

Thank you for purchasing college-prep materials from DreamCatcher Curriculum, LLC. We appreciate your business and hope that our products meet your needs for assisting students prepare for college. Although our materials can stand alone as a handout for students, the program guide will offer additional information and activities to share with students in a classroom or workshop setting.

The program guide is intended as a rough outline for the topic and can be adapted as you see fit to meet the needs of your program, school, or situation. The guide also includes copy-permissible pages for use in activities as a supplement to instruction. **Please note that color handouts are copyright-protected and duplication in any form is strictly prohibited.** See our website [www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com](http://www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com) for additional info, resources, and new curriculum topics.

➤ **BEFORE YOU BEGIN:** This workshop requires minimal prep, however, it is strongly recommended that you read and review the program guide along with the handout before meeting with students.

## **FINDING THE RIGHT FIT OBJECTIVE & INCLUDED TOPICS**

To foster skills of discernment when it comes to selecting a college (and making other impactful life decisions) as well as provide college-bound students the tools necessary for success once on a college campus, utilizing basic problem-solving strategies and interpersonal skills; *College Selection, Overcoming Obstacles, First-Year Experience, Self-Awareness, Problem-Solving Skills, Interpersonal Skills*

## **BEFORE THE WORKSHOP/SESSION**

This workshop is designed to assist high school students in finding the right fit for selecting a college as well as fitting-in with campus life. The handout content provides a great baseline of details to consider when deciding on a college, but you could supplement the workshop by incorporating time to research colleges. You may want to reserve a meeting space that has computer access if research is to be part of the workshop.

## **STEP ONE TIME: 5-10+ MINUTES**

Before distributing the handout, introduce the topic of college selection by asking students to raise a hand if they have started thinking about colleges for submitting applications. Ask students to pull out a piece of scrap paper or provide the *Fitting Things to Consider About College* half-sheet (included with this guide). Direct students through the following engagement tasks to encourage deeper consideration of the college selection process.

- 1st: Take a guess at how many colleges and universities exist in the United States.  
(Answer: approximately 5,000)
- 2nd: What are the typical admissions requirements you must provide when applying to a college?  
(Answers could include: application, app fee, shot/immunization records, GPA, test scores, transcript, class rank, essay(s), list of extra/co-curricular activities, student resume, recommendation letters, transcripts--both high school and college if receiving dual or concurrent university credit, etc.)
- 3rd: List the most important factors or criteria you are looking for in a college.
- 4th: Which colleges are on your short list right now? Use the back page, if needed.  
(Follow up by asking why those colleges made the list.)

Questions for deeper discussion: *What if you don't meet all of the admission requirements? Have you considered colleges that are "sure thing," "match," and "reach"?* (Take a moment to discuss what these terms mean.) *What happens if you choose the wrong college? With about 5,000 colleges in the country, how do you know if you're selecting the right one?*

**DreamCatcher Extra:** If time allows, facilitate a quick one minute "race" to list all of the colleges or universities each participant can think of (no abbreviations allowed). If using the provided half-sheet, students can flip to the back to write the list. Provide one minute on a timer and see how many colleges they get. Have students say aloud their listed colleges. (You could make it even more challenging by asking them to cross out any colleges already said by other students.) The student with the most colleges listed is the winner.

# FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

## Program Guide



### **STEP TWO** TIME: 10-15 MINUTES

Distribute the FINDING THE RIGHT FIT handout to students. Read aloud the text on the cover page, making certain to emphasize the “Start Here” suggestions as well as the “Consider These Criteria” section. Ask students to use their scrap sheet of paper to rank the eight criteria in order of personal importance, possibly adding their own criteria to the list, if not already included in the list.

Move to the inside of the handout and cover the Summer Melt belt. Next, instruct students to read silently on their own the *Reasons NOT to Pick a College*. Provide about 5 minutes to read this part of the handout. Follow up by asking: ***Of the reasons NOT to pick a college, which would be the most tempting for you? Which of those reasons wouldn't be an issue for you at all?*** Instruct students to put a star by the tempting reasons, or ones they have actually considered.

**DreamCatcher Tip:** While students are reading silently, consider playing study-friendly “brain” music at a quiet level. Brain music should have no lyrics, with a slow rhythm of 40-60 beats per minute, such as Baroque classical music.

### **STEP THREE** TIME: 15 MINUTES

Before covering the *Fitting Things to Consider* section of the handout, instruct students to find a partner. For the next activity, pairs need to determine who will be Partner 1 and who will be Partner 2. Read aloud the first entry on the list (*Admission Rate*). Allow discussion as needed, then instruct the partner groups that Partner 1 will read the next three things to consider and Partner 2 will read the final three items on the list. Everyone will read silently, learning the material well enough to teach it to their partner. Provide students about five minutes to read their parts (perhaps play brain music during the interlude). Next, instruct pairs to take turns teaching their partners what they learned from the three parts they read. This instruction needs to be in their OWN WORDS, paraphrased to sum up the info pertaining to that item. Provide pairs five additional minutes to teach their partner what was learned. Conclude with a quick explanation: **according to brain science, learned info that is TAUGHT to another person has a 90% success rate of being retained in long-term memory.**

### **STEP FOUR** TIME: 10 MINUTES

Turn to the back page of the handout to cover *Fitting In On Campus*, reading the info about managing expectations. For *Fitting Tips to Avoid Serious Snags*, ask that partners from the previous activity take turns reading the tips together. When most partner groups appear to be finished, challenge the pairs to RECALL what items their partner taught them from the **previous** activity about choosing a college. This should be done without looking back at the handout. Give pairs a few minutes to share what they learned from their partner. You could ask: ***How did you do? Were you able to recall what you learned before? Did you have to “cheat” and look back to the handout?*** Mention that it takes multiple encounters with new information to commit that info to long-term memory. For better retention of new material (now and in college), you should read, write, teach, and re-read/re-write what needs to be remembered. Class notes should be written out paper-to-pencil. Flashcards are also helpful.

