

Realistic Job Preview Information Points

What is a Realistic Job Preview?

As the name implies, a Realistic Job Preview is a mechanism for providing realistic information about a job prior to a person becoming employed. There are several methods of realistic job previews including internships, job shadowing, site visits, informational materials, dramatizations and job sample tests. In Maine, as well as using some of these methods, we also developed a video that presents information about the job of a child welfare caseworker.

Why a Realistic Job Preview?

In Maine, about one out of five new hires leave within the first year of employment. At least some of that turnover is because people have a limited understanding of what the job is about. The research on realistic job previews shows that when accurate information about both negative and positive aspects of the job is provided to applicants or newcomers prior to their starting work in an organization, their expectations are more likely to be met. As a result satisfaction and job performance are often higher and turnover lower than when such information is not provided.

How does the Realistic Job Preview work?

The goal of the Realistic Job Preview is to provide a balanced view of the job and organization, presenting both positive and negative information about critical elements. After viewing the Realistic Job Preview, some applicants will self-select out of the hiring process before substantial resources are invested in their hiring and training. This results in a better job-applicant fit and prevents hiring ill-informed applicants who quit when the reality of the job hits them. A Realistic Job Preview also makes applicants feel more positively about an organization because they feel that the organization has been more honest with them.

How was this Realistic Job Preview developed?

We surveyed all caseworkers and supervisors in Maine to ask them to identify critical issues in the caseworker position both positive and negative. We then asked them to rate 33 issues on 'frequency with which they occur' and 'how you view each issue (positive, neutral, negative)'. The goal was to balance the challenges with the more fulfilling aspects of the job that occur most frequently for caseworkers. Once the survey results were compiled, the script and the 'storyboard' were developed. Actual child welfare workers and other professionals in the field chose to collaborate with us on this project to give it more authenticity.

Frequently Asked Questions

The video depicts fictional situations for demonstration purposes only and is not intended for specific practice training purposes. The following are questions that may be raised after viewing the video.

Q. Wouldn't the caseworker have gathered all the information prior to seeing the supervisor during the Emergency Situation?

Yes, an experienced caseworker may very well have but for purposes of demonstration it was important to show the high level of collaboration between the supervisor and caseworker.

Q. How often do you have to respond to emergencies?

It varies according to the office structure and the specific job responsibilities but everyone coming into the work must be prepared to handle emergency situations and be able to change gears quickly.

Q. How often do you interview children and how much training do you get?

Interviewing children is a regular part of the job. You will learn about interviewing in pre-service training and will have the opportunity to job shadow. It is an ongoing learning process and skills develop with practice.

Q. Would a child really be removed in this situation?

This is a clip of a larger fictional story that is for demonstration purposes. There are many variables not included. The whole story would determine the actual outcome of such a scenario. However, when a pattern of injuries to the child is identified and a parent is unable to keep a child safe, it is viewed as very serious.

Q. Are the police involved in every removal situation?

That will be a decision made with the supervisor on a case-by-case basis. Police are often involved due to the unpredictability of these situations, but not always.

Q. How often will I have to go to Court?

Court is a regular part of the job. You may not go for a long time and then you may go regularly depending upon the nature of your caseload.

Q. Do you have to deal with angry people like that often?

Depending upon the nature of your caseload, it is not unusual to have to deal with difficult emotions of all types.

Q. How frequently are Family Team Meetings used?

They are a part of the overall practice model and are an important case management tool. Actual frequency will depend on your caseload and your work with your supervisor.

Q. How much time do you spend on documentation related tasks?

All facets of the case must be documented for future reference. It is important to stay as current as possible in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed. Much of your time will be devoted to documentation and paperwork.

Q. How long is the pre-service training?

At the present time it is five weeks in Augusta and must be completed prior to being assigned cases.