

CORE

Career Opportunity

Readiness Experience

**Workshop
Facilitation Guide**

Authors

Rebecca P. Johnson, MA, LCPC
Brianne LaPelusa, MFA, CRSS
Abby Mayhue, MSW
Vanessa Vorhies Klodnick, PhD, LCSW

Contributors

Ava Schneider
Ally West
Jaime Silvestri
Qiyamah Hameed

Acknowledgements

The National Institute for Disability Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR #90IFRE0032) funded this project from 2019-2023. Thank you to Thresholds Youth & Young Adult Services for partnership while we implemented, evaluated, and improved CORE over many years:

Emily Bialas, Director, Thresholds IPS
Adrienne Brown, Senior Director, Thresholds, IPS
Terria Diggins, MBA, former Thresholds IPS Assistant Director
Eshawn Spencer, Youth Employment, City of Chicago (CORE Creator)

Thank you to our expert research advisors: Hewitt B. (Rusty) Clark, Maryann Davis, Eileen Brennan, Deborah A. Cohen, Gene Oulvey, Lisa Razzano & Marc Fagan. Interested in integrating CORE into your agency? Seeking additional information on CORE, or on Vocational Peer Mentor best-practices or developing internships for young people with serious mental health conditions? Contact Vanessa Klodnick at Vanessa.Klodnick@austin.uteaxs.edu.

Contents

Introduction	4
How can CORE Workshops be used?	4
CORE Workshops Content Outline	5
Team Workshop Preparation	5
Vocational Peer Mentors	6
CORE Orientation	7
Mindfulness Activities	8
Workshop 1: Intro to CORE	9
Workshop 2: Talking Finances & Work Fatigue	11
Workshop 3: Workplace Etiquette (Part 1)	15
Workshop 4: Workplace Etiquette (Part 2)	19
Workshop 5: Mental Health on the Job (Part 1)	25
Accommodations/Work Wellness Plans	28
Workshop 6: Mental Health on the Job (Part 2)	29
Workshop 7: Mock Interviews	34
Appendices	36

Introduction

Career Opportunity Readiness Experience (CORE)

The main purpose of the CORE workshops is to prepare young people who are enrolled in mental health services for work by building their confidence and job skills. Workshops offer experiential learning, connection with peers, coping skills for mental health experiences on the job and support with understanding expectations, individual rights, and accommodations in the workplace. Workshops are an opportunity for young people to practice workplace expectations—including building a routine, showing up on time, interacting with others and navigating a new environment. The two-hour workshops consist of classroom-style learning and group activities, with time for work on career tasks with support from CORE staff.

This guide reflects the original structure of CORE—which includes a paid community-based internship following the phase of seven interactive group workshops. Workshops were led by a team of 1-2 Vocational Peer Mentors (VPMs) and a Coordinator role, with support and supervision from IPS/Supported Employment. CORE was initially offered to youth and young adults enrolled in diverse programs within a community mental health agency with wide ranging needs, interests, skills, and levels of experience.

This facilitation guide outlines recommendations for mapping the content, structure, and delivery of CORE Workshops. Each workshop outline contains an agenda template including learning objectives and instructions for facilitating activities and discussions.

How can CORE Workshops be used?

The activities, discussion topics and concepts covered within these workshops may be used and adapted according to the needs of your program, clients, group dynamics and staff infrastructure. **Facilitators should be empowered to select, reinvent, and refresh workshop content based on the needs, interests, strengths, and culture of your group.**

CORE is an adaptable set of services that can be delivered by providers in various roles. Workshop content and activities may be used by case managers, activity directors, employment specialists and support staff as a guide for exploring work-related topics with groups and individuals.

The workshop structure and content must be accessible to various learning styles, offering multiple ways to engage young people and present information. **Some activities may be engaging for some groups and may “flop” in others.** It's important that the CORE team works collaboratively to adapt according to the needs, tone, energy level and overall “vibe” of each group. To effectively build group rapport and engagement, CORE staff should continue learning, reflecting on and adapting to the needs of the group and individual participants.

CORE Workshops Content Outline

Workshop 1 Intro to CORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build group rapport • Understanding of “work” • Workplace needs and interests
Workshop 2 Talking Finances & Work Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial needs and wants • Work fatigue, prevention, and ways to cope
Workshop 3 Workplace Etiquette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences in workplace environments, cultures, and expectations • Workplace Stressors
Workshop 4 Workplace Etiquette (Part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication styles & working with others • Protocols and impacts of calling off work
Workshop 5 Mental Health on the Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping strategies for work-related stressors • Identifying trigger areas & support needs
Workshop 6 Mental Health on the Job (Part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking work accommodations • Sharing mental health information in the workplace
Workshop 7 Mock Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on CORE workshops • Prepare for CORE internship with mock interviews

Team Workshop Preparation

- **Determine Roles:** CORE staff should co-decide who should lead different activities and discussions and delegate tasks for workshop preparation and

other responsibilities (room setup, snacks, activity materials, etc.). CORE staff should explore the dynamics of being both a “peer” and a workshop facilitator.

- **Location:** Identify an accessible, centrally located space with movable tables and chairs, a wipe board, WIFI, and a computer and projector with audio.
- **Timeline:** Determine dates and times of CORE orientation & workshops based on applicant availability and in partnership with clinical programs to ensure maximum participation.
- **Review Applicants:** CORE staff discuss CORE applicants, including any relevant considerations and capacity for the current cycle.
- **Tailoring:** Review and collaborate on workshop material, ensuring that it is relevant and practical to current participants’ needs, skills, motivations, and goals. Practice workshop activities with any additional accommodations or tailoring to improve engagement and impact.
- **Debriefings:** Reflect on workshop participation, the impact of activities, group dynamics, and participant needs. Strategize future workshop activities. Staff may share insights gained about participant interests, needs and strengths to promote an engaging and supportive learning environment.

Vocational Peer Mentors

To effectively prepare participants for success in their internships, VPMs may connect individually with young people to explore content from workshops, job interests and perceived challenges and provide support with any additional needs or concerns, including those identified in participants’ individual support plans. VPMs provide empathy, validation and insight gained through their lived experiences as individuals with mental health conditions navigating the workforce. VPMs provide coaching on basic job skills including support with managing mental health on-the-job, understanding accommodations and workplace expectations, and linking to additional resources and support.

