



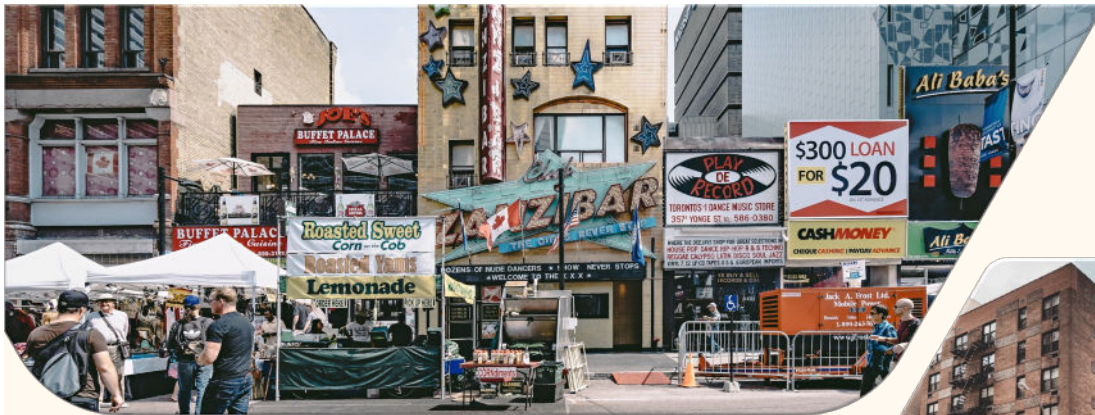
*Realizing
Dreams:
Expanding
Support for
Undocumented &
Mixed-Status
Family Students*

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Adolescent Development
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Takeaways

- 1. USRCs are special places that can powerfully transform student lives**
- 2. Let's expand services, regardless of our starting points**



A bit about me & what brings me here

**Socio-cultural psychologist,
immigration scholar, "immigration
psychologist"**

**Conducted qualitative research with
undocumented communities for 12+
years to understand the psychology
of migrant "illegality"**

Immigration is personal to me

*1.5 gen Polish-Canadian immigrant & 1st
gen US immigrant*

*Grew up within Polish community where
friends and family were undocumented*

*Their stories inspired my doctoral studies
and professional journey*



Toronto (2012-2015)

Research with Polish 1st generation undocumented adult immigrants



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Chicago (2015-2017)

Research & advocacy work with ethnically diverse 1.5 generation undocumented children & youth



Sacramento (2017-)

Research has focused on well-being of undocumented students

Collaborations with Dreamer Resource Center (e.g., facilitated weekly support group, seminar with undocumented students)

