

## Topic: Cultural Adjustment

### Activity: Changing Parent/Child Roles: A Critical Incident for Refugees

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<b>Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Participants will consider resettlement's potential impact on parental and child roles</li><li>✓ Participants will consider strategies for handling negative impacts on parental and child roles</li></ul>
<b>Lesson Time</b>	30 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Critical incident (included)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Optional: Flipchart paper, markers, tape</li></ul>
<b>Introduction</b>	<p>Resettlement drastically impacts many aspects of daily life, and this often includes parental and child roles in the family. Young people may learn English faster than their parents, and some act as interpreters for their family. Young people may also understand the culture quicker than their parents. These pressures can potentially strain the relationships between parents and children, affect school performance, and lead to destructive behaviors.</p>
<b>Practice</b>	<p>(Note: Feel free to change names to reflect your participants.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Put participants into small groups of 2-4 and ask each group to choose a spokesperson.</li><li>2. Read "Changing Parent/Child Roles: A Critical Incident for Refugees" aloud, pausing after each set of reflection questions.</li><li>3. In small groups, participants discuss the reflection questions. Listen in on the discussions to check for understanding.</li><li>4. After the last set of reflection questions, bring the large group together and ask the spokesperson from each group to summarize the main ideas from their group discussions. Discuss as necessary.</li></ol>
<b>Reflection Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● What happened in this critical incident?</li><li>● What can Aisha do now?</li><li>● Who can Aisha ask for help?</li><li>● What would you do if you were Aisha?</li></ul>
<b>Variations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Give flipchart paper to each small group and have groups draw and present the highlights of their discussion.</li><li>● If literacy levels allow, prepare flipchart paper with reflection questions for each small group and have groups write and present their answers.</li></ul>

## Changing Parent/Child Roles: A Critical Incident for Refugees

Aisha\* resettled in the United States with her teenage son Ali\*. Aisha knows very little English, and because of her busy work schedule she cannot attend orientation or English classes. Instead, she relies on Ali, who learned English quickly and translates for her. At first Ali was happy to help, but now he laughs at Aisha and deals with issues directly rather than translating for her. Aisha feels hurt because her son is not showing her respect.

### Stop and reflect:

- Why does Ali laugh at Aisha and deal with issues directly rather than translate for her?
- Is there anyone else who can translate for Aisha?
- What should Aisha do?

Aisha starts to receive many letters from Ali's high school. Each time she asks Ali to translate them, he says they are not important and throws them away. Eventually, she takes one of the letters to her co-worker, who tells her the letter says Ali is fighting with other students at school.

### Stop and reflect:

- Who did Aisha go to for help?
- Why do you think Ali is fighting at school?
- What are Aisha's options?

Aisha is angry and asks Ali why he is fighting at school. Ali says he does not like school and wants to quit. When Aisha tries to discuss this with him, Ali refuses to talk about it. Ali says he knows more about life in the United States than Aisha does.

### Stop and reflect:

- What can Aisha do now?
- Who can Aisha ask for help?
- What would you do if you were Aisha?



\* This critical incident is based on the real-life experience of resettled refugees. All identifying information has been changed to protect privacy.

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This document is a product of the Orientation Technical Assistance Project, funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, Grant No. 90RB0037. The views herein do not necessarily represent views held by the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

For more information about resources available from the Cultural Orientation Resource Center, visit [www.culturalorientation.net](http://www.culturalorientation.net).