

IN MY SISTER'S SHOES

Seeking Understanding: My Sister, My Responsibility®

Developed by Stevie Tran and Nathan Arrowsmith, attorneys and diversity educators

TIME | 65 minutes

Objectives:

- Think critically about sisters' different life experiences.
- Identify ways members and the chapter can support sisters from all experiences and backgrounds.
- Analyze the advantages and challenges members bring to their experiences as sisters of Zeta Tau Alpha.

Group size:

- Any group of 12 or more people is suitable for this workshop.

Setup:

- Choose a room that offers a lot of open space for small groups to be able to spread out and remain undistracted by others. Members will need to either sit and gather on the floor or move chairs around into small groups if able.
- In order to facilitate meaningful dialogue, we encourage you to limit group sizes when possible; aim to assign no more than 10 people to a group.
- Tables may be helpful for this workshop, but they are not strictly required. Smaller chapters can facilitate this workshop on an individual basis rather than in groups.

Preparation:

- Read all facilitator materials and review PowerPoint.
- Make a copy of the "Shopping for Advantages" handout for each participant.
- Cut out budget cards.
- Set up projector and computer.
- Load and test PowerPoint.

Materials needed:

- Projector and screen
- PowerPoint
- For each participant: "Shopping for Advantages" handout
- One budget card for each group

INTRODUCTION | 5 minutes

The presenter should introduce him/her/themselves, welcome participants and thank everyone for attending the session.

Share:

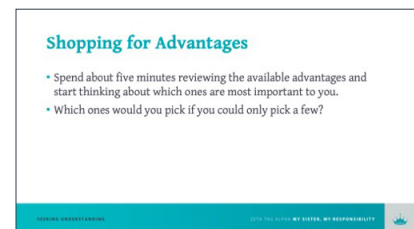
- Zeta Tau Alpha is made up of sisters from many different backgrounds. Today's activity and discussion will help you learn how to recognize and be mindful of the different experiences and challenges our sisters bring to the chapter. This exercise encourages you to take a walk in another sister's shoes and to think differently about what it means to support and advocate for every one of our sisters.
- Although Zeta Tau Alpha is a private organization that by nature excludes some individuals from membership, Zeta Tau Alpha strives to create an inclusive environment for its members. We want all sisters to feel seen and supported by their chapters. We want them to bring their full selves to their chapters and to be able to meaningfully participate in chapter activities that promote each sister's growth as an individual and as a sister.
- Today, I'll ask you to set aside your life experiences and try to view things from another perspective.



SHOPPING FOR ADVANTAGES | 25 minutes

Share:

- Everyone has different advantages and challenges in life that are out of their control. For example, some people deal with chronic health conditions or physical or invisible disabilities that make everyday activities more challenging. Others may have the advantage of being born to families with the financial resources to send them to good schools.
- For the purposes of this activity, we are stripping away all the advantages and challenges each of us brings to the table and starting out on a level playing field.
- Before we begin our activity, I want to set some norms for the discussion. We want all sisters to feel safe sharing their thoughts and opinions.
 - » We will discuss some complex and difficult issues, so respect for your sisters is paramount. Listen thoughtfully and quietly when others speak. When it is your turn to talk, continue to be respectful.
 - » Hateful language has no place in Zeta Tau Alpha and will not be tolerated in this activity.
 - » Remember, sisters have different backgrounds and experiences and may not view things the same way you do; we are all here to learn from each other.



Activity

Split participants into groups. To facilitate thoughtful group discussion, try to limit group size to at most 10 people. Pass out the “Shopping for Advantages” handout.

Share instructions:

- I handed out a sheet with a list of advantages. In a few minutes, your group will be able to “buy” advantages off this list.
- Spend about five minutes reviewing the available advantages and start thinking about which ones are most important to you.

After about five minutes, hand out one budget card to each group.

Share instructions:

- Now you have a card that tells you what your group’s budget is. You must now decide which advantages you wish to purchase with your available funds. Each advantage costs \$100.
- Any advantages that you do not buy, you do not have.
- After about 10 minutes, we’ll review each group’s purchases.

