Preparing Students for the Transition Out of High School

Webinar Presenter: The Jed Foundation
Webinar Date: July 10, 2019

Learning outcomes:

• List the main components of a healthy transition out of high school
• Take concrete actions to help students prepare emotionally for the transition out of high school
Our Approach

- Equipping teens and young adults to navigate mental health challenges, to seek and give help, and to be emotionally prepared to enter adulthood and fulfill their potential
- Helping high school students become emotionally prepared for the transition to college and adult life
- Partnering with colleges to build a comprehensive approach to support student mental health
- Educating communities to support the emotional well-being and mental health of teens and young adults

1st-year college experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77%</td>
<td>feel social media, TV, and movies make college seem a lot more fun than it actually is</td>
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<tr>
<td>49%</td>
<td>feel college is not living up to their expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>63%</td>
<td>talked to their parents regularly about how they are adjusting to the new college life</td>
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<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>feel that “it seems like everyone has college figured out but me”</td>
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<tr>
<td>54%</td>
<td>said they felt making new friends was a challenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>tend to keep their feelings about the difficulty of college to themselves</td>
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Source: JED/Nielsen survey of 1,502 1st-year college students
Insights: First-Year College Experience

- 60% of students wish they had gotten more help with emotional preparation for college. The following groups of students were more likely than their counterparts to agree with this statement:
  - Have a lower GPA
  - Regularly consume drugs or alcohol
  - Take a leave of absence after the first term
  - Rate their overall college experience as "terrible/poor"

Insights: First-Year College Experience

- 45% felt that "it seems like everyone has college figured out but me."

Challenges to Getting Support

- 51% found it difficult at times to get emotional support at college when they needed it.
- 11% said they turned to no one for support when they needed it during their first term.
- 65% said they tended to keep their feelings about the difficulty of college to themselves.
- 50% of students feel stressed "most of" or all of the time.
- 36% do not feel in control of managing the stress of day-to-day college life.
Non-academic pressures reported as extremely or very challenging include:

- Paying for college expenses
- Making new friends
- Keeping in touch with family and friends not at their college
- Being independent

Not an exhaustive list of the top concerns that students found challenging.

Risk of Substance Abuse

30% of students reported regularly consuming drugs or alcohol during their first semester.

These students are more likely than non-regular drug/alcohol users to rate their emotional health as "worse than other students" (79% vs 52%).

Rethinking College Preparation

- 87% of students said college preparation during high school focused more on academics than emotional readiness.
- 51% of students felt "a great deal of pressure" to attend a well-known college.
- 50% said their independent living skills need improvement.
Life on Campus
What predicts success after high school?

- **Social-Emotional Skills**: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making, cooperative behavior
- **Independent Living Skills**: managing time, managing money, understanding and prioritizing self-care, taking care of health and mental health, knowing when and how to seek help
- **Coping Skills and Resiliency**: Flexibility, emotion regulation, openness to new ideas
- **Self-Knowledge**: Identification of interests and passions, conviction, resistance to peer pressure
- **Success in college is closely tied to both emotional well-being and overall “fit” of a school for the student’s personality, preferences, interests, and ambitions**

What predicts success in college?

- **Being engaged on campus is most important**:  
  - Taking a course with professors who make learning exciting  
  - Working with professors who care about students professionally  
  - Finding a mentor who encourages students to follow personal goals  
  - Working on a project across several semesters  
  - Participating in an internship that applies classroom learning  
  - Being active in extracurricular activities

Building a Self-Care Plan
• Practice stress management techniques
• Explore fitness, yoga, meditation & other wellness facilities/activities on campus
• Investigate activities & extracurriculars of interest
• Learn how to balance academic workload
• Connect with other students on campus
• Find mentors & advisers
• Plan how to manage health on campus

Building a Communication Contract
• Guidance for Families:
  • Contact may be more frequent during the transition – this shouldn’t be alarming
  • Set some basic guidelines:
    —What decisions and challenges do they expect their child to be able to handle alone?
    —At what point should their child ask for help?
    —Under what circumstances would their child want a friend or roommate to call their parents/guardians?
  • Pay special attention to changes:
    —Feeling sad or anxious during the transition may be normal but any changes in things like eating, sleeping, or communication habits should not be ignored
  • Talk about the “communication contract” in advance and re-visit, evaluate, and shift as needed
Information Privacy

• Guidance for Families:
• When a student turns 18:
  • Information about their student's medical care, including care received at the school's health and counseling centers, and academic information is private
  • There are some exceptions to that, which they can read about in the JED/NAMI "Starting the Conversation" guide on the Set to Go site
• We recommend:
  — Over the summer before their student starts college, review the JED/NAMI guide and have a conversation about it with their student

Identifying Health Services on Campus

• What Students Should Know:
  — Where is the health center on campus? What are the health center's hours?
  — How do I make an appointment?
  — Can I see a specialist at the health center?
  — How much does it cost to go to the health center?
  — What if I need a referral to an outside provider? Can the health center help?
  — Can I continue to get healthcare over breaks and during the summer?
Identifying Mental Health Services on Campus

• What Students Should Know:
  – Where is the counseling center on campus? What are the counseling center’s hours?
  – How do I make an appointment?
  – Is there a wait time to get an appointment?
  – How many sessions can I have at the counseling center?
  – Are there any services that the counseling center does not provide?
  – How much does it cost to go to the counseling center?
  – What if I need a referral to an outside provider? Can the counseling center help?
  – Can I continue to get counseling over breaks and during the summer?

Accessing & Transitioning Care

If you have a diagnosed mental health or other health condition for which you receive care currently, you’ll need to think about the following before you arrive on campus:

• Should I receive care on-campus or off-campus or continue with my provider from home?
• How will a new provider get pertinent information from my current provider?
• Will I see my current provider when I come home on breaks and/or during the summer?
• If I take medication, how will I access it on campus? Is there a student pharmacy or do I need to go to a commercial pharmacy like CVS? How much do my prescriptions cost and how will I pay for them?
• Will I be covered by health insurance when I’m at school? What will my co-pays be and how will I pay them? Are the services I need covered by insurance?
JED's Set to Go Program

Your guide to the transition from high school to college and adulthood.

Preparing for college is more than just academics and testing. Being emotionally ready creates the greatest opportunity for success.

Text, Talk, Set to Go
Preparation in Action

Annual seminar with parents grades 9-12 on redefining success in college and helping students choose the “Right Fit”

Annual workshop with graduating seniors on getting to know their campus and getting involved, recognizing signs of emotional distress, and seeking help on campus

Annual workshop for graduating seniors and their parents on how to communicate in college, privacy laws that change once students turn 18, and how to prepare for the transition

Incorporate Set to Go into senior health curriculum

Seize the Awkward
Students should know about signs to notice

**Changes in:**
- Academic or work performance
- Eating and sleeping habits
- Self care
- Mood
  - Cranky
  - Variable
- Social interactions
- Social media posts
Student Should Know What to Do if They or Someone They Know is Struggling Emotionally

• Call the campus counseling or health center
• Request a confidential conversation with your resident advisor if they are in a campus residence hall
• Talk with the dean of student affairs, peer support specialist, or campus chaplain
• Request a confidential conversation with their academic advisor or a faculty member
• If they or someone they know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, they should seek help immediately by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) or by texting the Crisis Text Line at 741741

Thank you.

jedfoundation.org

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