


### Torn Apart: How our Immigration System is Affecting Mixed-Status Families



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### Immigrants

- **First generation immigrant:** A person who migrates to a foreign country with the intention of establishing permanent residence.
- **Second generation immigrant:** The U.S. born children of immigrant parents.



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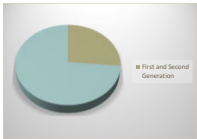

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### Some Statistics

- First generation immigrants comprise 13.5% of the U.S. population (43.3 million)
- First and second generation immigrants make up 27% of the U.S. population (84.3 million)



By 2020, 1 in 3 children below the age of 18 will be the child of an immigrant

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### More Stats

- More than 4 million American children under the age of 18 have at least one undocumented parent
- Nearly 6 million children live in mixed-status households
- In 2015, an estimated 5,000 children in child welfare custody had a deported parent or a parent in immigration custody
- 273,000 U.S. born children have parents with Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

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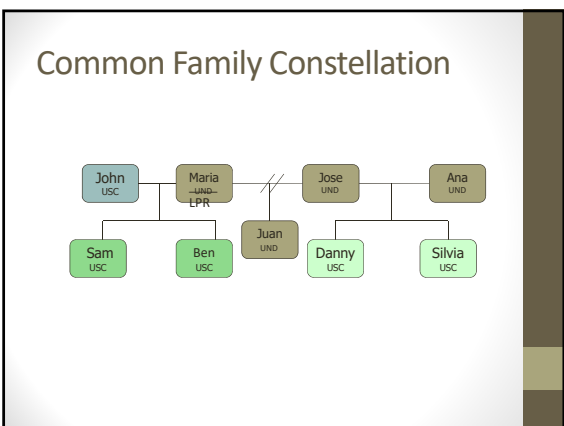
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### Growing up with an undocumented parent

*"A secret, a weight on my shoulders"* **SHAME**

*"Every time I see a police car, I get nervous and scared"* **FEAR**

*"I think [my parents] know, but I don't tell them because I don't want to worry them"* **ISOLATION**

*"I thought, 'what if this is the last time I'm gonna see her?' and I felt terribly guilty"* **GUILT**

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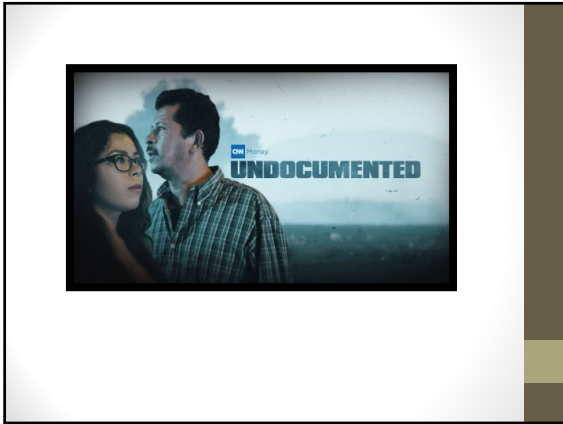
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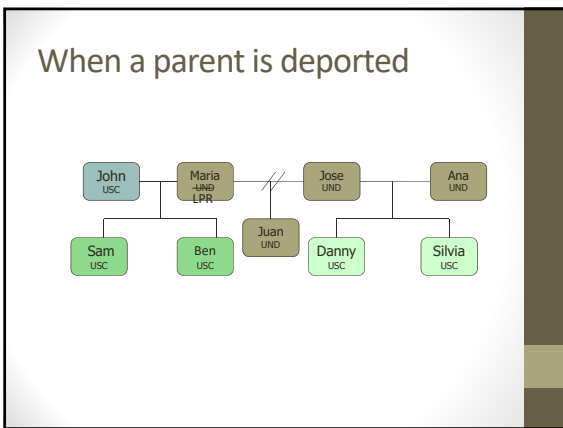
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### When a parent is deported

- Disruption in family dynamics
- Shifts in family roles
- Financial and practical hardships
- Depressed parent
- Conspiracy of silence
- Physiological changes in unborn children
- Depressed/anxious/angry children

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### Children's experience of grief

- Attachment theory - the tendency in human beings to make strong affectional bonds with others

	Low Emotional Avoidance		
Low Anxiety	SECURE	PREOCCUPIED	High Anxiety
	High Emotional Avoidance		
	DISMISSIVE	FEARFUL	

- Responses to separations from a caregiver vary depending on the individual's attachment style

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### Responses to separation according to attachment style

- Securely attached:  
Anxiety → Seek safety → Find safety → Anxiety diminishes
- Others:  
Anxiety → Seek safety → Don't find safety → Anxiety increases
  - Strategies:
    - Keep seeking (Preoccupied)
    - Avoid (Fearful)
    - Dismiss (Dismissive)

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### Manifestations of grief in children

- Young children
  - Acting out behaviors
  - Separation anxiety
  - Changes in eating and sleeping habits
  - Isolation (often modeled by parent)
  - Somatization
- Older children
  - Anger
  - Changes in eating and sleeping habits
  - Isolation
  - Somatization
  - Stoicism
  - Anxiety




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### When children are also undocumented

- Fear based on real, objective danger
- Shame
- Lack of support

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### Interventions

- Listen for what they already know
- Explain things in a language they can comprehend
- Focus on strengths and resiliency, but don't minimize their suffering
- Provide resources (i.e., support groups, therapy, legal services, practical help, etc.)

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### Cultural considerations

- Cultural competence involves three broad dimensions:
  - Cultural knowledge
  - Attitudes and beliefs toward culturally different clients and self-understanding
  - Skills and use of culturally appropriate interventions
- Culturally competent treatment requires an understanding of the complex interplay of pathology and resilience

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