Trust building is crucial to young people’s comfort and willingness to discuss struggles throughout the internship process. Meetings with VPMs provide young people with an ongoing opportunity to connect and build rapport. This peer-to-peer connection and support allows participants to process their experiences, address struggles and create new strategies for internship success and personal growth.

CORE Orientation

Learning Objectives

- 1) Get to know the CORE team and other CORE participants.
- 2) Understand CORE participation expectations.
- 3) Sign required documents.

Agenda

10 minutes	Intro to the CORE team & agenda
20 minutes	Beach Ball Activity
15 minutes	Overview of CORE workshops, commitment & educational stipend
10 minutes	Break
10 minutes	Overview of the Internship Process
20 minutes	Comfort Agreement & Group Expectations
5 minutes	Closing Activity/Announcements
30 minutes	Sign documents, confirm contact information, connect

Activity: Beach Ball Get-to-Know-You

Needed: Beach ball, list of questions, large open space

- Write questions on beach ball prior.
- Explain activity rules and purpose:
 - *This beach ball has fun questions aimed at getting to know each other. When you catch it, answer the question closest to your left thumb. Share your name and pronouns before answering the question. After answering, toss the ball to anyone in the group until everyone has had a turn.*

Workshop Expectations

- **When where and why we meet:**
 - Workshops build off one another; attendance is especially important so that we can continue learning as a group.
 - The skills you learn in the workshop are critical for success in your internship
- **Attendance policy**
- **Review payment process as a group:**
 - Amount participants will make for completing the workshop phase
 - Rate per hour participants will be paid during the internship phase
 - Payment schedules and how participants will receive payment

- Walkthrough how to determine if money earned during CORE may or may not affect a participant's SSI/SSDI (provide resources on how to/who else can help them with this)

Overview of the Internship Process

After the workshop phase, CORE participants may have the opportunity to pursue a paid internship in the community and will be placed based on individual interests, needs and the availability of internship sites.

- Internships are a learning experience. We challenge you to think of this as work and to learn as much as you can about the workforce.
- We will be discussing your options and internship opportunities over the next few weeks!

Group Comfort Agreement

A group comfort agreement is a set of guidelines that we decide on as a group for how we want to engage with each other over the next four weeks during workshops. Workshops should be respectful, validating spaces for everyone in the room. See *examples below*:

Individual and group expectations

- Attendance policy
- Maintaining respect for one another in the space
 - Using 'I' statements
 - Group communication
 - Phone usage: non-distracting, being respectful
 - What can or cannot be said or done in meetings
- Role of facilitators
 - Redirecting & group discussion management
 - Confidentiality

Mindfulness Activities

Brief mindfulness activities can be used as an alternative to an icebreaker at the beginning of each workshop. These activities may or may not relate directly to work and the day's agenda topics. A brief group reflection on the activity may focus on how the activity relates to or may be used for work. Mindfulness activities may also be incorporated after a break or at another point during workshop sessions to "reset." See appendix for mindfulness activities and resources.

Workshop 1: Intro to CORE

Learning Objectives

- 1) Building rapport and developing basic understanding of work
- 2) Reflecting on our needs and interests in the workspace
- 3) Review and reflect on skills, work/school history

Agenda

5 minutes	Welcome and announcements!
10 mins	Mindfulness activity
5 minutes	Review group expectations, check in
20 minutes	This or That Activity
20 minutes	Internship Interests
10 minutes	Break
20 minutes	Activity: Work version of “The Game of Things”
30 minutes	Resume Creation

Activity: Workplace “This or That”

Need: Slides on a projector (or words on whiteboard) and large open space

Instructions: Facilitators will read a series of “this or that” statements. After each statement, move to the side of the room that you agree with. If you feel neutral, stay in the middle. Pause after each statement to discuss our reactions and observations. Meet back in the middle before the next statement.

This or That Statements:

- Working individually or working as a team
- Cats or dogs
- Movies or TV shows
- Working early in the day or working evenings
- Sweet or Salty
- iPhone or Android
- Being late or being early
- School or work
- Hot or cold weather
- A few best friends or a bunch of casual friends
- Paid weekly or biweekly
- CORE is going to be great or I’m so nervous!

Discuss: *What stood out to you during this activity? Did you notice any trends or themes with the group's answers?*

Internship Interests

- Facilitators should connect individually with each participant to discuss internship interests.
 - Focus on questions related to participants' work interests and abilities including their preferences for work environments, types of tasks, transportation, and distance from home, etc. This information will be used to match participants with internship sites.

Activity: The Game of Things

Need: Questions on PowerPoint, hat/bowl for responses

Instructions: Write an answer on a slip of paper for each prompt that comes up on the screen. Fold up your answer and put it in the middle of the table. We will read each response and discuss it as a group.

Questions:

- What are things you should **never** tell your boss?
- What is something you should **not** wear to work?
- What is something you definitely **should** do at work?
- What are things you should **never** say to a customer?
- What is one thing you **should do** to prepare for your shift?
- How should you **not** spend your first paycheck?

Activity: Resume Creation

See appendix for Resume Template. Using the template, write a rough draft of your resume. Think about your past education and work history, skills you've learned through work and school, and a quick summary of who you are and what you want from a job. *We will work on building resumes continuously during CORE!*

Workshop 2: Talking Finances & Work Fatigue

Learning Objectives

- 1) Understanding differences between financial needs and wants
- 2) Develop understanding of work fatigue
- 3) Identify symptoms of work fatigue, prevention, and ways to cope

Agenda

10 minutes	Announcements & Mindfulness activity
10 minutes	Financial Needs vs. Wants Activity
20 minutes	Work Fatigue Discussion
10 minutes	Break
20 minutes	Work Fatigue Walk
20 minutes	Debrief work fatigue walk
30 minutes	Short term financial budgeting

Activity: Financial Needs vs. Wants

Instructions: See *appendix for Financial Needs vs. Wants Worksheet*.

You will see several different items listed on your worksheet. Your task is to identify whether each item is a financial want or a need for you.

- Ask the group to define/provide an example of a want versus need
- Remind group that needs and wants will vary per person (e.g., some people feel that a gym membership is a need while others may consider that a want)

Pair up with the person next to you and discuss: ***What to do if we can't meet our needs or wants?***

Discussion: Work Fatigue

What is work fatigue/burnout? Does anyone have a definition? How do we get to that point?

