

Topic: Housing

Activity: Animal Slaughter: A Critical Incident for Refugees

Objective

- ✓ Participants will be able to consider both U.S. laws and cultural norms concerning the raising, sale, slaughter, processing, and disposal of livestock
- ✓ Participants will be able to understand how these laws may affect their own practices

Lesson Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Critical incident (included)
- Optional: Flipchart paper, markers, tape

Introduction

In the U.S., laws concerning the raising, sale, slaughter, processing, and disposal of livestock are complex and vary in different places. They are typically more restrictive than laws previously encountered by refugees. In addition, while some participants may prefer to slaughter animals for religious, cultural, or economic reasons, animal slaughter is typically performed only by professional butchers in the U.S. Misunderstandings over these laws and cultural norms can result in tensions with neighbors, eviction, and/or legal action.

Practice

(Note: Feel free to change names to reflect your participants.)

1. Put participants into small groups of 2-4 and ask each group to choose a spokesperson.
2. Read “Animal Slaughter: A Critical Incident for Refugees” aloud, pausing after each set of reflection questions.
3. In small groups, participants discuss the reflection questions. Listen in on the discussions to check for understanding.
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.

Reflection Questions

- What happened in this critical incident?
- What are the consequences of Than’s choices?
- What could Than have done differently?

Variations

- Give flipchart paper to each small group and have groups draw and present the highlights of their discussion.
- If literacy levels allow, prepare flipchart paper with reflection questions for each small group and have groups write and present their answers.

Animal Slaughter: A Critical Incident for Refugees

Than* is a man who arrived in the United States one year ago. He is happy with his housing in the U.S. because there is a small yard behind his apartment where his landlord allows him to grow vegetables.

Than buys two chickens from a farmer and keeps them in the yard to save money on eggs. A neighbor complains to Than, saying that in their town, it is illegal to keep chickens in yards. Than does not want to get in trouble with the police, so he puts the chickens inside his apartment. Two days later, Than's landlord says she received complaints from Than's neighbors about chickens in his apartment. She tells Than he is not allowed to keep live chickens in his apartment.

Stop and reflect:

- What happened so far?
- Why is Than not allowed to keep chickens in the yard or his apartment?
- What should Than do now?

Than slaughters one of the chickens outside for his family to eat and plans to slaughter the other chicken in a few days for the New Year celebration. However, Than's neighbors see Than slaughter the chicken in the yard and feel upset. They have never seen someone slaughter an animal before. In the U.S., only professionals called "butchers" slaughter animals. Than's neighbors call the health department and an officer comes to Than's house. The officer warns Than that slaughtering chickens in the yard is against health rules and he should have his remaining chicken slaughtered by a professional butcher. He also says that there is a *halal* butcher in town if Than wants to eat *halal* meat.

Stop and reflect:

- Why were the neighbors upset about the chicken being slaughtered?
- What should Than do with his remaining chicken?

Than is upset because he knows how to slaughter chickens himself and thinks paying a butcher is a waste of money. Than decides to slaughter the remaining chicken himself in his apartment. However, his neighbors see him throwing away the carcass and complain again, and Than's landlord evicts him. Than is disappointed with his next apartment because he no longer has a yard for gardening.

Stop and reflect:

- What are the consequences of Than's choices?
- What could Than have done differently?