Transitioning to Post-Secondary Education: Through a Social Emotional Lens

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Please join us on your laptop or smartphone at www.joinpd.com

Objectives

1. Participants will examine common social and emotional issues that individuals with ID may experience when transitioning to a post-secondary education program.

2. Participants will explore various strategies and practices that can be implemented to help increase social and emotional skills for individuals with ID prior to transitioning to post-secondary education programs.

3. Participants will explore ways to support their student enrolled in a post-secondary education program regarding social and emotional learning.

Dr. Tina Randall, Ph.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor
ClemsonLIFE, Clemson University

- 14 years public school general and special educator
- 3 years higher education professor and researcher

Research focus:
Factors that increase quality of life, independent living, and competitive employment for individuals with IDD.

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Program Counselor
ClemsonLIFE, Clemson University

- 3 years public school counselor
- 3 years counselor for ClemsonLIFE (1 year full-time; 2 years graduate assistant)

Counseling Approach:
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
Solution Focused

Now it's Your Turn...

I am a(n)...

a. Parent/caregiver
b. Individual with IDD
c. Teacher at a public K–12 school
d. Teacher at a PSE school
e. Service provider
f. Other that is interested in this topic...

Now it's Your Turn...

What is your primary reason for attending this session?

To learn....

a. Common first year social and emotional concerns those with ID and DS may experience when transitioning to a full-time PSE program

b. Strategies and practices that teachers and families can implement to help prepare students prior to transitioning to PSE programs

c. How best to support the social and emotional wellbeing of a newly transitioned PSE student

Students choose an option

ClemsonLIFE
~Who We Are~

Mission Statement

ClemsonLIFE offers a collegiate experience that prepares young men and women with intellectual disabilities for competitive employment and independent living through a combination of academic coursework and career exploration.

What is ClemsonLIFE?

Serve:
- Students ages 18-26 (Traditional)
- Students ages 18-30 (HCP)
- Intellectual disability

Teach:
- Employment skills
- Independent living skills
- Social skills
- Self-advocacy
- Functional academics

Goal:
- Competitive employment
- Independent living to the greatest extent possible.

	ClemsonLIFE	National Average (NLTS2)
Employment Rate	100% have been employed 96% currently employed	14–34%
Independent Living Rate	60%	21%

Program Overview

Currently 44 students in LIFE Program

- 13 Freshmen
- 9 Sophomores
- 10 Juniors
- 7 Seniors
- 5 HCP Students

Traditional Program: 2 to/or 4 year program
  - Two-year basic certificate program with optional invite-only two-year advanced certificate program

Hospitality Certificate Program: 2 year program

Basic Program

Freshmen and Sophomores:

- Attend ClemsonLIFE classes
- Attend 1 Clemson University traditional course each semester
- Live on campus with an Independent Living Assistant (ILA)
- Participate in employment internship experiences
- Work 4–9 hours per week
- Participate in various other service, volunteer, and social activities around campus and in the community

Advanced Program

Juniors and Seniors:

- Students live off campus with no ILA
- Work 15+ hours a week
- Attend 1 Clemson University course
- Attend ClemsonLIFE classes to refresh LIFE skillS
  - *Transition *Employment *Health/Wellness *Building Relationships
- Participate in cooking classes in their apartment with peers
- Participate in various other service, volunteer, and social activities around campus and within the community
- Receive (limited) supports in the apartment and employment settings

Hospitality Certificate Program

- Students live off campus with no Independent Living Assistant (ILA) or Independent Living Support

- Paid Internship for 9 hours a week in Year 1 and 15+ hours per week in Year 2

- Attend a 3 credit hour Parks, Recreation, Tourism Management (PRTM) Clemson University traditional course per semester

- This two-year program provides graduates with a ClemsonLIFE Hospitality Certificate while having the to receive other national certifications in class and with other trainings/certifications Hazmat, Customer Service).

- Participate in various service, volunteer, and social activities around campus

Independent Living

Independent Living for Basic Program

Independent Living Assistants (ILAs)

- Provide supervision in the housing area and community for Basic Program Students (6pm – 6am M–F and on weekends)
- Work with instructors to teach students independent living skills, such as cleaning, hygiene, laundry, etc.
- Coordinate activities each night and on weekends

Volunteers/Mentors

Volunteers and mentors are extremely important to ClemsonLIFE.

