



THIS. IS. COLLEGE! Program Guide

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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, students/clients, or situation. The guide also includes copy-permissible 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, updates 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.

THIS. IS. COLLEGE! OBJECTIVE & INCLUDED TOPICS:

To provide college students with basic preparation skills and success tips to use throughout college, including an overview of what to expect on a college campus and how to adapt to campus life, as well as introducing life skills needing development throughout college to be successful in the workplace after college graduation; *Flexibility/Adaptability, College Success Tips, Mistakes to Avoid, Time Management, Organization, Professional and Interpersonal Skills to Develop*

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP/SESSION:

This workshop is designed for first time entering college students, both traditional and non-traditional; however, any level of college student could benefit from the provided specific tips and suggestions for success on a college campus. Print in advance the supplemental pages included with this guide. The card discussion sets should be printed on cardstock paper. Print enough of the *This Is How You Remember/Assess* page for each student to have their own copy. Have scissors on hand for the workshop (for participants to trim the assessment).

STEP ONE TIME: 5-10 MINUTES

Before distributing the handout, start the session with an open discussion about how college life differs from that of high school. If participants are currently in college, facilitate discussion about how college is going thus far. You could generate feedback with the following questions: *Has anything about the college experience (so far) surprised you, or was not what you expected? What has been the hardest part of transitioning to college? What fears or concerns do you have about the years ahead on a college campus? What parts of college have been the most intimidating?* Encourage dialogue. Students should hopefully be able to see that their fears/concerns are not unique, but common to most entering freshmen on campus. You might also share lessons you learned while in college. Sharing personal experiences is a great way to build trust and engage participants, just remember to keep it brief and focus on a specific narrative.

STEP TWO TIME: 10 MINUTES

Distribute the handout and begin with the *Welcome to Campus Life* section, emphasizing the fact that **college is what you make it**. Transition to the *Adjust Much* section and stress that college success requires the ability to adapt and be flexible. Pause to emphasize that **an important skill to foster is resilience**, which is similar to flexibility, but also critical for success in college and in life. Provide this brief definition: **Resilience is the capacity to quickly recover from adversity, obstacles, or hardship.** Ask participants to consider a time they experienced adversity, then ask: *How did you overcome that setback and move forward? What character traits might one need to be resilient?*

Have students find a discussion partner. Provide to each partner group a set of the copy-permissible/copy-friendly discussion cards included with this guide. Each person needs to have a different card. Provide participants a few minutes of "think time" to consider their responses, then instruct partner groups to begin discussion, taking turns after a few minutes. Set a 2 minute timer to help facilitate this activity, prompting the switching of discussion between partners. If there's extra time, partners could swap cards and share their responses.

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STEP THREE TIME: 10-15 MINUTES (OR AS TIME PERMITS)

Provide each student with a copy of the *This Is How You Remember/Assess* sheet for taking notes during the session, taking the quiz in this step, and for assessing later. Move to the inside of the handout and cover sections as time permits. It may be helpful to cover the *This Is What to Avoid* section before conducting a little “honesty” experiment. Ask participants to truthfully answer the questions below. For every YES response, or statement that is true, they should write an X on their sheet. Answers can be confidential, but follow up by encouraging some self-reflection on how they believe they are doing thus far in college (considering the number of Xs written down). You could also ask for a show of hands if they believe they could do better in making the most of their college experience.

1. So far in my time on campus, I have — at one or more times — felt confused or overwhelmed, but did not seek out help or ask questions.
2. I have missed or skipped at least one class this semester/year.
3. I have misunderstood my professor or had questions in class, but did not raise my hand to ask a question or visit with the professor after class to clarify my misunderstanding.
4. I have not yet visited my professor during office hours.
5. I have — at one or more times — put off or delayed studying, reading my textbook, or writing a paper for class.
6. I have yet to read the campus student handbook from beginning to end.
7. There are some classes that I have not yet fully read the syllabus.
8. I do not know when I need to meet with an academic advisor regarding next semester’s schedule.
9. I have yet to sign up for any extracurricular organization or volunteer opportunity on campus.
10. I do not usually attend optional free performances, lectures, or activities on campus.

Be sure to clarify that everyone’s college experience is unique to the individual, but it’s up to each student to make the most of their time on campus.

DreamCatcher Tip: At this point in the workshop, it might be helpful to do a brain exercise to refocus for the next activity. Ask workshop attendees to stand up and take some deep breaths to oxygenate the blood and brain. Everyone should take 3 deep cleansing breaths on the count of 8. Breathing in through the nose and counting silently upward to 8, then exhaling through the mouth counting backwards from 8-to-1.

STEP FOUR TIME: 10-15 MINUTES (OR AS TIME PERMITS)

For the *This Is Good Advice* page, participants will read on their own. Before beginning, explain that for NEW concepts, or something never heard of before, they should UNDERLINE those parts while reading. For any idea/tip/advice they want to adapt into a habit, they should CIRCLE those parts. For anything important they want to remember, they should jot it down on the provided *This Is How You Remember* page. During this time, play “brain music” (see tip below) to induce relaxed alertness and focus. After an appropriate amount of time, process the activity by asking: *What was the most helpful piece of advice you learned? What is something you personally plan to make into a habit?*

DreamCatcher Tip: Playing music is a fantastic strategy for engaging workshop participants of all ages, as it is fun and brain friendly. For periods of concentration, *brain music* should be instrumental (without lyrics) such as Classical Baroque with a soft pace of 40-60 beats per minute, played at low volume.

