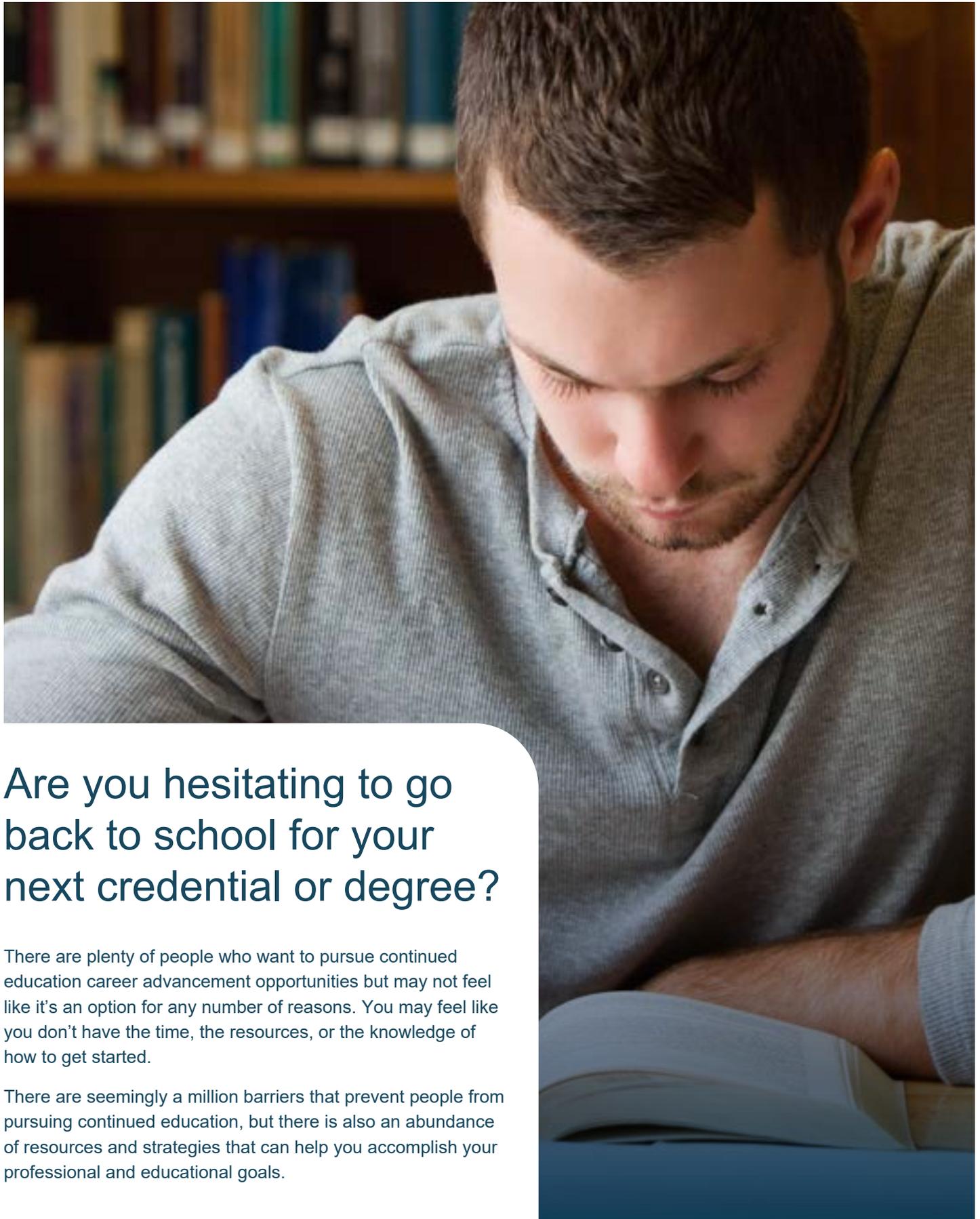




Shift Your Potential from **Stop** to *Start*

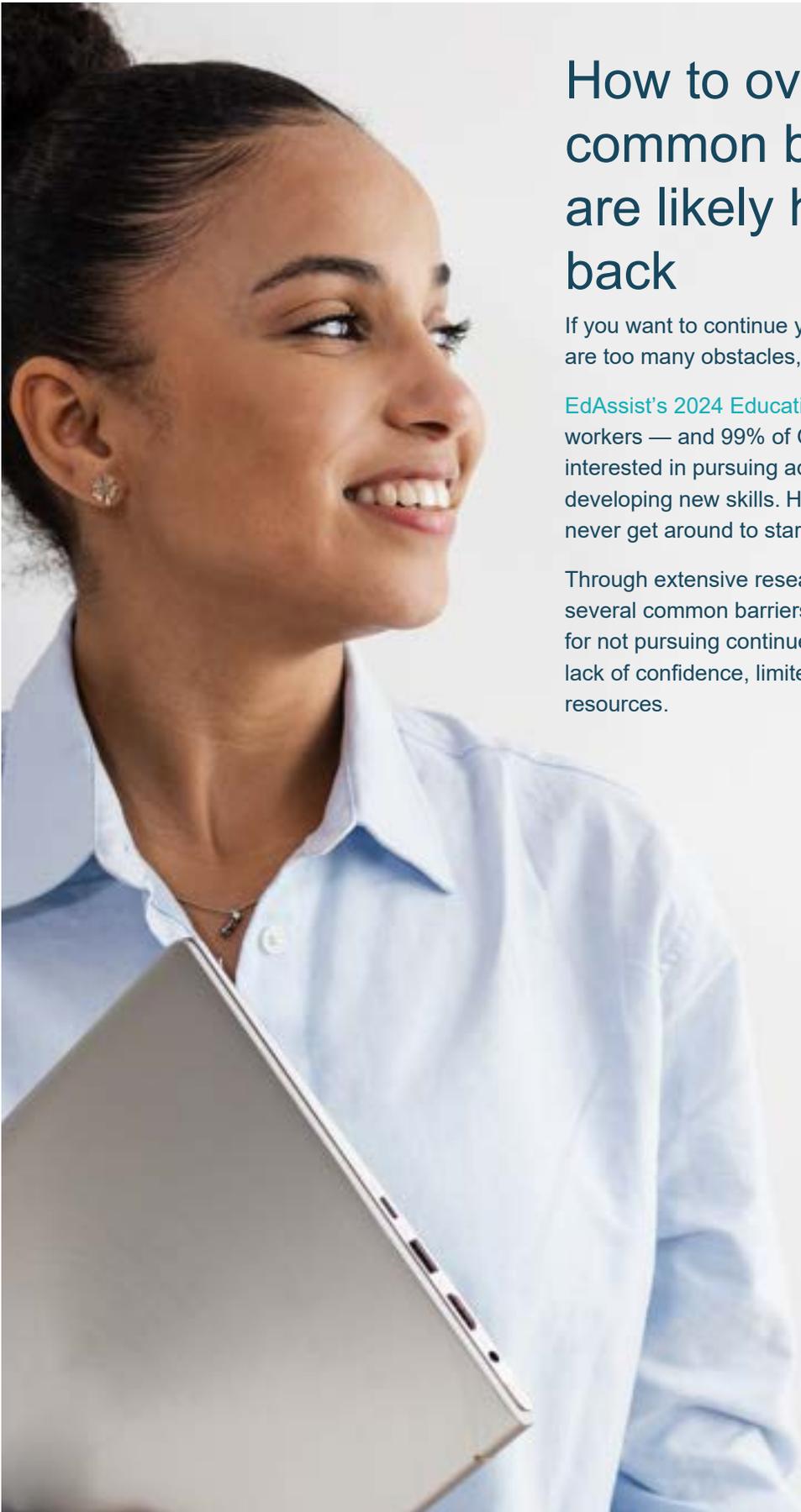
How to move beyond the obstacles holding
you back from continuing your education



Are you hesitating to go back to school for your next credential or degree?