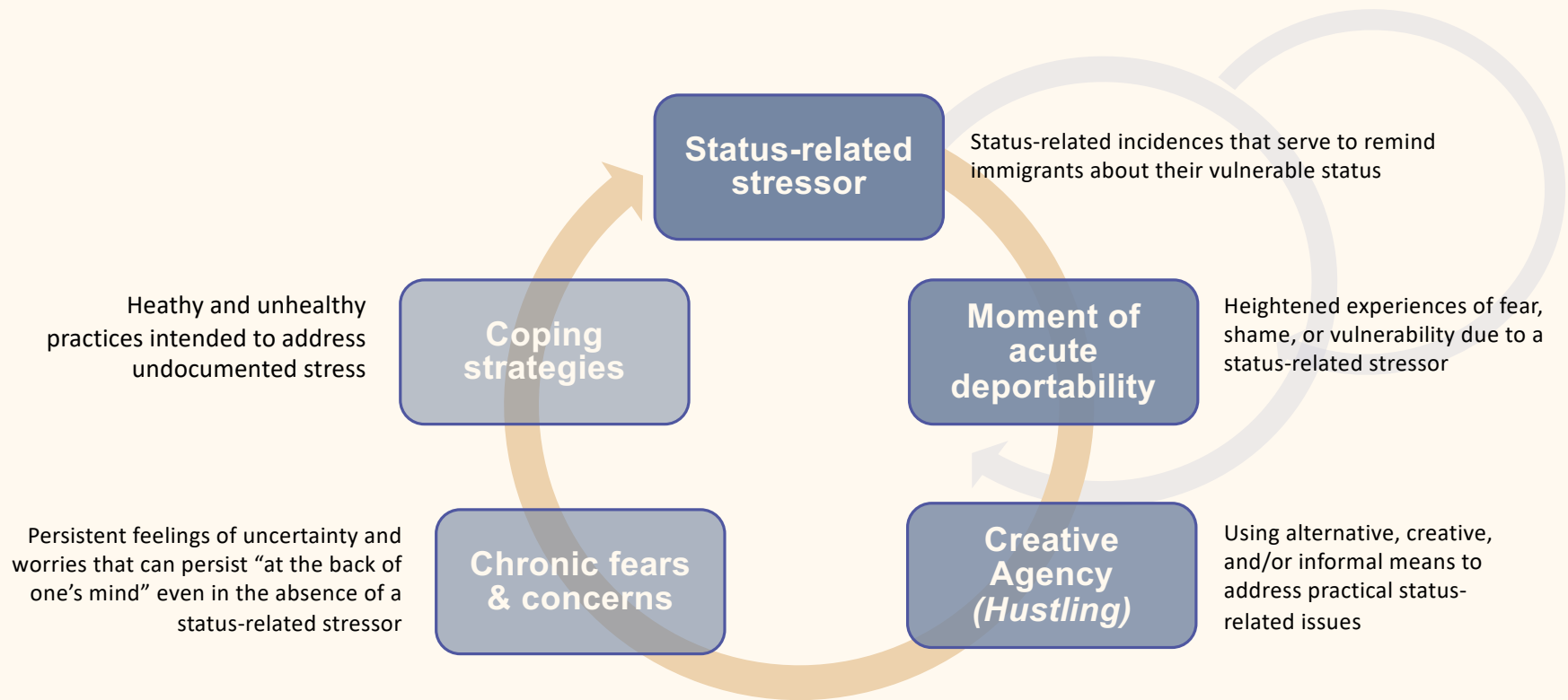


Key findings from long-term research

- 1. There is an Undocumented Stress Cycle (USC)**
- 2. There is variation in the USC, much of which is dependent on access to support**

Hence, your support can be transformative for student lives

The Undocumented Stress Cycle



Research Question

What happens to USCs when students encounter supportive staff and services at USRCs on campus?

USRCs = Supportive offices on campus dedicated to the success of undocumented and mixed-status family students

Service Categories	Types of Services & Activities
Financial Support	Financial aid advising, emergency grants, gift cards, housing support
Legal Support	Consultations with attorneys, DACA renewals, legal updates
Academic Support	Guidance with admissions, scholarship applications, graduate school applications
Wellness Support	One-on-one counseling, group counseling, wellness workshops
Professional Development	Internship opportunities (stipend based), professional development workshops, mentorship
Community Building	Social events on and off campus, maintaining websites & newsletters, tabling at orientation
Advocacy	Delivering UndocuAlly trainings, consulting with other departments

Study Overview

Collaborative study with Dr. Carly Offidani-Bertrand, California State University San Marcos

Methods: Qualitative interviews and focus groups with 14 USRC coordinators and 20 undocumented students from across California

Analysis: Observe psychological impact of Undocumented Student Resource Centers on various aspects of the students' undocumented stress cycle

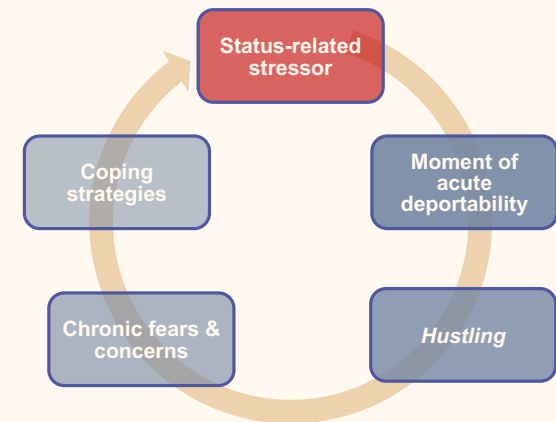
Findings: Receiving USRC services and supports transformed *every* aspect of students' undocumented stress cycles

