



NanoExperiences Speed-dating Tools for Partners

Specific topics to cover:

- Major industry in which your company is situated
- Ways in which your company uses nano science and technology
- Major job responsibilities within the company
- A typical day (including the unpredictable things that happen)
- Education and training required for your job and other positions in your field
- What you like about your job
- What can make your job difficult or frustrating at times
- Why you chose this field

Other topics to consider:

- What has surprised you the most about your job?
- How does this job compare to other jobs you've had?
- Suggestions for someone considering a job in your field
- Personal qualities that make someone successful in your field

Questions to Guide Conversations with the Students

Use the following conversation starters and tips to get to know the students and gain a better understanding of their career goals and dreams. What follows is not a script but a starting point. Review these talking points before lunch and the Speed dating to pick the ones that feel most natural for you.

Getting To Know You and Sharing Your Journey

Share a bit about yourself (what school/college did you attend? What was your major? Why did you decide to go there? How did you choose your career or how did it choose you?). Then, get the young person to talk about herself. The more self-reflection she does, the easier it will be to recognize the careers that suit her best. Questions you can ask and ideas to share include:

- What do you like to do? How do you spend your free time? Do you have any particular hobbies that you really enjoy?
- What are you really good at? What are you passionate about?
- What are your favorite classes at school?
- Which clubs have you joined and what did or didn't you like about them?
- Are you involved in any community activities?

Exploring Personal Qualities—Relating Them to a Career

More than guiding the career we choose, our personal qualities and characteristics help us enjoy the job we have chosen. Help young people explore the personal qualities that will impact their ability to enjoy their chosen career by asking some of the following questions:

- Are you a morning person, afternoon, evening? What would be your ideal work schedule?
- Do you prefer being indoors or outside?
- Do you like things neat and organized?
- Do you like to be around people? Are you more comfortable on your own or do you prefer to be part of a team or in a group?
- Do you prefer school courses with a lot of hands-on activities or with a lot of reading?
- Do you like to work with your hands or your mind? Do you prefer physical labor or using your head? (Remember: these are not always mutually exclusive.)
- Do you like to take things apart? Do you like to learn how things work?
- Do you do your best with a lot of supervision or a little supervision?
- When thinking about desired work and/or learning spaces, would you prefer to have an office or be in a more open environment?

Current Work/School Life—Leading to a Career Pathway

The young person is probably doing a lot of things now—in his school and work life—that can help define post-graduation career paths. With just a few well-placed questions, you can help a student see how what he is doing now can help pave the way toward future goals. Such questions might include:

- What type of holiday, summer, or after-school work have you done? What did you like most about it? What did you like least?

- What type(s) of work are you interested in? What are three things you'd like to learn about these jobs? (Help the student create a list of ways he can do that both in and out of school, on his own or with a trusted adult.)
- What skills, experience, and education do you think you need to get your dream job? What skills do you already have? What skills do you still need to acquire?
- Are there any specific issues or barriers/roadblocks you think might prevent you from being successful in high school and beyond? If so, what strategies and resources can we identify to help you make a plan to overcome those barriers?
- What do you want to do after graduating from high school? Do you want to work right away? Do you want to keep going to school? Or, do you want to take some time off?

Future Life—Dreaming of the Possibilities

Occasionally, helping young people plan their future starts with something as simple as helping them dream. In the teen years, young people are often focused on the here and now. When a caring adult asks the right questions in the right way (at the right time), she can help young people open up to a world of possibilities. Consider asking questions such as:

- What kind of life do you want to live? What do you imagine your life will be like at age 21? 25? 30? What would you like to be doing (career/leisure/family)? Where would you like to be living? What kind of car do you want to drive?
- What's your dream job? Which careers appeal to you? Would you like to create your own job?
- How much money do you want/need to make?

How Best Can I (or Others) Help?

Sometimes, young people need a hand asking questions and learning more about the adults around them. When the young person is with you, you can ask questions that will help him learn more about you, as well as identify what kind of support he may need to reach his or her goals. Questions that might elicit that information include:

- What aspects of my job do you want to learn more about? What questions do you have? Are there other careers that you would like to learn more about? (I might be able to answer some of your questions about that career or help connect you with someone in that field!)
- How can adults help you learn new things and make progress toward your goals? How can I help you make decisions that will help you achieve your dreams/goals?
- Are there other adults in your life (e.g., teachers, after-school staff, others) who could help you achieve your goals?
- Do you have anyone in your life who you can talk to about what it's like to do your dream job? What will you do to find out more about the day-to-day realities of your dream job?
- Do you know who to talk to at school about postsecondary options, financial aid, and career guidance?