

THE TWO SIDES OF REJECTION

GOALS:

- To discuss aspects of rejection in our lives.
- To begin to learn how to deal with being rejected.
- To learn how to reject a job offer in a positive manner.



RATIONALE:

Rejection is a natural part of everyone's life and occurs from time to time. When looking for a job, each interview has the possibility of presenting us with rejection. We may also find ourselves in a position of being the person who does the rejecting if we turn down a job offer. The ability to handle being rejected as well as rejecting others will help us maintain our dignity and positive relationships with employers.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Flipchart, markers and for each participant a copy of *Coping with Rejection From Employers* and *Rejecting Job Offers*.

Warm Up: No, No, No, Yes

Instruct participants to mingle around the room. As they make eye contact with one another they are to say *No* to three people, then *Yes* to the fourth person. Encourage them to continue to mingle until everyone has had several experiences of both saying and being told the *No, No, No, Yes* sequence.

Exercise 1: Sharing

Ask participants to recall a time when they experienced a feeling of being rejected. Caution them not to bring up a situation that might be too fresh or painful, but something they feel they could share with one other person. Divide the group into pairs. Have them tell their partner something about the situation and some of the feelings it brought up for them.

Now ask participants to recall a time when they turned down either a person or a situation. Have them share some of the feelings they had about this situation. Invite participants back to the large group and facilitate a discussion.

Questions to Consider:

- What are some of the feelings associated with rejection?
- Which of the two situations were you most comfortable with, rejecting another or being rejected?
- In what ways are these two experiences similar or different?
- What can this tell us about rejection and looking for work?

Theory:

Invite participants to brainstorm the positive and negative aspects of

- a) being rejected
- b) rejecting a person or situation

Exercise 2: Strategies

Break the group into small groups of three or four. Tell them they have recently attended a good job interview and were pretty sure they would get the position. However a phone call just informed them that they did not get the job. In their small groups they are to brainstorm ways of dealing with the situation and the feelings associated with it.

Have small groups share their ideas with the large group.

Hand out copies of ***Coping with Rejection from Employers*** and summarize anything the group has not already mentioned.

Exercise 3: Turning Down an Offer

Again working in pairs, have participants imagine the situation of receiving a telephone call from an employer offering them a job. They decide to turn the job offer down. In pairs have them plan what they would say and create a response script. Instruct participants to act out their script with each other.

In the large group ask how it felt to reject the job offer.

Hand out copies of ***Rejecting Job Offers*** and read together with the group.

Ask group members to share what they have learned and how they now feel about rejection.

EVALUATION:

COPING WITH REJECTION FROM EMPLOYERS

Realistic Assessment

Try not to take the rejection personally. Each rejection is a step towards an offer of employment and can be a learning experience. There are many reasons why you did not receive an offer of employment. Out of 10 or 12 people interviewed usually only one is given an offer. One of many reasons for not being offered the job is that sometimes the position is filled by someone from inside the company.

Learning

Consider the rejection as an opportunity to learn more about yourself or the industry you are interested in. Evaluate the interview. Ask yourself what part did you do well. Build on your strengths for the next interview. What could you improve about your voice, posture, preparation, knowledge of the company? Every interview can build strengths for the next interview.

Supports

Draw on your support system at this time to help you cope with the feelings of rejection and move on. If you do not have a support system, now is the time to build one. Consider forming a partnership with one or several others like yourself who are looking for work. You may find it very helpful to review and practise with others before an interview and follow up with each other afterwards.

REJECTING JOB OFFERS

ASSERTIVENESS

Be assertive and clearly say "no" to the employer.

'I' STATEMENTS

Use 'I' statements when talking to an employer. For example, "I don't think that this is the right position for me at this time." This puts the ownership on you and not on the employer.

BE POSTIVE

The organization may be a potential employer in the future or may become a valuable networking contact for other possibilities.

HELP THE EMPLOYER

If you know of someone who may be a good candidate for the position pass their name along once they have given their permission to do so. This act of good will help the employer and leaves you in a good light.