

BRIEFING FOR PERSONAL SKILLS ADVISORS

VOLUNTEERING SESSION - PERSONAL COMPETENCY PROFILES

Aim: To provide a young person with a high quality personal competencies profile.

Your role: To draw out of young people the best examples and produce them in a manner which would impress a potential employer.

Thank you very much for volunteering to support a young person to develop a personal competency profile.

Throughout the last ten months young people have been planning and carrying out a social action project to tackle and issue that they care about in their community. While they have been doing this Envision staff and our Team Coaches (volunteers) have been helping them to reflect on their learning in relation to the six core competencies listed below.

Now they need your help as their very own personal skills advisor to articulate their competencies in a way that they could use in a job application or interview.

The copy you produce for them will also be used on their graduation certificate. Having something positive written by a person in business will really boost their confidence.

What you need to do during the session

The session will take place in your office and the students will be 'delivered' to you by Envision.

After a bit of an ice breaker (run by Envision) you should ask your young person to talk openly about their Envision experience. Use lots of open questions to get them talking as much as possible.

As you do this listen out for really good examples our six competencies. When you hear what sounds like it might provide a really good example, dig into the detail to find out more about it and write a few notes (if you have a Dictaphone even better). We have given some examples to support each definition - these are not exhaustive and other examples to back up the competencies can be used.

The aim is to get young people to talk as freely as possible – so that they are focusing on just telling you the details, not worrying about how they say it. That way you can draw the best information out of them.

We will let you know when you have only 10 minutes to go and at this point you should tell the young person what three competencies you have heard them best express. Ask them if they agree and whether there is one they think is a better example. They may use their skills passport to do this (a log of activity they have kept throughout the Envision programme). The reason you should leave

this to end and ask open questions first is that they may actually have a better example of team work than the one they have recorded through self reflection in their skills passport.

If your young person is highly self aware and quickly able to give you good examples then you can use the time to talk to them about how you might express this using the guide below.

Back in your office

After the event please write up a short paragraph (approx 150 words) for **three** of the competencies (drawing on what you think are the strongest examples for the individual). You should feel free to express this in the way that you think will portray the individual in the best light. A sample structure is offered below, but don't be too rigid as it will appear formulaic.

ENVISION COMPETECIES:

EMPATHY – I am good at understanding things from another person's perspective

I can provide an example of a time when I have:

- found out what life is like for people who are different from me, for example having different values and backgrounds
- changed my attitudes or behaviour towards another person because I've seen things from their perspective.

COMMUNICATION – I can communicate confidently and appropriately with a range of different people.

I can provide an example of a time when I have:

- communicated confidently with adults that I do not know
- used a range of communication styles tools and techniques to persuade another person to think or act a certain way
- presented information to a group in a clear, concise, engaging and memorable way
- listened carefully, taken on board what was said then responded accordingly.

ORGANISATION – I am good at setting goals and using time and resources well to achieve them.

I can provide an example of a time when I have:

- Set clear and realistic and measurable goals
- Identify a range of options to achieve my goal and select the one which is most appropriate
- Make decisions about the best way to manage my time and resources to achieve my goals

LEADERSHIP – I am good at motivating others to get stuff done

I can provide an example of a time when I have:

- Inspired other people to take action for a common cause or purpose
- Supported or co-ordinated other people to get things done
- Identified what people are good at and harnessed their talents

TEAMWORK - I'm good at working with others to get stuff done

I can provide an example of a time when I have:

- been willing to make a compromise and give up my own ideas to get agreement in a team
- taken responsibility for completing my own tasks on time as part of a wider co-ordinated activity
- stepped in to support other people in a team to get things done

PROBLEM SOLVING AND RESILIENCE – when I decide to do something, I don't give up easily

I can provide an example of a time when:

- I have come across problems but persevered to keep going
- things have not gone according to plan but, I have come up with another way to get things done
- thought of several different ways to solve a problem before choosing the best solution

SAMPLE STATEMENTS:

Please try to limit the evidence statement for each of the three competencies to no more than seven or eight lines. It should demonstrate that the student understands what the skill means as well as setting out a specific example drawn from their Envision experience.

You may like to try using the STAR structure:

S- situation- what was the challenging situation?

T- task- what were you required to do?

A- action- what did you actually do?