There are plenty of people who want to pursue continued education career advancement opportunities but may not feel like it's an option for any number of reasons. You may feel like you don't have the time, the resources, or the knowledge of how to get started.

There are seemingly a million barriers that prevent people from pursuing continued education, but there is also an abundance of resources and strategies that can help you accomplish your professional and educational goals.



How to overcome common barriers that are likely holding you back

If you want to continue your education, but feel like there are too many obstacles, you aren't alone.

EdAssist's 2024 Education Index found that 74% of workers — and 99% of GenZ employees — are interested in pursuing additional education or developing new skills. However, many of these workers never get around to starting their education.

Through extensive research, we've found that there are several common barriers that workers cite as reasons for not pursuing continued education: potential expense, lack of confidence, limited free time, and few personal resources.



of workers, and 99% of GenZ employees, are interested in developing new skills or continuing their education.

1

Overcoming Financial Obstacles

Potential out of pocket expense is the most commonly cited obstacles preventing workers from deciding to pursue education.

THE SOLUTION

- Financial aid. There are a variety of state and federal programs that may offer financial aid to learners who qualify, including reduced tuition costs.
- Scholarships and grants. There are a variety of scholarships available, including those that may be awarded to qualifying individuals based on merit, identity, field of study, military service, or interest.
- Stipends. Some schools may offer stipends for working in research positions or as a Teacher's Assistant (TA), especially for graduate and post-graduate students.
- Employer-funded education assistance. Your employer may offer a variety of employee education benefits, including tuition reimbursement, tuition discounts through partnerships with schools, and student loan repayment programs.

53%

of employees say knowing that they would incur student loan debt has prevented them from pursuing additional education

43%

of workers say it has negatively impacted their mental health

55%

say student loan debt has negatively impacted their financial situation

Research your financial aid and funding options — there are likely more available to you than you think. Make sure you investigate any education assistance benefits that are available through your employer, as you may be able to pursue additional degrees and training completely on their dime.

