**Role play Guidelines - PARTICIPANT**

The competence area assessed in the [role play exercise are](https://www.assessmentday.co.uk/role-play-exercise.htm):

* Communication
* Decision making
* Entrepreneurial mindset
* Team work

Role play exercises simulate scenarios such as:

* Different view about rules in a youth exchange
* A migrant escapes from a structure managed by a youth worker
* Lack of future plan for a youth worker
* Deadline not respected by a colleague

The participant usually meets with just one role-player. There will be a brief before he/she meets the role player, with instructions to try to achieve a particular outcome.

The assessor will also be given a brief they have to follow, often trying to reach an outcome different to the one of the participant. The challenge is to negotiate the way to an amicable resolution in this fictional situation.

Before your role play exercise you normally get 15-30 minutes (or more if needed) to read the background information and to prepare. Use this time to pre-empt possible arguments the role player might use, and their possible responses. Make sure you understand the brief and think about strategies for achieving the outcome your fictional character wants.

If you don’t know well the context in which the exercise is developed, it could be good to ask some information to the youth worker, to make a research and to discuss with the youth worker in order to adapt it to one of your similar life experiences.

Before you walk into the room get your mind into character, otherwise you will appear flustered.

**General role-play exercise advice**

Here are some tips and recommendations to help you to prepare for your role-play exercise and help ensure you are ready:

**1. Try to stay relaxed:**Your ability to work under pressure and to perform on the spot is a key competency which the role-play exercise is assessing. It is therefore imperative that you do not let nerves get in the way of maximum performance. Small to moderate amount of nervousness can hone one’s skills and keep you sharp, but serious anxiety will impair your performance. Just remember to breathe, to listen, to take your time and think thoroughly before answering.

**2. Assume the role and get in character:**One of the hardest parts of role-play exercises is taking the exercise seriously and really committing to character. Ensuring that during the exercise, you take the role seriously, get in character and psych yourself up before hand, can help you to assume the role more readily. The more in character you are, the more naturally and professionally you will act and seem, impressing recruiters with a higher performance and expressing your commitment to the exercise, and therefore the organisation. Similarly it’s important to consider the other person in the role-play as their respective role, i.e. if they are playing the participants, treat them and consider them participants as much as possible, try to forget this is an exercise and act as if this was the real thing.

**3. Research the role:**This is an essential and obvious necessity before undertaking a role-play exercise and assessment centre in general. Ensuring you know the key competencies observed and the skill set needed for the role of the youth worker. Armed with this knowledge, you will more effectively assume you’re given role in the exercise, and impress the assessor with a more convincing and professional performance.

**4. Time keeping:**Ensure that an appropriate pace is kept throughout the exercise. You shouldn't put yourself in a position where you need to rush, or where you need to slow down because you have been working too quickly. Keep an eye on the time, and pace yourself appropriately, but do not let the clock hinder your performance, and do not be caught “watching the clock”, check the time rarely and discretely.

**Tips for getting into character**

Ensuring you are in character is a vital aspect of the role-play, as without committing to the role, you will not take the exercise seriously. Here are some tips for getting into character, and adopting the mindset of the role you are assuming:

**1. Adopt the character before the exercise:**Begin to think and act like your character well before the start of the exercise, this means that when the exercise begins, the "psyching" process has already finished. Having spent 10-20 minutes acting, behaving and thinking like your target role will help the exercise run more naturally than if you had only just got into character at the start.

**2. Confirming when the exercise begins:**Ensuring you know exactly when the exercise has started can avoid awkwardness, and put your mind at ease. Knowing exactly when the exercise has begun will help you stay in character as you will not need to worry going in and out of character more than you need to, allowing a more natural flow in the exercise.

**3. But also be yourself:**Don't try and complicate matters by adopting a whole new alter ego. Just imagine that you have the job which you are role-playing, and other than that you are exactly the same person. This is not an audition for an acting role, you just need to role-play a particular role in a particular situation. Although assuming the responsibilities, mindset and objectives of the role is critical, you do not need to pretend to be a different person, and trying to do so will make the exercise feel an unnatural, hampering performance.

**STAR TECHNIQUE - How to structure your answers**

A good technique for structuring and focusing your answers to interview questions is to use the STAR technique.

The acronym **STAR** stands for:

* **S**ituation
* **T**ask
* **A**ction
* **R**esult

**Situation**

Describe the situation that you were in.

**Task**

Which task were you confronted with? Try to be concise and informative so that the employer has a good understanding of the situation you were in and what you were trying to achieve.

**Action**

This is the most important section and will take up the majority of your answers. You need to explain what it is you did and why you did it. Make sure you keep the answer personal; the interviewer is looking to find out what it is **YOU** did and not just the team. This is a great opportunity for you to highlight your relevant skills.

**Results**

Explain the outcome and whether your actions helped to achieve the initial objective.

It is important to state what you learnt and how this has helped you since.