



Client Profile Simulation Facilitator's Guide

This guide is intended for adult and youth leaders facilitating this exercise with adults and/or youth (7th – 12th graders). As a general guideline, we recommend that at least one leader is present for each 10 participants in order to ensure that the activity runs smoothly and is a positive learning experience for participants.

In the simulation, participants work alone or in pairs to assume the identity of a Reston Interfaith client. Based on the client's personal and financial information, participants complete a budget spreadsheet in order to see how much money their person/people have each month after expenses and how that would affect their lives.

I. SET UP

Before arriving at Site

1. Review this guide to ensure familiarity with the program.
2. Review identity envelope to ensure that each has a blank financial worksheet, pencil, the correct identity information sheet.
3. Bring the following additional materials:
 - a. Calculators
 - b. Pencils

II. OPENING

Introduction

After introducing facilitators of the activity, briefly explain the purpose of this activity: to experience first-hand the issues surrounding food insecurity, housing insecurity and homelessness in our community. Explain that it generally takes about 20 minutes, followed by a group discussion. Explain that the leaders will circulate assist participants by answering questions, confirming that they have accomplished the goal and suggest additional resources as needed.

Identities

Distribute the identity sheets and review the sheets and budget form with participants. If a particular participant would like to change their gender, they may do so. Explain that they will first learn about their new identities and then use the information contained in the identity to complete the financial worksheet, which will allow them to determine how much money they have remaining at the end of the month.

IV. DISCUSSION

Process Simulation

Ask general questions and allow the discussion to follow a natural flow. Leaders may ask any of the following questions intended to generate an effective discussion.

Identity Participants

- Can you introduce your identity to the group?
- How much money did you have left over each month after expenses?



- What is the biggest expense you faced?
- What else would you need to spend money on that wasn't on your financial worksheet?
- What service or resource would be most helpful to you?
- How do you feel about your identity's income (was it high/low, is that a normal range for this area?)

General Questions

- Why did we do this activity?
- What might it be like to live like this every day?
- How would it feel to not know where your next meal will come from or where you will sleep next?
- What other resources might be available to people in real life?
- What components of real life were not included in the simulation? Some suggestions: food, savings account/retirement, entertainment, clothing and shoes, toiletries, holiday/birthday gifts, furniture and household items, travel, school supplies and activity fees (for those with children), for car owners – gas, repairs and maintenance, property taxes, inspection, and registration, for home owners – repairs and maintenance, increases in property taxes, homeowners/condo association fees
- How many of you were in debt with your credit cards, gambling or medical bills in the simulation?
- How does this happen to people?
- In real life, how often does your family go to the grocery store?
- In real life, how often does your family move?
- How can participants help individuals who are food and housing insecure or homeless?
 - Raising awareness among classmates, friends and families about these important issues;
 - Reston Interfaith depends on over 2,500 volunteers each year to participate in a wide variety of roles. Refer interested volunteers to Reston Interfaith's Youth Opportunities Calendar and website, www.restoninterfaith.org for episodic and on-going opportunities to directly benefit Reston Interfaith clients



V. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership on Ending Homelessness:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless

Definitions:

1. Housing Instability - The less severe and more widespread forms of homelessness and hunger. (Housing Instability and Food Insecurity as Barriers to Health Care Among Low-Income Americans, Kushel, Gupta, Gee, & Haas, 2006).
2. Food Insecurity- Not knowing when and from where your next meal will come (Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report No. FANRR42, p. 69, October 2004).
3. Homelessness –
 - An individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence;
 - An individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is supervised publicly or is a privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
 - An institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
 - A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

(The McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, codified in USCA42 Section 11302(a))
4. Chronic Homelessness - An unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years (National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness).

Reston Interfaith Background Information:

Reston Interfaith helps individuals and families survive tough economic times in an already high cost-of-living community. Through advocacy and support services, we connect our clients to the vital resources they need to build more self-sufficient lives and provide a comprehensive array of programs that solve urgent or on-going requirements for housing, childcare, food or financial assistance. With deep roots in the community, our knowledgeable staff and strong partner network ensure a proven and effective response to changing resident needs. Our clients, our donors, our associates and friends—all benefit from our tradition of caring and record of results. Refer participants to www.restoninterfaith.org for detailed information about Reston Interfaith's programs.