

Topic: Employment

Activity: Job Types & Searches: A Critical Incident for Refugees

Objective

- ✓ Participants will be able to identify some of the employment-related challenges they might encounter in the U.S. workplace
- ✓ Participants will be able to identify some ways to prevent or address challenges in the U.S. workplace

Lesson Time

25 minutes

Materials

- ☐ Copies of “Job Types & Searches: A Critical Incident,” 1 per participant (included)
- ☐ Flipchart paper
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Tape

Introduction

Finding employment in the U.S. may present unexpected challenges to you. Some jobs will require you to adjust your expectations or behavior. You may find that there are ways in which you are not willing to adjust, however. Recognizing the need for compromise, and also recognizing your own boundaries, will help you conduct your job search accurately and work in partnership with your job developer or case manager.

Keep in mind that your decisions do have consequences, however, and that financial assistance and benefits will end at some point. Early employment is essential to survival in the United States, and it must be the primary focus for all employable adults: both men and women.

Practice

1. Put participants into small groups of 3-4. Ask each group to choose someone to report back later to the larger group.
2. Distribute copies of “Job Types & Searches” to each participant. Ask participants to read the critical incident to themselves or have someone in their group read it quietly to the group. If the facilitator senses that most participants are unable to read, s/he should read the critical incident aloud to the large group.
3. Instruct the groups to develop solutions or tactics they might use to deal with this situation. Some ideas might include the following: Explaining his challenge to the job developer and asking for suggestions; accepting the new job but exploring alternatives to help him feel more comfortable, such as wearing gloves at work; actively looking for another job without leaving the current one; etc.
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 are some possible consequences of Than Saw’s choices?
- How would you handle this situation?
- Who can Than Saw talk with about this? What resources are available?
- Can you imagine being in a similar situation, when taking a job might require an adjustment that you would find difficult?

Job Types & Searches: A Critical Incident

Than Saw* arrived with his wife and two children. The children started school soon, but Than Saw and his wife had a difficult time finding work. After four months, Than Saw's job developer told him there were jobs available at a meat packing company. Than Saw, some other refugees, and their job developer traveled to the company to meet the supervisor and learn about the jobs involved. Although there was a job available for Than Saw, he did not want to accept it. Than Saw did not want to pack meat because he was a vegetarian and did not feel comfortable touching meat products. Than Saw was worried, however, because he knew that there were few job opportunities, and that he needed to start bringing in a paycheck before his financial assistance ended.

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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