After about 10 minutes, bring everyone back together.

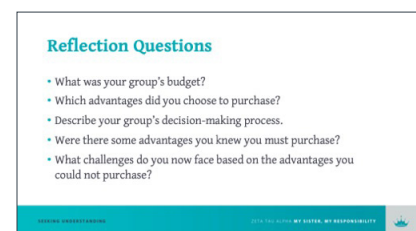
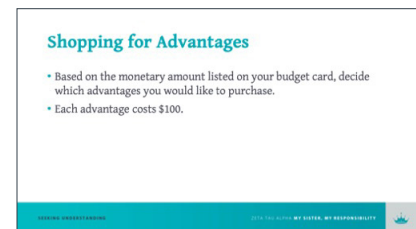
Ask:

- Now that you’ve all had the opportunity to discuss the available advantages and make your purchases, let’s share what happened in our groups.

Spend about 15 minutes discussing the following questions. If you have a very large group, consider only asking the third and sixth prompts on the list below.

Discuss:

- What was your group’s budget? Why do you think groups had different budgets?
- Which advantages did you choose to purchase?
- Describe your group’s decision-making process.
- Were there some advantages you knew you must purchase?
- Which advantages were most important to the group?
- What challenges do you now face based on the advantages you could not purchase?



DISCUSSION | 30 minutes

Depending on the size of your group, you can conduct this portion of the workshop as a full group discussion or allow small groups to discuss the questions on their own and ask them to share findings from their discussion with the larger group. Spend about 10 minutes on each question.

Ask:

- We've talked about the challenges some of your groups now face. Which challenges do you think would make it most difficult to succeed in your chapter?

Stuck? Try prompting participants based on specific advantages/challenges. Example questions are below.

- **Example:** How would having to work while in school impact a sister's ability to succeed in the chapter?
 - » They would have less time to devote to chapter activities and responsibilities because of work and school.
 - » Although we may see her as the "distant" sister because of her job, she may be able to attend events if the chapter considered moving events one or two hours earlier or later.
- **Example:** How would not having supportive parents or family impact a sister's ability to succeed in the chapter?
 - » Dealing with rejection from family can contribute to depression or anxiety, which can make it difficult to participate fully in the chapter. Additionally, a student who does not have her family's financial support may struggle to afford dues or other costs for chapter activities. However, she may be a sister who can benefit most from sisterhood. How can we bring her in?
- **Example:** How would having trouble paying attention in class and completing assignments impact a sister's ability to succeed in the chapter?
 - » It can be easy to see certain sisters as a negative impact on the chapter GPA, but they could be struggling with an invisible disability or learning difficulty. How can we be better guides for our sisters and help them access the academic resources on campus?

Another option for large groups

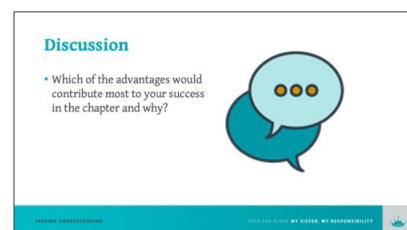
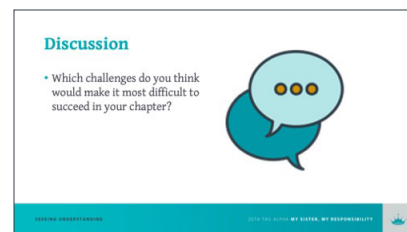
Consider assigning one or two advantages to each group. Then, ask each group to discuss and prepare to share with the whole room how they would respond and try to succeed in the chapter without having the advantages assigned to them.

Ask:

- Let's flip the discussion around. Which of the advantages would contribute most to your success in the chapter and why?

Stuck? Try prompting participants based on specific advantages/challenges. Example questions are below.

- **Example:** How would being comfortable bringing your significant other to chapter events impact a sister's ability to succeed in the chapter?
 - » Sisters who can bring their full selves to the chapter will likely be more involved and more open to sharing in sisterhood and spending more time with the chapter.



