Activity Plan

Play Your Cards Right

Learning Outcomes

By completing this activity the participant(s) will be able to:

- understand how to prepare for an interview

  so that they can:

- be successful in interviews.

Resources & Preparation

- Copies of the Info Sheet for each participant
- A set or sets of Interview Preparation cards prepared from the photocopiable sheets provided as part of this Activity Plan. Blank copies of the question mark cards are provided on the photocopiable sheets to allow additional or alternative issues to be raised
- Delivery Notes for reference
- Optional use of icebreaker materials
- This activity has optional links to activities IYC 2 What Sort Of Person Am I?, IYC 5 Good Stuff About Me, IYC 28 Talking About Myself and IYC 30 Putting My Record Straight

Method

1. Use an icebreaker to encourage the participant(s) to talk about themselves (optional).
2. Explain what the participant(s) will gain from this activity and how this will benefit them, based on the outcomes above.
3. Explain that each Interview Preparation card has an image that is related to some aspect of interview preparation that the participant(s) can discuss.
4. Take the set of cards, shuffle them and invite the participant(s) to pick a card.
5. With reference to the Delivery Notes, explain the significance of the picture or words on the first card chosen, and invite discussion. Remove that card from the pack.
6. Repeat the process until all of the cards have been used.
7. Give out the Info Sheet for the participant(s) to keep as a reminder of what has been discussed.
8. Ask the participant(s) what they have learned from the activity and summarise the main learning outcomes based on those given above.
Refer to the number given on the card and explain the significance of the picture or wording on the card with the help of the following notes:

CARD 1  
Know where the venue for the interview is.

CARD 2  
Plan the route beforehand and try to do a practice run.

CARD 3  
Be on time. Plan to arrive 10 minutes early so you can relax, freshen up and take in your surroundings.

CARD 4  
Research the company beforehand from brochures, their website, a visit if the company is open to the public like a shop or hotel, and by talking to people that work there. Stress the importance of this, as an interviewer may ask what you know about the company and this will help you to have an answer already prepared.

CARD 5  
Switch off your mobile phone during the interview.

CARD 6  
It’s best to be understated with jewellery. Discuss whether nose studs, eyebrow studs etc. are likely to be acceptable.

CARD 7  
Appear neat and tidy, dressing appropriately for the job. Stress the importance of this and explain that it’s not always necessary to wear a suit, but it’s important to avoid casual wear such as jeans and a T-shirt.

CARD 8  
Make sure clothes are pressed, and check them beforehand for missing buttons, stains, hems coming unstitched etc.

CARD 9  
Take a comb to tidy your hair when you arrive, but not where you can be seen.

CARD 10  
Don’t chew gum during the interview.

CARD 11  
It’s OK to accept a cup of tea or coffee before the interview, but it’s best to say “no” during the interview, as you’ll have enough to concentrate on.

continued …
Don't smoke during the interview or while waiting to be called.

Sit up straight, don't fidget or lean on the desk or move things around on the desk. Maintain eye contact with the person who is asking you the questions, and avoid looking down when answering. Remember to smile. Discuss the importance of body language.

Take certificates or evidence of qualifications with you in case the employer asks to see them. It's also useful to have a spare copy of your CV in case this is needed.

Discuss these 2 key questions:

**“Tell me something about yourself”**
- Give a brief account of your work experience, skills, qualifications, training and achievements.
- Emphasise those most relevant to the job.
- Think about how you will deal with gaps in your history caused by dropping out of school, being unemployed, illness or being in custody. Be positive – concentrate on your good points and how circumstances have changed for the better.
- If you have a CV, practise talking through it but don’t learn it “parrot fashion” or it won’t sound natural.

**“Why do you want this job?” or similar question**
- Think – “How can I make a contribution?”
  - “What can I do for the employer?”
  - not “What can the employer do for me?” Emphasise your skills, personal qualities, and experience that are relevant to the job.
- Show enthusiasm and interest for the job.
- Use evidence and/or stories to show what you’ve done.

