good about the reasons that you have for whatever action you take moving forward.

So I want to assume, first of all, that you are considering your options for a new position. And when I think about doing job search, I don't know if you job search like this, maybe you don't, but maybe you do. Lots of people start by just scanning the online ads just to see if anything looks enticing. And while that's not necessarily the worst thing to do, but what I would actually ask you to do even before you do that searching is to ask yourself some questions, actually one specific question I have in mind.

And it's not even my own question, it's a question that comes from an organization that I really admire called Strategic Coach. And this is a question that can really help you to get the most out of even the most innocent online search.

So here's my question for you. If we were meeting here a year from now, or insert a timeframe that works for you, It might be a year from now, it could be six months from now, it could be five years from now. But if you think about a time in the future from today and you were to look back over that timeframe to today,

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what has to have happened during that period, both personally and professionally, for you to feel happy about your progress?

So the reason that I like that question is that it really helps you to define in advance what does success look like for you? And it is important to think about that both personally and professionally because work-life balance, while sometimes that term gets thrown around or we say there is no such thing or there is such a thing, you really wanna decide what does progress look like for you in the future.

So I really like that it asks the personal and professional, and it helps you to start to identify those success metrics that are most important to you. And that's all of the metrics. It could be objective things like hours of work. It could be pay. It could be some subjective things like feeling like you have autonomy, feeling like you have control, feeling that you're really making a difference. All of those things can be important. And what is one person's amazing job could be somebody's nightmare job.

So an amazing job is all in a perspective. So I do really want to invite you to be really clear on what your current perspective is on what is an amazing job, what is your dream job, and what would progress look like to you towards moving to that amazing or dream job moving forward.

So again, let's think of some of the things that could be important to you. You could think about things like compensation. Sometimes people say pay, but I'll talk a little bit more in the future of why I think compensation is a more important or more encompassing word versus pay. Location, hours, the kinds of clients or patients that you're seeing, could be about culture, that work-life balance. Even all of these items really can be broken down into some objective and subjective criteria that feels aligned to you and your values.

So I invite you to answer that question in a way that works for you best, and then you can use that criteria to start looking. Otherwise, it's easy to see something that sounds enticing, but might come with other aspects that you end up selling yourself short on in the short term, but might not work for you in the

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long term. I'm thinking about pay as one of the things. It's easy to be like, oh, pay is going to make things better.

And again, we'll talk about compensation, but pay is a great short-term dopamine hit, but the truth is there are so many other things that really add to your satisfaction that pay is not gonna cover up. And I will say with this, no job or position is probably gonna be completely perfect for you. And there's also an opportunity not to gaslight yourself that something like high pay is going to compensate for something else that is also important for you.

For example, I've seen people decide, oh, the commute isn't gonna be that bad, but I've seen the commute wreck the joy out of any kind of joy in their job for a clinician. I've also seen the lack of autonomy. For example, being able to choose what kind of referrals you see make a career that at one time seemed like a dream feel much more like a prison. So you get what I'm getting here?

So those are the kinds of answers you want to find for yourself. Again, subjective and objective measures for you, so then you can look. Where to look? I know you know where to look. You want to look at Indeed. You want to look in social media. You want to reach out to your classmates and reach out to organizations in the area, even if they don't have a job posted.

Because I'm here to tell you, as a founder, owner, hirer of clinicians, I love getting emails from clinicians who reach out without an actual position that I've posted in mind. I really love that. That shows a level of motivation that I'm really looking for in a clinician that I want to work with.

So in terms of increasing your chances of getting the position, so you found some criteria and you found a position that could be a potential great match for you, I want to say, Again, do I look at TikTok? No, because I'm older. I am one of those people that are getting all the best TikToks through Instagram Reels like all the other elder millennials and Gen Xers around. But I will say that there is not a magical TikTok phrase that you're going to hear to tell you to get the \$10,000 pay increase or to unlock something that the organization would be



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willing to give you if only you were to say these magical words. That's not actually true.

