

USCRI

Building Successful Futures: Empowering Newcomer Adolescents & Emerging Adults

Refugee Youth Resource Center

January 2026



Introductions

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Housekeeping

- Please write any questions you have throughout today's training in the Q&A box
- We would appreciate your participation throughout the presentation
 - Mentimeter
 - Chat
- Scan the QR code or click the link in the chat to access today's slides



What Is USCRI?



- Refugee Services
- Policy and Advocacy
- Legal Services
- Anti-Trafficking Services
- International Programs
- Children's Services

**Note: USCRI is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)*



Refugee Youth Resource Center

- Building provider capacity to foster refugee youth resilience and child safety
 - **RYRC Needs Assessment:** Open from January 28 - February 13
- Services include:
 - Monthly webinars
 - Targeted trainings
 - Case consultation helpline
 - Resource website for clients and providers
 - Community resource directory
- Visit us at refugee-youth.org

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the webinar, you will be able to...

- ① Identify the common challenges and cultural considerations newcomer youth navigate as they transition into adulthood
- ② Prepare newcomer youth and emerging adults to make decisions about their own future and set goals
- ③ Support newcomer adolescents and emerging adults in developing life skills, navigating systems in their community, and identifying resources in preparation for independent living



Newcomer Youth & Emerging Adults in the U.S.

Defining Terms

Newcomer

An individual with refugee, asylee, or parolee status, or other ORR-eligible populations* who are newly arrived in the U.S.

Emerging Adult

Anyone from late teens into mid 20s

* for more information, see [ORR Policy Letter 16-01](#)



Why This Transition Matters



- Youth become legal adults
- No longer required to be in school
- Formal support network may be reduced
- Changing societal and family roles and expectations
- Increased responsibilities
- Developmental changes
- Identity formation



Age of Arrival & Levels of Cultural Adjustment

Newcomers who arrive in the U.S. at a younger age tend to have...



- a faster rate of building English proficiency
- a higher rate of adjustment to U.S. culture
- a higher likelihood of friendships outside their ethnocultural group

- a higher likelihood of attending community college, a trade school, or university
- a higher likelihood of obtaining higher-wage jobs



Cultural Considerations: Independent Living

Early Independent Living



Moving out of the family home at 18

Rapid transition to adulthood

Independent finances

Extended Family Living

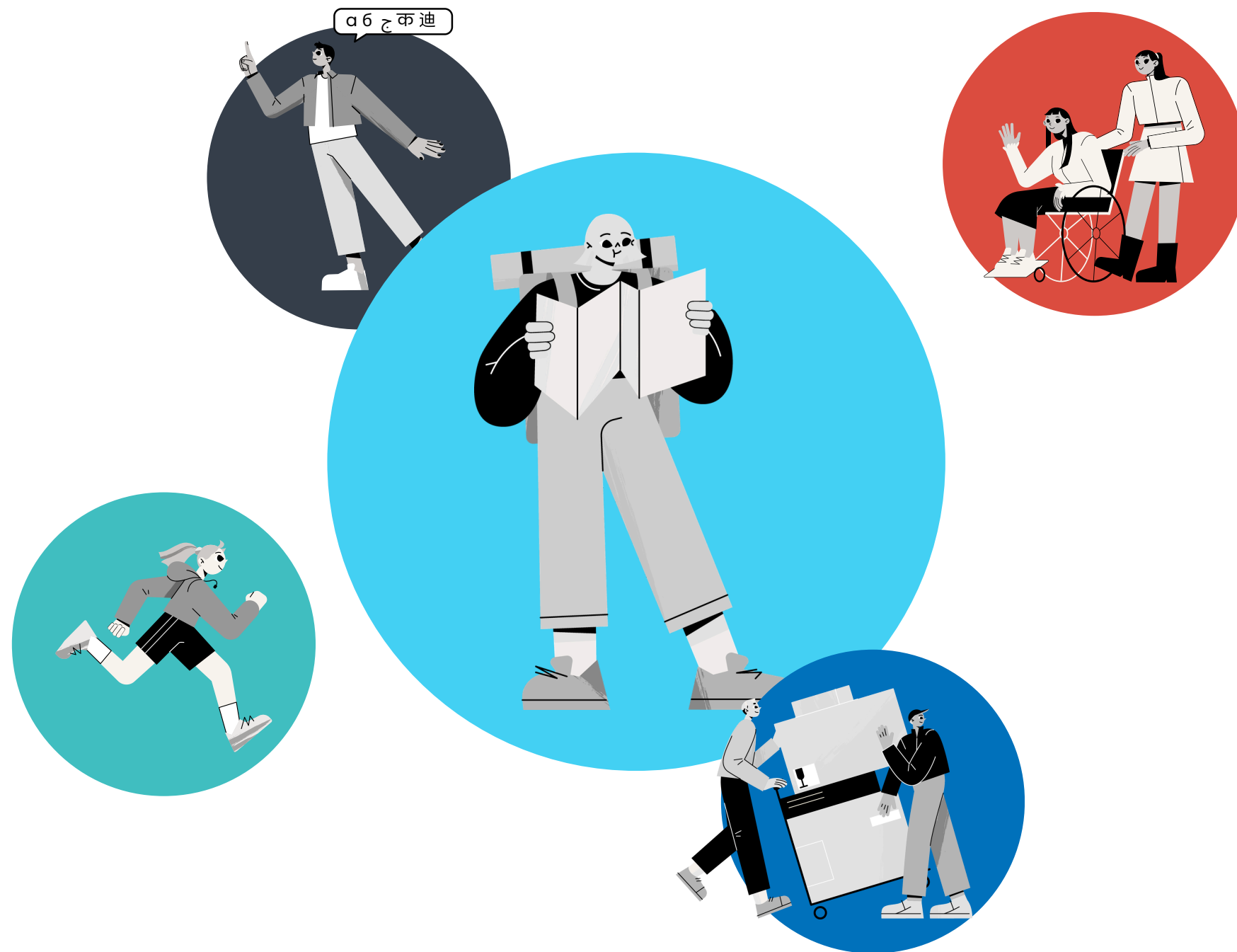
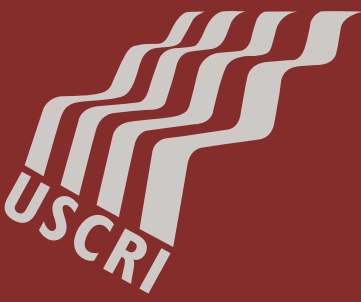
Living with family beyond 18 years of age