Our definition: Job burnout is a special type of work-related stress—a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity.

Discuss in small groups: What does a good day at work/school look or feel like?

Talk or write about what a good day at work/school looks and feels like for you.

Examples:

- I get to work on time
- I am easy to work with
- I can accept kind criticism.
- I feel calm and confident
- I enjoy my work

Discuss as large group: Can we think of potential causes that lead to work fatigue?

Examples:

- Lack of control: do you have a voice in your schedule, assignments, or workload?
- Do you have the resources you need for your work?
- Unclear job expectations: Do you know what is expected of you and your colleagues?
- Dysfunctional workplace dynamics
- Extremes of activity: Do your tasks consistently feel boring or monotonous? Do your tasks consistently require too much energy?
- Lack of social support
- Poor work-life balance
- Wellbeing: lack of sleep, mental health
- Life!

Discuss in small groups: What does a tough day at work/school look or feel like?

Think about a time in your life when you felt fatigued at work or school (mentally, physically, emotionally). In small groups, discuss what this day looked and felt like for you.

Activity: Work Fatigue Walk

Need: Tape for squares, cards with work fatigue walk statements

Instructions: Participants and CORE staff will stand in a horizontal line along 8 squares taped to the floor. Participants will start in the middle and pick up a card from the deck. Each card will describe a situation that either decreases or adds to work fatigue. If you reach the “decreases” side, you win the game and got a raise! If you reach the increases side, you quit your job.

Statements for cards:

Decreases work fatigue <i>Move up 1 square</i>	Increases work fatigue <i>Move down 1 square</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting along well with your coworkers• You take a day off because the last few shifts were rough.• Your supervisor recognizes your excellent work and gives you a compliment.• You wear your favorite outfit to work and you're feeling yourself.• You and your friend did one of your favorite hobbies over the weekend.• You're excited to go to your shift today!• You completed a shift and feel proud of yourself!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You had a bad interaction with a customer or coworker.• You really don't enjoy a task that you have to do every time you work.• You stepped in dog poop on the way to work.• You no call/no show because you have had a really hard past few days.• Your mental health symptoms have increased recently.• You haven't been sleeping well.• You don't want to go to work because you already feel it is going to be a difficult day.• You're having a hard time with staying focused.

Discussion: *What can we do when we start to feel symptoms of work fatigue?*

Be honest with yourself! You know yourself better than anyone else.

Seek Support

- Is there a co-worker, friend, or loved one that can support you during this time? Maybe they have experienced something similar.
- Take advantage of the CORE team, we are here to support you!

Evaluate Options

- What are the issues?
- Discuss concerns with supervisor or CORE team
 - Can we change the schedule? Change tasks? Change the staff you work with?

Maintaining Work-Life Balance

- What activities help you relax after work?
- How can you incorporate self-care into your new busier schedule?
- *Why is it important that we recognize symptoms of fatigue?*
- *How might work fatigue impact how you react, respond, and act at work?* (relating to workplace etiquette)

Short term financial budgeting worksheet

CORE participants receive a stipend for participating in internship. Peer mentors and coordinator will go over with participants 1:1 or in small groups about cashing checks, and goals for what to do with money received that will help them in the long run.

Workshop 3: Workplace Etiquette

(Part 1)

Learning Objectives

- Practice communicating with elevator speech activity.
- Define & understand the meaning of “workplace etiquette.”
- Explore differences in workplace environments, cultures, and expectations.
- Reflect on workplace stressors

Agenda

10 minutes	Mindfulness Activity
30 minutes	Activity: Elevator Pitch
20 minutes	Discussion: What is workplace etiquette?
10 mins	Break
30 mins	Activity: Workplace Etiquette in different environments
20 mins	Workplace Stressors

Activity: Elevator Pitch

Sometimes we code-switch, or modify how we present ourselves, when we are in different environments and around certain people. We all do this in our everyday lives, whether we realize it or not. This activity will get us thinking about how and why we may change our responses based on who we are talking to. **The activity may be done in smaller groups, or as one large group (participants come to the front and respond to questions).**

How would you introduce yourself to...	<i>“Why did you call off work the other day?”</i> How would you respond to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vocational Peer Mentor• Another CORE participant• A new co-worker• New work supervisor• A customer at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peer Mentor or CORE Coordinator• A coworker that is a friend• A coworker you’re not friends with• Your supervisor

Group Discussion

How do we introduce ourselves differently based on who we're talking to?

Sharing personal information at work: You have control over what you choose to share and not share and how you respond.

Discussion: What is workplace etiquette?

Prompts and examples for discussion. **This discussion includes space for sharing personal examples and experiences.**

*Does anyone know what **workplace etiquette** means?*

- Workplace etiquette changes depending on where and who we're working with
- It is an understood way of acting in the workplace.
- It is interpersonal
- Workplace etiquette exists to maintain a safe, respectful, and efficient workplace, and to adhere to company policies and culture.
- Sometimes, ideas of workplace etiquette may be biased and/or discriminatory.

Can you think of examples of when workplace etiquette becomes discriminatory or biased?

- Certain hairstyles
- Clothing/uniforms (gender expectations)
- Expectations and/or limitations around the way you speak and express yourself
- Ableist expectations (lack of accessibility or adaptability)
- Being silent in the face of microaggressions

Workplace etiquette can differ culturally and generationally—employers, coworkers and customers with different upbringings and cultural backgrounds may have implicit biases and ideas of what is

“appropriate” and “inappropriate” for the workplace. This does NOT mean that discriminatory behavior, expectations, or interactions are acceptable. You should report any discriminatory or uncomfortable workplace experiences to CORE staff.

How do we learn about the workplace etiquette specific to the place you'll be working?

- Ask questions to those you trust in the workplace- a co-worker you make a connection with could be a great resource
- You can talk to the CORE team and ask questions
- Observe your supervisor and coworkers

The CORE Team shares examples of workplace etiquette from their own experiences.

Activity: Workplace etiquette in different environments

Images will be presented on screen comparing different workplace environments.

Instructions: We will compare the differences in each workplace side-by-side and explore how expected workplace etiquette may change based on the environment.

