

Supporting Undocumented Students

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Disclaimer:

This presentation addresses approaches to supporting individuals who may be experiencing immigration-based stressors. We will be discussing issues related to documentation status. The session will remain focused on professional practices and humanitarian considerations. The conversation will take an immigrant supportive position, and for today's purposes, other narratives will not be explored. Immigration policy debate is outside the scope of this discussion; those wishing to participate in such dialogue or debate are encouraged to step away from today's presentation and use their time in ways that aligns with their values.



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Learning Objectives



Identify status related stressors/mental health concerns



Learn four best practices for supporting students with immigration stress

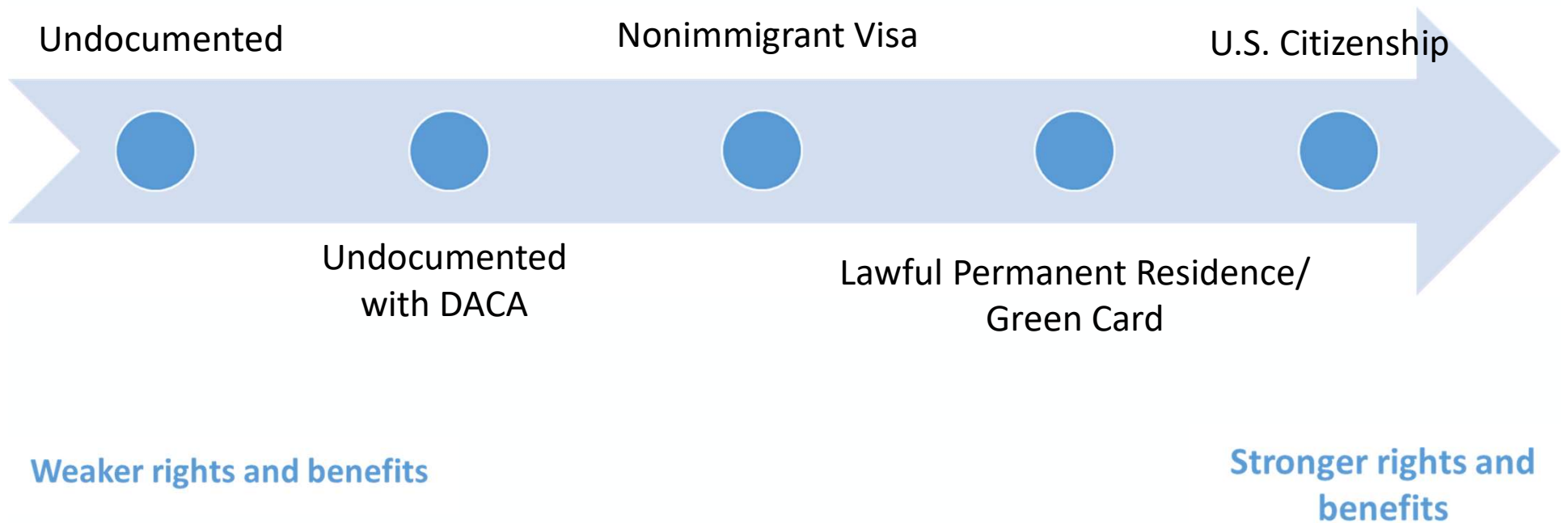


Increase access to resources for undocumented, DACAmented, and students in mixed-status families



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Immigration Status: A Spectrum



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Who is Undocumented?

An undocumented individual is a non-citizen living in the United States without a current, lawful immigration status who:

1. Entered without inspection
2. Entered with a valid visa or other status, and overstayed the authorized duration of that status, therefore does not currently have lawful status in the US

Who is DACAmented?

Refers to individuals who meet specific legal, immigration, chronology and education history who have been granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status that are now eligible for:

1. Employment authorization
2. Access to healthcare/social services
3. Access to higher education

DACA is **NOT** a pathway to citizenship



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The Undocumented Stress Cycle

