

Academic culture shock: Promoting first generation student success through psychological wellbeing
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<http://www.firstinthefamily.org/>



Primary Developmental Tasks

- Separation or differentiation
- Identity Formation
- Intimacy

Separation

- Differentiation from parents, home and high school friends
- Gradual Process
- Support continues to be necessary

Identity formation

- Who am I?
- Career confusion, political and religious values
- Choices help them take responsibility and develop self-confidence
- Identity development

Intimacy

- Increased need for intimacy in friendships & Romantic Relationships
- May experience 1st significant Break-up

Predictable developmental crises

- differentiation from parents, career confusion, romantic relationships, being evaluated, transitions, adjustments

1st generation lens

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation • Identity formation • Achieving intimacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independence • Class • Culture • Gender • Sexual orientation • Alienation |
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Mental Health & Wellbeing

- Imposter phenomenon
- Self esteem
- Substance abuse
- Depression & Anxiety
- Suicidal ideation
- Sexual assault/child abuse

Referral to CAPS

- When you have a connection with a student
- They have confided in you/vulnerable
- Normalize talking to someone and obtaining clarity and guidance
- Plant the seed
- Motivation has to come from them

Academic culture shock

- 2 worlds collide
- 1st gen students have one foot in the academy and one foot at home

Two worlds collide

1st Generation Student

- Relationships with others
- Financial survival
- Survival of the group
- Time is flexible and secondary to "felt need" or relationship responsibility

The Academy

- Order
- Structure
- Focus on time
- Hierarchy
- Independence/autonomy

What can be done

- Build relationship
- Help with interpersonal and professional skills
- Validate and normalize their experience
- Recognize them as the strivers that they are
- Speak to the part of them that wants to be here
- Know that they want your approval
- Help them move from Academic Culture shock to Academic Ownership

The only factor
becoming scarce in a
world of abundance is
human attention

-Kevin Kelly
