

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 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.

FIRST GEN 411 OBJECTIVE & INCLUDED TOPICS

To inform high school and college students about situations they might face as first-generation college students (one or more parent does not have a college degree) and solutions they can implement for success in higher education, as well as selecting the appropriate college and career path, ensuring the needed support is obtained, staying on track in college, and making the transition to college and career: *Are You the First? And What's the Process?*, *Creating a Plan for College/Career Exploration, Self-Advocacy, Initiative, and Adaptation.*

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP/SESSION

This workshop is appropriate for high school through college-level students. The session will address actions that first-generation college students (FGCS) can take to be successful in post-secondary education. Even if some students are not FGCS, this workshop will still provide many helpful strategies to be successful in college. Consider inviting an advisor or other professional that works with FGCS on your college campus to speak about available services, resources, or degree completion. You could also ask a former student who has completed their degree to reflect about the experience. Prepare an appropriate amount of supplemental materials that are included in this Program Guide to distribute to students.

OPTIONAL STEP ONE TIME: 10 MINUTES

Begin by asking for a show of hands to the following question: *How many of you are first-generation college students, meaning your parents do not have a college degree?* Ask students if they have discussed their college plans with their parents/guardians and how that conversation went. Solicit answers and promote discussion as time allows.

Next, ask *What types of challenges might first-generation college students face?* Solicit answers, or prompt students by discussing the following challenges: lack of parental support and/or knowledge about college, concerns about financial responsibilities and sources of financial aid, difficulties transitioning from high school to college, struggles with isolation/invisibility while attending college, dropout probability, selecting a mentor, feeling like an imposter, etc. Tell participants that *all of these challenges can be overcome with knowledge, support, and skill-building.*

Before distributing the *First Gen 411* handout, guide students through a brief by-the-numbers activity:

1. Print and cut the signs from pages 3 and 4 from this program guide (laminates for reusability in other workshops).
2. Place signs in various spots around the workshop space.
3. Ask students to get into groups of 4 (alternatively, ask students to find a partner, then have pairs pair).
4. Distribute a set of the percentage arrows to each group (2 sets per page included on page 5) and 4 pieces of tape.
5. Instruct groups to match their percentage arrows to each sign posted around the room by taping onto the prompts. When complete, review and discuss the answers below with students.

Answer Key:

How many students nationwide are first-generation college students? 56%
What percentage of FGCS students are enrolled in college full-time? 30%
How many FGCS students sought academic support services while in college? 65%
How many first-generation college students have a job outside of college? 66%

FIRST GEN 411 Program Guide



STEP TWO TIME: 15-20 MINUTES

Distribute the *First Gen 411* handout; review each section beginning with the definition of a first-generation college student. Next, focus on the section titled "Have You Ever Asked Yourself the Following as a First-Gen Student?" Ask everyone to consider the questions and fill in the circles next to the statements they have asked themselves. If time allows, have them pair up and discuss. Wrap up by asking *if some of the questions made them think more about their experiences about being first-gen.*

Move to the *Start Here* section and discuss the main strategies to consider as a FGCS while in college. Discuss the window with the main strategies and the prompts below to prime students for learning later in the workshop.

Move to the back of the handout to discuss the **Exploration Plan** section. Go through the strategies below beginning with **Choose Wisely**. Add any relevant information that is necessary for your students. When you're done with this section, move to the corresponding section to the right beginning with **Which college degree interests me?** Students should read the three prompts and consider their responses before writing answers. Solicit responses from the group as time allows. Direct attention to the **Self-Advocacy Plan** and review the pointers below. Add supplemental information that you deem relevant. Repeat this process for the **Initiative Plan** and **Adaptation Plan** sections.

STEP THREE TIME: 10 MINUTES

Before the workshop, print the *Crack the College Code* double-sided and cut in half. Distribute the 1/2 sheet next.

The *Crack the College Code* handout contains some extra tips to aid in FGSC students' success. Tell participants that *success in college extends beyond performance in class*. This handout begins with some tips for success in class, then covers tips for success on campus, financially, and mentally. Review each section with students, adding in any personal anecdotes from your college experience or other strategies you know are effective.

DreamCatcher Tip: This would be a great time to incorporate a guest speaker into the workshop. Consider inviting an academic advisor or other professional that works with first-generation college students or with freshmen students on your college campus to speak about available services and resources. Invite an advisor that works with students on degree completion to speak to students. Ask a former student who has completed their degree to reflect about the experience. Perhaps include a student panel so different students can speak about their differing college experiences. Allow for a questions and answers.

FINAL STEP AND ASSESSMENT TIME REMAINING

Wrap up the session by soliciting any questions or comments. Distribute the assessment included in this Program Guide to all students (print and cut prior to the workshop). Collect when complete.

LEARNING OUTCOME

At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to define first-generation college student and list one new strategy for each of the plans covered in the session (exploration, self-advocacy, initiative, adaptation).



How many students nationwide are first-generation college students?



