STANDARD COLLEGE TRANSITION WORKSHOP
FOR STUDENTS

This workshop/presentation reviews basic information for students that they should start thinking about as they approach the end of senior year in preparation for college.

SLIDE  SUGGESTED SCRIPT AND ACTIONS (ITALICIZED TEXT INDICATES SUGGESTED SCRIPT)

1. Introduce yourself, say your name, where you’re from, and whatever other relevant information you want to give. Keep it short. If you have a short explanation as to why you are leading this presentation give it. You can then explain the purpose of this presentation:

“The purpose of this presentation/workshop is to help you mentally and emotionally prepare for the transition to college and also to explore the different mental health resources available to you on campus. Being emotionally prepared for life in college is a key contributor to success and happiness while there. Today we’ll give you some tools to help ease the transition and help set you up for success in college and beyond.”

2. You don’t really know what life on campus is like until you get there. That’s why it’s helpful to learn from other students about their experiences.

3. Here’s a short video a female college student made to depict how her transition period to college was not as seamless as she anticipated it to be.

Play video. Stop video at 3:20

4. Activity: Now I want you to jot down things you’re interested in. It can be activities you do now, activities you’re interested in trying out in college, activities you are curious about – anything of that nature. I’ll give you 3 minutes to do this by yourself and then share with the person sitting next to you what you wrote and why.

5. I hope you found it interesting to learn from your peers about what their interests are. Maybe you even learned about something new you didn’t know existed that you could try out in college. When you arrive on campus, you should be prepared to engage with others and ask questions about where you can find information about certain clubs and any other activities that might interest you. Also, if you know any current students at the school, reach out to them and see if you can talk to them about what they’re involved with or if they could put you in touch with someone from a club you’re interested in.
6. Along with your extracurricular interests, it’s important to begin thinking about your academic goals and interests.

**Activity:** In pairs, discuss what you might want to major in and why? If you aren’t sure that’s okay — you can just share what types of courses you are interested in taking and why those are of interest to you.

Take about 2 minutes.

7. One of the best ways to get honest tips about what classes to take is by asking current students at your college. If possible, get in touch and ask them about how to create a balanced semester schedule. Find out which professors they recommend and what to expect in terms of workload.

When you get to campus and begin classes, talk to your professors! Don't be afraid to go to their office hours. Professors and teaching assistants set aside time to work with students during office hours and definitely want to be able to help. If you can’t make it to office hours, you can always set up another time to meet with professors and teaching assistants.

Set up a meeting early on with your academic advisor to discuss course load and to get other advice about academic life on campus.

8. **Activity:** By a show of hands, how many of you have talked with your parents about communicating once you’re in college?

Wait for them to raise their hands.

**Activity:** Ok, now we’re going to move back into a paired discussion. Turn back to your neighbor and answer these two questions on the slide about communicating with your parents. Take about 2 minutes to share with each other.

After the two minutes is up, you can ask if anyone wants to briefly share what they discussed.

9. Now we’re going to talk a bit about different resources your school most likely has to offer that you should be aware of before you get there. While every school is structured slightly differently, most have a variety of support services and resources available if you or a friend is struggling emotionally.

Most campuses have:
- counseling services
- health services
- campus security
- emergency services
- and a student affairs office

10. It’s a good idea to look into your campus’ health services and get familiar with what you have access to prior to arriving on campus. Looking this information up in advance prepares you for when you may need to use any of these services and may make it less overwhelming to seek out help when you need it.

**Activity:** Take 5 minutes to do some online research about your school’s health services and try to find answers to the questions on this slide.

**Note:** if not all students brought/can bring a laptop, we recommend you read these questions out loud and ask the students to take time on their own at a later point, maybe at home, to research and find the answers to these questions about their school. You can say “These questions are also in your handout so you can reference them again when doing your research.”
11. Along with general health services that colleges offer, your campus most likely provides mental health services. Knowing about these services in advance is important. Campus mental health resources may not necessarily be something you believe you need right now, but emotional issues are common on college campuses, especially during the transition to college. It’s likely that at some point you or a friend might want to talk to someone for some extra support.

**Activity:** Now we’re going to do the same type of exercise we just did for general health services, but this time researching mental health services on your campus. Try to find answers to the questions on this slide.

**Note:** If not all students can bring a laptop, we recommend you read these questions out loud and ask the students to take time on their own at a later point, maybe at home, to research and find the answers to these questions about their school. You can say “These questions are also in your handout so you can reference them later when doing your research.”

12. When trying to decipher whether or not someone may be experiencing mental health issues, you can look for changes in:
   - academic or work performance
   - eating and sleeping habits
   - self care
   - mood
   - social interactions
   - social media posts

13. If you know someone is seriously struggling you can: read bullet points on slide.

**Note:** When you get to the last bullet point, you can add: “Please take out your phones now and add The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Crisis Text Line numbers to your contact list.”

After, ask, “Is everyone done adding and saving those numbers to their phones?” before moving to the next slide.

14. Seize the Awkward is a campaign created by the Jed Foundation in partnership with The Ad Council and The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The campaign’s goal is to teach students how they can utilize sometimes awkward moments to reach out and check in with their friends.

15. Play video.

16. **Note:** If you have time, try to debrief the Seize the Awkward video for a few minutes (try to keep it under 3 minutes).

**You can ask students:** “Can you think of a time when it might have been beneficial to check in with one of your friends during an ‘awkward moment’ in the past?”

Then transition to the content on this slide.

Take 2 minutes to yourself and think about the questions on this slide. Consider them for a few minutes and then we’ll continue.
Another very important thing to start planning out and thinking about is your living situation at college.

**Activity:** Take 5 minutes to investigate the living situations and options on your campus. Specifically, look at whether there are options on campus or if the students typically live off campus. If you’re on campus, will you try to get a single room or will you have a roommate?

**Note:** If not all students brought/can bring a laptop, we recommend you read these questions out loud and ask the students to take time on their own at a later point, maybe at home, to research and find the answers to these questions about their school. You can say: These questions are also in your handout so you can reference them again when doing your research.

**Note to facilitators:** If most students at your school will commute to school and not live on campus, omit this slide.

A good tool to use when thinking more about how you can prepare for the transition to college is the Set to Go website. The website provides resources and tools that help teens, young adults, and those who support them navigate this transition from high school into adulthood and college. Take some time later on to browse through the website and read some of the resources that interest you.

It’s a good idea to make a checklist of things you need to complete before starting school in the fall. Some good checklist items include: planning with your parents how/how often you will communicate with them; reading through the Set to Go resource called ‘Starting the Conversation: College and Your Mental Health’; looking at options for waivers you and your family can fill out together to allow access to your information while you’re at school; reviewing the Transition of Care Guide if you need to transition health or mental health care.

To wrap up this session, we’re going to watch a video that was developed by The Jed Foundation in partnership with WebMD. It aims to capture different students’ experiences dealing with certain aspects of the transition to college.

Thank you for participating in this session. We hope that you use this information to prepare emotionally for the transition to college! For more information, visit The Jed Foundation’s website and settogo.org.