Examples of different environments:

Childrens Museum vs. Warehouse

Animal Shelter vs. Clothing Store

Book Store vs. Clothing Store

Movie Theater vs. Coffee Shop

Front Desk Reception vs. Restaurant Kitchen

Questions:

- What do you think workplace etiquette looks like in both places?
 - Similarities? Differences?
 - (Ex: You can crab walk through children's museum but not in a warehouse)
- How do these expectations differ depending on position/role in that workplace?
 - Entry-level position

- Supervisor
- Did anyone have a workplace they would prefer to work in?
- What does this activity tell us about workplace etiquette?
- What are you nervous about in relation to workplace etiquette?

Workplace Stressors

What are your workplace stressors or concerns and how can you plan for self-care before, during and after work?

Before: Do you need a reminder for work? Laying out clothes the night before, charge phone, headphones? Engaging in relaxation techniques. Eat!

During: When and how long is your break? What do you need to do during break? Using phone during work?

After: Did you clock out of your shift? How can I relax when I get home? Reflect: what did I do well? What do I want to try next shift?

Workshop 4: Workplace Etiquette

(Part 2)

Learning Objectives

- 1) Understanding workplace expectations
- 2) Learn about communication styles & working with others
- 3) Understand the protocols and impacts of calling off work

Agenda

15 mins	Activity: Communication Styles Survey
15 mins	Activity: Tools for Workplace Communication Elevator Pitch Pt.2
25 minutes	Workplace Etiquette with stressors present
10 minutes	Break
30 minutes	Jeopardy Game: 5 Universal rules of workplace etiquette
10 minutes	Calling Off Flow Chart

Activity: Communication Styles

Share link to [communication styles quiz](#). Review the 4 types of communication styles as a group.

Discuss: How can learning about your own communication style help prepare you for working with others?

Activity: Tools for Workplace Communication

The following DBT strategies can be used as tools for communicating assertively with your coworkers and employer (learn more about DBT and Interpersonal Effectiveness for Work here). Introduce these tools and practice in pairs.

- You have value as a person and a right to put yourself first sometimes. You have a right to exercise your legitimate rights.
- You have a right to say no even if it makes you uncomfortable. You can validate the person's request "I understand why you want me to..." and then state your preference not to do it "but I'd prefer not to because..."

- Being assertive is not the same as being aggressive. Assertive people can politely say no to requests they don't like, set personal boundaries, and ask to have their own needs met.
- Three parts to an appropriate assertive request:
 - *"I think"* focuses on the facts, not judgements.
 - *"I feel"* addresses how the situation makes you feel emotionally.
 - *"I want"* requests that the person does something.
- Practice making simple requests: find safe opportunities to practice making small simple requests. Ex: ask stranger for directions, ask a store employee to help you find something

Activity: Elevator Pitch Pt. 2

Instructions: With your partner, you will practice explaining why you did not attend your last shift using the provided scenario. This will be repeated four times, giving an explanation to various staff positions: CORE staff, co-worker that is a friend, colleague you are not friends with, and your boss. Both partners will give their explanations. Notice how explanations change based on who you're talking to.

Q2: Why did you call off work the other day?

Situation: My medications recently changed. I feel so tired, nauseous, and dizzy. I couldn't fall asleep last night and now my mood is all over the place because of the medication change. On top of that, my best friend and I got in a fight yesterday and the LAST thing I want to do is go to work... so I called off and I'll be back on Wednesday.

When I arrive to work on Wednesday, people keep asking me why I wasn't at my last shift:

- Explaining to CORE staff
- Explaining to co-worker that is a friend
- Explaining to colleague that you are not friends with
- Explaining to boss

Debrief: Did you find that how you explained the situation changed based on who you were talking to?

Discussion: How to uphold workplace etiquette when stressed or having a tough day

Prompt: How do we maintain/uphold workplace etiquette during situations when we feel our best vs. when we are struggling?

Examples of situations:

- Being yelled at by a customer
- Getting negative feedback from supervisor
- Getting into argument with co-worker
- Not wanting to be at work/do the tasks assigned

Prompt: What should we do when we are having a tough day and have a shift scheduled?

Missing a shift is bound to happen, we are only human! What matters when we miss a shift is that we communicated with our staff and are missing a shift for a reason.

A lot of our internship sites have smaller staff which means less ability to cover when staff must miss shifts.

Small Groups

Prompt: What are reasonable vs. Unreasonable reasons to miss work (There is a spectrum to all of reasons)

Examples:

- Being sick or not feeling well (emotionally or physically)
- Lost phone (Can you use someone else phone to contact work?)
- Having tough mental health day (is it one of those days we feel we can push through or does this does not feel possible)
- Death in family
- Doctor appointment
- What would you do/how would you feel if I ghosted you on check pick up day?
- Not enjoying the work or staff

Prompt: What are reasonable vs. Unreasonable reasons to **no call/no show?** (SMALL GROUPS)

Discuss:

What reasons did you come up with?

Was there a difference between acceptable reasons for missing work v no call/no showing?

Small Groups

Prompt: *What about when you are on duty, at your shift, and something triggers or activates you or you are experiencing a lot of MH symptoms? What should you do? What if you feel like you need to leave work?*

- Is there someone you feel like you can talk to about this?
- Did you already take your break? Can you bring another one?
- What will you do during your break so that you can go back to work?
- How much do you need to tell your supervisor?

Activity: Universal Rules of Workplace Etiquette

This activity may be adapted to best fit the group. Each section has a series of questions and response options that can be used as a guide to build a [Jeopardy game](#) using KAHOOT, or any similar type of interactive virtual tool.

This activity should be very interactive and may include “prizes,” like snacks or other small gifts. The goal is to reinforce what participants have learned and to have fun.

The Five “Universal Rules” of the Workplace Jeopardy

- 1) Hygiene
- 2) Attendance
- 3) Communication
- 4) Work Fatigue
- 5) Workplace Etiquette

HYGIENE

Responses

What can I do if I show up to work in the wrong uniform/attire?

Explain the situation to the supervisor. Can I continue wearing my current outfit, are there extra uniforms? Ask co-workers if they have extra clothes, they are willing to share. Is there a nearby store where you can get what you need? Do you have time to go home?

What are 3 things that can make maintaining hygiene difficult?

Mental health, physical injuries, expense of products, lack of time before shift, access to clean clothes/products, difficulty adding hygiene into routine, sensory processing issues, walking/riding bike to work, simply forget, hygiene is not a top priority.

ATTENDANCE

Responses

What is the first thing you should do when you know you're going to be late?