The work associated with activity YIC 5 Good Stuff About Me is relevant here. Encourage the participant(s) to use their Activity Sheet from that activity to enhance their answers to these questions.

If the participant(s) demonstrate an interest, you could extend the number of questions to discuss areas such as:

**“What do you do in your spare time?”**
**“What did you think of your previous job/training/course?”**
- Remember, don’t knock any of these, think of something positive to say.
**“What would your friends say about you?”**
- Don’t say, “Ask them”. Think why the question is being asked by the employer. They’re looking for positive personal qualities.
**“How do you get on with other people?”**
- The employer is looking for evidence of fitting into a team.
You need to have enough information to decide whether to accept the job if it's offered to you.

There's usually an opportunity at the end of the interview to ask questions. Have some questions already prepared but make sure you don't ask something that's already been covered just because you planned to.

Try to let the employer be the first to raise pay and conditions. If they don't, then raise it at the end, after you've asked a few questions about the job.

**Examples of questions you could use:**

- What will a typical day at work be like?
- Is there any on-the-job training?
- What does any off-the-job training involve?
- Will I be able to work towards any qualifications?
- Where will I be working?
- Who will I be working with?
- Who will be my line manager?
- What are the prospects for advancement?
- Are there any changes to the company expected in the future?
- When will I know if I've been successful?
- What are the hours of work?
- Will I be expected to work overtime or unusual hours?
- What is the basic pay?
- Are there any bonus arrangements?
- Are there any opportunities for overtime?
- What are the holiday arrangements?
Interview Preparation Cards

Tourist Information Centre
Railway Station
Westborough

Best Buy Products Ltd
Northway Valley Road

Bus

Watch

1

2

3
Improving Your Chances

QUESTIONS AN EMPLOYER MAY ASK YOU
Play Your Cards Right

Using skills and taking action to achieve success

Info Sheet

Know where the venue for the interview is.

Plan the route beforehand and try to do a practice run.

Be on time. Plan to arrive 10 minutes early so you can relax, freshen up and take in your surroundings.

Research the company beforehand from brochures, their website, a visit if the company is open to the public like a shop or hotel, and by talking to people that work there.

The interviewer may ask what you know about the company and this will help you to have an answer already prepared.

Switch off your mobile phone during the interview.

It’s best to be understated with jewellery. Nose studs, eyebrow studs etc. may not be acceptable.

Appear neat and tidy, dressing appropriately for the job. It’s not always necessary to wear a suit, but it’s important to avoid casual wear such as jeans and a T-shirt.

Make sure clothes are pressed, and check them beforehand for missing buttons, stains, hems coming unstitched etc.

Take a comb to tidy your hair when you arrive, but not where you can be seen.

Don’t chew gum during the interview.

It’s OK to accept a cup of tea or coffee before the interview, but it’s best to say “no” during the interview, as you’ll have enough to concentrate on.

Don’t smoke during the interview or while waiting to be called.
Sit up straight, don’t fidget or lean on the desk or move things around on the desk. Maintain eye contact with the person who is asking you the questions, and avoid looking down when answering. Remember to smile.

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- Think about how you will deal with gaps in your history caused by dropping out of school, being unemployed, illness or being in custody.
- Be positive – concentrate on your good points and how circumstances have changed for the better.
- If you have a CV, practise talking through it but don’t learn it “parrot fashion” or it won’t sound natural.

“Why do you want this job?” or similar question

- Think – “How can I make a contribution?” and “What can I do for the employer?” not “What can the employer do for me?” Emphasise your skills, personal qualities, and experience that are relevant to the job.
- Show enthusiasm and interest for the job.
- Use evidence and/or stories to show what you’ve done.

The work associated with activity IYC 5 Good Stuff About Me is relevant here. Use your Activity Sheet from that activity to build your answers to these questions.

“

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