- Tutors
- Classroom Assistants
- Lunch/Dinner Peers
- Social Club

- Workout Peers
- Special Events/Parties
- Currently we have 600+ volunteers

What concerns do you have about the social or emotional wellbeing of your student (or yourself if you are the PSE student) as they transition to a post-secondary program?

Types of PSE Programming

SUBSTANTIALLY SEPARATE

*may or may not be housed on a college camps
*all courses or college experiences are strictly with other students with disabilities

HYBRID

*housed on a college or university campus
*take a mix of both functional courses with other students with disabilities as well as typical college courses with neurotypical peers
*same college experiences as neurotypical peers

FULLY INCLUSIVE

*housed on a college or university campus
*individualized
*take only traditional college courses with neurotypical students (supports through the disability services office, peers, or PSE staff)
*same college experiences as neurotypical peers

Current Status of Individuals with IDD and Social and Emotional Supports/Problems

Regardless of PSE programming model, the transition to college can be challenging for many students with IDD in part due to limitations and or struggles with different conceptual and social skills. [1,2]

Existing Research on Neurotypical College Students

- Elevated levels of mental health problems including: depression, anxiety, & stress[3, 4, 5]

- Initial transition is an especially vulnerable time [6]

- Those living AWAY from home face even higher levels of psychological distress [7]

- 35% of first year neurotypical undergraduates report symptoms of a mental health disorder [8]

If you have a neurotypical child or student – or even if you attended college yourself – do you remember any negative mental health symptoms when they or you first started college?

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If you answered yes to the previous question – what were some of the negative mental health symptoms you, or they faced?

What helps neurotypical college students?

- Peer-to-peer relationships

- Engagement (joining clubs, participating in intramural sports) within the institute of higher education

- Establishing student-faculty relationships [6]

- Social support in and of itself has been found to be one of the *MOST* important factors to predict college student success [3]

What about counseling services?

- Majority of institutes of higher education provide or offer counseling and mental health supports and services to their students

- College counselors are well equipped to deal with neurotypical college students and their emotional and mental health needs

However, most mental health professionals have limited or no experience counseling individuals with IDD.

What do we know about those college students with IDD?

Young adults (ages 19–24) with IDD face an increased risk for mental health disorders due to stress associated with the transition process and challenges associated with moving into society, attempting to gain employment, and live independently [9, 10]

What we know works at teaching skills to individuals with IDD…

- Explicit instruction,[11]

- Modeling,[12]

- Providing frequent practice and feedback, [13]

- Peers [14]

Why can't we just use counseling services provided by the university?

1. Very few professional counselors have any training, experience, or confidence in working with individuals with IDD [15]

2. In the US – the population of those with IDD is underrepresented in the residency training of most psychiatric programs [16]

   a. even with proper training, many mental health practitioners choose to not work with individuals with IDD [16]