2

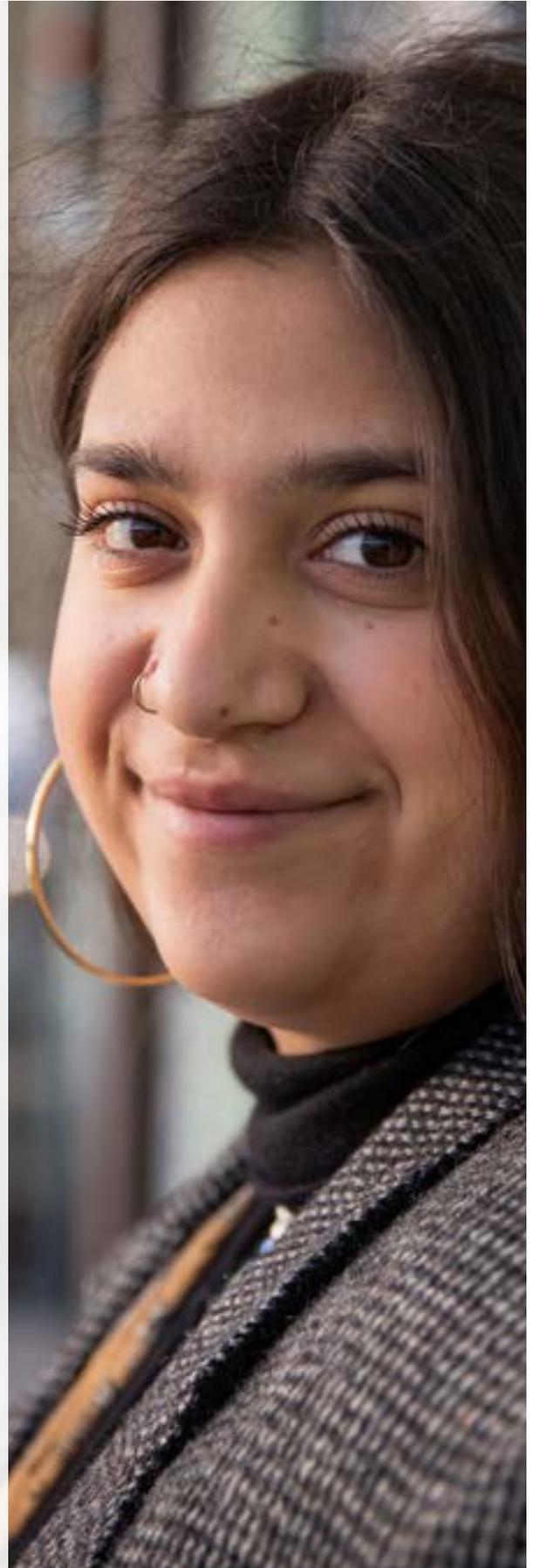
Overcoming Confidence Challenges

Many adult learners worry that they won't be successful if they return to school. They may worry that they've forgotten how to study, or that the next degree would be too challenging for them to succeed.

Imposter syndrome affects up to 82% of graduate students, medical students, and college students, and it can be so significant it prevents you from even submitting an application.

THE SOLUTION

- Remember it's normal to feel overwhelmed. Take things one step at a time, and find a program that aligns with your interests, skills, and schedule.
- Just get started. Send a few applications to get the ball rolling; sometimes, momentum and the confidence boost of an acceptance can be all you need.
- Look into available resources. Many schools offer office hours or study workshops to help students succeed. Employers with education assistance programs may also offer expert coaching to help you with everything from selecting a degree program to determining how to fund your education.



3

Overcoming Time Restrictions

Time is another major concern for adult learners. You may be worried about finding the time to balance work, personal obligations, and schoolwork.

THE SOLUTION

- Take one course at a time. Many adult learners can only take a single course at a time. While it may take longer to complete your degree, it can ensure you can fit the work into your schedule.
- Find a flexible degree program. Some programs let you work at your own pace. Others may have a more strict timeline, but you can listen to online lectures at your convenience throughout the week instead of attending programs in person at a set time.
- Opt for short-term upskilling. A single course or certificate program can help you learn new skills and advance at work. You can always continue with additional upskilling later.



of workers said they'd prefer a short-term approach to learning (such as a course or certificate program) because of its flexibility and minimal time constraints.

