



Hunger Simulations and Lessons Appropriate for Older Group (Grades 6 and up)*

How is Our Country's Hunger Problem Complex?

Description:

The group will read scenarios from different family situations that are food insecure. The group will learn about the interrelatedness of the issues that cause food insecurity and can result in hunger in our country.

Objectives:

Group will better understand:

1. The relationship between availability of food, accessibility of food and knowledge of how to get and use food in their community.
2. How the issue of food insecurity in our country requires more than just food and cash donations to solve.
3. What causes food insecure and can aid in food security.
4. How the more significant the barriers to food security can make support more difficult

Time:

About 20-30 minutes

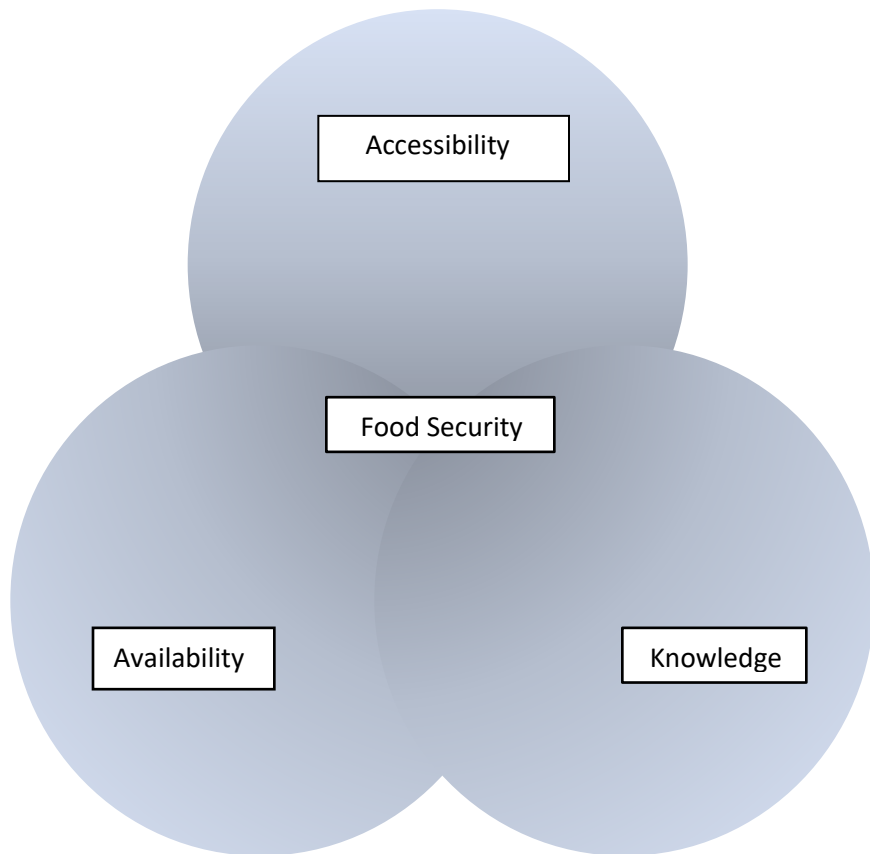
Materials and Preparation:

Print enough copies of the scenarios for groups of five (so for a group of 20 people, print four copies). And cut up the scenarios for each group for each to have one of each of the scenarios.

Plan:

1. Talk about hunger. Ask the group to raise their hands if they have ever been hungry. Ask for experiences about how they felt both emotionally and physically. Ask if it would feel different if they knew there wasn't any food available for them to eat. Talk about the difference between what they might feel when they need to eat, but have access to food, and for those who consistently do not have the right food to support their needs. Over 10% of our families in the United States make \$15,000 or less and have a difficult time providing for their everyday needs.

2. Draw the following Venn Diagram on a flipchart or whiteboard. After groups read and determine if the hunger situation in each scenario is caused by availability, accessibility or knowledge. Ask questions like: Can everyone get food? Does everyone know how to get and use their food? Is there enough food for everyone? Groups discuss where in this diagram, the scenarios fall. Groups come to consensus through discussion together.



Scenario #1 – Carly’s Family

Carly’s family moved to their new home in the city last year. Carly has four brothers and sisters. Her mom must stay home with her siblings and her dad is always working very hard. Unfortunately, his job doesn’t pay enough money to feed his big family. There are five kids in total! It’s hard to pay for the house, car and water and electricity each month, but it’s even harder to find any money for food or anything else like new shoes for Carly to play basketball at school. Unlike most families, Carly’s family doesn’t have enough money to buy lots of food at the grocery store. 28% of our total population in the United States must choose between paying utilities or buying food.

Scenario #2 – Emile’s Family

Emile was born in Mexico, but his family moved to the US last year. Emile’s dad is a skilled home repairman and gets jobs as often as he can. It’s hard for him, though, because of the language barrier as he only speaks Spanish. Their family doesn’t always have enough food. Emile’s mom found out about some places that help families like theirs when she dropped Emile off at school. But she doesn’t know the area where they live and how to ask for directions, so she can’t find the resources their family needs.

Scenario #3 – LaKeitha’s Family

Summer vacation just started, and most kids are talking about their vacations and are acting very excited about the coming months. Unfortunately for LaKeitha, this is a stressful time of the year for her and her mom. She lives with her mom and her baby brother and her mom lost her job just a few months ago. LaKeitha’s mom is only working a couple days a week right now and all that money goes to the rent, utilities and gas for the car. It’s always been hard for her mom to find grocery money and the right healthy food for her brother, but the summer is the worst for LaKeitha because she doesn’t get breakfast and lunch at school. Over 30 million children get free lunch at school. Only 15% access summer meal programs around the country.

Scenario # 4 – Chris’ Family

Chris is a very inquisitive third grade student whose favorite subject is math! When Chris doesn’t get enough food for his growing body, his stomach is always growling and it’s very hard for him to concentrate. Sometimes he squirms in his seat and gets in trouble with his teacher. Chris’ parents both have jobs, but they just don’t pay very much and often his parents don’t have enough money to buy the food they need to support their family. 15-30% of families suffering from food insecurity hold at least one job.

Scenario #5 – Daniel’s Family

Daniel’s grandparents owned a farm. When his grandparents died, Daniel and his wife moved to their farm, even though he didn’t know much about running a farm. He and his wife wanted to grow their own food and sell the extra to pay the bills. They don’t know how difficult it would be to take care of the crops and they haven’t even been able to grow enough food for themselves yet. They have no income to pay their bills and live far away from the nearest grocery store. They have limited money for gas to make long trips and, of course, don’t have enough to spend on groceries too.

*Realize that these lessons are meant to support understanding and compassion for those in need. Be sensitive to the needs of your youth and be careful to know their own situations and how they may respond.