Have you had difficulty finding a counselor who is prepared to work with individuals with IDD?
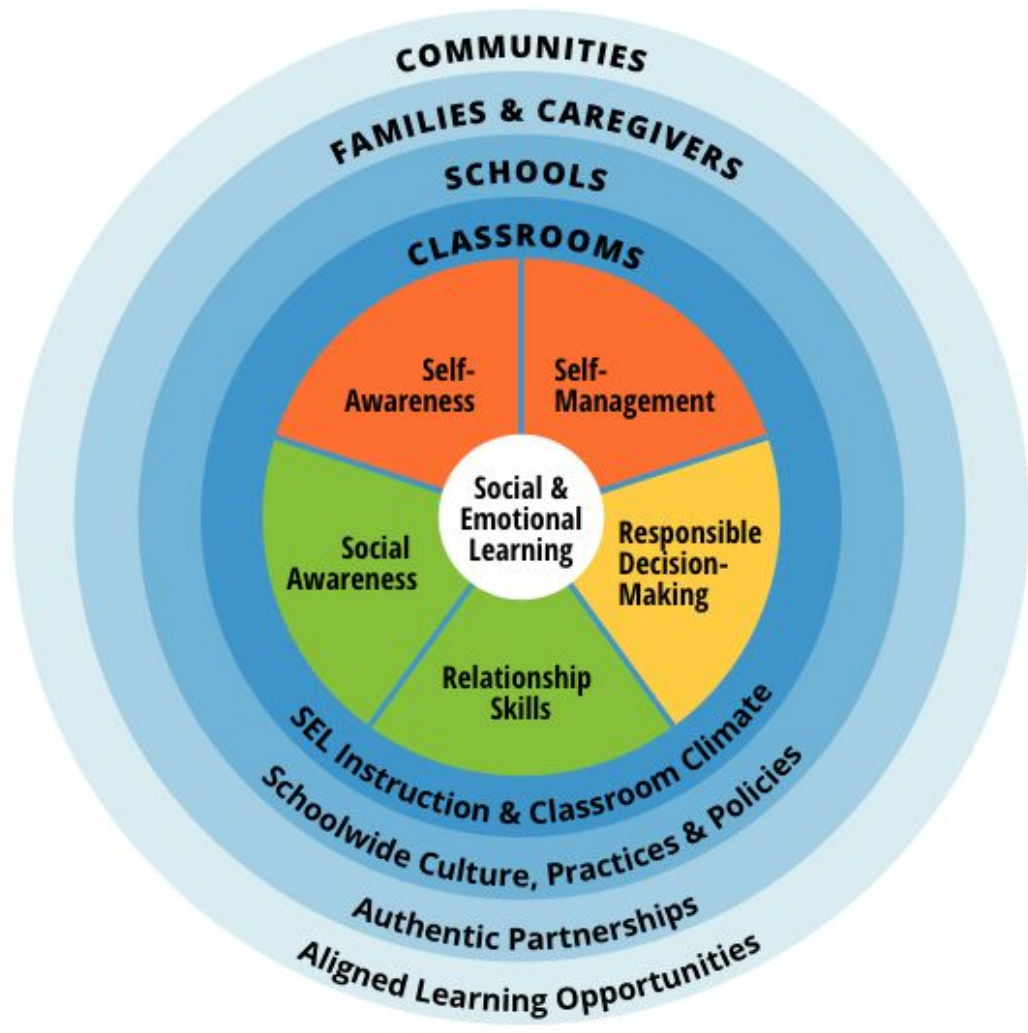
The PSE Counselor Role

History of Counseling Support in ClemsonLIFE

- Until last year, the counseling role was filled with a

  Graduate Assistant (GA) position

  - About 3 half-days a week

  - Individual meetings and classroom lessons

  - New person every year or every two years

How I Support Students

1. Classroom Lessons
    a. Relationships
    b. Social Skills
2. Individual and Small Group Sessions

COMMUNITIES

FAMILIES & CAREGIVERS

SCHOOLS

CLASSROOMS

Self-Awareness

Self-Management

Social Awareness

Responsible Decision-Making

Relationship Skills

Social & Emotional Learning

SEL Instruction & Classroom Climate

Schoolwide Culture, Practices & Policies

Authentic Partnerships

Aligned Learning Opportunities

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Overview of Classes

- Freshmen:
  - Relationships
  - Social Skills
  - Community Involvement
- Sophomores:
  - Social Skills
- Advanced Program (juniors + seniors):
  - Group
- HCP:
  - Group

Individual Counseling Sessions

- Available to any student

- Individual, sometimes done in pairs

- Some scheduled regularly

- Some scheduled as needed

- Can last anywhere from a few minutes to 30 minutes

- Proactive sessions if possible!

  - Parent input prior to coming

Referral System

- Student self referral

- Friend

- Teacher or staff

- Parent

- Work

*ALL of mental health referrals have come from parent

or staff*

Common Issues

A Student's Perspective

Current CULIFE Student

Why Collect Data?

- Identify areas for programmatic improvement
- Identify areas that were of highest priority for students
- Identify patterns for counseling visits, by gender, by year in program, etc.
- Develop future curricula and plan to address common social, emotional, or behavioral issues that are commonly seen with post-secondary students with IDD.
- Help parents and secondary school teachers identify which areas their students may require additional instruction and support.

