

Fatima's Story: "I want them to be better than me. I'm here, stuck."

Category: Encounters

written by Sara Kohrt | July 27, 2018



"I tell [my children], you don't have to do anything for me, just go to school and do what you have to do. On the weekend I take them to the mosque, because jeu can learn Arabic and all that. And I just want them to study. That's all. That's the main thing. If you want to be someone tomorrow, you have to work hard right now.

I want them to be better than me. I'm here, stuck. I cannot do the work that I want to do because I don't have the degree for it, so I want them to go to school and not struggle the way I'm struggling right now."

Fatima, age 32, immigrated from Guinea in 2002

About the *Seeing Immigrants* Series:

From the time she was a medical student, **Joanna Sharpless** has been collecting immigration stories to learn more about the struggles and celebrations of being an immigrant in America. For a social medicine project undertaken

during residency, she combined excerpts from interviews with a half-dozen of her immigrant patients with photographs of these immigrants holding something of importance to them. Three of these photos and excerpts are presented here. More will be featured in a later issue of *Pulse*. All of these photos and excerpts are exhibited at the family health center where Dr. Sharpless saw patients during her residency—in the hopes of creating a welcoming atmosphere for current and future immigrants. For Joanna Sharpless's own story of her interest in immigrants, see "[My Immigrant Patients](#)."