Contact Supervisor at work, contact CORE team, call place of work.

An employee is consistently arriving 10 minutes late to work. What are 2 changes this employee can make to arrive on time?

Set an earlier alarm, catch the earlier bus, change route to work, go to bed earlier, ask Thresholds support staff to call in morning to make sure they are up, prepare outfits and meals the night before, change shift to a later time, find a job closer to home, etc.

WORK FATIGUE

Responses

What is 1 thing you can do to combat work fatigue and 1 thing that escalates work fatigue?

Combats: enjoy co-workers, enjoy your work, personal/work life balance, sleeping well, request day off when noticing fatigue symptoms.
Escalates: do not like co-workers, losing focus quickly, not enjoying tasks, no call/no shows, engage in more frequent substance use, not sleeping well, experiencing MH symptoms, etc.

What are 2 things we can do when we feel burnt out from work?

Request break from work, work less hours, create balance between personal/work life, create self-care plan, speak with supervisor about options, ask co-worker to cover one of my shifts, put 2 weeks in, find new job, take break from working, etc.

WORKPLACE ETIQUETTE

Responses

What are two ways we can learn about the workplace etiquette at a new job?

Ask staff, observe staff while working, reflect on past work experiences, observe as a customer, learn from mistakes, consult with CORE staff.

You feel uncomfortable about a recent interaction with a co-worker. What can we do in this situation?

Ask staff, observe staff while working, reflect on past work experiences, observe as a customer, learn from mistakes, consult with CORE staff.

COMMUNICATION

Responses

What are 3 topics of conversation you should typically avoid at work?

Substance use, gossip, flirting, sexual relations, personal information you do not feel comfortable sharing, complaints about workplace or co-workers, etc.

What should you say to supervisor when calling to let them know you are running late?

Apologize, ETA, offer to stay late or if there is anything I can do to help, simple explanation of what you are late (if it was something out of your control), changes you will make to arrive on time, etc.

Etiquette for Calling Off

Discuss the protocols for calling off work, requesting time off and seeking schedule changes. Use the **Calling Off Flow Chart** as a reference and share with participants to add contacts. **See Appendix for Calling Off Flow Chart.**

Workshop 5: Mental Health on the Job

(Part 1)

Learning Objectives

- 1) Identify coping strategies for work-related stressors & mental health needs
- 2) Identify trigger areas and support needs
- 3) Learn about work accommodations and create an accommodations plan

Agenda

15 mins	Mindfulness activity
20 minutes	Coping strategies
10 mins	Break
35 minutes	Understanding Work Accommodations
5 minutes	Introduce Accommodations plan
30 mins	Accommodations worksheet

It's important to create a space where participants can think and speak about their mental health experiences together. The following two workshops focus on building strategies and tools to effectively understand and cope with mental health symptoms and experiences within the workforce.

Peer Mentors (VPMs) should lead these workshops, drawing from their personal and professional experiences to relate, share, educate and destigmatize managing mental health on the job.

VPMs should prep for these workshops by reflecting on their lived experiences with work and mental health and identifying what insight may be relevant and useful to share with the group. The CORE team should discuss these topics prior to the workshops and develop a plan for leading discussions.

Discussion: Work Coping Strategies

What is a coping strategy?

Peer Mentors begin by sharing examples from firsthand experiences of using coping strategies during the workday.

- Examples of coping strategies to discuss:
 - Checking in with yourself—how do you feel in the moment?
 - Checking in with others
 - Mindfulness and grounding techniques
 - When and how to step back and take a break
 - Preparing for situations: recognizing what activates you, what are your triggers?
 - Identifying & using personal accommodations plan

Activity: Coping Strategies

Instructions: Reflect on a challenging time or challenge in your life that you got through and that you feel comfortable writing about for 5 minutes (try to focus on something small, facilitators may share their own examples).

- Talk about the ways you got through this experience with the person next to you using the following questions—only share specifics that you are comfortable with and that are relevant to the questions.
 - How did you cope/get through it?
 - Was your coping strategy a temporary solution, or more long term?
 - Would you change how you dealt with it now?
 - Did you recognize that you were using a coping strategy at the time?

Debrief: How could you adapt your coping strategy for the workplace?

Discussion: Practical Coping Strategies

Discussion prompts focus on looking at coping strategies through a practical lens and thinking about what is feasible within the workplace. This is a great space for facilitators to lead into discussions by strategically sharing past examples of how they have managed workplace situations and practical coping skills they have used.

- What comes to mind when you hear “coping skills on the job?”
- Does how you cope change based on your environment (at home, school, work, with friends, etc.)?
- How do you know what type of coping strategy will help in specific environments or scenarios?
- What are some specific coping strategies that have worked for the unique challenges you have faced?
- How might having a mental health and diagnosis, or being neurodivergent, serve as a benefit in the workplace?
- What could happen if you don’t preemptively set up coping strategies for the workplace?
- Are there any mindfulness activities you learned in CORE that you may want to try in the workplace?
- How does managing your mental health outside of work impact your experiences at work?
- What are some coping strategies we’ve learned that are subtle/universal/adaptable enough to work in most workplace settings?
- How does workplace etiquette relate to mental health and coping on the job?

Introducing Workplace Accommodations

What is a workplace accommodation?

Watch [video on workplace accommodations.](#)

Definition: A workplace accommodation is an adjustment or modification made to a job or workplace environment that makes it possible for an individual to perform their job duties.

- These modifications cannot cause undue hardship on other staff members
 - “Undue hardship” means significant difficulty, including accommodations that are overly extensive or disruptive, or which could impact the actual running of a business.

Review [examples of workplace accommodations](#) as a group. **VPMs may also share personal examples of workplace accommodations and how they have used them in the past and present.**

Discuss

- What types of workplace accommodations do you think might be useful to you?
- What accommodations have you used previously or currently use for school or other settings?
- What questions do you have about seeking and using different types of accommodations?

CORE Internship Accommodations & Support Plan

Participants will continue to build this plan throughout workshops and during their internship. **See appendix for CORE Internship Accommodations & Support Plan template.**

- Accommodations Plan worksheet: discuss and complete section on coping strategies together.
- Hand out copies of Accommodations Plan worksheet. Brief introduction to the concept of workplace accommodations, focusing on review of the coping strategies section.

