

Making An Impression That Counts

Ideas for discussion are noted in bold italicized print. Student handout follows.

- You make an impression on other people from the first moment that you meet them.
 - ***Wear clothing that makes an impression either positive or negative!***
 - ***There are great images on the internet. Contrast impressions made by recording artists versus lawyers versus healthcare providers, etc.***
 - ***Small or large group activities that allow for discussion of situations that they have been in where someone has made a good impression and someone has made a poor impression. Discussion of cultural, gender, age differences that effect how perceive and are perceived.***
- You will be meeting people who can provide you with assistance as you consider options for your future.
- You need to make the most of each contact.
- Examples of contacts (***This list could be generated as a group activity. Discuss impressions that have already been made.***)
 - **People that you job shadow**
 - **People that you meet in professions that you are interested in pursuing**
 - Teachers
 - Counselors
 - Employers
 - The first two are the ones we are considering here. The last three are also very important, but may be people that are already contacts.
- Why is a good impression important? (***Allow time for discussion after the question is raised.***)
 - Letters of recommendation
 - Professionals have contact with others in their discipline
- What makes an “impression”
 - Appearance
 - Attitude
 - Contacts that are not face to face
- Appearance (***Discuss how appearance changes generationally and culturally. How are professionals presented on television? Is it important to consider the population that you will be receiving your services?***)
 - Attire

- Clothing and footwear
 - Piercings and tattoos
- Hygiene
- Attitude
 - This is a very broad area (***Refer back to initial discussion and discuss how actions reflected, or seemed to reflect attitude.***)
 - People will judge attitude based on:
 - Your interest as noted by how well you pay attention
 - The questions you ask
 - Your punctuality
- Contact that is not face to face

(This is an area that students often forget about. Sometimes it makes the first impression. Example: A cell phone answering message that played “I’m bringing sexy back” did not make a good impression on a professional that was calling the student back to set up an interview for a job opportunity!)

 - Telephone contact
 - Don’t have a voice mail message or song that is unprofessional
 - Make the call yourself
 - If you leave a message, speak clearly and give your name at the beginning of the message and then again toward the end. Say your number slowly it doesn’t hurt to repeat your number.
 - E-mail contact
 - Make the contact yourself
 - Don’t use abbreviations
 - Use spell check
 - Check your grammar and punctuation
 - Thank them for considering your request or taking time to respond to you.
- Ways to improve the impressions you make
 - Hand shake – Your handshake should be firm and your hand warm and dry.
 - Make eye contact as you are speaking and they speak to you.
 - Say “Thank you” and if you have been job shadowing, a thank you note is a nice touch
 - Turn your cell phone off
 - Don’t chew gum
 - Ask questions, even if you are worried about appearing dumb. There is no dumb question!