Findings

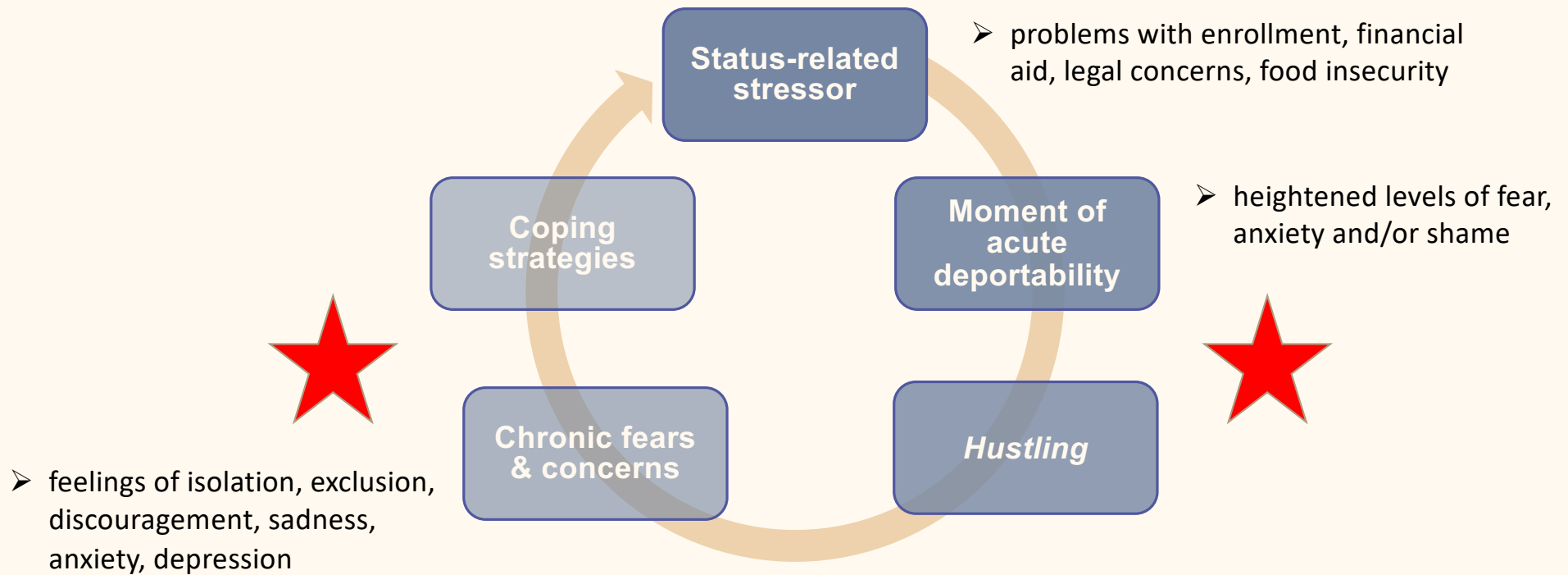
1. Merely learning about the Center engendered relief from status-related stressors & hope

When I found out that there is centers like this, it gave hope, I guess, cuz ... you know you can't just disclose your status to anyone (.) like it's hard to trust anyone with your status so knowing that there's like, a safe space for people like us in a university... gave hope that we can go to a university and get a degree.

- Chesca



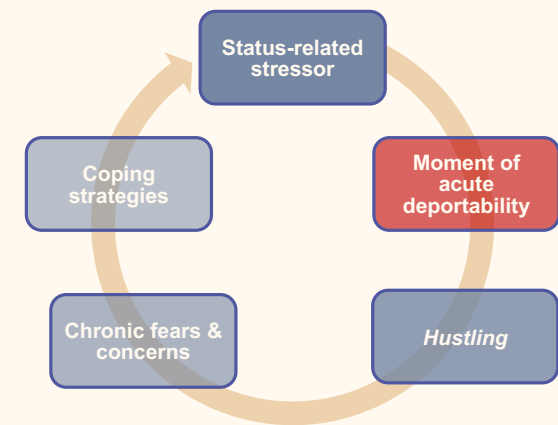
2. Most frequent initial points of contact



3. Accessing support helped relieve moments of acute deportability

I started freaking out, I was like “Wait, what? I'm not gonna be able to afford that.” I was freaking out in- in my head, I was going to take a semester off and just work to save money, but my mom got mad at me. She's like, “There has to be some way.” So I just remember just googling “Dreamers [my California University]” and then the Center came up and I went and they helped me with the financial aid side of things... So it totally saved me. I was gonna have to take some semesters off to work to get money until I found out, so I'm really thankful.

