

fact sheet p4.9f

GROUP TASK: COUNSELLING OLDER EMPLOYEES

This is a group task for a team of three to six participants.

You have 30 minutes

You are working for HoP (Hands-on Personnel), a human-resource consultancy mainly focusing on manufacturing and construction industries. Your current project is with Jim Makenew Restorations (JMR) who are desperately to expand their workforce, especially looking for qualified carpenters, decorators, and plumbers. They are also short on drafters with up-to-date CAD skills as they just purchased licenses for the newest version of the InventedCAD software. At the same time they complain about the effort and costs generated by trying to find settlements to release older construction workers into early retirement at the ages between 55 and 59 – while they cannot complain about reliability here (unlike most of their younger colleagues they have good qualifications, acquired initially in apprenticeships and amended through engaging in further training), many of them cannot keep up the pace expected by an increasingly impatient property market. The external labour market is dire – which is why JMR hired you to help them with recruitment. You have succeeded in convincing JMR to have a series of careers counselling sessions with their older employees. You even managed to convince them that these counselling sessions should not be limited to testing out whether they would be willing and capable to retrain to work with CAD. Your first session will be with Sarah, a 56-year old carpenter. Sarah has been with the company ever since doing her apprenticeship. She has kept up to date with developments, especially new machinery, through vocational college courses, but feeling overpowered by ever more strenuous demands in the workplace has stopped doing so about a decade ago. She nonetheless likes her job, as she loves working with wood. In her spare time she looks after her grandchildren, helps out in a charity shop, and does a bit of joinery on the side, designing and hand-crafting cabinets for her own use and to give away for birthdays and Christmas. She is sceptical as to whether she could learn “new tricks” after not having been to any courses for a long time now.

Your task: Plan for a counselling session with Sarah (five minutes). Enact the session as a role play (one of the team to adopt the role of Sarah, one as the counsellor – the others to take notes – five to ten minutes). Discuss the emerging issues and create a summary to be presented in class (15 minutes)