

How to Support Students with or without DACA

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It is important to recognize and remember that no two immigrant stories are the same and as a result, there exists no “single way” to provide support to all. Much like everything in education: expect every student to be different, have varying concerns and varying obligations to fulfill.

You do not need to be a psychologist, an academic advisor, a financial aid counselor, a lawyer, a minority, formerly undocumented etc., to find ways to support our students.

You can support right here and right now.

Guidelines

In order to listen to sensitive information from your student regarding his/her immigrant story it is important to emphasize the following as you have a conversation:

- 1. Student Voluntary Choice.** From the very start, the student should lead the conversation and may make you aware of their status at their comfort level, or not at all. Their choice.
- 2. Meet the students where they are.** This time is really for them, about them. Everyone processes in different ways. Let our students cry or rage or be quiet or talk about the weather. Be yourself, but try not to insert your political opinion and reactions over their own. Validate their feelings. Stay away from common phrases like "it will be okay", and "I understand" towards supportive phrases like, "I'm listening" and "I care about you."
- 3. Absolute Confidentiality.** The student should be made aware that nothing discussed during the session will be shared with others unless authorized by the student themselves. [The exception to this being that the student is perceived at risk of harm to self or others.]
- 4. No legal advice will be provided.** The staff/faculty member will be in a supportive role and should not offer any interpretations of DACA, legal advice or the final answer to questions the student may have - but rather listen and give input based your current knowledge as a faculty member and connect the student to people and resources. (For links to resources, see next page).
- 5. Your current knowledge and understanding.** If you have had experience working with undocumented students before, be sure to mention this to the student. If you have not had experience, be honest and let them know. Most students will take careful note of that and appreciate it – why? Because despite such, they will appreciate that you recognize them as a valued investment of your time and effort. Let them know they are important to you.
- 6. Explain that your aim and role is to serve as a support and connector.** As a faculty member you are more likely to serve as a connector to make sure our students are not isolated. Deeply listen and learn as much as you can about the students’ needs and make direct connections to the students and faculty you know.

Resources Pages

Mason DREAMers page

<http://www.masondreamers.org/>

Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural (ODIME) On Campus and Off Campus Resources

<https://odime.gmu.edu/undocumented-student-resources-daca/>

“I’m scared”

We’ll figure it out, together. Remember, DREAMers have more support and voices rallied behind them than they did 10 years ago. A number of allies, activists and young leaders – even at this very campus – are more than willing to fight for you and along your side. I am, too.