Workshop 6: Mental Health on the Job

(Part 2)

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Learn about workplace disclosure
- 2) Identify when to share your mental health information with coworkers, employers, and accommodations.

Agenda

10 minutes	Announcements + Brief Mindfulness Activity
10 minutes	
10 minutes	Break
30 minutes	Disclosure
30 minutes	Activity: Accommodations Bingo
15 minutes	Discussion: What accommodations are and are not
10 minutes	My Work Life Worksheet
30 minutes	Mock Interview Prep

Discussion: Workplace Disclosure

When you first get the job

Later, in your work experience

What kind of information do you want to share with your employer?

Are there pros and cons to disclosing earlier or later?

What are your rights when you disclose?

To whom do I disclose?

What do I disclose? How much is too much?

Where will I disclose?

Would I like someone there to support me when I have this conversation?

Questions for discussion:

- What concerns come up for us about requesting accommodation?
- Do you all think that you will share diagnosis and/or symptoms with work people? Why?

- How can we build our confidence in advocating for ourselves?
- What comes to mind when we talk about being this vulnerable in professional spaces?
- When should I tell an employer about personal information?

When you first get the job

Later, in your work experience

What kind of information do you want to share with your employer?

Are there pros and cons to disclosing earlier or later?

What kind of personal information do you want to share with your employer?

The purpose of this form is to help you decide if, and how much of your personal information will be discussed with employers. This may include information about your medical, mental health, or legal history. How much of, or whether any of this information is related to a future or current employer is entirely up to you.

Are there pros and cons of disclosing?

- **Advantages:**
 - CORE staff can advocate for you and help you job hunt by going to employers and talking about why they should hire you.
 - CORE staff can come to the job site and talk to the employer if you need support.
 - You may be able to receive accommodations for your mental or physical health issues. CORE staff can help you with figuring out these needs.
 - Keep in mind, you cannot get accommodations if you do not tell an employer that you have a disability.
 - You can seek accommodations for certain allowances to perform the functions of your job. For example, if you need occasional time off to see a doctor or a therapist, or if you need to move your desk to a quieter place.
- **Disadvantages:**
 - People sometimes report that after they identify as someone diagnosed with a mental illness, they feel that they can't have a "bad hair" day. People have reported feeling that coworkers will attribute a bad mood to the illness, rather than the average responses to everyday stressors that many people experience.

- People may feel that disclosure may affect their ability to advance in their role, due to biases or stigma.
- People report they sometimes feel that they are under more observation than their co-workers.

Discussion: What accommodations are and are not

Share the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) legal definition of “reasonable accommodations.” [Watch video](#) describing reasonable accommodations.

Questions asked when deciding if workplace accommodations are needed:

- What limitations is the employee experiencing?
- How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee’s job performance?
- What specific job tasks may be impacted or require accommodations?
- What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all resources being used to determine accommodations?
- Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?
- Discuss how to communicate with employers about accommodations related to mental health on the job
 - VPMs and Coordinator may share some relevant experiences of seeking and using work accommodations with the group.
- Dealing with various kinds of micro and macro-aggressions and negative experiences on the job: ableism, sexism, racism, and other “isms” in the workplace. Open to the group—are there any experiences or concerns young people would be comfortable sharing?

Activity: Accommodations Bingo

Use a [Bingo card maker](#). **Instructions:** A hat with slips of paper with workplace accommodations will be passed around. Participants grab a slip of paper, read it to the group, and mark off their bingo cards if they have it. Allow time after each slip of paper to discuss the accommodation listed until all have been discussed. Have BINGO prizes to make it fun!

Example accommodations for Bingo squares (x24):

- Reduction/removal of distractions in work area

- Addition of room dividers (to reduce noise/visual distractions)
- Increased natural lighting or full spectrum lighting
- Music (with headset) to avoid distractions
- Office/workspace location away from noisy machinery
- Tape recording meetings and training sessions (to allow for review of meeting/training)
- 'White noise' or environmental sound machines
- Use of electronic organizers or software calendars
- Modification or removal of non-essential job duties (only doing essential job duties)
- Division of large assignments into smaller tasks and goals
- Additional training or modified training materials
- Breaks according to individual needs rather than a fixed schedule
- Sick leave for reasons related to mental health
- Scheduling changes (part-time hours, job sharing, adjustments to start or end of work hours, "make up" of missed time)
- Beverages and/or food permitted at workstations (to mitigate side effects of medication)
- Additional forms of communication to match employee's preferred learning style (written, verbal, e-mail, demonstration)
- Creation of daily "to-do" lists (step-by-step checklists, written instructions)
- Written work agreements of any agreed upon accommodations
- Discussion of long-term and short-term goals
- Expectations of responsibilities
- Expectations of consequences of not meeting performance standards
- Education of all employees about their right to accommodations
- Development of strategies to deal with problems before they arise

Activity: My Work Life Worksheet

Instructions: The goal of the activity is to reflect on needs before, during, and after work and create a plan that would feel good for you. This plan includes the creation of a travel plan and a place to put your weekly work schedule.

See Appendix for My Work Life Worksheet.

Mock Interview Prep

Interviewing is hard!! It's a skill that we all need to practice. Let's look at the questions you will be asked during your mock interview.

Are there any questions that stick out, you want to go over, or that you think you will ace?

See Appendix for Mock Interview Questions.

Workshop 7: Mock Interviews

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Practice introducing yourself and giving your elevator pitch
- 2) Reflect on completing phase 1 or CORE and the connections made
- 3) Practice meeting with new people and answering potential interview questions
- 4) Gain confidence in preparation for CORE internship interviews

Agenda

- 10 minutes Announcements
- 20 minutes Web Activity
- 10 minutes **Brief Interview Prep**
- 10 minutes Break**
- 35 minutes **Mock interviews** with agency leaders & community partners
- 10 minutes Debrief, share feedback
- 30 minutes Preparing for next phase: scheduling interviews

Activity: Web

Need: Ball of yarn, a cleared large table space. *Include everyone in the room in the activity.*

Instructions: A ball of yarn will be passed around the circle. The person who passes the ball gives a compliment to the person they pass it to (says something nice, something they learned, a cool interest of this person, etc.). Every time someone receives and then passes the yarn, they will keep their grip on the string. At the end, everyone tightens their hold on the string. The web created represents the connections made throughout CORE and provides a representation of everything we learned as a group over the past few weeks.

