

Topic: Employment

Activity: Additional Responsibilities on the Job: A Critical Incident for Refugees

Objective

- ✓ Participants will become familiar with some values highly regarded in the U.S. workplace
- ✓ 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 “Additional Responsibilities on the Job: A Critical Incident,” 1 per participant (included)
- ☐ Flipchart paper
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Tape

Introduction

It is important to realize there are often job-related duties required of employees that are not always clear from the job description. Such duties may include cleaning or administrative tasks relevant to the employee’s responsibilities. For example, someone working in a factory may be expected to clean their work area, while someone in an office environment may be asked to photocopy materials or prepare coffee. Employers do not mean these tasks to demean employees, but to accomplish tasks efficiently, without having to hire separate staff members. Such tasks are performed by many employees throughout the U.S., and being willing to perform them when required can help you prove your worth to an employer.

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 “Additional Responsibilities on the Job” 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 Ghalib’s situation. Some ideas might include the following:
 - Discussing all potential duties of a job with the supervisor
 - Accepting such duties in order to gain U.S. work experience
 - Taking advantage of having a job by working on English skills
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 is the challenge?
- What are Ghalib’s options?
- What are some possible consequences of the choices Ghalib could make?
- How would you handle this situation?
- Who can Ghalib talk with about this? What resources are available?

Additional Responsibilities on the Job: A Critical Incident

After being in the United States 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.