

Step into the Shoes of Your Neighbor

Purpose: To create empathy and understanding for those in our community who are experiencing hardship and barriers to well-being.

Audience: 4+ people

Time: 20-30 Minutes

1. Have each group member share how the past year has impacted them. Invite them to share experiences related to COVID-19, equity, etc. (2-5 min)
2. Assign each group member one of the roles from the list below:
 - a. You are a single mother trying to feed 2 children on a limited income
 - b. You are unemployed and do not have a high school diploma
 - c. You are someone struggling with a chronic illness without health insurance
 - d. You are an 8-year-old without permanent housing
 - e. You are a parent with a 4-year-old child with an undiagnosed learning disability not ready to start kindergarten
3. If needed, create break out groups so there are only 1 of each new “people” in every group
4. Have each group member share their persona and the challenges they are facing (10-15 min)
5. Facilitate discussion around struggles related to education, income and health if you were in these shoes (10 min)
6. Wrap up discussion and come back together

[Talking point] These aren't just hypothetical situations; these are real people and real calls 211 receives every day. 211 is a resource center that anyone can access 24/7 to get connected to resources such as food assistance, help paying bills, housing assistance, community clinics and many other services. Now we'll listen to a voice over of a real call 211 received last year:
<https://www.unitedwaydanecounty.org/wp-content/uploads/United-Way-211-Call.mp3>

7. Close and call to action

[Talking point] As you can hear from the video, many of our neighbors struggle with barriers to happy and healthy lives each day. United Way works to address those barriers and identify solutions to create a community where everyone can succeed in work, school and life. 211 call volumes increased dramatically during the pandemic and people are continuing to reach out for help finding vital resources. Please consider supporting 211 and other important programs by participating in our campaign this year.