May have ongoing family support

May contribute to overall family finances



Common Strengths of Newcomer Youth & Emerging Adults



- High adaptability & mobility
- Resourcefulness
- Multilingual communicators
- Perseverance, determination, & strong work ethic
- Sensitivity towards other marginalized groups

Barriers That Can Slow Progress Towards Independent Living

- Navigating unfamiliar systems (public benefits, higher education, job applications, etc.)
- Financial constraints
- Communication across languages while building English proficiency
- Rebuilding social connections and community
- Planning for the future amid uncertain circumstances





Interactive Discussion

Imagine you're starting adulthood in a new place. What feels most urgent to figure out first?



Partnering with Youth on the Path to Independent Living

Five Principles of Positive Youth Development



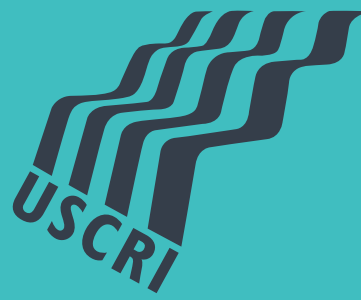
Fostering Connection & Supporting Healthy Autonomy



- Focus on relationship over tasks
- Ask open-ended questions & actively listen
- Ensure youth-led decision making
- Check in, offer advice, & encourage
- Create linkages to appropriate resources



Assessing Gaps, Knowledge, & Confidence



Ask Questions Like:

- What is an activity that makes you feel your best self? When do you feel most stuck?
- What are three things you enjoy doing?
- What's one new skill you would like to develop? What's one thing you want to know more about?
- How do you like to learn new information?
- When you have questions, who do you talk to or where do you go to find answers?

Identifying Youth-Led Priorities



Ask Questions Like:

- What matters most to you right?
- What responsibilities do you have at the moment?
- What hobbies, interests, or cultural practices do you hope to keep up with?
- Where do you imagine yourself in a year? 3 years? 5 year?
- Which of your goals are less urgent?

Setting Goals that are SMART



Short & Long Term Goals

- Setting short-term goals can build momentum toward longer-term goals.
- Plans can (and likely will) change. Goals can be useful tools to help youth remain on track when change happens.

SMART Goals

- S** Specific
- M** Measurable
- A** Attainable
- R** Relevant
- T** Time-bound

Case Example: Alim



 **Case Example - Alim**
USCRI Children's Services

 **U.S. COMMITTEE**
FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS



The video player interface features a central illustration of a young boy with short dark hair, wearing a black t-shirt and light-colored pants. A large red YouTube play button is overlaid on his chest. The video player has a dark grey header with the USCRI Children's Services logo and title on the left, and the USCRI logo and full name on the right. A dark grey footer contains the 'Alim' logo on the left and a 'Watch on YouTube' button on the right.

Case Example Discussion

What strengths do we see Alim already using?

What worries did you hear Alim express that might influence his decisions about his future?

What aspirations or priorities did you hear Alim identify?

Goal Setting Application



Alim's Goals

- **"I will get better at speaking English."**
- **"I will make new friends."**
- **"I will help my family financially."**
- **"I want to build a career outside of the restaurant industry."**



Goal Setting Application



Keeping Alim's priorities and circumstances in mind, how can we help him to adapt his goals as SMART goals?

- "I will get better at speaking English."
- "I will make new friends."
- "I will help my family financially."
- "I want to build a career outside of the restaurant industry."

- S** Specific
- M** Measurable
- A** Attainable
- R** Relevant
- T** Time-bound

Goal Setting Application



Alim's Original Goal

I will help my family financially.

Example SMART Goal

I will maintain part-time work at my current job to contribute to family expenses, starting with 15–20 hours per week for the next six months.

