

## OVERVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

In the United States, refugees will need to understand the impact of hygiene on health, interpersonal relationships, and finding and keeping a job. In some cases, refugees may find that American hygiene norms differ from those in other places they have lived.

### KEY MESSAGES

- The practice of proper hygiene in the United States is inclusive of personal hygiene, cleanliness in the home, and respecting public spaces, including neighborhoods and the workplace. There are basic actions that refugees can take to practice
- proper personal hygiene and maintain cleanliness in their homes and public spaces.
- Practicing proper hygiene helps to maintain good health and prevent the spread of diseases both in and outside of the home and workplace.
- There are also negative consequences for not maintaining the cleanliness of the home and following accepted hygiene practices in public spaces. These may include trouble with landlords and employers or fines for littering.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

After this lesson, refugees will be able to:

- List the different areas of proper hygiene practices in the United States (personal, home, public spaces).
- Identify a list of actions they can take to practice proper personal hygiene in the United States.
- Identify a list of actions they can take to ensure cleanliness in the home and in public spaces.
- Explain potential consequences of not practicing proper hygiene in the United States.

## APPLYING SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON PLANS

This supplemental lesson plan is not required, but may assist Cultural Orientation (CO) providers who are looking for ways to enhance the Health and Hygiene sections of their CO curriculum. CO providers and their supervisors can decide to incorporate this lesson into their curriculum based on the needs of the refugee populations they serve.

The lesson plan is a suggested guide and can be adapted according to circumstances and the creative wisdom of CO providers and their supervisors. It can be used in whole, or in part, depending upon need and time available.

The lesson includes the following sections:

- **Overview**
- **Activity Bank**
- **Appendix**
- **Additional Resources**
- **Acknowledgements**

This lesson can be used with the following companion resources:

- **Hygiene in the U.S.** fact sheet, podcast, or video
- Settle In app

## SESSION PLAN

The following is a proposed session plan of how all four activities provided in this lesson plan can be used together. CO providers may decide to select only one or two activities based on other lessons being delivered, the group of participants, and/or time and resources.

Title	Description Overview
Comparative Hygiene Discussion	Through the Comparative Hygiene Discussion, identify and discuss experiences on maintaining hygiene in refugees' countries of origin and/or protection. Then, using the <b>Hygiene in the United States</b> fact sheet or podcast compare this information to norms in the United States.
Scenarios Activity	Following the comparative discussion, ask participants to explore scenarios (accompanied with pictures) to identify hygiene practices (both positive and negative) and the potential consequences.
Create a Hygiene Checklist	Ask participants to create a hygiene checklist and then provide them with a pre-printed checklist that includes items for their families (or roommates) and homes. Explain to participants how they can use the checklist for themselves and/or with their families.
Hygiene and Settle In Activity	Use the Settle In mobile app lesson on hygiene and additional discussion questions to review key concepts of hygiene in the United States.

## SESSION PREPARATION

- Review the key vocabulary for the lesson
- Review Scenarios Activity and adjust as necessary

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- **Hygiene in the U.S.** fact sheet or podcast (optional)
- Speakers and media player for the podcast
- Copies of scenarios (as selected)
- Copies of Hygiene Checklist
- Computer or other digital device for using *Settle In* app (optional)
- Flip-chart
- Post-it notes
- Markers

## KEY VOCABULARY

- Cleanliness
- Disease
- Grooming
- Household
- Hygiene
- Infestation
- Laundry
- Maintain
- Prevent
- Travel
- Wash

# ACTIVITY BANK

## COMPARATIVE HYGIENE DISCUSSION

### PURPOSE

To compare hygiene practices and norms in the United States to refugees' countries of origin and/or protection.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants to define the term "hygiene." Explain that for this lesson, hygiene includes personal cleanliness, maintaining the home, and respecting public spaces.
2. Ask participants to consider hygiene practices in their countries of origin and/or protection. Ask them: What did it mean to be clean in these places? How did people keep their homes clean? What about public spaces? Why was it important to have proper hygiene? Record the responses on a flip-chart.
3. Use the Hygiene in the United States Guided Worksheet to guide participants in learning about hygiene in the United States. See Appendix for [Hygiene in the United States Guided Worksheet](#). As appropriate, provide participants with the **Hygiene in the United States** fact sheet or play the podcast.
4. If participants are already familiar with hygiene norms in the United States, invite them to share that information.
5. Finally, ask participants to compare their countries of origin and/or protection with the United States. What is similar about hygiene? What is different?
6. Ask if participants have any questions about hygiene practices in the United States. Address questions as time permits and make note of any questions that may require additional follow-up.

## SCENARIOS ACTIVITY

### PURPOSE

To identify positive and negative hygiene practices and benefits and consequences of practicing proper hygiene in the U.S.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Provide participants with different scenarios (and corresponding images) and either guide them through the discussion points, or have the participants work in groups to respond (depending on the group and the participants' abilities and level). See [Appendix for Scenarios Activity](#).
2. Review responses of the scenarios together. As appropriate, make lists on flip-chart paper for positive and negative hygiene practices, as well as a list of benefits and consequences of practicing proper hygiene in the United States.

