

# Being a Minority on a Majority Campus: Scenarios and Problem Solving

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**GOAL:** To experientially explore some of the challenges that minority students face on a majority campus. To introduce and apply a general problem solving model to these challenges.

**TIME REQUIRED:** At least forty minutes.

**MATERIALS:** A chalk board, over-head, or newsprint and markers.

**PHYSICAL SETTING:** A room where participants can participate in a discussion. If role plays are to be conducted, more room may be necessary.

**PROCESS:** As a part of a workshop on multiculturalism, diversity or minority struggles on a majority campus: (a) read one of the scenarios, (b) discuss it, and then (c) introduce the problem-solving model and then (d) apply the model to the scenarios in a discussion or (e) role play(s).

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## Problem Solving Model

### 1. Identify the Problem

- What are your perceptions? How can you check this out?
- Ask, Gather information from other sources
- What cultural values are affecting this situation?

### 2. Identify your Feelings

### 3. Identify Possible Solutions - What is under your control?

- Accommodations - adapting self to situation
- Adjustment - altering situation
- Resources - people, place, thing
- Prevention - an ounce of prevention...

### 4. Choose and Implement

### 5. Evaluate and Revise

- Discussion Questions
    - What is the problem?
    - What feelings might the student have?
    - What are some possible solutions?
  - Role Plays
    - Based on scenarios or personal experiences of participants.
    - Utilize problem solving model and feedback from others.
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## Scenarios

Tomuda is from a small country in Africa and this is his first semester on campus and in the U.S. There are not any other people from his country on campus and he feels lonely. He feels awkward meeting Americans and

does not felt very close to other African students he has met.

Jackson is an African-American student who holds a student work job at an office on campus. When a friend dropped by to say hi, Jackson said, "Yo, what up?". As soon as his friend left, Jackson's boss confronted him about his speech and said that "we don't talk that way in this office."

Daniel sent his resume to several businesses in the area to try and get a summer job. He is granted an interview, but when the company director meets him and realizes that he is Hispanic, he treats him coolly and only interviews him for about twenty minutes even though an hour had been scheduled. Daniel is not offered that job.

Ann is an Asian-American freshman who is moving into the residence hall. When her white roommates' parents meet her for the first time they ask Ann if she is studying math or engineering and suggest that Ann will be able to help their daughter study for her Algebra class. Ann is planning to study anthropology and does not care much for math.

After living in a multi-racial residence hall her freshman year, Denise hears that things are much nicer on the other side of campus. As she moves into her new residence hall at the beginning of her sophomore year, she realizes that she is the only African-American on her floor.

Tom is a white sophomore who lives with an African-American roommate, Andrew. Tom and Andrew are becoming good friends but in the dining hall, Andrew usually sits with other African-Americans and Tom usually sits with other whites. One day, Tom asks Andrew why he never sits with him at dinner and Andrew asks Tom the same question.

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**SOURCE: This exercise and the scenarios were developed by Judith Holder, Barbara Eldredge, and Jeff Brooks-Harris while they were a part of the Minority Programming Team, Counseling Center, Southern Illinois University.**