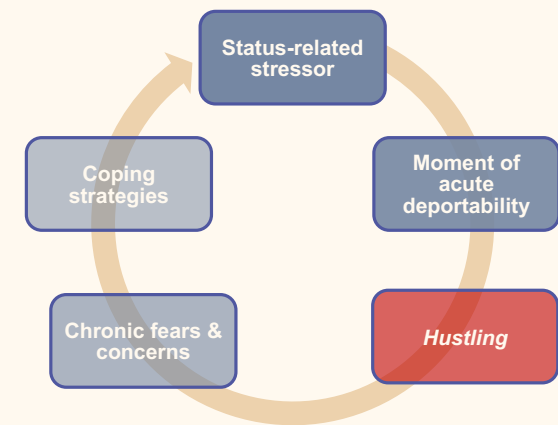
- Jose



4. With guidance from staff, students learned strategies for hustling

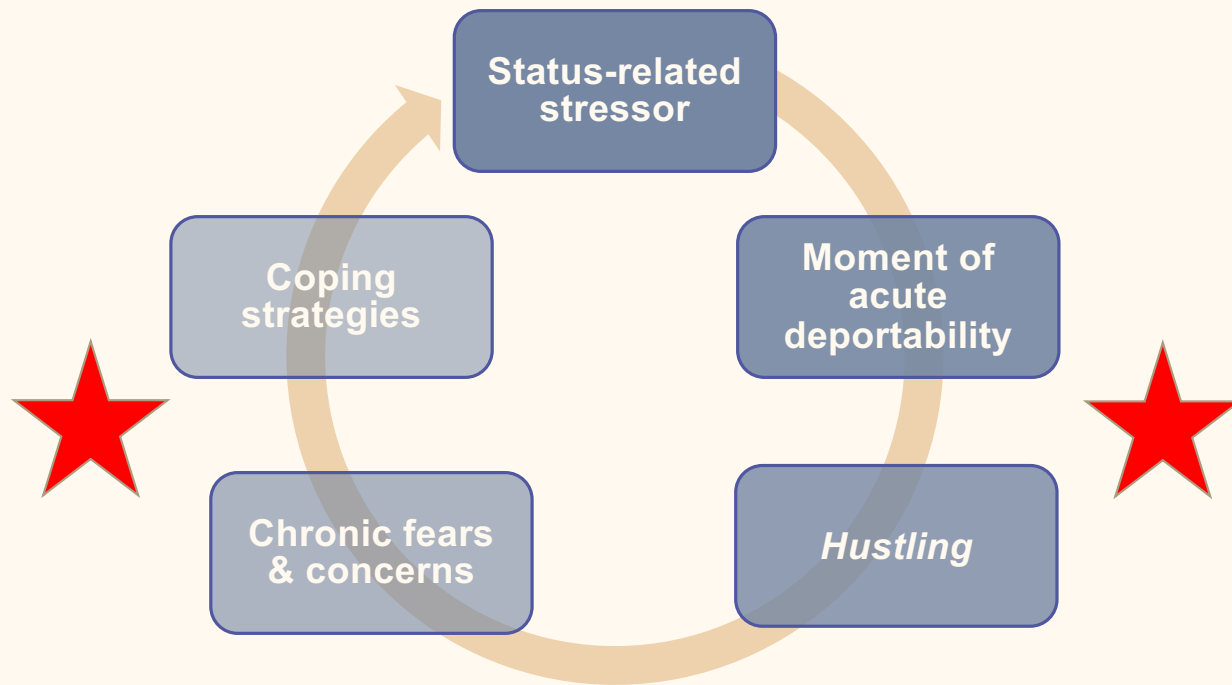
It was exciting because I had people that could offer me the information that I needed and I didn't feel like before [it] was more like “Oh, you have to just fill out this form” or you know, “just go to this area and go to this area.” Not knowing the [college] environment, it was very overwhelming... having someone that understood me and understood the process that I had to fill out or the programs that I needed to fill out in order to qualify for certain things was a lot more useful.