### MODIFICATIONS & TIPS

- Create a safe and comfortable environment.
- Ensure that participants know that it is okay to ask questions.
- Remind participants to respect each other's answers.
- As possible, include information specific to different genders and consider delivering this lesson in a **gender-segregated CO session**. As time permits, and as appropriate, include additional exercises that allow participants to practice good hygiene; for example, how to properly wash hands and/or dispose of feminine products.

### MODIFICATIONS & TIPS

- You can adapt and alter scenarios, including images and/or use of realia, to best fit the context for the group of participants. For example, consider showing real hygiene products and asking learners when, how, and why they should use them.
- You do NOT need to use all scenarios provided, and may elect to only use one scenario.
- Depending on participants, CO provider can conduct this as a group activity. If applicable, this activity provides an opportunity to link back to the Comparative Hygiene Discussion.

# CREATE A HYGIENE CHECKLIST

## PURPOSE

To create a checklist and encourage refugees to take personal responsibility for their own hygiene, and as applicable, their family's hygiene.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to participants that they have been asked to teach other refugees about hygiene in the United States. To do this they will need to create a checklist. The checklist needs to have three sections: personal hygiene, keeping the home clean, and respecting public spaces.
2. Explain to participants that they have been asked to teach other refugees about hygiene in the United States. To do this they will need to create a checklist. The checklist needs to have three sections: personal hygiene, keeping the home clean, and respecting public spaces.
3. Review the checklist(s) that has been created and adjust as necessary.
4. Ask participants to consider the checklist and what could be potential barriers to practicing proper hygiene? Make the connection that proper hygiene has cost implications (personal hygiene products, home cleaning products, etc.) and should be included in their spending plans.
5. As appropriate, provide participants with Keeping Your Home Clean Checklist. Explain to participants how they can use the list at home for themselves and/or with their families. See Appendix for Keeping Your Home Clean Checklist
6. Ask participants if they have any questions. Address questions as time permits and make note of any questions that may require additional follow-up.

# HYGIENE AND SETTLE IN ACTIVITY

## PURPOSE

To review key concepts of hygiene in the United States utilizing discussion and digital technology.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Access *Settle In* either through the mobile or desktop app versions, depending on setting and available technology. Open the "Health and Hygiene" chapter of *Settle In*, and select the lesson on Preventative Health.
2. Ask participants to define the term preventative healthcare. Explain to participants that preventative healthcare includes any actions that one can take to maintain and promote good health, and therefore prevent illness and/or diseases.
3. Before participants complete the lesson, ask them to predict what information they might learn in this lesson. Record responses.
4. Work and coach participants on completing the lesson. CO providers can have participants complete the actions collectively using one desktop or have participants work in pairs to complete the lesson on tablets and/or smartphones. Compare their predictions with what they actually learned in completing the lesson.

## MODIFICATIONS & TIPS

- This activity can be adapted for one-on-one setting and you may spend more time on reviewing the checklist with the learner.
- How you have participants create the checklists will depend on the learners' literacy and/or language needs. This activity can be adapted
- As time permits, you may want to show and/or provide additional information on cleaning products, including types and costs.

## MODIFICATIONS & TIPS

- Based on the amount of time you have for this CO topic, as well as the digital abilities of your learners, you can have learners complete this chapter outside of CO class.
- For more guidance on integrating digital technology as a part of CO, you can access CORE's How to Integrate Digital Technology in CO.
- If applicable, this activity provides an opportunity to reinforce key messages from the Comparative Hygiene Discussion, or could be used before completing the Create a Hygiene Checklist.

# APPENDIX

## HYGIENE IN THE UNITED STATES GUIDED WORKSHEET (PROVIDER VERSION)

If using the **Hygiene in the U.S.** fact sheet or podcast, the following worksheet can be used to guide participants in understanding the materials. Providers may add additional statements and information based on client needs.

### PART I: TRUE OR FALSE/AGREE OR DISAGREE

Ask participants to answer the following questions. You may first ask them to answer without the fact sheet (or podcast), and then provide them with the fact sheet (or podcast) to check themselves. You may give them the statements to complete independently, or in groups, or read them out loud.

1. Hygiene does not include cleaning your home. (False)
2. Proper hygiene can prevent the spread of diseases. (True)
3. Bad hygiene has no impact on your ability to get and keep a job. (False)
4. You can go to a laundromat to keep your clothes clean. (True)
5. You can be evicted for not maintaining a clean home. (True)
6. Having a clean home prevents pest infestations. (True)
7. It is illegal to urinate in public. (True)
8. It is your responsibility to know the laws on littering in public spaces. (True)

### PART II: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Depending on the group, ask participants the following discussion questions. They may generate responses in pairs or groups and report back, or you can have them respond directly to you. The answers provided are based on the fact sheet and podcast, but you may add to the lists.

1. How can you practice proper personal hygiene in the United States?

#### Answers:

1. Wear clothing that is clean.
2. Brush your teeth twice a day.
3. Clean and clip fingernails regularly.
4. Groom facial hair on a regular basis.
5. Put on deodorant daily.
6. Shower or take a bath using soap regularly.
7. Wash and groom hair regularly.
8. Wash hands when they are dirty, after using the bathroom, and before and after eating.
9. Cover your mouth when you cough to prevent the spread of germs.
10. When you have a runny nose, use a tissue, not your hand or the sleeve of your shirt.
11. Do not spit in public.
12. Do not urinate in public.
13. Follow dress code rules at work.

