



## COLLEGE LIFE & FRIENDSHIPS

### INTRO

College is a time of excitement, challenge and growth--**SOCIALLY** as well as academically. However, being in a new environment for the first time may not be an easy transition for everyone.

Loneliness and fear are feelings that many students encounter as they begin the transition to college. These emotions can actually keep you from getting out there and socializing with new people. It is important to know that these feelings are normal - so if you experience them, you may need to push yourself a little harder to form friendships.

College is **YOUR** time to learn and experience new things. You just may need a little assistance to get started. The following are steps to consider when building new college relationships.

### STEPS TO FRIENDSHIPS

Starting friendships can be looked at as a series of tasks, but shouldn't be viewed as a chore. There are certain things you can do to be successful and have fun at the same time.

**STEP ONE – BE POSITIVE.** The more positive energy you put out, the more likely you are to receive positive energy in return. Smile as you walk around campus, give a compliment, and maintain eye contact - look up, not down. You will appear to be a likeable person.

**STEP TWO - RELAX & BE YOURSELF.** Trying to be different to please others compromises your individuality. The more relaxed you are, the easier it is to get along with and interact with others because you won't be focusing on what you think you should be doing/saying.

**STEP THREE – FIGURE OUT WHO YOU ARE & WHO YOU WANT TO BEFRIEND.** People generally bond with those who are most similar to themselves. Sharing and discussing hobbies, interests, and other things in common allows you to get to know someone better.

**STEP FOUR - PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE.** You have to go where people are in order to meet them! Don't sit around waiting for them to come to you. Join a club and/or a study group, attend student events, go to the library, check your e-mail in the LARC, eat in the café, or work on campus in order to connect with others. If you get involved, chances are you'll meet peers who enjoy similar activities.

**STEP FIVE - STAY CONNECTED.** Once you meet and feel comfortable with a few folks, stay in contact with them. You may already have a regular meeting time based on a class, club, or study group. During that time, make arrangements to do things together outside of school.

### **WHAT DO I SAY/DO?**

- ❖ If you are in a particular setting you can talk about things specific to that setting. For example, "Where did you find information on our homework research topic?"
- ❖ Ask open-ended questions rather than closed-ended questions. An open-ended question is one that can't simply be answered by "yes" or "no". This type of question provides more opportunities for a conversation to start.
- ❖ It's important not to force yourself to say something. Sometimes it's okay to be with people and not say anything. Being a good listener is important in relationships.
- ❖ Good conversations begin with listening to others' contributions and then responding appropriately; avoid monopolizing the conversation.
- ❖ Share things about yourself, but don't come off too strong in your opinions or comments in the early stages.
- ❖ Practice starting conversations with individuals whom you don't know in low risk situations such as the line at the movies or in the convenience store.

### **WHERE SHOULD I GO?**

#### **Some ideas to get started:**

1. Check flyers and read *The John Letter* for upcoming programs and activities
2. Talk to classmates to find out what is going on that might be of interest to you
3. Visit the student center, cafeteria, LARC, coffee shop, and library on a regular basis
4. Join a campus club – contact Student Life for a current club list
5. Volunteer on campus or in the community

### **BEST WISHES!**



**FOR MORE INFO ON COLLEGE SUCCESS, VISIT THE CONNECT TO SUCCESS OFFICE**

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