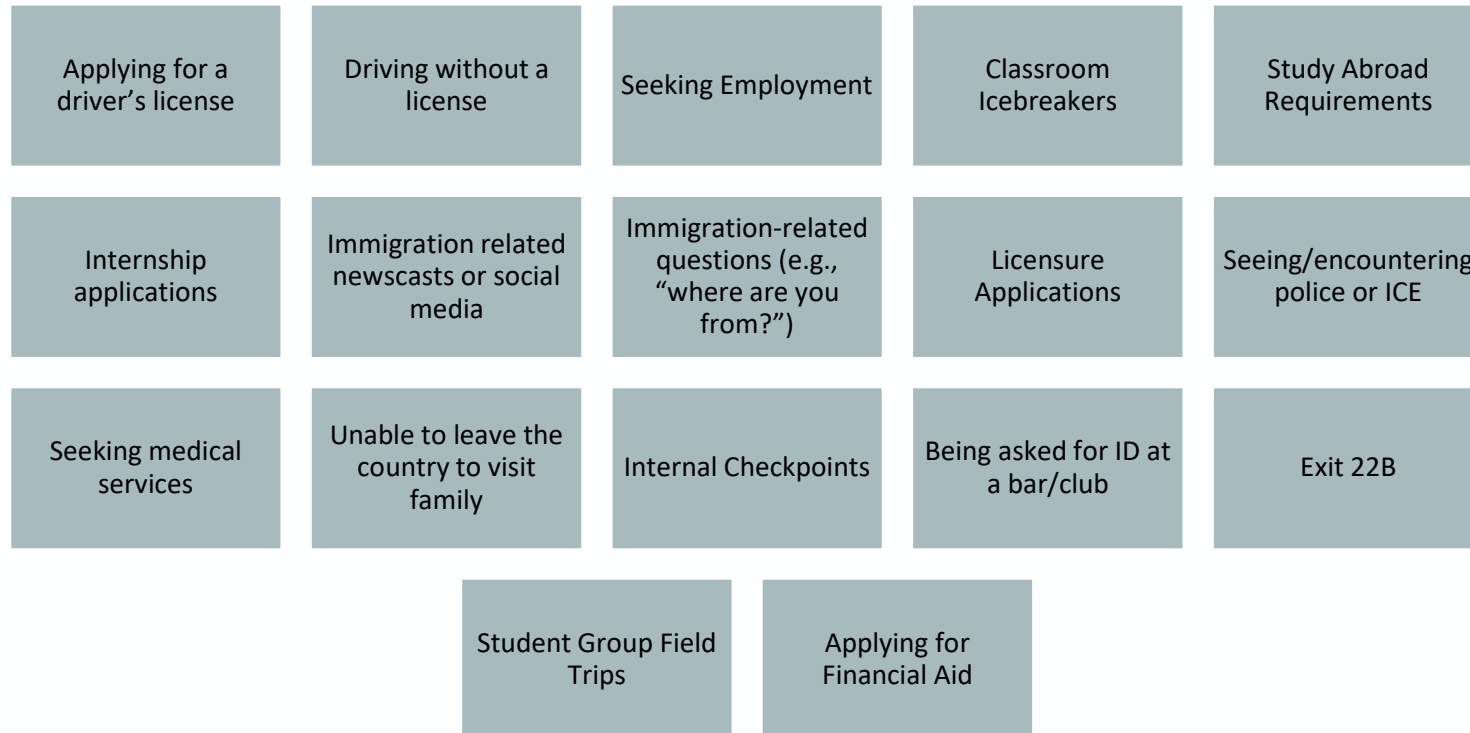


B.D. Ellis, 2017



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Status Related Stressors



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Mental Health Concerns

Migratory trauma (APA Update)

- Pre-migration
- Migration
- Post-migration

Transition to young adulthood (Gonzalez & Roth, 2015)

Identity Issues

Individualism vs. Collectivism (Huber & Malagon, 2008)

- Cultural dimension that overlaps with education



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Mental Health Concerns

Anxiety

- Separation themed
- Difficulties with trust and safety
- Chronic worry (including fear of deportation)

Depression

- Lack of sense of belonging
- Feeling like they are behind their peers
- Hopelessness*

Parentification

Hyperdocumentation

(Chen, Budianto, & Wong, 2010)



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Intersectionality and Identity

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- National origin
- Social class
- Gender
- Disability/ability
- Immigration status

**Compounding
effects of
marginalized
identities,
interpersonal
violence, poverty
and discrimination**



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Recognize Strengths!!!

(but...)

Resilience

Perseverance

Resourcefulness

When Your Greatest Strength



Becomes Your Biggest Weakness



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How to be an Undocu-Ally

ACTION STEPS!



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Undocu-Ally: Best Practices

Speak Up

- Publicly & Privately
- Use inclusive language

Listen

- Don't pressure self-disclosure
- Help problem-solve

Encourage

- Validate accomplishments
- Help build networks

Be a Resource

- Know your community
- Stay up-to-date



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Listening Tips and Reminders

Listen openly and compassionately to understand student concerns

Speak calmly, provide safety, and convey interest/curiosity

Remember trust is earned, not given

Validate the impact of status-related stressors (if disclosed) and communicate authentic support

Know your boundaries & avoid false promises

Be aware of your own cultural biases and limitations
(cultural competency)

Check in about mental health even if it's not an expressed concern & be prepared with resources



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Beyond Listening

Action oriented advocacy



Allow students to have as much control/choice as possible



Create a triage or referral system for students with immigration stressors



Identify policies/procedures for establishing your space as an undocu-friendly environment



Implement trauma informed practices into pedagogy and curriculum



Identify yourself/your program in undocumented advocacy networks as a welcoming space



Become a mentor!



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Encourage Positive Messages to Students

“Connect with others through shared values and experiences”

“Voice your needs to professors, university staff, counselors and peers”

“Ask for help... medical, psychological, tutoring, academic”

“Explore your own identity, your values, your goals”

“Who you are as a person is not defined by your status”

“Know that you are **not alone**, other **people share your concern**,
and there are groups and organizations looking out for the **community**”

“You **belong** here like everybody else”

“Remember you are a **role model** for many people”



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Contact Information

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