

Topic: Employment

Activity: Additional Responsibilities on the Job: A Critical Incident for Staff Training

Objective

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

Lesson Time

35 minutes

Materials

- ☐ Copies of “Additional Responsibilities on the Job: A Critical Incident,” 1 per participant (included)
- ☐ Flipchart paper, markers, and tape

Introduction

There are often job-related duties required of employees that are not always clear from the job description. Some of these (such as cleaning or administrative tasks relevant to the employee’s responsibilities) may come as a shock to clients who were unprepared for these tasks and consider them demeaning. Warning clients ahead of time that such additional duties may be included in their work responsibilities may help to prevent or ease tensions. Consider some other ways in which you could help your clients understand job expectations to help ease their transition, prove their worth to an employer, and become self-sufficient through employment.

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 “Additional Responsibilities on the Job” 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 Ghalib to find out what other duties he might be assigned
 - Advise Ghalib that such expectations are customary in a U.S. workplace and ask how he might adjust
 - Encourage Ghalib to focus on improving his English skills, maintaining a paycheck, and having health insurance
 - Encourage Ghalib to actively seek a new job
 - Create support groups of refugees to discuss issues such as this
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 challenges does Ghalib face?
- Do you know anything about Ghalib’s values that may impact his choices?
- What could you have done to try to prevent this situation?
- How would you handle this situation?
- What resources are available for Ghalib and you?
- How could you use this critical incident to coach clients?

Additional Responsibilities on the Job: A Critical Incident

After being in the U.S. for three months, Ghalib* was offered a position at a factory assembly line. His case manager outlined the basic duties as they had been explained by Ghalib's future supervisor: drilling holes, inserting screws, and moving the product to the next line. While the work was not what Ghalib wanted to do, he accepted the job so that he could pay his bills, support his family, and access health insurance through his employer.

After completing his week-long training, Ghalib felt prepared for his responsibilities. However, at the end of his first day on the job, Ghalib's shift manager asked him to wipe down the machine and mop the floor surrounding his work station. Ghalib felt disrespected and shamed by this request, and wanted to quit immediately.

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>.



* 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.

© Center for Applied Linguistics 2010

This document is a product of the Orientation Technical Assistance Project, funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, Grant No. 90RB0037. The views herein do not necessarily represent views held by the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

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