

Employment Support for Persons with Challenging Backgrounds

APSE Conference

Wednesday, June 22, 2016

Learning Objectives

- Use strength-based principles to write an explanation letter for employers review.
- Seek out employers who hire individuals who are justice involved.
- Tailor job development presentation while job searching for/with consumers with challenging backgrounds.

Justice Involved

- 2009
- Justice System Involvement and Employment
Johnson & Johnson- Dartmouth Community
Mental Health Program
- Employment Specialists from Eight states and
Washington, D.C. surveyed 128 employers
- 63% of the employers stated they knowingly
hired a person with a felony

Businesses That Knowingly Hired

- Accounting Firm
- Auto Dealer
- Bridal Retail
- Catering
- Chamber of Commerce
- Cleaning Service
- Gas Station
- Medical/Health Care
- Recording Studio- multimedia
- School District
- Truck Rental and Storage

Offense

- Drug Related
- DUI
- Theft
- Assault
- Sexual Offense
- Domestic Violence
- Armed Robbery
- Murder
- Reckless Driving
- Criminal Trespassing
- Manslaughter
- Gun Charge

Why Hire?

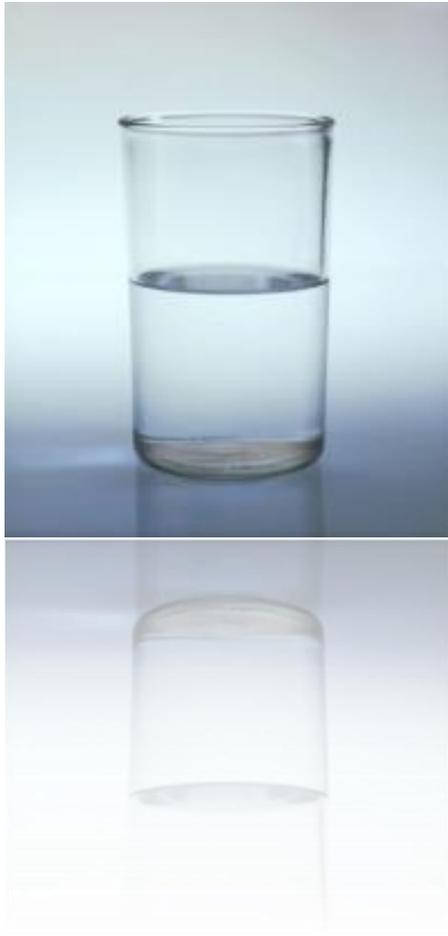
- Qualified to do the job
- Presented well in the interview
- Had a connection to the employer (vouch)
- The Employer believed the applicant changed his/her life
- Length of time from offense
- Applicant demonstrated sincerity and honesty
- Employer felt the applicant would be dependable

Some Advice To The Applicant

- Be honest and upfront
- Take responsibility
- Dress Well
- Show/Talk about work experience
- Have good references
- Provide information about bonding

Some Advice To Vocational Staff

- Know the clients history
 - Make sure client knows their own history
 - Have conversations about it
- Use strength based language and encourage it
 - Helps people to describe their situation with less stigma



The Power of Language in Strengths-Based Approaches:

*The Glass Half Empty,
The Glass Half Full:
Exercise and Group Discussion*

<i>The Glass Half Empty...The Glass Half Full</i>	
Deficit-based Language	Strengths-based, Recovery-oriented Alternative
A schizophrenic, a borderline	A person diagnosed with...
Clinical Case Manager	Recovery coach/guide
Front-line staff/in the trenches	Direct support staff
Substance abuse/abuser	Person living with...SU interferes with...
Suffering from	Living with/recovering from
Treatment Team	Recovery team
High-functioning vs. Low Functioning	A person symptoms/addiction interferes with the following...
Unrealistic	Idealistic, high expectations
Resistant/non-compliant	Disagrees with, chooses alternatives
Weaknesses	Barriers to change; Support needs
Maintaining clinical stability/abstinence	Promoting life worth living
Puts self/recovery at risk	Takes risks to try new things/grow
Treatment works	Person uses tx as a tool in recovery

Content of table derived from the following sources: Tondora and Davidson, 2006; White, 2001; and Meta Services, 2005.