S

Specific: Work 15-20 hours a week

M

Measurable: Number of hours worked

A

Attainable: Working part time to maintain a focus on personal goals/priorities

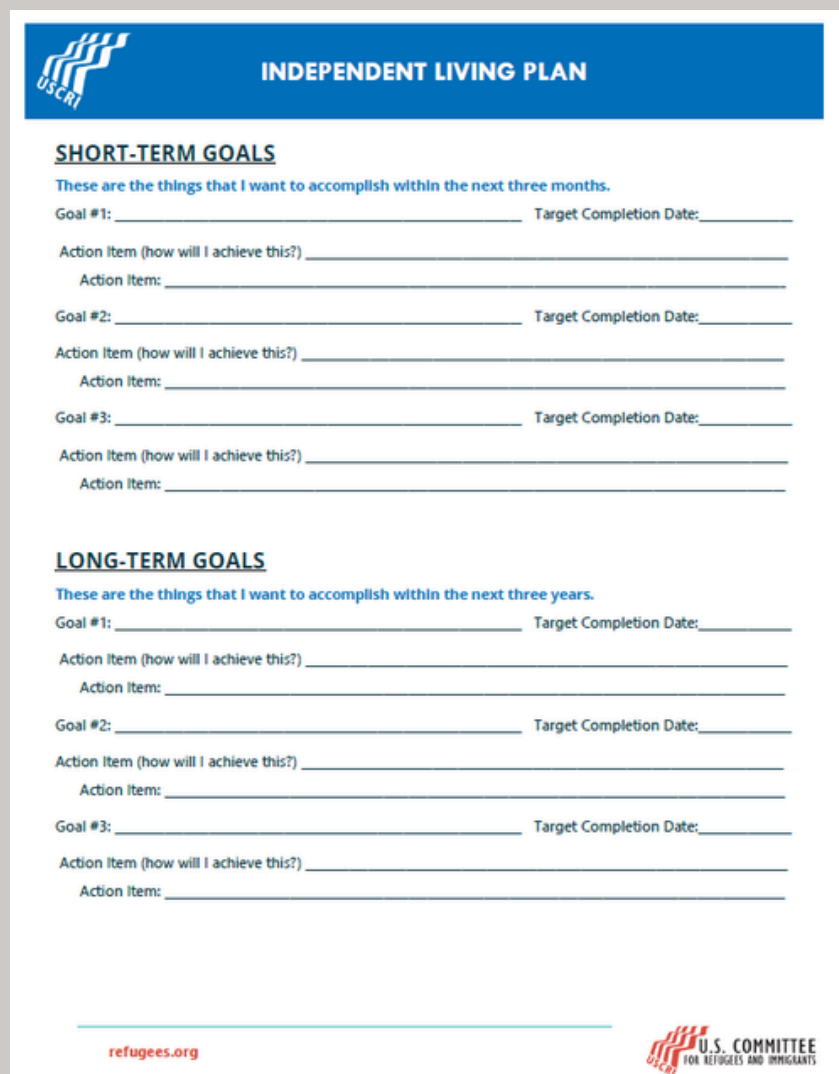
R

Relevant: Aligns with Alim's value of family and priority of helping supporting them

T

Time-bound: Six months

Goal Setting Tools



INDEPENDENT LIVING PLAN

SHORT-TERM GOALS
These are the things that I want to accomplish within the next three months.

Goal #1: _____ Target Completion Date: _____
Action Item (how will I achieve this?) _____
Action Item: _____

Goal #2: _____ Target Completion Date: _____
Action Item (how will I achieve this?) _____
Action Item: _____


Goal #3: _____ Target Completion Date: _____
Action Item (how will I achieve this?) _____
Action Item: _____

LONG-TERM GOALS
These are the things that I want to accomplish within the next three years.


Goal #1: _____ Target Completion Date: _____
Action Item (how will I achieve this?) _____
Action Item: _____

Goal #2: _____ Target Completion Date: _____
Action Item (how will I achieve this?) _____
Action Item: _____

Goal #3: _____ Target Completion Date: _____
Action Item (how will I achieve this?) _____
Action Item: _____

refugees.org 

[Independent Living Plan](#)



SMART GOALS PLANNER

NAME : _____ DATE: _____

Identify a goal that is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Break it into actionable steps, each with its own deadline.

S Specific: What exactly do I want to achieve?

M Measurable: How will I track my success?

A Attainable: How will I accomplish this goal?

R Relevant: Does this goal fit my values?

T Time-bound: When will I accomplish this goal?

What is my goal?

Completion Date: _____ How will I measure my success?

Steps to Achieve My Goal		Completion Date
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Challenges that may arise	How will I respond?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Helpful Tools	Helpful Resources
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

[SMART Goals Planner](#)



Equipping Newcomer Youth in Navigating Systems & Building Competence



Interactive Discussion

What systems do newcomer youth and emerging adults encounter in the U.S.?