Categorical Reasons for Initial Visit

- Social/Behavioral (61 visits)

- Emotional (25 visits)

- Academic/Employment (7 visits)

Emotional Visits

Mental Health Concern
Homesickness/Loneliness
Temper Control
Low Self-Esteem
Anxiety
Feeling Sick
Grief/Death

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Academic/Employment Visits

Post–Graduation Concern
Academic Performance
Work Concern
Eating Problems

Social and Emotional Counseling Visits by Category and Gender

Categorical Grouping Gender	Total Participation in Individual Counseling Sessions	Percent of Gender or Program (n) who Participated in Individual Counseling Sessions		
		Social/Behavioral Concerns	Emotional Concerns	Academic/ Work Concerns
Male (n = 25)	76% (n = 19)	64% (n = 16)	28% (n = 7)	8% (n = 2)
Female (n =19)	95% (n = 18)	84% (n = 16)	58% (n = 11)	21% (n = 4)
Total (N = 44)	84% (n = 37)	73% (n = 32)	41% (n = 18)	14% (n = 6)

Social and Emotional Counseling Visits by Category and Program

Categorical Grouping Residential Status	Total Participation in Individual Counseling Sessions	Percent of Gender or Program (n) who Participated in Individual Counseling Sessions		
		Social/Behavioral Concerns	Emotional Concerns	Academic/ Work Concerns
Living On Campus (n = 22)	91% (n = 20)	77% (n = 17)	45% (n = 10)	214% (n = 3)
Living Off Campus (n =22)	77% (n = 17)	73% (n = 15)	36% (n = 8)	14% (n = 3)
Total (N = 44)	84% (n = 37)	73% (n = 32)	41% (n = 18)	14% (n = 6)

Social/Behavioral Visit Reason	Total Visits Reason	Number of Students Visiting by Gender n (%)		Number of Students Visiting by Cohort n (%)	
		Male (n = 25)	Female (n = 19)	Live On–Campus (n = 22)	Live Off–Campus (n = 22)
Lack of Understanding Social Norms or Cues	24	8 (32%)	16 (84%)	14 (64%)	10 (45%)
Romantic Relationships	11	4 (16%)	7 (37%)	9 (41%)	2 (9%)
Adjusting to Campus Life	7	3 (12%)	4 (21%)	5 (23%)	2 (9%)
Bossy Behavior	7	6 (24%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	5 (23%)
Temper Control	6	5 (20%)	1 (5%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)
Miscommunication	4	2 (8%)	2 (11%)	1 (5%)	3 (14%)
Diet Concerns	2	0	2 (11%)	0	2 (9%)

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Emotional Visit Reason	Total Visits Reason	Number of Students Visiting by Gender n (%)		Number of Students Visiting by Cohort n (%)	
		Male (n = 25)	Female (n = 19)	Live On-Campus (n = 22)	Live Off-Campus (n = 22)
Grief/Death	10	5 (20%)	5 (26%)	5 (23%)	5 (23%)
Anxiety	6	0	6 (32%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)
Mental Health Concerns	3	1 (4%)	2 (11%)	2 (9%)	1 (5%)
Homesickness/Loneliness	3	1 (4%)	2 (11%)	3 (14%)	0
Low Self-Esteem	2	0	2 (11%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)
Feeling Sick	1	0	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0

Academic/ Employment Visit Reason	Total Visits Reason	Number of Students Visiting by Gender n (%)		Number of Students Visiting by Cohort n (%)	
		Male (n = 25)	Female (n = 19)	Live On-Campus (n = 22)	Live Off-Campus (n = 22)
Academic Performance	4	1 (4%)	3 (16%)	3 (14%)	1 (5%)
Post Graduation Concern	2	1 (4%)	1 (5%)	0	2 (9%)
Work Concern	1	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (5%)

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Examining Visit Patterns by Gender or Residential Status

- Any "significant" findings?
- Any surprises within the data?
- What does the analysis tell us?

