



## Training Concept: Coaching Skills

Recruitment can be an emotional and stressful time for everyone — including chapter members, PNM's, College Panhellenic officers and recruitment counselors. However, a recruitment counselor's most important consideration should be the PNM's experience. A PNM will most likely have fears and concerns about which chapter she may join. She may feel upset that she and a friend were not invited back to the same chapter. She may be worried about class responsibilities on top of recruitment activities. She may have parents who are pressuring her to join a certain sorority — or not to join one at all. Regardless of a PNM's worries, her recruitment counselor needs to recognize her concerns as a major factor in her experience and in turn, her decisions.

To counsel PNM's effectively, a recruitment counselor must be prepared to deal with different personality types, situations and issues. Often, the best attribute she can possess is the ability to listen. Being a good listener is a primary and vital part of being any kind of counselor. A PNM going through recruitment often just needs someone to hear her express her thoughts and anxieties so she can determine the best decision for herself.

### Active Listening Skills

Consider the following activities to help recruitment counselors practice and develop their active listening skills:

#### Talking Monkey in the Middle

Instructions

- Break participants into groups of three and have them stand in a line. The two participants on the outside face each other, and the person in the middle faces in any direction.
- Instruct the two participants facing each other to start a basic conversation about a recruitment-related topic.
- Instruct the participant in the middle to start talking about any nonrecruitment-related topic she chooses and not to engage in the conversation between the other two participants.
- All participants should speak in a normal voice (not whispering or shouting).
- Allow the chatter to go on for a few minutes before ending the conversations. Then have members in each group rotate positions so each person has a chance to be in the middle.
- End the activity by asking the reflection questions.

Reflection questions

- How did it feel to try to engage in a conversation while the participant in the middle was speaking over you or in your way?
- Were you able to hear everything your conversation partner was saying?
- How often were you distracted by the random chatter in the middle?
- How can this activity be similar to your interactions with PNM's?
- How can you apply this situation to your PNM group, and how can you spread your attention among each woman fairly?



## Changing Your Story

### Materials

- A book

### Instructions

- Break participants into five equal teams, and then ask them to sit facing the same direction, such as the front of the room.
- The recruitment team leader (vice president of recruitment or head of recruitment counselors) sits in front of the teams.
- The recruitment team leader reads a short passage or paragraph from a book to the teams.
- She then reads the passage or paragraph again but with small changes, such as changing the red hat to a blue hat or having the character turn right instead of left. Team members call out changes as they notice them.
- Each correctly identified change gives the team a point.
- After the recruitment team leader reads the story five or six times with changes (or more if needed), the team with the most points wins.

### Reflection questions

- How does this activity relate to listening to PNMs?
- When did the changes to the story seem most apparent? Did any of the changes change the purpose of the story?
- What can you conclude from this activity about finding the “big picture” in your conversations during recruitment? When should you focus on the details? When shouldn’t you?

## Additional Skills

Recruitment counselors also should have the ability to:

- Ask open-ended questions.
- Paraphrase and summarize.
- Be a role model.
- Provide resolution to conflict.
- Mentor.
- Multitask.
- Handle stress appropriately.
- Use body language and eye contact appropriately.

Recruitment counselors also need to know what practices to avoid, such as:

- Projecting personal experience onto a PNM. Remember, the recruitment experience is about the PNM and her experience. If the PNM has questions about the chapters she is visiting, encourage her to ask those questions during the recruitment rounds.



- Overstepping boundaries, such as not allowing a PNM to draw her own conclusion or make her own decision.
- Overlooking or missing a more serious issue that needs help beyond the recruitment counselor's skills.

These skills are critical in working with a diverse group of women with many different opinions and concerns about joining a sorority. Speaking of diversity ... social identities can impact the recruitment experience for everyone involved. Recruitment counselors must first understand themselves, so they may best help others. Recruitment counselors should understand how various social identities may, or may not impact PNMs. Recruitment counselors should spend a lot of time listening and not making assumptions in learning more about the women they are coaching through this process.

Diversity and inclusion, equity and social justice can be approached many ways and applies to the sorority and recruitment counselor experience. The activity outlined here is just one way to begin discussing these concepts. If these are topics that interest you and your community, you also can reach out to campus or local community experts and invite them to facilitate more conversations or workshops on these topics.

To facilitate the **Social Identities Workshop**, print [one packet](#) out for each recruitment counselor and follow along with the [facilitation guide](#). You may ask someone on your campus to facilitate this program for you, ask your advisor or choose to have a member of your executive board lead the program.

### Applying Skills in a Situation

No one can predict every situation a recruitment counselor might face; however, many issues occur frequently enough that it is possible to coach counselors on how to handle them. You can use a case study or role-playing approach with the following situations:

1. A PNM wants to withdraw from recruitment because her best friend was invited back to a chapter that they both wanted, but she was not.
2. A PNM likes two or three chapters equally and is having trouble determining her top choices for the next round.
3. A PNM has a difficult major and believes that sorority membership will hinder her academic success.
4. A PNM wants to move into a sorority house as soon as possible, but her favorite chapter cannot offer her housing, whereas another chapter can.
5. A PNM learns she has only one invitation or chapter to visit. She is convinced that this is a bad sign, that she will not receive a bid or that the chapter is not a "good chapter."
6. A PNM has been told by her family that sorority life is not right for her, but she truly wants to join.
7. A PNM wants to become involved in other student activities but is convinced the time commitment will be too much to handle.
8. A PNM has concerns about the financial commitment of membership and does not know whether she can afford it.
9. A PNM believes a certain chapter or the entire community projects a stereotypical image and does not want to be "labeled."
10. A PNM is concerned about hazing and being forced into humiliating or uncomfortable situations.



11. A PNM comes from a small town and worries this will affect her sense of belonging in a large chapter (or vice versa — the PNM is from a large hometown and does not feel comfortable in a community of small chapters).
12. A PNM does not want to join the chapter to which she is a legacy, but she feels family pressure.
13. A PNM is an introvert and is having trouble adjusting to the highly social nature of recruitment. She is scared she is not making a positive impression.
14. A PNM has expressed her primary goal in joining a sorority is to “find good parties” and have social opportunities.
15. A PNM has been told her attire must be name-brand and what she wears will significantly affect her chapter placement. She worries her appearance will keep her from receiving a bid.
16. A PNM does not have a recommendation to a specific chapter or chapters and thinks this will prevent her from receiving a bid.
17. A PNM has discovered her recruitment counselor’s affiliation and feels negatively about that chapter.
18. A PNM has been released from recruitment and is distraught.
19. A PNM shares with another PNM that a sorority member has been in touch with her outside official recruitment events or that she attended a chapter’s functions before recruitment started. This chapter has convinced her that she is guaranteed a bid.
20. A PNM shares with you that she is in a GroupMe with other PNMs and members of a certain chapter and they have been communicating regarding the current recruitment process.
21. A PNM was embarrassed by inappropriate conversation from chapter women during a recruitment event. She wonders whether sorority life is for her and is considering dropping out of recruitment.

These situations are common, but many more may occur. A recruitment counselor must be prepared to offer her best, most objective advice in any situation, but she also must recognize when outside guidance is necessary. If a PNM threatens extreme action in response to a negative situation, the recruitment counselor must immediately contact the fraternity/sorority advisor or another campus professional.