

Understanding the DREAMer Experience

Leticia Treviño, M.A.

College Advisor-Bruce Randolph School



Agenda

- Who is this population?
- Understanding Emotional Process/Stages
- Creating a school culture
- Next steps in supporting your staff in understanding the DREAMer experience.

Who is the undocumented student?

**undocumented,
unafraid and
unapologetic**



- Children born abroad who are not U.S. citizens or legal residents
- Undocumented students may be referred to as:
 - DREAMers
 - DACA-mented/DACA Student
 - ASSET student (in Colorado)

Estimated Numbers

- **1.1-1.4 million:** Undocumented students in the United States
- **65,000:** Undocumented students graduate from high school each year
- **7,000-13,000** (5-10% of HS grads): Enroll in college through the United States



Source: www.goldendoorscholars.org

Possible Emotional Stage

- **Memory, realization, conversation, or trigger**
 - Through a memory and/or conversation student realizes and/or learn of their legal status
 - Triggered by the student's inability to participate in a program, trip, milestone with peers, etc.
 - Students report anger toward the situation, parents, siblings, the system

“My parents were sending my brother to Mexico to visit family. I wanted to go but my parents said I couldn’t travel like my brother because of my legal status.”

Possible Emotional Stage

- **Living in a state of fear or uncertainty**

- What if I am reported?
- What about deportation?
- Will my family be ripped apart?
- What if some one finds out about my status? What will they do?

“I hear people say illegals so I don’t know if I can tell them about my legal status.”



Possible Emotional Stage

- **Coming out to friends, educators, support network**
 - Recognizing, accepting, and sharing with others
 - Conscious choice to be honest with you
 - Do NOT pressure students to inform you of their legal status
 - Not a single event, come out to more than one individual
 - 'Outing' students can be harmful



“My mom wants me to go to college but I don’t know how....I’m not legal.”

Possible Emotional Stage

- **Owning legal status & advocating**
 - Accept the obstacles due to legal status
 - Find ways to overcome obstacles:
 - Speaking up for self
 - Make decisions for self
 - Demanding information s/he can understand
 - Knowing their support system, rights, and responsibilities
 - Reaching out to others



“What colleges and scholarships can I apply to?”

Possible Emotional Stage

- **Hope & excitement about the future**

- New programs that recognize this population
- Options and support is recognized state and federal
- Confusion about what the DREAM Act/Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

“Can I apply for the DREAM Act?”

“I don’t know what that (Colorado ASSET) is?”

“Where can I work if I have a work social security number now?”



Guiding Principles for Support

- Protection
- Support
- Affirmation
- Information
- Hope



A photograph of three young people, two men and one woman, smiling and looking towards the camera. They are wearing casual clothing. The image is slightly faded and serves as a background for the text.

I DEFINE MYSELF: UNDOCUMENTED AND UNAFRAID

Protection

- FERPA/privacy
- School trips
- Not asking/sharing status

Support

- Create a safe space
- Do not judge or demean the student/family situation
- Honesty: Tell the truth and do all you can to help the student within your knowledge
- Network building and connecting

Affirmation

- Celebrate accomplishments
- Let students know they deserve to be in college
- Inclusive language
- Signaling
- Literature, “Just Like Us”
- Professional development for staff



Information

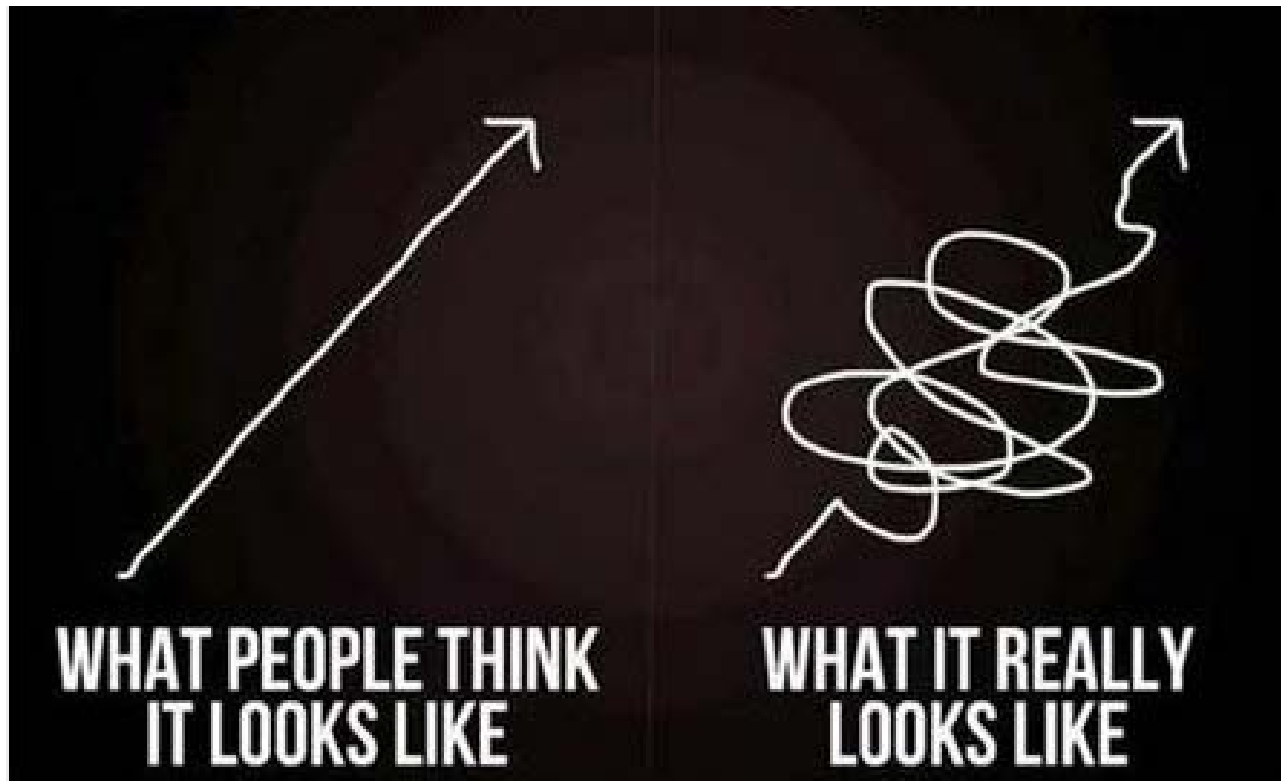
- Give
 - Clear
 - Accurate
 - Honest
 - Legal Rights
 - Disseminate information in group presentations
- Know
 - Institutions
 - Programs
 - Scholarships