4

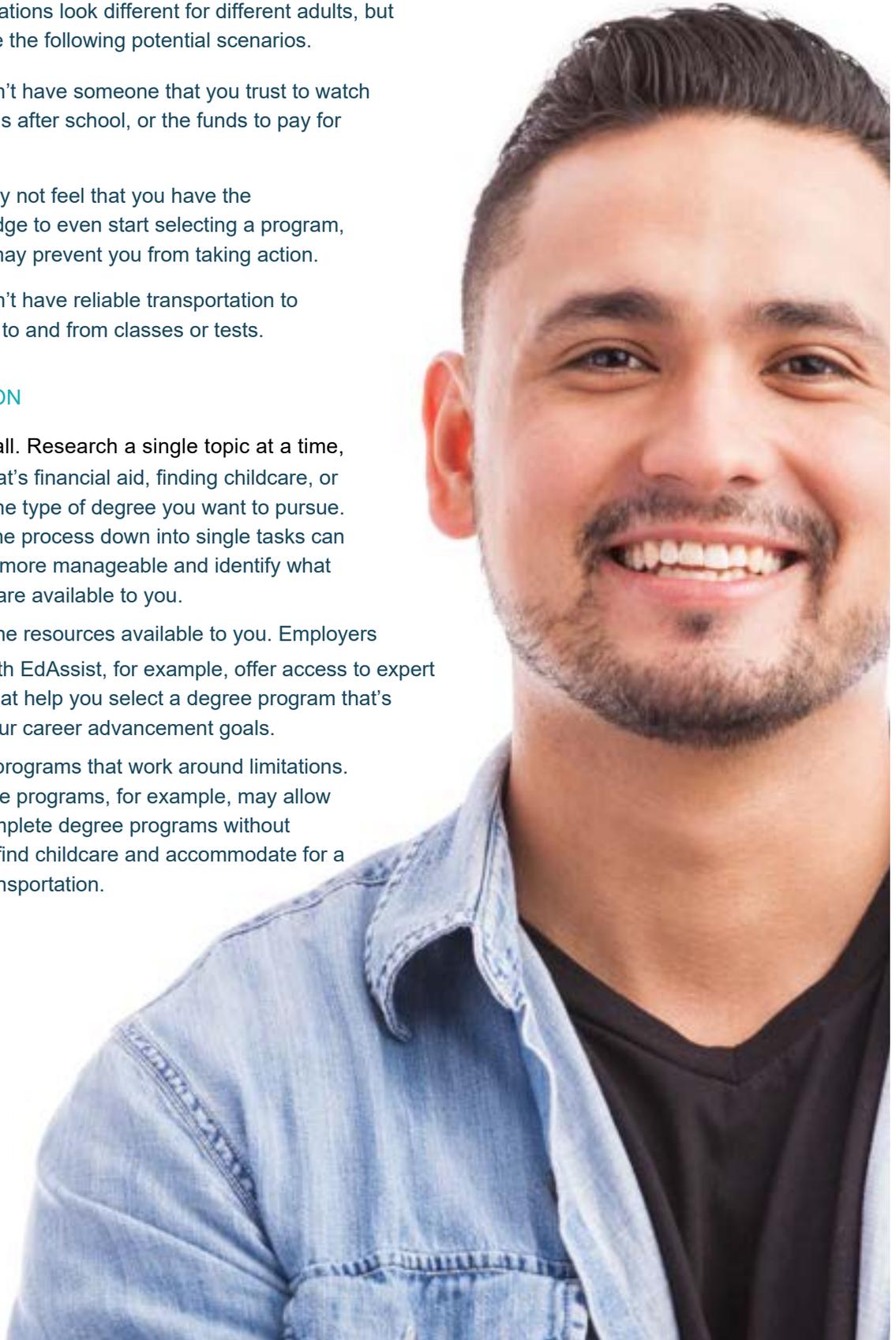
Overcoming Resource Limitations

Resource limitations look different for different adults, but likely resemble the following potential scenarios.

- You don't have someone that you trust to watch your kids after school, or the funds to pay for care.
- You may not feel that you have the knowledge to even start selecting a program, which may prevent you from taking action.
- You don't have reliable transportation to get you to and from classes or tests.

THE SOLUTION

- **Start small.** Research a single topic at a time, whether that's financial aid, finding childcare, or choosing the type of degree you want to pursue. Breaking the process down into single tasks can help it feel more manageable and identify what resources are available to you.
- **Review the resources available to you.** Employers working with EdAssist, for example, offer access to expert coaches that help you select a degree program that's right for your career advancement goals.
- **Choose programs that work around limitations.** Fully online programs, for example, may allow you to complete degree programs without having to find childcare and accommodate for a lack of transportation.



The time is now to discover your options.

It's easy to feel like there are so many good reasons not to pursue continued education, but it's important to remember why you want to. Additional education and upskilling can create more opportunities for career mobility and advancement, and may be essential to help you reach your goals.

Did you know that employees who pursue education are two times more likely than other employees to receive promotions, and program graduates are three times more likely to receive promotions than non-participants. Degrees are also correlated with lower levels of unemployment, and advanced degrees correlate with higher earning potential on average.

There are solutions that can help you overcome every barrier preventing you from continuing your education, so don't let the obstacles stand in the way of your future career (and earning!) potential.

Review your company's policy and discover how they can support you through educational assistance programs, and get ready to finally submit that application you've been thinking about.



Interested in pursuing continued education (even if it's intimidating)?

Discover your EdAssist education benefits on your organization's benefits website to get started.

Have questions?

Chat with us live on the EdAssist platform.

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