- **Example:** How would access to safe and reliable transportation impact a sister's ability to succeed in the chapter?
- » Sisters who don't have to worry about access to transportation can show up to chapter events more regularly.

Another option for large groups

Ask each group to consider: What are one or two advantages you think are necessary to succeed in our chapter? Then, go around the room and collect the responses for future reference and reminders. Consider these follow-up questions:

- Are there some advantages on the list that surprise you?
- Do you think these advantages are representative of how you view success in our chapter?
- What are one or two changes we could make to help members succeed in our chapter?

Ask:

- Although this activity was hypothetical, in real life, you may encounter sisters and potential new members with some of these challenges and advantages. What can you do to ensure that all sisters and potential new members feel welcome, valued and safe in your chapter regardless of the advantages or challenges they bring to the table?

Stuck? Try asking the following questions:

- What are some activities that might unintentionally exclude some sisters? How can the chapter modify those activities to be more inclusive?
- What can you do as a sister to check in on sisters you know are dealing with certain challenges?
- If you are dealing with a challenge that is impacting your ability to succeed in the chapter, who can you talk to about it?
- What will you do if a sister comes to you and shares some challenges she is facing?

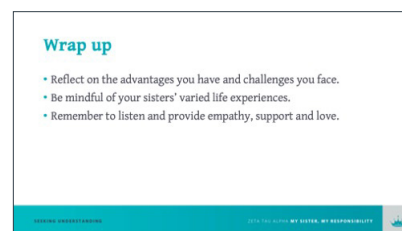
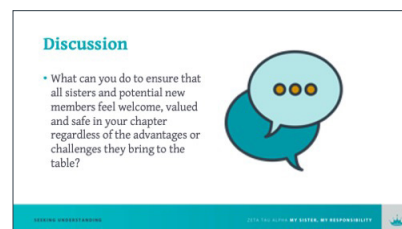
Another option for large groups

Consider assigning all four questions to every group and ask them to prepare one or two ideas for each. Then, collect the ideas for future reference and reminders.

WRAP UP | 5 minutes

Share:

- I want to thank all of you for attending today's workshop and for participating so respectfully. As you go forward, I encourage you to practice implementing this new perspective in your daily life and especially in your role as a sister of Zeta Tau Alpha.



- Reflect on the advantages you have and the challenges you face. Remember to always be mindful of the varied life experiences and the different advantages and challenges each sister brings to the table.
- Start by finding small ways to make the chapter feel more welcoming and inclusive for another sister. Most importantly, listen to your sisters. You can't change the advantages your sisters have or the challenges they face, but you can always provide empathy, support and love.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Safe Zone Project's "Privilege for Sale" activity, which encourages a new approach to diversity workshops, inspired this workshop.

SHOPPING FOR ADVANTAGES

Below are the advantages available for purchase. Each advantage costs \$100.

- **I do not have to work while I am in school.**
Some students must work to afford college, resulting in less time and energy for chapter events.
- **I do not have trouble paying attention in class or completing assignments.**
Some students have health conditions that make learning and completing assignments more difficult, leaving less time for chapter events.
- **I am able to afford chapter dues, socials and events every semester without difficulty.**
Financial barriers may prevent students from being able to consistently participate in chapter activities.
- **I have a body type that fits well into ritual service regalia, mandatory recruitment outfits and other chapter apparel.**
Some members may not feel comfortable wearing certain gendered or mandatory dress or may struggle to be able to afford additional clothing on top of dues and chapter activities.
- **I do not have to choose between campus or chapter events and religious/spiritual practices or holidays.**
During the school year, Jewish, Muslim, Black and Asian members may observe religious and cultural holidays and practices without time off, potentially interfering with classes and programming.
- **I see sisters who look like me in my chapter.**
Students who are the only member of a particular community (race, national origin, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender identity) of their chapter can often feel tokenized and less comfortable sharing their intersectional experiences.
- **I am comfortable bringing my date or significant other to chapter socials.**
Some members who are gay or bisexual may limit their engagement or participation in the chapter if they must hide their dates or significant others from members.
- **I am never asked where I'm really from or where my parents are from.**
Students of color often deal with an assumption of permanent "foreignness" that they or their families are only a temporary presence in the U.S. and will one day "go home." Encountering this assumption can impact a member's sense of belonging and connection to the chapter.
- **I do not worry about safely navigating bathrooms and locker rooms.**
Trans, nonbinary, or gender-nonconforming students may feel uncomfortable using gendered facilities for fear of being confronted or accosted about any perceived incongruence between their gender expression and the gender assigned to the facility.
- **I am able to physically access locations for chapter events without difficulty.**
Students with physical disabilities may have trouble attending chapter or campus events that take place in locations that do not have ramps or other accommodations for mobility devices.
- **I have no difficulty fulfilling my basic needs, such as waking up, feeding myself, bathing and sleeping.**
Students with physical disabilities or mental health issues may struggle to meet basic needs and as a result, may not engage regularly or at all in school and chapter events.

