Sensitivity & Strengths-Based Interviewing
Session Goals

1. Review Characteristics of Attending Behavior
2. Attitudes and Effective Communication
3. The First Interview with Clients
4. Strength Based Assessments
5. Attitudes and Effective Communication
6. The First Interview with Clients
7. Strength Based Assessments
8. Review Characteristics of Attending Behavior
Characteristics of Attending Behavior

Open body language
Good eye contact
Warm & welcoming
Active Listening
Know Thyself!

- How do we present our best selves to the clients and each other?
- Do we display openness and nonjudgmental behavior?
- How are we sensitive to individuals who are in a challenging place in their lives?

we don't see things as they are, we see things as we are.

- Anais Nin
Self-Awareness

- What does empathy feel like to individuals and youth who are struggling?
- Do you genuinely believe that all people have strengths that will help them make positive changes in their lives?
- What’s our awareness about the potential for fear or shame individuals may be experiencing when they first meet with a job coach or liaison worker?
Initial Interview

- Building initial rapport is critical to building a trusting relationship
- Sets the tone for future work together
- Are we and our meeting space warm and welcoming?
  - Is there a place for other children or extended family members?
Thoughtful Communication

- Check our own attitudes and values to make sure they are not getting in the way
- Do we allow for differences in families?
- Do we categorize and stereotype?
Goal is to make sure shared communication:
- Thoughtful
- Accurate and represents family’s reality
- Meaningful
No shaming or blaming
Seeking clarification about their unique situation
Utilize important interviewing skills
- Paraphrasing, reflective listening, and summarizing
- Communication is transactional
Shutting Down Communication

- Avoiding “why” but get at what and how when seeking information
- Tell me what is going on at home
  - Youth Response:
  - “When I was younger my mom and dad seemed okay. Now they fight all the time. My mother says my dad is on drugs and has a girlfriend. Home is like hell.”
Thoughtless Communication

- Telling the family what to do by ordering, directing and using your power as a job coach is an example of thoughtless communication and a roadblock to a collaborative and effective relationship
  - “I can tell you from experience this won’t work.”
  - “Stop hanging out with your group of friends.”
Exploring Options: Giving Choices

- Exploring options together builds collaboration, trust, and respect
- Avoid the “shoulds” and instead present options
  - “Here’s what you could do.”
  - “Is this a possibility that will work for your family?”
Wrapping Up the Initial Interview

Affirm they have taken a first and powerful step by seeing you

Agree upon the next steps for the youth or the prospective client

Cover timeframes if there are critical deadlines that need to be met

Creating a shared understanding of next steps to ensure families know what to expect - no surprises
Thank everyone for their time and honesty
Discovering strengths of family, youth, and history of school involvement

Identifying parents and family’s support system is important.

- Do they have a circle of friends, a network at work or ties in the community?
- Is there a faith tradition? What are the religious or cultural beliefs practiced or honored by the family?

What interpersonal skills do the parents display when meeting with you?
Youth’s Network

- Relationships at school with teachers, friends,
- Do youth have an option to live with another family member or close family friend if they can’t or won’t live at home?
- What housing option will help the student stay in school?
• Sensitive to the unique needs of immigrants-DACA students
• Refugee families who may have experienced trauma
• Historical trauma for Native American and African American children
• Importance of honoring different cultural traditions and roles
  ▪ “Saving face”
• Start with the family’s strengths – but also identify their challenges
• What could get in the way of their success?
• What’s going on at home impacts both the student’s success at school and the family’s ability to thrive
Thoughtful Assessment of Barriers

- Utilize a social history to determine:
  - History of domestic violence, addiction, abuse and chaotic family life
  - Lack of resources; inability to meet the family’s basic needs (food, housing, transportation, recent job loss, access to health care or lack of insurance)
  - Language and culture
  - Mental health
  - Intellectual disability

“STUDY THE PAST IF YOU WOULD DEFINE THE FUTURE.”
CONFUCIUS
Thoughtful and sensitive interviewing is both an ART and SCIENCE.

How would you describe the process?
Watching individuals and their families make changes and THRIVE AGAIN is a powerful reward for being an authentic helping professional.
Thank you for participating!