2. What can you do to keep your home clean?

**Answers:**

1. Cover and refrigerate perishable food. Leaving food out and uncovered can attract insects and mice.
2. Put all trash in a trash can, lined with a plastic garbage bag. Full trash bags should be placed in designated garbage cans or dumpsters.
3. Recyclable materials should be rinsed and placed in designated bins.
4. Do not put egg shells, bones, or fruit or vegetable peels down the sink drain or disposal.
5. Do not put objects, such as hair, down the bathroom sink, bathtub drains, or toilets.
6. Only toilet paper should be flushed down the toilet.
  7. When showering, keep water in the shower or bathtub by closing shower doors completely or placing the bottom of the shower curtain inside the tub. Also use bathmats on the floor outside the bathtub or shower. Puddles of water can damage floors.
8. Clean every room in your home regularly: dust furniture, wash windows, wipe down counters and other surface areas with proper cleaning disinfectant, sweep, vacuum, and mop floors, as appropriate.
9. Wash sheets, pillow cases, other bedding, and towels regularly.

# HYGIENE THE UNITED STATES GUIDED WORKSHEET (PARTICIPANT VERSION)

## PART I: TRUE OR FALSE/AGREE OR DISAGREE

Identify whether the following statements are True or False. Circle the correct answer.

1. Hygiene does not include cleaning your home. True  False
2. Proper hygiene can prevent the spread of disease. True  False
3. Bad hygiene has no impact on your ability to get and keep a job. True  False
4. You can go to a laundromat to keep your clothes clean. True  False
5. You can be evicted for not maintaining a clean home. True  False
6. Having a clean home prevents pest infestations. True  False
7. It is illegal to urinate in public. True  False
8. It is your responsibility to know the laws on littering in public spaces. True  False

## PART II: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use the fact sheet or podcast to answer the following questions.

1. How can you practice proper personal hygiene in the United States?

2. What can you do to keep your home clean?

## SCENARIOS ACTIVITY

Select scenarios prior to lesson. You can adapt the scenarios as necessary to ensure relevancy to your participants. Answers are provided after each scenario.

### SCENARIO 1:

Alice is a newly arrived refugee. She has three children and lives in an apartment building. Look at the images of her home. Answer the following questions.

*Questions:*

1. How can Alice improve hygiene in her home?
2. What are the potential consequences for Alice, if she does not improve her home?



*Answers:*

1. Clean dishes; clean counter; throw away trash; store food properly; use shower curtain; vacuum carpet; put clothes and other items away.
2. Pest infestation; problems with landlord; water damage in bathroom (no shower curtain).



## SCENARIO 2:

Fahed is new to the United States. Today is his first day at his first job. Look at the images below of what Fahed is doing to prepare for work. Answer the following questions.

*Questions:*

1. How does Fahed practice proper hygiene as he prepares for work?
2. What are the benefits of Fahed practicing proper hygiene?



*Answers:*

1. Clean and neat clothes; using deodorant; showering; clean hair.
2. Keeping his job; positive impression on others with whom he works.

### SCENARIO 3:

Joseph and Sabina are celebrating their first month in the United States. They are having a picnic in a local park. Look at the image. Answer the following questions.

*Questions:*

1. What will Joseph and Sabina need to do after their picnic to practice proper hygiene?
2. What is the importance of respecting public spaces?



*Answers:*

1. Properly store any food they do not eat and bring it home with them; throw away any trash in a proper trash can; wash their hands.
2. There are norms, rules, and in some cases, laws about how people use and behave in public spaces. For example, you must dispose of trash properly in trash cans. In some cases, littering is illegal and violators are required to pay fines. It is your responsibility to be aware of any local, state, and federal laws and do your part to keep the environment clean and beautiful for all to enjoy.

# KEEPING YOUR HOME CLEAN CHECKLIST

House Cleaning Tasks	Family Member	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
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Cover and refrigerate perishable food



Put all trash in a trash can, lined with a plastic garbage bag.



Place full trash bags in designated garbage cans or dumpsters.



Dust furniture.



Wash windows



Wipe down counters.



Sweep, vacuum, and mop floors as appropriate.



Wash sheets, pillow cases, other bedding, and towels regularly.



Keep water in the shower or bathtub. Puddles of water can damage floors.



Clean bathroom (toilet, sinks, bathtub, and/or shower).

**Other Tasks:**

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resource provides access to an 11-minute video with hygiene messages for refugees. Videos are available in multiple languages, along with a transcript of the video: [Ohio Department of Job and Family Services: Refugee Services Videos on Health](#).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This lesson plan was developed by CORE in collaboration with the CO Leadership Network, a community of practice comprised of Resettlement Support Center CO Coordinators and Resettlement Agency CO Focal Points.

**Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange**  
[www.coresourceexchange.org](http://www.coresourceexchange.org)



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