- Elizabeth



Most frequent initial points of contact

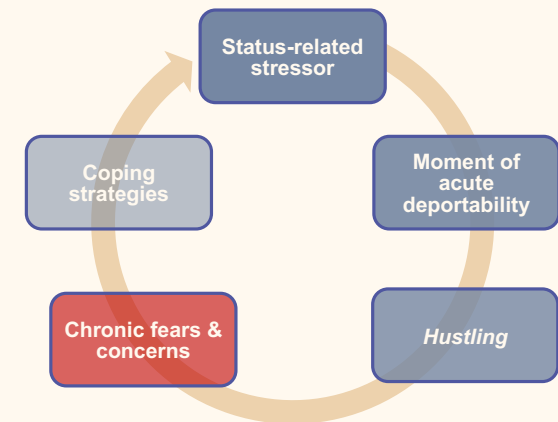
My mental health was a little struggling ... I was depressed. So for me to really get out of that depression as well, I needed to find community.
- Angelo



5. Relief from chronic fears and concerns

So that feeling when you find your grandma again, I mean, your mom at the grocery store, it's like, "Oh okay, I'm not lost" or you feel like that sense of relief where it's like somebody that, you know, you can trust. ... It was like, okay, I found a community where, I found a space where, I know I can trust that the people that run the space can help me in some way.

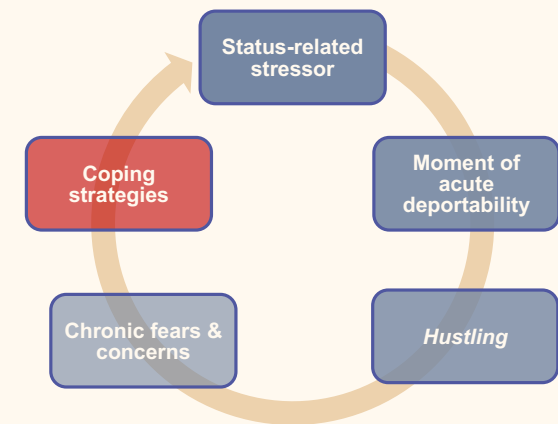
- Angelo



6. New capacities to cope with chronic concerns

In my head, I thought I couldn't do nothing, like I couldn't do absolutely zero things-- I was scared to move, because then they're going to know about me... but having this center at my current school I found out that I was wrong, you know there's so many things that I can do ... it just definitely shifted my way of thinking and not being so close minded and, just like, there are resources out there for us, we just have to ask.

- Sierra



7. Transformed relationships to oneself and one's status

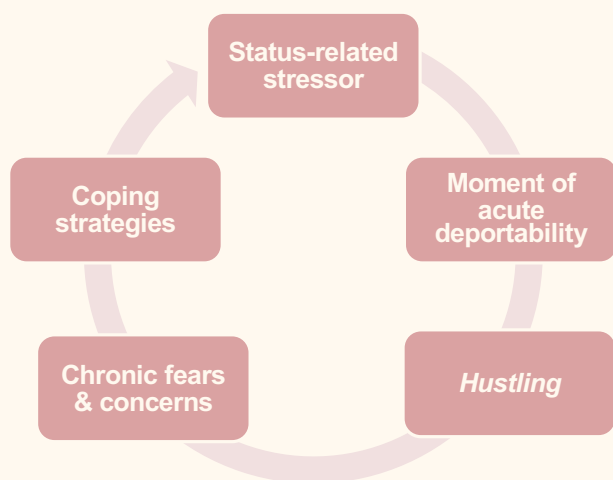
It's made me more comfortable and be more outspoken in being more proud of who I am and wanting to learn more about myself.

- Elizabeth

Oh, it definitely- I would say it's definitely helped me, I guess, in a way embrace my status, I don't see it as a weakness but more of like "Yes, I am an undocumented student, but look what I've been able to do because I'm not giving up or I'm not losing this idea of hope for what I could potentially do."

- Mark

USRCs positively impacted ALL aspects of the USC



Key factors that contributed to these impacts:

- Visible presence of support services
- Access to relevant supports (academic, financial, legal, housing, wellness)
- Guidance to build resourcefulness (co-hustling)
- Community
- Opportunities for personal and professional development

Ways to Expand Your Positive Impact

- **Make current supports visible (website, signs)**
- **Create task force / committee with your Undocumented Student Liaison, students, supportive faculty & administrators**
- **To build a Center, see Immigrantsrising.org for a guide**
- **Work with students & allies to build community (e.g., host social gatherings, workshops)**
- **Host UndocuAlly trainings (see Sacramento State > Dreamer Resource Center > Resource Library for free training videos!)**

Thank you!

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