

Topic: Employment

Activity: Transportation, Decisions & Timelines: A Critical Incident for Refugees

Objective

- ✓ 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 “Transportation, Decisions & Timelines: A Critical Incident,” 1 per participant (included)
- ☐ Flipchart paper
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Tape

Introduction

Transportation to work may be challenging in the United States. At times, it may seem that public transportation is inconvenient, time-consuming, and perhaps even costly. Even so, using public transportation will allow you to work in companies that may not be accessible to you otherwise without your own car and a driver’s license.

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 “Transportation, Decisions & Timelines” 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 Pu Lian’s situation. Some ideas might include the following:
 - Accepting the new job and being patient and flexible
 - Looking for co-workers who might be able to drive him to and from work some days of the week, in exchange for gas money
 - Trying to excel at his job to secure good recommendations for a job closer to home in the future
 - Spending time on the bus working on improving his 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 could Pu Lian have done differently?
- What were some possible consequences of Pu Lian’s choices?

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- How would you handle this situation?
- Who could Pu Lian talk with about this? What resources might be available?

* This critical incident is based on the real-life experience of resettled refugees. All identifying information has been changed to protect privacy.

Transportation, Decisions & Timelines: A Critical Incident

Pu Lian's resettlement agency helped him find a job. However, he was very frustrated because it took him one hour and 40 minutes with a train and two bus transfers to get to this job. When required to work overtime, he had to pay a taxi \$25 to get to work or go home because there was no bus on Sunday. Eventually he quit. Pu Lian started going back to the resettlement agency for assistance in finding another job, but soon realized this was a difficult time to become employed, and that finding him a second job was not a priority at the resettlement agency. After five months without a job, Pu Lian finally found himself a new job but he would have to travel two hours by bus and train each way to work.

Our thanks to [RefugeeWorks](#) and its Employment Training Institute participants for the information on which this critical incident is based.

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