

Immigration Experiential

The purpose of this exercise is to help trainees get in touch with their conceptions about the undocumented and to “step into their shoes.”

Instructions: Participants will form groups. The groups will be assigned one of the following scenarios. The small groups will share their thoughts and feelings within the small group.

1. You are an undocumented immigrant and this morning upon arising from bed, you turned on the television and hear a news story that the Police and Immigration, Customs and Enforcement (ICE) is using your city as a “test area” to do random road stops and sweeps at places known to hire “illegal immigrants”. The reporter wonders if schools that admit large numbers of immigrants will again be targeted by anti-immigrant pickets. Your family members have already left the house. Your spouse is taking the small kids to school and then he/she catches the bus to go to work, your high school aged son is off to school, and your eldest is on her way to the campus. You have been driving to work. You are due at your job in one hour, what do you do?
2. You are an undocumented student and you drive to school in a car registered to a family member. You are momentarily distracted and you rear-end the luxury car in front of you. You get out to see the damage and to talk to the driver. You explain that you are responsible and will pay for damages. At first the driver of the luxury car seems calm because the damage was minor, and you have taken responsibility for the damage. Then she asks you for your insurance and license. You have to own up to the fact that you have no driver’s license. The driver of the luxury vehicle starts to have a fit, yelling at you asking if you know how much her car is worth, and shouts, “Are you an illegal”, and starts to call the police on her cell. What do you do?
3. You applied to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for a green card and were on your way to becoming naturalized, but the process has taken a long time and your visa has now expired, rendering you an undocumented immigrant. Your employer cannot keep you on because your Social Security is no longer valid. You think that perhaps you can go to school and look for a part-time job, but the college program you want does not admit undocumented students, and you can’t find a job that will take you without a valid SSN. What do you do?
4. Your spouse is a US citizen. You have a very young child. You decided to leave your spouse because he/she has become increasingly abusive and his/her promises to help you get your immigration papers have gone unfulfilled. Now that you are on your own, paying your tuition will be difficult as your parents cannot help you financially. The semester is starting and your tuition is due. You had filed for graduation because you have only one semester left to complete your major. Your dream is to go to graduate school so you can be a counselor. You have to find a job but you have no work authorization. What do you do?
5. You are going to be a high school senior soon, hoping to be the Valedictorian of your class, and looking forward to going to college and becoming independent. Your grades and test

scores can qualify you for any school in the country. Just before school starts, your counselor calls you into the office and encourages you to take home the FAFSA form for your parents' review and he wants you to start selecting which of the elite eastern campuses you want to apply. You have had your eye on Brandeis, but Harvard would be great, as would Yale. When you get home, you ask your parents to complete the form and they look at you with sadness, as if they have dreaded this day. You just sit there as they tell you that you are undocumented, have no social security number, so they cannot complete the FAFSA. All this time you thought you were born in Colorado. What you did not know was that you were born in Colorado, Mexico. They try to encourage you by telling you that you could still go to a community college near the house and that you could get a job helping your mother clean houses so you can afford your tuition. What do you do?

6. You were so happy to have received your Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) because it would open up so many opportunities for you. You finally apply for a driver's license, so you study and make an appointment at the DMV. It's been a year now since you got your license and you are so much more relaxed. You even have a job that you enjoy. One Friday you go out with your colleagues for drinks to celebrate your promotion. They shower you with drinks and all is happy until it's time to drive home. You wait an hour, drink coffee, eat, but eventually you decide to get in your car to drive home. When out of nowhere, you get sideswiped by a car and run off the road. The Police arrive shortly thereafter and both drivers are given a breathalyzer test. You still have alcohol on your breath. What do you do now?

Source: AB540 Ally Training Project