

FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

You are considered to be a first generation student if your parents have not obtained a college degree.

Challenges First Generation College Students Face



LACK OF PARENTAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT COLLEGE

Unlike other students, first generation students do not have the advantage of consulting with their parents about information regarding college. Research study findings seem to indicate that college access and educational programs that prepare families in their information gathering process about educational paths after high school are most beneficial for the student's overall success. Amaro-Jiménez, C., Pant, M. D., Hungerford-Kresser, H., & den Hartog, J. (2020).

TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

The transition from high school into college can have long lasting impacts on a first generation students' overall college experience.

The findings of Rice's study suggest that first-generation college students' economic cultures before entering college are likely to influence their transition and their ability to cope positively with associated challenges in college. Rice, A. J., Colbow, A. J., Gibbons, S., Cederberg, C., Sahker, E., Liu, W. M., & Wurster, K. (2016).

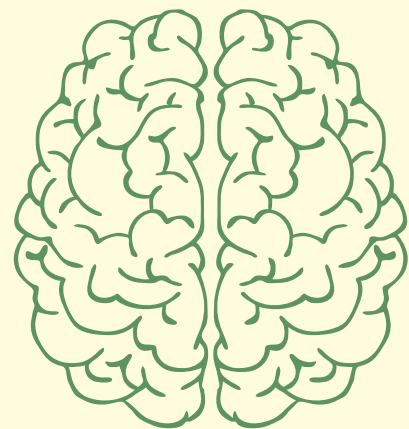


SOCIAL CLASS AND IDENTITY CHANGES

Social class issues can have a great influence on first generation students' lives. It was found that first generation students may be struggling to fit in, and develop a sense of belonging due to their social class. This can result in these students having problems adapting to different social situations that involve exploring their identity and having a “normal” college experience. Rice, A. J., Colbow, A. J., Gibbons, S., Cederberg, C., Sahker, E., Liu, W. M., & Wurster, K. (2016).

POOR MENTAL HEALTH

First generation college students face many unique risks for mental health distress, which can place them at a higher risk to face other negative consequences. First generation college student mental health receives very little attention, but studying the REDFLAGS model, a mental health literacy based tool has helped to support and raise awareness for mental health wellness for first-generation college students. Kalkbrenner, M. T., Flinn, R. E., Sullivan, D. K., & Esquivel Arteaga, L. E. (2021).



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP...



You can help a first generation student no matter your social status. As a parent, student, or college staff member you can follow these steps to do your part to help a first-gen student in need:

- Find accurate sources of information about college
- Engage in college readiness programs upon high school graduation
- Provide more on campus resources for first-gen students
- Provide mental health wellness options on campus for first-gen students

References:

Rice, A. J., Colbow, A. J., Gibbons, S., Cederberg, C., Sahker, E., Liu, W. M., & Wurster, K. (2016). The social class worldviews of first-generation college students. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 30(4), 415–440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2016.1179170> Amaro-jiménez, C., Pant, M. D., Hungerford-Kresser, H., & den Hartog, J. (2020). Identifying the Impact of College Access Efforts on Parents' College Preparedness Knowledge. *School Community Journal*, 30(1), 139–159. Harper, C. E., Zhu, H., & Marquez Kiyama, J. (2019). Parents and families of first-generation college students experience their own college transition. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 91(4), 540–564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2019.1647583> Kalkbrenner, M. T., Flinn, R. E., Sullivan, D. K., & Esquivel Arteaga, L. E. (2021). A mental health literacy approach to supporting first-generation Community College Student Mental Health: The redflags model. *Community College Review*, 009155212110028. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00915521211002893>