Schlossberg’s transition

Intro - Schlossberg’s transition theory is an idea of how people deal with a transition from one stage of life to another. Different events or non events can change where the person is in their life, and understanding the psychology behind the transition can let those around the person help them more.

Types of transition

Anticipated- For students they know they are heading off to college and can prepare to anticipate it.

Unanticipated- However some events that they may go through when starting college is not anticipated.

Non-events

Personal- Things related to individual aspirations

Ripple- Felt due to a nonevent of someone else

Resultant- Caused by a specific event

Delayed- Anticipating an event that might still happen

4 major sets of factors that influence a person’s ability to cope with a transition: Situation, Self, Support, and Strategies

Situation

Trigger-What precipitated the transition

Timing- Is the transition considered to be on time or off time in terms of one’s social clock

Control- What aspects does the individual believe that they have control over

Role change- Is a role changed involved during this transition?

Duration- Does it seem permanent, temporary or uncertain?

Previous experience- Has that individual gone through a similar event and how did they handle it?

Concurrent Stress- Are other sources of stress present?

Assessment- Who or what is seen as responsible for the transition and how is the individual behavior affected by this person

Self

Personal and demographic characteristics - socioeconomic status, gender, age, stage of life, health, ethnicity

Psychological - ego, outlook, values

Social Support

Intimate relationships - gf/bf

Family

Friends

Institutions and communities - BGR

Strategies

Those that modify the situation

Control the meaning of the problem -CAPS

Aid in managing the stress in the aftermath - BGR

How it relates to BGR

Anticipated

Going into college

BGR social support -> aid in managing stress of situation

BGR strategy for coping: gain information about how to best transition into college life (Student Success Sessions)

Domestic vs international

In state vs out of state

Transfer students vs high school students

Well prepared vs not prepared

Leaving families

Long distance relationship

Worry about being lonely/not making friends

Fresh start

Independence

Unanticipated

FREEZONE opens up possibilities for students to share personal events that are affecting their life - acts as a “trigger”

Culture Shock

Jet lag

Breakup

Death of family/friends

Divorce

Family stress

Worry about pleasing family

Unexpected events

Worried about not getting into major (ties back into academic session)

Close [j]

As incoming students from diverse backgrounds, there are many different types of transitions that the new students will be going through. It is important for us as supervisors to be aware of these transitions, and understanding Schlossberg’s transition theory will equip us to handle these potential situations.

Excerpt from pp. 111-114 of Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice by Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito (1998). Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.