**Äänitteen nimi**: Job Search Resilience: Overcoming Challenges with Hope and a Healthy Mindset

**Äänitteen kesto**: 00:19:15

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**Merkkien selitykset:**

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Speaker 3 [00:00:05]: Hello, dear listeners, welcome to our podcast. Today we will talk about job seeking and mental health. My name is Eszter Kiss from Haaga-Helia's career team. I'm a career counselor and mental health professional working mostly with international people, and today I have my dear colleagues with me. Another member of the career team, Timo Lampikoski, who is also doing individual counseling and workshops with the students, and Anna Pakkanen, who is the study psychologist at Haaga-Helia. Welcome, welcome. Thank you for being here. Well, then just let's go straight to the point. Anna, why is it important to talk about well-being in relation to job seeking?

Speaker 1 [00:00:51]: Well, because most of us get rejections while we are seeking for a job. And it's very important to take care of yourself when you are seeking for a job because intensive and negative feelings, they have more power when you haven't been taking care of yourself. As we all know, how is it when you are very hungry and you get some negative news. Basic things like eating, sleeping, and rest and also relationships and social life are important and the cornerstones of well-being. Also exercise is important. It doesn't have to be sports, but for example, walking. And it is also important to have some things in everyday life that makes you feel good.

Speaker 3 [00:01:40]: Right, definitely.

Speaker 2 [00:01:42]: Yeah, I totally agree. And for that, almost all people are struggling with their job searching at some stage. So, difficulties and difficult feelings during job search are very common.

Speaker 3 [00:01:57]: Definitely, I can relate to that, because when we think about job seeking, then of course, there are like a lot of positive things in it. For example, the excitement, the challenge, the opportunity to start something new, but then there are a lot of difficulties. You may get a lot of rejection during the journey, which can cause stress and anxiety. You might be afraid of interview situations if you are not very experienced. For example, you are a student and this is your first time. And then all these stress and rejection can also cause uncertainty, some loneliness in the process, and then at the end, it can lead to lack of self-esteem, that am I really good at it if no one wants me, no one wants to hire me? And then I think as an international, I must put the other side as well, that I think it can be even more challenging because then you might face some discrimination or racism. And then also the language barrier. And sometimes you don't understand how the system works in Finland. You don't understand where you can ask for help, for example, for job seeking. So, then you can get lost quite easily. But hey, Anna, so what can we do when we have this difficult situation and we have a lot of difficult feelings like anger and disappointment and hopelessness during the job search?

Speaker 1 [00:03:31]: Well, I think first thing is to recognize the feelings you have. You can take some time to think about what feelings might also be underneath the most obvious feeling you feel at the moment. For example, if you feel you are angry, you might also feel disappointment or grief. And because we tend to try to get rid of the bad feelings and avoid these feelings, so that's why we don't always have the place for the recognition. But it is important to go towards the feelings and feel these unwanted feelings, as well. The second thing is to accept the feelings you have, also these unwanted feelings. When you get rejected, it naturally feels bad.

Speaker 2 [00:04:20]: And you may feel really lonely during those dark hours.

Speaker 1 [00:04:27]: And a sense of belonging is one of our basic needs. But when you have strong feelings towards something, it usually also tells you that that thing is very important to you. The strong feelings tell about your values. And when the feeling gets very intense and unwanted, you can try to move your attention to other things also.

Speaker 3 [00:04:54]: That's very true.

Speaker 2 [00:04:57]: But it's not so easy.

Speaker 1 [00:04:59]: That's true. It's not easy.

Speaker 2 [00:05:00]: If you get rejected like two or three times a week, it's not so easy. So Esther, you have experience in job searching in Finland. So, could you please tell something about that? How you navigated through the difficult moments during your own job search journey?

