

Topic: Employment

Activity: Transportation, Decisions & Timelines: A Critical Incident for Staff Training

Objective

- ✓ Staff members will be able to identify some of the employment-related challenges their clients might encounter in the U.S. workplace
- ✓ Staff members will identify some ways of helping their clients to prevent and address challenges in the U.S. workplace

Lesson Time

35 minutes

Materials

- ☐ Copies of “Transportation, Decisions & Timelines: A Critical Incident,” 1 per participant (included)
- ☐ Flipchart paper, markers, and tape

Introduction

Transportation to work may be challenging for refugees resettling in the U.S. At times, it may seem inconvenient, time-consuming, and perhaps even costly. Even so, using public transportation may be the only thing that allows your clients to work in companies not otherwise accessible without their car. Helping your clients to understand and work with these transportation challenges may be difficult but is necessary.

Practice

1. Put staff members into small groups of 3-4. Ask each group to choose someone to report back later to the larger group.
2. Distribute copies of “Transportation, Decisions & Timelines” to each participant. Ask staff members to read the critical incident to themselves or have someone in their group read it quietly to the group.
3. Instruct the groups to develop solutions or tactics they might use to work with a client in this situation. Some ideas might include the following:
 - Encourage and assist clients to meet co-workers who might live near them and be able to carpool
 - Encourage clients to excel at their job to garner good recommendations and U.S. experience for future jobs
 - Help clients identify ways to occupy their time while commuting to work on public transportation, such as improving their English
4. Bring the large group together and ask group reporters to summarize the main points of their small-group discussions. Record these on flipchart paper and discuss as necessary.
5. Lead a discussion addressing any of the following Reflection Questions that you feel may not have been adequately addressed during the previous discussion:

Reflection Questions

- What happened in this critical incident? What could Pu Lian have done differently?
- Do you know anything about Pu Lian’s values that may impact his choices?
- How would you handle this situation? How would you advise your client?
- What resources might be available to Pu Lian and you?
- How could you use this critical incident to coach clients?

Transportation, Decisions & Timelines: A Critical Incident

The Resettlement Agency helped Pu Lian find a job. However, he was very frustrated because it took him one hour and 40 minutes with a train and two bus transfers to get to his new job. When required to work overtime, he had to pay a taxi \$25 to get to work or go home because there was no bus on Sunday. Eventually he quit. Pu Lian started going back to the resettlement agency for assistance in finding another job, but soon realized this was a difficult time to become employed, and that finding him a second job was not a priority at the resettlement agency. After five months without a job, Pu Lian finally found himself a new job where he would have to travel two hours by train and bus each way to work.

For this same critical incident in a lesson plan designed for use with refugees, see <http://www.cal.org/co.domestic/toolkit/employment/index.html>.

Our thanks to RefugeeWorks and its Employment Training Institute participants for the information on which this critical incident is based.



* This resource is based on the real-life experience of refugees resettled in the United States. All identifying information has been changed to protect privacy.

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