

Six Degrees of Networking – Small Group Activity

Below are discussion questions to generate and share ideas on ways to educate your job seekers about the value of networking. Please elect a note taker to record your thoughts, as you will be reporting out.

Major Discussion Themes:

- Biggest challenge is building confidence to “network”
- Many clients are already networking – just don’t call it that
- Clients need practice – many creative ways to do help them do this (mock networking/interviews, 30 second elevator pitch, homework to meet new people etc.)
- Need to remind them of value of networking through rewards, sharing personal experience, encouraging them to be persistent
- Need to attend events but also have professional online presence (LinkedIn)

1) To what degree have your job seekers already used networking in their job search and what are some examples of these networking practices (i.e. asking their working friends and family members about job opportunities etc.)?

- Clients are taught to include friends and family in networking.
- Include LinkedIn, Facebook.
- Be careful in social media to remain professional.
- Limited resources networking opportunities.
- Networking events, 30 sec elevator pitch
- The job seeker informs the staff
- Word of mouth
- LinkedIn (employer partner referrals)
- Circle of job networking: write down everyone in your community that could connect you with a job
- Social media, hiring events, job clubs
- Hiring events
- Social media
- Family/friends
- Career events
- Scavenger hunt
- High school
- Game night, getting kids to communicate, connect
- Random seating assignments for meetings, toastmasters
- Resources in classroom

- Social skills plays a big part
- People are not networking as much
 - o They do not see the value, they do not want to
 - o No commitment
 - o Afraid of losing benefits
 - o Many people on public assistance do not see the benefit of working a minimum wage job
- First point of contact
- Community based networking
- School based networking & community
- Organizational employment coach
- We bring other resources to the client
- A great deal of families and friends
- Need to start building confidence and network their common core

2) What are some activities or tools for networking that you share with your job seekers, either one-on-one or in a classroom setting? What activities or tools have worked best for your population?

- 30 second elevator pitch
- Creating networking event
- Teaching the value of professionally using social media
- Discuss community resources (ex. library, Comcast, and AT&T)
- Word of mouth
- Resume building/cover letter
- Social Media/LinkedIn
- Employer panel work
- Job boards, updated frequently
- Posting on social media
- Job Readiness training workshops
- Mock interviewing
- Networking
- Scavenger hunt
- Networking web
- Job fairs
- Elevator pitch
- Wednesday job clubs
- Whiteboard
- LinkedIn workshop
- LinkedIn
- Networking tool/solution
- Tools – informational interviews (interested in the field but not necessarily)
- Be persistent

- Make a purpose when going to job fairs – register and research, apply online
- Try to help people be determined and develop a vision or goal based on their passion
- Job boards
- Email blasts
- Informational session – encourage
- Best practice – one-on-one and word of mouth, referrals (personal)
- LinkedIn
- Teach elevator pitch before weekly report
- Job search work team meets weekly

3) What are the key networking tips and strategies you share with your job seekers?

- Use cell phone for job search, if computers are not available
- Utilize community church as a networking for professional resources
- Use social skills – smiling, handshake, be approachable
- Empower job seekers to open conversation
- Always be ready
- Inform social universe to your job search
- Smile
- Be confident
- Think professional
- One time to make a first impression
- Help build confidence
- Always be talking about it
- What to share/what not – pitch 4 job selling skills
- Social media
- It's not about you (your moods, helping others, \$ should not be your intent)
- Follow up and stay in touch
- Networking tree – circle of contacts
- Go out on interviews not necessarily to get the job but to get the experience
- Upload resume on various websites
- Register on different websites
- Be cognizant/aware of the fact that programs/organizations are or can be in communication
- Participate in as many network opportunities as possible – church, clubs, community events, volunteer, unpaid internship
- Personal experience
- Aim for your purpose in life
- Pay it forward by endorsing connections

4) In general, how has networking as a topic been received by your job seekers and has it led to quality employment? Please share any success stories.

- Customized employment – a person with a disability looks at their circle of resources, making connections, discover process of examining resources
- Workshop being sure that employers look for best
- Not received well in the beginning related to confidence
- Follow-ups after workshop – asking why they didn't get the job
- You won't know everything but you can know what you do really well
- Networking works both ways!
- Young lady got job by talking to someone else
- Think its more difficult than it is
- People afraid to be approached, intimidated, hesitant – not well
- LinkedIn success – client connect on linked in and found job
- May be interested as something formal & intimidating
- Influences cultural & environmental factors
- Use of words “networking” vs. “respectful/friendly”
- Youth attaining employment through job fairs
- Positively agreeable

5) What are some of the questions and concerns that have been raised by your job seekers in regard to networking? How have you addressed them? In general, how have you been able to help build your job seekers confidence in networking?

- Lack of education, self worth, advocacy
- Fear of meeting someone new
- What should I wear
- Practice
- Role Playing
- Mock interviewing
- Trans & gender non-conforming folks face a lot of barriers
- Don't apply for jobs that are so out of your skills
- Don't have strong network or background is in question (what do you talk about)
- Explain how it will benefit them
- Record yourself
- Talk to them about their skills
- Mock interviews – a lot!
- What is value?
- How soon will I get the job? – provide them with information, you have to do your homework
- Tell them to research company
- They say they don't know anyone in the field
- Uneasiness of having to pull yourself out and be an “extrovert”

- Time – it's a full time job
- Transportation – long commute
- Reward system – best approach
- “How can I be sure it won't be used as a scam?”

*** Be sure to exchange contact information with those in your small group!*