FINAL STEP & ASSESSMENT TIME REMAINING

The back page of the handout offers critical life skills one should develop while in college to be ready for the workplace after graduation. Even if you only have a short time remaining in the workshop, try to point out the main ideas for each of the 6 life skills listed. Participants should put a star next to the skills they personally believe need the most work. Ask how one might gain the experience needed to build that skill (volunteer work, part-time jobs, internships, co-curriculars, etc.). Ask participants to cut and complete the included *This Is How You Will Assess* sheet.

THIS. IS. COLLEGE! (AND I GOT THIS.)

Take a few minutes to read the questions below and consider your responses. When prompted, you will have 2 minutes to share the questions and your answers with your partner.

What is something helpful/useful you have learned while on campus that would've been good to know before you got here?

What has been the hardest adjustment to make while in college thus far?

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Take a few minutes to read the questions below and consider your responses. When prompted, you will have 2 minutes to share the questions and your answers with your partner.

In what ways have you made an effort to connect with other people while on campus so far?

What is the most surprising thing about college that you didn't expect (good or bad)?

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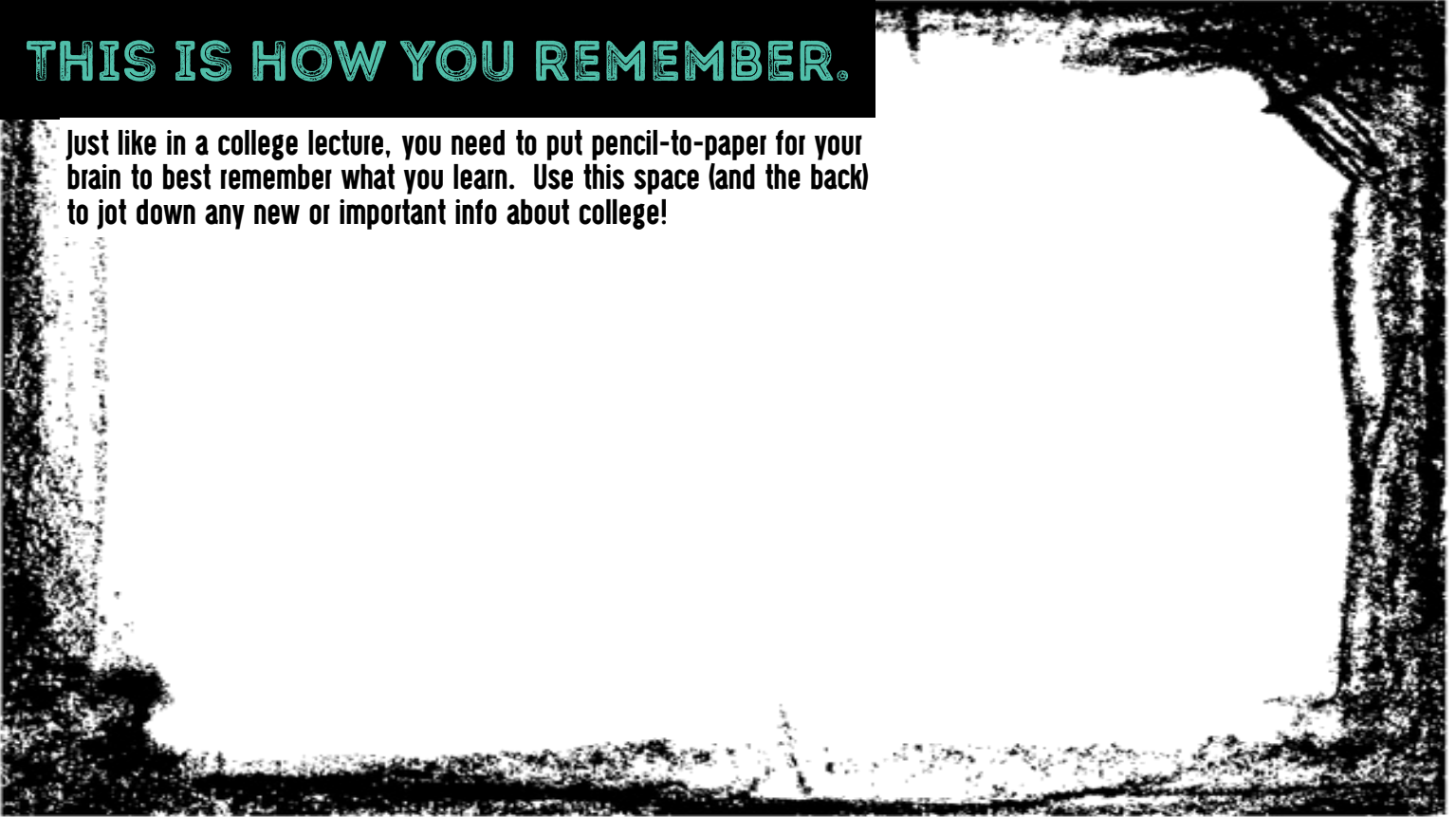
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THIS IS HOW YOU REMEMBER.

Just like in a college lecture, you need to put pencil-to-paper for your brain to best remember what you learn. Use this space (and the back) to jot down any new or important info about college!



THIS IS HOW YOU WILL ASSESS.

List **2** behaviors to avoid during college:

- 1.
- 2.

Name **3** life skills you'll need after college:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List **5** tips learned today about how to be successful in college:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