Navigating Systems in Early Adulthood



- Transportation
- Housing
- Education
- Language Acquisition
- Career Exploration
- Money Management
- Laws & Rights
- Important Documents
- Health & Safety
- Independent Living Skills



Show & Tell: Coming Alongside Newcomer Youth



- Walk newcomer youth through applications (employment, bank, housing, secondary education, driver's license, public benefits, etc.)
- Offer to be a reference
- Offer to review resumes
- Conduct mock interviews
- Offer to accompany them to first appointments

Providing Holistic Support

- Network and collaborate across disciplines with other community partners that support newcomer adolescents and emerging adults
- Refer newcomers to other organizations



Case Example: Masha



Case Scenario - Masha
USCRI Children's Services



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 **Masha**

Watch on  YouTube

Case Example Discussion

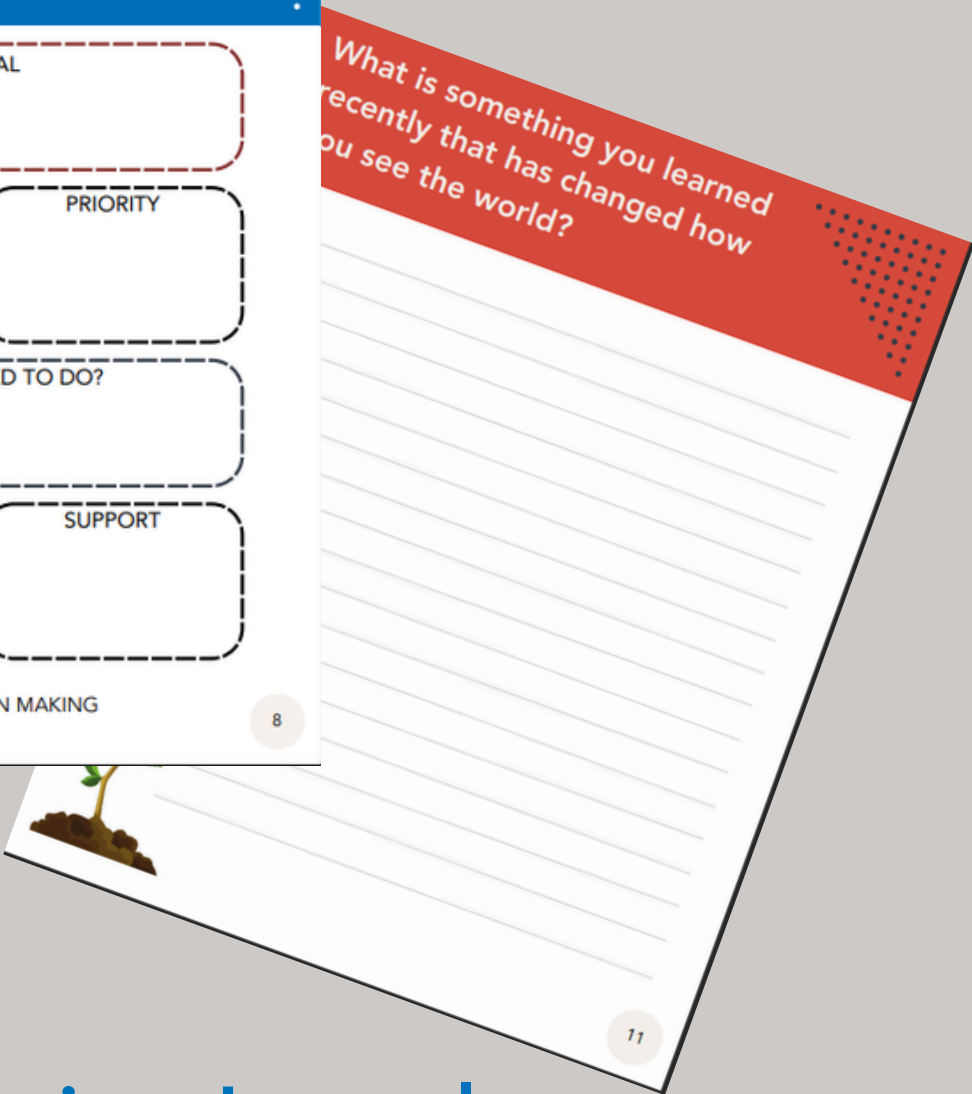
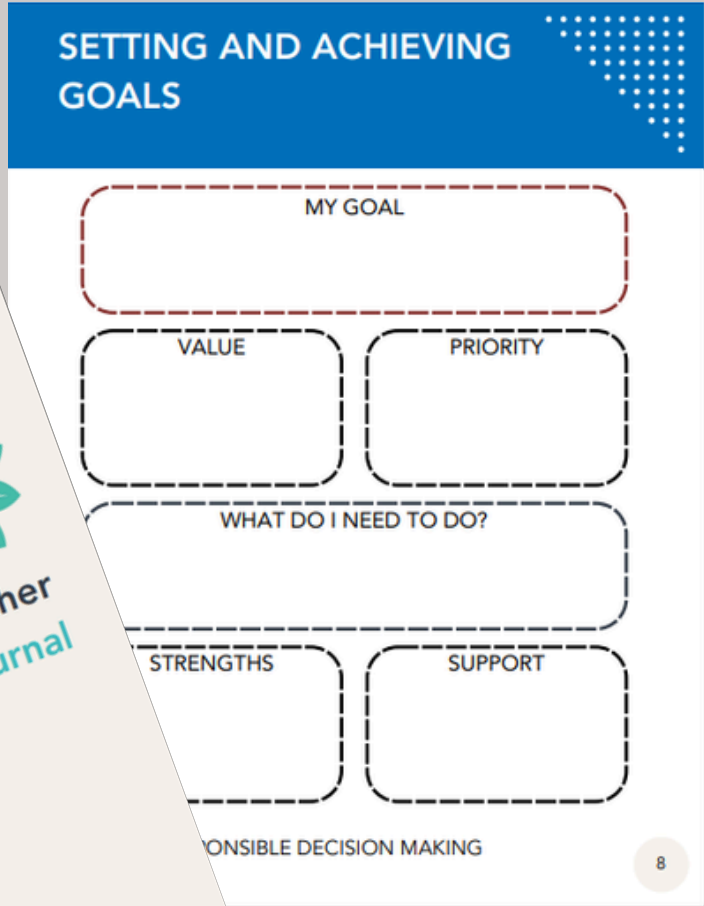
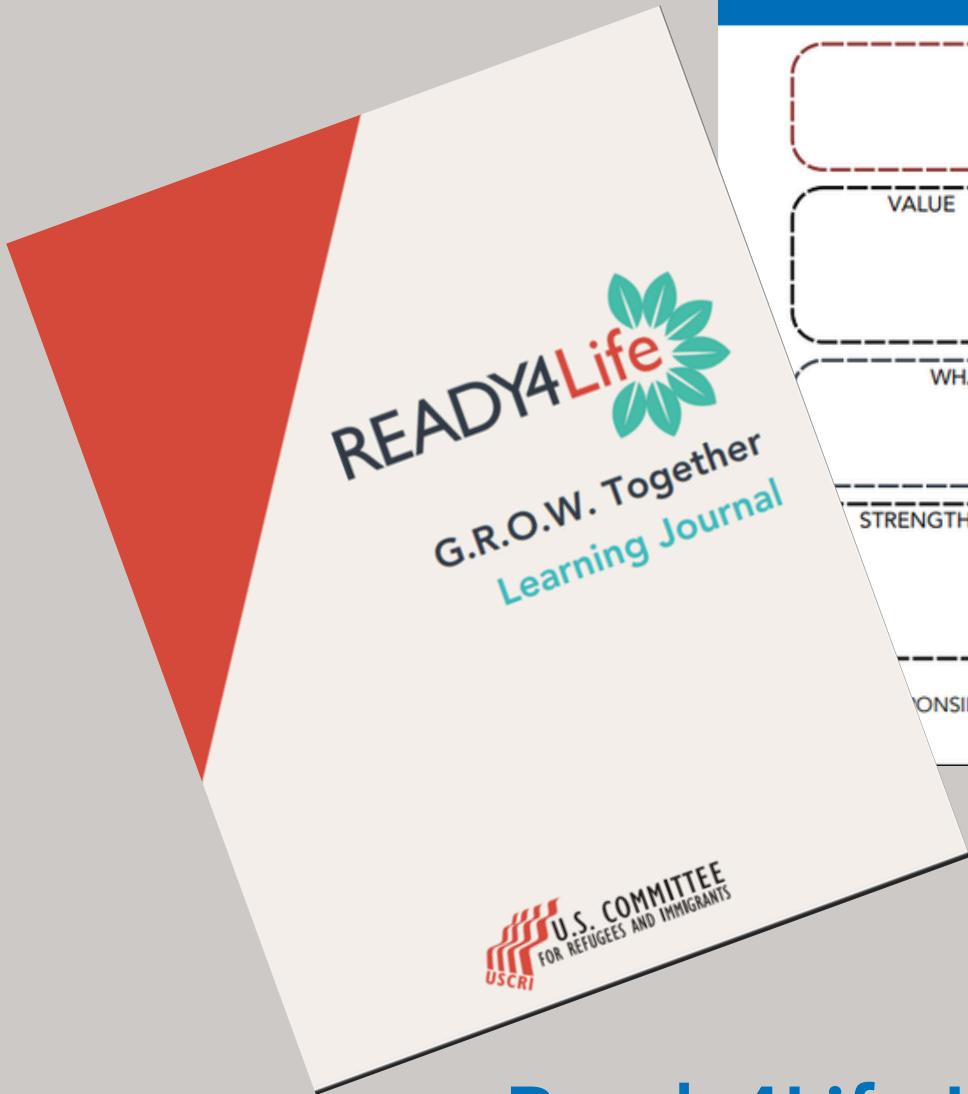
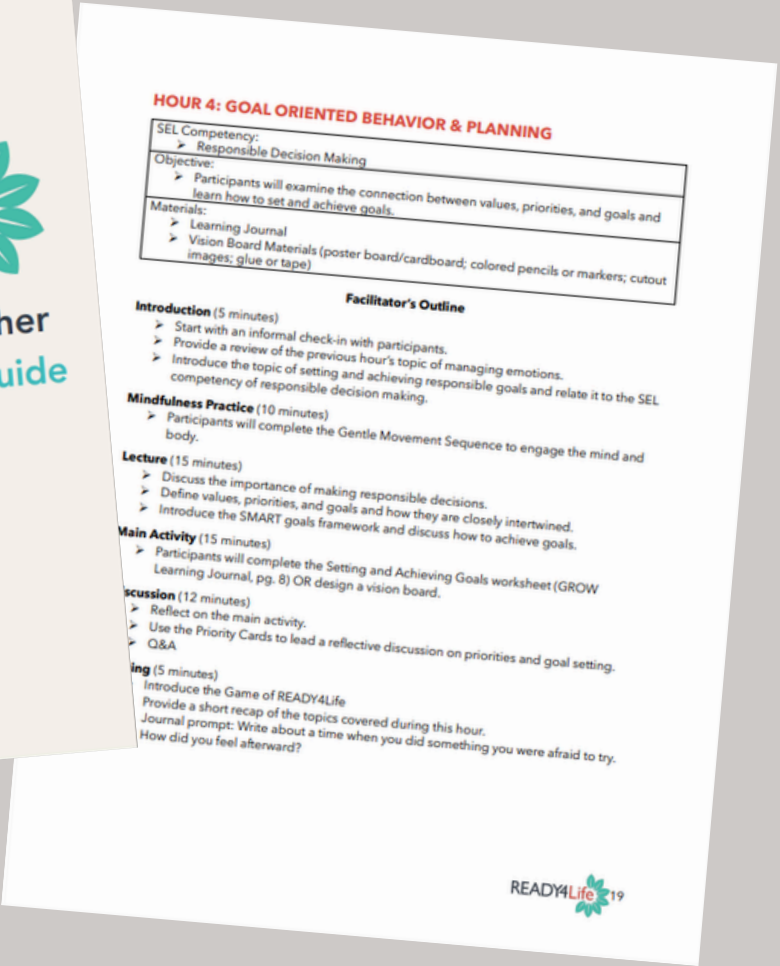
What information or resources could you connect Masha with to help her in achieving her educational and career goals?



