

Topic: Employment

Activity: Job Types & Searches: A Critical Incident for Staff Training

Objective

- ✓ Staff members will be able to identify and better understand 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 “Job Types & Searches: A Critical Incident,” 1 per participant (included)
- ☐ Flipchart paper, markers, and tape

Introduction

Your clients may find that employment in the U.S. presents unexpected challenges. These may require some adjustments on the part of your client, and you may need to assist them with that process. In addition, there may be some adjustments your client may not be willing to make. Assisting in the process of compromising and weighing the pros and cons of a decision may be an important part of helping your clients become self-sufficient.

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 “Job Types & Searches” 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:
 - Work closely with the case manager or job developer to find more culturally appropriate work
 - Help the client weigh the pros and cons of the position
 - Help the client identify acceptable alternatives to make him feel more comfortable in the working environment, such as wearing gloves
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?
- Do you know anything about Than Saw’s values that may impact his choices?
- What could Than Saw do? How would you advise your client?
- To what cultural values do you think you need to pay more attention? What other characteristics might be important?
- What resources are available to you and Than Saw?
- How could you use this critical incident to coach clients?

Job Types & Searches: A Critical Incident

Than Saw* arrived with his wife and two children. The children started school three weeks after they arrived in the U.S., but Than Saw and his wife had a difficult time finding work. After four months, Than Saw's caseworker told him there were jobs available at a meat packing company. Than Saw, some other refugees, and their caseworker 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. He had hoped there would be a job for him in which he would not have to touch any meat. Than Saw did not want to pack meat; 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.

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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For more information about resources available from the Cultural Orientation Resource Center, visit www.culturalorientation.net.