I have immediate family members who have graduated from college.

Students with family members who have attended and graduated from college are more likely to have mentors who can prepare them for the demands of college life.

I am not teased about how I look.

Students with physical features that differ from what society considers conventionally attractive may experience bullying or teasing based on their appearance, including from themselves. This can impact a member's desire to actually be seen or associated with at chapter events.

I have family connections to help me find jobs and internships.

Students with wealthy or well-connected families may have an advantage when pursuing internships and employment because they have the benefit of knowing someone who can make a positive phone call on their behalf.

I grew up in a home with two parents.

Growing up with two married parents is still considered the norm, causing those growing up with differently structured families to feel othered and carry the burden of explaining this "difference."

I have no chronic health conditions.

Students managing chronic health conditions may not be able to participate in campus or chapter activities at the same level as others.

I have family members who are supportive of who I am and want to become.

When students face rejection from their families, they may experience depression or anxiety that can interfere with their ability to focus and succeed in school or in their chapters.

I have somewhere safe to go during breaks.

Holidays and breaks from school tend to be happy and exciting times. For members who are homeless or experience rejection or violence at home, these breaks may bring up negative and even traumatic experiences that could cause disengagement due to a lack of support.

I have safe and reliable transportation to and from campus and events.

Students without safe and reliable transportation may have difficulty attending chapter or campus events, especially those that take place off campus, on weekends or during later hours.

I feel safe asking for help from a police officer.

Contact with police for some members may not be safe because of the color of their skin or any visible disabilities that may be interpreted as "dangerous."

People consistently refer to me with the correct name and pronouns (she/her, he/him, they/them).

For individuals who are transgender or gender-nonconforming, being misgendered or identified by the wrong name is a traumatic experience that does not honor or see their identity.

I am able to navigate public spaces without threats of violence.

Women and femme-presenting individuals often experience catcalling or other threats of physical and sexual violence when moving through public spaces. Gender-nonconformity for cis or trans women can increase the likelihood of threats of violence.

I have access to and am able to afford regular meals.

If a student does not have safe and regular access to food, succeeding in school and in the chapter will become less of a priority.

I like who I see in the mirror.

Students who face challenges like body dysmorphia or eating disorders may struggle on a daily basis with aspects of their looks or appearance, which may contribute to depression and anxiety and limit social engagement and interaction.

I am a citizen of the United States.

Individuals who are not citizens might avoid events involving law enforcement and may deal with the emotional burden of pursuing citizenship. Citizenship also impacts access to scholarship aid and other financial assistance.

I do not struggle with addiction or substance abuse.

Social events where alcohol and peer pressure are present can challenge and potentially trigger negative feelings for students who deal with addiction. Additionally, the emotional burden of maintaining one's sobriety means they may have less energy available for schoolwork and chapter activities.

<p>YOUR BUDGET</p> <p>\$800</p>	<p>YOUR BUDGET</p> <p>\$1,200</p>
<p>YOUR BUDGET</p> <p>\$1,000</p>	<p>YOUR BUDGET</p> <p>\$900</p>
<p>YOUR BUDGET</p> <p>\$700</p>	<p>YOUR BUDGET</p> <p>\$1,500</p>
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