Speaker 3 [00:05:23]: Yes, well, first of all, I can definitely relate to what you said just before, that how important it is that you understand your own feelings and you are in connection to them, but also what Timo said, that it's not always easy to shift out of them. I had a really difficult time emotionally when I was looking for a job because I felt constantly that I'm not wanted here in Finland and I'm not competent. So yeah, I gathered a couple of thoughts what helped me or what I did. So I think, first of all, one of the most important things is that a job seeker realizes that there are so many other things that the person is other than a job seeker. You might be a parent, you might be the kid of someone, you might have a partner, you might be a friend, you might be a volunteer, you might have some hobby. So, there are many other things that you are other than a job seeker and then it's important to concentrate on those as well. And then I think if you know what helps you through a bad day, what are your coping strategies that can help. For example, I do a lot of art. I did a lot of art. I was running a lot because those are usually what I do when I...or I do lists that...I think it's a very good idea for everyone to write a list and then when you have bad days, you can reach out to those. Then I think it's very important to celebrate small successes because sometimes they don't come easily. But for example, when I was learning Finnish, I was like, my Finnish skills are still not good enough to work in Finnish. I'm so slow. But then I started to celebrate when I got a new certificate about my A2 level because it's a lot of work to get there and that should be celebrated. Also, if you get an interview but you don't get the job, but hey, you were in the top, I don't know, five to ten applicants, which is already a great, great sign. So, those small successes should be cherished, as well.

Speaker 2 [00:07:45]: Yeah. It's always important to celebrate those small successes. When you get invited to an interview, it means that you have the skills, you have the experience, you have the educational background that the Finnish recruiters are interested in, the companies are interested in.

Speaker 3 [00:07:59]: Exactly, exactly. Then I was also thinking about my past successes. Earlier, I was also working with international students at the Hungarian University and I got a lot of positive feedback from them and also from my colleagues when I was leaving. So, I actually read back those emails that I got earlier to notice that, okay, I actually was successful, was wanted, I could create value for other people, just not at the moment, but it happened earlier, so it's going to happen again. Yeah, and then I think one of the biggest challenges for me that I felt that I'm not good in what I'm doing. So, I volunteered with Mieli Ry and then with Yeesi, which are both mental health organizations. And through volunteering, I could also experience that, hey, I do have skills that I can offer. So for me, that was also like a great thing also because I found community. And if community... this is my last thought, that I had a lot of people supporting. I'm very grateful for my partner who was really patient and encouraging during this time. I had friends and my family was also very understanding. So, I think reaching out and speaking about the difficulties is very important because like Timo you also said, it's a very lonely place to be a job seeker, even if you are, for example, a student and you have people around you, but you might feel that you are the only one doing something wrong, but you are not. So, I think it's important to talk about this.

Speaker 2 [00:09:53]: That's awesome. So, you had a great number of coping skills. It seems that that really helped you.

Speaker 3 [00:10:00]: Yeah, well, I was trying, definitely. But yeah, so Timo, Anna, do you have other practical tools and resources where job seekers can take care of their well-being?

Speaker 2 [00:10:17]: Yeah, from a career counselor's point of view. So, when you're looking for a job, so work on your job seeking skills, improve them all the time, edit your CV, customize your LinkedIn profile, optimize your LinkedIn profile. Yeah, and really clarify your goal and your career plan. What are you really looking for? What are you really interested in? In my view, it is very common that people don't know what they are looking for and what they are qualified to do in working life. And yeah, if you have been searching for a job a long time, so you may want to rethink your goals and especially your job searching strategy.

Speaker 1 [00:11:05]: Actually, I have a really good example of myself with this rethinking your goals because when I became a psychologist and I was looking for my first job as a psychologist, I was really doing a lot of work for five months too. I sent the applications, I did my best in every way, but I didn't get any job. But then I broadened my search so that...first I had this idea that I will work with adults in Helsinki, but then I broadened my search a bit and I ended up working with kids in a school outside Helsinki. And even though in the beginning I thought that's not my cup of tea, because it's what I first planned, I actually enjoyed my time and that school a lot and it was a great experience for me. In general, I would say that sharing usually helps. It's really important to think if there's anyone you can tell about your feelings, so you don't have to be alone with that job search. Also, writing to yourself, for example a diary, can be a good idea. And as Timo said earlier, brightening your values can be also a good thing if you don't really know what you want. And as Esther said earlier, it's important to take care of the other basic aspects in your life. And when you are facing a hard time, you can also practice breathing exercises, learn them if you are not familiar with those, and try to write a gratitude journal or simply list the things that you are grateful of in the end of the day. And those can really be little things that come to your mind.