What you really do want to be able to say in the job hiring process is number one, what is important to you? Share your values, share the things that are really important to you. Number two, show that you've actually researched the organization and show that you kind of have a basic understanding of how you may or may not be a good fit. And number three, say the words to show your interest in the position, because any good organization – and there are lots of great organizations out there – are going to care that it is a good fit.

It's really like dating at the end of the day. So again, of course, you're going to want to put the best version of yourself out there, but it absolutely should be an authentic version of yourself. So again, your interests, the research showing what's important to you, that's that level of authenticity that is either going to attract an organization to work with you or repel. And again, if it repels or if in conversation with that organization, you are repelled, it doesn't make you a bad clinician or the organization a bad organization, it just means that you're not a good fit.

And how much better, easier, cleaner for everybody involved to be able to figure that out before you decide to accept a position. It's kind of like before you get married, you want to figure that out in the dating situation. So just like dating, before you decide to partner yourself out, of course, put this best version of yourself, but make sure that it is an authentic version of yourself.

In terms of things what not to say, I don't have a lot to say about that, because again, if you are being authentically you, I'd love that, and I think that's really important. But a couple of red flags that I've noticed is one, asking what the compensation, or more specifically what's the pay up front before you've even discussed anything else about that. Like if a clinician is coming up and saying, what are you going to pay me specifically, that's a red flag from my point of view. Now of course there should be ranges.

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I know we put ranges in that, but I'm just telling you from the point of view of somebody who is hiring people, if that is one of the first things, the first things that you're asking, it does make me curious that pay is more important to you than culture and fit. And of course, should pay be important? Of course, it's going to be important. It's important for everybody. But, and we want to make sure that this is a win-win opportunity for both people, for both you and the organization. So meaning you both win.

And so I just invite you to do the research if you need to first to make sure that it is an organization that is going to be in line with that. But I'm here to tell you if pay is the number one thing that you're looking for, and if that's the number one thing that an organization is running for. Maybe that's great for you, but for us as an organization, do I believe that we pay well? I absolutely do believe that we pay well, but I do that from a way of transparency and showing how we can create a win-win situation and it's not about win-lose.

And when you ask for that compensation upfront before anything else, it kind of sets up the situation of that you need to organize and be aggressive about the pay first, meaning that somebody needs to lose in this situation, you're gonna make sure that it's not you. So do with that what you may, but just be careful about how soon you ask about compensation, if there's not a range that's out there.

Secondly, when I find that people are really selling themselves without being really clear about what is important to them, that tells me that they might be more of that people pleaser, that they're more worried about getting any job versus getting a job that works well for them, which again, is gonna feel good in the short term.

And maybe there's a thing of like, oh, I'll have different offers and then I'm going to leverage one offer versus the other. But that people-pleasing tells me that we might not be a good fit only because I can't solve a problem that I don't know about and people pleasing is really a form of lying at the end of the day.



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And maybe that sounds a little bit harsh, but ultimately it's not being authentic if you're really coming from that people pleasing place. So do your best to be clear about what is important to you and how you think that you can create a win-win situation with the organization. But if you're selling yourself and saying, "Oh, I can do this, oh, I can do this, oh, I can do this, oh, I can do that." Be careful about that because it does come across as like, well, are you actually interested in doing that? Like minimally say why that's important to you. It's that people pleasing that is a little bit of a yellow flag from my point of view.

So you've got through a place and you have got an offer. I have something – this is where I was going to talk about compensation. Remember when I said that earlier? Here we are. Here's my advice on how to evaluate offers.

Now it feels really easy, especially if you have a classmate or another colleague that's like, "Oh, I got this offer and it's X number of dollars per hour," and you are looking at your offer and it is Y number of dollars per hour. It sounds like that would be an easy thing that you're actually evaluating apples to apples, doesn't it? Because dollars per hour is the same thing, right? But it actually, in my experience, it isn't necessarily the same thing.

