



# How to Tell Your Story and Manage Trauma

Strategies you can use to prepare for and get through your interviews and to care for yourself afterward

## Preparing for an interview with your attorney or at court

### Make a plan for how you will get there and work out logistics

- It is imperative that you arrive on time for these meetings, so it is helpful to create a plan to ensure punctuality
- Will you take public transportation? Ride-share service?
- Do you need to request time off work?
- Who will watch your kids?

### Prepare your body and mind

- Engage in physical activity
- Get a good night's sleep
- Eat a healthy and filling breakfast
- Bring water with you
- Avoid or minimize news or social media when possible

### Proactively think through what you will do afterwards and block off a window of time

- Can you arrange for some protected time?
- Will you prefer to be alone or with friends or with family? Who or what helps you feel supported and grounded?
  - » Ex: meet a friend for coffee, go to the park or take a walk; do something creative like drawing, writing, or journaling; go to your religious/cultural community spaces

### Create a grounding practice and a tangible symbol to refer to/hold onto

- Do you have a river stone, piece of sea glass, or something from nature that you can hold?
- Do you have a special photo of someone important to look at?
- Do you have a piece of clothing/personal object of someone important that you can wear or carry?
- Can you recall the memory of an ancestor that inspires you that you can think about?

## During the meeting or interview

### Know that you can always:

- Ask for a break
- Ask for a cup of water
- Ask for clarification
- Stretch
- Look out a window and think to yourself: even though I am recounting what happened there, I am here now
- Practice grounding or relaxation techniques (see HIAS handout: [Grounding, Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques](#))

### Prepare for the possibility of unexpected emotions which may arise before, during, or after the interview

- Focus on self-compassion and self-care
- Follow the self-care plan that you have laid out above (or adapt it as needed)