### **STEP FIVE** TIME: 5 MINUTES

Referring back to the “Snags” part of the handout about encountering problems or obstacles in college, ask students to take a few moments to consider possible snags they might encounter at college. Does this fill them with panic or worry? It would be normal, if so. Every student has at least some degree of fear or anxiety when starting (and during) college. For the next five minutes, have students use their scrap paper to write down every possible worry, concern, fear, and stress they feel about the college experience. Afterward you can share with students: **journaling worries in a stream-of-consciousness style is actually quite therapeutic for stress-relief. Studies have shown that students who write down their concerns (or even doodle or sketch) immediately before testing often do better than those who don't. By writing down your worries, you are emptying your brain of the clutter that stress creates, improving your mood and allowing for clearer thinking. This is called “worry journaling” and it has been proven to help with anxiety.**

**STEP SIX** TIME: 20 MINUTES

**WORST CASE SCENARIO ACTIVITY** — Use the cards included with this guide to facilitate. Ask that previous pairs (from steps 3 and 4) now pair up with another partner group, making teams of four. Explain to groups that the WORST CASE SCENARIO activity has cards describing possible “snags” or obstacles they might encounter in college. As a team, they should brainstorm ideas for how best to handle or resolve the situation and provide justification for their answer. Provide each team with a set of activity cards. Allow time for teams to work through cards.

- WCS CARD 1 ANSWER: C      Don't wait to get help from the professor; seek support with additional tutoring; improve study habits
- WCS CARD 2 ANSWER: B      Ask for help or directions from anyone nearby; if that person doesn't know, keep asking others
- WCS CARD 3 ANSWER: A, B, & C      Try every possible option here, you can't miss that exam, as finals are a MAJOR part of your grade
- WCS CARD 4 ANSWER: C      Check the syllabus for office hours, then visit with both the lab instructor and professor to *respectfully* express concern and discuss options; remember a science lab grade factors into your overall GPA
- WCS CARD 5 ANSWER: B & C      Start by communicating with your roommate clearly and respectfully to express frustrations; reach out to your RA for support as well, especially if talking with your roommate doesn't reach a solution
- WCS CARD 6 ANSWER: A & C      Don't go back to bed until you've contacted your professors and sought medical treatment

Keep an eye on the clock to make sure there is time to provide and discuss the answers. Allow teams to share any solutions they came up with to resolve or improve each worst case scenario. Facilitate discussion to wrap up this activity, as students won't yet understand or know how to address these situations on a college campus.

**DreamCatcher Extra:** Included with this program guide is a sheet of copy-permissible bookmarks to distribute to each participant (optional). Simply print in color on cardstock paper, then cut to size. If time permits, discuss this quote from Stephen Hawking. How might his quote apply to the college experience?

**LAST STEP** TIME REMAINING

Provide assessment (included with this guide) to a sampling of students; collect before dismissal.

**LEARNING OUTCOME**

At session conclusion, students will have learned valuable criteria to consider for selecting the best fitting college, as well as understand strategies for how to fit-in on a college campus, utilizing problem-solving and interpersonal skills.

# Fitting THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT COLLEGE

1st

How many colleges or universities are in the U.S.? Your guess: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd

What are the typical admissions requirements applicants must provide?

---

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3rd

List the most important factors/criteria that you're looking for in a college:

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Which colleges are on your short list right now? Why? (Use the back if needed.)

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## College! WORST CASE SCENARIO 1

You have only missed one class so far this semester and taken notes during class, but when you get your first test returned from the professor, you only scored 68%!

- A. Quit the class
- B. Wait until the next test to see if you improve
- C. Go visit your prof to express concern/seek help

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## College! WORST CASE SCENARIO 2

It's the first day of class and you can't find the building or classroom for Biology 1214. You are going to be late or miss the class entirely.

- A. Keep searching, that class has to be somewhere
- B. Find the nearest person and ask for help
- C. Go back to your dorm room and sulk

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## College! WORST CASE SCENARIO 3

You show up for the final exam of the semester, but the test isn't in the same location as your class has been. The room is completely empty, but you know it's exam time.

- A. Immediately check your course syllabus for info
- B. Try calling or emailing your professor
- C. Text a friend from class to ask where to go

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## College! WORST CASE SCENARIO 4

The lab instructor for your Physics 1104 course seems rude and unhelpful. You like the lecture professor, but just don't seem to click with the lab instructor.

- A. Switch to a different section/time for the lab
- B. Don't say anything and suck it up
- C. Go to office hours to discuss your concerns/options

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## College! WORST CASE SCENARIO 5

Ever since moving into the residence hall, you and your roommate haven't gotten along. You cringe at the thought of sharing a space with someone you don't like.

- A. Spend as much time as possible away from the room
- B. Have a tough, but respectful convo with roomie
- C. Seek advice from the Resident Assistant

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## College! WORST CASE SCENARIO 6

It's the flu! You woke up with a fever and body aches and can't make it to class. At this rate, you may never get out of bed again.

- A. Contact or visit the campus health center right away
- B. Go back to bed and try to sleep it off
- C. Call/email your profs about having to miss class

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## **FINDING THE RIGHT FIT PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

**LIST 2 REASONS NOT TO  
PICK A COLLEGE:**

- 1.
- 2.

**LIST 3 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN  
SELECTING A COLLEGE:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**WHAT ARE 3 STRATEGIES FOR  
FITTING-IN ON CAMPUS:**

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