

Perspective Taking – Finding Creative But Respectful Ways to Walk in the Shoes of Others (Or Perceived Others)

Background:

The "Ban the Box" national campaign was created in 2004 to advocate to give a fair chance to people with past convictions. "Ban the Box" refers to the "box" on job application forms asking prospective candidates whether they have ever been convicted of a crime. Many states allow checkboxes for a criminal conviction on housing and college applications. This prevents previously incarcerated people, who have been rehabilitated, from getting jobs, housing, and education.

Scenario:

A person has just lost housing due to circumstances beyond their control and is currently living in a hotel while seeking a new place to live. The potential tenant is the parent and sole custodian of five children, ages 5-15. He/she also served time in the late '90s for retail theft over \$500. The apartment being sought is in a multi-level building consisting of mostly families that have lived there for a long time. However, there are also some elderly folks. The potential tenant has filled out paperwork and passed the credit check. To complete the process, he/she must be interviewed by the landlord.

Take a few minutes to walk in the shoes the person who is seeking housing for his/her family.

Role play instructions:

- Split up into pairs. One person will be the potential tenant and the other will be the landlord.
- As a part of the interview, the following questions must be asked:

#1 We consider ourselves a family-oriented community. If we rent to you, can you guarantee that the noise level will be low and the apartment clean?

#2 Given your criminal background, what assurances do I have or can I give my other tenants that you won't steal from them?

#3 Any additional questions