

Independent Living Instructors and Social Workers: This Page Is for You

Use *Represent* in IL Classes

This issue's IL section starts on page 26. It focuses on finding and keeping a job.

Often teens are not aware that the way they are expected to behave in a job interview and on the job is very different from the way they behave with friends and staff. Adapting to those new expectations is sort of like adapting to another culture for teens who have not had much experience with it. One of the toughest things about getting used to another culture is that at first the changes you have to make seem very awkward, even fake. For teens who do not want to be humiliated, and who place a high value on being "real," the new role they have to play on the job can seem almost like a betrayal of their own values.

Topic: Acing a job interview

Goal: Help teens realize that a job interview (and the way they should behave on the job) is a little like acting. They have to learn to play the role. And they have to practice. Only when it starts to feel natural will the teens be able to perform well under the stress of a real job interview.

Role Play of a Job Interview: 5 minutes for each teen

- Tell teens: When you meet someone for the first time on the job, you can't go wrong with the following:
 - 1) Stand up (if you're sitting down)
 - 2) Shake hands (firmly, but not like a vise grip)
 - 3) While shaking hands, look the person in the eye.
 - 4) Say: "Hi, I'm X. Thank you for interviewing me. I really appreciate the opportunity to talk with you."
(Teens can put this in their own words, but they need to do three things: state their name, thank the interviewer, and express their appreciation.)
- Pick a teen to rehearse with you first.
- Explain to other teens in group: You are the "audience," and you need to look for four things. The teen should:
 - 1) Stand up when the other person enters and

approach the interviewer

- 2) Reach out to initiate the handshake
- 3) Look the interviewer in the eye while shaking hands
- 4) Say the line above, or a reasonable variation on it.

- Explain to the teens that they need to give their peer constructive feedback on how well she does each of those things. (Remind them that they'll each get the chance to rehearse in a minute.)
- Bring teen to the front and have her sit down in a chair (pretend it's a waiting area).
- Stand off to the side, and then walk in and call out the person's name.
- Go through steps 1-4 above
- Before there are any comments, do it one more time with the same teen.
- Ask group for a few quick constructive suggestions.
- Repeat with the same teen two or three more times. Asking the group for to give one piece of feedback each time (e.g., "maintain eye contact," or "grasp my hand a little more firmly").
- If you have time and a small enough group, repeat this with each member of the group, in front of the group so that each student gets some direct feedback from you, and gets to "rehearse" their role in front of the "audience."
- Have the group practice on each other. Tell them they must do the exercise 10 times each and they must give each other one piece of feedback each time.

Closing Discussion

- End the exercise by pointing out to the teens that a job interviewer is going to form an opinion of them in the first 30 seconds, and that getting off on the right foot can make the entire interview go much, much better.

For more activities, go to:

www.youthcomm.org/Teachers/TeacherResources.htm