R- result- what happened as a result?

(as an example: planning and problem solving)

(S) A week before we had planned to go into a local primary school to give a healthy eating workshop, the primary's headteacher said we wouldn't be able to cook with the children due to a lack of cooking facilities. **(T)** We were told we either needed to change our workshop to accommodate this problem, or find another school to approach. **(A)** Instead of giving up on this

school, I decided to incorporate a talk about the food pyramid into the workshop and suggested that we brought in pre-prepared fruit and vegetables. (R) Due to this, we were still able to deliver our workshop to the children, as well as not being forced to find another school to approach at such short notice.

Other examples

Communication

By participating in Envision, I feel that I have become more comfortable in communicating with a greater variety of people. The range of activities during my time in Envision really helped me become more relaxed in talking to other people, especially the 'Meet the street' task which involved surveying many people about their opinions of Camden. Many people, as you would expect, tried their hardest to avoid us which was rather unpleasant as they seemed so disinterested and annoyed by our enthusiasm but it was all worthwhile as many people gave us a great insight to their feelings of the problems they feel still exist in Camden.

Teamwork

At Envision we had to work as a team to agree one issue that we all wanted to base our social action project around. There were many occasions where opinions were divided. Although there were disagreements, there were never arguments as we always respected each other's opinions and always took time to listen to what everyone had to say. Compromise was vital. I wanted our project to base upon racism as I believed it's an issue which affects everyone. However, crime was also another issue in which people believed was a good problem to tackle. Unfortunately, a selection of people in our group disagreed on both racism and crime. Eventually we agreed to tackle the problem of poverty which united everyone.

Resilience

By having a set target of trying to raise money for our local food bank, my mind was fixed on achieving this goal. There were always problems which we had to overcome but with our unwavering mind set, we overcame all of them and raised over £200! One of the main issues we had to face was the deadline set for our launch night. We had decided to sell badges and T-shirts to make money but the T-shirts took longer than expected and the funds to buy the required amount was also a problem. We were successful in applying for extra funds for our project and then the T-shirts soon arrived. We managed to sell many T-shirts and also had the chance to inform people about the troubles of poverty.

BRIEFING FOR PERSONAL SKILLS ADVISORS
VOLUNTEERING SESSION – SPEED INTERVIEWING

Aim: To develop students confidence and ability to participate in a competency based interview.

Thank you very much for volunteering to participate in our speed interviewing.

Throughout the last ten months young people have been planning and carrying out a social action project to tackle and issue that they care about in their community. While they have been doing this Envision staff and our Team Coaches (volunteers) have been helping them to reflect on their learning in relation to the six core competencies listed below.

So far so good. But we want your help to enable students to be able to demonstrate to others the skills they have learned – through real examples drawn from the Envision experience. Whilst some schools provide interview practice for young people, they very rarely explain what competencies are and how to provide evidence that you have them. This puts many young people at a disadvantage – a disadvantage you can help them overcome by participating in this event. Thank you.

What you need to do during the session

A full briefing will be given to you at the start of the exercise – but to give you a flavour of what to expect, you will be asked to conduct 3 mini-interviews of 15 minutes each.

Each 15 minute round will include: 5 minutes for mentors to ask students ONE question; 5 minutes for mentors to give feedback; 5 minutes for students to ask you the same question!

The three questions (one for each of the 15 minute interview session) are:

- What experience do you have of working in a team, and what experience do you have of working independently?
- Can you tell me about a time when you faced a problem and how you overcame it?
- Can you tell me about one other skill you have developed, where you demonstrated it and what was the result?

Giving Feedback:

Your role is to listen to students responses carefully and provide helpful feedback. You may find the following tips helpful:

Focus your feedback on the content and structure of the answer rather than just eye contact / body language etc.

Feedback if the example is a good one for the competency in question – or if it better illustrates a different competency.

Encourage students to be specific – explain that being specific makes them more credible. Let the student know if they have given enough detail

Use the stretch model:

Highlight something positive the student did

Highlight an area that they want to improve on and how they can do it

Explain how making that change may improve their performance

For example:

“One thing you did really well was giving a clear example of how you have applied your skill by talking about a specific activity. To make your response even stronger you could talk about the results of that activity or what you were able to achieve as a result. This would ensure that the interviewer understands that you can achieve results.”

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