Supporting Newcomer Youth in Developing Independent Living Skills



Ready4Life Curriculum



[Ready4Life Facilitator's Guide](#)

[Ready4Life Learning Journal](#)



Independent Living Plan

INDEPENDENT LIVING PLAN

Name: _____ Date: _____

THESE ARE MY RIGHTS:

- To live in a safe environment, where I'm treated equally and fairly.
- To be included regardless of my race, religion, or mental or physical ability.
- To have freedom of speech and religion.
- To have privacy.
- To live free from physical, verbal, or emotional abuse, harassment, or exploitation in any form.
- To remain silent if questioned by an immigration agent or government official.
- To speak to a lawyer and not sign anything first speaking to a lawyer.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS
These are important numbers I can call if I'm a victim of abuse or trafficking, need crisis or for information on my immigration case. If I am in immediate danger, I should call 911.

<input type="checkbox"/> 911 (for any emergency)	<input type="checkbox"/> ORR National Call Center (Centre ORR): 1-800-203-7001
<input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453	<input type="checkbox"/> National Human Trafficking Hot 7888
<input type="checkbox"/> Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988	<input type="checkbox"/> Planned Parenthood (Planifica 800-230-7526
<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233	<input type="checkbox"/> EOIR Hotline: Línea para averi corte: 1-800-898-7180
<input type="checkbox"/> Poison Help (Línea de Control De Veneno) - 1-800-222-1222	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS
Strengths: Which skills am I able to complete on my own?

<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal hygiene (showering, brushing)
<input type="checkbox"/> Preparing meals	<input type="checkbox"/> Basic First Aid
<input type="checkbox"/> Using kitchen equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Managing money
<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> Communicating with others
<input type="checkbox"/> Laundry	<input type="checkbox"/> Time management
<input type="checkbox"/> Making appointments	<input type="checkbox"/> Using a map
<input type="checkbox"/> Navigating public transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Areas of Need: Which skills do I want to improve as I prepare for independence?
A. _____ C. _____
B. _____ D. _____

TRANSPORTATION PLAN
This is how I plan to get around independently:
 Walking Biking Driving
 Family/Friend: _____
 Public Transportation
Instructions (type, cost, location): _____

MONEY MANAGEMENT
This is my banking information:
I currently have a: Checking Account Savings Account
If Yes, what is the name of my bank? _____
I will receive financial support from the following sources after I turn 18 (family):
 Source: _____ Monthly Amount: _____
 Source: _____ Monthly Amount: _____
 Source: _____ Monthly Amount: _____

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS
These are the documents that I should keep in my possession:
 Photo ID (Verification of Release or other ID)
 I-94 Form
 Employment Authorization Document Card
 ORR Eligibility Letter
 Other: _____
 Educational Records
 Medical Records
 Legal Documents
 OTIP Letter (if applicat

INDEPENDENT LIVING PLAN

COPING STRATEGIES & SELF-CARE PLAN
These are things I can do on my own to calm down, alleviate stress, and make myself feel better.