Date: 3/10/2015

From: Jeffery Smith

To: ABC Management

Re: Explanation of Justice Involvement

Dear Mr. Greene:

In 2010 I was arrested and charged for carrying a gun without a license; I plead guilty to the charge. I was sentenced to three years probation, which I completed without violation. I have not had any arrest or charges since that incident.

I recognize that my behavior and decisions that I had been making at that time in my life were not good ones. I also recognized that I not only valued my life, but the life of the people around me.

At that point I decided that I needed more structure so I landed in a series of jobs which still didn't offer me the structure I felt I probably needed. I then decided to get into a trade, and went to the Bayline Management Training Center. I completed the course in Building Management in 2012, and have maintained a building management certificate ever since.

I also went back to school in 2011 and obtained my Maryland high school diploma.

I'm currently attending Maryland College of Technology, completing the required courses to receive a certificate in Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC).

I think that I am an excellent candidate for a position in your company. I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you and further discuss my progress, as well as the qualifying skills I have for a job in your company.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeffery Smith

Date: 3/10/2016

From: Jimmy Ricky

To: ABC Management

RE: Explanation of Justice Involvement

Dear Mrs. Flower:

In early 2012 I was found guilty of aggravated assault, during that time I was living with the symptoms of an undiagnosed mental illness, which played a role in the decisions that I was making. I have now been in treatment for four years and have had no other incidences. Mental health treatment makes it possible for me to make safe and responsible decisions.

I would appreciate an opportunity to meet and share with you the experiences and successes that I have had since re-entering into the community. I am particularly proud of the time that I spent working at a shelter for youth. During my time there I worked with the administrative assistant processing paper work, as well as mentoring to the young people.

I am eager to learn and enhance my skills, and I know I can do the work that you need done. I am also bonded by the Federal Bonding Program.

While I do not have a lengthy work history, you will find that my work ethic and commitment to complete the task given to me is strong.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Ricky

Ban The Box

- That box that ask...
“have you ever been convicted of a felony?”
- Delaying the back ground check asking later in the hiring process.
- Removing that barrier to employment.

Twenty-four states

Over 100 cities

Some states have laws prohibiting private employer from asking any variation of the question

- Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode...

National Employment Law Project

- <http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/Ban-the-Box-Fair-Chance-State-and-Local-Guide.pdf>



The Federal Bonding Program

A US Department of Labor Initiative

Since 1966

A Unique Job Placement Tool
for the At-Risk Job Seeker



Individuals Seeking Bonding

The Federal Bonding Program provides fidelity bonding for the first six months of employment for hard-to-place job applicants. If you are seeking bonding services and/or a job you should call the following toll-free number for 1. the location of the workforce office/one-stop center nearest your home and, 2. the telephone number of the State Bonding Coordinator for your state. In those states without a state bonding coordinator, callers will be referred to the nearest career center/ one-stop center for employment assistance.

Call toll free: 1.877.US2.JOBS (1.877.872.5627)

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PHONE: 800.233.2258 or 202.293.5566

Federal Bonding Program

- Have a clear understanding of bonding
 - What is bonding
 - Insurance that protects the employer from “at-risk” employees
 - Who is eligible to be bonded
 - Justice involved applicants
 - Recovering substance users
 - Applicants who have little to no work history
 - Applicants who receive Entitlements
 - Have poor credit history
 - Is there a cost to the applicant
- <http://www.bonds4jobs.com/>

Expungement

- Have a clear understanding of expungement
 - What can and cannot be expunged?
 - Misdemeanor can be expunged
 - Felonies can't be expunged (fact or myth?)
 - What is the cost?
 - \$30 for single case
 - Fee Waiver
 - What paper work needs to be filled out and where?
 - The request must go to the arresting agency
 - What do you do after something has been expunged?
 - Check with reporting entity