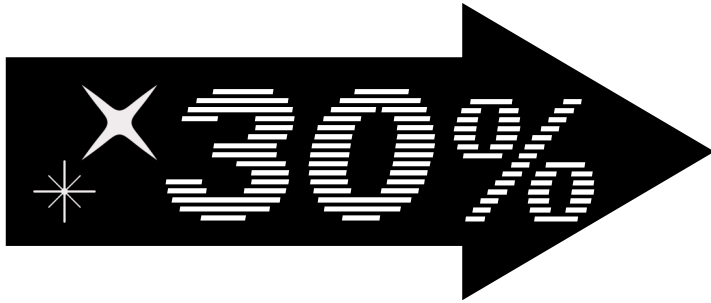
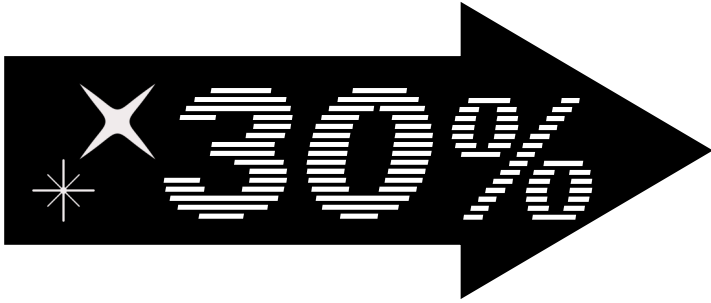
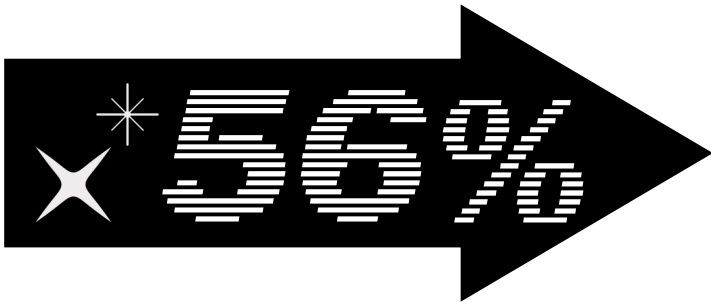
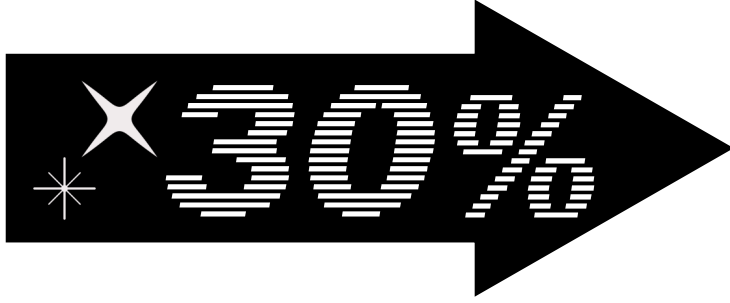
What percentage of FGCS students are enrolled in college full-time?



**How many FGCS
students sought
academic support
services while
in college?**



**How many first-
generation college
students have a
job outside
of college?**



CRACK THE CODE COLLEGE

START HERE

in class

on campus

financially

mentally

IN CLASS

- Read the course syllabi: Even if the teacher reviews it in class, read the syllabus on your own and note important dates (tests, paper due dates) in your planner. Make a plan to meet deadlines.
- Go to class: Attendance may be optional, but make an effort to go to each class meeting, pay attention, and take notes. Even if you're running late, go in quietly and find a spot without disrupting.
- Sit in front: You'll see/hear better and you won't be as distracted by those in front of you. Put your phone away unless instructed.
- Meet your classmates/instructors: Befriend a few people in class and create study groups. Introduce yourself to the course instructors.

ON CAMPUS

- Learn the campus: Walk around campus to learn where your classes are and how long it takes to get there. Locate the library and other important departments and buildings.
- Understand the college rules: Read your college handbook. Keep a copy handy for future reference.
- Become a part of the campus community: Find an organization or two that you can join and be an active member.

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FINANCIALLY

- **Complete the FAFSA each year in college:** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid needs to be completed in October for the following year. Go to www.studentaid.gov to file.
- **Don't take out too many student loans:** Only take out what is needed for your cost of attendance (tuition, fees, technology, housing, food, books, supplies, and travel costs).
- **Continue your scholarship search:** Keep looking and applying for scholarships during college.
- **Understand how your course load affects your financial responsibility:** Be aware of the drop and withdrawal deadlines and how that might impact you financially.
- **Use your meal plan effectively:** If you have a meal plan, make sure to utilize it before paying out-of-pocket for other food items.
- **Get used textbooks:** Shop off-campus bookstores if necessary. And don't forget to sell those books back!
- **Get to know your financial aid officer:** If your financial situation changes or you have an emergency, they'll be able to help you.



MENTALLY

- **Bring an open mind:** Be open to learning new concepts and ways of thinking, even if it challenges your current opinions/beliefs. Try to learn from others.
- **Don't succumb to imposter syndrome:** You are right where you are meant to be and just as capable and talented as your fellow classmates.
- **Accept constructive criticism:** Don't take feedback personally. Use criticism to improve your work.
- **Be patient with yourself:** You might make mistakes or get a low grade in college. Rest assured that you are not doomed. Try to find solutions and seek assistance from campus services when needed.
- **Make your own decisions:** You are in college for YOURSELF and no one else. Follow your own path and take chances. Make decisions for your own happiness.
- **Plan for the future while focusing on the present:** Make a short-term plan for the upcoming term. Make a long-term plan for your degree. Don't forget to be flexible and change direction when/if needed.



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FIRST GEN **411**
ASSESSMENT

Write down the definition of a **FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT** using your own words:

What is one strategy that you learned from the following plans?

EXPLORATION:

SELF-ADVOCACY:

INITIATIVE:

ADAPTATION:

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