Thriving as a First-Generation College Student

Presented by
Alece Alderson, MA
Student Success and First Generation Programs
and
Lindsey Brooks, Ph.D.
Student Health and Counseling
Outcomes for today

- Make new connections within FG2C community
- Learn common experiences
- Understand and explore imposter syndrome
- Discuss coping skills and PRACTICE
- Resources offered on campus
It starts with your story...

Select one of the questions to discuss with your partner:

What does it mean to be a first-generation college student?

What motivated you to attend UCSF and/or enter a health profession?

How has my background helped me?

What is the best advice you received in college?
A Message from Alumni

“Think of failure as natural and part of the learning process, not anything having to do with you as a person. Skills are all learnable, and you are in the perfect place to learn.” --Tania Pacheco-Werner (Grad Division)

“Nothing is impossible. There may be challenges and disappointments on the way. Position yourself you are are and will be the best candidate. "Stay the Course" Hold to your principles and always do what is in the best interest of the patient.” --Richard Sakai (SOP)
What was a challenge you encountered as a First Gen student?
How do you define Success?

Success

Intrinsically

Extrinsically
Common Challenges

- Balancing work and school
- Care-giving for family (parents, siblings, children, family business)
- “Culture shock”
- Apprehension about approaching professors
- Frustration with the system
Undergrad vs. Grad/Professional

**Undergrad**
- More structured
- Less autonomy
- Goal focused
- Short term memory
- Banking knowledge

**Graduate/Professional**
- More autonomy
- Less structure
- Unrelenting workload
- Time management
- Learning while doing
- Producing & applying knowledge
Imposter Syndrome

Imposter Syndrome

What I think others know

What I know

Reality

What others know

What I know
Navigating Family

- Family may be your biggest cheerleaders!!! And, also...
  - Family may not understand the demands placed on you
  - Family may not be able to adjust to you being less involved
  - “Family achievement guilt”

- DISCUSS: What has your experience been?
CARING FOR MYSELF IS NOT SELF-INDULGENCE, IT IS SELF-PRESERVATION AND THAT IS AN ACT OF POLITICAL WARFARE.

AUDRE LORDE
Coping Strategies

- Identify role-models who went before you
- Build your community
- Find a mentor - First Gen and other mentors
- Develop your “mental armor”
- Help-seeking = Strength
- Practice flexibility and embrace ambiguity
- Don’t be afraid to say no to create balance
- Work-Life BLEND
- Pay it Forward
I was raised in a Bronx public housing project, but studied at two of the nation's finest universities. I did work as an assistant district attorney, prosecuting violent crimes that devastate our communities.

— Sonia Sotomayor —

WHERE THERE IS NO STRUGGLE THERE IS NO STRENGTH

OPRAH WINFREY

TALESOFSUCCESS.COM
Resources are meant to be used!

First Gen Support Services
First Gen Mentorship Program
First Gen RCO--FG2C
Student Health & Counseling
Student Disability Services
Multicultural Resource Center
Learning Resource Service
Office of Career & Professional Development
We are First-Gen

You Belong!

First Generation Support Services connects first-gen students with their first-gen peers, alumni, faculty, and staff. We invite you to be a part of this supportive community of trailblazers and out-of-the-box thinkers.

firstgen.ucsf.edu
Guided Mindfulness Exercise
What are three takeaways from this presentation that you learned or remembered?
Thank you! Questions

Alece Alderson Alece.Alderson@ucsf.edu

Lindsey Brooks Lindsey.Brooks@ucsf.edu