Speaker 2 [00:13:02]: Esther, may I ask you, did you find it hard to be grateful during the dark hours? What was your experience?

Speaker 3 [00:13:10]: That's a good question. I remember...I'm not sure if it's a gratefulness question or like what I did, but I did create this one poster about what I had in Finland. And for example, I put that, hey, I already know five person here. Or hey, I don't realize how much I love sauna. So, that makes me feel home here. So, I think for that, yes, gathering those, it was not super easy, but really useful to recognize that there are actually things that surround me and I can be grateful for and makes me feel good. But yes, feeling gratitude might not be easy, but then I think it also helps to identify the small happy moments in your life.

Speaker 2 [00:14:12]: Awesome.

Speaker 1 [00:14:14]: Yes. Some people also think you can make up an encouraging sentence. And if you create your own sentence, it can also give you some strength and power. For example, it could be something like this that I will get through this, even though at this moment I feel overwhelmed.

Speaker 2 [00:14:34]: That's really important. Very useful piece of advice. As for me, I must say that which has helped me during my dark hours in my life during the past few years. So, Liverpool Football Club's famous anthem, You'll Never Walk Alone. So the message in this anthem is so strong and so helpful. And yeah.

Speaker 3 [00:14:56]: Definitely. Sounds good.

Speaker 1 [00:15:01]: Also self-compassion, which is not very easy to have self-compassion for yourself, which means that you're kind and understanding towards yourself. But you can also practice that and talk warmly towards yourself.

Speaker 3 [00:15:20]: Timo, do you have some tips where people can reach out people, services, platforms, when they are stuck with their job search?

Speaker 2 [00:15:32]: Yeah. As for university students, I suggest a career counselor or participate in some courses that deal with career planning or job searching. So, most universities offer these courses.

Speaker 3 [00:15:56]: Any workshops or platforms in mind or services? I don't know if Anna or Timo?

Speaker 1 [00:16:06]: Well, I think if...students can always contact their school psychologist if they're younger, and maybe study psychologist if they study in a higher education institution. Also study coaches you can always contact.

Speaker 3 [00:16:25]: That's true. And then I have in mind a couple of other places. For example, Mieli has phone line and chat services for young people that you can call and you can find the contact details on Mieli's website. And I myself volunteer at a member organization, Mieli Without Borders, which is especially for non-Finnish speakers in Finland, or for anyone who feels like getting support or getting involved with mental health issues in another language than Finnish or Swedish. And then there are also peer supports organized by NGOs that I think can be really useful when you are together with other people. And it's a led group, so it's focused on like how to move on from there.

Speaker 2 [00:17:22]: Esther, can I ask you for you to clarify what are NGOs, please?

Speaker 3 [00:17:27]: Yes, sorry. So, NGOs are third sector organizations, which are non-profit organizations, and therefore their goal is to support people in various topics. For example...and there are a lot of organizations like this in Finland, also supporting international people also with their job seeking and also with their integration and also with their mental health. And they are available...their services are usually free or very low fee. So, it's affordable also, for example, for students or unemployed people. So, to sum up, what is our final conclusion or what are our final thoughts, Timo?

Speaker 2 [00:18:18]: Yeah, as it says, you'll never walk alone. So, please don't be alone in your job searching. It's too lonely a place to be, so please discuss with people, discuss with professionals such as career counselors and study and school psychologists.

Speaker 1 [00:18:39]: Yeah, that's a good way to sum up this all because also the unwanted negative feelings are part of job seeking and that's something we have to accept.

Speaker 3 [00:18:52]: Yes, well, thank you Anna and Timo for the great discussion today. I hope everyone got some practical and useful tips. I wish that everyone would recognize the importance of mental health in job seeking and, well, good luck for everyone!

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