An Immersive Approach to Awareness: From Schools to Community

Pam Kies-Lowe, Michigan State MV Coordinator
Linda Mirabal Pace, South Carolina State MV Coordinator
Kaleigh Buris, Regional MV Coordinator, Nwaygo, MI
Kelly-Jo Shebeck, Local Liaison, Clark County, NV
John Daniels, Home Sweet Homelessness, Traverse City, MI
Pamela Story, Social Work Coordinator/Liaison, Fayetteville, NC
Today’s Objectives

Objective 1:
Participants will acknowledge the barriers to identifying homeless children at the school level.

Objective 2:
Participants will recognize multiple sources who may refer families and youth experiencing homelessness to local district liaisons.

Objective 3:
Participants will identify and experience professional development opportunities for homeless awareness trainings that can be adapted for any audience.

Objective 4:
Participants will recognize the need for an immersive approach to professional development that will positively influence the attitudes of school staff and community members and lead to improved identification and support of students living in transition.
Through the Eyes of Homeless Children

Can you imagine being homeless?
Now imagine being a homeless child.

This video was produced to help our community understand what children think, feel and experience when they become homeless.

Through the Eyes of Homeless Children

WellspringFS
Published on Apr 22, 2011
Immersive Activities = Experiential Learning
Experiential Learning

Learning that is considered "experiential" contains all the following elements:

• Opportunities for learners to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable for the results
• Provides opportunities for learners to engage intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, or physically
• Reflection
• Critical analysis and synthesis
Experiential Learning cont.

• Experiential learning is about creating activities based on real-life situations that engage learners/participants in problem-solving with no predetermined right answers.

• The learning occurs during the reflective process where students assess their decisions in the light of natural consequences, mistakes, and successes.
• Provides a better understanding of what homeless families and youth may be facing on a daily basis

• Improves understanding of the choices that those experiencing homelessness make, so that staff may better assist students and families

• Positively influences the attitudes of school staff and community members

• Leads to improved identification and support of students living in transition
• Re-energizes liaisons, state coordinators and other staff who provide frequent trainings

• Helps school staff and communities to recognize the broad definition of homelessness and its impact on our students and their learning

• Supports collaboration between communities and schools to provide a wider range of services and supports to ensure student needs are met
PANELISTS: How We Enhance Awareness Using Immersive Activities

• Linda Mirabal Pace, South Carolina State MV Coordinator
• Kaleigh Buris, Regional MV Coordinator, Newaygo, MI
• Kelly-Jo Shebeck, Local Liaison, Clark County, NV
• Pam Kies-Lowe, Michigan State MV Coordinator
**Linda Mirabal-Pace, State MV Coordinator, SC**

- **It Can’t Happen to Me! Or… Can It?** (Causes of Homelessness)

- **Previous MV Student Presentations**
  Youth who have graduated tell their stories. It makes it real. This gets the best feedback.

- **Fire! Get Out!**
  - You only have five minutes to get out of the house. What would you grab?
  - 10 minutes to write on chart paper. Report out.
  - At the end, how many listed birth certificates, school papers, etc.
  - What happens if you lose everything?

- **Poverty Tour USA** - [https://vimeo.com/35903896](https://vimeo.com/35903896)
Kaleigh Buris, Regional MV Grant Coordinator, Newaygo County RESA, MI

• Rural brings challenges
  o Doubled up – is it really homeless?!  
  o No shelters – do we really have homeless students here?!  

• Why Immersive Activities?
  o Promotes empathy
    • Effects of doubled up are hard to understand – especially for local district staff  
  o Increases understanding of MANY facets of homelessness
    • Especially, what decisions they have to make every day 
  o Increases ability of liaisons to work with homeless students/families
    • Empathy, understanding, openness, non-judgmental, etc.

• How Do We Do This?
  o Focus: 1 per year 
  o Lead liaisons through activity at liaison professional development
    • GOAL: equip them to lead in their own district
Kelly-Jo Shebeck, Title I HOPE, Clark County, NV

• Clark County School District’s McKinney-Vento Liaison
• Large school district challenges (358 schools)

McKinney-Vento Homeless Overview
• Staff & department meetings
• One required monitoring visit per year
• Online training course
• Open house for community agencies

Immersive Awareness Activities
• After-school professional development
• Homeless Awareness Mini-Conference
Other Immersive Awareness Activities in Michigan

• **App to Experience Homelessness**
  [http://www.socialjusticesolutions.org/2016/04/22/app-experience-homelessness](http://www.socialjusticesolutions.org/2016/04/22/app-experience-homelessness)

• **How Vulnerable Are YOU?**

• **Poverty Simulation**
  [http://www.povertysimulation.net/about](http://www.povertysimulation.net/about) (There are similar sites on this topic.)