PEOPLE OF TRUST
These are people of trust who I can turn to for help.
Name: _____ Number: _____
Address: _____
Name: _____ Number: _____
Address: _____
Name: _____ Number: _____
Address: _____

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
This is where I plan to live after I turn 18:
Address: _____
Roommates/Household Members: _____
Support Plan: _____

HEALTH BENEFITS/INSURANCE
These are my current health benefits and insurance information (if applicable).
Name: _____ Insurance Information: _____ Number: _____
This is the name and contact information for my pharmacy.
Pharmacy Name: _____
Location: _____ Phone number: _____
These are my current medications.
Medication Name: _____ Dosage: _____
Instructions: _____
Medication Name: _____ Dosage: _____
Instructions: _____
Medication Name: _____ Dosage: _____
Instructions: _____

CURRENT SERVICE PROVIDERS
These are my current service providers.
Medical
Name: _____ Number: _____
Insurance Information: _____
Dental
Name: _____ Number: _____
Insurance Information: _____
Vision
Name: _____ Number: _____
Insurance Information: _____

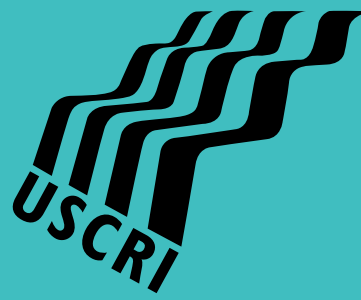
INDEPENDENT LIVING PLAN

Mental Health
Name: _____
Insurance Information: _____
Legal
Name: _____ Number: _____
Insurance Information: _____
Education
Name: _____ Number: _____
Insurance Information: _____
Recreation
Name: _____ Number: _____
Insurance Information: _____
Other
Name: _____ Number: _____
Insurance Information: _____

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Supporting Independence Through Ongoing Planning



- Skills development is not linear
- Youth's needs shift over time
- Independent living planning is a process, not a permanent document
- Ongoing assessment centers youth voice
- Changes in environment impact priorities
- Continuous assessment improves outcomes

Case Example: Ruya



Case Example - Ruya Part 1
USCRI Children's Services



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FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS



 **Ruya**

Watch on  YouTube

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcWuaC_Eb9w

Ruya's Independent Living Plan



INDEPENDENT LIVING PLAN

SHORT-TERM GOALS

These are the things that I want to accomplish within the next three months.

Goal #1: learning to live on my own Target Completion Date: 3 months

Action Item (how will I achieve this?) attend at least 2 Solid Ground Tenant Webinars

Action Item: attend a local independent living skills workshop

Goal #2: find a better paying job Target Completion Date: 1 month

Action Item (how will I achieve this?) search for 10 job postings on LinkedIn and Indeed

Action Item: create 2 new versions of my resume using Microsoft Word or Canva

Goal #3: rent an apartment Target Completion Date: 2 months

Action Item (how will I achieve this?) search 20 apartment listing online

Action Item: asking 3 people I can trust if they would rent an apartment with me

LONG-TERM GOALS

These are the things that I want to accomplish within the next three years.

Goal #1: earn an advanced degree or certificate Target Completion Date: 5 years

Action Item (how will I achieve this?) explore 5 career pathways based on my passions

Action Item: visit local community colleges and universities

Goal #2: _____ Target Completion Date: _____

Action Item (how will I achieve this?) _____

Action Item: _____

Goal #3: _____ Target Completion Date: _____

Action Item (how will I achieve this?) _____

Action Item: _____

INDEPENDENT LIVING PLAN

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

Strengths: Which skills am I able to complete on my own?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal hygiene (showering, brushing teeth, etc.) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preparing meals | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic First Aid |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Using kitchen equipment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Managing money |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shopping | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communicating with others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry | <input type="checkbox"/> Time management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making appointments | <input type="checkbox"/> Using a map |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Navigating public transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Areas of Need: Which skills do I want to improve as I prepare for independence?

- A. improving my english C. making new friends
 B. doing my own laundry D. taking care of myself

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

This is how I plan to get around independently:

- Walking Biking Driving

Family/Friend: _____

- Public Transportation

Instructions (type, cost, location): local bus and tram

MONEY MANAGEMENT

This is my banking information:

I currently have a: Checking Account Savings Account

If Yes, what is the name of my bank? XYZ Credit Union

I will receive financial support from the following sources after I turn 18 (family/friends, benefits, etc.)

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Source: <u>my job</u> | Monthly Amount: <u>\$1500</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Source: <u>food stamps</u> | Monthly Amount: <u>\$275</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Source: _____ | Monthly Amount: _____ |

INDEPENDENT LIVING PLAN

COPING STRATEGIES & SELF-CARE PLAN

These are things I can do on my own to calm down, alleviate stress, and make myself feel better.

- write in my journal
- draw or color something
- go for a walk in nature
- have fun with friends

PEOPLE OF TRUST

These are people of trust who I can turn to for help.

Name: my mentor Number: 123-456-7890

Address: 1234 Nowhere Boulevard

Name: my aunt Number: 000-000-0000

Address: 987 Some Place

Name: my social studies teacher Number: 987-654-3210

Address: 5670 Unknown Avenue

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

This is where I plan to live after I turn 18:

Address: on my own somewhere

Roommates/Household Members: I don't know

Support Plan: find a good roommate to help with rent


Case Example Discussion


As a provider working with Ruya, how could you support her to develop the independent living skills she identified?


How would you help Ruya identify and celebrate her own progress?


Case Example: Ruya, continued




 **Case Example - Ruya Part 2**
USCRI Children's Services

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 **Ruya**

Watch on  YouTube

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Beg4eenCkoE>



Conclusion & Resources

Presentation Takeaways



Increased awareness of the strengths and challenges newcomer youth face in transitioning to adulthood in the U.S.