Mock Interviews

See appendix for Mock Interview Questions and Feedback Guides for community partners.

- Mock interviews with Leaders & Community Partners
- Emphasize that this will not affect their internship in any way

- No pressure, this is an interview that you can use to practice skills with no consequences
- Pair each participant with a mock interviewer
- Make sure each staff member has a feedback rubric and interview questions specific to their participant
- Direct pairings to quiet spaces in building where they can conduct interview

Appendices

A. CORE Mindfulness Activities & Resources	37
B. Resume Template	39
C. Needs vs. Wants Worksheet	40
D. Calling Off Flowchart	41
E. CORE Internship Accommodations & Support Plan	42
F. My Work Life Worksheet	45
G. Mock Interview Questions	46
H. Mock Interview Feedback Guide	47

Appendix A. CORE Mindfulness Activities & Resources

Getting Started

[“The Basics of Mindfulness Practice”](#) (Digital guide)

[“Mindful Working: The Best Practices for Bringing Mindfulness to Work”](#)

Free websites and apps with guided activities & practices:

[Mindfulness.com](#)

[Greater Good in Action](#)

[Insight Timer](#)

[Healthy Minds Program](#)

[Smiling Minds](#)

CORE Mindfulness Activities

Let it go!

Participants will write in silence for 2-3 minutes about something they want to let go of before the workshop. After writing, destroy the paper! Crumple, tear, or cut it up, throw it across the room into the garbage, whatever (have fun and let it go).

Take a few minutes to share about how the activity felt—what came up, did it help you to reset before workshop? Is this something you could see yourself doing before work?

Music Mindfulness

Invite participants to request a song, choose one that is about 3 minutes long, with a good beat. Facilitators may also pre-select a song beforehand.

Ask the group to listen quietly and intently (eyes closed, no phones) for the length of the song:

- Listen without judgment.

- Attempt to focus on the music, any time your mind drifts, try to pull yourself back into it.
- Choose one part of the music to focus on (rhythm, melody, lyrics, etc.)

Discuss:

- How/was listening in this way different?
- Were you able to focus on one part of the song? What did you observe by focusing in this way?
- How could you use this activity for work (before, during—if music is playing in the workplace, or on break—after, to decompress)?

5-4-3-2-1 Senses

Read the following statements, one at a time, to prompt participants to engage their physical senses. Offer candies or mints and sensory objects or fidgets on the table to aid the exercise.

5 things you can see: Look around you. Notice and name five things that you can see.

4 things you can touch or feel: Tune in to your sense of touch. Notice and describe the texture of four things you can touch.

3 things you can hear: Listen carefully. Notice and name three sounds you hear in your environment.

2 things you can smell: Identify two scents

1 thing you can taste: Focus on one thing that you can taste right now. You can take a sip or bite of something, or simply notice the taste in your mouth.

Discuss:

- Did you find this exercise to be easy or difficult?
- How did it feel to focus on the individual senses? Was it grounding?
- Did you notice sensations that you otherwise wouldn't have?
- Does this feel like something you could do during the workday?

Appendix B. Resume Template

Full Name

Pronouns

Email

Phone Number

OBJECTIVE

Briefly describe what you are looking for in a job and/or relevant career goals (1-2 sentences).

SKILLS

Tech

Job skills

Personal skills

WORK & VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Job Title, Workplace Name & Location

Dates employed

- Brief description of position
- Responsibilities in role
- Relevant job duties
- Knowledge or skills used/gained

Volunteer Role Title, Organization Name

Dates volunteered

- Brief description of role
- Relevant experiences
- Knowledge or skills used/gained

EDUCATION

- High School, 2020-2024
- College, 2024-present

Appendix C. Needs vs. Wants Worksheet

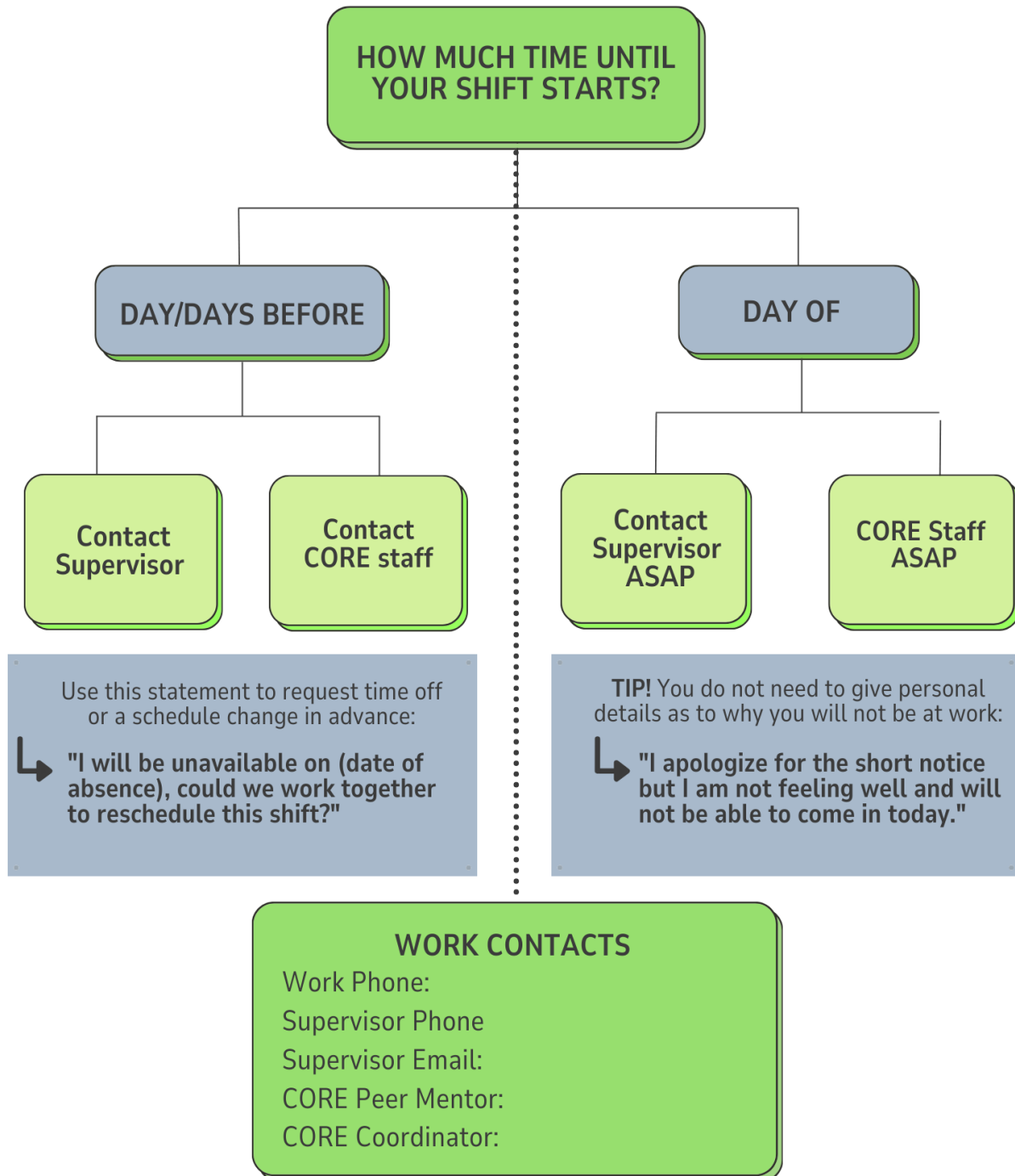
You deserve to earn money by using your skills, energy, and time to work. Earning money also adds new responsibilities to our lives. Let's examine spending by focusing on what you **need** to spend money on vs. what you **want** to spend money on.

