

MAKING A CONNECTION

Academy Curriculum



Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance
New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Module 1 - Getting Ready for the Workplace

- Activity 1 - Setting Goals: Daily Living Goals
- Activity 2 - Setting Goals: Skill Development
- Activity 3 - Setting Goals: Employment Possibilities
- Activity 4 - Building a Strong Work Ethic
- Activity 5 - Understanding Independence
- Activity 6 - First Impressions
- Activity 7 - Communicating at Work
- Activity 8 - Good Manners at Work
- Activity 9 - Who Am I?
- Activity 10 - The Paths to Jobs
- Activity 11 - Breaking Stereotypes
- Activity 12 - Why Take the GED?

Module 2 - The Job Hunt

- Activity 13 - Getting Ready for the Job Hunt
- Activity 14 - The Job Application
- Activity 15 - Resumé Preparation
- Activity 16 - Who Can Help Me Get a Job?
- Activity 17 - Searching for Jobs
- Activity 18 - Phone Skills
- Activity 19 - Job Searching in a Tight Economy
- Activity 20 - Entrepreneurship
- Activity 21 - The Job Interview

Module 3 - Managing Work and Personal Life

- Activity 22 - Building Self-Reliance
- Activity 23 - Time Management
- Activity 24 - Paychecks and Checking Accounts
- Activity 25 - Budgeting
- Activity 26 - Credit Card Responsibility
- Activity 27 - Good Credit / Bad Debt
- Activity 28 - Online Responsibility and Security
- Activity 29 - Employment and Disabilities
- Activity 30 - Managing Work and Family

Module 4 - On the Job

- Activity 31 - First Days on the New Job
- Activity 32 - Friendships at Work
- Activity 33 - Professional Behavior at Work
- Activity 34 - Teamwork on the Job
- Activity 35 - Customer Service
- Activity 36 - Don't Get Fired!
- Activity 37 - How Am I Doing?

Module 5 - Healthy Living

- Activity 38 - Building Self-Esteem
- Activity 39 - Personal Hygiene
- Activity 40 - Workplace Attire
- Activity 41 - Healthy Eating
- Activity 42 - Sleep!
- Activity 43 - Exercise!
- Activity 44 - Smoking
- Activity 45 - Drugs and Alcohol
- Activity 46 - Bullying
- Activity 47 - Hate Crime
- Activity 48 - Managing Stress
- Activity 49 - Gangs
- Activity 50 - Domestic Abuse

Module 6 - Leadership Training

- Activity 51 - Qualities of Effective Leaders
- Activity 52 - Communication Skills for Leaders
- Activity 53 - Facilitation Skills
- Activity 54 - Conflict Prevention and Intervention
- Activity 55 - Leading a Team
- Activity 56 - Handling Sensitive Discussions

Module 7 - Volunteering and Community Service

Module 8 - The Language of the World of Work

INTRODUCTION

The Making a Connection Academy (MAC) is a transitional opportunity for refugees ages 16-21 who need guidance as they try to navigate a new environment and culture. MAC participants are disengaged from school and may be unemployed.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the MAC Academy is to provide a supportive setting where young adult refugees will build confidence and skills that will prepare them for employment and active community participation. Mainstream support services may not be tailored to their specific needs such as cultural and linguistic barriers.

MAC CURRICULUM

The MAC Curriculum consists of 8 modules that can be used separately, or as an entire program. Each module consists of a variety of interactive activities that are focused on one aspect of job readiness, life skills, or on-the-job expectations.

The MAC Coach, after assessing the English language levels, work experience, training, and social/family status of the MAC participants, can determine which modules and activities to implement.

Activities can be conducted with the entire group of participants, or with small groups or individuals. The MAC Coach should select activities that match experiential and literacy levels of the participants, taking into consideration past schooling, country of origin, work experience, and specific needs related to employment and life skills.

Each activity in the curriculum provides background information for the MAC Coach, a list of supplies and handouts, vocabulary to review, and steps for carrying out the activity. The MAC Coach can modify an activity based on the participants and time frame.

The activities all have handouts that can be used as part of the activity or for individual consultation with specific MAC participants. For example, MAC participants may participate in an activity related to establishing personal goals for the future. The MAC Coach can follow up that activity by reviewing the handouts *Why Take the GED?* and *Paths to the High School Diploma* with individuals who have identified high school graduation as a personal goal.

It is recommended that the MAC Coach become familiar with the contents of the entire curriculum so that relevant activities and handouts can be selected.

MODULES

Module 1: Getting Ready for the Workplace, concentrates on identifying personal interests and goals and building basic employment skills. MAC participants have the chance to learn about career choices and the value of becoming a wage-earner.