Practical strategies to build the confidence of newcomer adolescents and emerging adults in making decisions themselves



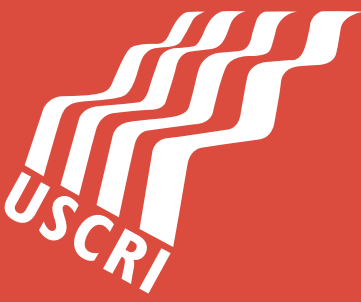
Tools to support emerging adult newcomers in developing independent living skills and navigating systems

Reflection

Share one strategy or new piece of information that you are taking away from this training that you will implement to support newcomer adolescents and emerging adults.



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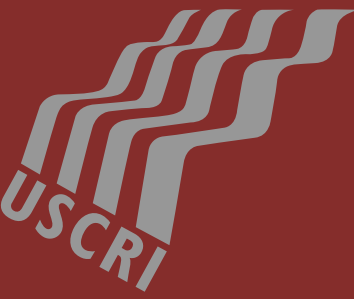
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REFUGEE YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER



Improving outcomes for refugee children, youth, and their families through resources, education, and provider support

Additional Resources



Higher Education

- [Higher Ed Immigration Portal | Quick Guide: Refugee Eligibility for Admissions to Higher Education](#)
- [USCRI | Guide to Higher Education - Spanish](#)

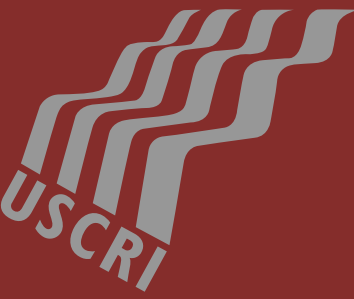
Employment

- [USCRI | Career Exploration](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor | Wages and the Fair Labor Standards Act](#)
- [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation | Youth Employment Resource Center](#)
- [Switchboard | Remote Job Readiness Resources for Clients with Lower Levels of Digital Literacy](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor | American Job Centers](#)

Financial Literacy

- [USCRI | Life Skills Toolkit - Finances](#)
- [USCRI | Youth Handout - Finances](#)
- [Switchboard | Resource Collection: Financial Empowerment for Refugees and Newcomers](#)
- [Switchboard | Three Ways to Support Newcomers' Personal Financial Health](#)
- [Federal Trade Commission | What to Know and Do](#)
- [Consumer Finance Protection Bureau | Tools and resources to use with the people you serve](#)
- [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation | Youth Banking Resource Center](#)
- [The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency | Financial Literacy Resource Directory](#)

Additional Resources



Life Skills

- [USCRI Refugee Youth Resource Center | SMART Goals Worksheet](#)
- [USCRI Refugee Youth Resource Center | Independent Living Planner](#)
- [USCRI | Ready4Life Curriculum & Journal](#)
- [Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center | Life Skills Checklist](#)
- [HIAS | Digital Literacy for Life and Work](#)
- [Solid Grounds | Tenant Webinars](#)

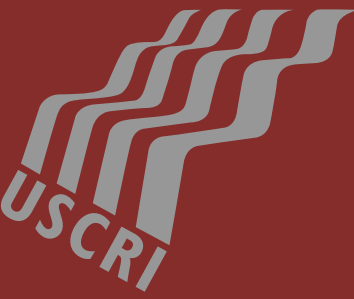
English Language Acquisition

- [SIL Global | English with Newcomers](#)
- [Switchboard | What strategies are effective for English language acquisition in newcomer populations?](#)

Safety

- [USCRI | Types of Relationships Interactive](#)
- [USCRI | Internet Safety](#)
- [USCRI | Online Predators](#)
- [USCRI | Safety Planning for Foreign National Children and Youth Survivors of Trafficking](#)
- [Switchboard | Introduction to Safety Planning](#)
- [IRC | Safety Planning in Resettlement, Asylum, and Integration Settings](#)

Additional Resources



Laws & Rights

- [Switchboard | Supporting Clients Through the New USCIS Refugee Review Process](#)
- [IRAP | I live in the US and I have refugee status, What should I know?](#)
- [IRAP | Information for people who are from a country listed in the travel ban and currently in the US](#)
- [IRAP | I have refugee status in the United States. What should I do if I am detained by ICE?](#)
- [NELP | Understanding Your Rights When Losing Work Authorization: FAQs for Immigrant Workers and Advocates](#)
- [Refugees International | Explainer on Termination of Parole](#)
- [Immigrants' Rights | American Civil Liberties Union](#)
- [iAmerica | Know Your Rights](#)
- [International Institute of Minnesota | Know Your Rights](#)

Partnership Building

- [Switchboard | Building Community Partnerships Across the Resettlement Landscape: Tips for Getting Started](#)
- [Switchboard | Identifying Strategic Local Partnerships: A Guide for ECBOs](#)
- [Switchboard | Strategies for State Refugee Coordinators to Support and Partner with Communities](#)
- [Switchboard | Establishing and Maintaining Employer Partnerships](#)



Thank You!

Contact Us:

refugeeyouthrc@refugees.org

The production of this material was supported by Grant #90RB0054 from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) and do not necessarily represent the official views of ACF.