

Backpack

activities to develop the confidence, assertiveness & job hunting
skills of young adults

careerdecisions

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Acknowledgements

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This product has been developed from the 'Get Wise to Work' pack, a resource pack developed by careers advisers from Careerdecisions, the career service company in Knowsley, Liverpool and Sefton. These careers advisers have specialised in working with adults, and have developed these materials to meet the needs of their clients. The materials have been tried and tested over several years and have helped many adults to gain the confidence and skills to re-enter the job market.

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Introduction

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For most people, the task of finding and securing a job is very daunting. For individuals who have been out of the job market for some time or conversely who have never found it difficult to find work previously, job hunting can feel like a nightmare. Whether coping with long term unemployment, career breaks, illness, family commitments or redundancy, such individuals often lack confidence in themselves and their skills and abilities. Before they put a pen to paper or pick up a telephone to contact an employer they have to overcome their self doubts and anxieties about their ability to do the job. The materials in this pack are designed to help such individuals develop strategies which will build their self confidence, their skills in being assertive and their ability to sell themselves effectively to prospective employers.

Based on materials and training sessions used with New Deal clients in the Merseyside area, many of the session focus on adults. However, some have been reworked for use with young disaffected clients and all are suitable for adaptation for use with such a group.

To get the most out of this pack we suggest that you spend time really getting to know the exercises. Some of them work very well as stand alone sessions, others work better when they are strung together in a programme, Also, the later sessions which focus on job hunting work better if they are localised - using local vacancies, local case studies, etc, so it is worth spending time adapting them.

Finally, this pack gives an outline of **what** to do in each session but it is extremely important to consider **how** this sort of training is run. Trainers of these sorts of materials needs to be empathic and sensitive to the experiences and emotions of the participants. Self confidence is a fragile thing that can only be built from within, not imposed externally, so trainers have to be encouraging, patient and

understanding as they try to coax these clients back into the world of employment and job hunting.

Warning

Please note that the information in this pack was correct at the time of going to press. Labour Market Information in particular is continually changing due to economic, social and political pressures and Highflyers Publishing Ltd cannot be held responsible where information is no longer correct. Please check the information before using it. More detailed information about LMI can be found in our publication Go Wild with LMI, see our website for further information.

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Icebreakers

Aim

To help participants to relax and get to know other people in the group.

Time

This varies according to the ice breaker you use and the number of people in the group. Do leave enough time though, because if participants can relax and begin to take part at this stage the rest of the training will run more smoothly.

Resources

- Copies of the *Getting to know you* worksheet on page 69

Tips

Some ice breakers are more relevant to particular training topics than others. It is a good idea to try and match the ice-breaker to the topic which will follow it. In this way you can get people to start thinking about the issues before moving onto the training session.

Method

1. If this is the first time the participants and trainers have ever met it is important firstly for the trainers to:
 - a. briefly introduce themselves
 - b. outline all domestic arrangements:
 - location of toilets
 - fire drill
 - where, if any, food and drinks will be served
 - start and finish times, break times
 - any special arrangements (eg claiming travel expenses, car parking passes, other paperwork that needs completing)
 - c. explain the purpose of the session/workshop/day. This kind of introduction should help to put people at ease a little.
2. Then introduce your ice breaker. There are a list of suggested activities opposite. However, remember that asking people to speak individually in front of a whole group can be very nerve wracking. For first sessions it might be better to pick activities which get people talking without exposing them to 'public speaking' too soon.
3. Whichever activity you use, once everyone has taken part, thank them for getting involved.

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This is a selection of icebreakers designed to encourage the group to interact and communicate with each other.

Icebreakers work best when they are introduced in a relaxed, informal way. This gives group members the opportunity to share their experiences, air their concerns and express their needs and expectations.

1. Ask the group to pair up with the person next to them and in turn interview each other to find out who they are, why they are here and what they want from the session. Ask each person to then briefly introduce their partner to the group.
2. Ask each person in the group individually to say their name and what they hope to gain from the session. You could list their first names and one or two words as to what they want from the session on a flipchart and blu tack it to the wall. You could then return to this at the end of the session to see if peoples wants have been met.
3. Ask the group to get into pairs and then take it in turns to complete this sentence..
If I were an animal I would be a ..., because ...
and they should give 3 reasons why.
Example:
'If I were an animal I would be a goat because I love being outdoors, I enjoy rock climbing and I would like the sense of freedom I would have.'
If appropriate, ask each person to share their choice of animal with the whole group.
4. Ask the group, either individually or in pairs or small groups, to describe the worst job they have ever had. You may want to use your own experiences to get the ball rolling, e.g. Bottling smelling salts in a factory with poor ventilation. The

fumes from the ammonia made eyes stream and ache.
Examples of the best job they have ever had could also be used. If appropriate, get them to feedback to the whole group.

5. Ask the group to work in pairs and tell their partner 3 things they like about themselves - make sure positive statements are made - and 3 things about themselves they dislike and why. Once they have done this point out that usually we can list the things we dislike about ourselves more easily than the things we like. This is because we are good at being hard on ourselves. When we are unemployed we have enough hardship to deal with so we need to start being easier on ourselves and remembering our good points.
6. Give each person a copy of the *Getting to know you* worksheet. (You may want to use Version 1 or 2 depending on the age of participants.) Then ask everyone to circulate and find a different person to fit each of the boxes. They should introduce themselves and then write the persons name in the box. Point out that there can be no swapping of names once they are written in a square and each name can only appear once.