Module 2: The Job Hunt, involves MAC participants in the process of preparing for an employment search. MAC participants will learn how to prepare a resumé, complete job applications, research employment opportunities, and practice job interviews.

Module 3: Managing Work and Personal Life, is a module that all MAC participants should experience, regardless of their employment status. The activities include topics that can be pitfalls for some young refugees, such as time management, budgeting, credit card responsibility, online security, and managing work and family. An activity on employment and disabilities provides information about the rights of MAC participants with disabilities.

Module 4: On the Job, prepares MAC participants for the first weeks of employment. Activities cover the first days on the new job, professional behavior at work, friendships and teamwork, customer service, and guidelines for sustaining employment.

Module 5: Healthy Living, consists of a variety of topics that can profoundly affect young adult refugees. The MAC Coach may determine that the activities in this module should be addressed before beginning the job readiness modules. The activities open up the conversation about sensitive topics such as personal hygiene, bullying, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, domestic abuse, and gangs, with emphasis on identifying healthy alternatives. The module also covers issues that may be new to the MAC participants, such as healthy eating, exercise and sleep, appropriate work attire, and managing stress.

Module 6: Leadership Training, is a stand-alone module that can be used with MAC participants who have been identified for their leadership potential. The activities include skill review and practice in communication, facilitation, conflict prevention, and teamwork. The MAC participants are expected to use their new leadership skills by assisting the MAC Coach in Academy activities.

Module 7: Volunteering and Community Service, stresses the importance of volunteering and community service as stepping stones to employment. MAC participants also learn about the benefits of community involvement so that they can build connections and friendships, develop confidence, and enjoy alternatives to gangs and other negative influences. The module contains a series of handouts that can be used as self-assessment tools.

Module 8: The Language of the World of Work, is based on Specialized English Language Training, with emphasis on the language of employment. The module contains a series of handouts from Modules 1-7 that cover the key points of obtaining and sustaining employment, and a section entitled *Words of Work in Context* that provides essential vocabulary for specific occupations. All of the modules contain a list of vocabulary words that can be used for English language instruction, but the modules can also be taught using the Native Language Literacy approach. Module 8 is especially designed for MAC participants who are prepared to enter employment once they become fluent in the English language of the workplace.

MAC PROGRAM HANDOUTS



STOPLIGHT HANDOUT

The Stoplight handout can be used with MAC participants after every activity, to assist them in reviewing what they have learned.

What behaviors will they stop – or never start?

When (and why) would they pause and think before engaging in a behavior?

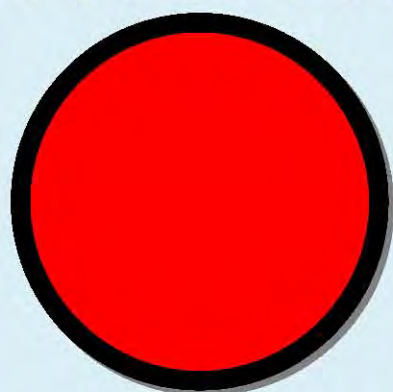
When should they continue or try a new behavior?



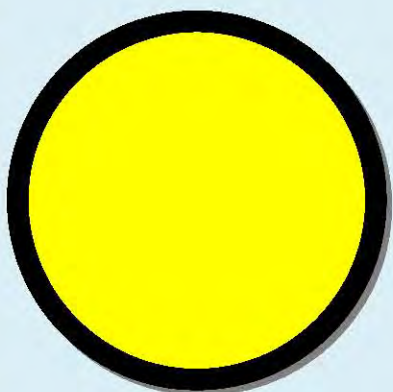
NEXT STEPS HANDOUT

The Next Steps handout can be used to help MAC participants determine specific actions they will take after participating in an activity.

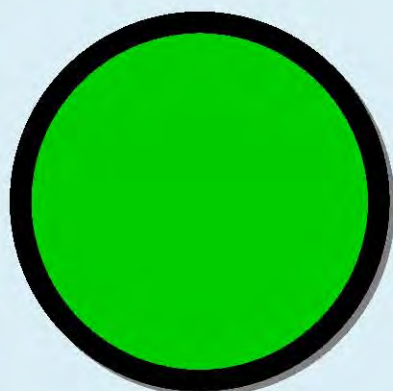
The steps can be incorporated into the INDIVIDUAL CONNECTION PLAN (ICP), a requirement of the MAC Academy that combines assessment results, personal goals, and visions for the future.



**STOP AND
DON'T START**



**PAUSE
AND THINK**



GO AHEAD!



MAKING A CONNECTION

NEXT STEPS

Name: _____



Date: _____

Next Steps: _____



Date: _____

Next Steps: _____



Date: _____

Next Steps: _____



Date: _____

Next Steps: _____
