

# The Power of Youth Voice in Post-Secondary Planning

*Chicago Housing Authority - Education Navigators*

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*“Youth engagement empowers young people to have a voice in decisions that affect them”*

*(Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2007).*

**Our goal as Education Navigators is to ensure students feel supported and gain independence in the post-secondary planning process.**

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We support SOAR participants by encouraging them to use their voices, today we highlight three issues:

**FAMILY GUILT  
& PRESSURE**

**FINANCIAL  
AID & SCHOOL  
CHOICE**

**SOCIETAL &  
RACIAL  
PRESSURES**



## FAMILY GUILT & PRESSURE

## SCENARIO 1

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- Age: 17
- African American Female
- Graduating High School Senior
- Single Parent Household Family
- Three members in the household

**CORE ISSUE:** Student & Mother have conflicting interests in school choice. Mom wants student to stay in Chicago, but student wants to move away.

## FAMILY GUILT & PRESSURE

# COMMON ISSUES

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1. Expectation to Work instead of College
2. Expectation to Stay Close to Home
3. Experience “Breakaway Guilt,” – Term describes Conflict Between Family Responsibility and Educational Mobility
4. Students Experience a Shift in Identity – Many Develop two Identities-One for Home and Another for College

## FAMILY GUILT & PRESSURE

### **As an Education Navigator...**

*My role is to impart students with the best information possible in order for them to make informed decisions*

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1. Seek Tailored Services and Support for First-Generation Students
2. Role Play with Students on Conversations with Stakeholders (ie: Family, Friends, College Staff)
3. Build a Support Network to Persist and Graduate – Find Allies to Advance Education Goals
4. Student Advocacy Provides an Effective Voice for Youth Who Face Significant Obstacles in School so They Receive the Resources They Need to Succeed Academically



## FINANCIAL AID & SCHOOL CHOICE

## SCENARIO 2

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- Age: 18
- African American Male
- Graduating High School Senior
- Single Parent Household Family
- 1<sup>st</sup> Generation College Student

**CORE ISSUE:** Student & Mother have conflicting interests in school choice. Mom wants him to go out of state, but he does not feel it is the best financial decision.

## FINANCIAL AID & SCHOOL CHOICE

# COMMON ISSUES

Students receive financial aid award letters from colleges listed on the FAFSA to assist in School Choice

- 1) The Cost of Attendance (COA)
- 2) Award Summaries
- 3) Out-of-Pocket Costs
- 4) Social & Academic Characteristics



- Youth and Families may not understand Award Letters
  - Youth and Families may make college choice based off the award letter, only- not considering characteristics of Institutions.

# FINANCIAL AID & SCHOOL CHOICE

## As an Education Navigator...

*My role is to provide as much information for youth to make the best decision & help them communicate it!*

- Review of Award Letters

College	Tuition & Fees	Room & Board	College Grants & Scholarships	Gov. Grants	Direct Loans	Out-of-Pocket
Option 1	\$11,823	\$9,760	\$1,000	\$11,764	\$5,500	\$3,319
Option 2	\$34,110	\$9,780	\$25,000	\$5,920	\$5,500	\$7,470
Option 3	\$32,078	-----	\$11,133	\$10,789	\$5,500	\$4,656

- Ask Reflective Questions about College Expectations
- Per SOAR participant:

“In looking at [option 1], it was the lowest cost. I like the programs, [option 1] is a diverse campus, and has a good support system[STAR program]. You’re not on your own... there are resources you can use”.



## SOCIETAL & RACIAL PRESSURES

# SCENARIO 3

- Age: 19
- African-American Male
- College Student Athlete & Full-Ride Scholarship Recipient.
- Low-income, Single-parent household. Academically grounded student.

**CORE ISSUES: Facing Racial Issues at a PWI & Addressing Micro Aggressions**

## SOCIETAL & RACIAL PRESSURES

# COMMON ISSUES

Common Issues Students of Color  
Face at PWI's:

- Racial Jokes & Verbal Comments
- Psychological Distress
- Segregated Spaces and Unequal Treatment





## SOCIETAL & RACIAL PRESSURES

### **As an Education Navigator...**

*My role is to acknowledge these realities, actively supporting my students as they consider their school options and responses to these pressures*

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Here are ways to support SOAR youth through these issues:

- Seek out partnerships, allies, and peer support
- Communicate issues with higher authority
- Address ignorance with knowledge and facts
- Create spaces and join organizations that support cultural identity.
- Seek out counseling and student support services
- Practice self-care

# CONCLUSION

FAMILY GUILT  
& PRESSURE

FINANCIAL  
AID & SCHOOL  
CHOICE

SOCIETAL &  
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PRESSURES

## 3 COMMON TAKEAWAYS

1. Encourage youth to build supportive networks - Family, School Staff, Peers etc.
2. Ask Reflective Questions about College Expectations
3. Research and Prioritize Post-Secondary Desires