Lack of Understanding Social Cues or Norms

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Social/Behavioral Visit Reason	Total Visits Reason	Male (n = 25)	Female (n = 19)	Live On–Campus (n = 22)	Live Off–Campus (n = 22)
Lack of Understanding Social Norms or Cues	24	8 (32%)	16 (84%)	14 (64%)	10 (45%)

The visit reason for Lack of Understanding Social Cues or Norms had the highest count.

More females than males, but not "statistically significant".

Continue to be a need throughout the program

Romantic Relationships

Social/Behavioral Visit Reason	Total Visits Reason	Male (n = 25)	Female (n = 19)	Live On-Campus (n = 22)	Live Off-Campus (n = 22)
Romantic Relationships	11	4 (16%)	7 (37%)	9 (41%)	2 (9%)

Concerns or issues regarding Romantic Relationships was the second most common visit reason.

More females than males, but again, not "statistically significant".

Much more common in the first two years of the program.

Bossy Behavior & Temper Control

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Social/Behavioral Visit Reason	Total Visits Reason	Male (n = 25)	Female (n = 19)	Live On–Campus (n = 22)	Live Off–Campus (n = 22)
Bossy Behavior	7	6 (24%)	1 (5%)	2 (9%)	5 (23%)
Temper Control	6	5 (20%)	1 (5%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)

Concerns or issues regarding Romantic Relationships was the second most common visit reason.

Males are statistically more likely to visit for being bossy and temper control.

Bossy Behavior more common for students living with roommates, but no ILA. Temper Control more common in newer students

Anxiety

Social/Behavioral Visit Reason	Total Visits Reason	Male (n = 25)	Female (n = 19)	Live On–Campus (n = 22)	Live Off–Campus (n = 22)
Anxiety	6	0	6 (32%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)

Females were statistically more likely to visit for reasons of anxiety than males.

Categorical Reasons for Visit

Categorical Visit Reason	Total Visits Reason	Male	Female	Live On-Campus	Live Off-Campus
Social/Behavioral Visits	61	28	33	35	26
Emotional Visits	25	7	18	16	9
Academic/Work Concerns Visits	7	3	4	3	4

Focus of nearly all counseling visits were due to social, behavioral, or emotional reasons – and not due to course programming or work placements

Referrals

Self-Referral	93
Teacher	51
ILA	17
Parent	16
Friend/Other Student	11
Administration	10
Volunteer	1

Mental Health Referrals

ALL referrals for mental health concerns were provided by parents, teachers, and administration – **NONE** were self-referral.

Implications of this finding??
- Ensure parents remain an integral part of student's life even while in a post-secondary setting
- Open lines of communication between all "team members" involved with the student.

But what are the specific issues that PSE students require help from the counselor?

Common Social Norms & Cues Not Understood

- Conversation skills
  - How to know when someone is not interested in continuing a conversation
  - One and done texting
- Gossiping
- Personal space
- Sports talk– bragging, trash talking = insulting family

Bossy Behavior & Temper Control Concerns

- ILA transition to no ILA → more bossy behavior in apartments
  - Ask, do not tell
- Growth mindset
- Knowing triggers
  - What bothers us?
  - How do we know when we are getting upset?

Romantic Relationship Issues

- What is a crush?
  - One way vs two way crushes
- Dating desires
- What is a date vs what is not a date
- General timeline of dating
- Healthy vs unhealthy relationships
- Reality of dating vs what is on social media & TV
- Sex Ed

Patterns with Anxiety

- Heightened during transition or adjustment times
  - Freshmen year, before/after breaks, going to AP, graduating, etc...
- Generally presents differently with everyone
  - Females– internalize more
  - Males– externalize more

One Key Concept to Remember

- <u>All behavior is a form of communication</u>

- Help the community change the way that they think about the needs of your students. Many times, a punishment or consequence isn't going to work.

- Need to get to the root of the problem!

First, ask yourself…

- What are some areas that my student struggles with currently regarding their behavior (socially or emotionally)?

- What supports does my student have in place now?

- What struggles do others face when going to college, that my student may struggle with too?

- Are there things that my student should know before going to college?

- What is our plan for when behaviors (social or emotional) occur?