• **Videos** – Included on handouts + many free & low cost powerful ones at [http://hearus.us/understand-homelessnses/videos.html](http://hearus.us/understand-homelessnses/videos.html)

• **The Charlie Book** – Diana Bowman, NCHE & Diane Nilan, HEAR US

  **GIVEAWAY OF BOOKS AND POSTERS in the Hotel Lobby on Monday, 10/30!**
The Charlie Book

• 60 Ways to Help Homeless Kids

• Diana Bowman, NCHE and Diane Nilan, HearUs

• [http://hearus.us/understand-homelessneses/books/cb.html](http://hearus.us/understand-homelessneses/books/cb.html)

• **GIVEAWAY – HOTEL LOBBY, 10/30/17**
Kent County, MI
MV Grant Consortium
Family Promise Campaign, 2017
LET’S PLAY!!

While we play these activities, panelists will roam through tables to respond to questions and facilitate discussion and processing of the experiences we are having.
Immersive Activities - Examples

• “Spent” Game – www.playspent.org – Kaleigh Buris

• Priorities Activity – Kelly-Jo Shebeck
  https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tbEWEi6AO3zTcg6K8mQRbchPR3eWyMHFCg9vKsqlDC4/edit?usp=sharing

• “Home Sweet Homelessness” Game – John Daniels

• Mobility Shuffle – Linda Mirabal-Pace
  http://www.socialjusticesolutions.org/2016/04/22/app-experience-homelessness

• MANY MORE ON HANDOUTS!
SPENT

• Online poverty immersion game
• Month long experience
• Make choices:
  • What would you do?
  • Will you have enough money left at the end of the month?

www.playspent.org
PRIORITIES: A Discussion About Choices

- Clothing
- Food
- Shelter
- Health
- Spirituality
- Education
- Significant Other
- Retirement

Working in a small group of 4-5 people, lay out so that everyone can see them.

As a school district employee, prioritize the items listed on the cards. Your first card should identify what your group agrees is the most important priority in their lives. Although the people in your group may have different opinions, your group must come to a consensus.

Record your group’s top three and bottom three priorities on the provided card.

Now reevaluate your items. This time prioritize them as if you were a middle school student living in transition or homeless. Again, your group must come to a consensus.
BREAK – 15 Minutes

The really FUN PART is NEXT!
An easy to play, engaging board game designed by guests in a homeless shelter, it was intended to serve as a “simulator” for those who have never experienced what the designers lived through every day.

- **Lifestyles** – from living on the street to buying your own home
- **Opportunity and Challenge Cards** – that will help players move up or down, just by luck – toward a home of their own or onto the street.
- **Question “?” Cards** – that will help players step into the shoes of those who fell into homelessness and to feel it themselves
- **Ease of Play** – no training or facilitation is needed. Rules are simple!
LET’S TALK…

WHOA.
What Just Happened?!?
Mobility Shuffle – Pop in as needed

• You just experienced the mobility experienced by a child experiencing homelessness. Let it sink in.

• Take a moment to stop and take notice of what you are feeling in your body. How did this activity affect you? How did it affect those around you?

• Now put yourselves into the shoes of a young child/student who experiences this over and over again.

• We ask you not to share the details of this activity so that others who may participate can experience in the same way they did.

• You are welcome to share that you had a great experience and now understand more than you did before, but not to share the name of the activity or any details that would give it away to someone who had not yet experienced this activity.
TODAY’S RESOURCES

- All materials and activities will be posted on the NAEHCY 2017 Conference website.

- Since we assume you want to receive them right away, **WE WILL EMAIL THESE TODAY** to those who signed up for this Pre-Conference Session.

- **YOU ARE WELCOME!** Thank you all for participating today!
Contact Information

Pam Kies-Lowe, Michigan State MV Coordinator  
kies-lowep@michigan.gov

Linda Mirabal Pace, South Carolina State MV Coordinator  
lpace@ed.sc.gov

Kaleigh Buris, Regional MV Coordinator, Nwaygo, MI  
kbolis@ncresa.org

Kelly-Jo Shebeck, Local Liaison, Clark County, NV  
kellyjo@nv.ccsd.net

Pamela Story, Local Liaison, Fayetteville, NC  
pamelastory@ccs.k12.nc.us

John Daniels, Lead Servant, Traverse City, MI  
John@homesweethomelessness.org