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SESSION 6: BUILDING YOUR DREAM TEAM AND TAKING IT ON THE ROAD

ACTIVITY # 1: FINDING FRIENDS AND MENTORS ON THE PATH TO COLLEGE

Opening Discussion:

Each one of us requires friends and mentors as we work toward our future goals. It is important that students identify the individuals who can help them reach their goal of college attendance. Students should consider who may help or impede their planning for college.

Activity/Handout:

With a Little Help From My Friends How to Use Your School Counselor

Instructions:

1. Distribute the handout, "With a Little Help from My Friends." Allow approximately five minutes for students to answer the questions.
2. Ask students to share with the group the individual they have identified as a mentor and what role that person has played in each student's life.
3. Discussion: Have students report on the individuals whom they have identified as potential friends and mentors during their college planning process. Use the chalkboard or flip chart to list individuals by the roles played in the students' lives. By the end of this activity, students should have touched upon these individuals: parents, siblings, school counselors, teachers, coaches and leaders of extracurricular activities, community and religious leaders, employers.
4. Distribute the handout, "How to Use Your School Counselor." Give students a few minutes to review the handout.
5. Ask students to share what their experience with school counselors has been to date.
6. Discuss with students the special resource that school counselors may provide. Suggest ways to overcome problems that may have arisen in effective working relationships to date.



WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

A mentor is defined as: “a wise and trusted teacher or guide.” Your road to college will be much easier if you enlist the help of more than one mentor along the way.

1. Name a person who has had a positive influence on your ability to go to college:
(Note: this person is one of your “mentors”)

- What is this individual’s relationship to you?
- How has he or she helped you move ahead toward college?

2. Who else can you think of who could be a “mentor” and help you attain your college goals?

3. Identify an experience you have had outside of the classroom (during the last year) that makes it more likely that you will have a successful college experience.

- How did this help you prepare for college?

HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR

School counselors are one of the best ongoing sources of support for students who plan to go to college. They can be your friend throughout the entire college process. If you are lucky enough to have access to a counselor in your school, it is in your best interest to visit that person on a regular basis.

Start by making an individual appointment to introduce yourself to your counselor. Begin your meeting by introducing yourself and stating clearly that it is your definite goal to attend college. Make sure your counselor realizes that this is **IMPORTANT** to you and that you are **HIGHLY MOTIVATED!** Whatever grade you are in **NOW**, this is the time to start helping your counselor get to know you and your college dreams.

Throughout your high school years, your counselor can help you:

- Plan classes that prepare you well for college admission and success. Your counselor knows which high school classes are required for college admission.
- Review your academic record and suggest areas that need improvement.
- Begin the admission process by identifying the questions you should be asking—and finding honest answers.
- Find information; for example in books, catalogues, brochures, and websites that deal either with the admission process or a specific college or university.
- Locate websites that offer **RELIABLE** and **FREE** information about college.
- Identify special opportunities that may maximize your chances for being a well-prepared and appealing candidate for colleges. These might include weekend or summer programs on college campuses (often free for first-generation students), internships or community college classes open to high school students.
- Learn about local college fairs, opportunities to visit college campuses, and even overnight visits to colleges that may be offered.
- Familiarize yourself with everything you need to know about the required college admission tests. Provide a fee waiver if you cannot pay for tests yourself.
- Figure out how to **PAY** for college. Your counselor can give you essential information about the “need-based” financial aid application process.

If you feel it will be helpful, ask your counselor to meet with you and the members of your family who will be working with you in your college planning. Having everyone in agreement about your future will make the process much easier!