The SRSS–IE:

A brief screening tool of external and internal risk factors

Sample Social–Emotional Planning Table

Behavior	How it's Communicated	Supports Currently in Place	Possible Future Supports	Plan Helping Reduce Behavior Before Occurrence	Plan Helping Reduce Behavior After Occurence
Anxiety about changes	Lots of repeated questions, picking of skin, perseverating on change	Large family wall calendar of upcoming dates, events, changes. Also, countdown of different days (X days until spring break, etc.)	Shared calendar through smartphone, whiteboard calendar to put on bedroom door	A family calendar will be shared on the smartphone, and student will practice accessing the calendar. Will also help create the physical calendar.	Parent will facetime with student and help them to update calendar, or use the new screen share option to show the family calendar.
Losing temper	Yelling, cussing, slamming things - typically frustration over not being able to "do something right".	Told to take a break (walk around outside, or sit quietly, for 10 minutes and take deep breaths)	Some kind of reminder of what to do when temper is being lost (ILA, small poster reminder on door, smart watch alert - elevated heart rate)	Practice steps for self-awareness of when feeling the rise of their temper. Check physical signs (heart racing, shaking hands, am I yelling?). Take a break.	Ensure teacher and/or ILA know about plan for if/when temper may be lost. Encourage your student to advocate for a break.

Transition to PSE
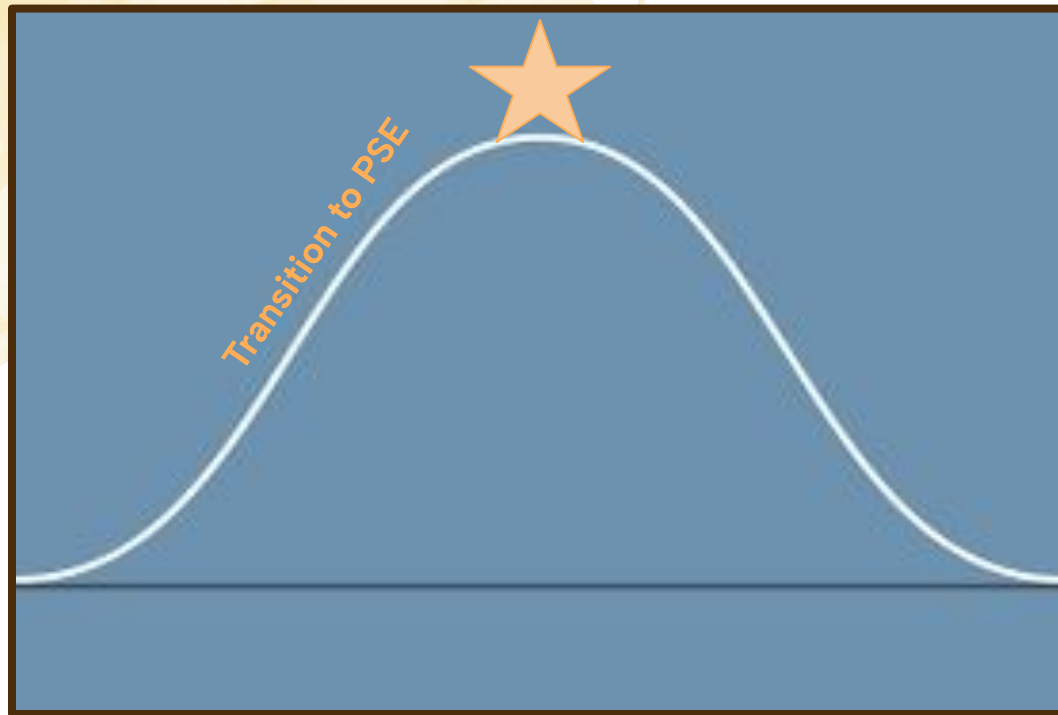
Remember –
Social and emotional issues are often amplified during transitioning to college for ALL students, especially those with IDD. [9, 10]

Advice

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- No transition is going to go perfectly! Things will come up.

- Have a growth mindset for yourself and your child.

- Parent involvement is key!

  - Mental health concerns are often not self- referred.

  - Within our data, the majority came from parents or other adults involved in the life of the student.