Review the list of items below and identify what are your **NEEDS vs. WANTS**.

Item	NEED	WANT
Food/groceries		
Hygiene, grooming and/or beauty		
Subscriptions (Netflix, Spotify, etc.)		
Transportation (Uber, Lyft, car, public transit)		
Vacation/travel		
Going out (dinner, bowling, movies, etc.)		
Phone, devices, video games		
Giving money to family/loved ones		
Personal hobbies		
Other (write in):		

Appendix D. Calling Off Flow Chart

YOU CAN'T COME INTO WORK, WHAT NOW?



Appendix E. CORE Internship Accommodations & Support Plan

Participant Name/pronouns:

CORE Staff Name:

Date:

What if any concerns do you have about starting your internship? Check all that apply:

- ☐ Communicating with team/customers
- ☐ Making it to the site on time, as scheduled
- ☐ Staying focused
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ Coping with stress/mental health
- ☐ Job skills
- ☐ Other?

Describe: _____

What symptoms or experiences do you think you might need accommodations for?
(anxiety, difficulty concentrating, distracting thoughts, following instructions, environmental or other triggers, depression, other)

How do you think these things could affect your internship or ability in the workplace? (feeling overwhelming, social anxiety, reacting when triggered, trouble communicating needs, calling off on difficult days)

What helps you succeed with getting tasks done? (listening to music, short intervals, other)

CORE Support

What types of support do you want from your Peer Mentor? (ex. check-ins before or after work, help communicating with supervisors, emotional support, coping skills, work goals)

How often do you want to see or talk with your Peer Mentor?

What are some early warning signs that you're feeling overwhelmed or struggling and need more support? (sleep problems, feeling irritable, increased use of substances, low motivation, other) **Identify three signs that you may need more support:**

1.

2.

3.

Do you have any other concerns or things you want us to know about to help support you with your internship?

(Complete this section with CORE Peer Mentor or Coordinator)

Check off any accommodations that you feel may be useful to you:

- ☐ Purchase or modification of equipment or devices
- ☐ Job restructuring or task modification
- ☐ Provision of reader, sign language interpreter or personal assistant
- ☐ Structural modification to work site or facility
- ☐ Modification of work schedule or leave policy
- ☐ Modification of examinations, training materials or personal assistant
- ☐ Reassignment to vacant position
- ☐ Modification of work site or environment
- ☐ Other

Describe accommodations and how they would enable you to perform your job duties:

Participant signature: _____

CORE staff signature: _____

Appendix F. My Work Life Worksheet

TOP 3 TASKS BEFORE WORK

- 1
- 2
- 3

MY WORK TRAVEL PLAN

Travel time:

Time to leave for work:

Transit plan:

TOP 3 TASKS DURING WORK

- 1
- 2
- 3

TOP 3 TASKS AFTER WORK

- 1
- 2
- 3

WORK SCHEDULE

Monday
:
Tuesday
:
Wednesday
:
Thursday
:
Friday
:
Saturday
:
Sunday
:

WORK NEEDS

→

→

→

→

Appendix D. Mock Interview Questions

Interviewers may choose from these questions or use them as a guide for interviews, relevant to individual needs.

- Tell me about yourself!
- What type of role would you like to have?
- What interests you about this job?
- Why are you a good fit for this role?
- What is it like for you to work on a team?
- Describe your ideal work environment.
- What are some of your strengths?
- What are some of your growth areas?
- How would you describe your communication style?
- How do you like to receive feedback?
- Tell me about a personal accomplishment or something you are proud of.
- Tell me about a problem you recently solved.
- What are some of your career goals?
- What is your availability and ideal schedule?
- What tools and techniques do you use to stay organized?
- What are some words your friends would use to describe you?
- What are you passionate about?
- What do you like to do for fun?

Appendix. Mock Interview Feedback Guide

After each interview, interviewers should circle the statement that applies most for each category and may review together with young person at the end.

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Introduction	Strong greeting and engaging throughout. Displayed confidence!	Unclear or shifting energy level, nervous or distracted. Acceptable appearance.	Avoids greeting, has low energy, inappropriate hygiene, or appearance.
General Presentation	Displays genuine interest and enthusiasm.	Seems interested, but could be more enthusiastic; Sometimes distracted	Seems indifferent and/or uninterested in the interview and position.
Responses	Confident answers with examples; consistently relates how their skills will translate to position, asks questions.	Responses a bit vague or short; refers occasionally to strengths and skills; comes across as someone who could work well on the team	"Yes" or "No" answers, does not refer to relevant strengths, skills, and interests, does not ask questions.
Preparation	Candidate is very prepared (demonstrates knowledge of position and business; asks several relevant, thoughtful questions).	Candidate is prepared as evidenced by demonstration of some knowledge of position and business; asks a few relevant questions.	Not at all prepared, obvious that candidate did zero research on the position and business, doesn't ask relevant questions.

CORE Workshop Facilitation Guide
2024