Resources

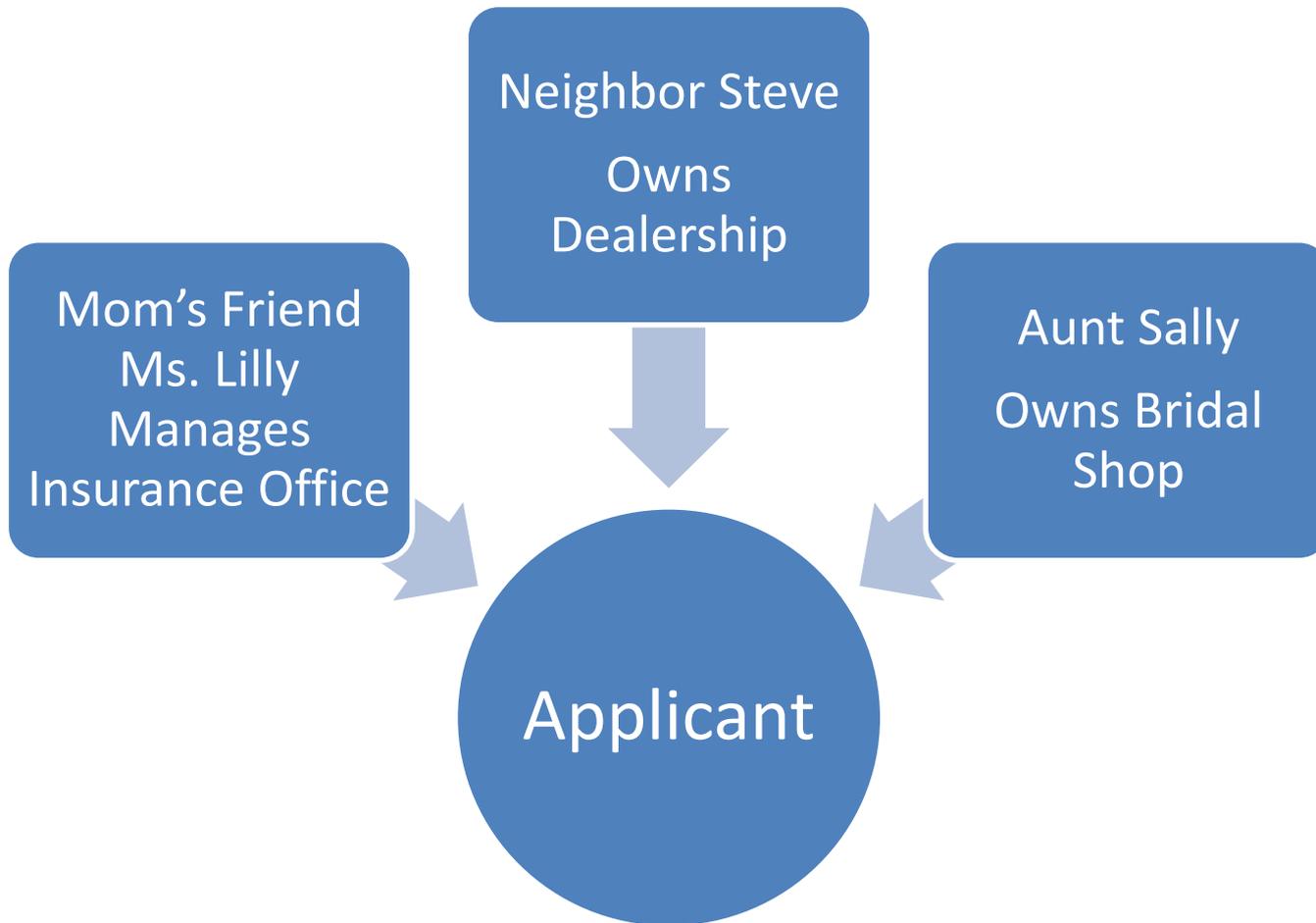
Expungement and Criminal Records: State-Specific Information

- <http://criminal.findlaw.com/expungement/expungement-and-criminal-records-state-specific-information.html>

Directory of State Bonding Coordinator

- <http://www.bonds4jobs.com/highlights.html>

Life Mapping



Job Development Strategies

- Visit employers before the job seeker to build relationships
- Talk to the person who has the power
- What is the company's policy
- Keep track of employer contacts
- Learn what the hiring process is once an application has been submitted
- Say "thank you!"

The Approach

- I work for an agency that assists adults with...with getting back to work. I'm here in the community to learn about employer's needs. Do you have a moment to talk? Or...I can come back at a time more convenient to talk?
 - Ask questions
 - Ask what the hiring policy is for working with justice involved
 - Explain how you support employers
- Treat warm calls the same as you would cold calls.

Rural Communities

- Agency partnership building
- Community events
- Board member relationships
- Employer references

THANK YOU!

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