

**Topic:** Employment

**Activity:** Hard Work: A Critical Incident for Staff Training

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**Objective**

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

**Lesson Time**

35 minutes

**Materials**

- ☐ Copies of “Hard Work: A Critical Incident,” 1 per participant (included)
- ☐ Flipchart paper, markers, and tape

**Introduction**

Finding a job in the U.S. may be difficult and take a long time for your clients. They may find the process to be very frustrating, and may be unhappy with their first job. Understanding the value of training and commitment may be challenging for your clients. Helping them to understand that these are highly valued aspects of an employee in the U.S. may be very important to helping your clients become self-sufficient and move up the career ladder.

**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 “Hard Work” 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 them to stay and work hard in hopes of a future promotion
  - Help clients to identify the pros and cons of staying in this job versus leaving the job (e.g. learning English, attaining health insurance, feeling a sense of happiness or pride in their work, gaining U.S. work experience)
  - Encourage clients to talk with other refugees about the types of work available before making the decision to quit
  - Establish a support group of refugees to discuss such issues
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 were the issues?
- Do you know anything about the client’s values that may impact their choices?
- What would you encourage your clients to do in this situation?
- How would you advise your clients?
- What resources are available to you and your clients in this situation?
- How could you use this critical incident to coach clients?

## Hard Work: A Critical Incident

Two friends found jobs together after taking part in a 4-month hands-on construction training program. Their new jobs involved doing the same work they had been trained for: hard, physical, outdoor labor. Their employment began in December when it was very cold and snow was on the ground. It was very difficult, uncomfortable, and cold outside, and the two friends wanted to quit.

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.

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