There's a couple of things. Number one, is that offer as an independent contractor or is it an employee relationship? And even as an employee relationship, is it a salary relationship or is it an hourly relationship? So that's going to make a huge difference on the actual total compensation. So you don't just want to think about the hourly rate. Of course, the hourly rate is important, but you want to think about all the other things that are important to you in your compensation.

So things that you could consider in your compensation, Is there paid time off as part of that? Is there paid sick leave, for example? So as an independent contractor, you're not going to have paid time off. You're not going to have paid sick leave or any other kind of paid time off leave. So of course that independent contractor rate is going to be larger to reflect that versus an employee relationship.

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Do you have an education amount? Are there potential bonuses and how easy or hard is it to get those bonuses? How much support are you going to have with those bonuses? As well as you might want to think about the things that could affect the expenses of the organization.

For example, clinical and professional mentorship is really important for many of the clinicians that I meet with. And I actually love that about that, but think about the time and the money, more importantly, that an organization is paying the people to that and how that could or may or may not affect your compensation.

Whether the offer that you're considering is a union position, so are there going to be union dues or other dues that are going to be taken off that compensation? You also want to consider the amount of administrative support. Are you going to have to do billing, which again, depending if you're public or private, you may not have to do that. Are you going to have to do the scheduling and how will that affect your compensation? Do you want to do billing? Do you want to do scheduling?

Thinking about all of that is really important to think about, again, the complete compensation package versus just an hourly pay. It really will allow you to make sure that you are comparing apples to apples and not apples to oranges.

Now again, I know that our process is very different than others, but the way that I make sure that I show up that people can understand what their compensation is, is I basically have a spreadsheet that I show them and it shows what is the productivity level that I'm expecting you to create, how many billable hours am I expecting you? How many clients am I expecting you to see in a day to be able to get a certain level of compensation? And what are all the things in the compensation?

And so, for example, in Abilities, some organizations will do this, some won't. They will be able to give you, there won't be a set - at Abilities, there isn't a set vacation rate. There isn't a set education amount because we want to tailor that compensation to be exactly what is important to you in that moment, knowing that it will probably change over time.

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And so as long as I feel good about it because as long as we are open and transparent about how the compensation works, that really positions both of us to create a win-win opportunity so that you can understand how to increase your compensation and how to align your compensation to best meet your needs. So those are some of the things that you're going to want to think about when you're evaluating your offer.

And eventually, really, ultimately, how to get your dream job, understanding the criteria, both subjective and objective criteria that you have, that will help you to show that you are making progress both personally and professionally, target those organizations that you think might help and show interest early and often. Be an engaged member in the process because you are actually evaluating the organization or you have the opportunity to do that as much as they are evaluating you.

I really like the idea of giving clinicians, the idea of like informed consent. The goal that I have when we are hiring a clinician is that at the end, they are as excited to accept the position as we are to give them because they've investigated us and they have as good of an understanding as they can without actually having worked with us as we are to hire them. That's the ideal.

I know that we have a process here in Abilities, and I'm not so naive to think that we're the only organization that does that, so I know that you can find that with other great organizations as well, but I wanna just offer you that is the goal that you can work to to help to get your dream job. That should be the goal. And if it isn't the goal, especially for their organization, I would just say it might not be the dream job that you think it is.

So with that, I hope you have an amazing rest of your day. And if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me. Yes, I am busy and I am doing a lot of things, but I am never too busy to talk to you. You can feel free to email me at [heather@abilitiesrehabilitation.com](mailto:heather@abilitiesrehabilitation.com).

With that, I will talk to you soon. Take care.

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Thanks for joining me this week on the *Clinicians Creating Impact* podcast. Want to learn more about the work I'm doing with Abilities Rehabilitation? Head on over to [abilitiesrehabilitation.com](http://abilitiesrehabilitation.com). See you next week.