Hope

- Hope \neq Safety
- Continue to inspire students even when the going gets tough
- Hope in self, in the system and hope that policies will continue to change

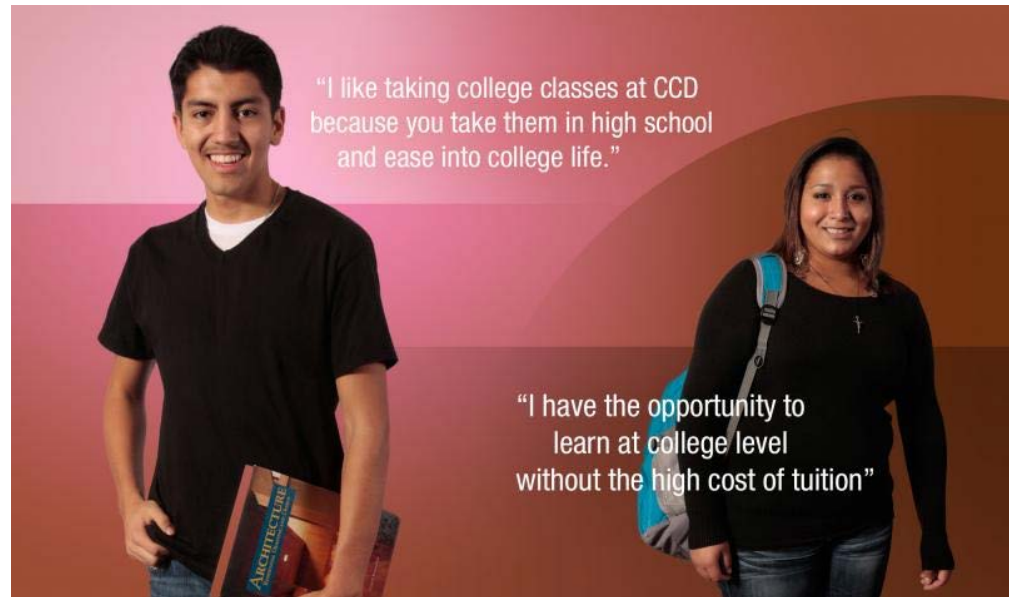


The Journey



Academic Support: Opportunities

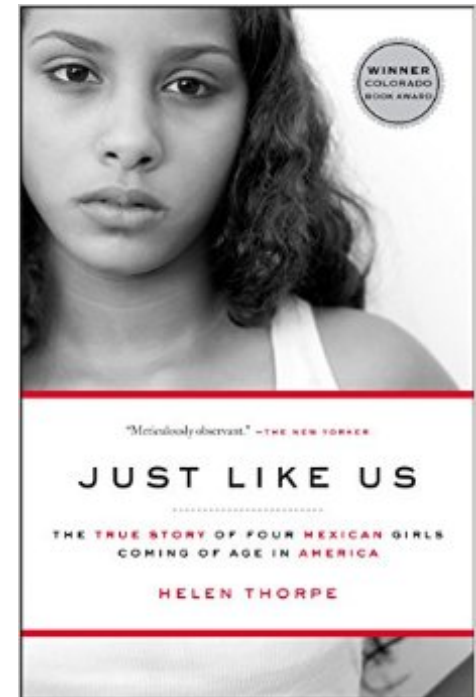
- Emphasize:
 - Scholarship opportunities
 - High School programs:
 - Concurrent enrollment & College First
 - Unique fundraising opportunities
 - Exposure
- Avoid
 - Painting an unrealistic picture of financial opportunities



Academic Support: Involvement

Parent Engagement, Student Involvement, & Community Events

- Student: Studying, on campus, clubs/organizations, and relationships
 - Involved students are engaged in their academic journey
- Home life circumstances may or may not allow this to happen
- Provide opportunities for networking, leadership development, self exploration, & engage with the community



Academics Supports: College & Career Readiness

- Grades and ACT
 - College IS possible
 - Scholarships
- Career Pathways
 - Career Building Models
- Avoid
 - Crushing dreams
 - Cultural insensitivity



Best Practices

- Inclusive, family information about college process
- Exposure to colleges
- Announcing safe spaces
- Connecting students with speakers with similar situations
- Admission counselors offer to speak privately with students & families

Thank you!

Leticia Treviño, M.A.

College Advisor, Bruce Randolph School

Denver Scholarship Foundation

ltrevino@denverscholarship.org