- **Ask how your student's PSE program communicates with parents and provides social and emotional supports.**

Attributes that will typically need to be explicitly taught to improve Emotional Intelligence

(the ability to recognize, understand, and deal skillfully with one's own emotions and the emotions of others – as by regulating one's emotions or by showing empathy and good judgment in social interactions [17])

Social Awareness

Understanding other people's perspectives and being able to empathize with them

How to Support

- Identify other people's feelings
- Practice having an open mind
- Intentional public observations

Responsible Decision Making

Ability to make good choices about one's behavior and interactions

How to Support

- Provide positive, honest feedback
  - ASAP
- If consequence is necessary, provide one that aligns with problematic behavior

Self Management

Managing our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in an effective way.

How to Support

- Teaching/model healthy coping skills
- Normalize hard feelings
- Setting goals
- Practice self control
- Growth mindset
- Find a local counselor if possible

Relationship skills

How to Support

Ability to connect with others and create & maintain healthy and supportive relationships.

Includes: friends, family, romantic relationships, work relationships, etc...

- Boundaries/personal space
- Positive friendship behaviors
- Conflict resolution
- Peer pressure
- Self advocacy
- Peer mentor/Role model

Ideas of teaching, supporting, encouraging these attributes:

1. *Teaching Exceptional Children Journal* (by Sage) – intended for practitioners, but written in a reader-friendly manner that parents may find helpful as well. Search for articles focused on the different attributes of Emotional Intelligence. (Subscription or membership to CEC is required to access)

2. Seek out different ideas via Google:
   a. https://rosereif.com/helping-people-with-disabilities-express-emotions-using-candyland/
   b. https://ideas.ted.com/how-to-raise-emotionally-intelligent-kids/

3. Check-out different SEL curricula (not endorsing any, just know it's available): Second Step, Skillstreaming, and Dialectical Behavior Therapy

4. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
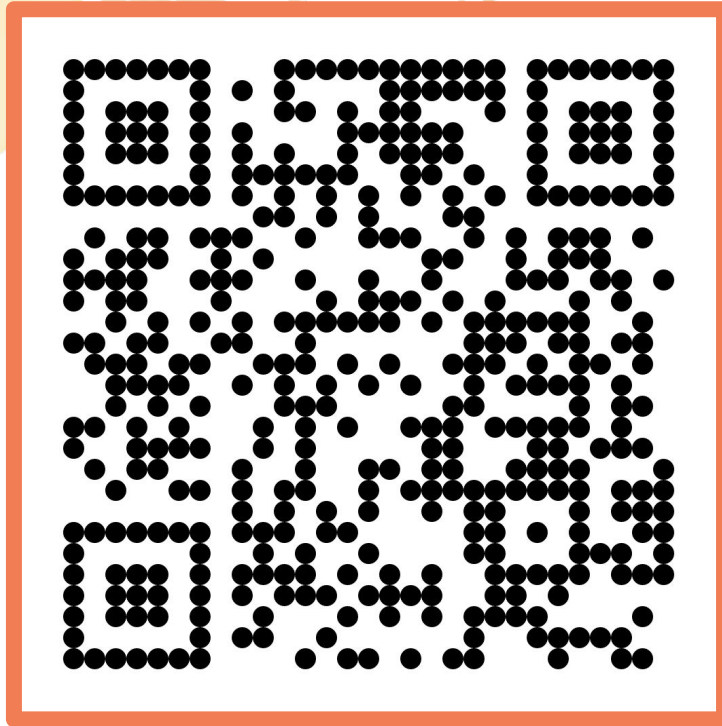   a. https://casel.org/

Additional Tips:

- TRUST THE PROCESS!

- Be open to opportunities for your student

- Allow autonomy

- Listen to the teachers input, work together!

Tips for finding a counselor...

1. Contact the counseling services of the school or college/ university campus to see if any of their counselors have experience or training with individuals with disabilities.

2. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/intellectual-disability

3. https://nacdd.org/councils/

4. https://therapy4thepeople.org/directory/

Example counseling interview questions available on resource document.

RESOURCES/SUPPORT

Thank You!

Do you have any questions?
knranda@clemson.edu
nlbenve@g.clemson.edu

https://www.clemson.edu/education/programs/programs/culife

Questions?
Comments?

Students, write your response!

Do not remove this bar

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